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An EPCK Challenge: A Study of the Major Challenges that Certified, Nonveteran English Language Arts Elementary School Teachers in a Southeast State of the United States Face with Pedagogical Content Knowledge

Lindsay Medford-Fazio
Lynn University

AN EPCK CHALLENGE: A STUDY OF THE MAJOR CHALLENGES THAT CERTIFIED, NONVETERAN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN A SOUTHEAST STATE OF THE UNITED STATES FACE WITH PEDAGOGICAL CONTENT KNOWLEDGE.

by

Lindsay Medford-Fazio

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Abstract

LINDSAY MEDFORD-FAZIO: An EPCK challenge: A study of the major challenges that certified, nonveteran English Language Arts elementary school teachers in a southeast state of the United States face with pedagogical content knowledge.

The complexity and expansiveness of the discipline of English Language Arts makes it necessary to equip novice teachers with an understanding of pedagogical content knowledge within the ELA framework. This study aimed at discerning whether novice, elementary ELA teachers in a southeast state of the United States experienced challenges with PCK in ELA and at discovering the root of these problems. An extensive literature review was conducted. This review highlighted Lee Shulman's theory of PCK which guided the study. The review found that ELA was the only discipline without a PCK model. The various components of ELA, with an emphasis on the correct scholarly approaches to interpreting and teaching, were examined in detail. Shulman's theory, the problem of practice, and the related literature guided the methodology, which was based on a two-phased mixed methods explanatory design. Surveys were used to gather quantitative data in phase 1 of the study and interviews were used to gather qualitative data in phase 2. Phase 2 aimed at enriching the quantitative data to provide a holistic view of the problem of practice. The study proved that teachers within this sample experienced challenges with PCK in ELA through statistically significant results that highlighted that a background in ELA enhanced teachers' understanding of PCK as it related to ELA. A number of ameliorative strategies were put forth in this dissertation, however, the researcher emphasized that systemic changes must precede these suggestions.

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Dedication

For my family and friends

This dissertation is dedicated to my father, Kenneth ‘Chic’ Medford. My Dad was a king among men. Through him, I understood the importance of adding value to the lives of others through our individual contributions. I learned to fight and persevere. In 2021, together, we battled: he, with cancer, and I with this testament of my love for all things English. I wish that he had lived to see me complete this.

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It is not often that pets are mentioned in a doctoral dedication, but Maximillian Fazio is not an ordinary pet. Max, thank you for sensing my emotions and for being my support.

List of Tables

Table of Figures

List of Abbreviations or Keywords

KW1 Beginning, novice, nonveteran: teachers with five years of experience or less

KW2 Veteran: teachers with five years of experience or more

KW3 PCK

Table of Contents

Chapter I: Introduction

Background

Those who can, do. Those who understand, teach. (Shulman, 1986, p.14)

This study examines the major challenges that certified, nonveteran elementary school teachers of English Language Arts in a southeast state of the United States encounter with pedagogical content knowledge. The terms beginning, nonveteran, and novice are used interchangeably throughout this study and refers to teachers who have five years of teaching experience or less. It can be said that since the publication of "A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform" (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), emphasis has been placed on teaching that is geared towards achieving certain standards and benchmarks. Similar attempts to bolster accountability and to improve student outcomes were made through the "Every Student Succeeds Act" (USED, 2015), where it is stated that "all students in America be taught to high academic standards that will prepare them to succeed in college and careers." In terms of teaching, these education acts are indisputably well-intentioned; however, it is the researcher's view that these laws emulate the proverbial "cart before the horse," in that the "high academic standards" in teaching, referenced by the ESSA, are focused on teaching towards standards. The basic tenant of the law asks states to set criterion-referenced tests for grades 3 to 8 to measure performance. Teaching to these standards has altered the face of teaching and has ignored the importance of pedagogical content knowledge. This sets the stage for ineffective teaching and decreased learning. As stated by Jacob et al., (2020), "One of the characteristics of good teachers is that they possess a substantial amount of specialized knowledge for teachers known as pedagogical content

knowledge" (p.15). The researcher proposes that at the core of the beginning English teacher's dilemma is a lack of pedagogical content knowledge.

Pedagogical content knowledge is one of the cornerstones of the teaching profession. Shulman (1987) described pedagogical content knowledge as "that special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers, their own special form of professional understanding" (p. 8). Shulman emphasized the importance of teacher knowledge of subject matter in particular, since he believed that this provided the foundation upon which an effective teacher could transform material through certain pedagogical practices to make knowledge accessible to student learners (Shulman, 1987). This process is challenging amidst being taught to teach towards certain benchmarks and standards.

Although the area of pedagogical content knowledge has been examined theoretically and ameliorative strategies have been put forward, there continues to be a decrease in teacher efficiency and consequently in student achievement. Statewide ELA elementary school test scores in the southeast state that is the setting of this study indicate a 3% decline in proficiency in grades 3 to 5. In 2019 the percentage of ELA scores at or above level 3 was 57% in grades 3, 4 and 5. This dropped to 54% in 2021 (DOE, 2020). Teacher performance ratings in 2021 revealed that of the 77 school districts in this state, only 11 districts had teachers who were evaluated as highly effective (anonymous citation). The researcher considered whether teacher certification, classical training, and years of experience have impacted teacher performance for the population of certified nonveteran teachers. Consideration was given to whether evaluations of teacher

effectiveness have been influenced by educational reform, curriculum changes, and inadequate systems of professional development.

A thorough study necessitates historical context. In the 1980s Lee Shulman created the concept of pedagogical content knowledge to address what had been treated as two separate foci: content knowledge and teaching pedagogy. There are multiple perspectives on the division between the two areas and consequently an ample body of research on content knowledge and on teaching pedagogy. Shulman (1986) felt strongly that these two areas should not be separated:

> Why this sharp distinction between content and pedagogical process? Whether in the spirit of the 1870s, when pedagogy was essentially ignored, or in the 1980s, when content is conspicuously absent, has there always been a cleavage between the two? Has it always been asserted that one either knows content and pedagogy is secondary and unimportant, or that one knows pedagogy and is not held accountable for content? (p. 6).

Shulman's statement alludes to what later became his theoretical framework. He believed that "If beginning teachers are to be successful, they must wrestle simultaneously with issues of pedagogical content (or knowledge) as well as general pedagogy (or generic teaching principles)" (Grossman, as cited in Ornstein et al., 2000, p. 508).

In an effort to determine what can be considered adequate content knowledge, the researcher looked at teacher certification exams, the impact of having five years of experience or less, and the adequacy of qualifications and degrees. Pedagogy specifies approaches to effective instruction. The best pedagogical approach is informed by infallible content knowledge; herein lies the connection between content knowledge and

teaching pedagogy. The researcher considered the fact that for different kinds of content areas at different grade levels, there is optimal pedagogy.

Determining optimal pedagogy for ELA elementary school education demands an understanding of the nature of pedagogical content knowledge. PCK "is based on the manner in which teachers relate their pedagogical knowledge (what they know about teaching) to their subject matter knowledge (what they know about what they teach)" (Cochran, 1997, para 4). Shulman (1986) stated that pedagogical content knowledge

> embodies the aspects of content most germane to its teachability. Within the category of pedagogical content knowledge I include, for the most regularly taught topics in one's subject area, the most useful forms of representation of those ideas, the most powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations, and demonstrations - in a word, the ways of representing and formulating the subject that make it comprehensible to others. (p. 9)

Shulman's definition of pedagogical content knowledge suggests that subject matter knowledge is modified by the teacher. However, a beginning teacher usually utilizes unmodified subject matter knowledge which is usually taken directly from the curriculum (Cochran, 1997). Thus, "low levels of pedagogical content knowledge have been found to be related to frequent use of factual and simple recall questions" (Carlsen, 1999). The question then becomes how to equip the novice teacher with the tools needed to overcome these types of obstacles.

Significance of the Study

ELA pedagogical content knowledge is one of the cornerstones of the teaching of English and problems exist on the global, national, and local levels. Grossman and Shulman (1994) asserted

> the question of what teachers should understand if they wish to teach a domain responsibly is no simple challenge. In the field of English teaching, where canons are under question and "consensus" is more frequently misspelled than accomplished, the problem of teacher knowledge is daunting. (para. 2)

These challenges that teachers face with pedagogical content knowledge affect all disciplines, but the expansive nature of ELA, and the lack of research dedicated to pedagogical content knowledge as it applies to ELA at the foundational level of elementary school education, makes this topic worthy of discussion. Grossman (2020) referenced the teaching of English stating, "If we lack common understandings of the complex, elaborate, and elegant work we do, then that work becomes ephemeral and local, difficult to replicate" (para. 3). The complexity of the discipline has been referenced as early as 1974 by Applebee, researcher and professor of education. He stated

> whether the model for the educational process has been growth in language, the four basic skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking) or the three basic disciplines (language, literature, and composition) some aspects of what teachers considered to be important have been lost, the edges of the subject have been blurred and wavered, creating for the teacher a perpetual crisis of identity. (Applebee as cited in Grossman & Shulman, 1994, p. 4)

This issue is exacerbated by a gap that exists in the research. Brunsberg (2013) asserted that, “there is a lack of research deciphering how to measure teachers’ content knowledge about literacy and teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge about literacy” (p. 13). Although the area has been examined theoretically and strategies have been put forward, there continues to be a decrease in teacher efficiency and consequently in student achievement. From 2019-2020 highly effective teachers constituted 95% of the teacher workforce in one of the largest districts within a southeast region of the United States. From 2020-2021 85% of teachers were considered highly effective (FDOE, 2022, *Performance Evaluation*). The researcher considered whether these have been heightened by deficiencies in teacher certification programs and subsequent inadequate teacher preparedness, years of service, and classical training.

Current studies regarding pedagogical content knowledge have been dominated by research in mathematics, science, and technology. The extensive body of theoretical research on ELA teacher challenges with pedagogical content knowledge are nearly 20 years old, and, according to Grossman (2020) the struggles have not gotten easier since that time. This lack of improvement that Grossman (2020) alludes to is compounded by this lack of current research. The researcher used the following search terms in an effort to procure current data:

- ELA pedagogical content Knowledge
- ELA in elementary schools
- Teacher’s Content Knowledge and teaching pedagogy in English
- Novice teachers and ELA
- Pedagogical content knowledge in ELA

- Current trends in ELA
- Pedagogical content knowledge in the United States

After using the search terms, the researcher was unable to find any current data. Additionally, there is an acute lack of empirical evidence on the issue. This gap is problematic in that any attempt to remedy these issues must be grounded in practical evidence.

Rationale

Theoretical Framework

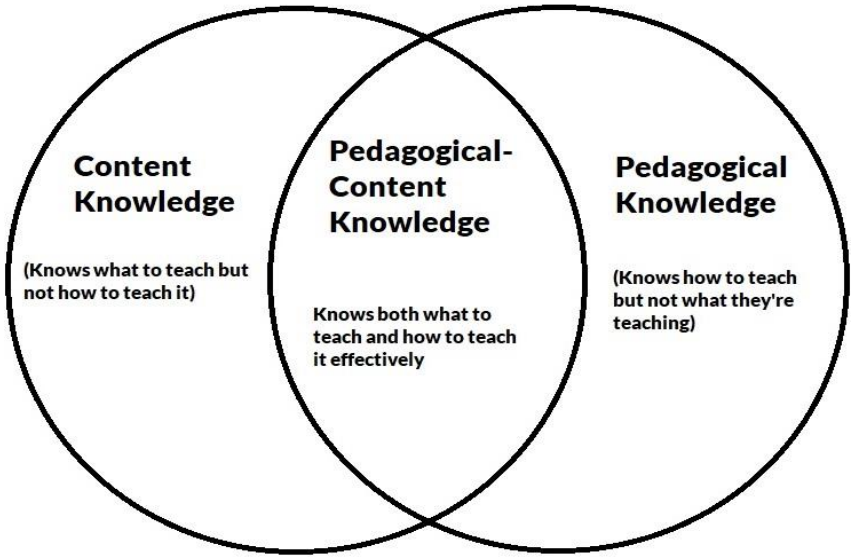
The main theory that informs this study is Shulman's model of pedagogical content knowledge. Introduced in the 1980s, Shulman referred to pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) as the missing paradigm in teaching. Prior to Shulman's creation of the PCK framework, knowledge of subject matter and teaching pedagogy were treated separately. PCK is the integration of content knowledge and teaching pedagogy. Shulman believed that pedagogical content knowledge was unique to teachers. He stated that it is formed through a teacher's ability to combine what she knows about her subject matter and the way she chooses to teach it. (Shulman, 1986). Shulman's theory of pedagogical content knowledge represents the intersection of knowledge and teaching, as seen in Figure 1. Shulman emphasized the importance of teachers possessing a firm grasp of content as a necessary precursor to developing a pedagogical style of teaching.

Context of the Study

The setting for this study is a state in the southeast United States. The researcher focused on nonveteran, certified teachers in public schools.

Figure 1

Shulman's Theory of Pedagogical Content Knowledge



Note: *Shulman's theory of pedagogical content knowledge with definition of terms.*

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this two-phased explanatory mixed methods study is to highlight the major challenges that certified, nonveteran, elementary school teachers teaching ELA in public schools have with pedagogical content knowledge. To highlight these challenges, the researcher examined whether teachers can make the critical connection between content material and teaching pedagogy. A determination on whether the teachers in the researcher's study are able to forge this connection revealed the extent of content knowledge that these teachers possess and whether they are able to make this knowledge accessible to students through their teaching. This concept was viewed through the lens of Shulman's theory of pedagogical content knowledge. Based on teachers' cognizance of the importance of the interconnectedness of content knowledge and pedagogy and their perceptions of their major challenges with it, this study provides

feasible solutions to these issues by proposing a teaching module designed specifically for ELA pedagogical content knowledge. The ultimate aim is to create a dialogic space in which policy makers, administrators, and school board members can begin to address, through reformation exercises, the innumerable gaps that exist in the system of ELA teaching as it pertains specifically to the ELA pedagogical content knowledge of certified, nonveteran, public elementary school teachers in the southeast United States. The goal was to gain adequate information from this specific population to bring about meaningful changes in terms of support for teachers to develop greater effectiveness. Improved teacher effectiveness will lead to increased student performance. This study is significant because it is the first of its kind to focus on ELA in public elementary schools in the southeast United States. It therefore fills a gap that has long existed in the literature.

Research Questions

This study examines the major challenges that certified nonveteran teachers of ELA in public elementary schools in a southeast region of the Unites States have with pedagogical content knowledge. While undertaking the study, the researcher attempted to answer the following questions:

RQ 1: Do certified, nonveteran, ELA teachers in public elementary schools in a state in the southeast United States recognize the relationship between content knowledge and teaching pedagogy?

RQ 2: What are the major challenges that ELA teachers in public elementary schools in the southeast region of the United States face in terms of pedagogical content knowledge?

Assumptions

The research design was based on the following assumptions. A lack of adequate teacher preparation through inadequate certification programs and, which leads to the inability to pass these exams on the first attempt, may lead to a lack of the ability needed to understand material. This subsequent lack of content knowledge may lead to ineffective teaching pedagogy and a decrease in student performance. Additionally, the researcher built the study design on the assumption that some of the problems with teaching ELA could be attributed to a lack of classical training. The researcher operated from the assumption that problems with neglect of one component for another component is necessary to fulfil the requirements of the standards. Though these were the researcher's expectations, the researcher needed to analyze the concrete data that emerged through a quantitative study that used a survey that the researcher designed.

Definitions of Terms

Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK): Pedagogical content knowledge is a type of knowledge that is unique to teachers and is based on the manner in which teachers relate their pedagogical knowledge (what they know about teaching) to their subject matter knowledge (what they know about what they teach) (Shulman, 1986).

Content Knowledge: The body of information and skills relevant to a particular subject area (Shulman,1986).

Teaching pedagogy: The specific teaching approaches and strategies that support student learning (Grossman, 2020).

Nonveteran teacher: a teacher with five years of teaching or less

Novice teacher: a teacher with five years of teaching or less

Beginning teacher: a teacher with five years of teaching or less

Organization of the Dissertation

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter I provides a description of the problem that the researcher investigated and the background to the study. Chapter II provides a review of the literature related to pedagogical content knowledge as it applies to novice elementary ELA teachers. Chapter III delineates the methodology that the researcher used in the study. Chapter IV describes the results of the study and Chapter V provides recommendations and a conclusion.

Summary

Chapter I of this study provided the background of the pedagogical content knowledge within the context of English Language Arts. This background highlighted the vastness of ELA and the necessity of equipping novice teachers with PCK amidst extraneous state and district curriculum mandates. The absence of research and empirical evidence on the topic emphasized the significance of the problem. Shulman's theoretical framework was presented along with the research questions that guided the study. The researcher's assumptions were outlined and a complete definition of terms was provided as a logical segway into the subsequent review of the literature.

Chapter II: Literature Review

History and Relevance of Pedagogical Content Knowledge

For the specific purposes of this study, which examines the major challenges that novice English Language Arts elementary school teachers encounter with pedagogical content knowledge in a southeast state of the United States, the issue of what teacher knowledge constitutes, and how this knowledge is transformed into meaningful pedagogy is particularly relevant. This has been a source of interest to educators and policy makers for many years (Shulman, 1986; Abell, 2008; Carlson et al., 2019; Guerriero, 2017; Sickel et al., 2017; Varma & Nair, 2022). The concept of "pedagogy" has changed over time, but it has always dealt with the development of thought, the advancement of knowledge and instructional institutions and their practices (Le Pôle Education, 2017). Ultimately, the aim of pedagogy is to guide the process of teaching and learning through the practical application of acquired knowledge. Jean Houssaye (2002) stated that pedagogy deals with the men and women who are actively involved in the process of education. One of these renowned pedagogues is Lee Shulman.

