

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHER ATTITUDES TOWARD THE COMMON
CORE STATE STANDARDS AND INFORMATIONAL TEXT

by

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Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to determine the relationship between teachers' attitudes toward the Common Core State Standards and three predetermined factors. These factors were (1) teachers' attitudes toward the practicality of pedagogical shift three, balancing informational and literary texts, (2) teachers' attitudes toward school support with the implementation process of pedagogical shift three, balancing informational and literary texts, and (3) teachers' attitudes toward the balance of informational and literary texts in comparison with the previous set of New York State standards. Through the use of a teacher survey, the researcher assessed the relationship between teachers' attitudes toward the Common Core State Standards and these three factors. This study found a moderate correlation between the three predetermined factors and teachers' attitudes toward the Common Core State Standards. The findings of this research will aid in creating a plan for properly preparing and supporting teachers to effectively implement pedagogical shift three of the Common Core State Standards. The participants of this study were kindergarten, first, and second grade teachers throughout the state of New York.

Keywords: Common Core State Standards, Informational Text, Implementation, Literary Text

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“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.” Romans 12:12

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List of Abbreviations

English Language Arts (ELA)

Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT)

New York State (NYS)

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)

Person Separation Index (PSI)

Project-Based Learning (PBL)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

On June 2, 2010, final Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for mathematics and CCSS for English Language Arts (ELA) & literacy in history/social studies, science and technical subjects were unveiled for states to begin considering. This set of standards was drafted and revised as a joint effort by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers, in partnership with Achieve, ACT, and the College Board. The effects of the CCSS on instruction and assessment practices are wide-spread from kindergarten through high school classrooms.

New York State outlined six instructional shifts related to the CCSS for both mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA). Specifically, there are three instructional shifts for ELA. Shift one calls for regular practice with complex texts and their academic language. The ELA standards now highlight the growing complexity of texts that students will interact with in college, career, and life. This increase in rigor is often referred to as the “staircase of complexity,” which requires teachers to systematically increase the difficulty of text, while scaffolding and providing support for struggling learners. Included in shift one is a greater focus on academic vocabulary through a mix of conversation, direct instruction, and reading.

ELA shift two involves reading, writing, and speaking activities that are grounded in evidence from texts. This shift incorporates both literary and informational texts. The emphasis for this shift requires students to use evidence from texts to present careful analysis, well-defended claims, and clear information, making them dependent upon the text to answer questions. Shift two also pulls teachers away from using questioning techniques that focus

solely on students' prior knowledge and experiences and encourages students to refer to specific information in the text when formulating responses.

The third and final ELA shift has students build knowledge through content-rich nonfiction. Specifically, students are immersed in information about the world around them to build content knowledge and develop the ability to learn independently. This shift has proven to be a great challenge while teachers try to balance the amount of informational and literary texts in early childhood classrooms. Specifically, the standards require that students in kindergarten through fifth grade be exposed to an equal amount of informational and literary texts, with that number increasing in later grades (Young & Ward, 2012). According to New York State's EngageNY (2011), the purpose behind this shift is to facilitate classrooms where students access the world through text. This shift includes access to informational texts focused on sciences, social studies, the arts, and literature.

With any new education initiative including instruction-altering shifts, heavy scrutiny and resistance are common and often inevitable (Waugh & Godfrey, 1993). The CCSS are not exempt from this opposition. Much discussion has been had regarding the appropriateness of the increase in informational texts and whether or not students in kindergarten, first, and second grade can read and comprehend such material. Consequently, many teachers are hesitant to support this new initiative (Cheng, 2012).

The concept of integrating informational texts in early childhood classrooms is not radical. For years researchers have stressed the importance of exposing early childhood students to more informational texts (Williams, 2009). However, the CCSS implementation is the first education initiative that has required early childhood classrooms to include equal amounts of informational and literary texts in their classrooms. Even states that have not adopted the CCSS

have created standards that incorporate more informational texts at younger grade-levels (Duke, 2016). According to a study done by Duke (2000), the average first grade classroom was exposing students to a mere 3.6 minutes of informational texts per day. This fact makes pedagogical shift three, balancing informational and literary texts, one of the most crucial and influential shifts in the United States' attempt to produce students who are college and career ready with the CCSS. While few studies have been done since the implementation of the CCSS to evaluate the amount of informational texts that are currently in kindergarten through second grade classrooms, Duke (2016) projected that this amount has increased but has not yet reached the goal of a 50/50 balance.

This study sought to determine the relationship between teachers' attitudes toward the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and three predetermined factors connected to pedagogical shift three, balancing literary and informational texts in the early childhood classroom. These factors were (1) teachers' attitudes toward the practicality of pedagogical shift three, balancing informational and literary texts; (2) teachers' attitudes toward school support with the implementation process of pedagogical shift three, balancing informational and literary texts; and (3) teachers' attitudes toward the balance of informational and literary texts in comparison with the previous set of New York State (NYS) standards. Through the use of a teacher survey, the researcher assessed the relationship of teachers' attitudes toward the CCSS and these three factors. The data were used to determine a strategic plan to prepare, encourage, and support early childhood teachers to effectively implement pedagogical shift three of the CCSS.

Background

In the fall of 2012, New York State (NYS) launched the start of the NYS Common Core State Standards. Every public school in the state was required to be in full implementation at this time. In ELA, the CCSS developed an increased focus on informational texts. Specifically, the CCSS required a 50/50 balance of literary and informational texts in elementary classrooms. This approach established a staircase of increasing complexity in what students must be able to read and do in order to be prepared for college. Students are expected to build their knowledge through the content of their reading, making it imperative for students to have access to a greater amount of informational texts (New York State P-12 Common Core Learning Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy, 2011).

While new initiatives seeking to improve New York's education system were familiar to New York's educators, not all participants welcomed these changes into their classrooms. Teachers held limited optimism and modest expectations toward the new standards, as past standards-based initiatives yielded inconsequential results (Cheng, 2012). However, past initiatives did not require a dramatic increase in informational text integration, especially in early childhood classrooms. These efforts were strongly supported by past research conducted by educational researchers Hirsch and Duke (Duke, 2004; Hirsch, 2006a).

For several decades, educational researchers have insisted on greater access to informational, nonfiction, and expository texts at early childhood grade levels. This push expanded to high school classrooms, with theorists putting a dramatic emphasis on preparing students for college and beyond. Hirsch (2006a) reported that reading proficiency is not the magic key to competence. He indicated that reading enables us to gain new knowledge rapidly, which is the key to economic and political achievement. According to Duke and Kays (1998),

using informational texts in the early childhood classroom exposes students to specialized vocabulary and topic-specific language. Other research indicated that informational text is especially interesting and motivating to certain groups of students, such as boys and struggling readers (Dreher, 2003; Kletzien & Szabo 1998). Informational text has also been seen as the gateway to effective classroom practices, such as project-based learning (PBL) and vocabulary instruction (Duke, 2016; Hiebert & Cervetti 2011).

Problem Statement

In any major academic instructional change, the attitudes toward the teachers required to implement the new change are crucial determinants of the success of the implementation (Waugh & Godfrey, 1993). To ensure that the implementation process is successful, instructors must be properly trained and understand how the new standards will alter and support their current instructional practices (Dancy & Henderson, 2010). In the case of the CCSS, it is pertinent that instructors understand the research behind the increase of informational texts in early childhood classrooms so they will make every effort to effectively alter their classroom instruction and resources to reflect this new pedagogical shift. Too many states have excellent standards that bear little resemblance to the instructional practices and content that is being learned in the classrooms. Therefore, according to research, the success of implementing the CCSS rests heavily upon teachers' attitudes toward the standards. In order to evoke positive teacher attitudes toward the CCSS, educators must gain a complete understanding of the initiative, along with the tools and training necessary to create a smooth transition that positively reflects the pedagogical shifts (Cheng, 2012).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between teachers' attitudes toward the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and three predetermined factors. These factors were (1) teachers' attitudes toward the practicality of pedagogical shift three, balancing informational and literary texts; (2) teachers' attitudes toward school support with the implementation process of pedagogical shift three, balancing informational and literary texts; and (3) teachers' attitudes toward the balance of informational and literary texts in comparison with the previous set of NYS standards. Through the use of a teacher survey, the researcher assessed the relationship between teachers' attitudes toward the CCSS and these three factors.

In order to better support teachers as they seek to shift their instruction to support pedagogical shift three, balancing informational and literary texts, it is important that school districts and administrators understand teachers' attitudes and concerns toward the implementation process and the standards themselves. The data collected for this study demonstrated which factors related to pedagogical shift three predict both positive and negative attitudes toward the CCSS. School districts and administrators should alter their implementation plan to better support their educators based on their concerns and needs. The criterion variable for this study was teachers' attitudes toward the Common Core State Standards. The predictor variables for this study were teachers' attitudes toward the practicality of pedagogical shift three, balancing informational and literary texts, teachers' attitudes toward school support with the implementation process of pedagogical shift three, balancing informational and literary texts and teachers' attitudes toward the balance of informational and literary texts in comparison with the previous set of NYS standards.

Significance of the Study

For the 2012-2013 school year, all public schools in the state of New York were required to fully implement the NYS Common Core State Standards. One of the most significant pedagogical shifts of the CCSS required instruction to build knowledge through content-rich informational and literary texts. This requirement included exposing early childhood students to an equal amount of informational and literary texts at school (Young & Ward, 2012). With this shift came an increase in teacher anxiety and uncertainty of the appropriateness of such texts in early childhood classrooms. By determining the factors related to pedagogical shift three warranting both positive and negative attitudes toward the CCSS, school districts and administrators can alter their implementation plan of the CCSS to include greater teacher support and materials. This will allow teachers to understand and have the ability to properly implement pedagogical shift three, balancing informational and literary texts.

Research Questions

This study investigated the following research questions:

RQ1: Is there a relationship between teachers' attitudes toward the Common Core State Standards and teachers' scores on Part C of the teacher survey, practicality of pedagogical shift three of the Common Core State Standards, balancing informational and literary texts?

RQ2: Is there a relationship between teachers' attitudes toward the Common Core State Standards and teachers' scores on Part D of the teacher survey, school support of shift three of the Common Core State Standards, balancing informational and literary texts?

RQ3: Is there a relationship between teachers' attitudes toward the Common Core State Standards and teachers' scores on Part E of the teacher survey, Attitudes Toward the Balance of Informational and Literary Text with the Previous New York State Standards?

Definitions

1. *Balanced Literacy* - Balanced literacy is a curriculum approach that incorporates explicit skills instruction in the context of authentic texts (Duke & Block, 2012).
2. *Close Reading* - Close reading is a careful, sustained interpretation of a short passage of text (Duke & Martin, 2011).
3. *Common Core State Standards Initiative* - The Common Core State Standards Initiative is a set of pre-k-12 standards that aim to provide a consistent, sequenced description of student learning that will result in college and career readiness (Cheng, 2012).
4. *Core Knowledge* - Core knowledge is a curriculum, a systematic syllabus of topics to be studied by students in prekindergarten through eighth grade. It includes topics and subtopics in language arts, world history, American history, geography, visual arts, music, mathematics, and science (Hirsch, 2006b).
5. *Elementary grades* - Elementary grades are grades kindergarten through fifth grade.
6. *Informational Text* - Informational text is a subset of the larger category of non-fiction text; its primary purpose is to inform the reader about the natural or social world (Duke, 2004).
7. *Narrative Text* - Narrative text is a piece of text that tells a story from a particular point of view and can be presented using words, images, and/or sounds (Duke, 2000).
8. *Pedagogical Shift* - A pedagogical shift is a change in instructional methods to align with academic standards (Cheng, 2012).
9. *Project-Based Learning* - Project-based learning is a teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and

respond to an authentic, engaging, and complex question, problem, or challenge (Duke, 2016).

10. *School Conditions* - School conditions are conditions within the school that affect a teacher's ability to properly implement the Common Core State Standards.

11. *School Support* - School support is the job of the school district to provide resources, training, encouragement, and other forms of support to its teachers, in order to set them up for success.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

In the fall of 2012, New York State (NYS) launched the start of the NYS Common Core State Standards. Every public school in the state was required to be in full implementation at this time. A group of bipartisan governors and state superintendents united to develop this set of rigorous, internationally benchmarked academic standards covering ELA and mathematics. These standards were created based on decades of research conducted by education experts. Primarily, the Common Core promotes greater student learning in the following ways:

- Scaffolding student learning to provide a strong knowledge base on which new ideas and concepts are stacked,
- Holding all students to high expectations, which promotes greater student achievement and growth,
- Incorporating the latest research on how students learn to read to help close the literacy gap,
- Employing both the traditional method of teaching math and conceptual strategies to provide students with a strong understanding of math and the skills to apply it,
- Increasing the opportunities for students to learn from their peers and collaborate on assignments, which improves learning and interpersonal skills, and
- Promoting problem- and project-based learning, which leads to a deeper understanding of concepts (Marchitello & Wilhelm, 2014).

Since the Common Core State Standards have entered the implementation stage, teachers and administrators around the country have been under strict requirements to alter K-12 instruction to meet these new standards. Coupled with the new standards were numerous budget

cuts, leading school personnel to do more with less. Finally, multiple states implemented rigorous teacher assessment systems, requiring teachers to complete further training, log meticulous records, complete scholarly book reviews, and meet higher standards.

The recent initiative of the CCSS has made a significant effort to integrate more informational texts into early childhood instruction in order to build students' content knowledge and expose them to rich vocabulary. Although significant research has indicated a great necessity for more informational text in early childhood classrooms, recent studies demonstrated a severe shortage of such books in both instructional practices and classroom libraries (Duke, 2000; Hall & Sabey, 2007).

The new Common Core State Standards (CCSS) increased the ratio of informational to literary texts in early childhood classrooms. Currently, kindergarten through fifth grade classrooms are required by the CCSS to teach an equal amount of informational to literary texts, allowing students greater access to content related to science and social studies. The anticipated results of this shift are twofold. First, classrooms implementing the CCSS should expose their students to more content-rich text through integrating more informational text in their literacy instruction. Second, teachers of science and social studies should be explicitly teaching comprehension strategies through their content instruction in order for there to be a strong relationship between reading and the content areas (Young & Ward, 2012).

Theoretical Framework

The work of E.D. Hirsch, Jr. strongly influenced the creators of the CCSS in their effort to increase the proportion of informational to literary texts in early childhood classrooms. So much so that Politico, a political news source, recently awarded the number eight spot on their list of “thinkers, doers and dreamers who really matter” to E.D. Hirsch, Jr. and David Coleman,

the principal author of the Common Core State Standards in English language arts (Pondiscio, 2014).

