SECONDARY SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES IMPLEMENTING COMMON CORE STATE LITERACY STANDARDS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

by

Krista Faith Huskey Webb

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the EDUC 989 Course

Liberty University

February, 2014

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Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA
February, 2014

APPROVED BY:

Angela Smith, Ed. D., Committee Chair

Sally Childs, Ed. D., Committee Member

Laura Hurter, Ed. D., Committee Member

Scott Watson, Ph.D., Associate Dean, Advanced Programs

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine the experiences of secondary social studies teachers who implemented Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in history/social studies, science and technical subjects in social studies courses requiring End of Course Tests at secondary schools in one suburban district in Georgia. Ten teachers of United States history and economics courses participated in this study. Data was collected through questionnaires, reflective online journaling, documents, individual interviews, and focus groups. Analysis was conducted using transcription, thematic coding, textural and structural descriptions, and a composite description of the essence of the experiences. Findings included teachers used creative lesson plans, primary source documents, and writing to implement the literacy standards. Teachers expressed a need for professional development, concerns about students' knowledge and understanding of complex vocabulary and students' reading skills, and lack of alignment between the summative assessment instrument and the literacy standards. Economics teachers had a difficult time finding appropriate materials for the implementation.

Keywords: Common Core State Standards, Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in history/social studies, science and technical subjects, Georgia Performance Standards, End of Course Tests, Common Core Georgia Performance Standards, Adequate Yearly Progress, College and Career Readiness Performance Index

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List of Abbreviations

Advanced Placement (AP)

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

Bring Your Learning Device (BYLD)

College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI)

Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS)

Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

Common Core State Standards English Language Arts (CCSSELA)

Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)

Document Based Question (DBQ)

Department of Education (DOE)

English/Language Arts (ELA)

End of Course Tests (EOCT)

Georgia High School Writing Test (GHSWT)

Georgia Performance Standards (GPS)

National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center)

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)

Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)

Professional Development (PD)

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC)

Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This phenomenological study begins with a brief history of standards-based education. As a veteran social studies educator I have a keen interest in the latest standards reform to be embraced by schools in the United States, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Within the CCSS there is a literacy component for history/social studies, science and technical subjects. Social studies teachers have not previously had a literacy standard required in their courses. This phenomenological study examines their experiences implementing this new literacy standard. Because all teachers participating in this study were implementing this standard for the first time, their experiences will be significant for other teachers required to implement this standard in the future. By focusing on their experiences and attitudes, as well as the impact on the learning environment and students' achievements, this phenomenological study provides valuable information for other teachers required to implement this literacy standard in their classrooms.

Background

Standards-based education has been at the forefront of educational reform for legislators, educators, students and parents in the United States since the publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983, the report on the status of schools made at the request of President Ronald Reagan's administration. Most recently, No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001), the bi-partisan education policy developed during the administration of President George Bush, affected the curriculum of all public schools in the United States. Requiring all

schools to meet a minimum pass rate on state administered and mandated tests, NCLB altered the curriculum and the climate of the American classroom (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001). States adopted standards to be implemented in classrooms to insure students passed required state tests. Schools with acceptable passage rates in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics were deemed to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) (NCLB Act of 2001). Each state adopted different standards to meet the requirements of NCLB, 2001. Due to the variations in standards across the United States, the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) worked together to create national standards for curricula resulting in the CCSS. As of March 2012, 47 states have adopted and plan to implement CCSS (*Common Core Georgia Performance Standards*, 2011).

In the state of Georgia, ELA and mathematics are the first subjects to be required to use the CCSS, beginning in the 2012-2013 school year. There are literacy components within the Common Core State Standards English Language Arts (CCSSELA) standard that are to be implemented in the history/social studies, science and technical subjects secondary classrooms. These new literacy standards include reading standards and writing standards for each subject, divided by grade levels (*Common Core State Standards*, 2010*).* This requires teachers of secondary social studies classes to be held accountable for standards that they have heretofore not been held accountable (Burroughs, Groce, & Webeck, 2005).

Social studies is a content-heavy curriculum (Vogler & Virtue, 2007). In Georgia, secondary social studies teachers are held accountable for students demonstrating content mastery through passing End of Course Tests (EOCT) based on

Georgia Performance Standards (GPS). Teachers now must also have students master literacy components of the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS). Teachers are held accountable for students' mastery of all social studies content mandated in CCGPS and now also CCSSELA literacy standards.

This new literacy requirement will alter the environment of the secondary social studies classrooms in Georgia. Teachers will need to find creative and engaging ways to introduce these new literacy standards. Research has shown that teachers, when faced with high-stakes tests, "tend to increase their dependency on teacher-centered instructional practices (e.g., lecture) and . . . [move] away from . . . student-centered approaches, such as discussion, role play, research papers, and cooperative learning" (Vogler & Virtue, 2007, p. 56). Loertscher and Marcoux (2010) acknowledge that "over the last decade, teachers have often abandoned the need for students to do research, problem-based learning, or project-based learning because they were focused on teaching the content knowledge required to 'pass the test'" (p. 12). Likewise, Laguardia, Brink, Wheeler, Grisham, and Peck (2002) found that "teachers . . . efforts now center on test preparation with the expressed purpose of meeting standards to avoid public censure" (p. 13). This research study provides insight for teachers in Georgia and other states facing the challenge of implementing these new literacy requirements in creative and innovative ways in the social studies classroom.

Because this is a new initiative, no research exists on its implementation. Research has shown when facing high-stakes tests, teachers tend to focus on curriculum that is aligned to the test (Burroughs et al., 2005; Klock, 2010; Laguardia et al., 2002; Tye, D., Tye, K., & Tye, B., 2010; Vogler & Virtue, 2007; Wolfe, Viger, Jarvinen, &

Linksman, 2007). While there is research to address teachers' experiences with implementing state mandated standards in their science classrooms (Donnelly & Sadler, 2009; Klieger & Yakobovitch, 2011; Paik et al., 2011), there is no research on the experience of CCSSELA literacy standards being implemented in the social studies secondary classroom.

Situation to Self

I am a social studies department chairperson as well as an Advanced Placement (AP) teacher of world history and United States history at a suburban high school in Georgia. I have over 21 years of teaching experience and I also taught at an evening alternative high school in our district for 12 years. I believe that teachers are being inundated with requirements from local, state, and national government as well as from administrators and parents (Burroughs et al., 2005; Callison, 2013; *Common Core Georgia Performance Standards, 2011; Common Core State Standards*, 2010; Irons, Carlson, Lowery-Moore, & Farrow, 2007; Myers, 2007; NCLB Act of 2001; Tye, D. et al., 2010). In this stressful environment of public schools today, teachers, as education professionals, need to have a voice. Often requirements are placed on teachers from well-meaning individuals in the political or social community who have no expertise in education theory, philosophy or practice (Myers, 2007; Tye, D. et al., 2010). This research study aims to give teachers a voice in the implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standard in the social studies secondary classroom.

This research is rhetorical in that the study is informing the educational community about the experiences of secondary social studies teachers implementing new literacy standards over the course of a school year. It is also participatory research in that

I involved social studies teachers as co-researchers, providing them with an avenue in which to voice their experiences. Their experiences in this endeavor will provide guidance and models for other teachers facing this requirement and offer an awareness of the demands and stresses on teachers for the general public. Implementation strategies of teachers are also noted.

My paradigm is pragmatism, following the beliefs and ideas of John Dewey. Dewey (1897) stated that "true education comes through the stimulation of the child's powers by the demands of the social situations in which he finds himself" (p. 1). Each classroom is a unique learning environment. Students and teachers come together from a variety of experiences into that environment. Learning is therefore contextual, drawing on both past experiences and cultural influences, and is age-appropriate. The world today is constantly changing and students must be able to adapt to those changes. According to Dewey (1897) "education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform . . . . education is a regulation of the process of coming to share in the social consciousness" (p. 15). Teachers must provide situations where students can engage in meaningful learning activities in order to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to become contributing, participating members of a democratic society. Dewey (1897) believed that

> It is the business of every one interested in education to insist upon the school as the primary and most effective instrument of social progress and reform in order that society may be awakened to realize what the school stands for, and aroused to the necessity of endowing the educator with sufficient equipment properly to perform his task. (p. 16)

Problem Statement

Secondary social studies teachers in Georgia are required to implement new national literacy common core standards, impacting students and the learning environment. According to Gewertz (2012b), these new standards require

> students building content knowledge and reading skill from independently tackling informational texts. They demand better analysis and argumentation skills, and they involve teachers from all subjects in teaching the literacy skills of their disciplines. (p. S8)

Teachers' attitudes towards and experiences with this new literacy standard requirement will impact students, their learning environment, and their mastery of the curriculum. According to Tom Loveless (2012), "the implemented curriculum is what teachers teach. . . . It may differ dramatically from classroom to classroom in the same school" (p. 13). Additionally, Loveless (2012) explained that "two students in the same classroom and instructed by the same teacher may acquire completely different skills and knowledge. One student understands and moves on; another struggles and is stuck" (p. 13).

Students in Georgia are required to take EOCT in United States history and economics social studies classes. Beginning in the 2012-2013 school year, the scores on these EOCT will make up 20% of a student's final grade in these courses (*Common Core Georgia Performance Standards*, 2011*)*. Requiring these additional literacy standards may take time away from teaching content considered essential for students to perform satisfactorily on the EOCT (Vogler & Virtue, 2007). Some teachers may be effective in implementing these new standards and others may struggle (Irons et al., 2007; Loeb, Knapp, & Elfers, 2008; Vogler & Virtue, 2007). The experiences of social studies

teachers will be helpful to other teachers required to adopt the CCSSELA literacy component.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine the experiences of secondary social studies teachers who implement Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in history/social studies, science and technical subjects in social studies courses requiring End of Course Tests at secondary schools in one suburban district in Georgia. For the purpose of this research study, the experiences of secondary social studies teachers implementing Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in history/social studies, science and technical subjects in social studies courses requiring EOCT will be generally defined as what these teachers experience in their planning, implementing, and reflecting on these new literacy standards. The state of Georgia requires EOCT in United States history and economics courses. Teachers of United States history and economics were selected to participate in this study in part due to this EOCT requirement. Social studies teachers with courses requiring EOCT must adhere to standards.

Significance of the Study

Empirical Significance

This study is significant by making empirical contributions. Data was gathered by focusing on teachers' experiences as they implemented new national literacy standards into their social studies curriculum. Because this study provides research on a new national requirement, and at this point there is no research available on this particular topic, data gathered will provide new and unique information about teachers' experiences

implementing literacy standards in social studies classes. According to Moustakas (1994), "the empirical phenomenological approach involves a return to experience in order to obtain comprehensive descriptions that provide the basis for a reflective structural analysis that portrays the essences of the experience" (p. 13). This study provides empirical data about the experiences of social studies teachers implementing these new curricular standards.

Theoretical Significance

This study has theoretical significance as well. By requiring teachers to implement literacy standards in their social studies curriculum, teachers have to think about the teaching of social studies in new ways. Unique and different ways of thinking leads to creative and innovative teaching methods and strategies. This research provides a voice for teachers to express new ideas, beliefs, thoughts and feelings about this literacy requirement. These teachers' experiences provide a framework for identifying theoretical similarities and differences.

Practical Significance

This study provides practical significance, too. By requiring social studies teachers to be held accountable for implementing a literacy standard in their classes, social studies teachers must use new and different methods and materials. This research provides a voice for social studies teachers as they grapple with implementation, time constraints, content mastery, and all content standards through CCGPS (Gewertz, 2012b; Loertscher & Marcoux, 2010; Phillips & Wong, 2010; Soares & Wood, 2010; Tye, D. et al., 2010; Vogler & Virtue, 2007). This research will also be a resource for teachers, administrators, policy-makers, parents and community members faced with

implementation of this literacy component in other districts, states, and subjects. Because social studies as an academic core subject was omitted as a tested component of NCLB and many states do not require passage of a social studies test as a requirement for high school graduation, this research study provides a needed resource for social studies teachers, facing these high-stakes testing conditions for the first time (Vogler & Virtue, 2007). As a result of the implementation of this new national literacy requirement, social studies teachers will be facing high-stakes tests, and having a research study that provides the voices and experiences of those teachers who have already embraced and implemented this idea will be beneficial.

Research Questions

The research questions framing this study are:

1. What is the experience of secondary social studies teachers required to implement the CCSSELA literacy standards in United States history and economics classes requiring an EOCT?

   Giving a voice to teachers experiencing implementation requirements in the 2012-2013 school year in a state requiring high-stakes social studies tests at the secondary level provides much needed information for teachers in other districts and states who are encountering these requirements in the area of secondary social studies for the first time (Moustakas, 1994).
2. What are the attitudes of teachers regarding the implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards in United States history and economics classes requiring an EOCT?

Burroughs et al. (2005) addressed social studies teachers' perceptions in the implementation of state standards as a result of the passage of NCLB. According to Burroughs et al., "enormous conflict was heard in the responses of teachers who participated in this study" (p. 19). Conflict may be present in teachers' perceptions of implementing national literacy standards as a component of CCSSELA.

3. What is the perceived impact of the new CCSSELA literacy standards on the learning environment in United States history and economics classes requiring an EOCT?

   Obara and Sloan (2010) found that middle school mathematics teachers implementing new curriculum designed to meet state standards made few changes to the learning environment. The implementation of this new literacy requirement may change the learning environment for United States history and economics classrooms.

4. What is the impact of the new CCSSELA literacy standards on student achievement in United States history and economics classes requiring an EOCT?

   According to Loveless (2012) the Common Core State Standards will have "very little impact" (p. 12) on student achievement. He states that "the quality of past curriculum standards has been unrelated to achievement. . . The rigor of performance standards. . . has also been unrelated to achievement" (Loveless, 2012, p. 12). The implementation of this new literacy requirement may have little to no impact on student achievement in United States history and economics classrooms.

Research Plan

This research study was qualitative, employing a phenomenological design. This method of design was appropriate to give voice to social studies secondary teachers experiencing the introduction of new national literacy standards into their curricula. According to Moustakas (1994) phenomenology refers to "knowledge as it appears to consciousness, the science of describing what one perceives, senses, and knows in one's immediate awareness and experience" (p. 26). Each person has his or her own perceptions of an experience based on their own past experiences; therefore, each person perceives situations individually. However, because Unites States history teachers and economics teachers were implementing this new standard at the same time, this phenomenological study identifies the commonalities of their experiences.

Phenomenology is an appropriate design to use when many people are experiencing the same situation at the same time. This type of study captures the essence of the experience in a thick, rich way. According to Moustakas (1994) "a complete description is given of its essential constituents, variations of perceptions, thoughts, feelings, sounds, colors, and shapes" (p. 34). Additionally, phenomenology provides a method for both a textural and a structural description of the experience to be examined, providing a complete, composite picture of the experience (Moustakas, 1994).

Delimitations

This phenomenological research study was confined to secondary social studies teachers in one suburban school district in Georgia for several reasons. First, three subject areas: history/social studies, science, and technical studies, are now required to implement literacy standards according to CCSS. I chose social studies because teachers

are held accountable for student mastery of content in United States history and economics courses in Georgia. This accountability is assessed through End of Course Test scores. Now teachers are being required to have students master literacy standards too. By keeping the research in one subject area a more focused experience was recorded. Teachers in the same subject area often share similar methodologies, content mastery, and materials. Therefore, their experiences, while unique to each, tended to have elements of similarity with which all social studies teachers can identify.

Second, I wanted to examine teachers' experiences so I confined my sample to teachers, eliminating other groups affected by this standard such as students, parents, and administrators. The findings of this study are a description of what teachers experienced implementing the new literacy standards in social studies classrooms. While students, parents, administrators and policy makers may find application and meaning in the findings, the focus of the study and the results are intended for teachers. Research questions were developed for teachers regarding their experiences in implementing the new literacy standards. Questions were not designed for other groups.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The Common Core State Standards are a national standards curriculum developed in an effort to ensure that all American students, regardless of the state in which they are educated, have the same curriculum. The experiences of social studies teachers in Georgia in implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards provides an example for other teachers in the nation required to adopt the literacy component into their classrooms (Evans, 2009; Hirsh, 2012).

This literature review identifies the social learning theory of Bandura, the sociocultural theory of Vygotsky, and the essentialist theory of Bagley as the basis for teachers teaching to standards and the modeling that takes place as a result. Also, teachers need to feel that they are empowered in developing and implementing the standards in order for the implementation to be successful (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1999; Bandura & Adams, 1977; Klassen, 2010; Laguardia et al., 2002; Myers, 2007; Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004; Wolfe et al., 2007). Then the literature review focuses on the background of the standards movement in education. Beginning with Plato and continuing into the 21st century, there has been a need for all people to master a common body of knowledge (Dewey, 1916a; 1916b; 1916c; Mill, 1867; Mann, 1848; Null, 2003b; Plato, 360 B.C.E.). In the United States today, the development of CCSS is an attempt to meet this need. Specifically, the first CCSSELA to be implemented have embedded a literacy component for history/social studies, science, and technical subjects.

Ultimately, the literature review addresses three important components of introducing the new literacy standards for teachers: planning, implementation, and

reflection. At the planning stage, teachers must incorporate complex texts and primary source documents into lessons as well as offer opportunities for students to write in informational, explanatory and argumentative ways. Common assessments need to be developed as well (PARCC, 2013; Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, 2013). In order to implement the new literacy standards, teachers need adequate and appropriate professional development. Also, teachers' implementation will be affected by their perceptions of and attitudes toward the CCSSELA literacy standards. Lastly, teachers must be reflective about their planning and implementation. By reflecting on the impact the new CCSSELA literacy standards have on the learning environment and on student achievement, teachers will make adjustments to lessons as necessary in order to continually improve their planning and implementation of the new standards.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this research study is social cognitive theory of Albert Bandura along with his theory of self-efficacy. Bandura (1999) believed that physical maturation and development, cognition, and the environment work together in order for learning to occur. Bandura called this "triadic reciprocal causation" (Bandura, 1999, p. 23). He further explained "in this model of reciprocal causality, internal personal factors in the form of cognitive, affective and biological events; behavioral patterns, and environmental events all operate as interacting determinants that influence one another bidirectionally" (Bandura, 1999, p. 23).

Closely aligned is Bandura's (1977) belief that "much human behavior is developed through modeling. From observing others, one forms a conception of how new behavior patterns are performed . . ." (p. 192). Modeling, to Bandura (1999), is "not

merely a process of behavioral mimicry" (p. 25). Instead, it is complex, developmental, and abstract. Bandura (1999) stated that

> observers extract the rules governing specific judgments or actions differing in content but embodying the same underlying rule. Once people extract the rules, they can use them to judge things and generate new courses of behavior that fit the prototype but go beyond what they have seen or heard. (p. 25)

Bandura (1977) made this assumption based on the idea that "psychological procedures . . . serve as means of creating and strengthening expectations of personal self-efficacy" (p. 193). Bandura (1999) stated that "among the mechanisms through which human agency is exercised, none is more central or pervasive than beliefs of personal efficacy" (p. 28). Personal efficacy is the idea that people believe in themselves, their abilities, and their decisions to affect and alter their lives, their futures, and their world. Bandura (1999) explained

> Unless people believe that they can produce desired effects by their actions they have little incentive to act or to persevere in the face of difficulties. Whatever other factors serve as motivators, they are rooted in the core belief that one has the power to produce changes by one's actions. (p. 28)

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory is also present. Vygotsky recognized that people learn because of interaction with one another and that advanced learning takes place within the individual due to the ability to self-regulate (Gredler, 2009). Vygotsky (2012) stated that "historians will have no trouble seeing that psychological ideas depend on the

overall dynamic of social life, a dependence that can be easily discerned based on countless and perfectly obvious clues" (p. 90-91). Gredler (2012) viewed Vygotsky's theory of cognitive development as having

> implications for educational practice . . . on at least three levels. They are (a) serving as a template for rethinking current classroom practices, (b) providing a supporting rationale for expressed concerns about current curricula, and (c) constructing and reviewing curricula. (p. 124)

Bagley espoused yet another theory of education, that of essentialism. It was his belief, according to Null (2003b), that there was a set, specific body of knowledge that all students should master, an essential body of knowledge. This academic curriculum needed to be taught to all students, regardless of their needs and interests. Bagley believed that this "type of education that he viewed as essential to the perpetuation of democratic societies" (Null, 2007, p. 1028) was necessary for democratic societies to continue to flourish and grow. Null (2007) stated that

> Bagley and the essentialists called for professors of education to strengthen the ideals of American democracy . . . They established that the first principles of the essentialists were found in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and the other foundational ideals of American democracy. (p. 1031)

Bagley and the other essentialists believed that "a powerful democracy demanded a community of democratic culture that, although not static, should be taught to each succeeding generation of children" (Null, 2007, p. 1031). Additionally Bagley felt that

"democratic societies . . . demanded that teachers teach a core of democratic ideals to combat any attempts to establish totalitarian states . . . [and] that every child had the right to a teacher whose job it was to teach them a body of subject-matter" (Null, 2007, p. 1041).

Bagley's essentialist beliefs are often viewed as the forerunner of the current standards movement (Null, 2007, p. 1031). According to Null (2004) "Bagley believed that a liberal education based on the conventional subjects of history, literature, and mathematics enabled students to develop broad understandings of culture, moral character, and social efficiency-social service" (p. 109). Even Benjamin Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning Domains was seen by Wineburg and Schneider (2009/2010) through the essentialists' lens. They stated that "at the wide and stable base of the taxonomic structure was 'knowledge'. A prerequisite to all of the steps that came afterward, it was the platform from which students might reach higher and more impressive ground" (Wineburg & Schneider, 2009/2010, pp. 56-57). This idea of a set body of knowledge that all students should master is the core of the CCSS movement.

My research focus related to all four of these learning theories. Standards, such as the CCSS, form the basis for an academic curriculum based on all students mastering a set and prescribed body of knowledge. Learning takes place in a sociocultural environment within the classroom and teachers are expected to teach in that environment. Teachers must teach lessons that integrate the CCSSELA literacy standards into the triadic reciprocal deterministic mode of students' existence. The self-efficacy of the teachers enables them to be effective in implementing the CCSSELA literacy standard. Teachers have prior experience in implementing standards. Teachers draw on their past

experiences but will also look to other teachers' experiences to integrate literacy into their classrooms (Evans, 2009).