In 1986, Lee Shulman wrote "those who can do, those who understand teach" (Shulman, 1986, p.). His eloquent verbiage was the profound rebuttal to George Bernard Shaw's infamous aphorism "those who can do, those who cannot teach" which appears in his play *Man and Superman* (1903). An examination of Shaw's thought process, if it were not already apparent, is useful in understanding its contradictions to Shulman's theory. Shaw felt that teachers were the inept spillover of their vocational pool. That is, teachers resigned themselves to the teaching profession out of an inability to secure

positions within their discipline (Strontium, 2020, para 2). His phrase ignored the specialized skill set of teachers and undermines the "'doing' or the 'can' of teaching." (International School Leader Network, 2016, para 4). Shulman contested Shaw's scathing view of the teaching profession. He stated that it inaccurately portrayed teachers as incapable, inadequate, and inefficient. More importantly, it undermined the mechanics of teaching: that is, what teachers know and what teachers could do (Shulman, 1986).

Out of a desire to demonstrate the veritable knowledge and the tremendous power of "doing" that an adept teacher is always in possession of, Shulman created a theoretical framework which defined the specialized skill set of teachers. This framework was called pedagogical content knowledge, or the PCK theoretical framework (Shulman, 1986). It encompassed a teacher's specific knowledge about the subject they are teaching, knowledge of teaching pedagogy, and the ability to teach in a way that is accessible to students (McGraw-Hill, 2019).

Shulman stated that the combination of teacher knowledge of subject material and knowledge of pedagogy dated back to the 20th Century. He referred to a chapter entitled "The Pedagogical Juggernaut" in Father Walter Ong's *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue* (1958). Father Ong was renowned for his work in studies of literacy and held the belief that all things were connected (Harp, 2018). Father Ong's "The Pedagogical Juggernaut," described the teaching that was undertaken at medieval universities, where content and pedagogy were not distinguishable from one another and together, created one understanding. (Ong, 1958). Father Ong highlighted the terms 'doctor' and 'dissertation' tracing the roots of both words to the teaching profession, thereby offering a stark contrast to Shaw's aphorism. Ong stated that teaching was rooted in the most

distinguished form of academic achievement, and that the term “doctor” meant “teacher”. The dissertation is the instrument that describes professionals and scholars who constitute the upper echelons of the academic world, these individuals are known as doctors or teachers (Ong, 1958). More specifically, Ong wrote of the dissertation defense as the ultimate example of combining knowledge of content and teaching pedagogy. Ong was not alone in recognizing that teaching was the ultimate demonstration of scholarly understanding. His predecessor, Aristotle, the founder of medieval curriculum, stated in *Metaphysics*, that those can teach are the true possessors of knowledge because they understand the ‘why.’ “… in general, it is a sign of the man who knows and the man who does not know, that the former can teach” (Aristotle, p. 2).

The philosophies of these intellectual giants regarding pedagogical content knowledge capture the fact that the ability of the teacher, specifically the novice ELA elementary educator, to recognize the interconnectedness between content knowledge and pedagogy is crucial to success in teaching and could possibly explain challenges encountered regarding the same. Ong, and later Shulman, acknowledged that content and pedagogy should be merged, yet varying degrees of importance have been placed on one over the other throughout the years. The beginning of this vacillating trend can be traced to the California teacher subject tests of 1875. Shulman stated “Lest you think that all of the items on the 1875 California Teachers Examination deal with subject matter alone, rest assured that there is a category for pedagogical practice. However, only 50 out of the total 1,000 possible points are given over to the 10-item subtest on Theory and Practice of Teaching” (Shulman 1986, p. 5). It is clear that knowledge of content was heralded as the most important component of becoming a teacher at this time.

There was a shift in the 1980s, where a heavy focus was placed on teaching procedures (Shulman 1986). This shift was attributed to what policymakers referred to as research-based teacher competencies. Based on their understandings of the research on teaching literature, policymakers focused on direct instruction, time on task, wait time, ordered turns, lower-order questions, and the like (Shulman, 1986). This focus, according to Shulman, ignored one vital aspect of teacher education: "No one asked how subject matter was transformed from the knowledge of the teacher into the content of instruction" (1986, p. 6). An examination of the 2022 rubric (seen in Figure 2) for the ELA component of the teaching certification examination in the southeast state of the United States, which is the focus of this paper, reveals that a greater number of questions are asked and thus more emphasis is placed on concepts of professional education than on knowledge of content and subject knowledge. Based on this evidence, it seems fair to assert that not very much has changed.

Figure 2 shows the testing pre-requisites for elementary K-6, ELA teacher certification in a southeast state of the United States. The researcher noted that English Language Arts is tested in combination with Reading for this examination. ELA and Reading constitute the first test, which is followed by a test of knowledge on professional education. The data in Figure 2 shows that reading is the most heavily weighted section, Literary instruction and assessment, which are both areas connected with pedagogical practices, come in second, while the two content knowledge sections of the test come in last. Even if these areas were combined, they still constitute less than the other sections that are being tested. The second part of Figure 2 shows the professional education subtest of this exam and, as the data demonstrates, it is clear that it is dominant over the

language arts and reading subtest. Knowledge of subject matter, according to Figure 2, is negligible in comparison to knowledge of pedagogical practices.

Figure 2

2022 ELA Teacher Certification Requirements. From DOE, 2022

Language Arts and Reading Subtest

Elementary Education K-6 Exam Concept	Percent of the Elementary Education K-6 Reading Subtest	Approximate Number of Questions	Chapter Lessons
Knowledge of the reading process	29%	17 questions	26
Knowledge of literary analysis and genres	16%	9 questions	8
Knowledge of language and the writing process	16%	9 questions	8
Knowledge of literary instruction and assessments	23%	13 questions	17
Knowledge of communication and media literacy	16%	9 questions	14

Professional Education Test Exam Breakdown

Professional Education Test Exam Concept	Percent of the FTCE Professional Education Test Exam	Approximate Number of Questions	Chapter Lessons
Knowledge of instructional design and planning	18%	21 questions	16
Knowledge of appropriate student-centered learning environments	15%	18 questions	13
Knowledge of instructional delivery and facilitation through a comprehensive understanding of subject matter	18%	21 questions	9
Knowledge of various types of assessment strategies for determining impact on student learning	14%	16 questions	14

Note: 2022 ELA teacher certification requirements. From DOE, 2022.

Shulman (1986) referred to the absence of a focus on knowledge of subject matter as a blind spot in the research that has been done on teaching (pp. 7-8). He referred to this as the "missing paradigm" problem. To fully appreciate the missing paradigm problem, it is vital to consider the intellectual climate in which PCK was borne. Research on teaching leading up to Shulman's introduction of PCK was based on the process-product paradigm (Hashweh, 2005). This type of research was geared towards identifying the relationship between teacher behavior (process) and student achievement (product). These studies were further influenced by breakthroughs in cognitive psychology, where it was felt that teacher planning should be emphasized in the process more than teacher behavior. This led to the emergence of planning models. Shulman's PCK construct emerged almost concurrently with the planning models and highlighted that in spite of the more cognitive approach of planning models, teaching was still perceived as generic. (Hashweh, 2005). The planning model, in its exclusion of research on teacher's content knowledge, was the embodiment of the missing paradigm and offered a perfect opportunity for Shulman's PCK construct to gain traction. In 1986, Shulman addressed the American Education Research Association in his capacity as president and introduced his theoretical PCK construct (Chan & Hume, 2019).

Shulman noted that the consequences of this missing paradigm had serious implications both for educational policy and for the type of research that is conducted on teaching, through the influence it had on teacher evaluation, teacher certification and state level programs. As Shulman asserted, "The emphasis is on how teachers manage their classrooms, organize activities, allocate time and turns, structure assignments, ascribe praise and blame, formulate the levels of their questions, plan lessons, and judge general

student understanding" (Shulman, 1986, p. 8). This focus on the processes involved in teaching is reiterated in several issues of the *Research in Science and Technological Education* journal for 2022, and in the works of Bozkus (2021). This heightened attention to the process of teaching ignores the content that is understood by teachers and how it is being taught. While Shulman acknowledged that pedagogy was vital to teaching, he states that the successful amalgam of the two fundamental aspects of teaching necessitates equal attention to content knowledge aspect of teaching and to the teaching process which has received more attention (Shulman, 1987).

The Theory of Pedagogical Content Knowledge

The term pedagogical content knowledge originated in 1986 in Lee Shulman's first publication "Those Who Understand: Knowledge Growth in Teaching." As a veteran educator, Shulman devoted years of study to developing a framework that was tailored to understanding teacher knowledge and how this knowledge informs teaching pedagogy (Shing et al., 2018). The issue of what should matter most when researching the knowledge base of teaching fueled his research. In fact, his conceptualization of the PCK framework was partially attributed to his need to divert attention away from teaching processes and towards studying teacher knowledge. Shulman placed emphasis on three main areas, which he called subcategories of teacher content knowledge. These were: pedagogical content knowledge, subject matter content knowledge, and curricular knowledge (Hashweh, 2005). Pedagogical content knowledge differentiates a scientist from a science teacher in that it is found at the point where content and pedagogy intersect and includes knowing how to present and translate content into material that can be accessed by students at varying developmental stages (Loughran et al., 2004). Subject

matter content knowledge dealt with the quantity of knowledge that teachers had about their subject and the way in which this knowledge was organized (Shulman, 1986). Curricular knowledge dealt with the teachers' tools. It is a teacher's general understanding of all subjects and organization of topics (Shulman, 1986).

Shulman's first iteration of PCK placed emphasis on teacher knowledge of subject matter and how this knowledge is translated into effective teaching strategies. PCK began as a subset of broader teacher knowledge which Shulman initially conceptualized as another type of content knowledge that represented the embodiment of the components of content that were most apropos to teachability (1986). According to Shulman this dealt with

> the most regularly taught topics in one's subject area, the most useful forms of representation of those ideas, the most powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations, and demonstrations-in a word, the ways of representing and formulating the subject that make it comprehensible to others. (p. 9)

This artillery of teaching strategies to which Shulman referred "goes beyond knowledge of subject matter per se to the dimension of subject matter knowledge for teaching" (p. 9).

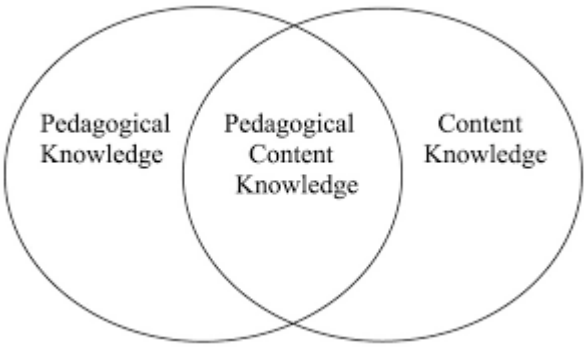
Shulman goes on to say that PCK must include an understanding of what makes certain topics easy or difficult for students. He stated that this is critical to understanding the way in which subject matter informs teaching pedagogy, as it delves into the cognitive processes involved in transforming student misunderstandings. Shulman stated that "Such research-based knowledge, should be included at the heart of our definition of needed pedagogical knowledge" (1986, p. 9). Here, in its initial stages, the PCK construct

focused heavily on knowledge of subject matter and stressed the importance of translating this knowledge into pedagogical practices (Chang, 2005). In accordance with this conceptualization of PCK, it is possible to assert that PCK is "(a) is a subcategory of content knowledge; (b) is topic-specific; and (c) includes two further subcategories: knowledge of representations and of learning difficulties and strategies of overcoming them" (Hashweh, 2005).

In 1987, Shulman published another article on teacher knowledge, entitled "Knowledge and Teaching: Foundations of the New Reform." In this article, he gave a broader view of PCK, stating that it was one of the seven categories that constituted the knowledge base of teaching. PCK was ascribed an identity of its own and became a stand-alone category. It was no longer enmeshed with content knowledge, where before it had been conceptualized as a subcategory (Hashweh, 2005). PCK is described as "the special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers" (Shulman, 1987, p. 8). The categories included (1) content knowledge; (2) general pedagogical knowledge; (3) curriculum knowledge; (4) pedagogical content knowledge; (5) knowledge of learners; (6) knowledge of educational contexts; and (7) knowledge of educational ends, purposes and values, and their philosophical and historical grounds. In this iteration of PCK, Shulman presented the intertwined nature of content knowledge and pedagogy. It represented "the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of topics, problems, or issues organized, represented, and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners, and presented for instruction" (p. 8). Thus, content knowledge within the PCK construct, which was fully fleshed out in Shulman's 1986 article, referred to placing an emphasis on teacher's understanding of subject

material and pedagogy, as illustrated in Figure 3. In his 1987 article, he dealt with transforming this knowledge into teaching practices that make material accessible to students.

Figure 3 *Shulman's First PCK Model*



Note: Shulman's first iteration of the PCK construct with emphasis on knowledge of subject matter, from Foregrounding Equity in Teacher Education: Toward a Model of Social Justice Pedagogical and Content Knowledge by Dyches, 2017.

Shulman's first iteration of pedagogical content knowledge is seen in Figure 3. His intention was to emphasize that the area of pedagogy and that of content knowledge should intersect to produce pedagogical content knowledge.

Critical Reception of PCK

From the inception of the PCK construct, educational scholars sought to define PCK in accordance with their own beliefs. Some were aligned with Shulman. Smith and Neale (1989) for instance, focused on Shulman's assertion that a teacher in possession of PCK would be attuned to students' preconceptions and misconceptions (Shulman, 1986), as they stated that any teacher with the PCK knowledge base component would create strategies within their lesson plans to counter common student errors in specific topics. A

further testament to Shulman's groundbreaking construct was seen in the works of Cochran et al. (1993), where they stated that,

> PCK concerns the manner in which teachers relate their subject matter knowledge (what they know about what they teach) to their pedagogical knowledge (what they know about teaching) and how subject matter knowledge is a part of the process of pedagogical reasoning. (p. 263)

Veal and Makinster (1999) also showed alignment with Shulman's PCK construct where they acknowledged the specialized skill set of a teacher, distinctly set apart from that of a content specialist, through their ability to transform content into manageable and accessible pockets of learning suitable for diverse learners.

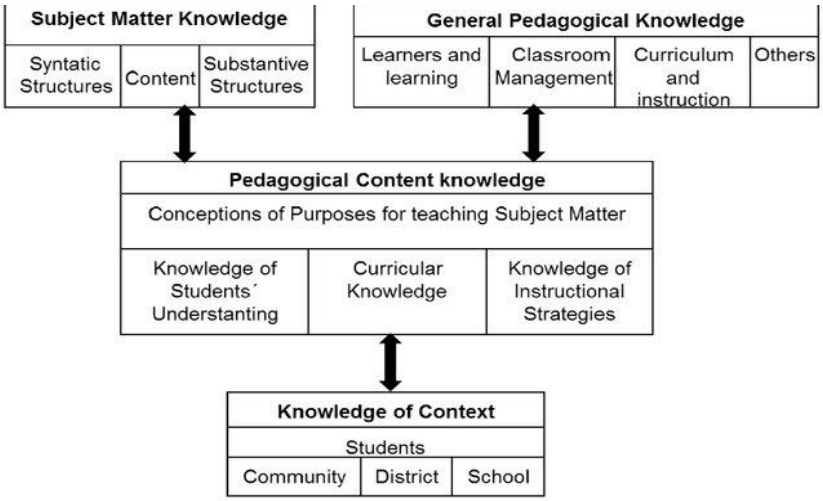
Some of the critics (Veal & Makinster, 1999; Cochran et al., 1993; Grossman, 1990) who accepted Shulman's construct saw fit to make additions, thereby creating new definitions of PCK, "by proposing PCK as one of seven categories of the knowledge base, and by neglecting the interactions among the other categories, the hierarchies that might exist between them, or the different forms or types of knowledge within each category, Shulman left the task of further developing the conceptualization of PCK to others" (Hashweh, 2005).

Pamela Grossman (1990) felt that teachers utilized other skills in addition to content knowledge and pedagogy in their teaching practice. She therefore expanded on the PCK construct including four components, as seen in Figure 4. These were (1) knowledge and beliefs about the purposes of teaching a subject at different grade levels; (2) knowledge of students' understanding, conceptions, and misconceptions of particular topics in a subject matter; (3) curricular knowledge which includes knowledge of

curriculum materials available for teaching particular subject matter, knowledge about both the horizontal and vertical curricula for a subject; and (4) knowledge of instructional strategies and representations for teaching particular topics (pp. 8-9). Grossman stressed the idea that what a teacher believed about the purpose of teaching impacted her teaching goals and emphasized that pedagogical practices should be informed by the teacher's cognizance of her students' needs.

Figure 4

PCK Model of Teacher Knowledge



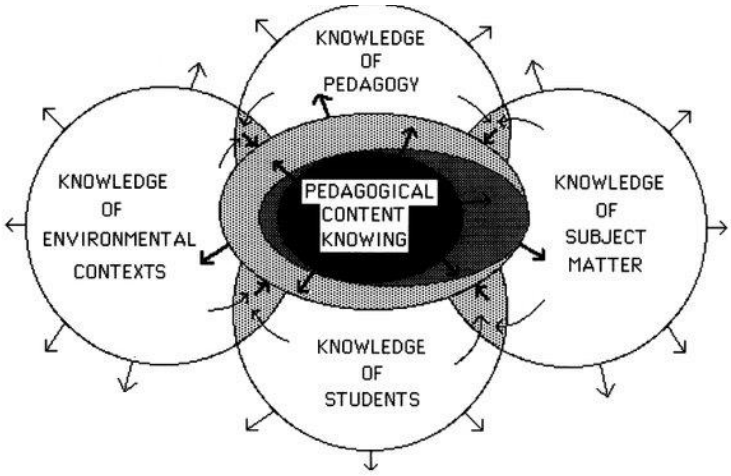
Note: PCK model of teacher knowledge. From "Conceptualization of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) of Science from Shulman's notion to Refined Consensus Model (RCM): A journey" by S. Roy and S. Bhaiagra, 2019 p.17.