Much of Hirsch's work has focused on how an increased amount of informational text exposure supports students, especially in high needs areas. More specifically, Hirsch's work sought to equalize educational opportunity on a knowledge-based approach to early schooling. This begins in preschool and is pursued systematically over several years so that students can overcome the language gap caused by family disadvantage (Hirsch, 2012). Hirsch developed The Core Knowledge Foundation, which seeks to alter the way educators view literacy. According to Hirsch (2006a), the only known way to enhance language abilities is for schools to follow a cumulative and coherent knowledge-based curriculum where each grade builds upon the last. This theory is based upon two beliefs. First, schools must outline the core knowledge necessary for each child to attain, while making sure that each school year exposes them to this selective information. Secondly, literacy in childhood education requires students to be constantly immersed in a subject matter context long enough for them to become familiar with its concepts and vocabulary (Stern, 2009).

Hirsch's theory that schools must emphasize core knowledge was based on the belief that reading comprehension requires a connection between language and background knowledge (Core Knowledge Foundation, 2012). Hirsch's beliefs were strongly linked to the schema theory. The concept of schema is used to understand the interaction of key factors in the comprehension process. According to the schema theory, all knowledge is compartmentalized into units, or schemata, where knowledge is held. Prior to entering school, students have developed schemata about their past experiences. This understanding develops theories that are then translated to reality. As new information is received, these theories develop and change.

Since reading comprehension is a cognitive-based process, activating and engaging students' schemata will allow for connections with past experiences and greater understanding (Schwartz, Ellsworth, Graham, & Knight, 1998). This theory was introduced by Piaget in 1926; however, it entered the education realm thanks to psychologist R.C. Anderson. According to Anderson's research, long-term memories are not fixed. They change and evolve like schemas. Other researchers that contributed to this body of research on the schema theory were Bartlett and Head (Myers, 2007).

According to Hirsch (2006a), the key to achievement is the ability to gain new information rapidly through reading and listening. Informational texts allow students to accomplish this. While Hirsch (2006b) encouraged explicit phonics instruction in every elementary reading classroom, the misconception remains that solely becoming a skilled decoder makes one a good reader. Curing the fourth grade slump, a trend in which students who appear to be doing fine suddenly start to struggle, requires students to gain broad general knowledge (Ness, 2011). The expectation for reading achievement in fourth grade quickly shifts from a student's ability to decode to a student's ability to comprehend their reading. This slump is when the knowledge deficit becomes extremely evident (Core Knowledge Foundation, 2012). According to Duke (2016), this shortcoming exists because there is a severe lack of exposure to informational texts in kindergarten through fourth grade classrooms. Due to this deficiency, children fail to develop the concept and skills necessary to read text to gain new knowledge and understanding (Duke, 2003).

Secondly, Hirsch (2006a) stated that elementary students must be immersed in informational texts throughout their literacy experience in order for them to become familiar with informational text and vocabulary. This means students gain general understanding of the

meaning of words through constant exposure. Therefore, discovering new vocabulary through informational text allows students to experience constant, ever-changing ways of content vocabulary to be used (Hirsch, 2006b). This vocabulary mastery cannot be taught with merely one exposure to a word. Since word learning is inherently slow and gradual, multiple exposures to a word in multiple contexts is necessary. Rather than linking vocabulary knowledge to a list of words, Hirsch's (2006a) research indicated that having a vast vocabulary is linked directly to having deep content knowledge.

A recent report from Hiebert and Cervetti (2011) outlined the differences between vocabulary found in narrative and informational texts. Specifically, this study identified how the approach to vocabulary instruction related to similar texts differed between the ELA and science classrooms. One important common factor among vocabulary taken from literary texts and vocabulary taken from informational texts was the number of lexical items identified for instruction. This number was notably similar, indicating the amount of words selected for ELA and science remain consistent. However, the selection of words varied greatly. For example, words such as "anemometer, meteorologists, and tornadoes" were selected when teaching a text on hurricanes in the science classroom, while words such as "expected, shatter, and destruction" were selected when teaching the same text in an ELA classroom. These differences indicated inconsistencies between vocabulary instruction related to informational text between these two classroom settings. With the push to balance literary and informational texts in elementary classrooms, it is important for teachers to identify both literary and content-related words to include in their instruction.

Hart and Risley (1995) discovered the number of words heard from birth to preschool varies greatly depending on the child's socio-economic status. This data was then compared with

the students' vocabulary development. The results indicated that there was a steep slump in vocabulary development when there was little exposure to complex words in the home. Children must hear words used repeatedly in meaningful context in order to learn new vocabulary (Hart & Risley, 1995). Since this slump was more prevalent in areas of poverty, pedagogical shift three of the CCSS becomes even more effective in areas with a low-socioeconomic status. This concept is also true, as studies have indicated lower socioeconomic students have less access to informational texts in their homes (Duke, 2000). Much of Hirsch's work was founded on this exact principle. In Hirsch's acceptance speech of the prestigious James Bryant Conant Award in 2012, Hirsch explained that a large vocabulary is, on average, the best single predictor of job competence and life chances. He went on to say that no single general test of academic achievement is more highly correlated with income and civic competence than a verbal test. Equalizing educational opportunity requires schools to close this language gap within the school walls rather than having a dependency upon knowledge and language acquisition in the home. This has been a main priority of Hirsch's work and the CCSS (Hirsch, 2012).

Hirsch's (2006a) research disputed the common belief that low reading comprehension is caused by poor technique and consequently suggested that students struggle with reading comprehension due to lack of knowledge and exposure to content-rich text. A recent study supported this belief. For three years, a pilot program tracked the reading ability of around 1,000 students in New York City. Half of these schools implemented Hirsch's curriculum set out by The Core Knowledge Foundation which prides itself on exposing students to nonfiction text in early childhood grades all the way through high school. The other schools used a "balanced literacy" approach which has been commonly integrated into schools across America. This approach seeks to utilize all of the components of reading necessary for students to master

written and oral communication through teaching grammar, phonics, reading comprehension, and writing (Israel & Duffy, 2008). Two areas were assessed to measure the effectiveness of each program. For this study, students who were taught with Hirsch's core knowledge outperformed their peers taught with the "balanced literacy" approach in reading comprehension and science and social studies knowledge (Core Knowledge Foundation, 2012).

In Hirsch's curriculum, the students were exposed to a skills strand which focused on the skills necessary to decode text, such as phonics and blending, which was combined with a listening and learning strand. This strand was implemented based upon Hirsch's 20 years of research, indicating that being successful in comprehension requires more than mastering the basic decoding skills. According to Hirsch (2006), students must have both language and content knowledge as well. This strand was comprised of read-alouds and oral language exercises that build students' listening and reading comprehension skills. The thematic units exposed students to enriching topics related to science and social studies but also allowed students to be exposed to this content at their own reading level (Stern, 2009).

Hirsch's (2006a) research strongly supports the work done with the CCSS and helps schools transition from balanced literacy to a reading program that integrates the initiatives of the new standards. This study supports Hirsch's (2016c) work and seeks to determine ways for school districts and administrators to better support their educators when implementing pedagogical shift three of the CCSS, balancing informational and literary texts. While the sound principles behind the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) call for more units on science and history within language arts instruction, Hirsch (2012) warned that merely following the letter and not the spirit of the CCSS will leave the same predicament as before the standards were implemented. Hirsch (2012) suggested that teaching this core knowledge must happen

coherently and systematically, rather than a helter-skelter approach. Much of this comes down to teacher understanding and school planning of content selection and instruction.

Hirsch's (2006a) work seeks to discredit a widely accepted concept by educators and school districts over the past decade. This is the view that comprehension depends on having formal skills rather than broad knowledge. According to Hirsch, until US schools take a gigantic leap in altering the literacy-based practices in which they teach reading and comprehension, great gains, especially from the nation's lowest academically achieving population, will never be met (Hirsch, 2012). This is seen by Hirsch as a major source of inequity in the nation's public education system.

Some of Hirsch's more recent work has focused on the defense of teachers for being blamed for inadequacies that are out of their control (Hirsch, 2016a, 2016b). According to Hirsch (2016a), the topic of teacher quality has suddenly reached a crescendo due to reform fatigue and desperation on the part of America's education reformers. Regardless of teacher quality, if the grade-by-grade content of schooling remains undefined, Hirsch believed schooling would remain unproductive over the long run. Therefore, Hirsch (2016b) suggested American teachers are blamed for the shortcomings of inadequate theories. However, Hirsch also expressed feelings regarding teacher treatment that may not resonate with most educators. According to Hirsch (2016a), teachers should not enjoy special job protections at the expense of children, thus Hirsch is not an advocate for teacher tenure and protection.

Hirsch has dedicated his career to creating a purposeful sequence of knowledge acquisition, founded in research-based best practices, particularly in the area of content-based reading instruction. This research strongly supports the shift by the CCSS to integrate more informational texts in early childhood classrooms. Hirsch (2006b) went beyond simply pushing

for more nonfiction text in classrooms. Hirsch (2006a) created a systematic outline indicating exactly what content knowledge should be mastered at each grade-level. The CCSS do not have a framework as specific as Hirsch (2006b) developed, but this may be something that states and districts integrate in the near future.

Related Literature

Lack of Informational Texts in Early Childhood Reading Instruction

Research indicates that fictional text has been highly favored by teachers in early childhood classrooms (Doiron, 2003; Williams, 2009). However, further studies indicated that children choose twice as many informational books when selecting books from the library (Doiron, 2003). Many factors contributed to this phenomenon. Historically, teachers have considered nonfiction text as being too difficult or uninteresting to elementary students (Duke, 2004). Some teachers express that their discomfort and unfamiliarity with nonfiction text prevents them from properly utilizing it in their instruction (Williams, 2005). Specifically, studies have shown inadequacies in teachers' content knowledge of science and social studies, which ultimately affects their ability to properly instruct in these areas with nonfiction text (Straits & Nichols, 2007). Also, many teachers are unsure how to support children's comprehension with nonfiction text and lacked methods to explicitly teach these skills (Marinak, 2008). Regardless of the reason for the lack of sufficient informational texts in early childhood classrooms, it is pertinent for teachers to be prepared with the tools and knowledge to effectively teach with informational texts on a daily basis.

Prior to discussing the current research and trends in the area of literacy instruction with informational texts, it is necessary to define the term "informational." The labeling of forms of informational texts varies along with their meaning. In order for teachers, librarians, and

practitioners to utilize informational texts effectively, it is necessary that they understand the several dimensions included in informational texts (Williams, 2009). Educators are responsible for making students aware of the differences between different types of text, and no definitive answer exists for what qualifies as “informational” (Duke, 2004). Some experts define informational texts as any true text, such as how-to books, instructional books, histories, informational books, travelogues, biographies, play scripts, and cookbooks. Others limit it to texts that convey information about the natural and social world (Williams, 2009). For this study, the term “informational” will consider its broadest classification term as any fact-based text.

Regardless of what constitutes informational text exposure in early childhood classrooms, the fact still remains that students are not adequately being taught to read and comprehend informational texts. A study by Duke (2000) revealed that the average elementary student is exposed to nonfiction text 3.6 minutes per day with schools of lower socioeconomic statuses exposing their students to an average of 1.9 minutes per day. Furthermore, informational text represented less than 10% of the classroom libraries in the study (Duke, 2000). Another study by Yopp (1995) found a mere 14% of classroom read alouds used informational text. They also found a lack of informational text exposure at home (Yopp, 1995). Several more recent studies have also shown a severe shortcoming of nonfiction texts in early childhood classroom libraries, regardless of the fact that it is preferred over fictional text by most students (Doiron, 2003; Duke, 2000; Duke & Bennett-Armistead, 2003; Young & Moss). The scarcity of informational texts in elementary classrooms has not been quantified by a research study since the implementation of the CCSS. While the statistics in this paragraph are staggering, these studies were conducted prior to the CCSS and the push to integrate more informational texts into all classrooms, specifically early childhood classrooms.

The scarcity of informational text in early childhood classrooms and homes is a serious shortcoming that must be addressed. Recent studies have indicated that not only does greater exposure to informational texts in the early childhood grades advance the reading progress of these students, but exposure to informational text actually helps students to read and write in several different genres (Moss, 2008). More recently, a study conducted by Ness (2011) indicated there has been an increase in nonfiction text in early childhood classrooms, averaging as much as 31.55 minutes of informational text instruction per day. This study indicated the shift toward more informational texts in early childhood classrooms began prior to the CCSS and is currently altering instructional practices. However, according to Duke (2016), while attention to informational text at the elementary school level has increased since Duke's 2004 study, it has remained lower than researchers believe it should be.

The demand for students to comprehend informational texts is evident by merely looking at a standardized reading test. Fifty to 80 percent of reading material on standardized tests is informational (Calkins, Montgomery, Santman, & Falk, 1998). Research has indicated students score significantly lower on informational texts rather than on literary passages (Mullis, Martin, Gonzalez, & Kennedy, 2003). This statistic demonstrates the strong need for improved instruction in this area.

The case for informational texts is apparent at the middle school and high school levels in addition to elementary school. The trends for these grade levels seem to be opposite of the trends in elementary classrooms. Since courses in high school are specific to their content, there has been a lack of reading instruction as part of content area teaching in subjects such as science or history (Moss, 2008). Along with this, content area teachers often read aloud to students rather than modeling for the students how to read the textbook material themselves (Armbruster

et al., 1991). The shifts in the CCSS have addressed this issue by incorporating explicit literacy instruction into the content areas at the middle school and high school grades (EngageNY, 2013).

Informational text cannot be avoided in the real world, which increases the responsibility of educators to prepare their students to become familiar with the nature of such text. The need for the ability to read and comprehend informational texts is even greater as students leave their school walls. According to Venezky (2000), the literacy needs of adults primarily center around their ability to process informational text. Pearson (2004) also added that competence with expository reading should concern future employers, as the ability to read expository text is a crucial skill for most skilled workers. What is done in the classroom to prepare students to comprehend nonfiction text directly affects the future success of the workplace. According to Duke (2003), the informational text skills that employers will expect their employees to have when entering the workforce are being able to obtain information from text and being able to process text nonlinearly. These skills should be communicated, modeled, and practiced on a consistent basis in early childhood classrooms (Wixson, 2009).

While nonfiction texts tend to be more difficult than fiction, it is essential that teachers provide a wide variety of text difficulty levels when selecting nonfiction books for their classroom libraries (Duke & Bennett-Armistead, 2003). When providing the students with an assortment of books on a given topic, it is necessary to arrange several books from different reading levels. For example, if the students are studying mammals in science, the teacher would create an area in the classroom with books on this content from several different reading levels. This provides all students the opportunity to support their content knowledge with appropriate books at their level (Young, Moss, & Cornwell, 2007).