Review of the Literature

Foundation of Standards

Standards-based education began with the ideas expressed by Plato in *The Republic* (Klock, 2010; Ediger, 1997). According to Plato (360 B.C.E.) "the business of us who are the founders of the State will be to compel the best minds to attain that knowledge which we have already shown to be the greatest of all…" (p. 5). Horace Mann (1848) reported to the Massachusetts School Board that "education…is the great equalizer of the conditions of men . . . it gives each man the independence and the means, by which he can resist the selfishness of other men" (p. 7-8). John Stuart Mill (1867) defined "education in the narrower sense; the culture which each generation purposely gives to those who are to be its successors, in order to qualify them for at least keeping up, and if possible for raising, the level of improvement which has been attained" (p. 4). In *Democracy and Education* John Dewey (1916) traced the continuation of a common body of knowledge from the Greeks through the Romans and medieval European civilization to the 20th century in America. In Chapter One: Education as a Necessity of Life Dewey stated it is "so obvious . . . the necessity of teaching and learning for the continued existence of a society. . ." (p. 3). Klock (2010) tied the need for standards with Dewey's view of societal interest by pointing out that "standards documents are invariably a description of society's values and goals" (p. 16).

A contemporary of John Dewey, William Chandler Bagley, focused on a no-nonsense approach to education. He believed in a "curriculum for public school students

which stressed the essentials or basics in the curriculum" (Ediger, 1997, p. 271). Additionally, Bagley felt that "students should complete tasks or solve problems with the intention of learning mathematics, history, geography, and other academic subjects" (Null, 2003b, p. 405). Bagley was perhaps the most immediate philosophical link to the standards-based movement of today. The emphasis in the 21st century is on students demonstrating mastery through testing of objectives that "represent essential, basic knowledge that all students need to learn" (Ediger, 1997, p. 271). Marilyn Adams (2010/2011) suggested that "the very concept of publicly supported schooling is predicated on the belief that there is a certain body of knowledge and abilities that is needed by every citizen for a safe, responsible, and productive life" (p. 10).

In the United States standards-based education has been the current trend in education for the past four decades. This focus on standards-based education began with the publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 during President Ronald Reagan's administration. This national report was created by the National Commission on Excellence in Education and focused on American high schools. The findings were alarming for many Americans who immediately called for change and reform in education (*A Nation at Risk*, 1983).

Next came a federal law known as Goals 2000: Educate America Act (Goals 2000: Educate America Act, 1994). This piece of legislation began to take form as America 2000 during the George H. Bush administration and was refined and passed during the Clinton administration as H.R. 1804. This education reform legislation outlined eight goals for American education (Goals 2000: Educate America Act, 1994). A portion of this legislation assigned a council to "identify and develop criteria to be used

for certifying the voluntary national content standards and voluntary national student performance standards" (Goals 2000: Educate America Act, 1994).

By 2001, the George W. Bush administration had undertaken a bi-partisan approach to yet another piece of education reform legislation resulting in the passage of the NCLB Act of 2001. This law mandated that all schools make Average Yearly Progress (AYP) by posting acceptable scores on mandated standardized tests. (NCLB Act of 2001). According to Holland (2008), "NCLB asserts that each state should have rigorous academic standards in place that guide curricula and instruction" (p. 215). Teaching to specific standards and the "use of standardized testing to measure student achievement" (Gutek, 2011, p. 383) became common place as a result. Holland (2008) reiterated that "NCLB expects each state to have an annual statewide assessment that is taken by all students and that serves as an independent measure of teaching and learning" (p. 215).

In an effort to continue the push for education reform, the Obama administration offered funds to schools "leading the way on school reform" (The White House, Office of Press Secretary, 2009, para. 1), called "Race to the Top Fund." Academic standards were a part of this "national competition which will highlight and replicate effective education reform strategies in four significant areas: adopting internationally benchmarked standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and the workplace. . ." (The White House, Office of Press Secretary, 2009, para. 3). Standards have been a key component of education reform for 30 years.

Instead of continuing to employ piecemeal standards, state-by-state, a movement was underway to produce national standards in education. Darling-Hammond

(2011/2012) found in her study of educational systems in South Korea, Finland, and Singapore that all three "organise [*sic*] teaching around national standards and a core curriculum that focuses on higher-order thinking, inquiry, and problem solving through rigorous academic content" (p. 27). Diane Ravitch (1996) advocated the development of national standards stating that "explicit content standards clearly can become an organizing force for education, in which all the different pieces of the system are focused on the same goal: helping children learn at high levels of achievement" (p. 134). This is the idea behind the "Common Core State Standards Initiative" (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). The standards, created by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) in 2010, were a collaborative effort involving "the best state standards; the experience of teachers, content experts, states and leading thinkers; and feedback from the general public" (Process, para. 2). NGA Center and CCSSO (2010) believe that "these standards define the knowledge and skills students should have within their K-12 education careers so that they will graduate high school able to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing academic college courses and in workforce training programs" (About the Standards, para. 4).

Common Core State Standards Literacy Component

CCSS are to be implemented in all states that have adopted them. The first CCSS to be required are in the subjects of ELA and mathematics. Within the ELA standard is a literacy component for history/social studies, science and technical subjects. This component involves both reading and writing standards. NGA Center and CCSSO (2010) point out that

> the 6-12 literacy standards in history/social studies, science and technical subjects are not meant to replace content standards in those areas but rather to supplement them. States may incorporate these standards into their standards for those subjects or adopt them as content area literacy standards. (p. 3)

Social studies, as a core academic subject, is often viewed as content heavy. According to Bender-Slack and Raupach (2008), "at the high school level, teachers race to cover mountains of content, hoping their charges will memorize the right terms for true/false or multiple-choice exams" (p. 255). Yet, the social studies were not included in NCLB for AYP. Vogler and Virtue (2007) pointed out that "testing for social studies, the fourth core academic subject, was noticeably absent in this legislation" (p. 55). Savit (2009) also acknowledged the absence of social studies in NCLB legislation but took the position that social studies education had declined since the 1960s, believing that "schools feared criticism or litigation if teachers dared broach politically or historically controversial subjects" (p. 1271). Bulgren, Graner, and Deshler (2013) reiterated this position by noting "little emphasis has been placed on the development of instruction in social studies, given its low priority in education reform" (p. 21).

Traditionally, the social studies curriculum encompassed almost anything and everything and while state standards differed somewhat in content, often times they were vague and unclear. Haycock (2010) stated that "the participants [developing the CCSS] were determined to avoid developing yet another mile-wide, inch-deep curriculum, with teachers never teaching—and students never learning—anything deeply enough to achieve true mastery" (p. 17). Pearcy and Duplass (2011) pointed out that "this new age of accountability and standards has introduced even greater challenges but has done little

to resolve the very fundamental problem of history teacher's [*sic*] having to decide what is necessary and to what depth" (p. 110). Additionally, one important focus of CCSS developers "was to create a system of standards that focused on a consistent end result, unlike our current system of standards, which differ from state to state" (Hill, 2011, p. 42). David Conley and his team of researchers conducted a study through the Educational Policy Improvement Center to see how the CCSS aligned with current existing standards (Conley, Drummond, de Gonzalez, Seburn et al., 2011). Their findings included "substantial concurrence between the Common Core standards and the comparison standards. . . . [and] general consistency between the cognitive challenge level of the Common Core standards and the five comparison standard sets" (Conley, Drummond, de Gonzalez, Seburn et al., 2011, p. 5).

Additionally, Conley and a slightly different team of researchers conducted another study involving 1815 postsecondary instructors to see how well the CCSS addressed knowledge and skills deemed necessary to be successful at the postsecondary level (Conley, Drummond, de Gonzales, Rooseboom et al., 2011). Overall findings "suggests that students who are generally proficient in the Common Core standards will likely be ready for a wide range of postsecondary courses" (Conley, Drummond, de Gonzales, Rooseboom et al., 2011, p. 7). In the category of Importance Ratings for the Reading Standards in History/Social Studies, Conley, Drummond, de Gonzales, Rooseboom et al. (2011) found that "ratings . . . were among the highest ELA and literacy ratings. . . . respondents tend to emphasize general concepts such as students being able to provide textual evidence to support analysis and to determine central ideas of a text" (p. 38). Likewise, in the category of Importance Ratings for the Writing

Standards in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects, Conley, Drummond, de Gonzales, Rooseboom et al. (2011) determined that "respondents tend to identify as important the writing of arguments on discipline-specific content that includes precise, knowledgeable, significant claims. . . . [and] students' ability to create organization that logically sequences the claim, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence" (p. 45).

Teacher Planning

Teachers plan lessons based on state requirements, curriculum content and standards. The CCSSELA literacy standard requires the use of complex texts in social studies classrooms. According to the CCSSELA & Literacy in history/social studies, science and technical subjects, "standard 10 defines a grade-by-grade 'staircase' of increasing text complexity that rises from beginning reading to the college and career readiness level" (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2010, p. 8). Teacher planning must include the use of complex texts.

Complex texts. One requirement of the CCSSELA literacy standards for history/social studies is for students to be able to read and comprehend complex texts. CCSSELA states students will

> Show a steadily growing ability to discern more from and make fuller use of text, including making an increasing number of connections among ideas and between texts, considering a wider range of textual evidence, and becoming more sensitive to inconsistencies, ambiguities, and poor reasoning in texts. (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2010, p. 8)

Reading and comprehending complex texts involves students being able to comprehend the texts, understand the vocabulary used in the text, and read texts of varying complexity.

Comprehension. Being able to read and understand complex texts is a necessary skill in order for students to be successful in post-secondary educational endeavors and careers (Adams, 2010/2011; Bain, 2012; Phillips & Wong, 2010; Rothman, 2012). However, a deficiency found in students' abilities across the curriculum was the "ability to comprehend complex texts" (Hill, 2011, p. 42). Past standards have failed to address the need for a standard focused on text complexity but the Common Core has attempted to rectify that previous mistake (Hiebert, 2012, p. 13).

The reading and comprehension of complex texts are an integral part of the CCSSELA literacy standards. Hill (2011) aligns the CCSSELA literacy component for history/social studies, science, and technical subjects to "teaching increasing text complexity and reading across the curriculum, so that from math class to science class to literature, reading via complex texts will dominate the curriculum" (p. 43). In Chapter Twenty-one of *Democracy and Education* John Dewey (1916c) recognized the importance of a literate society by "identify[ing] learning with linguistic training and to make[ing] the language of the learned a literary language" (p. 3). Additionally, in Chapter Sixteen, Dewey (1916b) emphatically stated that "geography and history supply subject matter which gives background and outlook, intellectual perspective, to what might otherwise be narrow personal actions or mere forms of technical skill" (p. 2). Bain (2012) noted that "historians and history teachers have long recognized that studying the past is impossible without the use of text" (p. 517). Hirsch (2006) acknowledged that

"reading comprehension-literacy itself-depends on specific background knowledge" (p. 6). He goes on to point out that "learning how to read . . .-decoding through phonics—does not guarantee learning how to read . . .-comprehending the meaning of what is read. To become a good comprehender, a child needs a great deal of knowledge" (Hirsch, 2006, p. 8). Non-fiction, informational complex texts helps students develop this necessary background knowledge (Goodwin & Miller, 2013). Goodwin and Miller (2013) acknowledged that "for years, we've known that the amount of independent reading students do contributes to their reading skills. Students who read more tend to learn more vocabulary, become more proficient readers, find reading more enjoyable, and continue to read" (p. 80).

Vocabulary. Secondary school social studies students will be required to read complex texts as part of the CCSSELA literacy standards. According to Gewertz (2012a), the CCSSELA literacy standards "place a premium on students' abilities to carefully read and re-read a complex text until they've mastered its meaning and to use evidence in that text to build arguments" (p. 14). Simon (2008) pointed out that there are two obstacles students face in reading complex texts, "(1) entering into and engaging with the story world . . . and (2) critiquing and transforming textual biases" (p. 135). Additionally, students must have mastery of complex vocabulary. Wixson and Lipson (2012) noted that "there is likely to be a major shift from an overemphasis on decoding to increased attention to comprehension of and learning with and from oral and written language" (p. 389). Adams (2010/2011) stated that "written texts draw upon many more words than normally arise in oral language situations" (p. 5). She also pointed out "that the great majority of words needed for understanding written language is likely to only be

encountered . . . through experience with written text" (Adams, 2010/2011, p. 5). In order to meet the new standards students "must read lots of 'complex' texts—texts that offer them new language, new knowledge, and new modes of thought" (Adams, 2010/2011, p. 9). Likewise, similar studies found similar results (Loertscher & Marcoux, 2010; Loertscher, 2010). Unfortunately, according to Adams (2010/2011) research studies of books published for students between 1919 and 1991 determined "that the difficulty of the text in these books had been significantly reduced" (p. 5).

Text complexity. Hiebert (2010/2011) recognized that the CCSSELA only acknowledges "a single measure of text complexity- Lexiles" (p. 33). She cautioned against relying solely on readability levels to determine text complexity (Hiebert, 2010/2011). New methods of assessing readability of texts focus on "the relative frequency of words as a measure of vocabulary complexity, rather than an identification of the percentage of words in texts that are not grade-specific vocabulary" (Hiebert, 2012, p. 15). She also stated that "when rare words are repeated-as they often are in informational texts where precise vocabulary is used . . . the level of a text is frequently overestimated. . . . when texts contain large amounts of dialogue . . . texts levels are frequently underestimated" (Hiebert, 2012, p. 15). Hiebert (2012) recommended considering not only quantitative levels of readability but also "qualitative features of texts . . . and the match between texts and readers and tasks" (p. 13).

Primary source documents. An additional source of complex texts for teachers is primary source documents. Many primary source documents are informational texts. Students reading primary source documents must develop skills in analysis and have

adequate background knowledge of subject matter in order to comprehend what is being read.

Informational texts. Primary source documents are often complex texts. The teaching of history involves reading, analyzing and interpreting primary source documents. Bain (2012) stated that " 'doing' history requires historians to work not only with primary and secondary print sources, but also with artifacts, objects, and data, each demanding comprehension, analysis, and evaluation" (p. 518). Kendall (2011) pointed out that "the Common Core standards recognize . . . that in history/social studies, students 'need to be able to analyze, evaluate, and differentiate primary and secondary sources'" (p. 19). Bulgren et al. (2013) acknowledged that "in the case of history and social studies, discipline specific learning involves abilities related to sourcing, contextualizing and corroboration as students read primary and secondary sources" (p. 18). The National Standards for History (1996) addressed this need for reading complex texts in order to develop higher-level thinking skills in historical comprehension. According to Mayer (2006) "history students, like historians, need to understand that all text is authored text, and that critical readers learn how writers' positions influence their writing" (p. 73). Primary source documents provide "a way to support increased opportunities for informational reading and to engage students in more thoughtful and critical work with the most fundamental of informational texts" (Morgan & Rasinski, 2012, p. 586).

Analysis. By using primary source documents in the classroom students are "exposed to multiple perspectives on the great issues of the past and present" (Singleton & Giese, 1999, p. 148). This enables students to "develop their own knowledge, skills, and predispositions" about history (Singleton & Giese, 1999, p. 148). Dutt-Doner, Cook-

Cottone, and Allen (2007) found that middle school students focusing on primary source documents in the classroom were able to use critical-thinking skills for analysis and interpretation. They concluded that "comprehending primary sources and extracting key information plays a critical role in document analysis. Students must have multiple experiences analyzing documents to assess an author's point of view and how that should be considered" (Dutt-Doner et al., 2007, p. 14). According to Gewertz (2012a) using a program such as "Reading Like a Historian, 75 free secondary school lessons in U.S. history" (p. 11) that uses primary source documents in place of a traditional textbook met the requirements of the CCSSELA literacy standard as it will "deepen students' content knowledge, help them think like historians, and build reading comprehension" (p. 11). Friedman and Heafner (2008) conducted three studies involving ninth-graders using the internet to access primary source documents in their world history class. They cautioned that teachers need "to scaffold students' learning experiences and provide easy and quick access to primary sources" (Friedman & Heafner, 2008, p. 83) when utilizing primary source documents with students.

Background knowledge. Damico, Baildon, Exter and Guo (2010) explored the idea of the influence of cultural resources and contextual knowledge on reading complex, primary source texts. Their findings "help elucidate specific metacognitive reading strategies needed in the social studies, such as determining the credibility of a source, detecting bias, and maintaining a vigilant commitment to evaluating and corroborating claims and evidence" (p. 333). With a specific skill set necessary for success in the reading and analysis of primary source documents it becomes necessary "for teachers to guide students in discussing, comparing, and contrasting the cultural and contextual

knowledge they mobilize to make sense of different texts" (Damico et al., 2010, p. 334). Bain (2012) also acknowledged the necessity for teachers to recognize "the background knowledge a textbook assumes students have *and* to the background knowledge their students actually do bring with them to reading" (p. 518). Likewise, Reisman and Wineburg (2008) recognized that "contextualized historical thinking is impossible to accomplish without background knowledge. One need not know everything about a historical moment, but a basic chronology and some familiarity with key developments are fundamental" (p. 203). Pearcy and Duplass (2011) agreed stating "the importance of prior knowledge to reading cannot be overstated" (p. 115). Hirsch (1987) understood that "cultural literacy-as a vocabulary that we are able to use throughout the land because we share associations with others in our society" (p. 26) is a necessary component for understanding history and social studies.

Methods and strategies. Secondary social studies teachers must decide which methods and strategies to use to teach using complex texts. They must also implement the methods and strategies in their history and economics classrooms.

Utilization. Teachers must also utilize a variety of instructional methods and strategies when teaching with complex texts and primary source documents. Bulgren et al. (2013) recognized that "as the complexity and volume of text demands grow, the expectations for students to apply higher order thinking and reasoning skills also increase" (p. 17). Parsons (2008) pointed out that "teachers must pay particular attention to the tasks they assign" (p. 629). Harris and Hofer (2011) found that "in planning instructional units . . . teachers first considered the content to be addressed, then predicted (based on past experience) what would engage students to learn that content in the

deepest way possible" (p. 225). According to Pearcy and Duplass (2011) "the first thing an American history teacher must do is to choose what content (topics) he or she will teach in class" (p. 114). Parsons (2008) proposed that teachers utilize

> ACCESS – an organizational framework designed to help teachers plan instruction that improves students' reading proficiency while also empowering and motivating students. ACCESS stands for tasks that are *authentic,* that require *collaboration* among students, that *challenge* students, that culminate with an *end product*, that allow *self-direction* by giving students choices, and that *sustain learning* across time. (p. 628)

Pearcy and Duplass (2011) suggested teachers use the standards developed by the National Center for History in the Schools (NCHS) when planning social studies lessons. They reiterated "that teachers should explicitly plan to teach something like historical analysis" (Pearcy & Duplass, 2011, p. 114). Bulgren et al. (2013) outlined skills history students need to acquire in order to be successful in the history classroom including "determine and summarize central ideas; analyze how a text presents information sequentially, comparatively, and causally; compare and contrast points of view; and reason about premises and evidence to evaluate an author's claim" (p. 17).

Implementation. Specific methods and strategies can and should be used by teachers in helping students learn content-laden material along with higher-level thinking skills. Nagel (2008) addressed cooperative learning as one method to use in the secondary social studies classroom, citing five essential elements for effective cooperative learning and suggesting implementation strategies such as 'talking chips' and 'round table' (p. 365). Likewise, Key, Bradley, J., and Bradley, K. (2010) also suggested

implementation strategies of magnet summaries, history memory bubbles, and data charts to "promote comprehension and content literacy and . . . involving students with content while pre-reading, during-reading, and postreading. [*sic*] activities" (p. 117). McMurray (2011) recognized that "historiography . . . is an excellent example of how the views of scholars and the interpretations of historical events can evolve over time" (p. 452). He also noted that "teachers have an inherent responsibility to teach students to think of history in a methodologically appropriate manner" (McMurray, 2011, p. 447). Key et al. (2010) summed it up best by stating "literacy is a natural component of social studies, and the social studies teacher is the key to successful literacy development in the field" (p. 120).

Appropriate writing. The CCSSELA literacy standards for history/social studies, science and technical subjects contain a writing element. Secondary social studies teachers must teach different types of writing and appropriate writing skills.

Types of writing. The CCSSELA literacy standards for history/social studies, science and technical subjects specifically requires the following "writing types: arguments, informative/explanatory texts, and narratives" (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2010, p. 8). The literacy component for writing also recognizes "the importance of the writing-reading connection by requiring students to draw upon and write about evidence from literary and information texts . . . research standards are prominently included" (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2010, p. 8). Wixson and Lipson (2012) acknowledged that students will be expected to "produce effective writing for a range of purposes and audiences" (p. 390). Rothman (2012) stated that most writing currently in the secondary setting is narrative yet "informational writing, in which the author attempts to explain something or

to inform others about a topic, is a much more important skill" (p. 14). Kist (2013) acknowledged that writing in the 21st century has taken on new meaning, including digital writing and he offered strategies that meld with the CCSS and new technologies. "A whole host of fundamental literacy implications . . . come naturally from a simple yet profound focus on reading texts deeply, writing for digital environments collaboratively, and reading and writing non-fiction texts" (Kist, 2013, p. 43).

Writing, in a variety of mediums, is the vehicle for students to express, explain, and elaborate on their historical findings. Writing, according to Wineburg (2006), takes place in the AP social studies classroom on a weekly basis (p. 402). One type of writing that AP students use is the Document Based Question (DBQ). Breakstone, Smith, and Wineburg (2013) stated that "the DBQ calls on many of the literacy skills identified by the Common Core: the ability to read multiple sources, evaluate claims, and mount arguments using evidence" (p. 54). Bulgren et al. (2013) realized that the learning disabled student will be required "to write arguments focused on discipline-specific content" (p. 18). The CCSSELA literacy standards for writing in the social studies require this type of writing in all social studies classrooms.

Writing skills. There are four specific key skills necessary for history students to have in order to effectively analyze, synthesize, and evaluate complex texts. (Gewertz, 2012a). They are

> "sourcing," to gauge how authors' viewpoints and reasons for writing affect their accounts of events; "contextualization," to get a full picture of what was happening at the time; "corroboration," to help students sort out contradictory anecdotes and facts; and "close

> reading," to help them absorb text slowly and deeply, parsing words and sentences for meaning. (Gewertz, 2012a, p. 12)

These skills are necessary components for appropriate writing in the social studies. Students must cite their sources when writing; contextualize the full picture of the situation they are describing; and discern between contradictory pieces of information. Breakstone et al. (2013) stated "in history/social studies, students are expected to analyze primary and secondary sources, cite textual evidence to support arguments, consider the influence of an author's perspective, corroborate different sources, and develop written historical arguments" (p. 53).