Grossman's interpretation of PCK as represented in Figure 4 shows that she has taken each of Shulman's components and expanded them to provide greater clarity. The directions of the arrows in Figure 4 suggest that each component in Grossman's model informs the other. Grossman believed that context was an essential part of pedagogical content knowledge. She has therefore added this as an additional component.

Among constructivists such as Cochran et al. (1993), there was the belief that Shulman's model was "compartmentalized and static" (Shing et al. 2018). These critics felt that knowledge was an evolutionary process and should grow, change, and develop dynamically (Cochran et al., 1993). They redefined Shulman's PCK construct as pedagogical content knowing (PCKg).

Figure 5

Model of Pedagogical Content Knowing PCKg



Note: PCKg model which adds the concept of knowing to the PCK construct from "Conceptualization of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) of Science from Shulman's notion to Refined Consensus Model (RCM): A journey" by S. Roy and S. Bhaiagra, 2019 p.17.

Figure 5 depicts Cochran and his colleagues' PCKg model. This construct focused on the art of teaching dynamically which depended on teachers' understandings of their students. They stated that their construct was based on four components. Two of these they took from Shulman: knowledge of subject matter and pedagogy. They added knowledge of students and knowledge of environmental contexts.

There is an important underlying assumption in this model, seen in Figure 5. Cochran et al. felt that as teachers' experience grows, all four components in PCKg grow too (Shing et al, 2018). This assumption is the first of many that illustrate the link between PCK and teacher experience. The researcher has emphasized this point since this study deals with nonveteran teachers. It is clear that the participants in this study would not have the cushion of experience to fall back on in their quest for understanding the interconnections of the PCK construct. Thus, it is one of the researcher's ultimate aims to counter this deficiency through the work of this study. The early constructivists' views resonate with modern educational strategies and initiatives, in that they believed that educational approaches were dominated by constructivism (Krahenbuhl, 2016). According to Driscoll (2005), "learners construct knowledge as they attempt to understand their different experiences" (p. 387). The constructivist approach to pedagogical content knowledge proports that information which learners are expected to absorb should be constantly improved (Kara, 2021). Kara's statement points to the need for continuous teacher education programs which support constant improvement.

In keeping with the idea of improving teaching outcomes, Veal and MaKinster (1999) expanded Shulman's construct even further than those before them. They intimated that PCK attributes in Shulman's model lacked relational hierarchy (Veal and Makinster, 1999). To this end, they created a PCK taxonomy which demonstrated the interconnectedness of various components.

This three-tiered taxonomy, seen in Figure 6, included general PCK, domain specific PCK, and topic specific PCK. The researcher's study is devoted to unearthing the problems that novice ELA elementary school teachers encounter with PCK, thus, this

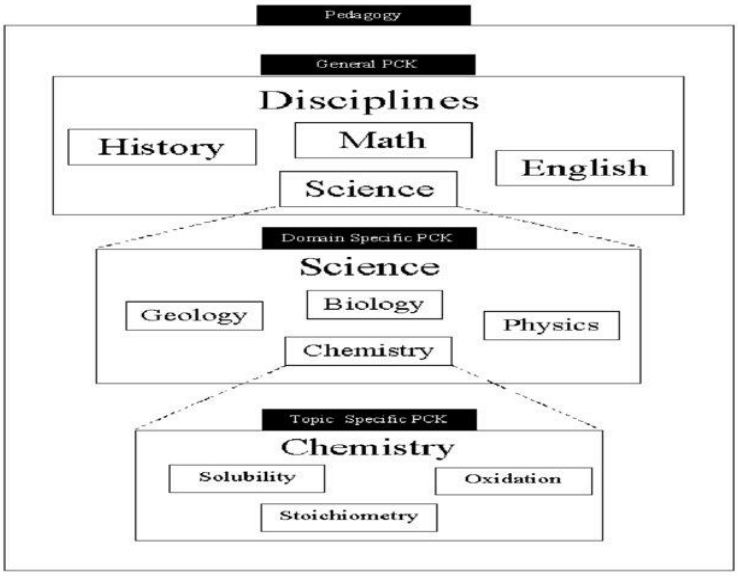
model, focusing on topic specific PCK was useful as the researcher developed the EPCK model in Chapter V of this dissertation.

Although most critics of Shulman's model recommended additions in their redefinitions, there were a few who were completely dissatisfied with his construct. It is important to consider these objections to truly understand the utility of the PCK construct in the 21st Century. One of Shulman's chief critics was Gudmundsdottir (1987, 1990). Gudmundsdottir felt that teacher professional knowledge was subject to the educators' values and orientation and as such what a teacher believed about content or subject matter was extremely crucial to the teacher's knowledge base. It should be noted that Shulman was becoming aware of this and eventually called it teacher orientation to subject matter (Grossman et al., 1989). This critique of the model started a trend where new knowledge and beliefs were included as subcategories of PCK.

PCK continued to evolve and what were considered sub-categories of PCK were starting to melt into the definition of PCK itself. For instance, Pamela Grossman (1990) added knowledge of beliefs and purposes and knowledge of curriculum to Shulman's initial construct. In Shulman's estimation, these categories were separate from the PCK construct.

Figure 6

General Taxonomy of PCK Proposed by Veal & MaKinster



Note: PCK taxonomy which displays relationship and connections among the attributes or components from "The Knowledge of Teaching: PCK" By C.L. Shing et al. 2015, The Malaysian Online Journal of Educational Sciences, (p.44).

Broadly speaking, towards the end of the decade-long debate on PCK following the release of Shulman's seminal paper, there was on one hand, a tendency among some critics to view PCK as general theoretical knowledge, while on the other hand, critics acknowledged the influence that other categories and beliefs had on PCK. In the conundrum of this debate, PCK seemed to lose some of its most important characteristics, one of which was its utility in topic specificity. It was regarded as a broad and general form of knowledge encompassing teacher beliefs and practices (Fernandez-Balboa & Stiehl, 1995). The impact of the theoretical construct of PCK that Shulman envisioned seemed to fade since it took on a generic, all-encompassing quality due to the absorption of teacher beliefs and practices. Questions about the utility of PCK flooded critical

circles. Although PCK was groundbreaking for its time, it seemed vague against this particular climate of criticism. PCK was in desperate need of a re-awakening, something that would spark new research and new developments to reaffirm its validity (Hashweh, 2005). The critics Mishra and Koehler seemed to answer this call in 2000.

Recent Trends in PCK

In 2000, Misha and Koehler, in an effort to avert the criticism that studies in technology lacked a framework (Mishra & Koehler, 2006), began working on a model called Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge or TPCK. They utilized components of Shulman's model and added their own. They posited that three essential components and the interplay among them were critical to their TPCK model. These were content, pedagogy and technology (Wang et al., 2018). Apart from grounding technological education in theory, these scholars were concerned with integrating technology into teachers' pedagogical practices. They stated that this could only be achieved if the teachers' knowledge of subject matter was sound. In the field of technology, the focus has been on how technology is used rather than on the knowledge that technology educators need to incorporate the field into their instructional practices (U.S. Department of Education, 2022). Mishra and Koehler (2006) stated that a theoretical framework for technology offered new ways to look at problems which informed decisions.

Research in TPCK, which later became known as TPACK, has persisted to the present day. Studies in TPACK are abundant and have branched out significantly. The role of the novice teacher in TPACK appears in the works of Wang et al. (2018), Lachner

et al. (2021), Joo et al. (2018), and Valtonen et al. (2020). Tseng et al. (2022) focus on TPACK in language teaching.

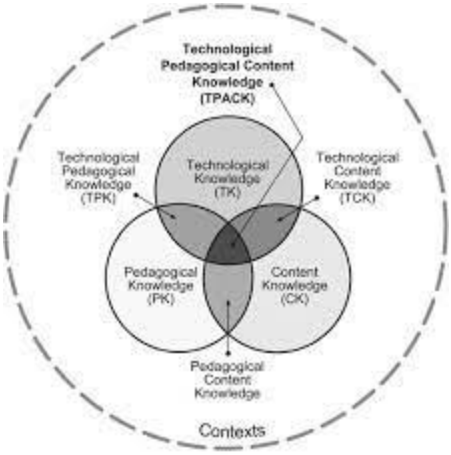
TPACK gained such momentum after its inception, that other disciplines began to see the merit in forming PCK models. Similar approaches were taken by the fields of Mathematics and Science. In 2015 a PCK summit was held. This summit was devoted to researchers working on pedagogical content knowledge in science (Carlson et al., 2015). Scholars in math saw the value in topic specificity, which was acknowledged by Shulman himself where he stated that "teaching and research were alike in their domain or discipline specificity. Thus, PCK is most relevant when there is a movement away from broad theoretical constructs and a move towards topic specificity (Shulman, 1987). The researcher used the Google Scholar search engine and received 64,000 results on PCK in technology, 25,900 results on PCK in mathematics and 145,000 results on PCK in science. On JSTOR, the researcher received 884 hits on TPCK, 714 hits for PCK in mathematics, 1,047 hits for PCK in science. On ProQuest, the researcher received 2511 hits for PCK in mathematics, 9508 hits for PCK in science, 9058 hits for PCK in technology. The researcher conducted other searches, but these search engines yielded the highest returns. It is clear that PCK research in science is the most prolific, followed by PCK research in technology and then in math. In many instances, PCK research was conducted by combining two of the aforementioned disciplines. It must be noted that PCK research in English Language Arts is deficient.

This deficiency points to the purpose of this study, which has as its ultimate aim the creation of a model for English Language Arts. It is instructive, therefore, to briefly examine the ways in which other disciplines created models. Mishra and Koehler's

(2006) PCK framework featured the integration of technology into Shulman's construct. In 1999, Magnusson, Krajcik and Borko created a PCK model for science. In the science model, these scholars included orientation and teaching which they extracted from Grossman's model (1990). Almost two decades later, there is evidence that the discipline of science still recognizes the utility in PCK through Suh and Park's 2017 model (Roy & Bhaiagra, 2019). In this model Suh and Park placed the highest priority on orientation to teaching science through the lens of argument-based inquiry (OTS-A). They included three sub-categories which are the beliefs about how students learn, understanding what science is, and how to use the language that is needed for argument-based inquiry (Suh & Park, 2017, p. 248). In Figures 7, 8, and 9, the researcher has depicted Mishra and Koehler's 2016 TPCK model and two prominent Science models.

Figure 7

Mishra and Koehler's TPCK

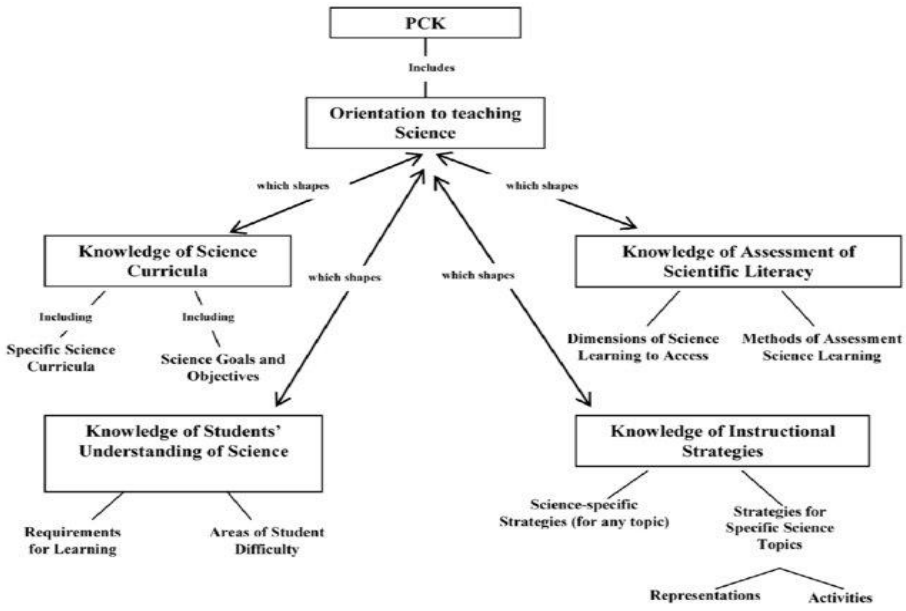


Note: Mishra and Koehler's incorporation of technology into Shulman's PCK model from "What is Technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK)?" Contemporary issues in technology and teacher education, 9(1) p.63.

Figure 7 illustrates the TPACK model which is an extension of Shulman's PCK model. This model proposes that there are three knowledge bases that are crucial for incorporating technology into teaching instruction. At a high level, these are pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge, and technological knowledge. Mishra and Koehler went further to show that there are different types of knowledge produced at the intersections of the core TPACK knowledge bases. It is clear that the complex interplay between the three core bases is at the heart of the TPACK framework. In addition to the TPACK model, other researchers in the science disciplines have created elaborate models in an attempt to improve teaching and learning outcomes.

Figure 8

PCK Model for Science Teaching by Magnusson et al.

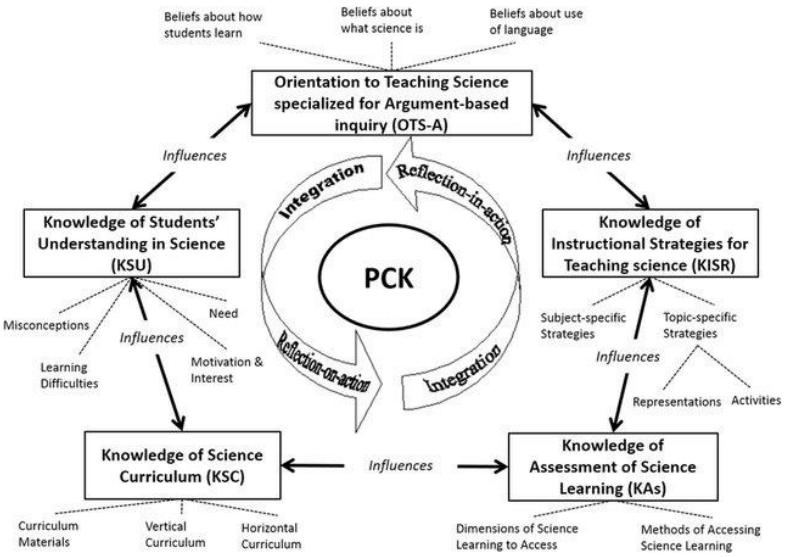


Note: PCK model for teaching Science. from "Conceptualization of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) of Science from Shulman's notion to Refined Consensus Model (RCM): A journey" by S. Roy and S. Bhaiagra, 2019 p.22

In Figure 8 Magnusson, Krajcik and Borko built on the work of Grossman (1990) to create pedagogical content knowledge for science teaching. In their model, PCK was expanded to include five components. These are (1) orientations to science teaching; (2) knowledge of science curricula; (3) knowledge of assessment of scientific literacy; (4) knowledge of students' understanding of science; and (5) knowledge of instructional strategies for teaching science. It is evident that each component requires a specific type of knowledge. This illustrative example goes further, in that each of the five knowledge bases is divided into subcategories. There is a relational hierarchy in this model as well as a complex interplay between the components. Other science researchers have created models for pedagogical content knowledge in Science teaching. Among these scholars are Suh and Park. The researcher has chosen to highlight their model because it is an expansion of the model created by Magnusson et al.

Figure 9

Pentagon PCKg Model for Teaching Science through ABI



Note: *Pentagon model of PCK for teaching science through ABI (modified from Park & Chen, 2012). (Suh & Park, 2017, p. 249)*

Figure 9 is an example of another PCK science model. This particular model was built off the pentagon model (Park & Oliver, 2008b). The pentagon model is known in PCK circles for its emphasis on interrelatedness (Juhler, 2016). The model was largely drawn from the conceptual PCK models of Grossman (1990) and Magnusson et al. (1999). It effectively illustrated that although PCK is considered to be a separate knowledge base, it has the ability to influence and be influenced by other conceptual models (Magnusson et al., 1999). Figure 9 consists of five components, these are (1) orientations toward teaching science (OTS); (2) knowledge of students' understanding in science (KSU); (3) knowledge of science curriculum (KSC); (4) knowledge of instructional strategies and representations (KISR); and (5) knowledge of assessment of science learning (KAS). These five components are also present in Magnusson's model as previously discussed; however, Magnusson et al. presented their model in a linear way. Their model did not place emphasis on the interaction between all of the components. The model in Figure 9 has placed equal emphasis on each component, hence its pentagonal form.

These conceptual frameworks of PCK illustrate that various disciplines have attempted to further teaching and learning outcomes by developing and modifying domain specific PCK models.

English Language Arts

The researcher questions why a model was never created for English studies and intimates that a closer examination of the different components of ELA could be instructive in laying the groundwork for positing a solution for the problems in ELA. The researcher chose to explore the components of ELA by grouping dependent, interrelated

elements together. Thus, spelling, phonics, and reading fall into one section, while vocabulary and reading comprehension form another section. Writing and speaking are the last section.

The aim of this portion of the ELA section is to capture the importance of words and word study by examining the parts that reading, spelling, and phonics play in ELA. The researcher hopes that demonstrating what needs to be understood about teaching these ELA elements will inform the necessity of equipping novice teachers with a firm understanding of PCK.

Reading has been described as the ELA component that has the greatest impact on student success (Castles et al., 2018). In 1997, the National Reading Panel was created. Their aim was to assess the research on reading and its subsequent implications on reading instruction (Templeton & Bear, 2017). The panel's findings were that in order to read, children must be taught alphabetics, phonemic awareness and phonics, reading fluency, and reading comprehension. The study found that most reading difficulties stem from poor instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics. Based on the quality of scientific evidence that pervades literacy studies today, it seems unlikely that literacy should be a hotseat of controversy; however, debates continue to rage. It has been suggested that the root of this controversy is based on two factors, and the first deals with phonics. Critics state that although there has been ample research on the strength of the evidence for phonics research, there is little evidence of research on why phonics works (Templeton & Bear, 2017). It is felt that a firm grasp of the mechanics that inform the writing system is paramount, and that knowledge of phonics falls into place after that. Secondly, critics feel that very often, reading instruction becomes limited to the use of

phonics (Castles et al., 2018). While phonics has the indisputable ability to enable children to connect letters to sounds, word recognition and automatic understanding of word meanings must be independent of 'sounding out' to produce effective readers (Castles et al., 2018). Educators must move away from teaching children to read without understanding (Davis, 2000). To this end, educators need to understand how to make the transitions from sounds to immediate cognizance (Templeton & Bear, 2017).