Why Informational Text is Appropriate for the Early Childhood Classroom

Strong empirical research suggests informational text is developmentally appropriate for young children (Duke, 2003). Several recent studies have indicated the integration of nonfiction text not only boosts student achievement, but also increases students' motivation to read. According to Young et al. (2007), greater access to nonfiction text promotes inquiry and creates a sense of wonder by building on student interest in the natural world. It may also motivate reluctant readers by engaging them with visual supports that are attractive and appealing. The research of Young et al. (2007) also explained the knowledge benefits of nonfiction text. Nonfiction text expands students' background knowledge, allowing them to process and comprehend the content information and concepts found in their textbooks. This contributes to mastering content standards while also building content related vocabulary. Smolkin and Donovan (2001) discovered that students were more engaged when reading nonfiction text as opposed to fiction. Other research indicated student reading achievement increases when the student had the opportunity to read something that was of interest to them (Williams, 2009). While fictional text is interesting to many students, nonfiction text gives students the opportunity to read about specific people, places, and events of interest (Marinak, 2008). Nonfiction text allows students to gain content knowledge while also experiencing the world around them.

Elementary classrooms require differentiated instruction to meet the wide range of needs that exist in schools. With the ever-increasing need for diversified instruction in elementary classrooms, teachers are given the opportunity to mediate content literacy strategies in ways that differentiate the reading, writing, and learning needs of students with diverse abilities and backgrounds (Brozo, 2010). Particularly in writing, students are able to relate to topics, such as their families, homes, and objects that they interact with on a daily basis. Using descriptions in

writing to describe these familiar topics is an excellent way to build nonfiction literacy skills (Dollins, 2012).

Nonfiction text carries specific features which are not found in fictional books while engaging the reader in aspects of the real world (Ness, 2011). These features allow students to gather information in nontraditional ways. For example, students can gather information regarding a topic in a nonfiction book through photographs (Novakowski, 2010). This type of inferencing can be done well before students gain the ability to read words. Other text elements, such as titles, table of contents, captions, and vocabulary definitions, must be understood in order to truly understand the purpose of the text (Marinak, 2008). Nonfiction text also has unique characteristics that are not found in fictional text. Examples of these are communication of information about the natural or social world, content that is both factual and durable, timeless verb tenses and generic noun construction, technical or content-specific vocabulary, material to classify and define the topic of interest, text structures including compare/contrast, problem/solution, cause/effect, and enumeration/description, and embedded graphical features including diagrams, indices, charts, and maps (Duke, 2000). Students must experience these characteristics through purposeful, explicit instruction in early childhood classrooms in order to prepare for the abundance of exposure to these text characteristics in the later grades.

Informational text also contains a structure that differs greatly from fictional stories. In fictional text, teachers are generally comfortable with teaching characters, setting, problem, events, and solution. Informational elements include the author's purpose, major idea(s), supporting details, aids, and vocabulary. The vocabulary in informational text differs greatly from the vocabulary in fictional text. Informational vocabulary tends to be more technical in nature and is necessary in order to fully gain understanding of the text (Marinak, 2008).

Understanding this text structure is necessary in order for students to understand informational text (Williams, 2005).

There are two specific concepts that differentiate informational texts from literary texts. First, informational texts are primarily used as a means of communicating information. This concept differs from the primary role of literary texts, which is to tell a story. When children are not exposed to informational texts early in their academic careers, they fail to learn the concept that literacy is a means of obtaining or communicating information. This is a crucial concept that should be taught, modeled, and communicated as soon as children are able to interact with text (Duke, 2003). The second important text feature related to informational text that typically does not apply to literary text is the fact that text can be read nonlinearly (Wixson, 2009). With the increased use of technology and the responsibilities that await students in their adult lives, this concept is necessary and must be communicated at an early age (Duke, 2003).

Teachers are constantly looking for ways to improve and enhance their instruction. Since many teachers are uncomfortable with informational text, they may be uncomfortable with finding ways to integrate it into their curriculum (Williams, 2005). There are several different ways teachers can integrate informational text into their instruction. First, teachers should assess their read alouds to make sure they include a balance of informational and fiction books. Secondly, teachers can find trade books that support the science and social studies themes (Straits, 2007). These books can then be placed on bookshelves for students to access when they complete their work or have free time. Thirdly, teachers can integrate informational texts that students are familiar with from their daily lives. Examples include brochures, menus, newspapers, magazines, and bulletins. These can be integrated into math instruction where appropriate. It is necessary to assess one's instructional habits to seek opportunities to expose

students to more nonfiction text (Donovan & Smolkin, 2001). Another space filled with informational content that is frequently explored by students is the Internet. Kamil and Lane (1998) found that 95% of the sites commonly visited on the Internet contain informational text. Teachers should encourage research and reading of informational text through exploring the Internet.

When choosing expository texts to integrate into elementary reading instruction and libraries, it is important to consider student reading interests. According to Reutzel and Fawson (2002), the opportunity for students to choose books based on their own interests happens far too infrequently. When choosing informational books for the classroom library, it is also necessary to evaluate each book for specific characteristics. Moss, Leone, & DiPillo (1997) developed an evaluation system teachers should consider when choosing nonfiction books for their classrooms. These are five A's: 1) the authority of the author, 2) the accuracy of the text content, 3) the appropriateness of the book for its audience, 4) the literary artistry, and 5) the appearance of the book (Moss et al., 1997).

- Authority relates to the author's qualifications for writing the book. The best authors consult authorities in a variety of fields to ensure credibility.
- Accuracy of content as well as visual features is the lynchpin of good nonfiction.
- The best nonfiction books are appropriate to their intended audiences. They do not talk down to readers but are successful in making complex concepts comprehensible.
- Literary artistry refers to the need for quality writing in nonfiction. The best nonfiction books contain engaging information presented through the use of narrative devices like simile and metaphors, "hooks," and others.

- A book's attractiveness matters to today's students, who are accustomed to an array of visual media. They expect materials with a strong visual impact. Attractive presentation of information can mean the difference between a book students will select rather than reject. (Moss et al., 1997, p. 420)

Another effective use of informational text access in elementary classrooms is provided by creating specialized text sets of books. Teachers can create small groups of books related to a specific area of interest or topic of study (Young, Moss, & Cornwell, 2007). Also, teachers should combine nonfiction and fiction titles pairs to deepen their understanding of both genres (Moss, 2003).

Along with the importance of teachers selecting appropriate informational texts comes the importance of allowing students the opportunity to choose books that interest them. In order for students to have the opportunity to choose books that interest them, it is necessary to provide them with an array of informational books with a wide spread of content. According to Moss (2003), half of the collection of each elementary classroom library should be nonfiction, with that ratio expanding, decreasing the percentage of fictional text, in upper elementary grades.

While exposure is an important element to familiarizing students with nonfiction, being able to successfully read informational text does not happen without explicit instruction. Students must learn how to read this type of text, and that comes through exposure paired with instruction (Moss, 2003). Digesting informational text requires a much different skill set than fiction text. Furthermore, students are much more comfortable with fictional text, as that is the genre of choice on most early childhood bookshelves (Baer, 2012). Teaching students the skills necessary to comprehend nonfiction text includes instruction on elements of informational books, sequencing, engaging prior knowledge, and introducing very specific vocabulary

necessary to comprehend the particular topic. While some may say these skills are too difficult for elementary students, they will be successfully mastered when they are modeled and explicitly taught in the early elementary grade-levels (Moss, 2008). The expectation is for students to read and comprehend nonfiction text in grades kindergarten, first, and second grades with teacher support. Independence is gained in upper-elementary as students make the transition from “learning to read” to “reading to learn” (Weis, 2004).

While the reasons for the lack of nonfiction text in elementary classrooms are many, there is strong support from professional research that it is necessary. The CCSS initiative has attempted to resolve this issue. This research study seeks to determine what factors inhibit or promote these changes from happening. If teachers are unprepared or uncomfortable with teaching informational comprehension strategies, it is the responsibility of teacher education programs and school districts to prepare and provide resources to educators to teach effectively in this area.

The Common Core State Standards

The New York State Common Core State Standards’ objectives have dramatically impacted the instructional practices of teachers in pre-kindergarten all the way through high school. There were specific and definitive changes for instruction in both English language arts and math. One of the most influential shifts in English language arts required the integration of more informational texts. Specifically, early childhood classrooms have integrated an even amount of informational and literary texts. This ratio expands to an 85% informational to 15% literary ratio in the high school grades (Young & Ward, 2012).

According to the CCSS, informational text is defined as text with the primary purpose of expressing information about the arts, sciences, or social studies. Teachers have the option to

integrate text from newspapers, magazines, trade books, and textbooks to make up half of their instruction. There are four types of informational text specified by the CCSS, literacy nonfiction, expository, argument or persuasion, and procedural texts (Young & Ward, 2012).

Literacy nonfiction includes personal essays, speeches, opinion pieces, biographies, memoirs, journalism, historical, scientific, technical, or economic writings and essays about art or literature. Other examples often include autobiographies, biographies, informational picture books, and informational poetry. This type of text is often written like a story, including a distinct beginning, middle, and end. They also portray true and accurate information and may teach the alphabet or counting (Young & Ward, 2012).

Expository texts contain several elements that must be explicitly taught in reading classes. These include tables of contents, indexes, photos, and captions. It is not necessary to read such books cover to cover in order to extract information from the text. This feature of informational text varies from literary text which must be read linearly. These texts use various text structures, such as description, compare and contrast, problem and solution, question and answer, cause and effect, and temporal sequence (Young & Ward, 2012).

Argument and persuasion texts seek to influence the beliefs or actions of the reader. Such texts are included in the category of persuasive writing. In order to accomplish the goal of persuading the reader, the writer must provide evidence to support their cause. Writers of such books may often make appeals to support the author's credibility, the audience's needs, or to reason with evidence (Young & Ward, 2012).

Finally, procedural texts outline step-by-step guidelines that describe how to complete a task. They may also include the materials necessary to complete the task along with pictures and other necessary elements to make the task doable and understandable. Examples of such texts

include information on rules for games or directions on how to make things (Young & Ward, 2012).

The CCSS have outlined four specific reading standards: key ideas and details, craft and structure, integration of knowledge and ideas, and range of reading and level of text complexity. These standards dictate the sequence of expectations set for our students each year. The verbiage used to outline these standards demonstrates a clear connection amongst grade-levels (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010).

According to the Common Core State Standards Initiative (2010), “key ideas and details is a standard that requires students to (1) read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text; (2) determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas; and (3) analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text” (p. 11). This standard requires students to determine what the author is communicating by drawing out both information and the author’s literal intention. In first grade, students are asked to ask and answer questions about key details in a text. In second grade, students are expected to ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010).

“Craft and structure is a standard that requires students to (1) interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone; (2) analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section , chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole; and (3) assess how point of view or

purpose shapes the content and style of a text” (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010, p. 11) In kindergarten, students are expected to be able to identify the front cover, back cover, and title page of a book. In first grade, students are expected to be able to explain major differences between books that tell stories and books that give information. In second grade, students are expected to describe the overall structure of a story, including how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010).

The integration of knowledge and ideas standard requires that students will (1) “integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words; (2) delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence; and (3) analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take” (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010, p. 11). Students demonstrating this standard must synthesize information across texts. This standard develops students’ ability to read critically. In kindergarten, with prompting, students are expected to compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in familiar stories. In first grade, students are expected to compare and contrast without prompting. In second grade, students are expected to compare and contrast two or more versions of the same story by different authors or from different cultures (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010).

The fourth and final standard, range of reading and level of text complexity, requires that students will “read and comprehend complex literacy and informational texts independently and proficiently” (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010, p. 11). In kindergarten, students

should be actively engaged in group reading activities with purpose and understanding. In first grade, students should, with prompting and support, read prose and poetry of appropriate complexity for their grade level. In second grade, by the end of the year, students should read and comprehend literature, including stories and poetry, in the grades 2-3 text complexity band proficiently with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010).

While it is important to understand what is covered by the CCSS, it is equally important to realize what is not outlined or required by following these standards. The standards do not indicate how teachers should teach, rather what students are expected to know and be able to do. These standards must be accompanied by a content-rich curriculum, as they do not enumerate most of the content that students should learn. The content of what is learned is left up to the individual teacher or the curriculum developers. The CCSS also do not outline the nature of advanced work for students who meet the standards prior to completing high school. Likewise, the standards do not define what intervention methods or materials are necessary for students who do not meet the standards and require altered instruction to meet their needs. Therefore, this set of standards is merely a framework for states to implement in their public schools to measure mastery and ensure college and career readiness for their students. A wide range of decisions based on specific content and instructional methods must be made by individual districts to guarantee the needs of each student are being met (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010).

According to EngageNY (2013), there are six major shifts with the Common Core State Standards. All of these shifts will either affect the amount of nonfiction texts that students are exposed to in the elementary classroom, or the quality of the instruction of nonfiction texts and

content. One shift indicates that students will read a true balance of informational and literacy texts. Next, students will build upon their knowledge of the world through text rather than teacher-led activities. Thirdly, classroom teachers will carefully integrate a staircase of complexity, which will allow students to read central, grade appropriate text, while teachers create more time and space. One of the most important aspects of this shift is the purposeful integration of close reading. Another shift requires students to create text-based answers, which requires rich and rigorous evidence based conversations about text. Next, student writing will also be supported with evidence from sources that will inform the reader or make an argument. Finally, the CCSS build the transferable vocabulary they need to access grade level complex texts (EngageNY, 2013).

While the CCSS shift requires greater reading instruction in the content areas at the high school level, elementary classrooms will see more content literacy, such as texts involving social studies and science content integrated in reading instruction. Greater content integration via informational text will and should gradually make its way into the reading instruction of elementary classrooms. This initiative is strongly supported by research (Stern, 2009) and should be followed up with additional research to ensure its effectiveness and validity.

In September of 2016, revisions to ELA and math standards in New York State (NYS) were proposed by Commissioner MaryEllen Elia. These new standards were drafted as a result of a 35,000 mile trip that Commissioner Elia took across New York State, discussing the challenges, strengths, and objectives of education with teachers, parents, and community members. It was determined that necessary changes to the NYS standards will be considered, modified, and presented to the NYS Board of Regents in 2017 (Burman, 2016).