Bain (2012) recognized that secondary social studies teachers face certain challenges in the teaching of historical writing. According to Bain (2012)

> teachers must also explicitly teach formal historical writing (e.g., narratives, causal explanations, consequential explanations, arguments) and informal writing (e.g., note-making, marking up sources), including the various formats used to represent historical understanding (e.g., essays, posters, *PowerPoint*, exhibits). (p. 520)

Wineburg and Martin (2004) reiterated that "literacy is the key word here, because the teaching of history should have reading and writing at its core" (p. 44). They went on to explain "working through successive drafts of the cause-and-effect essay-making sure that paragraphs reflect a logical procession of ideas and that assertions are backed by evidence-is hard and inglorious work, but there are no shortcuts" (Wineburg & Martin, 2004, p. 45). The CCSSELA literacy standards require extensive writing for all social studies students.

Common assessments. Common assessments are an important component of a standards-based curriculum. Common assessments must be aligned to the curriculum that is taught and teachers must be trained to consistently score the assessments the same.

Alignment. To address the need for new common assessments aligned to the CCSS, two consortia, the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, have begun to develop common assessments that align with the CCSS. According to Herman (1997)

> if an assessment is to serve a communication function, focus people's attention on what is important, and provide good information on students' progress, then it must represent the knowledge and skills we expect students to learn: the standards or goals we hold for student accomplishment. (p. 198)

Marzano (2003) acknowledged that "unless a school employs assessments that are specific to the curriculum actually taught, it cannot accurately determine how well its students are learning" (p. 38). Assessments must align with the curriculum being taught in the classroom. According to a study on science curriculum implementation conducted by Penuel, Fishman, Gallagher, Korbak, and Lopez-Prado (2008), one recent change has been "aimed at promoting greater *alignment* among standards, curriculum, assessments, and professional development" (p. 658). Breakstone et al. (2013) also acknowledged that "if we want students to achieve the benchmarks set out in the Common Core State Standards, then we need assessments that are aligned to these skills" (p. 57).

Consensus scoring. Not only must common assessments be utilized but consensus scoring as well. According to Fisher, Lapp, and Flood (2005), this is one way

for teachers to improve writing for students. They developed a comprehensive program involving "addressing and monitoring student progress while simultaneously providing identified staff development needs" (Fisher et al., 2005, p. 656) to meet increasing literacy requirements. Performance assessments currently being developed through PARCC for use with the implemented CCSS "are intended to focus on comprehending complex texts, analyzing sources in writing, conducting and reporting on research, and speaking and listening" (Wixson & Lipson, 2012, p. 389). According to Fisher et al. (2005) "through consensus scoring, teachers are able to share their effective instructional strategies with one another and to question strategies that they use when student achievement data are poor" (p. 660). Rothman (2011) stated that "teachers often say that scoring examinations is good professional development because it provides them with a clear sense of the standards students are expected to meet and the kind of student work that exemplifies the standards" (p. 159). Fisher et al. (2005) found that by "combining the best research-based ideas and then implementing a process school wide can result in significant changes in student achievement" (p. 657). Consensus scoring is something that the College Board has long employed in their grading process for annual Advanced Placement exams. Teachers trained in consensus scoring should have scores that align.

Teacher Implementation

In order for CCSSELA & Literacy in history/social studies, science and technical subjects to be implemented in social studies classrooms, several steps have to be taken. First, secondary social studies teachers must have adequate, effective professional development. Next, teachers must perceive that the CCSSELA & Literacy is important, effective, and doable. Teachers must feel they have a voice in implementation and that

they are empowered. Collective efficacy will enable teachers to have successful implementation of the CCSSELA & Literacy in history/social studies, science and technical subjects..

Professional development. Teachers must be aware of the new CCSSELA literacy standards and they must have access to effective professional development. Effective professional development is collaborative, ongoing, and content appropriate. Additionally, effective professional development meets teachers' needs and helps teachers plan for additional professional development for themselves.

Awareness of new standard. Teachers must be made aware of the CCSSELA literacy standards, their various components, and the expectations that accompany the implementation. Rothman (2011) stated that "states are taking steps to build awareness of the Standards and their implications for practice" (p. 125). Penuel et al. (2008) noted that "teachers' knowledge of standards and the relationship of standards to curriculum activities are likely to affect curriculum understanding" (p. 660). According to Fisher et al. (2005) "teachers must examine the content and performance standards for their grade or subject. . . . the careful analysis of standards . . . is critical in teaching" (p. 660). This can only happen through appropriate professional development (Babu, 2008; Bean, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2011; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011; Daugherty, 2003; EBSS Instruction for Educators Committee, 2011; Fisher et al., 2005; Hochberg & Desimone, 2010; Ivey, 2011; Lester, 2003; Umphrey, 2010).

Access to professional development. Teachers must have access to professional development in order to be aware of the new standards and to become familiar with methods and strategies that can be used in teaching the new CCSSELA literacy standard

in history/social studies. Bulgren et al. (2013) pointed out that "careful thought must be given to providing the strong professional development (PD) and instructional coaching supports that will be essential to make required changes" (p. 19) with the implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards in the social studies classroom. According to Hirsh (2012) "the common core will not be self-implementing-executing this overhaul of expectations for students and teachers represents a tremendous undertaking" (p. 24). States, school districts, and administrators must be willing to provide the resources and time necessary for adequate, appropriate, and necessary professional development to occur; too often educators have been recipients of "'spray and pray' training that exposes everyone to the same material and hopes that some of it sticks" (Hirsh, 2012, p. 22). Rothman (2011) found that "teachers in districts that provided them with opportunities to learn about the standards and their implications were more likely than others to change their practices in ways the standards intended" (p. 19). Rothman (2011) also pointed out that the CCSS could have a tremendous, positive impact on professional development by having trained professionals that provide workshops and seminars for teachers nationwide as well as online (p. 168-169). This professional development must provide "in-depth tools to support the development of teachers' comprehension of curricular purposes" (Penuel et al., 2008, p. 672).

Effective professional development. Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (2011) outlined characteristics of effective professional development needed by teachers in a changing standards-based curriculum (p. 82). They recognized that "new approaches to the professional education of teachers are needed, and they require new structures and supports" (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011, p. 82) including "structures that

break down isolation, that empower teachers with professional tasks, and that provide arenas for thinking through standards of practice" (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011, p. 84).

Too often professional development is designed for "'training' teachers to prepare their students for state tests" (Laguardia et al., 2002, p. 14). Birman, Desimone, Porter, and Garet (2000) listed three structural features (form, duration, and participation) and three core features (content focus, active learning, and coherence) that impacted professional development (p. 29). In order to make "standards-based reform successful, it is essential that staff development provide the content and opportunities necessary to foster teacher learning and changes in practice" (Birman et al., 2000, p. 32).

Collaboration. One major component of successful professional development is collaboration. Effective professional development opportunities for teachers include networking, sharing common planning time with other teachers, meeting regularly, increasing practical knowledge, having professional development that is ongoing and being introduced to new strategies (Blamey, Meyer, & Walpole, 2008/2009, p. 321). Having access to collaborative opportunities within schools, school districts, college and university settings, and regional and national activities also are effective avenues for professional development (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011 p. 84-85). Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (2011) recognized that professional development "must be flexible and dynamic and responsive to the specific and changing needs of teachers and the profession. They must start where teachers are and build on their knowledge and skills" (p. 85). Paik et al. (2011) found that "teachers valued collaboration with facilitators and other teachers to align teaching with state curriculum standards" (p. 431).

Bulgren et al. (2013) recognized that "teachers need dedicated time to collaborate for lesson planning, problem solving around specific students, and informing one another about how to best organize and teach critical content" (p. 20).

Ongoing professional development. Professional development that is sustained and ongoing with continuous feedback is also effective. Kennedy and Shiel (2010) used a collaborative, on-site professional development plan to improve literacy levels for students in an urban school in Ireland. They found that "the sustained, on-site, multifaceted professional development enhanced teacher expertise and opened up new ways of working with students" (Kennedy & Shiel, 2010, p. 381).

Likewise, Biancarosa, Bryk, and Dexter (2010) found similar results in a four-year longitudinal study centered on the effects of Literacy Collaborative, "a comprehensive school reform program designed to improve elementary children's reading, writing, and language skills primarily through school-based coaching" (p. 9). Biancarosa et al. (2010) stated that professional development "PD aims to support over time the development of the deep understandings that teachers need to continuously improve their practice" (p. 9). The professional development was designed to train teachers to become literacy coaches. The intense training of the Literacy Collaborative included "the theory and content of literacy learning, how to teach children within LC's instructional framework, and how to develop these understandings in other teachers through site-based professional development and coaching" (Biancarosa et al., 2010, p. 9). Findings "suggest that well-specified and well-supported coaching initiatives can effect positive changes in student learning" (Biancarosa et al., 2010, p. 28). Both the

Kennedy and Shiel study and the Biancarosa et al. study suggest the importance of ongoing professional development.

Content of professional development. Professional development that is centered on required standards and teacher accountability has proven successful as well. Bean (2006) evaluated the Standards for Teachers of English Language and Literacy in Australia (STELLA) when it was used as a "framework for professional learning" (p. 79). She found that "STELLA is [a] successful model of using standards as a means of extending the professional learning of teachers" (Bean, 2006, p. 85).

> Hochberg and Desimone (2010) recognized that
>
> teacher professional development plays an integral role in standards-based accountability by building teachers' capacity for addressing both basic content knowledge and higher order thinking and problem-solving skills to meet state standards and improve student achievement. (p. 89)

They also acknowledged that "the ability of professional development to succeed as a mechanism for improving student achievement may depend, in large part, on its ability to bridge divides among teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and practices" (Hochberg & Desimone, 2010, p. 92). Therefore, a necessary component of professional development in a standards-based curriculum is professional development that is aligned to the standards. "Professional development experiences must focus teachers on closing gaps between the standards and the content and nature of their own instruction" (Hochberg & Desimone, 2010, p. 93).

One of the first states to develop professional learning opportunities for teachers centered on the CCSSELA standards was Maryland (Cavanagh, 2011). Rothman (2012)

attested to the belief that "teachers must be prepared to teach the new standards. The standards call for some major changes in classroom practice to enable students to meet higher expectations, such as the greater level of text complexity in reading" (p. 14). Hochberg and Desimone (2010) stated that professional development must "ensure consistency between the content of professional development and the standards teachers must address in their teaching" (p. 100). Paik et al. (2011) studied

> teachers' expectations with regard to the alignment of teaching practice with the state curriculum standards . . . [and] examined how the Problem-Based Learning professional development program (PBL PD) helped teachers prepare for teaching within the state curriculum standards. (p. 425)

Findings included teachers' "expected to learn new instructional strategies, improve content knowledge, and become familiar with state curriculum standards" (Paik et al., 2011, p. 431). Teachers need and want professional development focused on content and standards.

Teacher needs. Effective professional development for secondary social studies teachers must meet the needs of the secondary social studies teacher. Lester (2003) found that "secondary teachers are anxious to learn about best practices, are willing to try out new suggestions and techniques, and support being held accountable for changes that will promote student success" (p. 50). Lester's study centered on "professional development which focused on the integration of literacy instruction to enhance the reading skills of high school students" (p. 50). Findings included secondary teachers' preferred professional development in small group settings where discussions were easily

conducted and decisions could be made (Lester, 2010, p. 52). Also, Lester (2010) found that "those teachers who are credited to be the most effective in the classroom are also those who are most anxious to improve their pedagogical skills" (p. 52).

Plan for professional development. Another successful form of professional development for the secondary school teacher is to write a professional development plan. Bandura (1999) stated that "people anticipate the likely consequences of prospective actions, they set goals for themselves, and they plan courses of action that are likely to produce desired outcomes and avoid detrimental ones" (p. 27). An effective professional development plan, according to Loveland (2012), contains goals that are measureable and attainable, connections between goals and standards, identifiable forms of training, descriptions of projected impacts in the learning environment, projected impacts on student achievement, lists of additional resources, and an avenue for teacher evaluation of the plan (p. 28-30). Bandura (1999) explained

> Goal adoption enlists self-investment in the activity. Once people commit themselves to valued goals, they seek self-satisfaction from fulfilling them and intensify their efforts by discontent with substandard performances. The motivational effects do not stem from the goals themselves, but from the self-evaluation that is made conditional on their fulfillment. (p. 28)

Loveland (2012) agreed. He stated "by writing professional development plans that link performance-based goals to standards and specific training, . . . teachers . . . will go a long way toward ensuring that their students are taught through standards-based methods and content, thereby leading to effective student learning" (Loveland, 2012, p. 31). True,

valid professional development will be necessary in order for secondary teachers of United States history and economics to adequately and appropriately implement the new CCSSELA literacy component in their history/social studies classrooms.

Perceptions and attitudes. Another important component of implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards in history/social studies, science and technical subjects is teacher perceptions and attitudes. In order for teachers to be effective in the implementation they must perceive the CCSSELA and literacy standards as non-threatening. Teachers must feel empowered and that they have a voice in the implementation. Collective efficacy will enable effective implementation of the new literacy standards in United States history and economics classrooms.

Teacher effectiveness. Another issue facing teachers adopting the new literacy standards is their perceptions of the CCSSELA literacy standards in history/social studies, science and technical subjects. If teachers perceive these new requirements as threatening, they might encounter difficulty implementing them or if teachers perceive these new requirements as a positive step, they might be eager and excited to implement them. Pearcy and Duplass (2011) noted that "a major component of student enthusiasm is the degree of energy the teacher brings to the classroom" (p. 113). Darling-Hammond (2008/2009) recognized that "ultimately, teachers want most of all to be efficacious" (p. 18). Kennedy and Shiel (2010) acknowledged that "teachers who experience collaborative approaches to professional development involving classroom observation and feedback have stronger beliefs in themselves and their power to change things" (p. 377). According to Bandura and Adams (1977), "because high levels of arousal usually debilitate performance, individuals are more likely to expect to function effectively when

they are not beset by aversive arousal than if they are tense and viscerally agitated" (p. 289).

Teacher voice. In order to feel in control of their environment, teachers need to have a voice in implementation, curricular decisions, methodologies employed, and materials to be used. Lester (2003) found that "teachers want their voices heard" (p. 53). Additionally, he found that teachers "will buy into professional development programs in which they feel their voices are heard and valued" (Lester, 2003, p. 57).

When teachers are empowered, they should be more receptive to new standards and curricula changes (Bandura, 1999; Bandura & Adams, 1977; Evans, 2009; Goddard, LoGerfo & Hoy, 2004; Kennedy & Shiel, 2010; Manthey, 2006; Salanova, Llorens, & Schaufeli, 2010; Tye et al, 2010). Myers (2007) pointed out that "the time has come for policymakers at the national and state levels, as well as citizens and parents, to seriously listen to teachers. Superintendents and principals should do likewise" (p. 242). Evans (2009) stated that

> teachers' collective sense of efficacy depends to some degree upon the faculty judgment of achievement or factors affecting achievement as being either in or out of their control. It seems clear that in order to enhance teachers' collective sense of efficacy *and* student success, teachers need to feel more control over factors, conditions, and decisions affecting schools and students, and on some level, attribute school success to schools and specifically to teachers' knowledge, skills, and dispositions. (p. 69)

Additionally, Klassen (2010) in his study of teacher stress and the role of collective efficacy stated that "when teachers experience challenges and failures that may raise stress and lower job satisfaction, these setbacks may be ameliorated by beliefs in the school's collective capacity to effect change" (p. 342).

Teacher empowerment. Teachers with a strong sense of efficacy are empowered. They are also more likely to be satisfied with their jobs and better able to manage the stresses their jobs bring (Klassen, 2010; Klassen, Usher, & Bong, 2010; Salanova et al., 2010; Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004). Kennedy and Shiel (2010) pointed out that "once teachers began to experience success . . . it empowered the teachers further" (p. 379). Attitudes that they observed in teachers participating in professional development designed in part to increase teachers' self-efficacy included "increased self-esteem and confidence in their ability to respond to the challenges they were facing on a daily basis" (Kennedy & Shiel, 2010, p. 379).

Collective efficacy. Teachers' perceptions about the CCSSELA literacy standards and their ability to effectively implement these new standards into their classrooms and schools requires collective efficacy. Klassen (2010) explained that "collective efficacy beliefs reflect teachers' perceptions of group-level attributes; that is, judgments of the capabilities of the staff or school to which they belong" (p. 342). Additionally, Bandura (1999) pointed out that "the stronger the beliefs people hold about their collective capabilities, the more they achieve. The contribution of perceived collective efficacy to group performance is replicated across . . . schools" (p. 34). Bandura (1999) also recognized that "people's shared beliefs in their collective power to produce desired outcomes is a crucial ingredient of collective agency" (p. 34). Marzano (2003) pointed

out that "for teachers to develop a sense of efficacy, they must be represented in governance structures that establish direction and policy for the school" (p. 65). Manthey (2006) stated that a faculty with collective efficacy will have "adequate resources and time to develop skills. Professional learning experiences in which teachers practice mastery should be accompanied by opportunities to see it modeled" (p. 23). Bandura (1999) explained

> People's shared beliefs in their collective efficacy influence the type of futures they seek to achieve through collective action; how well they use their resources; how much effort they put into their group endeavor; their staying power when collective efforts fail to produce quick results or meet forcible opposition; and their vulnerability to the discouragement that can beset those taking on tough problems that are not easily controllable. (p. 34)

One important method of teachers feeling collective efficacy, according to Evans (2009), is through "vicarious experience . . . what schools learn from other schools or what teachers learn from other teachers" (p. 69). Bandura (1999) pointed out that "people profit from the successes and mistakes of others . . . they do things they have seen succeed and avoid those they have seen fail" (p. 27). Falk and Darling-Hammond (2010), following the foundation set by John Dewey in the area of documentary practices, believed that

> the use of documentary evidence to guide decisions about students, curriculum, and teaching symbolizes a move away from treating teachers as passive recipients of educational dictates toward valuing

them as professionals who are active and respected participants in framing judgments and questions about teaching and learning (p. 76).

Teachers' perceptions about their involvement in the implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standard within their schools will be effected by their perceptions of collective efficacy. Bandura (1999) recognized that "if people are to work together successfully, the members of a group have to perform their roles and coordinative activities with a high sense of efficacy . . . a strong sense of efficacy is vital for successful functioning . . . by group members working together" (p. 35).

Teacher Reflections

Teachers need to reflect upon their experiences with planning and implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards. Teachers need to assess the impact of the implementation on the learning environment. Teachers also need to assess the impact of the implementation on student achievement.

Learning environment. The learning environment is impacted by the role of the teacher as well as the teacher's attitude. Successful implementation of the new CCSSELA literacy standards requires reflection on the learning environment.

Role of teacher. The learning environment is a crucial component of student learning and achievement. Kendall (2011) pointed out that "the teacher has the single greatest influence on student learning in the school" (p. 56). Rothman (2011) contended that "teachers' ideas about knowledge and learning are reflected in teaching and class work" (p. 163). Bagley believed that "the promise of democracy could be realized best through the placement of liberally educated, academically minded, competent,

demanding, caring professionally educated teachers in classrooms throughout the country" (Null, 2003a, p. 305). Topping and Ferguson (2005) reported that

> effective teachers of literacy had a wide and varied repertoire of teaching practices and approaches. Their classrooms were characterised [*sic*] by high levels of pupil engagement, on-task behaviour [sic] and pupil self-regulation. They integrated reading with writing and linked literacy with other curriculum areas. They differentiated instruction, had excellent classroom management skills, and . . . blended these together . . . according to the needs of individual pupils. (p. 127)

Attitudes of teachers. If teachers are excited about the new standards, feel confident in their ability to motivate, engage, and facilitate the learning of their students, and provide an atmosphere where success is expected, the learning environment will be positive and engaging for students. According to Bandura (1999) "people who have a high sense of coping efficacy lower their stress and anxiety by acting in ways that transform threatening environments into benign ones" (p. 30). On the other hand, if teachers are stressed, frazzled, confused, or reluctant, then a very different learning environment may exist. Bandura (1999) stated that people "who believe they cannot control them [threats] experience high anxiety, dwell on their coping deficiencies, view many aspects of their environment as fraught with danger, magnify possible risks and worry about perils that rarely happen" (p. 30). Myers (2007) noted that NCLB had lessened the power of teachers noting that teachers "have less control over what goes on in their classrooms; content is mandated from above and instruction is affected because this content is often too uniform for all students" (p. 241). The effective implementation

of the new CCSSELA literacy standard must overcome these preset obstacles. According to Rothman (2011) "enabling teachers to understand what students will be expected to learn and how they can structure classrooms to bring about that learning will be critical to the success of the Standards" (p. 124).

Student achievement. The most important component of the learning environment is student achievement. Teacher reflection will provide opportunities to assess the success of the implementation of the new CCSSELA literacy standards on student achievement. This reflection should include both formative and summative assessments.

Success. Reflection provides opportunities for teachers to think about methods and materials that can be utilized, adapted, adopted, or changed to better assist student learning, thereby improving student achievement (Bean, 2006; Conderman & Morin, 2004; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011; Ostenson & Wadham, 2012; Owles & Herman, 2012/2013). According to Topping and Ferguson (2005)

> Teachers should have access to a wide range of opportunities to develop and enhance effective literacy teaching behaviours through observation and interaction in multiple social contexts. However, they should also have access to opportunities to monitor and reflect upon teaching behaviours they use and do not use, in different contexts. (p. 141)

Tschannen-Moran and Barr (2004) found that the collective efficacy of teachers had a direct impact on the academic success of students. "The success of the school, as indicated by levels of student achievement, depends upon the collective belief that the teachers in that building can improve student achievement" (Tschannen-Moran & Barr,

2004, p. 192). Additionally, Darling-Hammond (2011/2012) found in her study of successful educational systems in three countries that they "use assessments that require in-depth knowledge of content and higher-order thinking skills" (p. 28).

Formative assessment. Research has shown that "teachers . . . adapt their curriculum to what is tested" (Rothman, 2011, p. 140). Ravitch (1996) pointed out that "teachers teach what they think is likely to be on the standardized tests that their students take" (p. 134). Because the CCSS require both formative and summative assessments, teachers are in a position to offer multiple forms of assessments for students, more broadly reflecting what a student is learning. Joe Crawford (2012) noted that "common formative assessments are . . . built by the local educators, based on the local instructional objectives. Most important, these local formative assessments are used to inform instruction" (p. 188). Likewise, Schraw (2010) noted that "many educators find more utility in assessments for learning, whereas evaluators external to the classroom and school fond [*sic*] [find] more utility in assessments of learning" (p. 74). Wolfe et al. (2007) conducted a study of teachers' attitudes toward alignment of classroom assessments to standards. They found that

> teachers must not only be familiar with the standards if they are to align their classroom instruction and assessment practices with state standards but must also feel confident that they can be successful in the alignment process, and they must believe that the standards are reasonable assessment and instruction targets. (Wolfe et al., 2007, p. 471)

Summative assessment. Summative assessments are being developed nationally by two consortiums, the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers

(PARCC) and Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (Kendall, 2011; PARCC, 2013; Rothman, 2011, Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, 2013). Summative assessments are intended to measure what a student has learned over a specified period of time. Lefever-Davis & Heller (2003) recognized that "effective assessment is the key to understanding the impact of instruction on student learning at all levels" (p. 567). According to Rothman (2011), "both of the consortia are working closely with the architects of the Common Core State Standards as they develop test blueprints and items" (p. 155). By reflecting on the changes in the learning environment and analyzing student achievement, teachers will recognize opportunities where additional planning and implementation are necessary.