School aged children are first introduced to words through phonics and spelling, the foundational skills that elementary school aged children are expected to master. In 2014, Graham and Santangelo conducted a meta-analysis of the effect of targeted and continuous spelling instruction on reading and writing. They concluded that elementary school teachers should continue to "explicitly and systematically teach spelling" (p. 1738). They suggested that more emphasis should be placed on spelling in upper elementary school and that spelling should be extended into middle school (Graham & Santangelo, 2014). Learning how to spell sets the foundation that children need for reading and writing (Treiman, 2018). Additionally, a child who has mastered the art of spelling will have greater reading and writing skills as they move through school.

The fact, therefore, that spelling is a skill that needs to be mastered is indisputable, yet it remains shrouded in controversy. Spelling itself is not the issue, but the way spelling is taught is controversial. This is because there are numerous approaches to spelling, ranging from visual to thematic methods (Georgiou et. al, 2020). It can be argued that teaching spelling is often oversimplified, and this is a disservice to the discipline of English. In this oversimplification, the teacher is deprived of the opportunity to truly understand the development of spelling and its impact on reading and writing

(Treiman, 2018). Cummings stated in 1988 that "It seems possible that a better understanding of the American English orthographic system would lead us to a better teaching of literacy" (p. 463). Orthography "involves the development of learners' awareness, understanding and application of the relationships between written and spoken words" (Lapp & Fisher, 2017, p. 207). These skills need to be mastered early on to avoid labored and ineffective reading and writing. Teachers very often attempt to integrate phonics, spelling and vocabulary. Lapp and Fisher state that the relationships among these curricula are often not well integrated (p. 207).

Recognition of the reciprocity between spelling and reading is also critical to effective instruction and learning, therefore instruction in one impact achievement in the other (Conrad, 2008; Graham & Herbert 2011; Georgiou et. al 2020; Richards et. al 2006). It is imperative for elementary school teachers to recognize this relationship to support students' understanding and development. This can only be achieved if they understand the development of the patterns that are inherent in English orthography and the relationships among them (Fillmore & Snow, 2000).

Studies based on teachers' knowledge of orthography show that there are significant gaps and shortcomings in the knowledge that they possess (Lapp &Fisher, 2017). Effective word study relies on interaction, knowing what to teach and when to teach it. Three main components of word study have emerged over the years (Bear et. al, 2016):

1. Know students' orthographic knowledge.
2. Know the progression of learning language among students.

3. Know how to choose what to teach a whole class and what to focus on in small groups.

Lapp and Fisher (2017) warned against rote memorization and undifferentiated instruction. They also suggested abstaining from writing word sentences since they stated that this diminishes the power of spelling instruction. To this end, it is possible to assert that there is more to be learnt about reading from spelling rather than the reverse (Graham & Santangelo, 2014).

The awareness of the impact of learning to spell on learning to read can be transferred onto students if the teacher's orthographic knowledge base is widened or in some instances opened. Increased teacher knowledge definitely supports student understanding and growth. Many suggestions have been put forth on how this knowledge base can be increased. These suggestions include examining the areas of content and support. Content in this regard refers to the content of courses and workshops at university. Support refers to ensuring that continuous support is provided. It is vital to consider perceptions of relevance in terms of support since this determines how the support is received and by extension how recommendations and new knowledge will be incorporated into the existing repertoire (Lapp and Fisher, 2017).

Having explained the importance of understanding the PCK involved in spelling, phonics, and reading instruction, the researcher examined vocabulary and reading comprehension at the elementary school level, in the hope that understanding the mechanics of these components will fortify the need for grounding novice teachers in PCK.

The primary goal of literacy is reading comprehension. Understanding the process of reading is the first step in building the understanding that is needed for comprehension (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2017). Perhaps the most important component of the reading comprehension process is knowledge. In terms of theory, Pearson and Cervetti (2015) suggested that the Kintsch Construction integration model, developed in 1998 and revised in 2004, is the most forward-thinking model of reading comprehension. The primary focus of the model is on the knowledge that the reader brings to reading comprehension (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2017). Readers use knowledge to read. Reading and specialized knowledge are based on the reader's comprehension skills (Cervetti & Hiebert, 2015). It is imperative, therefore, for literacy educators to devote a significant amount of time to building students' knowledge and to understanding their personal knowledge. Personal knowledge refers to students' life experiences. Making connections to personal life increases reading motivation, which boosts reading achievement.

Apart from student knowledge, the researcher proposes that teacher knowledge should be considered. The International Literacy Association taskforce on Teacher Preparation noted in 2015 that literacy instruction for teachers is inconsistent (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2017). Duke and Pearson (2009) asserted that even if knowledge were not an issue, implementation certainly is: "Despite decades of research identifying effective practices for improving reading comprehension, comprehension instruction remains rare" (p. 82).

To enhance instruction teachers must understand the mechanics of comprehension. Catherine Snow, chair of the RAND Reading Study Group stated that reading comprehension is "the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing

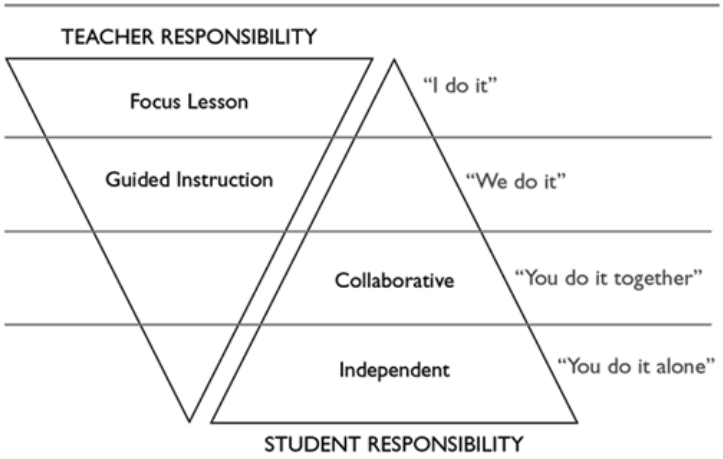
meaning through interaction and involvement with written language" (2002, p.11). It is clear, therefore, that a myriad of strategies needs to be imparted upon readers for them to be successful at reading comprehension. These strategies can be taught in early elementary grades (Duke & Pearson., 2009; Pressley, 2002). The model that is recommended by researchers of reading comprehension is the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983).

The aim of Pearson and Gallagher's model, seen in Figure 10, is to provide the instruction that is needed to move students towards independence. There is fluidity within the model as it does not necessitate a linear approach (Duke & Pearson, 2009). Strategies that are suggested using this model include but are not limited to, "predicting, questioning, visualizing, making connections, monitoring, summarizing, and evaluating" (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2017, p.). By working towards independence, reading comprehension skills are enhanced because students are encouraged to expand knowledge, understand how language and text work, and boost their vocabulary.

Researchers in comprehension instruction believe that effective instruction hinges on knowledge and teacher appreciation of the integrated language arts. Recognizing that reading, writing, speaking, and listening are inextricably linked and must run parallel to students' life experiences (McLaughlin & Rasinski, 2015). In addition, educators must have an understanding of motivation and engagement because they influence the choices students make and inform their willingness to be active participants (Pitcher et al., 2007). Teachers must also understand differentiated instruction because it enables them to reach students with diverse needs (Tomlinson, 2014).

Figure 10

The Gradual Release of Responsibility Framework



Note: The goal of the Gradual Release of Responsibility Framework is to provide appropriate instruction, moving students towards independence from "Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) Instruction" Pearson and Gallagher, 1983.

Having covered the key components that are essential to understanding successful reading comprehension instruction, it is critical to examine the importance of vocabulary to the process of reading comprehension. The sheer complexity of words in their ability to form connections to knowledge and personal experiences, as well as their potential to offer various meanings depending on the context in which they are used (Pearson et al., 2007), empower them with the ability to become beneficial or crippling to the student of reading comprehension.

In terms of vocabulary instruction, Manyak et. al (2014) asserted that educators must focus on teaching individual words. They need to develop strategies that enhance the appreciation of words through teaching words and their meanings. To this end, word consciousness must be encouraged. Word consciousness refers to understanding words and meanings versus memorizing words and meanings (Kucan, 2012), and encompasses cognizance of how meanings change. Word consciousness also fosters a love for gaining

new knowledge of words and their meanings (Graves & Watts-Taffe, 2002). As stated, vocabulary should not be a memorization exercise and as such, instruction should teach word meanings based on the nature of the words in question. It is suggested that different contexts and varying exposures are useful in allowing students to fully appreciate new meanings (Watts-Taffe, Fisher & Blachowicz, 2018).

Other supports that have been cited by researchers of vocabulary instruction include context clues and development of morphemes (Graves, 2016). Context clues foster independence and help readers with decoding unfamiliar words (McLaughlin, 2015). Morphemes assist students with breaking up longer words to determine meaning through the knowledge that is gained of root words, prefixes, and suffixes (Cunningham, 2017).

Although spelling, phonics, vocabulary, and reading comprehension have already been discussed, it should be noted that the order of their appearance in this study is not indicative of the order in which these skills develop in developing children. In fact, it has been suggested that writing begins to develop before any of the other ELA elements (Emerson & Hall, 2018). To this end, the novice ELA elementary school teacher plays a pivotal role in transitioning students from coloring and scribbling to the more sophisticated writing forms (Emerson & Hall, 2018). Writing at the elementary school level is, therefore, another critical foundational skill. In fact, if writing is not mastered early on in a child's elementary school career, they tend to be disadvantaged throughout their school career (Graham, 2008). In the United States, 34% of fourth graders write at or above the proficient level (National Center for Education Statistics, n.d. cited in Graham, 2008). These statistics are alarming, and they suggest that children may not be

receiving quality writing instruction. The statistic refers to fourth graders which brings the age for remediation into focus. It is imperative to implement effective writing skills early in a child's academic career because addressing foundational literacy problems in later years yields unsuccessful results (Slavin et al., 1989).

In terms of instructional strategies, Kiuhara, Graham, & Hawken conducted a study in 2009 where they asked teachers how writing was being taught in the classroom. They found that writing activities involved asking students to give responses to homework, completing journal entries and worksheets, and making lists. None of these activities involve analysis, interpretation or writing (p.1).

In 2008, Steven Graham wrote *Effective Writing Instruction for All Students*. He stated that there are ways to teach effective writing strategies and noted that a vast majority of teachers do not feel confident in their ability to teach writing. He claimed that schools need to look towards other schools with high literacy rates for support and suggested that understanding how the developing writer becomes an expert writer is also an instructive tool in teaching effective writing strategies. He proposed a framework comprised of seven effective writing strategies which he felt, if implemented correctly, should improve writing outcomes in schools. Graham's model (2008) for teaching writing included:

1. Dedicate time to writing, with writing occurring across the curriculum, and involve students in various forms of writing over time.
2. Increase students' knowledge about writing.
3. Foster students' interest, enjoyment, and motivation to write.

4. Help students become strategic writers.
5. Teach basic writing skills to master.
6. Take advantage of technological writing tools.
7. Use assessment to gauge students' progress and needs.

Graham's recommendations are based on experience, theory, and evidence, and are geared towards assisting teachers with creating a structured and comprehensive approach to writing instruction. Graham's recommendations coupled with the individual knowledge of teachers should contribute to intelligent approaches towards teaching writing.

All of the ELA elements that have been covered thus far belong to the written tradition of English studies. To explore philology in its entirety, consideration must be given to the oral and auditory components of ELA: speaking and listening. They represent a language mode alongside their better known and researched counterparts reading, writing, and the like (McLean et al., 2017). A recurrent theme in the literature on speaking and listening is the need to develop the art of listening (Back, 2007). Listening has been based on the precept that the student is tabula rasa, with little to no participation (McClean et al. 2017). In terms of speaking, the traditional model that schools have utilized has been top down, stand and deliver instructional strategies. We are still operating under the assumption that teacher-led speaking is the most effective way to encourage listening. McClean and her colleagues argued that these narrow definitions of speaking and listening limit progress. It is believed that a research subject needs to speak and that for true listening to occur, the same thing must be delivered in different ways and multiple times (Back, 2007).

Teacher Preparedness

Having gained an understanding of what needs to go into effective ELA instruction, the researcher presents critical views and statistical data on teacher preparation, focusing on teacher certification, degreed professionals, and classical training to discern whether novice ELA teachers are receiving what they need to successfully enter classrooms.

Higher student achievement is directly correlated to the level of teacher professional knowledge (Burroughs et al., 2019). Collinson (1999) wrote that professional knowledge in teaching refers to their subject-matter knowledge, curricular knowledge, and pedagogical knowledge. Putman and Walsh's (2021) report on teacher preparation educator programs stated that undergraduate programs are devoting more time to conceptual understanding of the content instead of how to teach it.

Teacher preparation and certification have the largest impact on student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2002). Research has shown that students under the tutelage of teachers with a high level of professional knowledge earned higher ratings on the student growth percentile (SGP) and value-added measures (VAM). These students not only performed better at their specific grade level but were a part of the group of students who attended college, procured better jobs, lived in better income neighborhoods, and saved money for retirement (Chetty et al., 2014). Darling-Hammond and several of her colleagues conducted perhaps the largest known study on the impact of teacher certification and degree levels on student performance between 1995-2002 (Darling-Hammond et al. 2005). They conducted several regression analyses focusing on fourth and fifth grade student achievement in reading and math over six years. They

found that certified teachers gained greater student achievement than non-certified teachers. They also discovered that certified teachers were more inclined to stay in the teaching profession than non-certified teachers, with the non-certified teachers leaving schools within two to three years (Darling-Hammond et al. 2005).

Some critics believe that the process of teacher certification is misguided, inefficient, and counterproductive. It is argued that deciding the quality of an educator via teaching certificate credentials is politically motivated. Walsh (2001) stated that certification as a method of identifying true teacher quality imprecise.

In response to Walsh, who wrote on behalf of the Baltimore-based Abell Foundation, Linda Darling-Hammond, who was then the Executive Director of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF), offered a striking rebuttal, stating that the data was distorted and that Walsh's publication offered gross misrepresentations and contradictions (Darling-Hammond, 2002). Darling-Hammond noted several contradictions: Walsh acknowledges that teacher certifications make a difference, but then argues for determining teacher effectiveness based on factors unrelated to the classroom. Additionally, Walsh shows a disregard for content knowledge, while at the same time acknowledging that verbal ability is important for effective educators. Darling-Hammond countered each of these misperceptions by noting the research that shows the importance of content knowledge (Darling-Hammond, 2002).

In the United States, there are three million employed teachers. There are 27,000 programs in 2,000 separate institutions for training (Putman & Walsh, 2021). With respect to the state that is being researched, there are 52 state approved educator programs, spread across various universities (Putman & Walsh, 2021). In most states in

the United States, teacher certification at the elementary level requires applicants to obtain a particular passing score on several tests which are administered by the State Teacher Certification Examination Program (Burke, 2005). Elementary school teachers are required to pursue generalist or multi-subject certifications (Burroughs et al., 2019). Teacher certification has been an ongoing and highly complex issue, due to the increased and fluctuating level of demands and implementation of reforms (Tobin, 2012).

In terms of English Language Arts preparation through certification, a study from the National Council on Teacher Quality in 2020 revealed that more than 50% of classical certification programs provide adequate instruction in at least four of the five areas of English Language Arts. It was noted that this marked an increase of 15% from 2013 (Putman & Walsh, 2021). Despite the increase, it is clear that there is a dire need of improvement. Given that only 50% of teachers receive some ELA training, it is fair to state that many teachers arrive in the classroom without the content knowledge they need. 54% of teacher certification programs provide insufficient training (Putman & Walsh, 2021).

As previously stated, one of the pre-requisites to earning traditional certification is a bachelor's degree. In the southeast state of the United States which is the focus of this study "educators need a bachelor's degree and completion of a state approved teacher-preparation program" (FLDE, *Teacher Certification,* 2022). In terms of gaining a bachelor's degree, critics have suggested that the quality of the degree matters. Wayne and Youngs performed a meta-analysis on teacher effectiveness in 2003. They stated that three studies indicated that the quality of the tertiary institution that a teacher attended influenced the performance of students on standardized tests. In a review on teacher

effectiveness which considered the type of undergraduate institution and subsequent teacher preparedness program that teachers pursued; it was found that both impacted student achievement (Rice, 2003). Apart from the college determining the quality of the degree and the subsequent impact on student performance, it has been suggested that the courses that comprise the degree also impact the future success of students (Wayne & Youngs, 2003).

A common misconception is that anyone who has graduated high school can teach elementary school. Teaching foundational subjects requires conceptual understanding and pedagogical knowledge. Teacher preparation courses must teach both. Shulman (1987) was cognizant of this fact as he stated:

> How might we think about the knowledge that grows in the minds of teachers, with special emphasis on content? I suggest we distinguish among three categories of content knowledge: (a) subject matter content knowledge, (b) pedagogical content knowledge, and (c) curricular knowledge. Content Knowledge. This refers to the amount and organization of knowledge per se in the mind of the teacher… To think properly about content knowledge requires going beyond knowledge of the facts or concepts of a domain. It requires understanding the structures of the subject matter in the manner defined by such scholars as Joseph Schwab. Teachers must not only be capable of defining for students the accepted truths in a domain. They must also be able to explain why a particular proposition is deemed warranted, why it is worth knowing, and how it relates to other propositions, both within the discipline and without, both in theory and in practice. (p. 9)

There are also alternative paths to certification. Alternative certification may include lateral entry or accelerated weekend programs (Bowling & Ball, 2018). The requirements for alternative teacher certification programs vary significantly which convinced critics that they cannot produce highly qualified teachers (Baines, 2006). These non-classical routes do not provide the adequate instruction that is needed to perform successfully as an ELA elementary school teacher.