Several recommended changes were presented from the five committee groups that deliberated upon the new standards. These committee groups were broken down by prekindergarten to grade two, grades three to five, grades six to eight, grades nine to 12, and literacy grades six to 12. Both parents and educators were involved in these discussions (Lang 2016). The committees highlighted six recommended changes. Three of these changes did not directly identify the research presented in this study. These three changes were:

- (1) Refocus on Prekindergarten-Grade 2 Standards with some grade-specific changes and additions to the ELA Standards, including a strong emphasis on the whole child and the importance of play as an instructional strategy. This includes the need for additional guidance for P-2 on how the standards are implemented in the classroom, including sample instructional strategies and activities, definitions and clear connections to teaching English language learners and students with disabilities;
- (2) Create a New York State Early Learning Task Force to discuss concerns around the P-2 grades, including standards, program decisions, social emotional needs and how the content areas/domains work together in the early grades. This task force will be formed in the coming weeks; and
- (3) Re-organize Writing Standards so they are easier for educators to use for curriculum and instruction. In addition to regrouping the standards, grade-specific changes are recommended across the grades to clarify language and ensure writing expectations are clear. (Burman, 2016)

With these three suggestions were three other modifications to the standards that directly correlated to this study. First, committees suggested that the updates streamline reading for information and reading for literature standards. With this suggestion, the committees did

mention a balance in literary and informational texts, which does align with the current standards and the research presented throughout this study. However, the skills and procedures aligned with reading literary and informational texts have very different features. Combining those processes may omit some of the important skills required to successfully manipulate and comprehend each type of text.

Secondly, the committees made a specific suggestion to balance literary and informational texts while also providing clear guidance for the teacher to ensure students read both full-length and shorter texts. Included in this recommendation was encouraging students to read for pleasure. This suggestion does align with the research presented in this study, and therefore the results could positively impact the implementation going forward.

The final recommendation for the new standards was to provide guidance on text complexity for all standards. This suggestion will help teachers to better understand and implement the staircase of complexity. While the NYS ELA learning standards may undergo a total revamping in the near future, the current draft still requires a balance between informational and literary texts in early childhood classrooms. Therefore, the research presented in this study should support the efforts of Commissioner Elia and staff going forward, as they seek to better support teachers, children, parents, and administrators in the classroom (Burman, 2016).

Past Education Initiatives

In order to gain a better understanding of the changes that have taken place in the nation's pursuit to properly educate our students, it is necessary to review the past initiatives that have been implemented into our public school districts. With any reform comes disagreements, and the arguments over academic reform have been historically connected to two factors: content and pedagogy. The majority of our nation's academic modifications have been put in place by

politicians. One of the foundational academic initiatives in the United States was led by Thomas Jefferson in 1779. Jefferson proposed a two-track educational system, one for the laborers and one for the learned. In the early 20th century were Jean Jacques Rousseau and John Dewey, leading the way in their support of progressive education (Tumbler, 2008). In 1983, the U.S. Department of Education exposed a shocking report entitled, “A Nation at Risk.” This troubled report revealed the troubled state of the nation’s 84,000 public schools, which had taken quite a hit by dropping enrollments, property-tax revolts, and the spread of teacher unionism. With America’s workplace making an overwhelming shift to brains over brawn, it became very evident that our schools had to push a far wider range of students to a higher level. Again, lawmakers and politicians had their own way of dealing with this issue. In the 1980’s, Ronald Reagan declared competition between public and private schools to be the best remedy for what troubled public education. He sought to initiate a voucher program that would distribute billions of dollars in federal education aid through vouchers redeemable at both public and private schools. This policy was followed by another academic alternative, as publicly funded but independently operated charter schools flourished in the early 1990’s. When former President Bill Clinton was in office, he initiated multiple academic reforms, including Goals 2000, which helped states establish standards of excellence for all children. He also administered Title I funds to high-poverty schools, requiring districts to turn around low-performing schools (Klein, 2003).

Perhaps one of the most well-known education initiatives initiated by politicians and lawmakers was introduced in 2001 by former President George W. Bush. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) supported standards-based education reform based on the premise that setting high standards and establishing measurable goals can improve individual outcomes in education. This

act had a huge impact on our teachers, schools, and students by increasing accountability, allowing school choice for students in failing districts, requiring schools to rely on research-based programs, creating highly qualified teachers, and improving test scores. While the goals of this initiative were wide-spread, the act's slogan summarized its intentions: "to close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice, so that no child is left behind" (US Congress, 2002, p.1). While this legislation has both supporters and protestors, it is evident that this initiative had lasting effects on our schools, leading them to the implementation of the Common Core State Standards.

While the education pendulum has wavered back and forth throughout our nation's history, few disagree that it is the desire of our nation to create mature, prepared, and responsible leaders of our country's tomorrow. Each academic reform has pushed our country to set higher expectations and greater goals for our students. It is the goal of the CCSS that with excellent instruction and appropriate standards, students will be better prepared than those who came before them for the world that they will enter as they leave high school.

Implementing Research-Based Instructional Changes

As the educational pendulum swings yet again, forcing our teachers to alter their instruction and learn a new set of standards, resistance and opposition are inevitable. Whether or not educators and administrators are willing to see the positive aspects of this new initiative, it is supported by empirical research that supports its efforts (Duke, 2004; Hirsch, 2006a). However, simply labeling an initiative as "research-based" does not immediately employ teacher acceptance (Duke & Martin, 2011). The success of this shift is highly based upon how effectively the states, counties, and districts are able to communicate with their educators in order to facilitate a smooth transition. Often, state standards bear little resemblance of what is

being taught in the classrooms (Achieve, 2010). Significant research has outlined certain strategies that support these educational transitions and must be considered by the authorities transferring pertinent information regarding the CCSS in order to increase teacher buy-in and decrease the amount of stress caused by the implementation stage (Waugh & Godfrey, 1993).

Government agencies, political figures, superintendents, and other leaders in our education system must consider the factors that have supported reform efforts in the past. According to a study conducted by Dancy and Henderson (2012), there were two major factors that participants noted as being helpful in implementing research-based teaching. First, participants reported that the support and encouragement that they received by local colleagues that were familiar with this style of teaching pushed them to be more innovative. This support also confirmed to these teachers that the research-based strategies they were expected to utilize were effective and accepted by other educators. Another key factor that educators reported made their transition easier was the technology and supplies that were administered to them to incorporate into their instruction. According to this research, having the necessary supplies to facilitate the expected teaching model is crucial to the effectiveness of its implementation (Dancy & Henderson, 2012).

Another crucial concept that must be considered with any new initiative is the fidelity of its implementation. Fidelity is the degree to which the treatment is implemented as intended (Achieve, 2010). The educators and politicians pushing the CCSS agenda understand that standards alone will not accomplish the goal of all students being ready for college and careers by the end of high school (Achieve, 2010). Several factors strongly affect a teacher, school, or state's ability to implement an initiative with high fidelity (Kaderavek & Justice, 2010).

One way of ensuring fidelity is by analyzing common assessments. These assessments must be created to match the new standards. Part of ensuring a smooth transition with the implementation of the CCSS requires a shift to next-generation assessments (Achieve, 2010). A consortium of 31 states began developing common assessments that measure performance tasks based on the CCSS, including required summative assessments and optional formative exams. There are several benefits to having common assessments among states. First, common assessments provide a consistent measure of student performance among states, which will then allow states to compare students by using a common measure. Also, participating in a consortium is a cost effective option that allows states to pool both financial and intellectual resources to minimize costs. This consortium also allows individual states to do more technologically than what they could afford to do as a separate entity. Having states work together also allows for more collaboration in other critical areas including curriculum materials, formative assessments, instructional tools, and teacher professional development (Achieve, 2010).

With any new initiative, it is crucial states develop a strategic implementation plan. Implementation for the CCSS required greater accountability at every level. The type of accountability expected for this shift was not one of punitive measures. Targeting assistance to schools that were in need of help and motivating exemplary performance were at the forefront of this accountability. According to the CCSS, the road to implementation required several specific steps that were carried out by each state and district (Achieve, 2010). First, states created a strategic implementation team. The primary job of this team included setting a timeline for full implementation. States and districts also created a supportive environment that was conducive to a successful implementation plan. At the state level, creating a supportive environment meant

engaging the individuals required to train districts of what successful implementation looks like. Each individual district worked effortlessly to create a suitable environment that allowed its teachers to be trained and prepared to implement the CCSS into their classrooms. Also, districts created a plan, timeline, and budget that determined dates for implementation, the expertise needed to transition successfully, and what funding was available and necessary to support these efforts (Dancy & Henderson, 2012).

According to Waugh and Godfrey (1993), there is evidence to suggest that major educational changes can be implemented more faithfully by teachers if administrators take into account certain variables. First, the benefits of the new curricula or standards must outweigh the cost of the implementation. Benefits may include increased satisfaction with teaching, better student learning, and better meeting student needs. Costs may include extended work hours, changes in teacher job responsibilities, and the school's fiscal commitment. Also, the practicality of implementing the new initiative is a crucial factor that affects teacher receptivity. Practicality means that sufficient resources, proper training, and practicality of use must be considered and attended to in order for teachers to be able to effectively integrate the new standards. Another important variable that affects teacher receptivity is the availability of mechanisms that allow teachers to raise their concerns and questions regarding the new enterprise. Teacher participation in decision-making can also have a significant impact on teacher buy-in. Furthermore, the perceived support and attitudes toward the administration may also affect teacher receptivity. Teachers are also more likely to have positive attitudes toward the change if it is perceived to be offering clear advantages over the previous efforts. Therefore, it is crucial that the administration clearly outlines these benefits during meetings and professional development opportunities regarding the new shift (Waugh & Godfrey, 1993).

Research indicates that there are several effective strategies that districts can use when implementing a new initiative. These tactics support implementation in an array of settings, not just schools. By better understanding what leads to a successful implementation, schools will be able to train their teachers effectively to make meaningful changes in their instruction.

Duke and Informational Text Integration

A well-known educational researcher, Duke, has spent extensive time studying informational texts in early childhood classrooms. Duke is currently a professor of language, literacy, and culture at the University of Michigan. Duke's research ranges from informational text in early childhood classrooms to narrowing the achievement gap in low socio-economic school districts. Duke is also a strong advocate for literacy teachers understanding the need for research-based practices in reading classrooms (Duke & Martin, 2011).

Duke's reading research has provided educators with research-based best practices for instruction and assessment (Duke, Pearson, Strachan, & Billman, 2011). Such recommendations include greater attention to and improvement of students' word-reading skills, building conceptual and content knowledge in science and social studies, increasing vocabulary and comprehension skills, and greater access to nonfiction texts in the classroom (Duke, 2000). Duke's (2016) research indicated that significant progress has been made in the area of word-reading skills in elementary classrooms. However, areas of vocabulary, comprehension, and conceptual content knowledge are still being neglected. Consequently, fourth grade test scores have remained stagnant (Duke, 2004). According to Duke and Block (2012), there are three key obstacles that prevent this progress from taking place in elementary schools. First, the concentration in elementary classrooms tends to be on instructional reform that focuses on reading skills that are easier to teach and learn at the expense of vocabulary, conceptual and

content knowledge, and reading comprehension strategies. Second, there is a lack of proficiency on the part of many educators in how to effectively teach these harder-to-master reading skills. The third obstacle plaguing our elementary classrooms is a lack of time in the school day and year to meet the expectations set before them. Given the role of content knowledge on most state and national exams, the need to take deliberate action to improve these areas of elementary reading instruction is crucial (Duke & Block, 2012).

According to Duke (2004), one issue that is plaguing elementary classrooms is the lack of foundational content literacy skills. The neglect of both social studies and other content area literacy in early childhood classrooms leaves our students unprepared for the skills necessary to be successful in upper-elementary, middle school, and high school (Duke, 2004). Both Kintsch's (1998) model of reading and other schema theory-based approaches emphasize necessary skills and knowledge that lead to comprehension. These models place a strong importance on the readers' prior knowledge as the cornerstone of the comprehension process (Anderson & Pearson, 1984). Knowledge is brought to the comprehension process, and that drives understanding. Knowledge is then transformed by the new knowledge that is gained through comprehension. When there is a lack of informational text in elementary classrooms, students do not gain the exposure and background information necessary to support their reading comprehension with more complex texts that they will encounter in upper elementary classes (Duke et al., 2011).

Duke (2003) recommended several classroom activities using information books in the article, *Information Books in Early Childhood*. First, Duke recommended interactive read-alouds. According to Duke (2003), highly interactive informational text read-alouds have benefits that include building vocabulary and developing knowledge of linguistic features of nonfiction books. When conducting this activity, it is important that teachers ask higher-order

questions that force students to make connections. Other recommendations by Duke (2003) include creating interest groups that work collaboratively to read about a specific interest that they share, writing with the purpose of conveying information about the natural world, using innovations to create new texts, and explicitly teaching about the text features that are found in nonfiction text. Duke's research is compiled of empirical data that supports integrating nonfiction text in early childhood classrooms along with recommendations and tools for teachers on how to accomplish this strategy successfully in their classrooms.

One concern voiced from many educators is that they are not prepared to integrate informational texts in their classrooms. This concern could be due to a lack of materials, not enough information, unfamiliarity with best practices, or little school support. According to Duke (2016), project-based literacy (PBL) instruction is a perfect match for the integration of informational texts. Preparing teachers to effectively integrate informational texts in their classrooms requires them to understand project-based learning. A recent article outlines four must-follow rules for designing a PBL classroom (Heick, 2013). First, PBL requires a classroom that supports collaboration. This suggestion may require teachers to replace desks with floor mats or alternative seating while also keeping in mind that students need access to technology and classroom PBL tools. Secondly, a classroom geared toward PBL requires easy access to information. Student seating and content materials should be relatively close, out, and easy to access. Next, a classroom geared toward PBL should use technology with purpose. This requirement encourages students to conduct research online, use spreadsheets and databases to organize information, and use video-editing and presentation software to transmit ideas. Finally, PBL uses the teacher as the most important resource to facilitating learning. Teachers must be flexible, supportive, and engaged in the learning process throughout the project. Important

responsibilities include introducing the project's themes and goals, ensuring students have all the resources and materials they need, and keeping the students and the classroom organized (Heick, 2013). According to Duke (2016), project-based learning approaches help teachers to avoid many of the potential pitfalls of informational reading and writing instruction. This type of learning allows students to solve a problem, address a need, and answer a question. PBL is closely aligned with Duke's research on integrating more informational texts into elementary classrooms.

Summary

The research discussed in this literature review supports the shift in the CCSS to incorporate greater instruction of informational texts in early childhood classrooms. Regardless of teachers' receptivity and perceptions regarding this shift, there is significant research supporting the necessity for more informational texts in early childhood classrooms. There has also been significant research that makes a strong suggestion that there is a lack of such text in these classrooms. Therefore, it is pertinent that teachers are prepared to make these adjustments to their instruction immediately. Waiting until the upper elementary grades to begin explicitly teaching nonfiction comprehension strategies leaves students unprepared to perform well on their standardized tests and leaves them with a severe shortcoming when they enter high school and complete state exams.