Summary

The standards movement in education is not a new initiative. Going back to the time of Plato, it has been accepted that certain knowledge is necessary for all. John Stuart Mill, Horace Mann, John Dewey, and William Bagley were also cognizant of the fact that there is a body of common knowledge that people within a society must know. The social learning theory of Bandura, the sociocultural learning theory of Vygotsky, and the essentialist theory of Bagley contain an idea that for learning to occur a certain social and cultural component is needed. CCSS are an attempt to identify the common body of knowledge necessary for American students today. While much research exists about past reform efforts and the implementation of standards into the learning environment, this is the first time cross-curricular standards such as CCSSELA & Literacy Standards in history/social studies, science and technical subjects have been introduced at the

secondary level directly impacting the secondary social studies classroom. My research addresses this gap in the literature.

CHAPER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine the experiences of secondary social studies teachers who implemented Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in history/social studies, science and technical subjects in social studies courses requiring End of Course Tests at secondary schools in one suburban district in Georgia. This research study provides vital, helpful information for other teachers looking to follow this standard requirement. Effective practices and procedures will assist teachers in other districts and states faced with implementing the national literacy standard in secondary social studies classrooms. This chapter explains the design of this study. It also contains the research questions. A section details the participants, setting and procedures. My personal biography is in this chapter. Methods of data collection including a questionnaire, interviews, focus groups, and reflective journaling through e-mail prompts as well as methods of data analysis are included. The chapter ends with an explanation of trustworthiness of this study and ethical considerations.

Design

The implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards into social studies classrooms is a new requirement for teachers. Because these standards have not been implemented before there was a need for research regarding this implementation. A qualitative phenomenological study was the appropriate design to use to examine teachers' experiences with this implementation because phenomenological research provides a method for examining the experiences of many individuals experiencing the

same phenomenon at the same time. Social studies teachers implemented the new CCSSELA literacy standards at the same time. Phenomenology was the appropriate design for this type of research. According to Moustakas (1994), "the aim is to determine what an experience means for the persons who have had the experience and are able to provide a comprehensive description of it" (p. 13).

This was a transcendental phenomenological research study, following the modified Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method found in Moustakas (1994). I wanted to give teachers required to implement these literacy standards in secondary social studies classrooms a voice so that other teachers will know their experiences in implementing these national literacy standards. This study also provides a resource for other teachers required to implement CCSSELA literacy standards in history/social studies classrooms. Most teachers required to adopt the CCSSELA literacy standards have had little to no input into this important curricular decision. Often there was little to no professional development available to help teachers make these curricular adjustments (Hirsh, 2012). This can cause stressful situations for teachers. This research study provides a resource for those teachers. According to Moustakas (1994)

> Phenomenology, step by step, attempts to eliminate everything that represents a prejudgment, setting aside presuppositions, and reaching a transcendental state of freshness and openness, a readiness to see in an unfettered way, not threatened by the customs, beliefs, and prejudices of normal science, by the habits of the natural world or by knowledge based on unreflected everyday experience. (p. 41)

This phenomenological research study provides valuable data about the experiences of social studies teachers implementing the CCSSELA literacy standards for the first time in secondary social studies classrooms in just this way. According to Moustakas (1994) the researcher attempts "to be completely open, receptive, and naïve in listening to and hearing research participants describe their experience of the phenomenon being investigated" (p. 22). In that way the true essence of the phenomenon is revealed. In this study the essence of the experience of teachers implementing the CCSSELA literacy standards in secondary social studies classrooms was revealed.

Research Questions

The research questions framing this study are:

1. What is the experience of secondary social studies teachers required to implement the CCSSELA literacy standards in United States history and economics classes requiring an EOCT?
2. What are the attitudes of teachers regarding this the implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards in United States history and economics classes requiring an EOCT?
3. What is the perceived impact of the new CCSSELA literacy standards on the learning environment in United States history and economics classes requiring an EOCT?
4. What is the impact of the new CCSSELA literacy standards on student achievement in United States history and economics classes requiring an EOCT?

Participants

United States history or economics secondary social studies teachers from four high schools in one school district in Georgia were eligible to be co-researchers in this phenomenological research study. Moustakas (1994) described co-researchers as

> research participants [who] remain close to depictions of their experience. . . . The depictions themselves achieve layers of depth and meaning through the interactions, explorations, and elucidations that occur between the primary researcher and the other research participants. Only the co-researchers' experiences with the phenomenon are considered. (p. 19)

This sample of co-researchers was a criterion sample because the co-researchers had to teach social studies courses in which they were required to administer EOCT and implement the new national CCSSELA literacy standards. Additionally, they had a minimum of three years of experience teaching these courses. The reason for this requirement was to make certain the co-researchers were experienced teachers. New teachers (teachers with less than three years of experience) are often overwhelmed by the day-to-day demands and requirements in the classroom. I believed that this could filter into their experiences implementing the new literacy standards. In an attempt to keep the data as accurate as possible I set the criteria for experienced teachers only. The sample size had to be at least ten teachers in order to have thematic saturation but no more than 25. According to Creswell (2007), in phenomenology studies "the number of participants range from 1. . . up to 325" (p. 126). I chose a minimum number of ten so that I would have enough co-researchers to constitute an adequate sample to meet thematic saturation and I limited the number to 25 so that the sample size and data collection would be

doable for me. Creswell (2007) further reiterated that "criterion sampling works well when all individuals studied represent people who have experienced the phenomenon" (p. 128). Participating teachers represented both genders, a diverse educational background, and had a minimum of three years of experience teaching United States history and/or economics. Table 1 lists demographic information about each co-researcher.

Table 1

Demographics of Participants

Name	Gender	Age	Years of Teaching Experience	Level of Education
Abe	M	58	7 years	Bachelor's
Audrey	F	43	14 years	Specialist's
Carl	M	27	4 years	Bachelor's
Doug	M	57	22 years	Master's
Jane	F	30	6 years	Bachelor's
John	M	35	13 years	Master's
Kelly	F	34	9 years	Bachelor's
Polly	F	32	5 years	Master's
Tim	M	34	8 years	Specialist's
Tommy	M	32	11 years	Master's

The ten co-researchers in this phenomenological study had a wide range of past professional experiences. Teaching experience ranged from four years to 22 years. Four co-researchers held Bachelor's degrees; four held Master's degrees and two held Specialist's degrees. Six of the co-researchers were male and four were female with ages ranging from 27 to 58. Curricular experience included teaching secondary United States history and economics as well as teaching other social studies courses, and teaching middle school social studies, secondary mathematics, and secondary ELA.

The teachers with less than ten years of experience had only taught under a standards-based system. Their experience was with the National History Standards, the GPS and the local school district's standards. Several teachers commented on their collegiate experience focusing on teaching by the standards. One teacher commented that when he/she was first hired it was out of field and he/she "really needed those standards to tell me exactly what I needed to teach." Older teachers remembered teaching under the old QCCs (Quality Core Curriculum) required in Georgia classrooms during the 1980s and 1990s.

Setting

The setting for this research study was a school district in the suburbs of Atlanta, Georgia. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the community had a population of 214,346 with a household total of 75,936. The median family income was $77,190 and the per capita income was $30,217 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). There were 41 schools in the district with six of those being high schools. Secondary social studies teachers in this district were required to implement CCSSELA literacy standards in history/social studies classrooms. The social studies curriculum coordinator for this district was also the curriculum coordinator for ELA. All social studies department chairpersons had participated in preliminary introductory training for the CCSSELA literacy standards. Each high school was provided the opportunity to participate in statewide initial training for implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards. Each school chose whether or not to participate in the training and each school that did participate chose when and how to train.

Additionally, EOCT were required at the culmination of United States history and economics courses. Co-researchers from four high schools in the district participated in this phenomenological research study. The fifth high school in the district did not participate in the study due to the principal not granting permission. The sixth high school in the district did not participate in the study due to professional conflict of interest. Utilizing co-researchers at four high schools allowed for a variety of experiences in implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards to be examined, available data from EOCT to be examined, and reflection on implementation to be submitted from a diverse group of co-researchers, resulting in thick, rich descriptions of their experiences.

Procedures

Before any data was collected, Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained (see Appendix A). The appropriate department at the district office of the school system was contacted by e-mail and in writing to obtain consent from the district for this research study. I contacted the principals of the high schools in the district by e-mail and in writing to obtain their consent. Co-researchers were then contacted in writing that explained the purpose of the study and asked for participation (see Appendix B). Co-researchers were mailed consent forms to sign prior to any participation in the study (see Appendix C).

Co-researchers were asked to complete a demographic survey (see Appendix D) at the beginning of the study. This instrument also contained space where co-researchers could record their initial perceptions, concerns and ideas about the requirements of the CCSSELA literacy standards. I also asked co-researchers to participate in on-line journaling in order to reflect on their experiences throughout this research study. I

prompted them to remember to do this by sending an e-mail to each co-researcher twice a month during the course of the study (see Appendix E). This provided on-going written documentation and reflection as the implementation proceeds for each co-researcher. I collected their responses to my e-mails as the study progressed rather than have them wait until the end to submit them. I asked each co-researcher to contribute any written documentation that would aid in my understanding of their experiences. Suggested forms of written documentation included lesson plans, training materials, informational materials, social studies department meeting agendas and social studies department meeting minutes. Any other written documentation that co-researchers felt would help with the understanding of their experiences was also accepted. I audio-recorded each interview as I met with each co-researcher in the latter half of the study. I also audio-recorded the focus group meetings held at the end of the study. I maintained a detailed audit trail throughout the entire process. I transcribed all audio-recordings as soon as possible, usually within three to four days.

The Researcher's Role

My role as the primary researcher in this transcendental phenomenology research study was to be the human instrument. According to Creswell (2007), "qualitative researchers collect data themselves through examining documents, observing behavior, and interviewing participants" (p. 38). I collected data, examined documents, observed behavior and interviewed participants in order to give a voice to teachers experiencing the phenomenon of implementing the CCSSELA literacy standard in secondary social studies classrooms.

I am a twenty-year veteran teacher of social studies and the department chair of a secondary social studies department. Many secondary social studies teachers that I encountered were concerned about the increasing number of requirements placed upon the classroom teacher. Larger class size, teacher accountability, lack of new materials, increased content standards and new literacy standards were just a few of the concerns of teachers. I was interested in giving teachers a voice for their experiences implementing the new literacy standards in their content-laden United States history and economics classrooms. While the teachers I work with are much of the impetus for this study, they were not co-researchers. Looking outside my school setting was imperative to allow an unbiased response to all situations encountered in the study. At the same time, as a social studies teacher, I have an insider's understanding of the curriculum and what is necessary for students to be successful in the learning environment. My years of experience added the insider's viewpoint to this study. I was the human instrument throughout the entire research process.

Data Collection

The primary data collection instrument in this phenomenological research study was interviews. However, five different types of data were collected. First, a questionnaire (see Appendix D) was sent by mail to co-researchers to collect basic demographic data and initial perceptions of the CCSSELA literacy standards for history/social studies. Next, co-researchers were prompted to reflect on their experiences through twice monthly e-mails from me. This reflection provided written documentation throughout the course of the research study from each co-researcher as they were proceeding through the implementation process. Additionally, co-researchers were asked

to submit any written documentation that illustrated the implementation process such as lesson plans, minutes from department meetings, and any professional development training materials provided to them. In the latter half of the study, individual interviews were conducted, audio-recorded and transcribed. Audio-recorded focus groups met once for group discussion. Transcription was made as soon as possible after each interview.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire (see Appendix D) was used to collect preliminary demographic data and record initial perceptions of the CCSSELA literacy standards. I piloted the questionnaire with a sample group comprised of four randomly selected social studies teachers after IRB approval was given. Corrections were made based on the sample group's suggestions. I then re-administered the questionnaire to a second sample group. This group consisted of four different randomly selected social studies teachers. The second sample group accepted the questionnaire without requiring any other changes. Because this was a questionnaire for secondary social studies teachers about the introduction of the new CCSSELA Literacy Standards for history/social studies, the questionnaire was aligned to this topic.

Basic demographic data included the co-researcher's pseudonym, gender, age, highest level of education attained, years of teaching experience and e-mail address. The questionnaire provided the opportunity for co-researchers to select the pseudonym they wanted to use for this research study. Initial perception data collected from the questionnaire included how and when the co-researcher first heard about the CCSSELA literacy standards, initial reactions upon finding out about these requirements, and any concerns about implementation. By obtaining this preliminary demographic data I

planned to have "an especially rich example of phenomenological research using diverse forms of data collection" (Creswell, 2007, p. 131).

Reflections

Teachers were asked to periodically reflect on their experiences with the implementation of the new CCSSELA literacy standards. Seven different e-mails (see Appendix E) were sent to prompt them to reflect on their experiences. This provided continuous written documentation of their experiences. By having on-going written documentation throughout the course of the study teachers were able to reflect on their individual experiences while the experiences were still current in their minds. This provided another source of information. According to Maxwell (2005) utilizing more than one source for information "reduces the risk that your conclusions will reflect only the systematic biases or limitation of a specific source or method, and allows you to gain a broader and more secure understanding of the issues you are investigating" (p. 93-94).

Creswell (2007) noted that one form of appropriate data collection for qualitative studies was to "have a participant keep a journal or diary during the research study" (p. 130). He also noted that "in recent years, new forms of data have emerged, such as journaling in narrative story writing, [and] using text from e-mail messages" (Creswell, 2007, p. 129). Creswell (2007) believed that using new data collection methods would "encourage readers and editors to examine their studies" (p. 129). By having co-researchers reflectively journal online, prompted by twice monthly e-mail reminders, I was modifying a traditional data collection method to work with current technology.

Written Documentation

A third type of data collected was written documentation. According to Creswell (2007) "the backbone of qualitative research is extensive collection of data, typically from multiple sources of information" (p. 43). In a situation where teachers were required to implement new standards, documentation for professional development in the form of training materials or information packets provided to them by the state, the school district, their administrator or department chairperson proved useful. These materials provided valuable insights into the implementation process. Also, teachers keep written lesson plans. This documentation also contained valuable information concerning the implementation of the new literacy standard. Social studies departments periodically meet. Often agendas are printed in advance and minutes are kept of the meetings. These documents too provided information about the literacy standard implementation process. Students in United States history and economics classes are required to take EOCT. The scores from these tests provided an additional source of information.

Interviews

The primary data collection instrument for phenomenological research is the interview. According to Moustakas (1994) "the long interview is the method through which data is collected on the topic and question" (p. 114). While it is important to develop interview questions in advance, the nature of phenomenological research can result in questions being altered or not being asked. (Maxwell, 2005; Moustakas, 1994; Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Maxwell (2005) stated that "you need to anticipate, as best you can, how particular questions will actually work in practice-how people will understand

them, and how they are likely to respond" (p. 92-93). Rubin and Rubin (1995) pointed out that "qualitative interviewing design is *flexible*, *iterative*, and *continuous*" (p. 43).

Table 2 lists preliminary standardized open-ended interview questions. Other questions became evident during the course of the interviews. Rubin and Rubin (1995) noted that the phenomenological research "design remains flexible throughout the study because you have to work out questions to examine new ideas and themes that emerge during the interviews" (p. 45). Table 2 therefore was the starting point.

Table 2

Standardized Open-Ended Interview Questions

Questions
1. Please describe your past professional experience, particularly concerning the implementation of standards into the learning environment.
2. Please describe your initial reaction to the CCSSELA Literacy Standards for history/social studies.
3. Please describe any professional development you participated in to be able to implement the CCSSELA Literacy Standards for history/social studies.
4. Please describe your plan for meeting these standards.
5. Please describe any methods or strategies that you have used in this process.
6. Please explain any changes that you have made to these methods or strategies. Why did you make the changes?
7. Please describe the classroom environment.
8. Please describe the impact these standards have made in the classroom.
9. Please describe the students' reactions to the new standards.

Interviews are crucial to qualitative research. Rubin and Rubin (1995) stated that "qualitative interviewers listen to people as they describe how they understand the worlds in which they live and work" (p. 3). The purpose of the interview questions was to gather information about the perceptions, strategies, and impact of the literacy standards on teachers and the learning environment. Question one established the past professional experience of the teacher with standards and their introduction into the curriculum. Teachers drew from past experiences when implementing new curriculum requirements

and past experiences impacted their perceptions (Dewey, 1897). Questions two through four provided a way for teachers to express and explain their initial perceptions and plans for implementation. Donnelly and Sadler (2009) found that the burden of responsibility for implementation of standards-based curriculum is on teachers and "teachers' views of and experiences with the implementation of standards are particularly important for the fate of standards-based reform efforts" (p. 1051).

Questions five and six addressed strategies and methods that teachers used to implement the new standards and changes that were required during the implementation process. Research indicated that for standards to be implemented, change must occur; however, often teachers recognize the need for change but resort to tried and true methods of instruction (Loeb et al., 2008; Obara & Sloan, 2010). Questions seven through nine dealt with the perceived impact the standards have had on students and on the learning environment (Burroughs et al., 2005). "Experts" in the field of secondary social studies teachers reviewed the questions and a sample group was used to pilot the questions to insure their clarity after IRB approval of the study was given.

Focus Groups

Another method of data collection utilized was focus group interviews. Rubin and Rubin (1995) defined focus groups as "a form of evaluation in which groups of people are assembled to discuss potential changes or shared impressions" (p. 27). This type of interview, conducted in a group setting, provided information that individual interviews may have omitted. By interviewing groups of secondary social studies teachers together about their experiences implementing the new CCSSELA literacy

standards into their classrooms, new information emerged due to ideas, thoughts, or memories that were prompted by statements from others in the group.

For this research study, focus group interviews were conducted in the latter half of the research study. Due to the time constraints and numerous demands on teachers, focus groups were held at various locations including the neighborhood coffee shop for a period of 30 minutes to one hour. According to Rubin and Rubin (1995) this is the standard length of time for focus group interviews. Because the purpose of these focus group interviews was to provide an opportunity for the co-researchers to converse about the implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards, Rubin and Rubin (1995) advised that "the researcher labels himself or herself as a *moderator*, a person who is going to guide the conversations of others" (p. 140). This reinforced the idea that "this is a professional environment and the panelists are the experts" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 140).

Table 3 lists preliminary standard focus group questions. Rubin and Rubin (1995) reiterated that "the researcher gives overall direction while communicating the expectation that the focus group members will do most of the talking" (p. 140). Questions in Table 3 therefore were meant to be a guide to direct the conversation of the co-researchers as needed.

Table 3

Standard Focus Group Questions

1. Please describe the impact of the new literary standards required for United States history and economics classes in the social studies department at your school.
2. Please describe any collaboration that took place between and among teachers to help in implementation.
3. Please describe the impact of this implementation on teacher morale.
4. Please describe the impact of this implementation on students and their achievement.
5. Please describe the impact of this implementation on the learning environment and the school culture.
6. Do you have any additional thoughts or ideas about the implementation that you would like to share?

Focus group questions were asked in a group setting. Responses to questions differed from responses to questions in individual interviews. According to Rubin and Rubin (1995) "because the interview takes place in front of other people . . . there may be considerable effort to preserve front in these situations" (p. 28). Also, one person's response may trigger a response in another person. Rubin and Rubin (1995) stated that "in focus groups, the goal is to let people spark off of one another, suggesting dimensions and nuances of the original problem that any one individual might not have thought of" (p. 140). Question one identified the perceived impact of the literacy standards on the social studies department at each high school. Question two concerned collaboration among and between teachers during the implementation process. Questions three through

five dealt with the perceived impact on teacher morale, students, and the school culture. Question six asked for reflection over the entire process of implementation through the course of the school year and any additional thoughts or ideas that teachers had about the new literacy standards. New information was often obtained from focus groups. Rubin and Rubin (1995) stated that "sometimes a totally different understanding of a problem emerges from the group discussion" (p. 140).

Data Analysis

The first step in data analysis was maintaining an accurate, detailed audit trail. Accurate and detailed records were kept throughout the study. All demographic data from questionnaires was tallied to ensure the sample represented a diverse group of co-researchers. Confidentiality was maintained and any specific identifying information was kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms. All audio-recordings of interviews and focus groups were transcribed by me as soon as possible.

Analysis procedures followed the modified methods of Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen outlined by Moustakas (1994). These procedures included using the verbatim transcripts of interviews, from individual co-researchers as well as the focus group interviews, to identify and record relevant statements. Relevant statements were highlighted on the verbatim transcripts. After highlighting, I briefly summarized what the co-researcher was saying. This helped me to identify recurring themes within the interviews. Bi-monthly e-mails were also analyzed in the same manner, highlighting meaningful statements and briefly summarizing what the co-researcher had iterated. All other documentation was analyzed in the same manner. I then went back over interviews, e-mails and documentation as new themes and concepts emerged. I reviewed all material multiple

times. Then I arranged data according to emergent themes and concepts. According to Rubin and Rubin (1995) this is a two-stage process: "in the first, you examine and compare the material within categories. In the second, you compare material across categories" (p. 251).

Once analysis was complete I wrote a full, rich textural description, using the themes and concepts I had identified. Moustakas (1994) stated that "the Composite Textural Description is . . . the invariant meanings and themes of every co-researcher . . . studied in depicting the experiences of the group as a whole" (p. 137-138). Then I wrote a full, rich structural description. According to Moustakas (1994), "the Composite Structural Description is a way of understanding *how* the co-researchers as a group experience *what* they experience" (p. 142). In this study, it was how secondary social studies teachers as a group experienced the implementation of literacy standards into their secondary social studies classrooms. Ultimately, I wrote a composite textural-structural description of the essence of the experience. This was "an integration of the composite textural and composite structural descriptions, providing a synthesis of the meanings and essences of the experience" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 144).

The first and second research questions were answered by identifying all relevant statements. Then, common phrases, words, ideas, and sentences were grouped according to recurring themes. Recurring themes provided answers for research questions three and four. I then wrote a textural description of what the co-researchers experienced. According to Moustakas (1994), "through the Transcendental-Phenomenological Reduction we derive a textural description of the meanings and essences of the

phenomenon, the constituents that comprise the experience in consciousness, from the vantage point of an open self" (p. 34).