In the southeast state of the United States that is being studied, alternative certification programs are offered in every public school district. The program is competency based and therefore does not require the candidate to take college courses. The pre-requisites for entry are a bachelor's degree, a temporary teacher certificate, and a passing score of the state's general knowledge section of the teaching certification exam (FLDOE, *Teacher Certification,* 2022). The governor of the state that is being studied in this dissertation said that although teacher certification exams play an important role, they do exclude uncertified talented people who are capable of teaching several subjects (LaGrone & Apthorp, 2019).

Amid these vacillating trends, research on the impact of teacher advanced degrees, subject specializations, and certification seems to require further exploration, though there is a strong slant towards degreed, certified, classically trained educators procuring higher student achievement. That being said, based on the history and relevance of pedagogical content knowledge, its riveting, albeit torrid, critical reception, the utility of its theoretical construct as evidenced in its recent trends, and the critical opinions on teacher preparedness, it seems clear that there is a need for a pedagogical content

knowledge model for the discipline of English Language Arts to support teacher development.

Chapter III: Methodology

Introduction

As stated in Chapter I, this study examines the major challenges that certified, nonveteran, English Language Arts teachers in public elementary schools, in a state in the southeast United States, encounter with pedagogical content knowledge. The researcher used an explanatory two-phased mixed methods design. This entailed collecting quantitative data first. The quantitative data was collected through data gathered from a state-wide survey. This quantifiable data is explained through the use of qualitative data which was collected through audiotaped focus groups. The qualitative data came from three open-ended questions. These questions were developed from the findings that emerged from the quantitative data. In the initial phase of the study, the quantifiable survey data, which was collected from certified, nonveteran, public elementary school teachers in a state in the southeast United States, tested Shulman's theory of pedagogical content knowledge. PCK is the combination of content knowledge and teaching pedagogy. This encompasses both what is taught and how it is taught. PCK has been referred to as the missing paradigm in teaching (Shing et al., 2015). The researcher attempted to discern, quantitatively, whether this population understands ELA content and whether they can deliver this content in an accessible form to students. The researcher related pedagogical content knowledge to teacher certification, years of experience, and classical training. The qualitative phase was conducted as a follow up to the quantitative results. Thus, the qualitative part of the study seeks to clarify issues arising out of the quantitative phase of the study. This added depth and value to the research.

Statement of the Problem

ELA pedagogical content knowledge is one of the cornerstones of the teaching of English and problems exist on the global, national, and local levels. According to Grossman and Shulman (1994),

> the question of what teachers should understand if they wish to teach a domain responsibly is no simple challenge. In the field of English teaching, where canons are under question and "consensus" is more frequently misspelled than accomplished, the problem of teacher knowledge is daunting. (p. 3)

These challenges that teachers face with pedagogical content knowledge affect all disciplines, but the expansive nature of ELA, and the lack of research dedicated to pedagogical content knowledge as it applies to ELA at the foundational level of elementary school education, makes this topic worthy of discussion. Grossman (2020) referenced the teaching of English stating, "If we lack common understandings of the complex, elaborate, and elegant work we do, then that work becomes ephemeral and local, difficult to replicate" (para.13). The complexity of the discipline has been referenced as early as 1974 by Applebee, researcher and professor of education, who stated,

> whether the model for the educational process has been growth in language, the four basic skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking) or the three basic disciplines (language, literature, and composition) some aspects of what teachers considered to be important have been lost, the edges of the subject have been blurred and wavered, creating for the teacher a perpetual crisis of identity. (Applebee, 1974, as cited in Grossman & Shulman, 1994, p. 4)

This issue is exacerbated due to gaps that exist in the research. Brunsberg (2013) asserts that, “there is a lack of research deciphering how to measure teachers’ content knowledge about literacy and teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge about literacy” (p. 13). Although the area has been examined theoretically and strategies have been put forward, there continues to be a decrease in teacher efficiency and consequently in student achievement. From 2019-2020 highly effective teachers constituted 95% of the teacher workforce in a southeast state of the United States. From 2020-2021 85% of teachers were considered highly effective (DOE, *Performance Evaluation*, 2022). Consideration was given to whether the decrease in effectiveness has been heightened by deficiencies in teacher certification programs and subsequent inadequate teacher preparedness, years of service, and classical training.

Current studies regarding pedagogical content knowledge have been dominated by research in mathematics, science and technology. Recent scholarly publications include Swallow and Olofson (2017) “Conceptual Understandings in the TPACK Framework,” Kabiri’s (2021) “Measuring the Pedagogical Content Knowledge of the Third Grade Primary School Math Teacher,” and Hanuscin et al. (2020), “The Re-Novicing of Elementary Teachers in Science? Grade Level Reassignment and Teacher PCK.” The extensive body of theoretical research on ELA teacher challenges with pedagogical content knowledge are dated. As Grossman (2020) asserted, “Almost 20 years ago, responding to the 25th anniversary of *A Nation at Risk,* I wrote of the daunting challenges facing the profession, unfortunately, things have not improved over the past two decades” (para. 1). This lack of improvement that Grossman alluded to is

compounded by a lack of current research. The researcher used the following search terms in an effort to procure current data:

- ELA pedagogical content knowledge.
- ELA in elementary schools.
- ELA teachers in the southeast state of the Unites States that is being researched.
- Pedagogical content knowledge in ELA
- ELA in the Southeast state of the United States that is being researched.
- Current trends in ELA pedagogical content knowledge in the United States

All of the searches yielded little to no data. Additionally, there is an acute lack of empirical evidence on the issue. This gap is problematic in that any attempt to remedy these issues must be grounded in practical evidence.

The Importance of the Study

The primary purpose of this two-phased explanatory mixed methods study is to highlight the major challenges that certified, nonveteran, ELA public elementary school teachers have with pedagogical content knowledge. The researcher intended to determine whether these teachers were able to recognize the connection between pedagogy and content knowledge, which in turn established the level of content knowledge they possess and their ability to impart this knowledge. This concept was viewed through the lens of Shulman's theory of pedagogical content knowledge. This study is significant because it

is the first of its kind to focus on ELA in public elementary schools in the southeast United States. It therefore fills a gap that has long existed in the literature.

The Role of the Researcher

The researcher is not currently affiliated with any public elementary schools in the southeast region of the United States, which is the setting of the study. Consequently, the researcher did not anticipate or encounter conflicts of interest during either of the two phases of the study. The researcher holds a dichotomous worldview, embracing both post-positivist and constructivist philosophies (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). The researcher's post-positivist worldview is grounded in the empirical observations and measurements that the study proposed, where the theory that nonveteran ELA elementary school teachers lack PCK will be verified. The researcher also holds a constructivist worldview in that the study is also aimed at understanding why this phenomenon exists.

Research Questions

This study examines the major challenges that certified, nonveteran, ELA teachers in public elementary schools in a southeast region of the Unites States have with pedagogical content knowledge. The researcher undertook the study by attempting to answer the following questions:

RQ 1: Do certified nonveteran ELA teachers in public elementary schools in a state in the southeast United States recognize the relationship between content knowledge and teaching pedagogy?

RQ 2: What are the major challenges that ELA teachers in public elementary schools in the southeast region of the United States face in terms of pedagogical content knowledge?

Research Design

The research design was based on the following assumptions.

A lack of adequate teacher preparation through inadequate certification programs and through the inability to pass these exams on the first attempt may lead to a lack of the ability needed to understand material. This subsequent lack of content knowledge may lead to ineffective teaching pedagogy and a decrease in student performance. Additionally, the researcher built the design on the assumption that some of the problems with teaching ELA could be attributed to a lack of classical training. The researcher operated from the assumption that problems with neglect of one component for another component is necessary to fulfil the requirements of the standards. Though these were the researcher's expectations, the concrete data that emerged through the quantitative survey that the researcher designed was analyzed to confirm or deny the researcher's expectations. This survey was time-sensitive to maximize participation.

Research for this study on the challenges that certified, nonveteran, ELA teachers in public elementary schools face with pedagogical content knowledge, in a southeast region in the United States, was conducted through a mixed method two-phased explanatory design. Mixed methods designs in research refer to the integration of quantitative and qualitative research methods and data in a study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This particular mixed methods study was explanatory in nature, in that the

researcher performed a quantitative analysis in the first phase of the study. The researcher then analyzed these results. These results were then explained using qualitative research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Two-phased studies present the first-phase questions first and second-phase questions second. This enables readers to see these questions in the same order that they will be dealt with in the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

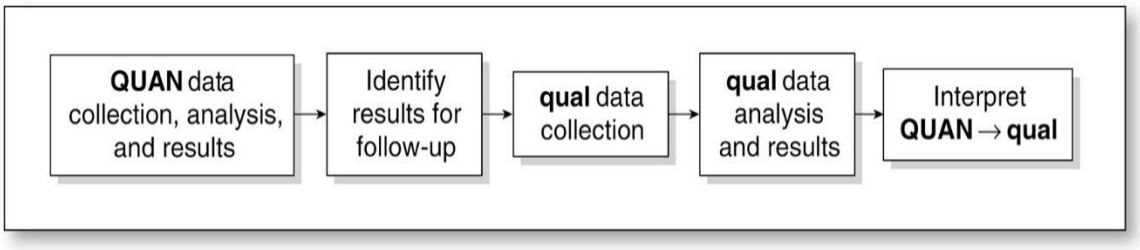
The researcher's rationale for selecting a mixed methods two-phased explanatory design was based on the advantages that this type of design offered to the study. This type of method added richness and clarity to the study because of its completeness (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The mixed methods design combines two types of data, which provides stronger evidence and produces more granular results. The researcher felt that this sequential approach (as seen in Figure 11) was particularly useful since it was the researcher's intention to explain, interpret, and clarify the quantitative data through the qualitative data. In this study, the two-phase approach was particularly useful since the researcher aimed to create questions from the results of phase 1 to collect qualitative data during phase 2. The qualitative data collected in phase 2 was then used to explain the quantitative data in phase 1.

The research design used in this study is illustrated in Figure 11. It is an explanatory-sequential approach. Figure 11 shows that the quantitative part of the study was conducted first. During this phase, data was collected, analyzed, and results were recorded. The results of the quantitative data were used to design the questions that were asked during recorded interviews in phase 2. It must be noted that focus groups were the intended protocol for the qualitative section. This change to interviews will be explained in Chapter IV. Figure 11 highlights that the quantitative portion was the focus of the

study, the qualitative part of the study was not as expansive but sought to explain the quantitative results.

Figure 11

Sequential Explanatory Mixed Methods Design (Emphasis on Quantitative Phase)



Note. Sequential Explanatory Mixed Methods Design (Emphasis on the Quantitative Phase) from Explanatory-Sequential Approach by Edmonds, W., & Kennedy, T. (2017). SAGE Publications, Inc.

In phase 1 of this mixed methods explanatory study, the researcher gathered quantitative data. The quantitative section operated on the hypothesis that certified, nonveteran ELA teachers in public elementary schools in a southeast state of the United States have challenges with pedagogical content knowledge. The rationale behind this hypothesis is based on decreased teacher efficiency in ELA and decreased student performance based on standardized tests. This hypothesis is based on deductive reasoning since the theory of the discipline of ELA pedagogical content knowledge being problematic for teachers is being tested. This data was gathered through a survey that the researcher designed.

The survey was administered to determine whether the researcher's hypothesis that certified teachers with five years of experience or less have problems with ELA pedagogical content knowledge in public elementary schools is valid. The researcher designed this survey. Phase 2 of the explanatory mixed methods study entailed

unearthing why certified nonveteran teachers in public elementary schools in the southeast United States have problems with pedagogical content knowledge, if it is determined through the survey that these problems do, in fact, exist. This qualitative portion of this study was performed through recorded interviews.

These interviews provided the researcher with a deep insight into ELA teachers' challenges with pedagogical content knowledge, an insight which the quantitative data alone was not able to provide. The researcher facilitated an unbiased process so no predictions as to thematic concerns were made; the themes emerged during the interview process. The researcher was confident that this mixed methods explanatory two-phased approach was advantageous in its ability to provide the information that was needed to conduct a rigorous study.

Data Sources

Data was collected quantitatively from a 17-question, time-sensitive survey that the researcher designed. The questions on the survey attempted to confirm the researcher's directional hypothesis which stated that certified, nonveteran ELA teachers in public elementary schools have challenges with pedagogical content knowledge. This quantitative data was supplemented by qualitative data so that the study is addressed in its entirety. Qualitative data was gathered through interviews that the researcher conducted with willing participants who completed the survey. The qualitative portion of the study addressed why teachers have problems with pedagogical content knowledge. These interviews were time sensitive. The researcher asked three open-ended questions, which furnished a rich information gathering process. The researcher coded the information that emerged from the interview process to allow thematic concerns to emerge.

Biases

The researcher attempted to mitigate internal biases throughout the study. The researcher was an adjunct professor of English at a college in the southeast United States for several years. The researcher's constructivist viewpoints are that a lack of adequate teacher preparation and support among teachers in elementary schools may lead to a lack of ability to understand material, and a lack of content knowledge may lead to ineffective teaching pedagogy. As stated by Creswell and Creswell (2018), "Social constructivists believe that individuals seek understanding in the world in which they live and work. Individuals develop subjective meaning in their experiences. These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for complexity of views" (p. 7). The researcher operated from a post-positivist viewpoint in terms of quantifiable data. As explained by Creswell & Creswell, "Post-positivists hold a deterministic philosophy in which causes (probably) determine effects or outcomes" (p. 6). The researcher was confident that concrete data would emerge quantitively through the survey. The qualitative portion of this study was built off the quantitative data that was collected. The researcher first needed to discover what the challenges are through the quantitative survey, and then answer why teachers are having these challenges through qualitative interviews.

Instrumentation

The researcher used two instruments in this study.

Phase 1

The first instrument is quantitative in nature and is a survey designed by the researcher with the use of survey monkey (Appendix C). Quantitative methods entail the

use of instruments that produce numerical data (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). Quantitative methods are used in research when there is a working hypothesis that is being tested. The survey consisted of seventeen questions. The first question of the survey was the force field question. The force field question allowed participants to make an informed decision whether to take the survey or not. Participants were asked to agree or not to agree by checking yes if they consent or no if they do not. This question acted as the informed consent question and outlined the risks versus benefits, anonymity, potential benefits, and impact on the participants' work. Questions 2, 3, and 4 were based on the participants' pedagogical content knowledge and were answered by participants through the use of a Likert scale. Questions 5 through 9 were based on a general understanding of English Language Arts content knowledge. These questions were answered through a mixture of Likert scale responses and short answer responses. Questions 10 and 11 assessed the participants' pedagogical knowledge. Question 12 asked participants to decide whether a short video recording of an ELA teaching lesson is a strong example of pedagogical content knowledge. This question was a yes or no question. Kuhn (2018) states, "Video questions offer (1) more interactivity, (2) greater depths in responses, and (3) the ability to analyze unspoken data" (para. 4). The researcher created two videos, using YouTube. An actor played the role of the teacher. Protecting the actors' identity is a non-issue because the actor is a willing volunteer. One video featured a weak application of pedagogical content knowledge, while the other video demonstrated the exemplary utilization of pedagogical content knowledge. The researcher sent the effective video to half of the participants and the ineffective teaching video to the other half. The researcher developed criteria for each of the two videos. The effective teaching

video demonstrated a firm understanding of content material and the ability to make content accessible to students. The researcher included a few moments of exemplary teaching in this video. The ineffective pedagogical content knowledge video featured a few moments of the ineffective application of pedagogical content knowledge. The final four questions, 13, 14, 15, and 16, are demographic questions. These questions utilized a variety of response techniques. The researcher's approach was to move from the broad concept of pedagogical content knowledge into content specific ELA PCK, into general pedagogy questions and finally into demographic questions. Question 17 was the final question of the survey and asked participants whether they were willing to participate in focus groups. It asked participants to provide their e-mail address to be contacted for the focus groups.

Some of these questions included: Did you pass the ELA component of your teaching certification exam on the first try? and do you take your students pre-conceptions about topics into consideration when you teach? The survey should not take longer than ten minutes to complete. Surveys that are at least 75% complete were used in the study. Due to use of a survey with multiple Likert questions, Cronbach's alpha was used to determine reliability.

Phase 2

The second instrument was recorded interviews (Appendix G). These were based on the results of the survey. The researcher sent these questions to participants ahead of time so that participants had ample opportunity to prepare. One of the things the researcher intended to discern from the interviews was why participants who were not able to identify the good example of PCK teaching had difficulty in doing so. Recorded

interviews are used in qualitative research, typically featuring a conversation between the researcher and the participants. Interviews are effective because they offer flexibility and the opportunity to connect to participants on a humanistic level, unearthing feelings, beliefs, and innermost thoughts (DeJonckheere &Vaughn, 2019). Trustworthiness of the qualitative data was established by bracketing the researcher's bias and worldview.

Instrumentation Phase 1: Validity

The scaled survey items were run through Cronbach's alpha analysis to determine the internal consistency in SPSS. UCLA: Statistical Consulting Group (2021) states that "Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal consistency, that is, how closely related a set of items are in a group" (para. 1). The survey items were unrelated due to the nature of the information that was being sought, thus a low alpha was expected. The researcher conducted a field test with the members of the doctoral cohort. Cohort members were familiar with the researcher's study and offered constructive feedback by way of shortcomings or misinterpretations. This also assisted with gauging the time that would be taken to complete the survey.