Further research should be conducted to determine specific methods of nonfiction literacy instruction that are lacking in most reading programs. This shift in early elementary literacy instruction should strongly influence instruction and settling for what has always been will not allow the CCSS to achieve the outcomes it was created to achieve. The purpose of this study was to determine factors that influence elementary teachers' receptivity to the CCSS and to

formulate a plan for preparing these teachers to implement the CCSS effectively. Specifically, this study sought to support teachers in implementing pedagogical shift three, balancing literary and informational texts, by providing the resources, materials, training, and guidance that they need to integrate this instructional shift successfully.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

With the new Common Core State Standards initiative, a greater emphasis has been placed on integrating informational text in early childhood classrooms. In order for classrooms to make this giant leap, teachers must be receptive to these new standards. The goal of this study was to determine the correlation between teacher attitudes toward the CCSS and three predetermined factors related to pedagogical shift three, balancing informational and literary texts. This data will be used to direct school districts and administrators in creating an effective implementation plan that supports teachers as they seek to follow this pedagogical shift. In any system-wide educational change that requires altering instruction, teachers' feelings toward the change is an important determinant of its successful implementation. By determining the variables that affect teachers' feelings to this new agenda, education decision-makers can prepare new proposals that are tailored to achieve the best chance of successful implementation.

Design

The research design selected for this quantitative study was correlational. Correlational designs are used to describe the degree of relationship between two or more variables (Creswell, 2009). Pearson correlation coefficient was used in this study to determine the relationship between teachers' attitudes toward the CCSS and three predetermined factors related to pedagogical shift three of the CCSS. These factors were (a) teachers' attitudes toward the practicality of pedagogical shift three, balancing informational and literary texts; (b) teachers' attitudes toward school support with the implementation process of pedagogical shift three, balancing informational and literary texts; and (c) teachers' attitudes toward the balance of informational and literary texts in comparison with the previous set of NYS standards.

The criterion variable for this study was teachers' attitudes toward the Common Core State Standards. The predictor variables for this study were (a) teachers' attitudes toward the practicality of pedagogical shift three, balancing informational and literary texts; (b) teachers' attitudes toward school support with the implementation process of pedagogical shift three, balancing informational and literary texts; and (c) teachers' attitudes toward the balance of informational and literary texts in comparison with the previous set of NYS standards.

Research Questions

This study investigated the following research questions:

RQ1: Is there a relationship between teachers' attitudes toward the Common Core State Standards and teachers' scores on Part C of the teacher survey, practicality of pedagogical shift three of the Common Core State Standards, balancing informational and literary texts?

RQ2: Is there a relationship between teachers' attitudes toward the Common Core State Standards and teachers' scores on Part D of the teacher survey, school support of shift three of the Common Core State Standards, balancing informational and literary texts?

RQ3: Is there a relationship between teachers' attitudes toward the Common Core State Standards and teachers' scores on Part E of the teacher survey, Attitudes Toward the Balance of Informational and Literary Text with the Previous New York State Standards?

Hypotheses

The null hypotheses for this study were:

H₀1: There is no statistically significant correlation between teachers' attitudes toward the Common Core State Standards and teachers' scores on Part C of the teacher survey, practicality of pedagogical shift three of the Common Core State Standards, balancing informational and literary texts.

H₀2: There is no statistically significant correlation between teachers' attitudes toward the Common Core State Standards and teachers' scores on Part D of the teacher survey, school support of shift three of the Common Core State Standards, balancing informational and literary texts.

H₀3: There is no statistically significant correlation between teachers' attitudes toward the Common Core State Standards and teachers' scores on Part E of the teacher survey, Attitudes Toward the Balance of Informational and Literary Text with the Previous New York State Standards.

Participants and Setting

The participants for this study were 4,000 early childhood teachers throughout the state of New York. Teachers from rural, suburban, and urban districts were sent the survey via email throughout the 2015-2016 school year. The researcher identified kindergarten, first grade, and second grade teachers when compiling the distribution list. All of the completed and returned surveys were included in the data analysis for this study. Of the 4,000 teachers who were sent the survey, 397 responses were received, providing a 10% return rate.

Instrumentation

The primary instrument for this study was a survey that was administered to 4,000 early childhood teachers in the state of New York. The first scale on this instrument contained demographic questions about the participant. Next, four scales were modified from Waugh and Godfrey's (1993) *Teacher Receptivity to System-Wide Change in the Implementation Stage* with permission from the researchers. In Waugh and Godfrey's (1993) original survey, ten specific areas of implementation were analyzed. These were teacher attitudes, cost benefit, practicality, school support, teacher participation in decision-making, perceived support from senior staff,

feelings compared to the previous system, general behavior intentions toward the unit curriculum, overall feelings toward the unit curriculum, and concerns about important issues. For this study, these categories were reduced to teachers' attitudes toward the CCSS ($a = .89$), teachers' attitudes toward the practicality of pedagogical shift three of the CCSS ($a = .80$), teachers' attitudes toward school support with the implementation process of pedagogical shift three of the CCSS ($a = .80$), and teachers' attitudes toward the balance of informational and literary texts in comparison with the previous NYS standards ($a = .85$). These scales were tested and proven to be both valid and reliable by the researchers, Waugh and Godfrey (1993). The original instrument was found reliable by Waugh and Godfrey using the Person Separation Index (PSI) = 0.95. Chronbach's alpha was calculated on the raw scores for this study's survey ($a = .88$). The internal consistency proved to be good for each of the instruments.

It was determined that not all of the categories from Waugh and Godfrey's (1993) study were relevant to the implementation of the CCSS or pedagogical shift three, which is why some categories were omitted. For example, the cost benefit, teacher participation, significant other support, general behavior intentions, overall feelings, and concerns about important issue sections were all omitted. In total, 67 questions were presented in Waugh and Godfrey's survey. The teachers surveyed for this study did not have the time to commit to such a lengthy survey, so it was suggested that the survey be condensed for this particular study.

The researcher condensed the categories based on Waugh and Godfrey's (1993) description of each section. For example, the "Teacher Participation" section asked participants about their influence on the implementation procedures and how they were handled. Since the CCSS implementation was passed down at the state level and handled primarily by administrative teams, the researcher chose to omit this section. Also, the "Concerns About

Important Issues” section focused on specific aspects of the unit curriculum implemented in western Australia, so many of these questions did not pertain to the CCSS implementation.

The creators of this survey granted the researcher permission to alter the wording of the questions to match the specific information that the researcher sought to gain through this study. Once the researcher was able to narrow down the sections used for this study, she modified the questions to reflect the CCSS and pedagogical shift three. For example, in the “Practicality” section, Waugh and Godfrey (1993) worded a question as: “Do the course outlines suit your classroom teaching style?” For this study, the question was modified to read: “Does pedagogical shift three, balancing informational with literary texts, of the CCSS suit your classroom teaching style?” Another example from the “Feelings Toward the Previous System” section reads: “In comparison to the previous education system, the Unit Curriculum provides for better student learning.” This question has been modified to read: “In comparison to the balance of informational and literary texts with NYS’ previous set of standards, the CCSS provide for better student learning.” These minor changes aligned each question with the CCSS and the pedagogical shift that was evaluated, while not changing the meaning or relevance of the question from Waugh and Godfrey’s study.

The final section of this survey was a group of open-ended questions (see Appendix C) that the researcher used strictly to gain a better understanding of teachers’ perceptions regarding the CCSS. This section allowed teachers to expand upon specific concerns, benefits, strengths, and downfalls of the CCSS, but the data was not reported as part of the correlation. This survey was mixed-mode in nature and included a five-point Likert scale and five category semantic differential and open-ended questions.

Procedures

After submitting an IRB application and gaining approval, the researcher conducted the research. After receiving the IRB approval, the survey was distributed via email to kindergarten through second grade teachers throughout the state of New York. Prior to administering the survey, the researcher gained approval from superintendents and principals from each school district. Appendix E includes the letter that was sent to school leaders, and Appendix D includes the letter that was sent to the participants. The survey was distributed as a Google form. Initially, the researcher sent the survey to two-thousand kindergarten through second grade teachers, expecting a 25% response rate. Very few responses were returned. To combat this issue, the researcher expanded the pool of teachers being surveyed to 4,000 participants, sent the survey at two different times in the school year (October and December), and altered the wording in the email to provide more clarification. Finally, 397 surveys were returned, which was a 10% response rate. Once the surveys were returned, the researcher analyzed the data.

Data Analysis

The SPSS software program was used to assist in the analysis of the data obtained through the survey administered by the researcher. Initially, descriptive statistics for the demographics and scales were monitored and reported. These statistics included mean, standard deviation, median, interquartile range, or proportions whenever needed. Next, the Pearson r correlation was used to analyze the linear relationships between the criterion variable of teachers' attitudes toward the CCSS and each of the predictor variables: (a) teachers' attitudes toward the practicality of pedagogical shift three, balancing informational and literary texts; (b) teachers' attitudes toward school support with the implementation process of pedagogical shift three, balancing informational and literary texts; and (c) teachers' attitudes toward the balance of

informational and literary texts in comparison with the previous set of NYS standards. Pearson correlations were used to test the three null hypotheses to describe the strength and direction of the relationships between the variables. Data screening was conducted to check for any missing variables. Assumption of bivariate outliers were examined using a scatter plot between the predictor and criterion variables.

Following the data analysis process, the researcher did an analysis of the open-ended questions in section F of the survey. The coding process began with the researcher reading the responses to the open-ended questions. Next, the researcher used a manual coding scheme to find words and themes that consistently presented themselves throughout the responses. Specific themes were combined and quantified to determine the frequency in which they appeared among all of the responses. The researcher then evaluated how these answers aligned with the correlations and descriptive statistics that were presented in sections A through E of the survey.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this quantitative correlative survey research study was to determine the relationship between teachers' attitudes toward the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and three predetermined factors. These factors were (a) teachers' attitudes toward the practicality of pedagogical shift three, balancing informational and literary texts; (b) teachers' attitudes toward school support with the implementation process of pedagogical shift three, balancing informational and literary texts; and (c) teachers' attitudes toward the balance of informational and literary texts in comparison with the previous set of NYS standards. To determine whether teachers' attitudes toward the CCSS were influenced by these three factors, Pearson correlation coefficient was used to evaluate the null hypothesis. Data and analyses are presented in this chapter. Research questions and hypotheses are presented and followed by data analysis. This chapter begins with an overview of the research questions and null hypothesis, an overview of the descriptive statistics and a description of the sample, and analysis of the data, which are presented in tables and narrative.

Research Questions

This study investigated the following research questions:

RQ1: Is there a relationship between teachers' attitudes toward the Common Core State Standards and teachers' scores on Part C of the teacher survey, practicality of pedagogical shift three of the Common Core State Standards, balancing informational and literary texts?

RQ2: Is there a relationship between teachers' attitudes toward the Common Core State Standards and teachers' scores on Part D of the teacher survey, school support of shift three of the Common Core State Standards, balancing informational and literary texts?

RQ3: Is there a relationship between teachers' attitudes toward the Common Core State Standards and teachers' scores on Part E of the teacher survey, Attitudes Toward the Balance of Informational and Literary Text with the Previous New York State Standards?

Null Hypotheses

The null hypotheses for this study were:

H₀₁: There is no statistically significant correlation between teachers' attitudes toward the Common Core State Standards and teachers' scores on Part C of the teacher survey, practicality of pedagogical shift three of the Common Core State Standards, balancing informational and literary texts.

H₀₂: There is no statistically significant correlation between teachers' attitudes toward the Common Core State Standards and teachers' scores on Part D of the teacher survey, school support of shift three of the Common Core State Standards, balancing informational and literary texts.

H₀₃: There is no statistically significant correlation between teachers' attitudes toward the Common Core State Standards and teachers' scores on Part E of the teacher survey, Attitudes Toward the Balance of Informational and Literary Text with the Previous New York State Standards.

Descriptive Statistics

The participants for this study were kindergarten, first grade, and second grade teachers from rural, suburban, and urban public school districts throughout New York State. The survey was administered via email throughout the 2015-2016 school year to 4,000 teachers. A total of 397 completed responses were received providing a 10% response rate. The total sample included in the study was 397, as there was no missing data in any of the submitted surveys.

Participating teachers had classroom experience ranging from less than one year to more than 20 years of service. Of the 397 participants (see Table 1), 125 (32%) were kindergarten teachers, 112 (28%) were first grade teachers, and 159 (40%) were second grade teachers.

Demographically (see Table 2), 220 (55%) participants taught in a rural district, 134 (34%) taught in a suburban district, and 43 (11%) taught in an urban district. Finally (see Table 3), of the 397 participants, 29 (7.3%) had less than one year of teaching experience, 20 (5.1%) had 1-2 years of teaching experience, 37 (9.3%) had 3-5 years of teaching experience, 48 (12.1%) had 6-10 years of teaching experience, 116 (29.2%) had 11-20 years of teaching experience, and 147 (37%) had more than 20 years of teaching experience.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Grade Taught

Grade	Frequency	Percent
Kindergarten	126	31.7
First Grade	112	28.2
Second Grade	159	40.1
Total	397	100.0

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Setting

Setting	Frequency	Percent
Rural	220	55.4
Suburban	134	33.8
Urban	43	10.8
Total	397	100.0

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Experience

Years of Experience	Frequency	Percent
0-1	29	7.3
1-3	20	5.1
3-5	37	9.3
6-11	48	12.1
11-21	116	29.2
21+	147	37.0
Total	397	100.0

The independent variable for this study was teacher attitudes toward the CCSS. To evaluate this variable, the survey outlined 10 different opposing adjective sets and used a five-point scale to identify each attitude as a numeric value. The mean combined attitude indicated an overall slightly positive attitude toward the CCSS ($M = 2.84$, $SD = .67$). This finding was consistent with a similar study conducted in the state of Tennessee (Pepper, Burns, Kelly, & Warrach, 2013). The researcher also found that teacher attitudes were most negative in kindergarten ($M=2.73$, $SD=.67$). Teacher attitudes of second ($M=2.89$, $SD=.71$) and first grade teachers ($M=2.891$, $SD=.59$) were almost identical. In terms of experience, teachers with the least favorable attitudes toward the CCSS had less than one year of teaching experience ($M=2.60$, $SD=.40$), while the teachers with the most positive attitudes toward the CCSS had 1-2 years of experience ($M=3.09$, $SD=.41$). When breaking down the experience brackets by 0-5 years and 6-21+ years, teacher attitudes were identical, demonstrating some consistency in teacher attitudes across experience levels ($M=2.84$). Teacher attitudes toward the CCSS were most positive from suburban teachers ($M=2.91$, $SD=.68$) and most negative from urban teachers ($M=2.70$, $SD=.62$).