Then I wrote a structural description of the co-researchers' experience. Using the Imaginative Variation espoused by Moustakas (1994) "a structural description of the essences of the experience is derived, presenting a picture of the conditions that precipitate an experience and connect with it" (p. 35). Lastly I wrote a description of the experience of the co-researchers, blending the textural and structural descriptions into one thick, rich description that described the essence of the experience of secondary social studies teachers implementing national literacy standards into their United States history and economics curricula. Moustakas (1994) stated that

> the structural essences of the Imaginative Variation are then integrated with the textural essences of the Transcendental-Phenomenological Reduction in order to arrive at a textural-structural synthesis of meanings and essences of the phenomenon or experience being investigated. (p. 36)

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was established by following the methods of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1986). My research study lasted for four months , from March of 2013 through June of 2013, providing "prolonged engagement—lengthy and intensive contact with the phenomena" (Lincoln & Guba, 1986, p. 18). I triangulated my data, collecting data from questionnaires, reflective online journaling, documentation, individual interviews, and focus group interviews. I also used peer debriefing sessions, having an "expert," an educator with a doctorate degree who was familiar with the standard implementation

requirement, look over my transcriptions for appropriateness and clarity. I used member checking with the co-researchers to make certain I had recorded, transcribed and analyzed their information appropriately. I followed Creswell's (2007) plan and had co-researchers review identified themes and concepts (p. 209).

To address transferability I collected "thick, description data" (Lincoln & Guba, 1986, p. 19) of the essence of the experience of this cross-curricular experience from the perspective of secondary social studies teachers. I maintained an accurate and extensive audit trail. I documented dates, times, and places for all interviews, focus groups, documentation and e-mails. This journal was kept in a password protected file on my home office computer. This insured an accurate accounting of the data collection process. Likewise, I documented dates, times, and places of transcription, analysis and synthesis. This provided an extensive accounting of the analysis process. According to Lincoln and Guba (1986), "that part of the audit that examines the process results in a dependability judgment, while that part concerned with the product (data and reconstructions) results in a confirmability judgment" (p. 19).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations included keeping all written data in locked cabinets and all electronic data password protected. Confidentiality of all co-researchers was maintained. Pseudonyms were used for all co-researchers as well as the school district and the various secondary schools involved in the study. The primary objective was the safety and security of the co-researchers. Special consideration was made with the focus groups. I moderated the conversations, redirecting when necessary, in order to make certain the conversation remained focused on the implementation of the literacy standard in their

social studies classrooms, departments, and schools. I took precautions in all areas of research and the reporting of the results to insure their safety, security, and confidentiality.

While no co-researcher was paid for their time and efforts, I provided a gift card to a local restaurant as a token of my appreciation for their time and involvement at the end of the study. I also acknowledged their participation with hand written thank you notes at the end of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine the experiences of secondary social studies teachers who implement Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in history/social studies, science and technical subjects in social studies courses requiring EOCT at secondary schools in one suburban district in Georgia. The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings of this phenomenological research study. This chapter contains the findings of the researcher addressing all four research questions. The chapter begins with an accounting of the experiences of ten secondary social studies teachers (co-researchers) in one suburban school district in Georgia planning, implementing, and reflecting on the CCSSELA literacy standards in their United States history and economics classrooms. Then the attitudes and perceptions of these ten secondary social studies teachers toward the CCSSELA literacy standards will be addressed. Next the perceived impact of the literacy standards on the learning environment by the ten secondary social studies teachers will be discussed. Last the impact of the CCSSELA literacy standards on student achievement will be addressed.

Teacher Experiences

Teacher Planning

Teachers that participated in this phenomenological research study drew upon their past professional experiences in planning, implementing, and reflecting on the CCSSELA literacy standards in their United States history and economics classrooms. Each co-researcher expressed an initial reaction to the new standards and recounted initial

professional development. Additionally, the co-researchers had designed plans for implementation including the use of complex texts to meet the reading standard and various writing scenarios to meet the writing standard.

Past professional experiences. The ten co-researchers in this phenomenological study came from a wide range of past professional experiences. Some were young with just a few years of experience in the classroom. Carl was a male teacher, age 27, who had only been in the classroom for four years and held a Bachelor's degree. Carl taught both United States history and economics courses. Polly was a female teacher, age 32, who had been teaching for five years and held a Master's degree. Polly only taught United States history. Jane was a female teacher, age 30, with six years of teaching experience. She, too, taught only United States history and had a Bachelor's degree. Both Tim, a male teacher, and Kelly, a female teacher, were 34 years old. Tim held a Specialist's degree and had eight years of experience in the classroom. He taught only economics. Kelly held a Bachelor's degree and had nine years of experience in the classroom. She taught only United States history. While Abe was an older teacher, male age 58, he only had seven years of experience in the classroom. Abe taught United States history and held a Bachelor's degree. These six teachers shared the experience of only having taught in secondary social studies classrooms in Georgia under the requirement of standards outlined by the Georgia Department of Education (DOE), the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS). They had no teaching experience without the guidelines provided and required by standards implementation.

More experienced teachers had a different background. Tommy, a male teacher, age 32, held a Master's degree and had taught United States history and economics for 11

years. He was a social studies department chair, holding a leadership position in his school. John, a 35 year old male teacher, taught only economics. He had 13 years of experience, several in another state. Audrey, a 43 year old female teacher, also was a social studies department chair, holding a leadership position in her school. She held a Specialist's degree and had 14 years of teaching experience. She taught only United States history but also had a background in teaching ELA at the secondary level. Doug, a 57 year old male teacher, had 22 years of experience in the social studies classroom. He held a Master's degree but the majority of his experience was at the middle school level. He taught only United States history. All of these teachers had taught prior to the implementation of standards in the social studies classroom.

Initial reaction. The initial reaction of the ten co-researchers to the CCSSELA literacy standards ranged from "these are things that good teachers are already doing" to being "in favor of any movement toward a nationalized norming of standards" to "it was just another thing to add to the workloads of teachers." Abe, a seven-year veteran teacher, felt that it was "one more attempt to 'modernize' education" while Tommy, a social studies teacher with 11 years of experience, reacted with "concern over implementation due to the amount of info that already must be taught in U.S. history and concern over the assigned texts for each grade level." Audrey, a social studies teacher with 14 years of teaching experience and a background in ELA felt that "the literacy standards would bring the focus back to learning how to learn and acquiring a broader, deeper understanding of history while developing literacy skills."

Several of the teachers expressed initial concerns. Polly, a teacher with five years of classroom experience, expressed concern about having adequate time to implement the

CCSSELA standards as well as having the necessary qualifications to teach reading and reading comprehension to secondary students. While many of the teachers expressed concern over time constraints, many also addressed concern over assessments. Audrey said "my concern is that while the literacy standards have been added, we don't have any assurance that the assessment will change." John, a teacher with 13 years of experience, pointed out that "how testing will be altered is up in the air." Kelly, a nine year veteran social studies teacher asked "How will they be assessed formally by the state? When?.

Additionally, several of the co-researchers noted that teaching in the past few years had been in an almost constant state of change. Carl, a four year teacher, noted that it seemed that there was always something new to implement. He stated "at times [that] is good because it keeps things from getting monotonous but at the same time it is a challenge always constantly bringing new things in." Jane pointed out that "so many teachers are being pulled in so many different directions. I feel like from year to year we're focused on something different, every single year." Kelly acknowledged that "that's the only climate we've ever know because we have under ten years' experience."

Initial professional development. The majority of the co-researchers had been exposed to a professional development activity at the end of the 2011-2012 school year provided by the Georgia DOE. This activity was a several-hour-long webinar produced by the Georgia DOE to introduce the CCSSELA literacy standards to social studies teachers. Some co-researchers had been given a professional development day by their principals to view the webinar as a department. These teachers had viewed the webinar together and then had time to discuss the training and brainstorm ideas for implementation within their curricula. Other teachers had been told about the webinar

but were expected to view it on their own. Two teachers had no professional development at all.

Co-researchers also spoke of having discussed the CCSSELA literacy standards in department meetings, "talking about what we could do and what we have done." All recognized the need for more professional development. Tommy stated that "initially there was a hope for more training and more professional development in preparing to use those literacy standards." Doug pointed out that

> once we get local based learning opportunities in place . . . where someone that knows how to do this or shows us ways to [do] this . . . I don't think it's going to have the success that it ought to have because it's different . . . And until we've become comfortable with it, then, and we're not going to become comfortable with it until we get adequate training.

Abe stated that he was "waiting for them to send me more information about it." John perhaps put it best when he said "this has been more 'here it is. Read it. Figure it out on your own.'"

Plan for implementation. Teachers planned for implementation of the new CCSSELA literacy standards in their United States history and economics classrooms. One part of planning for implementation included finding resources that met the criteria for complex texts. Another part of planning for implementation was creating appropriate writing lessons.

Resources for complex texts. All ten co-researchers had plans for implementation of the new CCSSELA literacy standards in their United States history

classes and economics classes. One of the most popular plans was to use more primary source documents. Primary source documents are complex texts, meeting the requirement of the CCSSELA literacy standards. The teachers of AP United States history courses stated that they already had access to primary source document texts and they were planning to incorporate those texts into their college-prep courses as well. Others cited multiple resources available on line for primary source documents and teaching materials for United States history, such as the Library of Congress, the National Archives, the State of Georgia Archives, the local county historical society, the Digital Library of Georgia, North Carolina's Primary Documents Journal during the Civil War, Docs Teach, Student as Historian, National Council for the Social Studies, Georgia Council for the Social Studies, etc.

While every co-researcher mentioned planning to use primary source documents in their classes, those teaching economics expressed difficulty in finding appropriate economics documents for high school students. Carl pointed out that "economics and the literacy standards do not really go that well" and that it's "a lot easier to find primary sources for U.S. than econ because for econ there's a lot of language that they [students] don't understand." Tim stated that

> in economics what I found was that it's hard to find texts that really go along with a lot of standards. It's hard to find texts that are not so either abstract in concept or so advanced in econ that they'll [students] get lost in it so what I've done to help with the literacy [standard] is to [use] Money Magazine, Business Week, Fortune Magazine articles.

Plan for implementing writing. Another area of the CCSSELA literacy standards co-researchers planned to implement in their classrooms was the writing portion. All of the co-researchers planned to have students write as a part of their curricula. The AP teachers mentioned having students write essays and DBQs as part of their preparation for the College Board's AP exams in United States history and economics. However, here a difference was noted between the two courses. While AP United States history requires coherent, somewhat lengthy essays with much supporting detail, AP economics requires, according to John, writing that is "concisely explain[ing] something in as few words as possible which is not quite really what the literacy standards are."

Additionally, the co-researchers that taught college-prep level students mentioned the writing that was already incorporated into the curriculum in preparation for the Georgia High School Writing Test (GHSWT). Writing across the curriculum was required in several of the high schools also. Kelly said "we already do writing, all the time . . .I think that people who don't do writing particularly on a test, I think they're the ones . . . that are really going to have to adapt."

Teacher Implementation

Teachers used various methods and strategies to implement the new CCSSELA literacy standards in United States history and economics courses. Additionally, teachers made changes to methods and strategies when they recognized a need for change.

Methods and/or strategies used in implementation. Teachers used a variety of methods and strategies to implement the new CCSSELA literacy standards in United States history and economics courses. One such method was the utilization of primary source documents. Another was the utilization of various ancillary teaching materials.

Co-researchers found collaboration between and among the social studies department and the ELA department to be beneficial. Teachers also differentiated instruction including using collaborative learning groups and maintaining a structured learning environment. Creative lesson planning was a key component to implementation of the new CCSSELA literacy standards.

Use of primary source documents. Overall, the ten co-researchers had increased the use of primary source documents in their classrooms, as part of implementing the CCSSELA literacy standards. Carl stated that "the literacy standard has made me more aware of the use of literature that was already in place in my classroom." He spoke of "more 'original document' reading in my classroom and relating the topics and languages used to today's students." Abe related

> the only new strategy I used this year was to incorporate more primary documents and have students read them in class . . . we then had brief discussions to discover what the meaning of the document was. It became obvious that many students were confused or unclear after reading the articles on their own. The classroom discussion was valuable for helping them "get it."

Tommy gave his "U.S. History classes a list of 60 primary sources that they were responsible for reading, analyzing, and discussing throughout the course of the year." Kelly pointed out that she has her students "analyze a primary source at least once per unit."

Use of ancillary teaching materials. Co-researchers used ancillary teaching materials with primary source documents. Polly and Tommy used the primary source

analysis sheets provided by the Library of Congress. Doug used materials that the local county historical society had prepared specifically for teachers as well as "analysis guide[s] that [were] created by the National Archives to facilitate their work." All co-researchers used the internet to locate primary source documents and supporting materials. Tommy pointed out that "teachers . . . will find things from seminars they've gone to . . . other teachers find stuff here and there and share around." Tommy had students write questions to ask the author of primary sources used in his class; Doug had students look at the documents and "come up with some of their own evaluations."

Again, economics teachers had a unique situation with fewer appropriate resources available both in print and online for secondary students. Tim utilized economics magazine articles in his classroom. Carl spoke of using resources with his Smart Board and John pointed out that "econ's more of a current event type thing . . . with regular econ I had to do too much; it was too much over their heads." Tim put it best when he said

> In econ it is sometimes difficult to find material that satisfies the literacy standards due to the nature of econ concepts. Many articles and texts require significant coverage even before students engage the readings since the concepts are quite involved for most students.

Collaboration between and among departments. Departmental collaboration as well as cross-curricular collaboration was important for implementation, particularly with the United States history course. In the local district, U.S. history and American literature are taught in 11th grade. Tommy noted "there was naturally a cross over between 11th grade U.S. history and 11th grade American lit." United States history

teachers saw such dovetailing as the study of colonization and the Salem witch trials in United States history with the reading of *The Crucible* in American literature, studying the 1920s in United States history and reading *The Great Gatsby* in American literature, a curriculum focus on the 1930s while *The Grapes of Wrath* was the reading in American literature. Polly pointed out that the first semester curriculum of United States history seemed to flow together in pacing with first semester American literature but second semester the pacing for United States history quickened.

Differentiation of instruction. Teachers differentiated instruction in order to implement the CCSSELA literacy standards in their United States history and economics classrooms. Many used collaborative learning groups in implementation. Others maintained a structured learning environment.

Collaborative learning groups. Some co-researchers recognized that utilizing primary source documents in the classroom required differentiation of instruction. Doug pointed out that using primary source documents in the classroom is "where differentiation comes in. We present it in its original context but then we differentiate." One of the best methods co-researchers found for differentiation was using collaborative learning groups. Collaborative learning groups at the secondary level can pose unique problems, one being that as Doug reiterated "it's a group assignment and the deadheads in the group sponge off of the strong child." Abe confirmed that situation when he said "at the AP level [students] work pretty well together . . . with college prep kids it is one person, or maybe two, that are doing most of the work and then the other one or two do little or none." Doug pointed out that

> it's not happened as much in using primary sources because

> primary sources sometimes [are] a leveler. They all have to come at it, I mean even the brainy ones in the group, have to come at it afresh and understanding how to use it and we found ways that they have used these in very productive ways . . .sometimes with a game . . . sometimes with jig sawing. And I've been very impressed.

Other co-researchers like Tim used collaborative groups to help with difficult vocabulary, realizing that "breaking up the groups and having some people in that group understand the definition that helps with delivery." Polly also pointed out that her students "do a lot of group activity."

Structure classroom environment. Other strategies for differentiation adopted by co-researchers included Audrey's strategy of using half a traditional class period for lecture and the other half to complete an activity that complemented the lecture. Once a unit is completed and Audrey assessed her students she then provided

> for students who made a 75 and above . . . an enrichment activity and the kids that made 75 and below they would have a reteaching activity . . . some of that involved looking at primary documents and some of it involved finding information from the book or watching a video and getting information and then we would go over it together.

Kelly, likewise, as an organized and structured teacher said

> [students] know to expect a beginning of class activity . . . some kind of guided notes . . . and an activity . . . some days it's independent; some days it's collaborative; you know we like to change it up; but in general they do pretty well with being on task . . .

Lesson plans. Both United States history teachers and econ teachers had utilized creative lessons in implementing the CCSSELA literacy standards. In Tim's economics class students participated in a stock market simulation that required them to interpret articles about finance and economics. The project also contained a writing element, where students had to explain how they were investing their "money" and why. John had students analyze current event articles about economics and then write how the articles related to economics topics being studied in class. Tim also had students analyze current event articles, having them "determine the author's view in a different way." He recognized that "with some advanced economic primary sources many students have difficulty with interpreting the meaning. I find that I have to use vocabulary exercises to help with delivery."

Audrey began the school year by administering a reading comprehension test to her students. That allowed her to identify the weaker readers in her class before instruction began. She was thus able to implement strategies such as previewing vocabulary for those students that would struggle with complex terminology. Tommy used scaffolding, presenting small pieces of documents to students such as a quote, a political cartoon, or a paragraph to get them accustom to analyzing documents, not just summarizing as they had done in the past. Kelly also used scaffolding, introducing at the beginning of the school year, a primary source letter written by George Washington and "we talked about what a primary source is and how to take it apart and . . . to pull the context out . . . and then we kind of built from there and got more independent as the year went on." Polly used chunking explaining "we broke it down into ok what's being said here, and what does this passage infer."

Specific lesson plans of co-researchers used to meet the CCSSELA literacy standards were varied and creative. Carl had designed a lesson plan focusing on the formation of the United States government having students read and analyze excerpts and then write comparisons between Thomas Jefferson's the Declaration of Independence and John Locke's Second Treatise on Government, focusing on what parts of Locke's ideas Jefferson adopted and what parts Jefferson ignored. Abe had students peer grade DBQs. Tim created writing activities around current event articles in economics magazines, having students "form a different opinion of the various articles' focus and . . . use certain vocabulary words within their responses."

Kelly used primary sources as a way to prepare her students for in-class debates. Audrey had students "read articles about the Mexican-American War and examine them for bias." An additional activity involved "having students read primary source documents about slavery from slavery apologists, former slaves and observers," comparing differing opinions. She addressed the writing component through having students write an "essay on what gift they would take back to Jamestown if they were a time traveler . . . prepare a campaign brochure for either the Federalist or the Democratic-Republican Party . . . and write a letter to the editor protesting the Indian Removal Act."

Doug "divided William Bradford's '*A Relation or Journal of the Proceedings of the Plantation settled at Plymouth in New England'* into short reading selections and assigned one to each member of the class." Students used an analysis guide to arrange their responses in chronological order. He later used the same strategy in a student "activity reading travel letters from turn-of-the-century tourists in Yellowstone." Doug also used primary sources extensively in a lesson designed to immerse students in the

experience of the 1929 Stock Market crash. Analysis of President Woodrow Wilson's 14 Points speech in comparison with terms of the Treaty of Versailles and an in-depth analysis of the revival in the 1920s of the Ku Klux Klan, opinion verses reality, were other excellent lessons that incorporate the reading and writing elements of the CCSSELA literacy standards.

Changes made to methods and strategies. Teachers recognized that some adaptations and adjustments needed to be made in order for successful implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards to occur in their United States history and economics classrooms. Vocabulary posed a difficult problem for students, both in syntax and in comprehension. Reading also proved challenging for students.

Vocabulary. Co-researchers found that historical primary source documents often contain language that is different in syntax. Teachers had to find ways to circumvent these differences. Also, all co-researchers had to surmount problems that students encountered with comprehension of vocabulary.

Historical difference in syntax of language. Every co-researcher encountered problems with vocabulary. One common problem faced by teachers of United States history was the change in the syntax of language from one time period in history to another. Doug pointed out that "the English language has changed from 18th even into the 19th century, that Victorians had a different way of communicating to the common way that we communicate today." Polly observed that in the past "the writing style [was] completely different than the writing style of today's American student . . . it's complicated for them." Because of this difference in writing style and syntax Doug found that using primary sources that "have been edited or redacted . . . makes it easier

for [students] to understand." Carl also found that using sources "that has more language terms that people can understand" makes it easier to reach and engage students. He recognized that "if something was written a hundred plus years ago it's going to be in a different language than what they speak now." One way he found to combat the language difference was to have students "translate what was written then in today's jargon." This made the sources more interesting and helped students connect better.

Vocabulary comprehension. Every co-researcher had encountered problems with students being able to understand complex vocabulary. Polly stated that "their comprehension level is below what I would expect" and "they just need help in vocabulary. It's really the vocabulary skills that they're not understanding . . . if [students] don't know the vocab [they] don't understand the language that's being said." Audrey also recognized that "comprehension is really hard for them . . . we assumed that they understood a lot of words that they didn't."

Co-researchers addressed these vocabulary issues in a variety of ways. Polly had students write their own tests making sure to include context clues to help with the understanding of vocabulary. Tommy recognized that whole group discussion was necessary so that students "can feed off one another . . . one gets one part, one gets the next . . . we do it as a whole group." Kelly "unpacked the standards" at the beginning of each unit, "pulling the words out and talking about them . . .we make a list of basically all of the vocabulary that's in there and we talk about each of the words so it's a previewing activity so at least they . . . have some exposure before we jump into the content." Abe "used vocabulary that I assumed my students were not familiar with and . . . of course I explain what it means and give examples." He also "wrote vocabulary words on the

board with brief definitions and . . . gave weekly vocabulary quizzes." Audrey "provided struggling readers and English language learners copies of vocabulary words they would need for a unit." Doug previewed his stock market crash lesson with 16 vocabulary words necessary for students to understand in order to successfully complete the lesson.

Again, economics teachers made changes to adjust for complex vocabulary. Carl pointed out that in "economics there's a lot of language that they don't understand and it's very difficult to put into laymen's terms as opposed to . . . U. S. history." Tim noted that economics "articles do sometimes pose words that are a little too advanced for some. When those problems occur, I take the opportunity to identify the words and define them in the context of the econ curriculum." He also utilized preteaching by giving students a vocabulary list of basic economic terms each week. When having students read economics articles Tim would point out words initially that students might not be familiar with and define them prior to students' reading. Then he asked them to identify additional words as they read that they didn't know and he would also address those in depth.

Reading. In order to be literate, students must read. Co-researchers noted that in order to implement the CCSSELA literacy standards, all were requiring students to read more, particularly in the area of primary source documents. Audrey noticed that students "genuinely [did] not understand how to read a text." Kelly said that she, as a teacher, can tell when students have read and when they haven't. Polly pointed out that students today access most of their information digitally, through Twitter feeds, social media sites, and the internet. Their communication skills differ from students of the past, even ten years ago. She recognized that "students have to read . . . but its old school and they don't like it . . . they don't want to read." She also stated that "they can't read to the level that

we're having them to read from" in the CCSSELA literacy standards. She acknowledged that "they don't have the reading comprehension skills that are needed for primary sources." Jane also noted that "some of them have such a hard time, they don't know how to read . . . I do think it's a skill that's needed and many of them struggle with and have gotten lost along the way." When students do read Tommy noticed that they

> just want to read and summarize. They can say 'Oh here's what it means' but they can't really tell you . . . information about the time period . . . information about the person who said it or the person who wrote it. They have a really hard time doing that and so the more I can find ways to do that that's where my literacy direction is going to go.