Instrumentation Phase 2: Reliability and Trustworthiness

Reliability and trustworthiness in a mixed methods study deals with consistency, dependability, and replicability. The researcher intended to rigorously address the quantitative and qualitative components in the study by assessing them separately. The trustworthiness of the qualitative data was established by bracketing researcher bias and positioning the researcher's worldview. The researcher hoped that gathering quantifiable information through the survey combined with the information gathered from the interviews boosted the reliability and trustworthiness of the study through the

triangulation of data. “The term triangulation refers to the practice of using multiple sources of data or multiple approaches to analyzing data to enhance the credibility of the research study” (Triangulation, 2010, para. 1).

Context/Setting of the Study

The setting for this study is a state in the southeast United States. The gatekeeper for the quantitative portion of the study is the Department of Education of this state. (Appendix A). The researcher requested the email addresses of every certified teacher in the southeast state that is the setting of the study. The researcher pursued secondary sources as gatekeepers in the event that the minimum number of participants, which will be determined by the power analysis, was not met during the recruitment phase. These secondary gatekeepers were the Literacy Association of the state and the Center for Reading Research of the state. In the second phase of the study, the gatekeepers were the school principals of the participants who completed the survey and agreed to participate in focus groups. The researcher completed the IRB for each school that participated in the interviews.

Description of Population

The population of this study was certified, nonveteran, ELA teachers in public elementary schools. This population was chosen because the researcher wished to determine whether teachers with five years of experience or less are equipped with the skill set that is needed to be deemed effective in ELA teaching. Additionally, there exists a gap in the literature on pedagogical content knowledge with regards to ELA teachers in public schools at the elementary level in the United States which the researcher hoped to fill. The researcher selected the southeast United States due to the geographical

convenience this area will offer in terms of conducting focus groups. The researcher gathered a robust data set and therefore used convenience sampling, due to the readiness and availability of study participants (Creswell, 2009). The researcher was confident that this technique would procure the most fruitful returns. Inclusion criteria for this study was based on certification and five years of service or less in the field of ELA in elementary schools.

In terms of sample size, the researcher hoped for approximately 500 participants. The researcher conducted a power analysis to determine the minimum sample size for the study. The researcher recruited potential participants by requesting the email addresses of every certified teacher in the southeast state of the United States from the Department of Education of this state. The research also used social media platforms. The researcher reached out to the Florida Literacy Association and the Florida Center for Reading Research to recruit potential ELA participants as well. The researcher invited survey participants to partake in the phase 2 focus groups.

Variables

A variable is a trait or quality of a person or an organization that is measurable or observable, and which varies depending on the individuals or the organization under study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). For the purposes of this study, which is on the challenges that certified, nonveteran, ELA public elementary school teachers have with pedagogical content knowledge in the southeast United States, the independent variable was pedagogical content knowledge, and the dependent variables were certification, years of service, and classical training. In terms of certification, the researcher measured how many attempts participants had to make before receiving certification and whether there

is a relationship between multiple attempts at certification and proficiency with ELA pedagogical content knowledge. In terms of years of service, the researcher measured whether there is a relationship between five years or less of teaching and the necessary acquisition of pedagogical content knowledge to be deemed effective in teaching. In terms of classical training, the researcher evaluated whether classically trained nonveteran teachers possess a firmer grasp of ELA pedagogical content knowledge than those who have only received certification.

Data Collection

In phase 1, the researcher sent a request (Appendix B) to the department of education, for the e-mail addresses of every certified, nonveteran ELA public school teacher in the southeast region of the United States. Survey data was solicited (Appendix C) and collected. Survey results were separated based on the type of responses the questions yielded. Various analyses were conducted. Likert responses were analyzed through SPSS with a focus on frequencies and one sample t-tests. Two one sample t-tests were conducted to determine whether statistical significance was achieved. Results were deemed statistically significant if the p-value was less than the pre-specified alpha level (usually .05 or .01). This means that the mean is statistically different from zero. Open ended survey questions were analyzed through codes and themes. Survey participants were asked to volunteer for phase 2 interviews. The researcher collected data from recorded interviews by taking field notes. These two strands of the study were conducted sequentially but the results were combined through triangulation, which showed connections and contradictions.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher followed the Internal Review Board protocols. The researcher sent an email (Appendix B) with a detailed explanation of the research in this study to all eligible survey participants. Participants were assured of anonymity for phase 1, the survey, as no names were attached to the surveys and no IP addresses were shown to the researcher. The researcher included the consent forms for survey participants as the first question of the survey (Appendix C). As mentioned, the researcher included an invitation to the phase 2 focus groups at the end of the survey. These focus group participants were also assured of their anonymity and received a consent form (Appendix F) prior to their participation in the focus groups. The researcher delineated all of the risks and safeguards for the participants. The researcher clearly stated that any participant in the survey is able to withdraw at any time. The researcher protected the identity of the participants in this study by guaranteeing that anonymity would be maintained throughout the survey process. The researcher protected the identity of the participants in the videos that are a part of the survey by blurring out their faces. The researcher used pseudonyms in the qualitative part of the study. The researcher stored all information in a password protected computer for which only the researcher knows the password. The researcher will permanently destroy all data after three years.

Quality of Data

Validity and reliability for quantitative studies; applicability, consistency, trustworthiness for qualitative studies.

Data Analysis

Phase 1 Analysis

The researcher determined the Cronbach's alpha to validate that the survey items were unrelated. During quantitative analysis the researcher entered participant responses from the scaled survey items into SPSS. Responses from questions 6 and 10 which were short answer questions were coded and themed. The researcher attempted to validate responses by entering data from these questions in Chat GPT. Quantitative results were displayed in tables, charts, and graphs. Qualitative survey data was displayed in tables and in word art form. Data collected from the survey shaped the content of the questions posited during the focus groups.

Phase 2 Analysis

Phase 2 of this survey was influenced by the quantitative data that was collected in phase 1. The researcher hoped to discover what the challenges were, quantitatively, and answer, qualitatively, why teachers were having these challenges, if in fact, the statistical evidence indicated that they were encountering hardships. The researcher developed questions for the recorded interviews from the data collected in the survey. The questions were directly related to the teaching video, the curriculum of the state, and preparedness through teacher training. The researcher took field notes during the focus groups and transcribed the content from the interviews. Material was collated and analyzed, by first coding data and then creating themes. The process of coding as described by Creswell (2009) entails an attempt to code the data by segmenting and labeling text, using codes to develop themes by combining similar codes, connecting and interrelating themes, and developing an interpretation of the data.

Triangulation of Quantitative and Qualitative Data

The researcher triangulated data in an effort to produce the most accurate results. Creswell & Creswell (2018) explain “Triangulating data sources- a means for seeking convergence across qualitative and quantitative methods” (p.14).

Limitations and Delimitations

Delimitations are “the boundaries of the research study, based on the researcher’s decision of what to include and what to exclude” (DiscoverPhDs, *Scope and Delimitations*, 2020, para. 1). That is, the delimitations of this study are the elements that the researcher has decided not to explore. These include the elimination of noncertified teachers, even though they are increasingly becoming a part of the teaching workforce in the southeast state that is the location of the study since substitute teachers are prevalent due to high rates of teacher attrition. Though the researcher assumes that this could be a contributory factor to poor student achievement, noncertified teachers are not a part of the study. Additionally, the researcher only examined the discipline of ELA, and no secondary school teachers were included in this study. Furthermore, the impact of technology was not explored. Although COVID-19 changed the landscape of teaching over the past three years, the implications of COVID-19 on teacher efficiency were not considered in this study.

Limitations “relate to the validity and reliability of the study. They are characteristics of the research design or methodology that are out of your control but influence your research findings. Because of this, they influence the internal and external validity of your study and are considered potential weaknesses” (DiscoverPhDs, *Scope and Delimitations*, 2020, para. 4). The results of this study are only applicable to the southeastern state in which the study is conducted. The only discipline explored in the

study is ELA, only elementary school teachers were considered in this study, and the study operated on the premise that participants are honest. The researcher attempted to mitigate personal bias but has a background as an adjunct professor of English. Research depended only on themes that emerge from the literature and from data collected. Additionally, participants may not have answered in ways that support the researcher's hypothesis, participants may also have answered in ways that they believe they were expected to, rather than in ways that are reflective of their real experience, and the participants may have not finished the survey.

Summary

In summation, Chapter III explains the methodology and purpose of this study, which is to examine the challenges that certified ELA teachers with five years' experience or less in public elementary schools have with pedagogical content knowledge. The mixed methods, two-phased explanatory research design was explained in detail with supplemental diagrams. The potential participants were defined in detail, along with the methods that the researcher used to solicit participation. The survey instrument, interview protocol, and creation of videos were explained, and the researcher's methods of establishing validation, credibility, and trustworthiness were discussed. Data collection methods and data analysis methods were also discussed. The researcher defined the delimitations and limitations of the study as well as the role and biases of the researcher. The researcher outlined ethical considerations and measures taken for human subject compliance.

Chapter IV: Results

Introduction

As mentioned in Chapter I, the impetus for this study came from the jarring absence of a pedagogical content knowledge construct devoted to the discipline of English Language Arts (ELA). This gap, and its possible challenges for the ELA teaching practices of novice teachers in a southeast state of the United States, led to the problem of practice upon which the dissertation is based. Chapter II of this study entailed a robust examination of the literature related to pedagogical content knowledge in ELA. The review traced the history and relevance of PCK, outlined Lee Shulman's theoretical construct of PCK—the theory that guided the study—reviewed the critical reception of PCK and the recent trends in PCK, examined the various branches of ELA within Sulman's PCK framework, and it delved into various aspects of ELA teacher preparedness through the critical lens of PCK. The researcher used a two-phased mixed methods explanatory research design, employing surveys and follow up focus groups, as outlined in Chapter III, to investigate whether certified, novice elementary school teachers in a southeast state of the United States experienced challenges with pedagogical content knowledge as it related to English language Arts and to unearth the root causes of these challenges.

The study was poised to address this problem of practice through two fundamental research questions:

> RQ 1: Do certified nonveteran ELA teachers in public elementary schools in a state in the southeast United States recognize the relationship between content knowledge and teaching pedagogy?

RQ 2: What are the major challenges that ELA teachers in public elementary schools in the southeast region of the United States face in terms of pedagogical content knowledge?

The results of this study were presented in accordance with the survey design. Thus, the results of phase 1, which was designed to address the first research question, were presented first. Phase 2 was conducted subsequently to phase 1, and these results, which were designed to answer research question 2, were presented second. These results, as well as the procedures used to cleanse and prepare the data for analysis and the analytical processes that were used to interpret the results, were reviewed in this fourth chapter. The chapter also featured supporting statistical tables and a myriad of graphics.

Summary of Phase 1

Participants

The researcher targeted certified, novice ELA elementary school teachers in a southeast state of the United States. The rationale behind selecting this group was explained in Chapter I of this study. The process of recruiting participants entailed retrieving the e-mail addresses from the state's Department of Education through a Listserv request. The Department of Education honored this request within two days of the request being made, however; the e-mail addresses that were sent back included the contact information for every certified teacher in the state. This amounted to more than 186,000 e-mails. Consequently, the researcher's first task was to clean and classify this data to ensure that the population of the study was not compromised. To this end, teachers who belonged to middle school, high school, and who taught within any

discipline that was specifically unrelated to ELA were removed from the data set. The final number of e-mails left after cleansing the data was 48,349. Data was alphabetized for the purpose of creating clean and manageable demographic categories. The teachers who received the survey belonged to several cohorts. These were: combination elementary, gifted teachers, teacher other classroom, teacher other instruction, teacher elementary reading, teacher self-contained fifth grade, teacher self-contained fourth grade, teacher self-contained third grade, teacher self-contained second grade, teacher self-contained first grade, teacher self-contained kindergarten, title 1 elementary school teacher, and ungraded elementary.

Analyzing the Survey: Field Test and Cronbach's Alpha

Field Test.

This section reviewed the analytical processes involved in the study. Survey analysis began with a field test, where the initial iteration of the survey was administered to the researcher's doctoral cohort. This exercise assisted the researcher in refining the questions on the survey. It also assisted in gauging the length of time it would take the actual participants to take the survey. Cohort members took approximately 10 minutes to complete the survey.

As stated in Chapter III, the survey questions that were used in this study to gather quantitative data from the target population of teachers were custom designed by the researcher. The researcher's surveys aimed at testing various components of pedagogical content knowledge in English Language Arts. A Cronbach's alpha test was performed on the Likert-Scaled questions that appeared on the 17-question survey. The researcher anticipated a low alpha since this survey tested different components of English

Language Arts. Thus, a low alpha would have confirmed that the items were not internally consistent. This scaled data was run through SPSS and the results were recorded as follows:

Survey Psychometrics: Cronbach's Alpha.

In Table 1, a Cronbach's Alpha was run using SPSS on the seven Likert scale survey items. One of the 7 questions was removed by SPSS. The results were depicted in Table 1.

Table 1

Cronbach's Alpha

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.439	.488	6

As seen in Table 1, six of seven Likert scaled items on the survey were run through SPSS and analyzed statistically. The overall Cronback Alpha (N=6) was .488 which meant that the scaled items were unrelated.

Summary of Analyses Phase 1: Methods and Data Cleansing

Methods.

Having refined the questions, the researcher embarked on creating a distribution strategy for the 48,349 email addresses that represented the target population for the study. An external server needed to be used due to restrictions that were placed on mass e-mails by the researcher's university. These restrictions were due to cybersecurity concerns.

The researcher used SurveyMonkey to distribute the two surveys. Using SurveyMonkey as the server through which e-mails were sent presented unique learning experiences to the researcher. The first task was adding validity to the surveys in terms of the origin of the survey. The researcher combatted this challenge by merging the professional university address with the SurveyMonkey link. As stated in Chapter III, the surveys were identical, except for question 12 which featured a short video on pedagogical content knowledge. Survey 1 was sent to 24,169 potential participants and survey 2 was sent to 24,180 potential participants. These two e-mail batches were sorted into three collectors per survey per SurveyMonkey limitations. The maximum number of emails per survey collector was 10,000. Surveys were sent in a staggered manner over the course of two weeks, due to SurveyMonkey's 24-hour waiting policy for surveys that exceeded 5,000 recipients. Two reminders were sent per survey. Surveys were all closed at the end of the staggered two-week period. The researcher observed that surveys that were sent on Tuesdays and Wednesdays received greater responses than surveys that were sent on Thursdays. The first reminder yielded almost the same number of responses as the initial invitation relative to the days on which they were sent. The final reminder did not gain as much traction. 240 surveys or .05% were fully completed.

Data Cleansing.

At the end of the two-week window, survey data from each of the two surveys was retrieved from Survey Monkey and imported into Microsoft Excel. This data was not SPSS compatible since the responses were misaligned. The researcher began with the survey, an EPCK Challenge 1. Seventeen columns represented each of the survey questions and the responses were aligned beneath the columns and against the margins to

ensure SPSS readability and frequency accuracy. The researcher then repeated this process with an EPCK Challenge 2. For questions 7, 10, 12, and 17 the researcher created additional categories to refine the data even further. Question 7 was split into two parts: 7a recorded participant's choices of either the first or the second statement regarding the relationship between spelling and reading and 7b listed the number of teachers who agreed that both statements were valid. Question 10 was broken into five parts. Each of these parts recorded the frequency of responses in relation to the evaluation method that teachers used most (see Appendix I). Question 12 was broken into 12a, which listed the yes or no responses to the effective teaching video, and 12b, which listed the yes or no responses in relation to the ineffective teaching video. Question 17, which asked whether participants would be interested in a follow up focus group, was split into two parts, 17a recorded their willingness to participate or lack thereof with yes or no responses, and 17b listed their e-mail addresses. The EPCK Challenge 2 datafile was then merged into the EPCK Challenge 1 datafile. This process of merging necessitated renumbering the participants so that the actual numerical value of all survey participants could be produced.

The researcher then imported the merged datafile into SPSS. The Likert Scale questions and the yes or no questions on the survey were run through SPSS to determine frequencies. These questions were questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 17. After the initial run, the researcher cleaned the data since there were four participants who only answered question 1. It was felt that the inclusion of these participants would skew the data. These participants were removed from the survey. The data was run again, in descending order through SPSS. Next, the responses to the open-ended questions on

the survey were read and analyzed. These were questions 6, 7 and 8. Question 7 was a mixed methods question. It was run through SPSS and supporting quotations were included in the discussion of results for reference. Questions 6 and 8 were analyzed using qualitative analysis methods. Out of the 386 teachers who responded that they were willing to take the survey by checking yes on question 1, which was the forcefield question, only 240 respondents fully completed the survey. The remaining 142 teachers agreed to take the survey but clicked through the questions. Four of these teachers only attempted question 2 which asked whether they were familiar with the term pedagogical content knowledge. These 4 were removed from the data set. The results presented dealt with 240 valid responses.

Phase 1 Survey Analysis and Results

The results of this study were presented in four sections. The first section discussed demographic data. The second section provided the results of the scaled survey questions, the third section covered the findings of the open-ended survey questions, and the final section presented the results of the focus groups. The researcher employed this approach to present results in a strategic and systematic manner, moving from the broad and general to the specific.

Results.

Demographics of Participants.

The researcher gathered demographic data on the target population of certified, novice ELA elementary school teachers through survey questions 13, 14, 15, and 16. These demographic questions were directly tied to research question 1 and were fleshed out in detail in Chapter V. The results of these questions are below.

Question 13 on the survey asked teachers what grade level they taught. The results are recorded in Table 2.

Table 2

Grade Levels of Participants

Grade Level	Number of participants
Kindergarten	44
1st Grade	40
2nd Grade	35
3rd Grade	37
4th Grade	39
5th Grade	45

Table 2 shows the grade levels that the 240 survey participants taught. 45 fifth grade teachers took the survey, constituting the largest group of respondents. 44 kindergarten teachers responded to this survey, comprising the second largest group in the study. There were 40 first grade teachers, 39 fourth grade teachers, 37 third grade teachers and 35 second grade teachers. Thus, there was an even distribution from all elementary grades.