Table 4

Combined Attitudes Mean by Grade Table

Grade	Mean	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>
Kindergarten	2.73	126	.673
First Grade	2.89	112	.60
Second Grade	2.89	159	.71
Total	2.84	397	.67

Table 5

Combined Attitudes Mean by Experience Table

Experience	<i>M</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>
0-1	2.60	29	.40
1-2	3.09	20	.41
2-3	2.71	37	.67
3-5	2.99	48	.61
6-11	2.84	116	.71
11-21	2.84	147	.71
Total	2.84	397	.67

Table 6

Combined Attitudes Mean by Setting Table

Setting	<i>M</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>
Rural	2.82	220	.67
Suburban	2.91	134	.68
Urban	2.70	43	.62
Total	2.84	397	.67

Teacher attitudes toward the CCSS were broken down into the following opposing adjective pairs: Unsatisfactory/Satisfactory (Attitude 1), Worthless/Valuable (Attitude 2), Foolish/Wise (Attitude 3), Bad/Good (Attitude 4), Absurd/Intelligent (Attitude 5), Restrictive/Permissive (Attitude 6), Idealistic/Realistic (Attitude 7), Ineffective/Effective (Attitude 8), Unnecessary/Necessary (Attitude 9), and Complicated/Uncomplicated (Attitude 10). Participants shared their attitudes toward the CCSS based on these adjective pairs by selecting a number on a five-point semantic differential scale. A response of one was aligned with the negative adjective, and a score of five was aligned with the positive adjective. Of these adjective pairs (see Table 7), the most favorably viewed was Attitude 2, Worthless/Valuable ($M=3.08$, $SD=.891$), while the most negatively viewed was Attitude 6, Restrictive/Permissive and Complicated/Uncomplicated ($M=2.54$, $SD=.897$).

Table 7

Individual Attitude Mean

Individual Attitude	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Unsatisfactory/Satisfactory (1)	397	2.95	.91
Worthless/Valuable (2)	397	3.08	.89
Foolish/Wise (3)	397	2.96	.88
Bad/Good (4)	397	2.97	.92
Absurd/Intelligent (5)	397	2.97	.92
Restrictive/Permissive (6)	397	2.54	.90
Idealistic/Realistic (7)	397	2.60	1.03
Ineffective/Effective (8)	397	2.60	1.03
Unnecessary/Necessary (9)	397	2.86	.91
Complicated/Uncomplicated (10)	397	2.59	1.09
Valid N	397		

The dependent variables for this study were (a) teachers' attitudes toward the practicality of pedagogical shift three, balancing informational and literary texts; (b) teachers' attitudes toward school support with the implementation of pedagogical shift three, balancing informational and literary texts; and (c) teachers' attitudes toward the balance of informational texts in comparison with the previous set of NYS standards. Overall, the dependent variables combined for a slightly positive view of pedagogical shift three ($M=3.06$, $SD=.42$). When broken down, descriptive statistics showed common results for each of these variables. Teachers' attitudes toward the practicality of pedagogical shift three, balancing informational and literary texts ($M=3.11$, $SD=.587$), teachers' attitudes toward school support with the implementation of pedagogical shift three, balancing informational and literary texts ($M=3.06$,

$SD=.464$), and teachers' attitudes toward the balance of informational texts in comparison with the previous set of NYS standards ($M=3.00$, $SD=.660$). Of all of the questions asked in the independent variable sections of the survey, the lowest response was to the following question: "In comparison with the balance of informational and literary texts with NYS' previous set of standards, the CCSS allow me to better manage my classroom." This result indicates that management is a concern for some teachers, and therefore should be at the forefront of future research. Tables 8, 9, and 10 break down each independent variable by question.

Table 8

Practicality Questions

Practicality	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Combined	397	3.11	.59
Practicality			
Practicality Ques. 1	397	3.25	.74
Practicality Ques. 2	397	3.21	.72
Practicality Ques. 3	397	3.13	.85
Practicality Ques. 4	397	2.96	.83
Practicality Ques. 5	397	3.01	.82

Table 9

School Support Questions

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Combined School	397	3.06	.46
Support			
School Support Ques. 1	397	2.89	.94
School Support Ques. 2	397	2.74	.86
School Support Ques. 3	397	3.19	.93
School Support Ques. 4	397	3.22	.88
School Support Ques. 5	397	3.26	.90

Table 10

Previous Standards Questions

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Combined Previous Standards	397	3.00	.66
Previous Standards Ques. 1	397	3.24	.80
Previous Standards Ques. 2	397	3.19	.80
Previous Standards Ques. 3.	397	2.68	.83
Previous Standards Ques. 4	397	2.90	.88
Previous Standards Ques. 5	397	2.99	.85

Data Screening

Data screening was completed to check for inconsistencies and outliers among the predictor and criterion variables. No inconsistencies or outliers were found. All surveys were

complete and no questions were omitted. Therefore, all 397 surveys were included in the researcher's data analysis. No data were found when calculating for interquartile range outliers.

Results

After running descriptive statistics, a Pearson correlation was computed to assess the bivariate relationship between the dependent variable (attitudes toward the CCSS) and the independent variables (factors measuring teacher attitudes toward shift three of the CCSS). The purpose of this test is to demonstrate linear correlations. A .05 alpha level was used, as the literature indicates this measure aids in the prevention of both type 1 and type 2 errors (Laerd Statistics, 2013).

Null Hypothesis One

Hypothesis one examined if there was a relationship between teachers' attitudes toward the CCSS and teachers' attitudes toward the practicality of pedagogical shift three, balancing informational and literary texts. A Pearson correlation coefficient was used to evaluate the null hypothesis. Given this dependent variable ($M=3.11$, $SD=.587$) and the independent variable ($M=2.84$, $SD=.668$), it was determined that a moderate correlation existed between teachers' attitudes toward the CCSS and teachers' attitudes toward the practicality of pedagogical shift three, balancing informational and literary texts, and therefore the null hypothesis was rejected ($r=.328$, $n=397$, $p=.001$). The assumptions of linearity, bivariate normal distribution, and bivariate outliers were examined using a scatter plot (see Figure 1). The assumptions were all met.

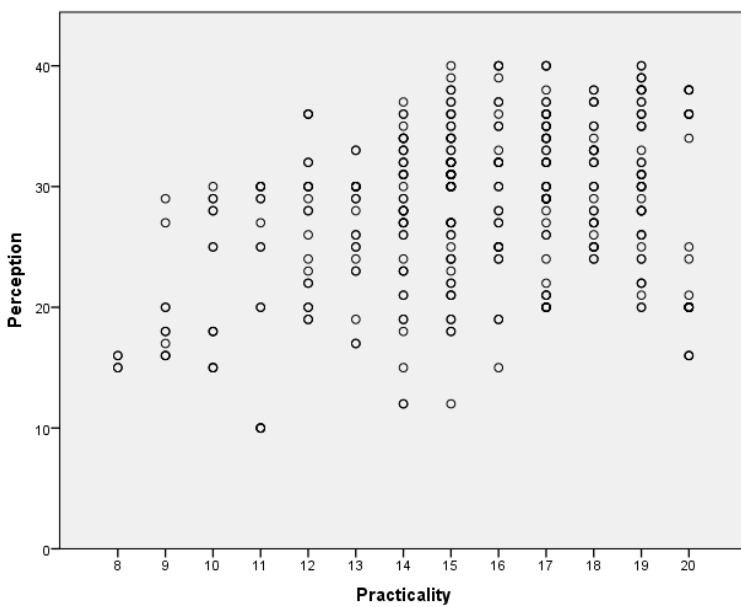


Figure 1. Scatter Plot Teacher Attitudes Toward the CCSS and Practicality of Pedagogical Shift Three.

Table 11

Teacher Attitudes Toward the CCSS and Practicality of Pedagogical Shift Three

<i>N</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
397	.328	.001

Null Hypothesis Two

Null Hypothesis Two examined if there was a relationship between teachers' attitudes toward the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and teachers' attitudes toward school support with the implementation process of pedagogical shift three, balancing informational and literary texts. A Pearson correlation coefficient was used to evaluate the null hypothesis. Given this dependent variable ($M=3.06$, $SD=.464$) and the independent variable ($M=2.84$, $SD=.668$), it was determined that a moderate correlation exists between teachers' attitudes toward the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and teachers' attitudes toward school support with the

implementation process of pedagogical shift three, balancing informational and literary texts. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected ($r=.259, n=397, p=.001$). The assumptions of linearity, bivariate normal distribution, and bivariate outliers were examined using a scatter plot (see Figure 2). The assumptions were all met.

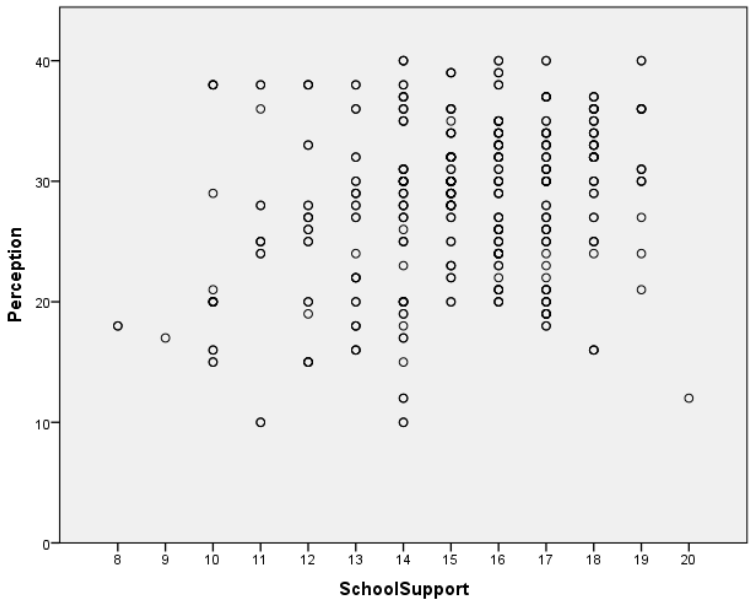


Figure 2. Scatter Plot for Teacher Attitudes Toward the CCSS and Attitudes Toward School Support.

Table 12

Teacher Attitudes Toward the CCSS and School Support

<i>N</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
397	.259	.001

Null Hypothesis Three

Null Hypothesis Three examined if there was a relationship between teachers' attitudes toward the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and teachers' attitudes toward the balance of informational and literary texts in comparison with the previous set of NYS standards. A Pearson correlation coefficient was used to evaluate the null hypothesis. Given this dependent variable ($M=3.00$, $SD=.660$) and the independent variable ($M=2.84$, $SD=.668$), it was determined that a moderate correlation exists between teachers' attitudes toward the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and teachers' attitudes toward the balance of informational and literary texts in comparison with the previous set of NYS standards. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected ($r=.531$, $n=397$, $p=.001$). The assumptions of linearity, bivariate normal distribution, and bivariate outliers were examined using a scatter plot (see Figure 3). The assumptions were all met.

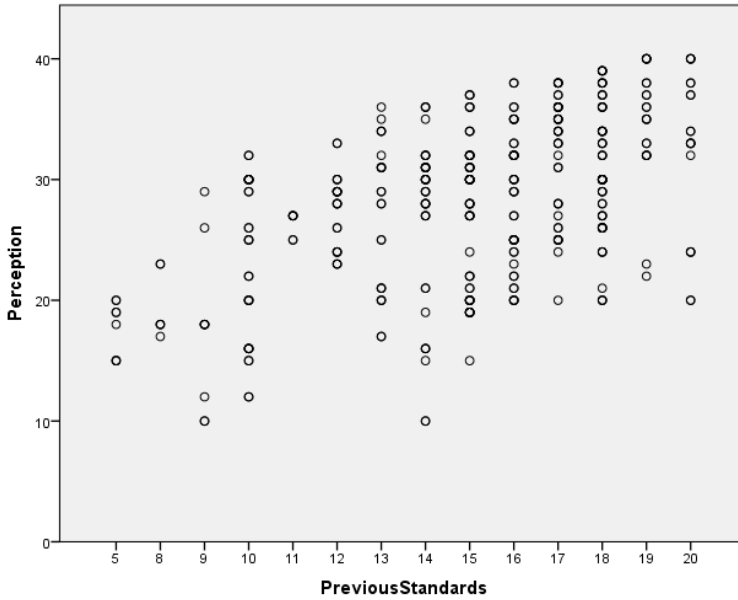


Figure 3. Scatter Plot for Teacher Attitudes Toward the CCSS and Previous NYS Standards.

Table 13

Teacher Attitudes Toward the CCSS and Previous Standards

<i>N</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
.397	.531	.001

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Overview

The purpose of this quantitative correlation study was to investigate the relationship between teacher attitudes toward the Common Core State Standards and three factors regarding pedagogical shift three, balancing informational and literary texts. The findings for this study indicated that there was a moderate statistically significant relationship between teacher attitudes and the following factors: (a) teachers' attitudes toward the practicality of pedagogical shift three, balancing informational and literary texts; (b) teachers' attitudes toward school support with the implementation process of pedagogical shift three, balancing informational and literary texts; (c) and teachers' attitudes toward the balance of informational and literary texts in comparison with the previous set of NYS standards. In this chapter, the researcher will provide a summary of the findings, provide implications for practice, and offer recommendations for further research.

Discussion

After reviewing the data, it is evident that the teachers who participated in this study scored slightly above neutral on their attitudes toward the CCSS ($M=2.84$, $SD=.67$), the practicality of pedagogical shift three ($M=3.11$, $SD=.587$), their school support with the implementation of pedagogical shift three ($M=3.06$, $SD=.464$), and the balance of literary and informational texts in comparison with previous NYS standards ($M=3.00$, $SD=.660$). These findings are consistent with a similar study conducted by Ness (2011) that evaluated K-5 teachers' attitudes toward integrating informational text in the classroom. In Ness' (2011) study, teachers found this shift to have significant instructional value, but also shared concerns about lack of time, lack of resources, and curricular limitations.

The dependent variables for this study evaluated teachers' attitudes on three factors regarding pedagogical shift three, balancing literary and informational texts. The first viewpoint covered the practicality of this shift. The results indicated a slightly positive viewpoint regarding the practicality of pedagogical shift three ($M=3.11$, $SD=.59$). Although teachers have expressed concerns and challenges with integrating more informational text in elementary classrooms, the results of this study indicate that teachers view this as a practical and necessary shift (Young & Ward, 2012). It is imperative that districts build upon these positive attitudes by providing teachers with the tools, resources, and training necessary to successfully implement this shift in their classrooms.

The second dependent variable for this study evaluated teachers' attitudes toward the school support they have received throughout the implementation process of the CCSS. The results also indicated a slightly positive viewpoint regarding this variable ($M=3.06$, $SD=.47$). This result aligns with a recent study that used the Concerns-Based Adoption Model to identify teachers' perceptions of the CCSS (Sanchez, 2016). This study reported positive teacher perceptions of the CCSS in the areas of student benefit, district's choice, district support, and state implementation. While attitudes were slightly positive in this area, the researcher believes that this is an area that should constantly be evaluated to determine the level of support that is being provided to teachers on an annual basis.