Carl acknowledged that "students now know that they're expected to read a lot more and write a lot more about what they're reading . . . it's almost become routine for them."

Teacher Reflection

Teachers reflected on their planning and implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards in their United States history and economics classrooms. Co-researchers noted that students were engaged with the lessons. Co-researchers also believed that the implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards promoted higher level thinking in students. Another important component of the planning and implementation of the new standard was the incorporation of technology into the lessons, both through students' personal learning devices and mediums made available through modern technology. Co-researchers also noted that the CCSSELA literacy standards provided many teachable moments in their classrooms.

Engagement of students. One of the most common reflections from co-researchers on their experiences of implementing the CCSSELA literacy standards in United States history and economics classes was the level of engagement of the students. Students appeared to be more engaged when using complex texts, were able to see connections chronologically as well as cross-curricular, and were excited about their classroom experiences. Tommy reflected

> the thing I've noticed is especially with the excerpts, the readings, it seems to promote almost more of an engagement with history than it did before . . . all of a sudden it becomes real. So even with my lower level students, they seem to respond better to that so I like the engagement that it proposes.

Likewise, Doug noticed that "to use literature and primary sources, yes I saw it turned light bulbs; the kids understood because . . . it was clear how history played out in lives." Polly said "they could actually, physically see the connection and mentally see the connection." Carl recognized that it made history real for students, that " a lot of those same issues in history were being dealt with that we dealt with today in almost the same capacity back then as well . . . it's not just boring history to them." Polly also experienced students being more engaged first semester when students were reading the Transcendentalists in American Literature and she was teaching it in United States history as well as when they were reading passages from the Slave Narratives in their literature class and she was teaching about slavery in United States history. She pointed out that "second semester there's no additional reinforcement and I noticed a big gap in their personal connection that they make when they read that kind of stuff." She went on

to explain that the personal connection for students was important. It gave relevance to their work. She noted "when it's interesting to them . . . they really like to read." Doug said that "even today in sixth period when we finished our final exam [students] were talking about some of the things that had been brought to class . . . and that wouldn't have happened without using those resources." Co-researchers were pleased with the level of engagement of students that the implementation of the literacy standard had created.

Promotion of higher level thinking. All co-researchers also reflected on the implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards as promoting, encouraging, and requiring higher level thinking skills from students. Doug noted that the use of primary sources in his classroom "allowed students to not just be dependent on the textbook writer's point of view but to look at actual documents and come up with some of their own evaluations." Carl mentioned "I wanted them to actually see and respond on these certain things, you know, read it for themselves and respond in their own writing . . . how to compare and contrast different documents." Tim reiterated students "determined the author's view in a different way." When Tommy had students create their own questions to ask the authors of primary source documents he remembered

> while it doesn't seem like that hard of a thing to do it blows their mind, they have no idea what to ask them. And so for me that's showing that's stretching them a little bit and making them really wonder who this person that wrote the document is. What were they doing and why were they writing it in the first place? Because they can tell me all day long what it's about but I don't want them to simply summarize it; I want them to understand the document.

Additionally Tommy recognized that the use of complex texts is "raising the standard for those lower level classes and continuing to promote some things they are doing in upper level classes." Audrey point blank stated "the literacy standards require us to develop higher order thinking skills." Polly was cognizant of the fact that combining the use of complex texts with available technologies led to higher order thinking and problem solving.

Use of technology. Teachers recognized that students today learn through different methods and strategies due to the prevalence of technology, both in and out of the classroom. Co-researchers used students' personal learning devices in planning and implementing lessons to meet the requirements of the CCSSELA literacy standards. Teachers also used available technological mediums in their classrooms.

Personal learning devices. Much reflection by co-researchers focused on the use of technology in the classroom in conjunction with the CCSSELA literacy standards. The local school district supports the use of technology by teachers and students. All secondary social studies teachers have Smart Boards in their classrooms. Additional technologies such as Quizdoms, Airliners, and document-capture cameras are available upon request by teachers. Students have the option to bring their own learning devices to school for use in the classroom with the teacher's permission. These learning devices include iPhones, iPads, Kindles, Nooks, laptops, etc. Tommy recognized that when students in his classroom were working independently or within a collaborative learning group, students were more likely to look up information on their learning devices than to look in a textbook. He also spoke of incidents where during class discussion students were quick to use their learning devices to find specific information relating to and

supporting the discussion at hand, generating excitement and engagement among the students.

Technological mediums. Other teachers addressed the use of technological mediums to teach students, provide resources and to produce products that incorporated the CCSSELA literacy standards. Polly used technology extensively in her classroom. She

> found that using modern day mediums seem to have the greatest impact. Reading the Constitution as a Twitter feed allowed the students to focus in on the main point of each article and then understand some of the more complicated amendments all in 140 characters.

She plans to "recreate the Constitution through Vines using six second videos of Vines where they have to break down each article and then each amendment and put it in the Constitution with a six second Vine and then post that." Tommy hoped for more clarification on what constitutes a complex text for social studies students. He noted "we're living in a digital age . . . C-Span sources would be great because you can go and clip it down to whatever you want . . . it'd be good to be able to use those sources and feel like you're going in both directions." The video element appealed to Carl. He stated that "certain videos . . . update [language] and it gives students a better understanding . . . seeing it in the form of a video and seeing it acted out makes complete sense to them." Carl went on to explain "I like to try to give them the most updated material as possible and try to . . . use technology to where they understand it and they enjoy it." Doug spoke of having students create podcasts to simulate colonial newspapers via the Walter Cronkite "You Are There" news program.

Teachable moments. Co-researchers reflected that implementing the CCSSELA literacy standards had provided teachable moments in their classrooms. A teachable moment is an unplanned, unscripted inquiry or comment made by a student that introduces a concept related to the topic at hand. It is spontaneous and requires teachers to "think on their feet," forcing them to meet students' needs which may or may not be a part of the daily lesson plan. Tommy reflected that

> it promotes a lot of discussion so it slows down the day's progress because you get stuck on talking about the quote, about the people involved but that's ok because it's taking the learning to something they're interested in and something they've connected to.

Doug recognized that "it's worth it if you find the time to give them the back knowledge on how to understand 18th, 19th century English to using the full value of these primary sources . . . it becomes a moment where you have to teach how to read the context and the language."

Teacher Attitudes and Perceptions

Teacher Attitudes

Teachers expressed excitement about the CCSSELA literacy standards in United States history and economics classrooms. Co-researchers recognized it as an opportunity to be creative in planning and implementing lessons. Many co-researchers noted that teachers should already be doing this in their social studies classrooms. Teachers perceived potential issues including time constraints and larger class sizes. Co-researchers' concerns included a lack of adequate professional development, some assessment issues, and having to teach reading.

Excitement. The overall attitude toward the CCSSELA literacy standards being implemented into United States history and economics secondary classrooms by co-researchers was excitement. Audrey's attitude was one of excitement. She said

> these are really the types of things that I became a teacher to teach students to do . . . I felt some excitement that maybe this would guide us back more towards teaching skills the students need whatever profession they go into just skills they need for life, for being a parent.

She was also excited about professional development that she had received. She stated "I went to the CCGPS literacy design collaborative. I think the best thing I got out of that was the reading like a historian website from Stanford . . .I'm very excited about that." Kelly also felt that "it's been good, I'm looking forward to going through it for the second time next year and being able to kind of polish it up and make it better." Tommy saw that with the literacy standards "the more we do with it the better it's going to become. And the more opportunities we'll have and more direction I'll be able to give them." Polly's attitude was also one of excitement. She said "I don't think that learning is supposed to be static; it's supposed to always be changing and evolving; and so my classroom does that as well."

A time for creativity. Co-researchers also seemed to enjoy the creativity required for designing new lesson plans that would meet the requirements of the CCSSELA literacy standards. Implementation of this new standard forced teachers to re-evaluate lessons, materials, and resources in an effort to successfully meet the literacy standards. Doug created his own exhibits based on primary source documents and then had students participate in a scavenger hunt built around the exhibits. He would also

enlarge primary source documents, encode them with a QR code and then students could scan the code, leading them to additional information such as a newsreel film clip, a photo collection, etc. Tim brought in his own materials for his economics classes, coordinating those materials with the requirements of the CCSSELA literacy standards. Polly found that reading actual government documents like the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was something that students really struggled with deciphering. Her solution was to have students "read newspaper articles, discuss the story of Emmett Till, talk about voting, boycotts and sit-ins, and show them first-hand accounts of that time period without ever having them read the actual Civil Rights Act of 1964." Co-researchers were creative in finding ways to introduce complex texts into their existing curriculum.

Teacher Perceptions

Co-researchers perceived that social studies teachers should already be doing many of the requirements of the CCSSELA literacy standards in their United States history and economics classrooms already. Teachers expressed the desire for more time to adequately plan and implement the new standards. Co-researchers also worried about large class sizes and the logistics involved with implementation in confined spaces.

Teachers should already be doing this. Many of the co-researchers felt that the CCSSELA literacy standards for social studies was something that teachers should naturally be doing in their classroom already. Polly stated "good teachers were already looking at the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and Letter from a Birmingham Jail." Kelly pointed out that when she "read through [the CCSSELA literacy standards for social studies] it was stuff that I already do in my classroom." Abe's perception was "you know we're already doing it so are they just giving it a new

name?" Doug commented "I think part of that is what I've done for years and that is to bring [the] literary element into the classroom."

Time constraints. A major concern for teachers was time. All co-researchers mentioned the lack of time to adequately prepare lessons, find materials and resources, and assess student writing. Tommy recognized that time was an issue. He stated we are

> trying to fit it into a busy schedule to begin with, we're so busy with what we do on a day to day basis that finding time to sit down and figure out how we are now going to put in another standard into the standards we already have to teach, the Georgia Performance Standards, how to make those two mix.

Polly also expressed concern about time constraints. She stated "that would be all fine, well and good if I had two years. I could really get into the depth of a document if I had two years to teach U.S. history." Jane pointed out that "we're so spread thin in so many areas" and Kelly reiterated "there's still only so many hours in the day and only so much that we can accomplish that I think as educators we are having to prioritize." Doug was also concerned about time. He reflected that "I have not had enough time to implement it fully itself." Tommy recognized that lack of time is often used by teachers when introduced to new ideas and concepts like the CCSSELA literacy standards. He stated

> finding the time is the hard part. I know that's what we always say when there's something new in education: I need more time, find the' time, need more time, need more time, but when the year gets shorter and you have more to do, you can only do so much.

He also said "when it's not something they're preparing for on the EOCT it's really hard to take the time and set aside time for them to write and to write critically."

Class size. Another major concern for teachers was class size, both in the number of students and the limitations physically in a room filled with adult-sized bodies and furniture. Carl spoke about the problem with a large number of students. He said

> there are times where you try things from class to class and oh that didn't work in this class so I'm going to have to try this other one here because with the implementation it's a lot of trial and error . . . I have one class that's much smaller that I can try a lot more things on that I can't with a big class that's right after that.

Doug stated that he had a "room crammed full of the all-in-one high school standard desk." Added to that were student backpacks. He elaborated "the room is full, not only is it full of furniture, it's also full of luggage." This crowded situation limits physically what can safely and effectively be done in a classroom.

Teacher concerns. Co-researchers expressed concern over the lack of professional development to assist them in the planning and implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards. Teachers noted several assessment issues with the CCSSELA literacy standards as well. Co-researchers expressed concern over the perceived requirement of having them teach reading to their students.

Lack of professional development. Many co-researchers felt some frustration because of the lack of professional development that had been provided for secondary social studies teachers to aid in the implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards for social studies teachers. Two of the co-researchers had received no professional

development of any kind. Others had viewed the webinar provided by the Georgia DOE in the spring of 2012. Tommy reflected

> there was so little information given at the same time and also it seemed to roll out at the same time that the English standards did and so there was a lot of focus on the English standards. And it seemed the literacy standards kind of got pushed to the back . . . the information we were given was what little we could find online ourselves and [what] was delivered through the webinar from the state and what came from the county.

Doug also appeared to be concerned about the lack of professional development. He said "I think the county's put more emphasis on literary standards in middle school this year . . . colleagues in middle school they are very aware of it but I don't see that in my situation." Abe claimed "other than watching a video tutorial last May during finals week, we have not had any information regarding the Common Core standards (that I know of anyway)." Jane pointed out that much professional development is aimed toward elementary teachers and for high school teachers it is often "self-taught and being taught by co-workers."

Assessment issues. Another major concern for co-researchers was assessment. Teachers did not know how the new CCSSELA literacy standards would be assessed. All co-researchers spoke of the lack of coordination between the requirements of the CCSSELA literacy standards for social studies and the information that was actually assessed on the EOCT, the assessment instrument that was already used in secondary United States history and economics courses. Audrey stated

> I have a lot more to do to implement the literacy standards; I feel like I'm hitting the basics now about getting more in depth and trying to carve out time where I'm still like preparing students for the EOCT and implementing those skills asked for by the literacy standards which I feel are more important than the fact-based comprehension and knowledge type of questions we do for the EOCT. We're still testing over the basic knowledge/comprehension types of things.

Tim spoke of the lack of literacy assessment on the economics EOCT. He stated

> I have been involved in EOCT review material which does not include focusing on literacy. Though students may be subject to a few questions on the EOCT (maybe 2) that require them to read a passage and interpret its meaning, those questions are few and far between so there is no focus on literacy during the EOCT review week.

John also said that "it was hard getting the kids to realize when I've had them read a little bit more or do some writing and then all of a sudden . . . the End of Course Test it's multiple choice, multiple choice, multiple choice." Polly also said "when they're asked to read a passage on the End of Course Test and they don't even need to read the passage to actually answer the question . . . what's the point?" Kelly reiterated "at this point, under the current End of Course Test model, I don't believe that the literacy standards are reflected. Students do not write on the test. It is entirely multiple choice."

Tommy also stated he recognized a lack of coordination between the CCSSELA literacy standards and the assessment instrument used in secondary U.S. history and economics courses, the EOCT. He said

> the questions they have on literacy on the EOCT could be a simple recall question based on the people involved and the events they're looking for as opposed to really getting into the depth of the piece of literature and tell me what it means or how to use it.

Teaching reading. Co-researchers were also fearful that the implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards in their classrooms would require them to teach reading. Doug likened it to "xenophobia, the fear of the unknown." He recalled that "when this came out last year . . . the concern was that social studies teachers would all of a sudden have to start teaching novels and how are we going to get our material in." He recognized "that has to be overcome on the part of teachers . . . I think once we get into it and we spend a little more time with it that that fear will go away and it will just become commonplace." Audrey was "glad that I had a background teaching English." Polly was concerned because she did not feel qualified to teach reading and felt that most teachers "don't have the expertise to teach reading comprehension and if they did they certainly couldn't get through the curriculum." She said "I'm not a literature teacher and I don't have literature or reading comprehension certification on my certificate so I don't feel like I'm qualified in that." She also was concerned that students were "just getting a repeat of U.S. history in American Lit." Tim also expressed concern over lack of qualifications. He stated "with my Master's in Education I probably had two classes in reading and my six year maybe one class in instruction and design [is all] I've had in reading . . . [I] didn't focus really on any kind of reading classes at all." This lack of feeling qualified to implement the standard has led to fear on the part of teachers.

Teachers Perceived Impact on the Learning Environment

Teacher Morale

Co-researchers were concerned about the impact the CCSSELA literacy standards had on the learning environment. All co-researchers expressed feelings of being overwhelmed. They also expressed concern over a new teacher evaluation system being implemented in their school district at the same time the CCSSELA literacy standards was being implemented. Teachers were overall pleased with the positive reaction from students about the use of literacy in the United States history and economics classrooms. Co-researchers also benefitted from the collaboration that occurred between and among departments as a result of the CCSSELA literacy standards. All co-researchers acknowledged the need for further professional development and more resources to aid in the planning and implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards.

Overwhelmed. Co-researchers repeatedly mentioned feeling overwhelmed in the learning environment. The implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards added to that feeling. Because it was implemented in a school year that saw the introduction of several other new requirements teachers felt overwhelmed. Polly stated

> It's overwhelming. I mean we have that end of course test pressure that's there and now we have to make sure our kids do writing across the curriculum and then we do the graduation test writing and social studies graduation test and it's just it's too much.

Doug also thought "it is overwhelming up front." Tommy recognized that

> it was introduced at a time when [teacher] morale was already low . . . furlough days, the new TKES system, [the new teacher

> evaluation system] SLOs, [new assessments required of students in non-EOCT classes] teacher performance . . . so adding this on top of that was just another thing that people felt like wow could you pile one more thing on us this school year? . . .it's an overwhelming factor . . .and that's probably what most teachers who would have to deal with any of these changes in literacy or Common Core, with English or math, would say "we're just overwhelmed."

Carl pointed out that "not only are the teachers overwhelmed by this but I think the kids are getting overwhelmed. It's like it's just something new, it's just something else." Tommy noted that it was not just social studies teachers that felt overwhelmed, but that teachers in the English department "were already overwhelmed with the standards themselves." Doug acknowledged that "if you don't have them (the literary resources), the knowledge, where the resources are, that can be overwhelming." Carl added that "at some point you've got to stop adding things and let's see if what's been added is going to work before we start adding on top of it. Until that happens these will struggle to be successful."

Teacher evaluation. Another concern that co-researchers perceived had impacted the learning environment was the introduction of a new teacher evaluation system (TKES) during the same school year that the new CCSSELA literacy standards was to be implemented in secondary social studies classrooms. While this contributed to teachers feeling overwhelmed, it also seemed to conflict with the purpose of the standards. Tommy explained

> the impact has been trying to find ways to not only teach the standards, the Georgia Performance Standards, but also trying to implement the new literacy standards and find a way to seamlessly integrate the two in a way that still allows us the time to get through the GPS which they'll assess on the EOCT.

Tommy also admitted that "my focus is always going to be on the Georgia Performance Standards because right now that's what I'm evaluated on; that's how I'm judged as a teacher, that's what my students are scored on so that's where my focus lies." Kelly felt

> as a teacher everything is about the test, the test, the test . . . if the EOCT is still what they're [students] are being tested on, it's still what I'm being assessed on as a teacher . . . as long as the EOCT is still the benchmark upon which I'm going to be assessed that's where the bulk of my energy is going.

Audrey stated

> we had TKES and SLOs come out this year and . . . they've rolled out all this new stuff in one year. And there is only so much you can conquer at one time. And even though the literacy standards are probably the most important part of what has come out . . . it's not what we're evaluated on either for TKES or for end of course tests.

Student Reaction

All co-researchers did not recognize any acknowledgement from students that they were aware of the new CCSSELA literacy standards being implemented in the

learning environment. However, Jane worried about the impact of teacher morale on students. She said "I feel like from year to year we're focused on something different, every single year. . . it gets frustrating and discouraging as teachers and so I'm sure it's reflected to students." Doug recognized that "the teaching . . .came out of those [primary source] resources and . . . the kids got used to it. And it was the only time, I'll be honest with you, that I've ever seen cooperative learning work effectively." Polly felt "we have to start using the technology . . . it's already out there and . . . it's much easier because the kids like it. They don't actually want to sit there and hold a piece of paper and read it."

Audrey saw some resistance from students to the primary sources. She said there was

> resistance to being asked to think a little deeper and I feel these kids have come all the way through on NCLB basically so I would probably be resistant to if I had been given the easy way all my educational career and people started asking a little bit more of me.

Collaboration within the Learning Environment

Collaboration occurred between co-researchers and other teachers within their social studies departments as well as between different academic departments within schools about the implementation of the new CCSSELA literacy standards in social studies classrooms. All co-researchers had discussed the CCSSELA literacy standards in social studies department meetings. Also, Tommy stated that he had "spent some time talking to the English department chair at the beginning of the year about their movement towards the Common Core English standards and how social studies could work with

them." He also acknowledged that "as a school and department we have discussed ways to further use these resources (primary sources), but have developed no set plan for increasing usage." Polly recognized that there was a natural flow between United States history and American literature and that "there should be some crossover between the two." Polly wondered about cooperative classrooms. She questioned "why not combine those classes? [United States history and American literature] And especially because she [the literature teacher] has the comprehension skills and I can talk about document analysis and . . . the impact it would make would be 100 times more." Tommy felt the CCSSELA literacy standards brought together United States history and American literature in a way that should lend itself to cross-curricular seamless instruction. He said

> I looked at some of the lists of suggested readings for the English classes, a lot of those are documents that we normally read in a social studies class. So being able to get a good connection I feel like the collaboration would be beneficial cause it should be once it's implemented fully [it] should be a rather seamless transition from class to class.

Doug had seen a connection between early United States history and forensic science. To improve the learning environment Doug was looking forward to bringing in the forensic science teacher to help with the creation of his historical exhibits during the next school year.

Additional Professional Development

All co-researchers recognized the need for further professional development. Tommy was "looking forward to a county sponsored training this summer that should

help with the implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standard . . . one of my fellow teachers attended a training for literacy implementation and shared some ideas for further use of sources and I am also attending a training for literacy this summer." He also recognized that "as we get more time and as we get more training . . . things will improve." Doug pointed out that "the success of this is going to come in professional development and . . . until we get support I don't think it's going to be successful." Polly felt that the Georgia DOE needed to provide some additional training. Audrey agreed that "I don't know that it's something the county can actually tackle. I mean to me it has to be a state level thing."

More Resources

Co-researchers acknowledged the need for more resources in order to appropriately integrate the CCSSELA literacy standards into the existing curriculum. Tommy stated that "I have also looked for more resources that I can purchase next year to help implement the standards." He also acknowledged that "whatever I use has to be done in a way where we can get the most out of our time." Doug pointed out that "it's a learning curve. I think once we've done it maybe for a year or so and we get our literary resources for each of these units in place I think the stress will be less." He also acknowledged that students "enjoyed what they were doing because of the documents chosen and I think that's the key, what documents are chosen . . . that's going to go a long way in bringing them [students] along with you." Tommy hoped for "some clarification on the types of sources that we're allowed to use. Because if you look at the English sources it specifies that it can be a written source, a visual source, a play, etc. There's not that specificity in the CCSSELA literacy standard." He also hoped that "the

training and everything else we do will open up the doors for some other sources." He also noted that "it seems that most texts for U.S. history [identified as examples of complex text in the CCSSELA literacy standard] are listed as appropriate for the 10th grade curriculum instead of the 11th."