Descriptive Statistics

Question 14 on the survey asked teachers whether they passed the ELA components of their certification examination on the first attempt. Table 3 depicts first time passing percentages for ELA certification.

Table 3

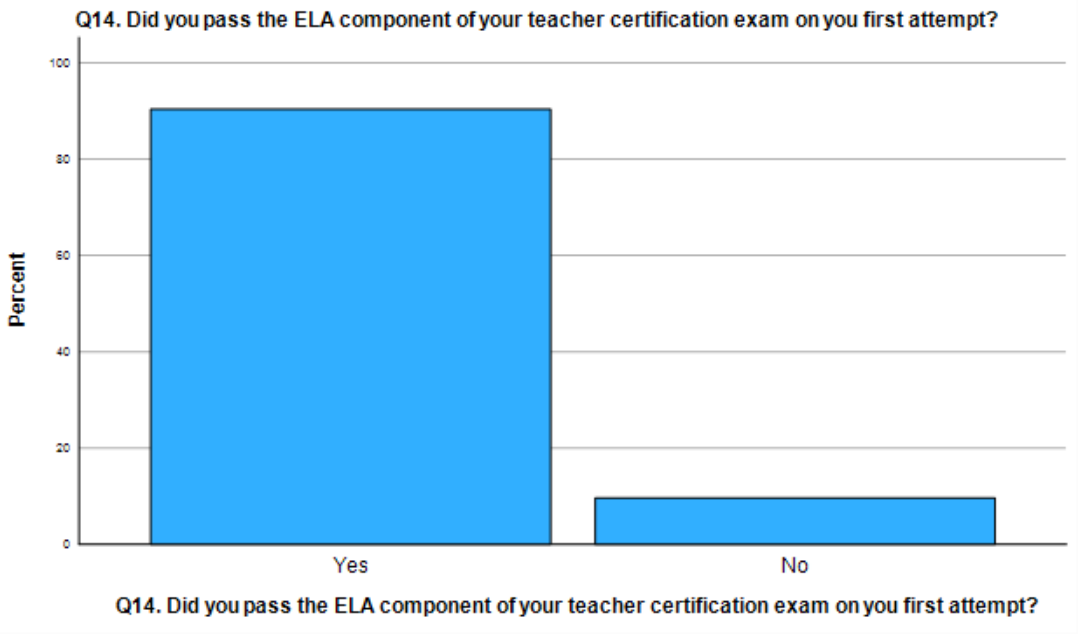
Question 14 Survey Results

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	216	90.0	90.4	90.4
	No	23	9.6	9.6	100.0
	Total	239	99.6	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.4		
Total		240	100.0		

As illustrated in Table 3, of the 239 teachers who answered this question, 216 teachers, or 90.4%, passed the ELA component of the teacher certification examination on their first attempt. Only 23 teachers or 9.6% of teachers reported that they were unsuccessful at this exam on their first try. Therefore, most teachers who took the survey were successful at this exam on their first try. These results were displayed in the bar graph in Figure 12 to offer a different visual perspective.

Figure 12

Question 14 Results Bar Graph



The visual offered in Figure 12 reinforces that those who were successful at the ELA examination on their first attempt were in the clear majority.

Question 15 on the survey dealt with classical training and asked whether the teachers who took this survey held an ELA subject specific degree opposed to a non-specialized bachelor's degree. The results of this question are depicted in Table 4 and Figure 13.

Table 4

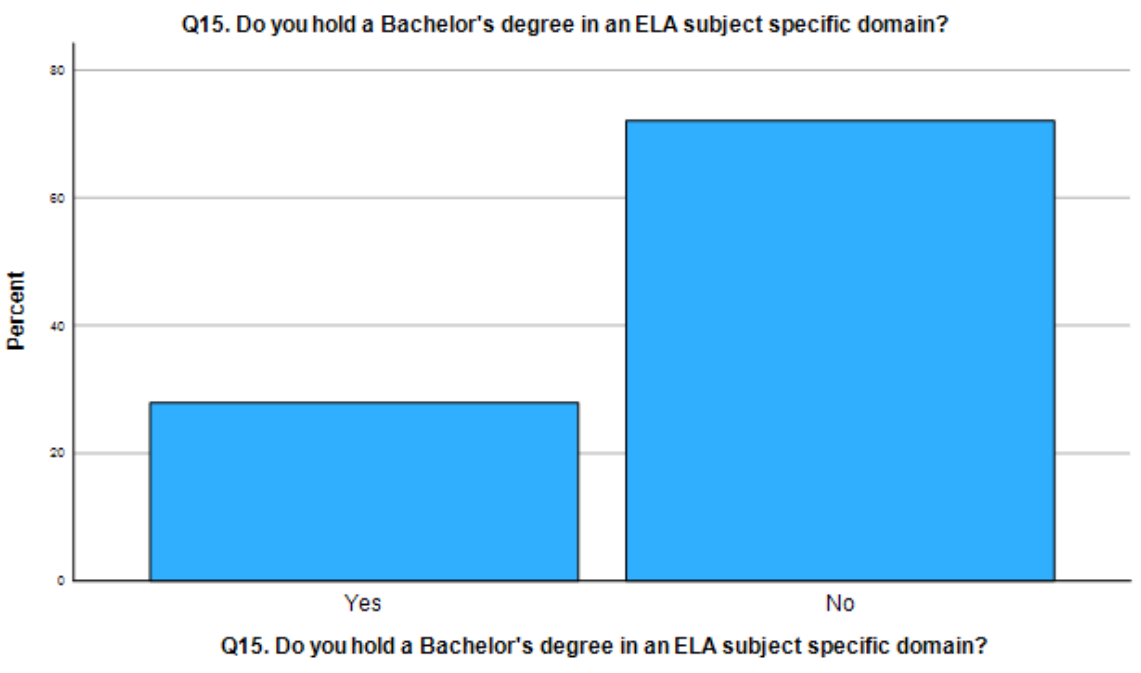
Question 15 Survey Results

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	Yes	67	27.9	27.9	27.9	27.9
	No	173	72.1	72.1	100.0	
	Total	240	100.0	100.0		

As shown in Table 4 and Figure 13, out of the 240 teachers who took this survey 173 teachers out of 240 or 72.1% of teachers did not have an ELA specific degree. 67 teachers or 27.9% did have a Bachelor's in an ELA specific domain.

Figure 13

Question 15 Results Bar Graph



As shown in Figure 13, the majority of teachers who took this state-wide survey did not hold a bachelor's degree in an ELA subject specific domain.

Question 16 was the final demographic question on the survey. This question asked participants what kind of teacher preparedness program they graduated from. Detailed responses to this question can be found in Appendix J.

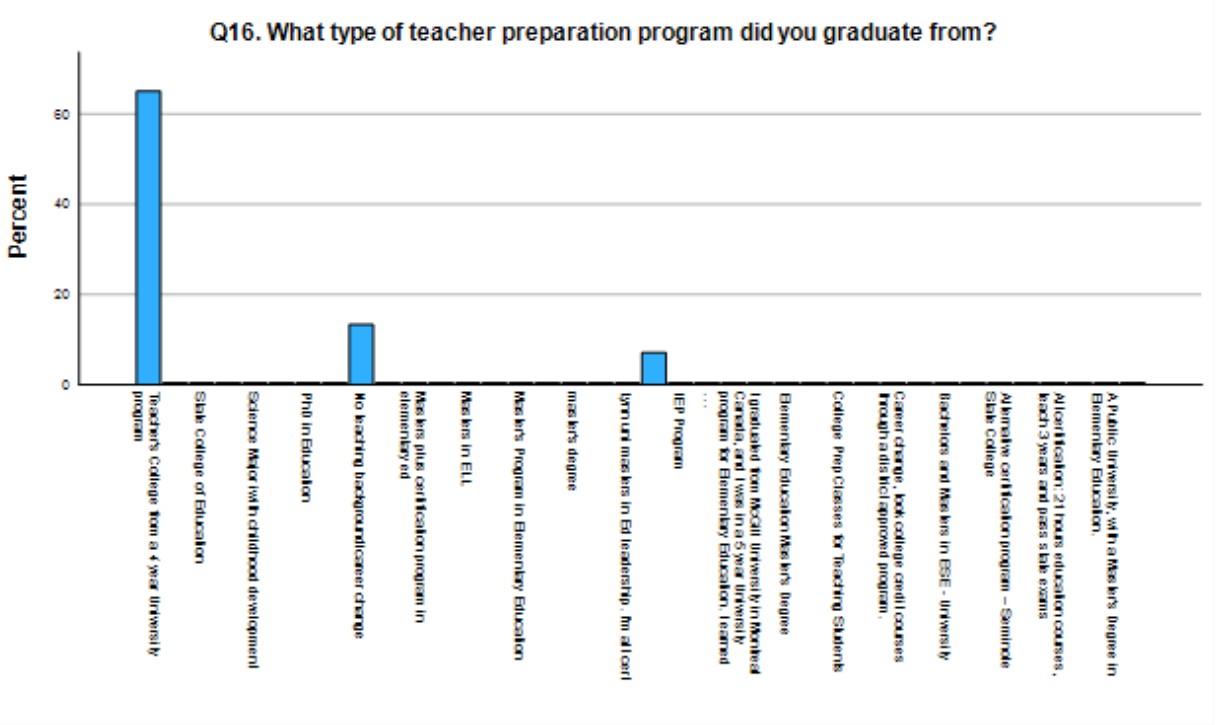
As seen in Figure 14, there were three categories that accounted for most of the responses in this section. Notably, 156 teachers or 65% of the sample, stated that they received their teacher training through a teacher's college from a four-year university program. The second largest category comprised 32 respondents or 13.3% of the sample population. These individuals reported that they did not have a background in teaching.

17 participants or 7.1% reported that they graduated from a liberal arts college. The remaining 35 participants were trained in other ways, with no two ways being the same.

Some of these included post graduate education and alternative certification.

Figure 14

Question 16 Survey Answers



Results

Likert Scaled Questions.

The results of the scaled questions on the survey were presented in chronological order. These questions tested the teachers' knowledge of broad pedagogical content knowledge questions first and moved to more specific aspects of PCK within the ELA framework. These questions were designed to answer research question 1.

Pedagogical Content Knowledge.

The first question on the survey asked whether teachers were willing to take the survey. As mentioned previously, 48,349 survey invitations were sent to ELA elementary school teachers, with 5 years of experience or less. These surveys were sent in two batches. Survey 1 was sent to 24,169 potential participants and survey 2 was sent to 24,180 potential participants. In the first survey, an EPCK Challenge 1, 1,245 emails bounced back, 387 recipients clicked through, 306 teachers opted out, and 7,646 invitations remained unopened. The actual number of teachers who opened the survey and attempted the questions was 198. For the second survey, an EPCK Challenge 2,899 emails bounced back, 282 clicked through, 337 opted out and 10,793 invitations remained unopened. The actual number of teachers who attempted the survey was 188.

Question 2 on the survey asked how familiar participants were with the term pedagogical content knowledge. Likert scale responses were run and recorded through SPSS in descending order. The results were shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Survey Results for Question 2

Valid	Strongly Agree	89	37.1	37.1	37.1
	Agree	114	47.5	47.5	84.6
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	21	8.8	8.8	93.3
	Disagree	16	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	240	100.0	100.0	

As Table 5 showed, 240 people responded to Question 2. Of these, 89 or 37.1% strongly agreed that they were familiar with the term pedagogical content knowledge. 114 people or 47.5% agreed with the statement indicating that they were familiar with the term. Thus, 84.6% of the sample either agreed or strongly agreed that they were familiar with the term PCK. The researcher chose to depict these results in the form of a bar graph to provide an alternative visual. This bar graph is depicted in Figure 15.

Figure 15

Question 2 Bar Graph

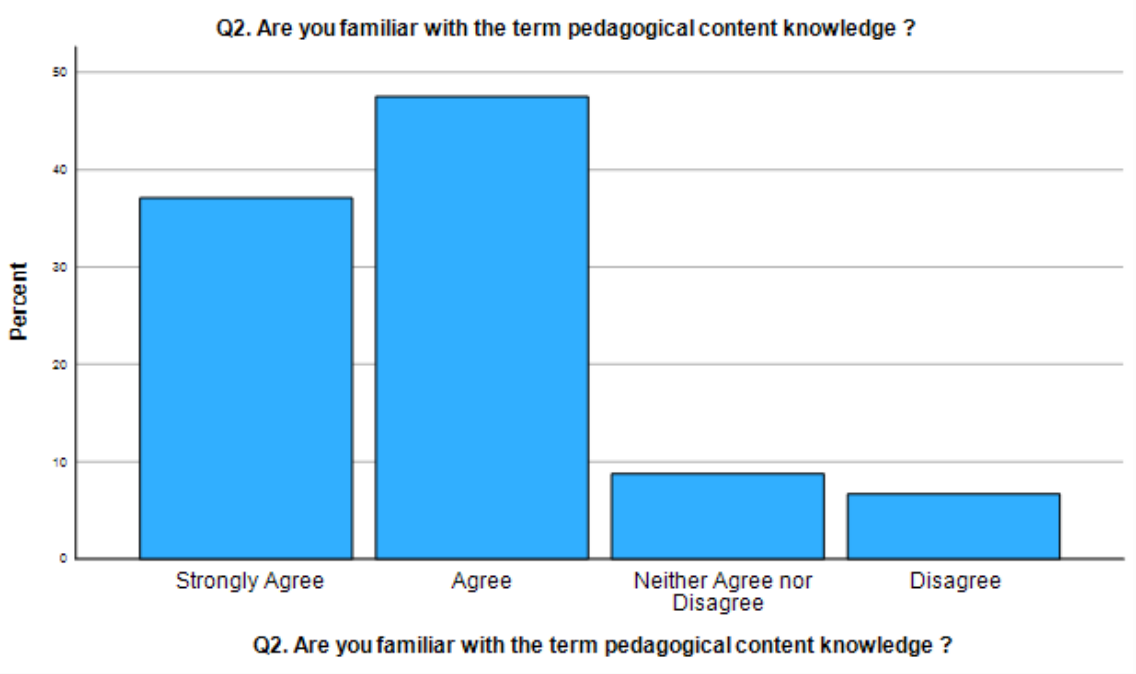


Figure 15 above showed the similarities between respondents who strongly agreed or agreed with the statement and with those who were indecisive and those who disagreed.

Question 3 on the survey asked whether teachers considered their students preconceptions of a topic before they taught a lesson. This question tested broad pedagogical content knowledge. The results of this question were presented in Table 6.

Table 6

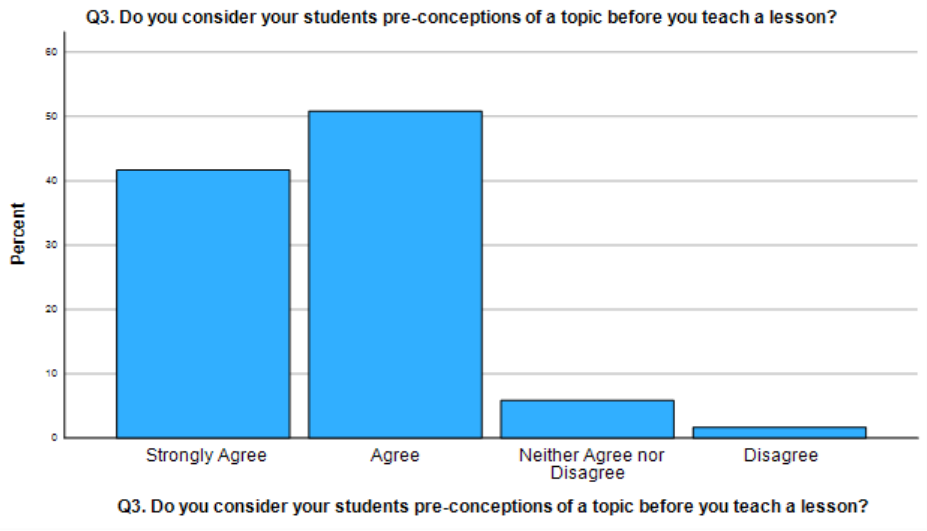
Question 3 Results

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	Strongly Agree	100	41.7	41.7	41.7	
	Agree	122	50.8	50.8	92.5	
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	14	5.8	5.8	98.3	
	Disagree	4	1.7	1.7	100.0	
	Total	240	100.0	100.0		

As illustrated in Table 6, 240 people responded to the question. Of these 222, or 92.5% of the sample indicated that they considered students' preconceptions before teaching a topic. Figure 16 provided another visual representation of this data, allowing for another view of the responses.

Figure 16

Question 3 Bar Graph



Question 4 on the survey asked whether teachers felt that the curriculum documents provided by the state were useful in their teaching; the results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Question 4 Results

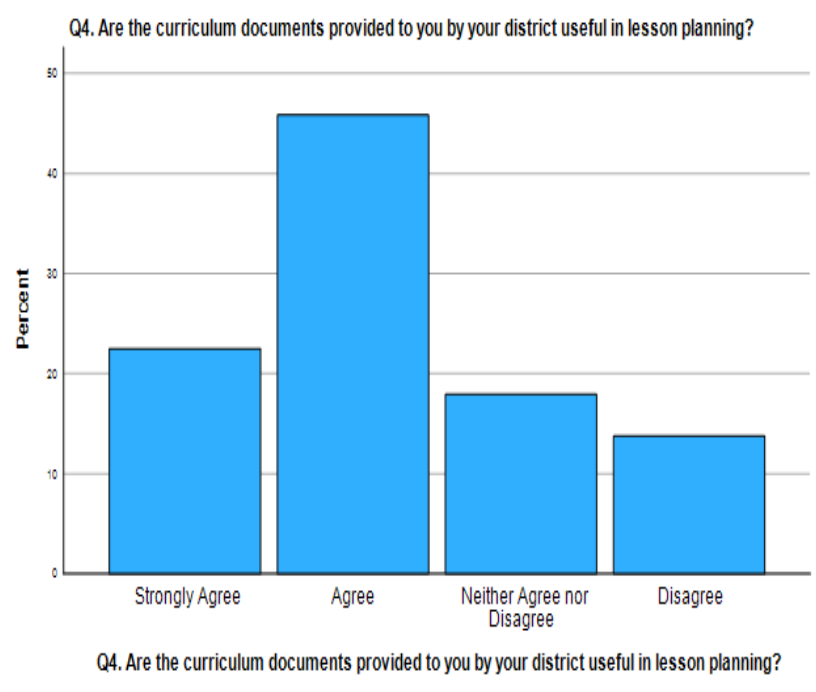
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	Strongly Agree	54	22.5	22.5	22.5	
	Agree	110	45.8	45.8	68.3	
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	43	17.9	17.9	86.3	
	Disagree	33	13.8	13.8	100.0	
	Total	240	100.0	100.0		

As seen in Table 7 and Figure 17, of the 240 teachers who answered this queston,164 participants or 68.3 % either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement. 43 or 17.9% of participants neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, and 33 or 13.8% disagreed.