The third dependent variable for this study evaluated teachers' attitudes toward the balance of informational and literary texts in comparison with the previous set of NYS standards. The results for this variable indicated a slightly positive viewpoint ($M=3.00$, $SD=.660$). The researcher found consistencies among each of these dependent variables, as the amount of variance between the means was small. The results of this variable align with teachers' attitudes

toward the CCSS. Teachers are more likely to reflect positively upon a recent instructional shift if they found that shift to be necessary. This variable suggests that teachers felt a need for an increase in the amount of informational text exposure in early childhood classrooms, and therefore may have welcomed pedagogical shift three of the CCSS as a result.

While each of the three factors indicated a moderate statistically significant relationship between teacher attitudes toward the CCSS, the strongest correlation ($r=.51$) was found with hypothesis three. This hypothesis examined if there was a relationship between teachers' attitudes toward the Common Core State Standards and teachers' attitudes toward the balance of informational and literary texts in comparison with the previous set of NYS standards. This result indicates that negative attitudes toward the CCSS are more likely to come from teachers who did not see this pedagogical shift as necessary, and positive attitudes toward the CCSS are more likely to come from teachers who deemed the pedagogical shift of incorporating a 50/50 balance of literary and informational text in K-2 classrooms as necessary. Prior to beginning the actual research, the researcher selected this research model based on informal conversations regarding the CCSS and pedagogical shift three with fellow teachers. These conversations indicated that veteran teachers did not see the need for a change in the amount of informational texts in the early childhood classrooms and therefore found pedagogical shift three to be unnecessary. The data for this study supports that teachers who viewed a change in the amount of informational text exposure in elementary grades as necessary had a more positive attitude toward the CCSS, while teachers who did not find this shift necessary had a more negative attitude toward the CCSS.

The weakest correlation from the three variables was found with hypothesis two, which examined if there was a relationship between teachers' attitudes toward the Common Core State

Standards and teachers' attitudes toward school support with the implementation process of pedagogical shift three, balancing informational and literary texts. However, this result was still found to be statistically relevant ($r=.259$). This outcome indicates that teachers' attitudes toward the CCSS align with the amount of support they have received within their school district. Teachers who perceive that they received little support from their district are more likely to have negative attitudes toward the CCSS, while teachers who have been supported by their district are more likely to have positive attitudes toward the CCSS (Lyons, 2014).

Null Hypothesis One also found a statistically significant correlation between teacher attitudes toward the CCSS and teacher attitudes toward the practicality of pedagogical shift three, balancing informational and literary texts ($r=.328$). While the three independent variables had similar mean scores, of the three factors evaluated in this study, the most positive response was calculated for this variable ($M=3.11$). This outcome indicates that of practicality, school support, and previous standards, teachers feel most positive about the practicality of balancing literary and informational text in K-2 classrooms.

The correlation results for this study validated recent research in the area of teacher perceptions of the CCSS. These studies found teachers' perceptions and attitudes to be slightly positive toward the CCSS (Ness, 2011; Sanchez, 2016). However, no recent studies have correlated teachers' attitudes toward the CCSS with their perceptions of pedagogical shift three, balancing literary and informational texts, and the factors that go into successfully integrating that shift. The results of this study are an excellent place to begin by expanding Duke's (2000) research to determine how much progress has been made with the implementation of informational text in early childhood classrooms.

The final section of the survey contained five short-answer questions. This section was not required or calculated with the data for this study. However, teachers' responses to these questions did shed light on the specific factors that influence their routines, successes, and failures with the CCSS on a daily basis. First, teachers were asked what made their experience positive with the implementation of the CCSS. Five specific themes were found within the responses. First, of the 123 responses to question one, 43 teachers shared that their administrators' support made the implementation positive and effective. Specifically, being given sufficient, appropriate supplies, attending professional development sessions, and a positive school culture all influenced these responses. For example, one teacher wrote, "There has been great support at our school during the transition into implementation of the CCSS. My grade level team constantly meets to discuss and plan."

Secondly, 22 teachers found that the NYS modules were an asset when it came to implementing the CCSS. These are found on the EngageNY (2013) website and are broken down for both math and ELA for preschool through 12th grade. It is also important to note that 11 teachers listed the modules under negative aspects of the CCSS and were seen as both an asset and a detriment to the implementation, depending upon the teacher being surveyed. A positive response was, "I enjoy using the modules that are prepared on the engage.nysed.gov website. They are scripted and helpful when it comes to implementing the standards." However, negative responses were also found such as, "NYS Engage NY speaking and listening materials are not always child friendly or interesting to the students. It seems like they were thrown together quickly."

The survey responses indicated that some school districts required their teachers to follow these modules, while others suggested them as a resource or supplementation materials. Another

positive characteristic that was referenced by 13 teachers in this section of the survey was the consistency among grade-levels, districts, and states. Teachers in this study indicated that this continuity allowed children to be more successful, instruction to be more consistent, and expectations to be more dependable. While this question did not focus specifically on the balance of literary and informational texts, multiple responses suggested that this shift has been well-received by many students and teachers. Specifically, students enjoy interacting with informational texts and learning about specific topics that are relevant to their world. Teachers shared that they are not only grateful for the shift, but also appreciative of the training and support that they have received to make them more efficient teachers of informational text. Finally, a consistent theme for this question suggested that the CCSS have challenged students and boosted achievement.

The second question for this section asked teachers to reflect upon what factors have made the CCSS implementation negative. For this question, 143 participants responded. The most common theme for this question connected the CCSS implementation to high-stakes testing, indicating that the increased emphasis on testing has resulted in a negative CCSS implementation process. Of the 143 responses to this question, 52 suggested that testing has had a negative impact on their attitudes toward the CCSS. One participant wrote, “The assessments are not reasonable for this age level.” According to EngageNY (2013), elementary and middle school students in the state of New York take annual tests in core academic subjects to assess their mastery of the CCSS. Students in grades 3-8 take both math and ELA exams, while the science exam is administered starting in fourth grade. According to a letter from Angelica Infante (2016), Deputy Commissioner of the Office of Instructional Support, significant changes were made to the Grades 3-8 ELA and Mathematics Tests for the 2015-2016 school year. This

exam was administered in the spring of 2016. Further research should be conducted to determine if these changes improved the test administration process for both teachers and students. This factor has a large impact on teacher attitudes, efficacy, and feelings (Herman & Golan, 1991), and it would be beneficial to determine what strategies, procedures, resources, and routines assist in minimizing the amount of stress and anxiety linked to standardized testing.

Another factor that had a negative influence on teachers' attitudes toward the CCSS was the lack of support and training provided to teachers at the time of implementation. Of the 143 responses for this question, 35 teachers presented this issue as a negative for the implementation process of the CCSS. One participant shared the following feedback regarding professional development,

I need more training. How am I supposed to successfully implement these standards when I don't have the resources and do not know how to do this? Maybe there should be more specific trainings? Or coaches that come into the classroom to help the teachers?

However, this comment was also listed as a positive influence on the implementation process, so the researcher has determined that this factor is dependent upon each school district's professional development plan and procedures. Therefore, it is important that each school district analyzes their own teacher preparation and training measures to ensure that their teachers are well-equipped, supported, and trained. According to Bolin (1989), teachers feel empowered when they are granted the right to participate in the creation of school goals and policies on what and how to teach. Further research should be conducted to determine what school support measures will ensure positive teacher attitudes toward future implementations.

Another issue that teachers consider to have had a negative impact on the CCSS implementation is the support of children with special needs. According to The CCSS

“Application to Students with Disabilities” (2012), students with disabilities must be challenged to excel within the general curriculum and be prepared for their post-school lives. The website also suggests that students with special needs require supports and related services, individualized IEP goals, and teachers and specialized instructional support who are prepared and qualified to deliver high-quality, evidence-based, individualized instruction and support services. However, according to this survey, teachers do not feel that they are equipped to meet the special needs of their students in the classroom. Therefore, future research should specifically evaluate teacher concerns related to effectively supporting students with special needs with the CCSS implementation.

Other specific concerns related to the CCSS implementation included poorly written modules, standards that are too rigorous, and an implementation process that was done too quickly and did not consider teacher or student needs. In a recent focus group study conducted by the Center on Education Policy (2016b), teachers indicated that they appreciate the consistency and rigor of the CCSS. Therefore, more research should also be conducted in this area to determine how the modules can be improved and teachers can be supported to continue to effectively implement the standards in their daily routine.

The next question evaluated what supplies and materials teachers are lacking in their classrooms to effectively integrate the standards. According to the survey, the greatest need in kindergarten, first, and second grade classrooms is nonfiction and informational texts. This result supports much of Duke and Block’s (2012) research, which indicated a severe deficit of informational texts in early childhood classrooms. Particularly, 27 out of the 89 teachers from this study who responded to this question indicated that they are in need of class book sets that allow for collaborative and group learning. One teachers said, “I could use more non-fiction

texts at the students' guided reading lesson, so that they can read these during daily 5. I need more copies of the books.” Other items included Smartboards and better lesson exemplars for them to follow in their instruction. These suggestions align with a focus group study conducted by The Center on Education Policy (2016a). In this study, teachers expressed positive views of the CCSS, but they also indicated that they were required to do much of the initial work on their own to develop and revise their curriculum to align with the CCSS. This result was, in large part, because few CCSS-aligned materials were available at the early stages of the implementation process. Future research should evaluate what resources and tools teachers are lacking in the classroom. It is imperative that this research reaches the desks of administrators, so that school leadership teams understand the materials and resources that are lacking from their district's classrooms.

The next question asked teachers to identify what training and professional development they need in order to be better equipped to implement the CCSS. The most common response to this question indicated a deficiency in professional development related to supporting students with special needs. Of the 114 teachers who responded to this question, 36 requested more training on how to meet the needs of special education students within the CCSS framework. Students with special needs require instructional supports which present information in multiple ways and allow for diverse forms of expression and dialogue. Preparing classroom teachers to meet these needs requires explicit instruction and intensive training (Van Laarhoven, Munk, Lynch, Bosma, & Rouse, 2007). According to the teachers surveyed in this study, insufficient attention has been provided in the area of effectively supporting students with special needs through the implementation process of the CCSS. Further research should quantify this deficiency in order to determine how to plan for and implement upcoming trainings and

seminars. Teachers also indicated that they need more time for grade-level and vertical planning. Taking time to plan with teachers of other grade levels and content areas in order to provide consistent instructional strategies, expectations, and routines benefits both the teachers and the students involved in the process (Impara, 2001). A successful example of this model is found at Eddy Middle School in Columbia, Georgia, where teachers and teacher-leaders are given ownership of their school by being part of a shared decision-making and problem-solving process. This model has boosted student achievement. In 2012, 89.1% of the eighth grade students at Eddy Middle School met grade-level standards on the Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) in reading. This type of exemplary school model can be replicated with future research in the area of teacher professional development and the CCSS.

The last open-ended question of the survey asked teachers what specific teaching and learning strategies they have found to be most effective regarding informational text comprehension. The goal of this question was to gain a better understanding of what is currently working in classroom across New York State regarding the balance of literary and informational text. Responses to this question included cooperative groups, returning to the text, mind mapping, graphic organizers, and close reading. Teachers also found that the shift to providing students with more opportunities for practice and mastery has yielded positive results in the classroom. Since teachers identified these as effective strategies, it is important that administrators train and equip all teachers with the tools necessary to implement them with fidelity into their classroom routine on a daily basis. This strategy can be done through purposeful professional development that focuses on key strategies that make pedagogical shift three of the CCSS successful.

Implications

The present study sought to determine if teacher attitudes toward the CCSS had a statistically significant relationship with three aspects of implementing pedagogical shift three, balancing literary and informational texts. If the researcher determined that there was a statistically significant relationship in any of these areas, practicality, school support, and attitudes toward previous standards, then perhaps this result would help school leadership teams and administration better support their educators with this instructional shift. Since the present study did find a statistically significant correlation between these three factors and teacher attitudes toward the CCSS, it has been determined that teacher attitudes toward the CCSS are influenced by pedagogical shift three, balancing literary and informational texts in kindergarten through second grade classrooms. Specifically, this result indicates the importance of positive school support when it comes to implementing the CCSS and pedagogical shift three. Likewise, teacher attitudes toward the practicality of pedagogical shift three and its importance in comparison with the former NYS standards has a significant impact on teachers' overall attitudes toward the CCSS.

Specific implications can be determined from the significant relationship between teacher attitudes toward the CCSS and the three factors regarding pedagogical shift three. First, teacher attitudes are positively aligned with their view of the practicality of pedagogical shift three. This result indicates that teachers not only share a slightly positive opinion of the CCSS, but they also have positive feelings toward the new shift that balances literary and informational texts in elementary classrooms. This result is important because it clarifies that although teachers may be lacking the resources to effectively implement this shift, they still feel that the shift is necessary and important (Center for Education Policy, 2016a).

The next factor indicates a relationship between teacher attitudes toward the CCSS and their school's support with implementing pedagogical shift three. While this was the weakest correlation, according to this study a weak correlation still exists between these two factors. The strength of this correlation may establish that while teacher attitudes toward the CCSS are positive, concerns exist with school support and the implementation process of pedagogical shift three. According to the survey, these concerns most commonly reflect a lack of professional development, training, resources, and administrative support. When these factors are strong, teacher attitudes toward the CCSS and pedagogical shift three are highly positive (Center for Education Policy, 2016). This result is important to consider when preparing teachers to modify their instruction to accommodate a new instructional shift such as pedagogical shift three of the CCSS.

The third factor that influenced teacher attitudes toward the CCSS was their attitudes toward pedagogical shift three in comparison to previous NYS standards. This factor carried the largest correlation, which indicates that teacher attitudes toward the CCSS are closely related to their opinions of the former NYS standards. While the New York State ELA Core Curriculum (2005) did not indicate a specific breakdown of literary and informational texts for kindergarten, first, and second grade teachers, it was reported that the balance leading up to the CCSS was 70% literary and 30% informational in these grades. Many researchers have cited that this breakdown shows a far greater use of informational texts than what was actually taking place at those grade-levels prior to the CCSS (Duke, 2000). The implications of this study indicate that teachers value the importance of a literary and informational text balance, they identified the need for change from the former NYS Core Curriculum, and they are actively seeking ways to better implement pedagogical shift three of the CCSS.

Limitations

The limitations of this study fall into three classifications. First, the sample could be considered a limitation. This sample only consisted of public school teachers, as not all private, parochial, and charter schools follow the NYS CCSS. A more broad sample size from multiple states and school settings may provide more accurate data for future reference.