Tim recognized that economics teachers were particularly lacking in resources. He said "we're going to need sources so . . . the lack of materials is going [to make it difficult for students] to understand how to apply [economics principles]." He knew that the textbook that the county provided has "a huge disconnect . . . it's outdated . . . it doesn't have the level of graphs [needed]."

Impact on Student Achievement

Summative Assessment

Summative assessment is a measure of a student's learning over a specified period of time in a particular subject area. Georgia has a summative writing assessment for high school juniors that is administered in September of the school year. Georgia also has a summative content and skill assessment for United States history students and economics students that is administered at the end of each course. Different groups of students take the summative assessment each year. Data comparisons from year to year do not compare the same group of students.

Georgia High School Writing Test. The Georgia High School Writing Test is the summative writing assessment for Georgia high school juniors and it is administered in late September of the school year. Students attending Georgia schools must pass the GHSWT in order to earn a high school diploma. Economics students in the 2012-2013 school year took the GHSWT in September of 2011. While United States history

students did take the GHSWT in September of 2012 the CCSSELA literacy standards had just been introduced into their United States history curriculum in August. There was not enough time in implementation for the CCSSELA literacy standards to adequately be assessed by the GHSWT.

End of Course Test. The summative assessment required by Georgia for all United States history students and economics students is the EOCT for each course. The assessment is administered at the end of completion of each course. The EOCT was designed to assess the achievement of students according to the GPS, not the CCSSELA literacy standards. There is no correlation between the GPS and the CCSSELA in the EOCT assessment instrument. Co-reachers recognized the need for a redesign of the EOCT to adequately assess the CCSSELA literacy standards.

Instrument. The EOCT was designed to assess student mastery of the GPS, not the new CCSSELA literacy standards. As a result many co-researchers recognized that the assessment instrument did not match the CCSSELA literacy standards. Tommy pointed out that "there's no skill on the EOCT that would correlate to an improved score through the use of literacy standards of Common Core."

The local school district as a whole had exceptional scores on both the economics EOCT (local district average 91, score falls in the exceeds range) (Georgia Department of Education, 2013) and the United States history EOCT (local district average 90, score falls in the exceeds range) (Georgia Department of Education, 2013). Co-researchers recognized that the EOCT in both subjects was not designed to assess mastery of the CCSSELA literacy standards. Doug acknowledged that "most of mine [students] that were very involved with the literary lessons . . . had exceptional scores. Now whether

they would have had exceptional scores had we just taught it the old-fashioned way with textbook and discussion, I don't know." He went on to add "I think it was worth doing even though I don't know that there was a correlation there."

Lack of assessment correlation with CCSSELA literacy standards. Co-researchers were aware that there was some nonalignment between the requirements of the CCSSELA literacy standards and the summative assessment instrument utilized by Georgia, the EOCT. The curriculum disconnect was apparent to Tommy who stated that

> the new literacy standards do not correlate very well to what students are expected to do on the End of Course Tests. Many of the questions on the EOCT are not requiring students to interpret or analyze the passage. Students simply need to be able to relate the reading passage to the event that it goes with. Many times it is possible to answer the question correctly without even having to read the passage itself. Until these questions require students to truly read and analyze the passage, I feel that many teachers, especially in EOCT courses, will not focus on the true intent of the literacy standards which is to teach students how to use the reading passages with higher order thinking skills.

Kelly pointed out that "the only thing I can see the literacy standards helping with are the reading passages on the EOCT. Students who take the time to read the passages could use some skills and strategies from class to help them."

Audrey reiterated

> what we are asked to accomplish with the EOCT is at cross-purposes with the literacy standards. Prepping students for the EOCT requires

> us to spend a lot of time in activities on the lower level of Bloom's Taxonomy . . . The literacy standards require us to develop higher order thinking skills. In addition, there was very little guidance from the DOE which was particularly felt as TKES was rolled out in the same year. Finally, with large class sizes and furlough days, there is a lack of time to provide meaningful feedback on writing and to discuss that feedback with students.

John recognized that economics posed a unique situation. He said "since the vast majority of their [student] testing is multiple choice, they do not understand the importance of writing." Tim saw the need in the economics curriculum for "having some guided instruction as to what literacy concepts out of econ the state is going to assess on that state test, I think that's what they need to focus on."

Redesign. Co-researchers wondered if there would be a change in summative assessment at the state level as a result of the implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards. Kelly said "Are they prepared to get rid of the EOCT and replace it with something where there is writing? And if so, who's going to grade that? . . . what are they planning on doing with this?" Kelly also recognized that "they haven't given us any guidelines about how that's going to be assessed or when it's going to be assessed." John acknowledged that "I'm actually one of those teachers that thought once it matches the assessment a little bit more, I think you'll see more of an impact." Audrey pointed out that for the CCSSELA literacy standards to work

> the assessment at the end has to be on these skills and where it doesn't matter if the kids maybe didn't get particular facts but can they see some bias? Can they tell you how this person supports

> their argument? As opposed to do they know Irving Berlin wrote "God Bless America"? Because they can look up that on their phone.

Kelly recognized the logistical problem with a redesign of the summative assessment. She stated

> they [the state] really have not defined how they [the CCSSELA literacy standards] are going to be used. And how we're going to be held accountable for that . . . I mean to me with what's in there the only way that you're really going to see that from the students is that they have to produce a writing example and in order to do that you almost have to have kind of a mini AP reading to be able to do that so I'm going to be very interested to see where the state goes with that.

Data comparisons. Co-researchers acknowledged that year to year data comparisons for different groups of students on the same summative assessment such as the EOCT were inappropriate because each group of students is unique. Doug pointed out that "I take each year new because it's different kids, different abilities and you just start from scratch." Kelly also recognized that "there's always an ongoing process to look at a group of students that you have every year, what those particular group of students need." She also acknowledged that "if I compare my year to last as a group my students did better. It's so hard to compare from year to year though." She stated that comparing between teachers was inappropriate as well because one teacher may teach gifted students while another may teach a number of special education students and yet another may coteach with a special education teacher.

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is designed to measure students' progress throughout the duration of a course, allowing for changes to be implemented in instruction as the need arises. Most often formative assessments are teacher created and include a number of different assessment methods, including tests, essays, projects, discussion, analysis, etc.

Teacher created. While there was no correlation between success on the EOCT and the implementation of the new CCSSELA literacy standards in social studies courses, there were observations of student achievement, engagement and depth of knowledge in formative assessments. Formative assessments are generally teacher created and implemented throughout the duration of a course of study. Formative assessments may be traditional pen and paper tests or they may be more subjective, sometimes informal, instruments created and used by teachers to assess student work such as production of products, final projects, creative written work, and oral presentations. Teacher observations are also a form of formative assessments. Tommy noted that "students greatly enjoyed the primary and secondary excerpts that were put into the class notes. It helped them better understand the time periods and people they were studying." He also stated

> the success of using the [primary] sources was found in providing students something that they could connect to what they did in class. It made the event real as they had something from someone that directly connected to the event rather than just hearing notes or a discussion about it.

Tim observed that in economics he "noticed that students were obtaining a more real world understanding of economic concepts through the readings." Carl believed that

> the largest, and most effective, activity I have done in my class this year implementing the literacy standard was that the entire social studies department administered a practice exam for the Georgia High School Writing Test for Juniors . . . It appeared to me that most students did not object to this requirement and many wrote a good bit longer than the expectation. I believe that the students understood that the assignment was going to assist them in passing the writing test and they took the task seriously.

Effectiveness of new standard. Carl believed that "implementing the standards has been effective in the classroom and, as teachers get more used to them, opportunities to use the standards other than just original documents will arise." Tommy was "looking forward to professional development this summer that will hopefully give me new ways to implement these standards in my classroom." Tim worried that the economics articles he used in the classroom might not align to the GPS or the CCSSELA literacy standards. He stated "they may kind of hit or miss on the actual state standards for economics."

Audrey saw the CCSSELA literacy standards "as a wake-up call of how far away I've gotten from what I thought I should be doing in the classroom, what I believe in doing in the classroom, and what I felt forced to do because of preparing for an EOCT."

Summary

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine the experiences of secondary social studies teachers who implemented Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in history/social studies, science and technical subjects in social studies courses requiring End of Course Tests at secondary schools in one suburban district in Georgia. This chapter began with an accounting of the experiences of ten secondary social studies teachers (co-researchers) in one suburban school district in Georgia planning, implementing, and reflecting on the CCSSELA literacy standards in their United States history and economics classrooms. The attitudes and perceptions of these ten co-researchers were addressed. The perceived impact of the CCSSELA literacy standards on the learning environment by the ten co-researchers was also addressed. The chapter ended with a discussion of the impact of the CCSSELA literacy standards on student achievement.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Summary of the Findings

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine the experiences of secondary social studies teachers who implemented CCSSELA literacy standards in social studies courses requiring EOCT in one suburban school district in Georgia. Ten teachers participated in the study and the findings are from the experiences of those ten teachers. Teachers' experiences included planning for implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standard, implementing the standard, and reflecting upon the implementation. Experiences also included teachers' attitudes about and perceptions toward the implementation of the literacy standard as well as their perceived impact on the learning environment and student achievement.

Planning for Implementation of the CCSSELA Literacy Standard

The experiences of secondary social studies teachers required to implement the CCSSELA literacy standards in United States history and economics classes requiring an EOCT (research question number one) included planning for the implementation. Past professional experience influenced the planning of the ten teachers. All had taught under standards-based curricula in the past but the teachers with ten years of experience or less had only taught under standards-based curricula. The initial reaction to the new CCSSELA literacy standards in the social studies classroom was that this is something that is already being done. Some saw it as a refocus on what is most important to teach while others viewed it as just adding more to their already packed work load. All expressed some type of concern about the new standards ranging from time constraints to

qualifications of social studies teachers in teaching literacy to how the new standards would be assessed. Eight teachers had some form of professional development prior to the implementation. The most common training was a webinar that had been provided by the Georgia DOE the previous spring. Two teachers had no professional development in implementation. All had discussed the new literacy standards in their school social studies department meetings. Many felt that they were on their own to find ways to implement the standards.

All United States history teachers planned to use primary source documents in their classrooms. Many cited specific websites and organizations where they could access primary source documents as well as ancillary materials to accompany them. Economics teachers faced a different situation. They seemed confused as to what the literacy standards meant for their students and having an outdated textbook required creativity on their part to secure adequate resources for their students. Magazine articles and current events involving economics provided most of the resources for their students. All teachers planned for their students to engage in some form of writing in their classrooms. Writing was already a large part of the curriculum for AP United States history students. Teachers planned for college prep students in United States history to write more. Again, economics teachers were confused. Economics as a discipline requires concise writing and the literacy standards seemed to teachers to oppose that.

Implementation of the CCSSELA Literacy Standard

The experiences of secondary social studies teachers required to implement the CCSSELA literacy standards in United States history and economics classes requiring an EOCT (research question number one) included implementation of the literacy standards

in their classrooms. This implementation included the use of primary source documents, differentiation of instruction, vocabulary instruction, and more reading.

Primary source documents. A variety of methods and strategies were used by both United States history teachers and economics teachers to implement the new CCSSELA literacy standards in their classrooms. All teachers used primary source documents. Teachers found that primary source documents met the requirement for complex texts in both United States history and economics. Discussion, debate, point-of-view, analysis and guided notes were just some of the methods employed by teachers in the implementation of these new standards. The use of primary source documents in the United States history curriculum highlighted the fact that United States history and American literature dovetail one another in the 11th grade in this school district. Students saw the connection. While social studies teachers had engaged with one another in collaboration about the CCSSELA literacy standards, United States history teachers and English/language arts teachers began to collaborate as well. Economics teachers had no such collaboration.

Differentiation of instruction. The implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards led to differentiation of instruction. Collaborative learning groups proved to be a successful method to use with primary source documents. The nature of the documents overrode past problems associated with collaborative learning groups. A structured learning environment also helped with the implementation of the new literacy standards. Teachers provided various lesson plans as examples of their implementation of the strategy. Plans were innovative, creative, and unique, focusing instruction and learning at the higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. Lesson plans included strategies such as

previewing, pre-teaching, scaffolding, chunking, guiding, re-teaching and enrichment activities.

Vocabulary instruction. Teachers recognized the need for some changes to their methods and strategies as a result of the implementation. The biggest issue concerned vocabulary. Students in United States history classes encountered problems comprehending and deciphering the language of primary source documents that were hundreds of years old. Economics students had difficulty with the complex, advanced vocabulary of economics. All teachers had to adjust their lessons to accommodate the need for more vocabulary instruction. Methods used included whole group instruction, collaborative groups, unpacking standards, previewing vocabulary, traditional vocabulary lists given to students, and traditional vocabulary quizzes.

Reading. A second issue encountered concerned reading. Students had to read more. They also had to read at a more complex level. This was difficult for some students. Some students were lacking in reading ability and in reading comprehension. This was an issue for most of the teachers in the study. The teachers felt inadequate and unqualified to teach secondary students to read. Reading is a skill that content-expert secondary teachers expected students to have mastered prior to entering high school. Teachers acknowledged that communication skills have changed, particularly in the past ten years with the explosion of new technologies. Combined with the controversial NCLB legislation most teachers recognized that today's students may not have the reading skills necessary to read complex texts. This is an area that must be addressed.

Reflection on the CCSSELA Literacy Standard

The experiences of secondary social studies teachers required to implement the CCSSELA literacy standards in United States history and economics classes requiring an EOCT (research question number one) included reflection on their planning and implementation. All teachers acknowledged that students were more engaged when primary source documents were used in the classroom. Teachers also embraced the higher level thinking the use of those complex texts promoted in their students. Technology was one means used to have students engage in content and practice reading. Using personal learning devices in the secondary classroom proved helpful in engaging students. The use of technological mediums such as Twitter, Vines, Podcast, etc. also kept students engaged and made the content 21st century appropriate. Teachers were also pleased with the teachable moments that the introduction of the new CCSSELA literacy standards had produced in their classrooms.

Attitudes and Perceptions

The attitudes of teachers regarding the implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards in United States history and economics classes requiring an EOCT (research question number two) were varied. Co-researchers were excited about the CCSSELA literacy standards and the opportunity for creativity that it presented. Teachers also had some legitimate concerns about the CCSSELA literacy standards.

Excitement and creativity. Teachers were excited about the new CCSSELA literacy standards and the opportunities its implementation offered in the classroom. They were glad to be getting back to focusing on the higher end of Bloom's Taxonomy, teaching students to think in complex ways. Confined to NCLB for many years, teachers

felt that the CCSSELA literacy standards would provide the avenue away from rote memorization of facts to more complex levels of analysis and synthesis of information. Teachers also anticipated new professional development that would assist them in the implementation of the new standards. Teachers were also looking forward to developing and implementing new lesson plans that tapped their creativity.

Concerns. Teachers felt that much of the CCSSELA literacy standards were things that good teachers should already be implementing in their classrooms. Many expressed concerns about time constraints as well as large class sizes, making implementation much more problematic. Teachers were also aware that they were in need of more professional development in order to be successful in the implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards. They were also concerned about the need for a redesign of the state mandated summative assessment, the EOCT, in order to adequately assess the progress of students with the CCSSELA literacy component of the curriculum.

Perceived Impact on the Learning Environment

The perceived impact of the new CCSSELA literacy standards on the learning environment in United States history and economics classes requiring an EOCT (research question number three) included concerns about teacher morale. Teachers were feeling overwhelmed with the new CCSSELA literacy standards coming at a time when there were many other new initiatives in the classroom environment. Of particular concern was a new teacher evaluation system, TKES, that had a component tied to students' results on the state summative assessment, the EOCT. Until there was a redesign of the EOCT to match the CCSSELA literacy standards, teachers felt their focus had to be on

the old standards in order to achieve and maintain satisfactory job performance evaluations.

Perceived Impact on Student Achievement

The impact of the new CCSSELA literacy standards on student achievement in United States history and economics classes requiring an EOCT (research question number four) was minimal at best. Teachers saw no correlation between the implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards and the summative assessment scores of their students. The summative writing assessment, the GHSWT, was administered for both economics and United States history students prior to adequate instruction in the CCSSELA literacy standards. The summative content and skills assessment, the EOCT, does not align to the CCSSELA literacy standards. It is aligned to the GPS, the prior standards teachers were required to implement. There was no correlation of data because of the lack of alignment with the summative assessment instruments. A comparison of EOCT assessment data from year to year is an inappropriate comparison of data as well because the students being assessed are different from year to year.

Implications in Light of Relevant Literature and Theory

There are several implications in light of relevant literature and theory regarding implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards in the social studies classroom. The implementation of CCSSELA literacy standards for history/social studies aligns with the social cognitive theory of Bandura, the self-efficacy theory of Bandura, the sociocultural theory of Vygotsky, and the essentialist theory of Bagley. The national trend of teaching to standards appears to support the essentialist theory of Bagley. The CCSSELA literacy standards is just one of the many Common Core standards being implemented in

classrooms nationwide. Complex texts, primary source documents, appropriate writing and common assessments are integral parts of the CCSSELA literacy standards. In order to successfully implement the standards teachers need professional development, teachers' attitudes and perceptions must be addressed and teachers must be able to reflect on the learning environment and student achievement in order to make necessary adjustments for the success of their students.

Theoretical Alignment

Vygotsky believed that learning takes place in a social environment and students must be self-regulatory in order for learning to occur. (Gredler, 2009). He also recognized that "a key question in cognitive development-- [was] that of the development of higher forms of thinking" (Gredler, 2009, p.2). The CCSSELA literacy standards for history/social studies aligns to Vygotsky's theory, requiring implementation in the classroom, a social environment, and requiring students to read, interpret, and analyze complex texts. Damico et al. (2010) "contend[ed] that guiding students to access and mobilize their own cultural and contextual knowledge is a core disciplinary literacy practice in social studies" (p. 325).

Bagley's ideology supported the use of standards in the curriculum. Null (2003b) stated that Bagley "contended that, in addition to learning a process of thinking, students should learn *something"* (p. 403). Bagley's essentialist theory focused on a core academic curriculum for all students. (Null, 2003b). Ravitch (1996) supported this idea of a core academic curriculum. "One essential purpose of standards is to ensure that students in all schools have access to equally challenging programs and courses of study,

that expectations for learning are equally high for almost all children, and that all teachers are well prepared to teach" (Ravitch, 1996, p. 134).

Bandura posited a social cognitive theory that acknowledged the physical maturation, cognition, and environment of students for learning to occur. Bandura also posited a theory of self-efficacy that applies to teachers. "That is, people process, weigh, and integrate diverse sources of information concerning their capability, and they regulate their choice behavior and effort expenditure accordingly" (Bandura, 1977, p. 212). Teachers experienced the implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards from their own unique perspectives. Past experiences and current perceptions of self-efficacy influenced their perception and subsequent implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards. The control, or lack thereof, over their classrooms, their work environments and their curriculum impacted the way they implemented the standards as well as the outcomes of the implementation. Teachers who felt they were empowered seemed more willing to embrace the new standards than those who felt controlled.

Foundations of Standards

Political policies in the United States have focused on changing, reforming and improving education since 1983 with the publication of *A Nation at Risk* and continuing into the present with the current Race to the Top program. Concern for the lack of academic success of American students in a global environment has continued to fuel this political debate, leading to several different reform efforts centered on the implementation of common standards into the American classroom. The most recent educational reform movement being the Common Core State Standards, adopted by 47 states and on slate for full implementation during the 2013-2014 school year with

summative testing by PARRC or Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium to begin in the 2014-2015 school year.

Into this new national standards movement is a literacy component in ELA that transcends the traditional curriculum and requires implementation within the context of the history/social studies, science and technical subjects' classrooms. This is new territory for history/social studies teachers as the traditional vein of thought has been that this is within the parameter of the ELA academic domain (Bain, 2012; Blamey et al., 2008/2009).

Teacher Planning

Implications in light of relevant literature regarding planning for the implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards in United States history and economics classrooms included the use of complex texts and having students engage in appropriate writing.

Use of complex texts. Students, because of the new CCSSELA literacy standards, are required to quantitatively read more as well as read complex texts. Teachers planned for the use of complex texts within their United States history and economics classrooms. United States history teachers mainly focused on primary source documents while economics teachers utilized contemporary magazine articles. Both are considered complex texts. The literature supports the use of complex texts (Adams, 2010/2011; Bain, 2012; Goodwin & Miller, 2013; Hill, 2011; Phillips & Wong, 2010; Rothman, 2012) and primary source documents (Damico et al., 2010; Dutt-Doner et al., 2007; Gewertz, 2012a; Reisman & Wineburg, 2008; Singleton & Giese, 1999) in the social studies classroom. Additionally, students must master certain historical skills in

order to adequately analyze, synthesize and evaluate primary source documents and other types of historical text (Bain, 2012; Damico et al., 2010; Gewertz, 2012a; Kendall, 2011; Mayer, 2006; Reisman & Wineburg, 2008; Simon, 2008). Teachers cited numerous locations, both online and in print, with usable primary source documents for United States history students. Economics teachers also cited locations where appropriate economics materials could be accessed. Additionally, economics teachers were especially creative in coming up with methods and materials for their students.

Appropriate writing. Another component of the CCSSELA literacy standards is a writing element. Writing is the genre used by historians (Bain, 2012; Breakstone et al., 2013; Gewertz, 2012a; Reisman & Wineburg, 2008; Wineburg & Martin, 2004; Wineburg, 2006). Students of history must know how to write up their findings, draw conclusions, make inferences, etc. (Bain, 2012; Breakstone et al., 2013; Gewertz, 2012a; Reisman & Wineburg, 2008; Wineburg & Martin, 2004; Wineburg, 2006). Teachers planned lessons centered around writing.

Economics students must be able to concisely and succinctly write. The CCSSELA literacy standards for history/social studies contains writing standards. While writing for history required by the standards is an appropriate goal in a history classroom, the economics teachers found some misalignment between requirements in the field of economics and the requirements in the standards. All teachers implemented the writing standards in their classrooms, utilizing new technologies and new methods. Economics teachers found this to be more challenging than did the history teachers because of the nature of the content in economics.

Teacher Implementation

Implications in light of relevant literature regarding the implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards in United States history and economics classrooms included using appropriate materials and a variety of methods and strategies. The use of complex texts and various writing activities were implemented in social studies classrooms. Vocabulary comprehension proved to be a particularly difficult problem in all classes.