Another limitation is separating teacher opinions of the CCSS with the implementation of the CCSS. According to a recent Gallup poll (Lyons, 2014), 76% of teachers view the primary goal of the CCSS, to have all states use the same set of academic standards for reading, writing, and math in grades K-12, as having a positive impact on our education system. However, 72% of teachers reacted negatively to using standardized tests to measure all students' performance and progress, and 89% of teachers reacted negatively to linking teacher evaluations to their students' Common Core scores. While the tool used for this study is a well-respected survey, it is challenging to ask teachers to separate their attitudes toward the CCSS from their attitudes toward standardized testing and teacher evaluations. This issue may skew the data to reflect a more negative attitude of the standards, as teachers' opinions of standardized testing and teacher evaluations may influence their opinions of the standards themselves.

Another limitation is the method by which the survey was administered. Teachers received this survey via email. In order to complete the survey in its entirety, participants must be familiar with accessing and completing a survey through Google Drive. Teachers who were unfamiliar with this technology were less likely to complete this form, and therefore may not have participated. Also, because the CCSS influence teacher evaluations, some teachers may not have been comfortable filling out the survey even though the anonymity of the survey was communicated to everyone who received it.

The final limitation identified for this study was the response rate. Of the 4,000 surveys sent, 397 teachers responded. This was almost a 10% response rate. While this rate does fall within the normal range for external surveys, future research should consider ways to involve more participants and elicit a greater response. Examples could include case studies, internal surveys, and classroom-based action research.

According to Duke and Martin (2011), different kinds of research are good for different questions. While this research used an instrument to measure the correlation between teacher attitudes toward the CCSS and different factors related to pedagogical shift three, action steps can only be inferred related to how this data can be used to positively influence teacher attitudes and methods in the classroom. While this study answered the question of whether or not there is a statistical correlation between these factors, it did not answer the question of why these factors relate and what should be done in the future to better support teachers in these areas.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study concluded that there is a statistically relevant correlation between teacher attitudes toward the CCSS and three factors that influenced the implementation of pedagogical shift three, balancing literary and informational texts. Given these results, the researcher found several recommendation for future research:

- A follow-up study be conducted with a larger, more diverse sample. This study could include teachers from other states and school settings. While this study focused primarily on early elementary classrooms, future studies could expand this data to include upper elementary, middle, and high school teachers.
- Conduct further research that specifically focus on the issues that hinder teachers from effectively implementing pedagogical shift three, balancing literary and

- informational texts. These issues could include but are not limited to: a lack of resources and books, professional development and training, and administration support. These factors should be evaluated to determine how teachers can be better supported in the classroom to successfully integrate this instructional shift.
- Future studies should isolate teacher attitudes toward the CCSS from their attitudes regarding the implementation process, the teacher evaluation process, and standardized testing. These issues do influence one another, but can also be viewed as mutually exclusive concepts and ideas. In order to best evaluate teacher attitudes regarding the actual standards and pedagogical shifts, future surveys should identify the differences between these concepts and issues and evaluate them individually.
 - Further research should be conducted to formally evaluate the attitudes, needs, and concerns of middle school and high school teachers related to pedagogical shift three and the CCSS.

Following the data-collection phase, the researcher took time to converse with middle and high school teachers regarding their experience with pedagogical shift three. The findings of these informal conversations indicated a similar correlation between teacher attitudes toward the CCSS and the integration of informational text. While this shift has not had as great of an impact on the instructional routines of high school teachers as it has on elementary classrooms, many high school teachers have swapped out fiction for nonfiction texts on major projects, focused on writing pieces that better align with informational text structures, and increased the amount of content-rich vocabulary that is taught on a daily basis (R. Conway, personal communication, November 9, 2016).

One concern that has been presented in connection to this research is the potential for a dismantling of the CCSS by the current president's administration. While the federal government does not currently have control over individual state standards, President Trump has suggested that the United States should dispose of the CCSS. Regardless of the state and federal education policies that will unfold in our nation's future, the research presented in this study focuses on a pedagogical shift that has been researched and vetted in a number of different capacities and settings (Marinak, 2008). The balance of literary and informational texts in early elementary classrooms will likely be part of future standards and implementations, and therefore more research should be conducted to ensure that teachers are equipped with the knowledge, tools, and resources to successfully integrate this pedagogical shift into their classroom instruction.

Regardless of the future of the CCSS, both Hirsch (2006a, 2006b) and Duke's (2000) research should influence future conversations and action steps regarding both national and state education initiatives. It is also important that researchers and policymakers understand the factors that influence teacher attitudes prior to implementing a new set of standards or policies. This understanding will help them to plan effective trainings, meetings, and guidelines that will be supportive of teachers and ensure a positive, effective, and seamless implementation process.

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Part C: Practicality of Pedagogical Shift Three of the CCSS

1) Does pedagogical shift three, balancing informational with literary texts, of the CCSS suit your classroom teaching style?

Yes, very much so Yes, a little Neutral No, not much No, not at

2) Does pedagogical shift three, balancing informational with literary texts, sufficiently reflect your educational philosophy?

Yes, very much so Yes, a little Neutral No, not much No, not at

3) Does pedagogical shift three, balancing informational with literary texts, provide a sufficient variety of classroom learning experiences?

Yes, very much so Yes, a little Neutral No, not much No, not at

4) Is pedagogical shift three, balancing informational with literary texts, tuned to the needs of the students?

Yes, very much so Yes, a little Neutral No, not much No, not at

5) Are there available resources (books, magazine, materials, etc.) that allow you to sufficiently implement pedagogical shift three, balancing informational with literary texts?

Yes, very much so Yes, a little Neutral No, not much No, not at

Part D: School Support

- 1) My school district holds regular school meetings at which I can raise my fears and apprehensions about pedagogical shift three of the CCSS, balancing informational and literary texts.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

- 2) There are some problems with pedagogical shift three of the CCSS, balancing informational and literary texts that cannot be solved through the support at my school.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

- 3) Whenever I have concerns or questions regarding pedagogical shift three of the CCSS, balancing informational and literary texts, there is an administrator to whom I can turn for advice.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

- 4) In your opinion, your administration supports pedagogical shift three of the CCSS, balancing informational and literary texts.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

- 5) In your opinion, your colleagues support pedagogical shift three of the CCSS, balancing informational and literary texts.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Part E: Attitude Toward the Balance of Informational and Literary Text with the Previous New York State Standards

- 1) In comparison with the balance of informational and literary texts with NYS' previous set of standards, the CCSS provide for better student learning.
___Strongly Agree ___Agree ___Neutral ___Disagree ___Strongly Disagree
- 2) In comparison with the balance of informational and literary texts with NYS' previous set of standards, the CCSS provide more relevant and up-to-date content.
___Strongly Agree ___Agree ___Neutral ___Disagree ___Strongly Disagree
- 3) In comparison with the balance of informational and literary texts with NYS' previous set of standards, the CCSS allow me to better manage my classroom.
___Strongly Agree ___Agree ___Neutral ___Disagree ___Strongly Disagree
- 4) In comparison with the balance of informational and literary texts with NYS' previous set of standards, the CCSS provide for more interesting and fascinating experiences for students.
___Strongly Agree ___Agree ___Neutral ___Disagree ___Strongly Disagree
- 5) In comparison with the balance of informational and literary texts with NYS' previous set of standards, the CCSS provide for more interesting and varied content to teach.
___Strongly Agree ___Agree ___Neutral ___Disagree ___Strongly Disagree

Part F: Open-Ended Reflection Questions

What factors have made the CCSS implementation process positive?

What factors have made the CCSS implementation process negative?

What tangible supplies/items could you use to help you more effectively integrate pedagogical shift three of the CCSS in your classroom?

What training/professional development opportunities would help you to more effectively integrate pedagogical shift three of the CCSS in your classroom?

What specific teaching and learning strategies have you found to be most effective regarding informational text comprehension?

Appendix B: Permission to Use the Survey

Mail -

Teacher Receptivity to System-Wide Change PSI

Russell WAUGH

Sun 11/3/2013 11:29 PM

To: Estruch, Marcie

Dear Marcie

I looked up the Waugh & Ketusiri paper in the Journal of Educational Change and it gave the Person Separation Index (PSI) = 0.95.

This index is calculated on the Rasch scores and is the Rasch equivalent of the Cronbach Alpha calculated on the raw scores. Rasch validity is different from Classical Test Theory validity (or True Score Theory validity).

One used to say that the questionnaire was reliable and valid in Classical Test Theory but we do not do this with Rasch measurement.

With Rasch measurement, we create a conceptual design of items ordered from easy to medium to hard along a continuum.

We test the fit to this conceptual design with all

the fit statistics provided by the Rasch computer program (RUMM) such as PSI, item fit, residual fit, thresholds, ICC graphs and RCC graphs, and targeting of person measures against the item difficulties.

If there is a reasonable fit of data to the measurement model, and the items are ordered from easy to medium to hard, as conceptualised, then we say that we have created a reliable scale and we can use that scale to make valid inferences.

Hope that helps

Regards

Professor Russell Waugh

From: Estruch, Marcie

Sent: Monday, 4 November 2013 11:06 AM

To: Russell WAUGH

Subject: Teacher Receptivity to System-Wide Change

Dr. Waugh,

This spring I contacted you seeking permission to use your questionnaire on Teacher Receptivity to System-Wide Change for my doctoral thesis. I was wondering if you have the specific reliability for this measurement? It is necessary to indicate the specific reliability and validity for the survey that I am using.

Thank you for your assistance with this matter.

Kind Regards,

Marcie Estruch

From: Russell WAUGH

Sent: Thursday, May 23, 2013 11:03 PM

To: Estruch, Marcie

Subject: Permission to use survey from "Teacher Receptivity to System-Wide Change" Granted

Dear Estruch Marcie

You have my permission to use the Questionnaire on Teacher Receptivity to System-Wide Change for your doctoral thesis. I wish you success with the doctoral studies so that you can become Dr Marcie.

In your thesis and any published papers, you will need to reference the author(s) and the journal from which it is taken as I had to assign copyright to the journal to get it published.

Mail - mestruch@liberty.edu

I used Rasch measurement to analyse the data and create the linear scales (validity analysis). At present, I use the Rasch Unidimensional Measurement Model (RUMM2030) computer program which I consider is the best in the world and you can look this up on the web. You can also put my name into the web and look up my Rasch measurement books (and you can probably get them from your library).

Cavanagh, R.F. & Waugh, R.F. (2011). Applications of Rasch measurement in learning environments research. Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers

Waugh, R.F. (2010). Applications of Rasch measurement in education. New York: Nova Science Publications

Waugh, R.F. (2010). Specialized Rasch measures applied at the forefront of education. New York: Nova Science Publications

Attached, as a word document, is a list of some of my other publications on educational change.

Best wishes from sunny Perth in western Australia

Russell Waugh

From: Estruch, Marcie

Sent: Friday, 24 May 2013 3:20 AM

To:

Subject: Permission to use survey from "Teacher Receptivity to System-Wide Change"

Dr. Waugh,

Hello! My name is Marcie Monegro, and I am a doctoral candidate at Liberty University in Virginia, USA. I am writing to seek permission to use your survey that you created, tested, and employed for your research regarding teacher receptivity to system-wide change. I would like to use this tool to conduct similar research regarding the Common Core State Standards that are currently being implemented in several US states. Also, I was wondering what the exact measure of validity was for this tool. Thank you so much for your time, and I look forward to your response! Have a wonderful day!

Sincerely,

Marcie Monegro

This e-mail is confidential. If you are not the intended recipient you must not disclose or use the information contained within. If you have received it in error please return it to the sender via reply e-mail and delete any record of it from your system. The information contained within is not the opinion of Edith Cowan University in general and the University accepts no liability for the accuracy of the information provided.

CRICOS IPC 00279B

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CRICOS IPC 00279B

<https://outlook.office.com/owa/?realm=liberty.edu&exsvurl=1&ll-cc=1033&modurl=0&path=/mail/inbox>

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Appendix C: IRB Approval Application

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

May 22, 2014

Marcie Estruch-Monegro

IRB Exemption 1787.052214: Early Childhood Teacher Attitudes of the Common Core State Standards and Pedagogical Shift One, Balancing Informational and Literary Text: A Correlative Study

Dear Marcie,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and that no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101 (b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:

- (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:
 - (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and
 - (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and that any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption, or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,



Liberty University | Training Champions for Christ since 1971

Appendix D: Letter to Teachers

Dear Teachers,

My name is Marcie Estruch-Monegro, and I am an educator and course developer in the state of New York. I am currently completing my dissertation as part of the requirements for my EdD.

My research focuses on pedagogical shift three of the CCSS: balancing literary and informational text, and teacher opinions of the CCSS.

I am writing to ask if you would like to be part of my research. Should you be interested in participating, you would complete the survey below. Completing the survey should take about 8-10 minutes. This is both optional and anonymous. None of your information will be collected or shared in correlation with your name or school district. While this opportunity is strictly voluntary, your participation is greatly appreciated. Your responses are invaluable to my research and will support administrators as they seek to equip teachers with the proper materials and training necessary to effectively implement this instructional shift.

Thank you for your time! Best of luck with the rest of the school year!

Regards,

Marcie Estruch-Monegro

Appendix E: Letter to Superintendents

Dear _____,

Thank you for taking the time to read this e-mail. My name is Marcie Monegro, and I am currently conducting research in New York State for my dissertation as part of the requirements for my EdD program. My research focuses on early childhood teacher attitudes of the CCSS regarding pedagogical shift three, balancing informational and literary text. In order to determine how to better equip teachers to effectively integrate this shift into their early childhood classrooms, I will administer a teacher survey to assess the relationship between teachers' attitudes of the CCSS and three correlating factors.

I am writing to request permission to administer this survey to the kindergarten, first and second grade teachers of your school district. The survey will be sent via e-mail (in May) and is optional for all teachers. It should take about 10 minutes to complete.

Should you so kindly allow me to administer this survey to your teachers, I will access their e-mail addresses from your district website. I would ask that you please sign and return the attached letter of consent on your district's letterhead, so that I can use the data collected to support my writing and research.

I appreciate your consideration of joining me in this effort to conduct research that will allow school districts to better prepare their teachers and serve their students. Please feel free to contact me with any questions regarding my research or the data collection process.

Regards,
Marcie Monegro
marciemonegro@gmail.com
[585-507-7095](tel:585-507-7095)

Appendix F: Letter of Consent Form Letter

Dear Marcie Estruch-Monegro,

I am writing as an administrator of the **please fill in** school district, to grant you permission to administer a teacher survey for your dissertation, *Early Childhood Teacher Attitudes Toward the Common Core State Standards and Pedagogical Shift Three, Balancing Informational and Literary Text*, to the kindergarten, first, and second grade teachers at our school. It is understood that this survey will be sent via e-mail and is optional for all teachers. It is also understood that our school name and participant names will not be used in your follow-up writing. You may access our teachers' e-mail addresses using our district website.

Regards,

Superintendent Signature

Superintendent Name (Typed)