Materials. Teachers used primary source documents as one method of meeting the requirements of the CCSSELA literacy standards. According to Pearcy and Duplass (2011) teachers must "be willing and prepared to incorporate a number of primary and secondary sources that allow students to move beyond the comparatively simplistic tasks that are typical of high school textbooks" (p. 114). United States history teachers had a multitude of resources available online to access primary source materials for their students. Many of these online sources contained appropriate ancillary materials as well. Economics teachers had a unique challenge, finding appropriate primary source documents and complex texts that were understandable at the high school level. This proved to be a somewhat challenging and difficult task for them.

Methods and strategies. Both United States history teachers and economics teachers used a variety of methods and strategies in the implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards. Complex texts were used to meet the reading requirements and a variety of writing activities were used to meet the writing requirements. Vocabulary comprehension proved to be problematic for most students.

Complex texts. The CCSSELA literacy standards for history/social studies requires the use of complex texts. Differentiation of instruction was evident in

implementation by the teachers. Collaborative learning groups proved viable and successful methods for the analysis required when using primary source documents in United States history classrooms. Simulations, museum exhibits, debates, and ordering events and situations chronologically were other methods used in United States history classrooms. There were many sources for United States history teachers to peruse to find primary source documents that were appropriate for secondary students in content, time period, and language. Also, a number of ancillary materials were accessed by United States history teachers as well. Structuring the learning environment and developing daily routines were strategies that aided United States history teachers in successfully implementing the requirements for reading complex texts.

Economics teachers relied on magazine articles and online sources about current events involving or tying into economics. While materials were more difficult to find, economics teachers did utilize a variety of methods for implementation including collaborative learning groups, scaffolding, chunking, and debating. Allowing time for re-teaching and/or enrichment activities on an individual basis also proved effective for both economics and United States history teachers.

Teachers made adjustments during implementation as was needed. United States history teachers encountered problems with language usage, configuration, and syntax in primary source documents from the past. One solution for this problem was for teachers to find updated primary source documents with present-day language or have students create their own documents from primary source documents, rewriting them using the language of today.

Teachers were concerned about the lack of complex reading skills of secondary school students. Many students could not read at the level required by the CCSSELA literacy standards. Students must engage in more and more reading if they are to be successful (Hirsch, 1987) in mastering the requirements of the CCSSELA literacy standards. Also, students today engage in new forms of reading and writing that are compatible with the use of today's technologies. Often, the actual reading level of a student is lower than what would be expected (Hirsch, 1987). Students also had a hard time remaining interested in complex reading that they felt was boring and/or irrelevant to their future and future plans. Students also had a difficult time utilizing the four skills necessary for effective historical analysis.

Vocabulary. Vocabulary posed a unique problem for United States history teachers and economics teachers. Comprehension of vocabulary is essential for effective instruction to take place (Pearcy & Duplass, 2011). United States history teachers encountered archaic vocabulary that proved difficult for students to decipher. Economics teachers encountered complex vocabulary that was very content specific to economics and that was too difficult for high school economics students to comprehend. Teachers had to make adjustments to implementation strategies in order to address these issues.

Economics teachers found collaborative learning groups and whole groups to be successful strategies when facing complex economics vocabulary. United States history teachers relied on re-teaching activities, enrichment activities, and rewriting activities using modern language. All found scaffolding and chunking of vocabulary to be effective. Additionally, some teachers used traditional vocabulary definition activities and quizzes on a routine basis for vocabulary mastery.

Several methods used to address the problem of lack of comprehension of complex vocabulary included students engaged in whole group discussion; students listed unfamiliar words; teachers gave verbal explanations to students; teachers unpacked the standards with students; teachers allowed ample time for questions and concerns to surface; and teachers previewed vocabulary with students on a weekly basis. Some teachers encouraged students to write their own tests allowing students to demonstrate mastery of complex vocabulary in a way that was most beneficial to them. Gehsmann (2011/2012) reiterated that "the more students know about orthography—how words work, their structure, and how that structure corresponds to sound and meaning—the more rapidly they can identify words in print and generate words in writing (p. 6). She said that "word knowledge is the bedrock of . . . literacy development" (p. 11).

Writing. The CCSSELA literacy standards require the implementation of complex writing as well. United States history and economics teachers used a variety of methods and strategies to meet this standard. Traditional essays, brochures, and letters to the editor were some examples of writing activities that coordinated with the literacy standards. Peer grading was often employed in order to facilitate improved writing skills in all students. Teachers had students rewrite operational pieces, both in economics and United States history. This allowed students to embrace challenging vocabulary and reword difficult passages into the language of today. Comparing and contrasting articles, recognizing authors' bias, analyzing authors' points of view and using peer grading helped students effectively meet the writing requirements of the CCSSEL literacy standards.

Perceptions and attitudes. Teachers in this study came to the new curriculum with excitement and apprehension. Teachers' attitudes toward the new CCSSELA literacy standards impacted the decisions they made for their classrooms. Their perceptions of what the implementation would look like also were factors in classroom environments. Gehsmann (2011/2012) found that "classroom teachers will more confidently support children's movement toward grade-level standards if they have predictable structures and routines in their daily and weekly schedules (p. 11). Additionally, teachers needed to have a sense of self-efficacy and empowerment (Bandura, 1977, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 2008/2009; Evans, 2009; Goddard et al., 2004; Kennedy & Shiel, 2010; Manthey, 2006; Salanova et al., 2010; Tye et al., 2010). Teachers' self-efficacy and collective efficacy is crucial for the literacy standards to have a positive effect on the learning environment and student achievement (Bandura, 1999; Evans, 2009; Kennedy & Shiel, 2010; Klassen, 2010; Klassen et al., 2010).

Teacher Reflections

Teachers reflected on their experiences in the learning environment. Teachers recognized the need for professional development**.**

Learning environment. Teachers experienced both positive and negative effects in the learning environment when implementing the CCSSELA literacy standards in United States history and economics classrooms.

Positive results. Student engagement, motivation, and involvement were noted by teachers reflecting on the implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards. Collaborative groups were successful methods used in implementation. Teachers seemed surprised and delighted at their success. Not only were students engaged but the

implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards led to higher level thinking among students of all levels and teachers saw an increase in students' problem solving skills as well.

The literacy standards implementation also provided some very teachable moments in the learning environment. Students were particularly engaged when the Bring Your Learning Device (BYLD) policy was utilized in classrooms implementing the CCSSELA literacy standards. Demski (2012) reported that Heidi Hayes Jacobs has identified "three related but distinctive toolsets—digital literacy, media literacy, and global literacy—that had become key in helping students' navigate through the curriculum that they need to master" (p. 42) that embrace the use of 21st century technology in the teaching of literacy. The use of technology proved effective for teachers in this study. Using technology to analyze primary sources, using technology to present findings, research projects, and rewrite opportunities, and using technology to bring history and economics principles into focus proved to engage and motivate students and teachers. Presentation mediums such as Twitter, Vines, Instagram, etc. provided opportunities for students to be successful that often had not been anticipated nor planned by teachers.

Negative results. One negative result of the implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards in history/social studies classrooms had to do with politics. Lack of funding, overcrowded classrooms and a new teacher evaluation system were deterrents to the implementation process. Frustration of teachers concerning those political issues effected the learning environment. One potential solution to that effect is the empowerment of teachers. Teachers should be a part of the political process concerning

education (Bandura, 1999; Evans, 2009; Klassen, 2010; Manthey, 2006; Marzano, 2003; Myers, 2007).

Teachers' perceived lack of time was another negative effect in the learning environment. Pearcy and Duplass (2011) acknowledged that "there never seems to be enough time, in the day or the term, to accomplish everything we need to do" (p. 115). Not only was lack of time a concern but many teachers reported feeling overwhelmed. Again, Pearcy and Duplass (2011) noted that "many teachers, when presented with the enormous breadth and depth seemingly required in teaching . . . can feel overwhelmed" (p. 113). Teachers participating in this study felt pressed for time and overwhelmed by their multiple teaching requirements.

Professional development. Professional development is continuing education for a professional. Teachers reflected on the need for professional development to aid in the implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards in the learning environment. It is imperative for teachers to have access to professional development that exposes them to the new CCSSELA literacy standards (Fisher et al., 2005; Hirsh, 2012; Penuel et al., 2008; Rothman, 2011). They also need training in implementation of these new standards as well as resources to utilize in its implementation (Birman et al., 2000; Bulgren et al., 2013; Pearcy & Duplass, 2011). Only with appropriate professional development can the effective implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards occur (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011; Laguardia et al., 2002).

Student achievement. Because the summative exams required by the State of Georgia in United States history and economics courses do not align with the CCSSELA literacy standards, teachers felt there was no correlation between what was taught and

what was assessed (Kendall, 2011; Rothman, 2011; Wolfe et al., 2007). For assessment to be effective, it must be aligned to the curriculum being taught. (Bean, 2006; Breakstone et al., 2013; Herman, 1997; Marzano, 2003; Paik et al., 2011; Penuel et al., 2008). Because of this lack of alignment teachers perhaps did not diligently implement the standards as they would have if they were held accountable for student progress with the standards (Rothman, 2011; Wolfe et al., 2007). A redesign of the state summative assessment needs to be made so that the EOCT aligns with the CCSSELA literacy standards. At present, there is no alignment between the CCSSELA literacy standards for history/social studies and the EOCT in United States history and economics. Formative assessments, particularly those that were teacher-created, were more aligned to the new standards and provided more useful data for teachers about student progress and growth.

Study Limitations

This phenomenological study of ten secondary social studies teachers' experiences implementing the CCSSELA literacy standards in their United States history and economics classrooms was limited by being exclusive to one suburban school district in North Georgia. The school district in which the study was conducted has been identified throughout the state of Georgia and the nation as a successful district due to consistently above average test scores, national rankings in magazines and newspapers, and various gubernatorial honors and award. This successful suburban school district has received local, state, and national recognition for its students' achievements.

Because this is a high-performing school district, experiences of teachers from other districts may be different. The impact of problems and unique community situations experienced by teachers in underperforming school districts may not be evident

in this study. Therefore, the experiences of social studies teachers in underperforming school districts may not be the same as those experiences of social studies teachers in this successful school district. Without the challenges that are sometimes faced by underperforming districts, results of this implementation may be different for teachers in a stable socioeconomic, suburban school district than for teachers in districts with socio-economic deficiencies, poor attendance rates, and other outside problems.

Another limitation of this study included confining the research to social studies teachers of United States history and economics only. Other social studies teachers as well as science teachers and teachers of technical subjects are required to implement the CCSSELA literacy standards too. However, findings for teachers of social studies may not be adaptable to science or technical subject teachers implementing the literacy standards. The experiences of those teachers may not correlate to those of the social studies teachers involved in this study. Experiences of teachers in this study may not be applicable to teachers of other subjects required to implement the CCSSELA literacy standards.

Yet another limitation to this research study is the honesty of the social studies teachers and their willingness to reveal their true experiences with the new CCSSELA literacy standards. Teachers may have been hesitant or fearful of being open and honest about their experiences. Some may have chosen to leave information out that would have been valuable in the analysis of teachers' experiences implementing the CCSSELA literacy standards. Others may have chosen not to disclose lesson plans or other materials that were found to not be effective or successful in the learning environment.

Also, social studies teachers may have presented information that only appeared positive or negative, depending on their unique experiences with the new literacy standards.

For secondary teachers facing new school performance standards through the College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI) of the CCSS, the experience of colleagues with the introduction of these literary standards as part of the new CCSS is both timely and necessary (Adams, 2010/2011; Conley, 2012; McLaughlin & Fisher, 2012/2013; PARCC, 2013; Phillips & Wong, 2010; Rothman, 2012; Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, 2013; Smith, 2012).

Implications

Methodological Implications

This phenomenological study of ten secondary social studies teachers' experiences implementing the CCSSELA literacy standards in their United States history and economics classrooms was effective in providing a voice for teachers required to implement the literacy standards in social studies classes. Other opportunities to provide a voice for teachers would add to the findings of this study. Subject areas, such as science and technical subjects, are required to implement the CCSSELA literacy standards also. Teachers of those subjects need the opportunity to voice their experiences, too.

Different methods of qualitative research might reveal different results. Utilizing the case study method may provide a more in-depth experience of teachers implementing the CCSSELA literacy standards in history/social studies classrooms. While interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, documentation, and journal reflection provided sufficient data for a phenomenological study, the day-to-day observation required in the case study

format may yield more in-depth information about teachers' experiences with the implementation.

Practical Implications

This phenomenological study has practical implications for secondary teachers of United States history and economics. This study highlights the need for professional development for teachers being required to implement the CCSSELA literacy standards in their history/social studies classrooms. Teachers wanted, needed, and requested professional development. Professional development needs to be timely, empowering and effective. Additionally, professional development needs to meet the needs of secondary teachers required to implement the CCSSELA literacy standards in history/social studies, science and technical subjects. This study illustrated the need for developing effective professional development for these secondary teachers.

Second, while both United States history teachers and economics teachers needed resources and materials to qualify as complex texts, economics teachers had much less available to them than the United States history teachers. While there were numerous primary source documents easily accessable to United States history teachers, both online and in print, economics teachers struggled to find appropriate materials and resources for their students. This is a need that must be addressed. Secondary economics teachers would be wise to begin searching for economics materials and resources that meet the requirements of the CCSSELA literacy standards.

Third, students struggled with reading complex texts due to lack of reading skills and difficult vocabulary. Instruction in how to read complex texts is needed for students being required to master the literacy standards. Additionally, adequate time and

resources must be dedicated to helping students' master complex vocabulary. Teachers are aware that the way to improve reading and vocabulary skills is to have students spend more time reading. This is a necessary requirement for all students facing the CCSSELA literacy standards. Time for reading complex texts must be incorporated into the school day on a daily basis.

Four, students must master writing components of the CCSSELA literacy standards. Creative, effective means of teaching students to write at higher levels of thinking must be provided through professional development for teachers. One way found to improve writing is consensus scoring. Teachers need training on consensus scoring of complex essays at the secondary level.

Recommendations for Future Research

While this study gives voice to ten secondary United States history and economics teachers experiencing the implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards in their social studies classrooms, teachers in middle and elementary schools had no voice. Neither did secondary teachers of science and technical subjects. I would suggest further research in the implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards in secondary science and technical subjects classrooms as well as in middle school and elementary school. Teachers' experiences in those subjects and in lower grade levels may or may not differ from the experiences of teachers in this study. Further research from the perspective of other teachers involved with the implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards is needed.

This phenomenological study focused on secondary social studies teachers' experiences implementing the CCSSELA literacy standards in United States history and

economics classes. There is no voice in this study for students, parents, administrators, or district personnel. Additional research is needed to provide a voice for various other groups impacted by the implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards in history/social studies, science and technical subjects.

This phenomenological study provided qualitative data about the implementation of the CCSSELA literacy standards. There is a need for further research in a quantitative measure to assess student achievement. Once there is a summative assessment such as those being developed by PARCC and Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium quantitative data can be gathered. There is a need for a study to determine if the standard initiative through the CCSSELA literacy standards improves literacy for students in history/social studies, science and technical subjects.

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APPENDICIES

Appendix A

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

The Graduate School at Liberty University

February 15, 2013

Krista Webb
IRB Approval 1514.021513: Secondary Social Studies Teachers' Experiences Implementing Common Core State Literacy Standards: A Phenomenological Study

Dear Krista,

We are pleased to inform you that your above study has been approved by the Liberty IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

Fernando Garzon, Psy.D.
Professor, IRB Chair
Counseling

(434) 592-4054

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Appendix B

Introductory Letter for Co-researchers

Introductory letter for 2012-2013 CCSSELA/Literacy in History/Social Studies

Date: _____

Dear _____,

I am a doctoral candidate at Liberty University and I am very excited about my research topic: Secondary Social Studies Teachers' Experiences Implementing Common Core State Literacy Standards. This is a qualitative transcendental phenomenological study and I would like to offer you the opportunity to participate in this ground-breaking research.

The experience of implementing the Common Core State Standard for English/Language Arts and Literacy in the history/social studies, science and technical subjects is as yet an unresearched topic. This standard is being implemented in certain selected counties in the state of Georgia for the first time during the 2012-2013 school year. For this reason, I am confining participants in this study to this school district.

A second qualification for being eligible for participation in this research study is to teach at least one section of United States history or economics. Because this is a qualitative study, if you choose to participate, you will be referred to as a co-researcher. As a co-researcher you will be asked to do the following: complete an initial questionnaire; respond to e-mails twice monthly throughout the remainder of the school year, reflecting on your experiences with the literacy standard implementation; submit any written documentation that you feel would aid in this research study; participate in an interview with me during the latter half of the school year; participate in a focus group

led by me during the latter half of the school year; and submit your students' end-of-course test scores.

A third qualification for being eligible for participation in this research study is to have at least three years teaching experience.

I know your time is valuable and, while I cannot offer you compensation for participation, the results of this study could prove to be important nation-wide as states adopt and implement the Common Core State Standards. At all times your privacy and identity will be protected. At no time will anyone have access to your personal and professional information. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board and all guidelines for confidentiality will be maintained.

If you would like to participate in this research study please respond to this letter within one week from receipt. You may respond in writing, by e-mail, or by phone. I look forward to hearing from you within the next two weeks. I am thanking you in advance for your commitment to this study and to improving education for the students in our country.

Sincerely,

Krista Webb

kristawebb@bellsouth.net or kwebb12@liberty.edu

404-502-3780

1110 Wiley Bridge Rd.

Woodstock, GA 30188

Appendix C

CONSENT FORM

Secondary Social Studies Teachers' Experiences Implementing Common Core State Literacy Standards: A Phenomenological Study

Krista Webb
Liberty University
School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study with other secondary social studies teachers who are experiencing the implementation of the Common Core State Standards in English/Language Arts literacy in history/social studies. You were selected as a possible participant because you teach either a United States history class or an economics class that is implementing the new cross-curricular literacy standard. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by Krista Webb, a doctoral candidate at Liberty University in the School of Education.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is: to give a voice to secondary social studies teachers as they implement this new literacy cross-curricular standard.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

1. Complete an initial questionnaire within one week of receipt. This should take approximately 15-20 minutes.
2. Respond reflectively to e-mails throughout the remainder of the school year within one week of receipt of prompt. This should take approximately 10-15 minutes.
3. Submit written documentation as requested
4. Meet with the researcher for a personal audio-recorded interview lasting approximately 30 minutes
5. Meet with the researcher and a focus group for an audio-recorded discussion lasting approximately 30 minutes to one hour
6. Submit your students' EOCT scores to the researcher (students will remain anonymous)

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study:

The risks of this research study are no more than you would encounter in everyday life.

The benefits to participation are being part of preliminary research about the new Common Core State Standards and the implementation process, thereby providing information that may prove beneficial to other secondary social studies teachers throughout the country.

Compensation:

You will not receive payment for participation in this research study.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records. The following procedures will be taken to protect the privacy and confidentiality of participants:

1. All participants will have pseudonyms
2. All schools will have pseudonyms
3. The school district will have a pseudonym
4. All data will be kept on a password protected computer and/or a password protected flash drive at the researcher's home office
5. All audio recordings will be kept in a locked cabinet at the researcher's home office
6. Audio recordings will be erased within one week of the final dissertation defense
7. The researcher cannot assure the participant that other participants in the focus groups will maintain confidentiality and privacy.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or with any school within the Cherokee County School District. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Krista Webb. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at 1110 Wiley Bridge Rd., Woodstock, GA 30188, 404-502-3780, kristawebb@bellsouth.net or kwebb12@liberty.edu . You may also contact Mrs. Webb's faculty advisor, Dr. Angela Smith at amsmith11@liberty.edu .

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, Dr. Fernando Garzon, Chair, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 1582, Lynchburg, VA 24502 or email at fgarzon@liberty.edu.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

_____Please check here if you agree to be audio-recorded.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Investigator:_____ Date: _____

IRB Code Numbers: 1514.021513

IRB Expiration Date: 02/15/14

Appendix D

Questionnaire

Questionnaire for 2012-2013 CCSSELA/Literacy in history/social studies

Pseudonym you want to use for this research study: _____

Gender: _____

Age: _____

Personal Email:_____

Home Mailing Address: _____

Highest Level of Education: _____

1. How long have you been teaching?
2. Are you familiar with the new Common Core State Standards English Language Arts/Literacy Standard in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects' standards?
3. If yes, how did you become aware of these standards? (reading and research, school program, professional development, word of mouth from friends, internet usage, other)
4. What was your initial reaction to these new standards?
5. Do you have any concerns about the implementation of these new literacy standards? If yes, what are your concerns?

Appendix E

E-mail Prompts for Reflection

E-mail prompts for reflection for 2012-2013 CCSSELA/Literacy in history/social studies (Prompts will be e-mailed to co-researchers on the first and fifteenth of each month as indicated below).

Month One:

March 1st: Please reflect on your implementation of the literacy standard in your classroom. Explain what you have been doing to implement the standard, how your students are reacting, and address any problems you've encountered. Be sure to include any successes you've experienced as well. Your reply to this e-mail is the medium for your reflection.

March 15th: Please reflect on your implementation of the literacy standard in your classroom. Explain your thoughts and feelings about the reading component, the writing component and the listening component. Be sure to include ways that you are addressing each. Your reply to this e-mail is the medium for your reflection.

Month Two:

April 1st: Please reflect on your implementation of the literacy standard in your classroom. Explain any successful lesson plans, projects, materials that you have utilized in this implementation. Be sure to include any school wide or departmental efforts for the implementation. Your reply to this e-mail is the medium for your reflection.

April 15th: Please reflect on your implementation of the literacy standard in your classroom. Explain any new lesson plans, materials, training, or information that you have experienced regarding this implementation. Be sure to include any thoughts or feelings that you have about the implementation. Your reply to this e-mail is the medium for your reflection.

Month Three:

May 1st: Please reflect on your implementation of the literacy standard in your classroom. Explain how you think and feel the implementation is impacting the learning environment. Explain any strategies that you are using to continue implementation. Be sure to include adjustments and changes that you made to your instructional strategies. Be sure to include any gains or regressions that you are experiencing with your students. Your reply to this e-mail is the medium for your reflection.

May 15th: Please reflect on your implementation of the literacy standard in your classroom. Explain your thoughts, feelings, and concerns as your students approach and experience end-of-course tests. Be sure to include reflection on any methods that you are using for implementation and test preparation. Your reply to this e-mail is the medium for your reflection.

Month Four:

June 1st: Please reflect on your implementation of the literacy standard in your classroom. Explain any thoughts, feelings, and concerns that you may have as you reflect

over the past school year. Be sure to include any adjustments that you made to the learning environment. Explain any new teaching strategies that you used. Be sure to include the successes and the failures of these strategies. Looking back over the school year explain what you feel to be your greatest success with this new standard as well as areas where you see the need for change and adjustment in the future. Your reply to this e-mail is the medium for your reflection.