The bar graph in Figure 17 effectively highlighted that those who agreed with the statement were in the majority for question 4 on curriculum documents.

Figure 17

Question 4 Bar Graph



Question 5 on the survey asked whether teachers felt that phonemic awareness was the cornerstone of spelling instruction. The results are presented in Table 8 and Figure 18.

Table 8 *Question 5 Survey Results*

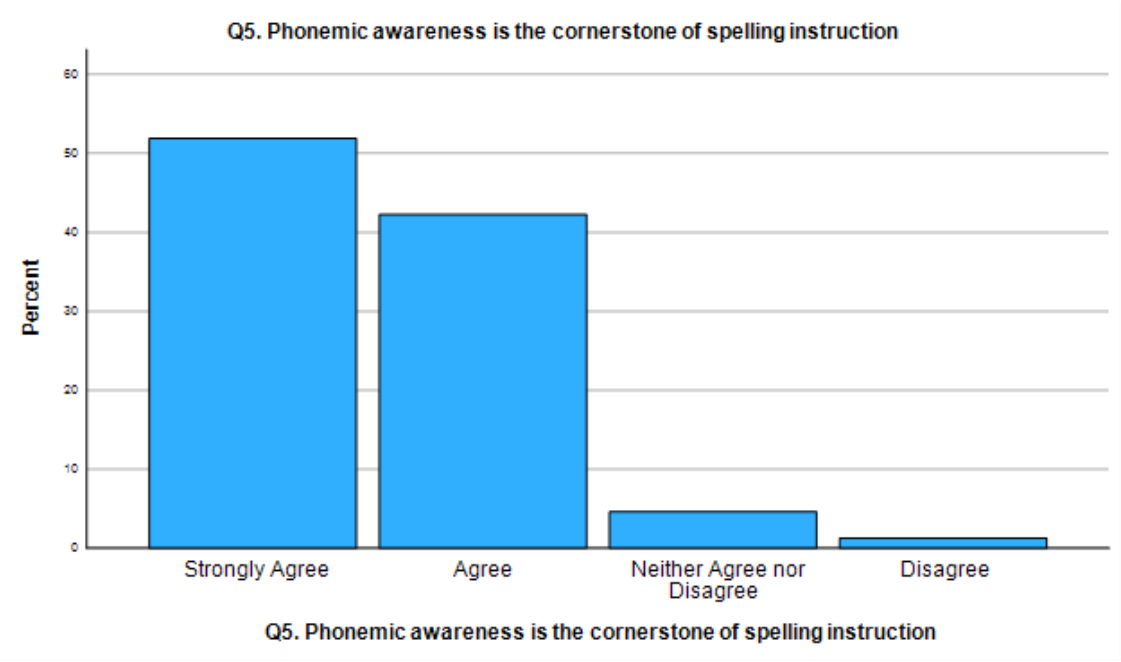
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	Strongly Agree	124	51.7	51.9	51.9	
	Agree	101	42.1	42.3	94.1	
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	11	4.6	4.6	98.7	
	Disagree	3	1.3	1.3	100.0	
	Total	239	99.6	100.0		
Missing	System	1	.4			
Total		240	100.0			

As seen in Table 8, in response to question 5, almost half of the total number of participants stated that they either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that

phonemic awareness was the cornerstone of spelling instruction. .225 or 46.9% out of 240 respondents indicated that they either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement. The bar graph in Figure 18 supported these findings.

Figure 18

Question 5 Bar Graph



The bar graph in Figure 18 above showed that the vast majority of teachers believed that phonemic awareness was the cornerstone of spelling instruction. The graphic clearly depicted the drastic difference between the groups who were in agreement with the statement and those who were not in agreement.

The next question on the survey, question 7b, asked respondents to agree one of two statements. Statement 1: there is more to learn about reading from spelling; or Statement 2: there is more to learn about spelling from reading. Respondents were asked to respond yes or no to each statement and had the option of agreeing with both statements. Table 9 and Figure 19 present the findings of this survey question.

Table 9

Question 7b Survey Results

	Frequency		Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	Both 1 and 2		19	7.9	8.0	8.0
	There is more to learn about Reading from Spelling		92	38.3	38.8	46.8
	There is more to learn about Spelling from Reading		126	52.5	53.2	100.0
	Total		237	98.8	100.0	
Missing	System		3	1.3		
Total		240	100.0			

Participants who agreed with both statements were in the minority. 19 teachers or 7.9% felt that both statements 1 and 2 were valid. 92 respondents or 38.3% felt that there was more to learn about reading from spelling, while 126 participants or 52.5% felt that there was more to learn about spelling from reading. 3 participants or 1.3 % who responded to most of the other questions, did not respond to this question. The bar graph in Figure 19 was used to provide an additional layer of visual awareness.

The use of a bar graph for Figure 19 aided the researcher in seeing the acute variety of responses. Participants were invited to accompany their answer choice with a short answer response. Supporting quotations were shown in Tables 10 and 11.

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Figure 19

Question 7b Bar Graph

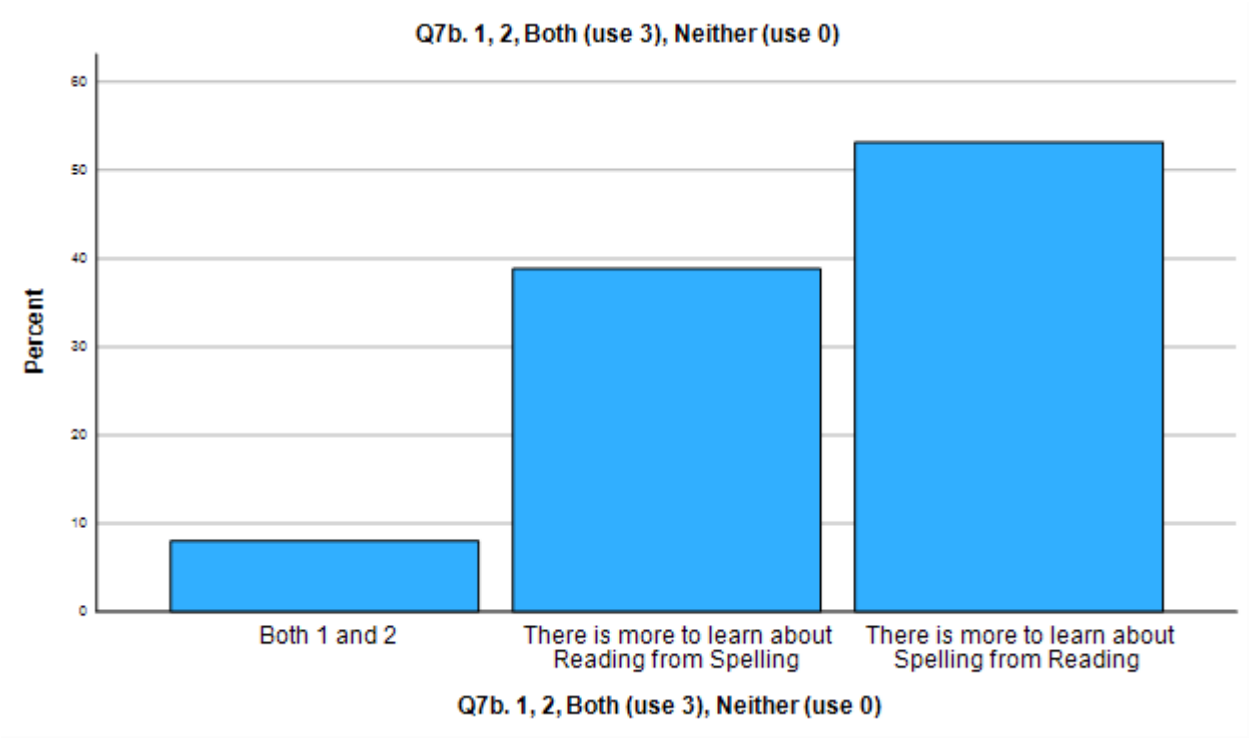


Table 10 captured participant responses to question 7b, statements 1 and 2. These responses were strategically juxtaposed alongside one another to facilitate a comparative analysis of teacher responses.

Table 10

Comparison of Answers to Question 7b Statements 1 and 2

Agree with Statement 1	Agree with Statement 2
I don't think students can learn to spell if we aren't teaching them the strategies through a strong reading program. (T 15)	Just because you can sound out the words doesn't mean that you can understand the text. Learning comes from understanding. (T 33)
There is more to learn about spelling from reading because we are able to see the parts of a word and understand what the word means. (T 20)	I do not consider spelling to be an important part of the curriculum because kids memorize the words to pass a test and then forget them (T 61)
There is more to learn about spelling from reading because students are then able to put those sounds together to create words to help with the meaning of their reading. (T 37)	There is more to learn about reading from spelling because our language is made of complicated rules that have many exceptions. To understand text, you must be able to decode words to form meaning. (70)
Reading can help someone learn how to spell by exposure. In contrast, knowing how to spell may help you read somewhat but leaves out comprehension. (T 50)	There is more to learn about reading from spelling. spelling and foundational studies of words and word parts, lead to proficient reading skills and proficient reading skills lead to proficient comprehension skills. (T 111)
This is a very tough question. I feel like I could make an argument for each. If I have to choose I'll go with #1. The more you read and experience words in textual context your brain begins to recognize the spelling patterns. (T 69)	Spelling will come naturally after students read seeing words time and time again.(T 120)
There is more to learn about spelling from reading. The reason is if they can spell the word, then they can sound it out and then make sense of what they have read. Spelling should not just be studying for a test and then when they write they miss spell the words. (T	I changed my answer as I was typing. I agree with 2 more, because once you know spelling rules, it can help you decode. (T 136)

96)	
I agree that there is more to learn about spelling from reading because young students learn spelling rules that support reading development and older kids develop a deeper understanding of word relationships and vocabulary through spelling. (T 101)	Spelling is about patterning, computational thinking (the way the brain thinks). If you teach Kindergarteners word family, blends, etc. they will naturally flow into becoming a fluent reader. I have had amazing success with teaching K and 1st readers, especially those with learning difficulties. (T 152)
Spelling is part of phonological awareness which is the foundation for reading. (T 106).	A person can be an awful speller, but an excellent reader. (T 142)
I think I agree with #1, although it is a hard choice. As students read, they become aware of what words look like. Most writers don't think about how to spell words. They just recognize the correct spelling. For students who struggle with spelling, seeing the words and decoding them using phonics rules helps them be able to sound out words as they spell them. (T 121)	The easier a student can decode words, the more fluent of a reader they can become. by focusing less and less on decoding word-by-word, they are able to focus on meaning. (T 196)
As kids read and encounter words their knowledge of spelling is accessed. (T 158)	Spelling is word parts. Word parts have meanings. When you know word parts, you can better understand what you are reading. (T 103)
I agree with the statement "There is more to learn about spelling from reading". I find that spelling patterns are introduced naturally through reading. When applying spelling patterns, students will learn about prefixes, suffixes, base words, etc., which will allow them to decompose the words and understand the meaning. (T 151)	
Because spelling is encoding and reading is decoding. As students decode words and receive exposure to words they will have an easier time encoding or spelling (T 182)	

In terms of teacher responses to the statement "There is more to learn about reading from spelling" which implied that reading was the gateway to strong spelling skills, the general consensus was that a strong background in reading could facilitate the acquisition of spelling. Teachers referenced the development of spelling strategies, recognition of spelling patterns, understanding word meanings and methods of decoding words. They all felt that these strategies would enhance reading skills. Overall, it was felt that reading significantly contributes to spelling acquisition and comprehension. With regard to statement 2 "There is more to learn about spelling from reading," emphasis was placed on learning to spell in order to read. These teachers felt that spelling was a fundamental part of learning to decode words in order to read. Additionally, these participants stated that spelling rules and learning word parts and sounds enhanced both reading fluency and comprehension. Table 11 depicted responses from teachers who agreed with both statements.

Table 11

Answers in Agreement with 7b Statements 1 and 2

Agree with Both Statements 1 and 2
Spelling and Reading work hand to hand, they are not divided, they are more useful when they are taught together as a whole not separated. (T 3)
Not sure why you separated them. (T 29)
I'm not sure which statement I agree with because in my opinion it all depends on whether you are a fluent reader. If you are a fluent reader you don't focus on the spelling, you focus more on what you are reading. If you are a struggling reader, you focus more on how the words are spelled. (30)
Both 1 and 2. When students have internalized spelling patterns, reading and writing becomes more effortless. As children get exposure to words from reading, they improve their spelling. Also, as kids get direct instruction on spelling variants and high frequency words, independent reading becomes more accessible. (99)

In Table 11, teachers referenced the reciprocity of the relationship between reading and spelling and did not see one as the gateway to the other. These teachers felt that equal importance needed to be ascribed to each component since they were equally impactful on one another.

Question 9 in the survey asked teachers whether the most useful way to teach vocabulary was to encourage the purposeful memorization of words. The results of this question are depicted in Table 12 and Figure 20.

Table 12

Question 9 Results

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	Strongly Agree	17	7.1	7.1	7.1	
	Agree	40	16.7	16.8	23.9	
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	53	22.1	22.3	46.2	
	Disagree	88	36.7	37.0	83.2	
	Strongly Disagree	40	16.7	16.8	100.0	
	Total	238	99.2	100.0		
Missing	System	2	.8			
Total		240	100.0			

As Table 12 showed, the results for this question were remarkably close between those who either strongly agreed or agreed and those who were uncertain. 57 participants or 23.1% either strongly agreed or agreed and 53 or 22.1 % participants were undecided. In contrast to question 1, it was noted that 23.9% of the sample indicated that the most effective way to build a students' vocabulary is to encourage purposeful memorization. 22.3 % neither agreed nor disagreed and 58.3 % either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

These results were directly tied to research question 1 which hinged on the assumption that novice teachers encountered challenges with pedagogical content knowledge. Consequently, the researcher ran an addition one sample t-test on question 12 and question 15 to bolster results. This test appeared later in this chapter. These results were reinforced through a bar graph as seen in Figure 20.

Figure 20

Question 9 Bar Graph

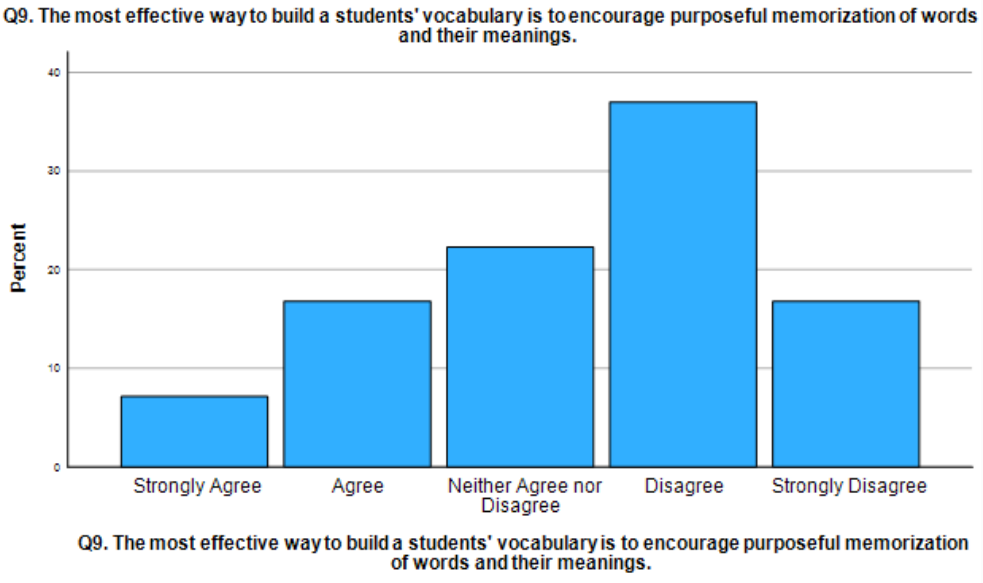


Figure 20 provided an impactful visual because it clearly highlighted the uncertainty that teachers felt over this question. The visual of the agree and strongly disagree categories, which were the same as seen in Table 12, is particularly enlightening.

Question 10 asked survey participants what they used to evaluate their students. The novice teachers were invited to choose all the options that applied. These results can be seen in detail in Appendix I. Of the 240 teachers who responded, 41.3% indicated that they use i-Ready as an assessment tool; 38.8% indicated that they use FAST or STAR; 37.9% indicated that they used exit tickets; and 16.7% indicated that they used progress

reports. Several teachers reported using other methods to evaluate their students, but these methods were not numerically significant.

Question 11 of the survey asked participants whether teachers considered their students gender, culture, and first language when using examples, illustrations and analogies to make complex topics more accessible to them. The results to this question were presented in Table 13 and Figure 21.

Table 13

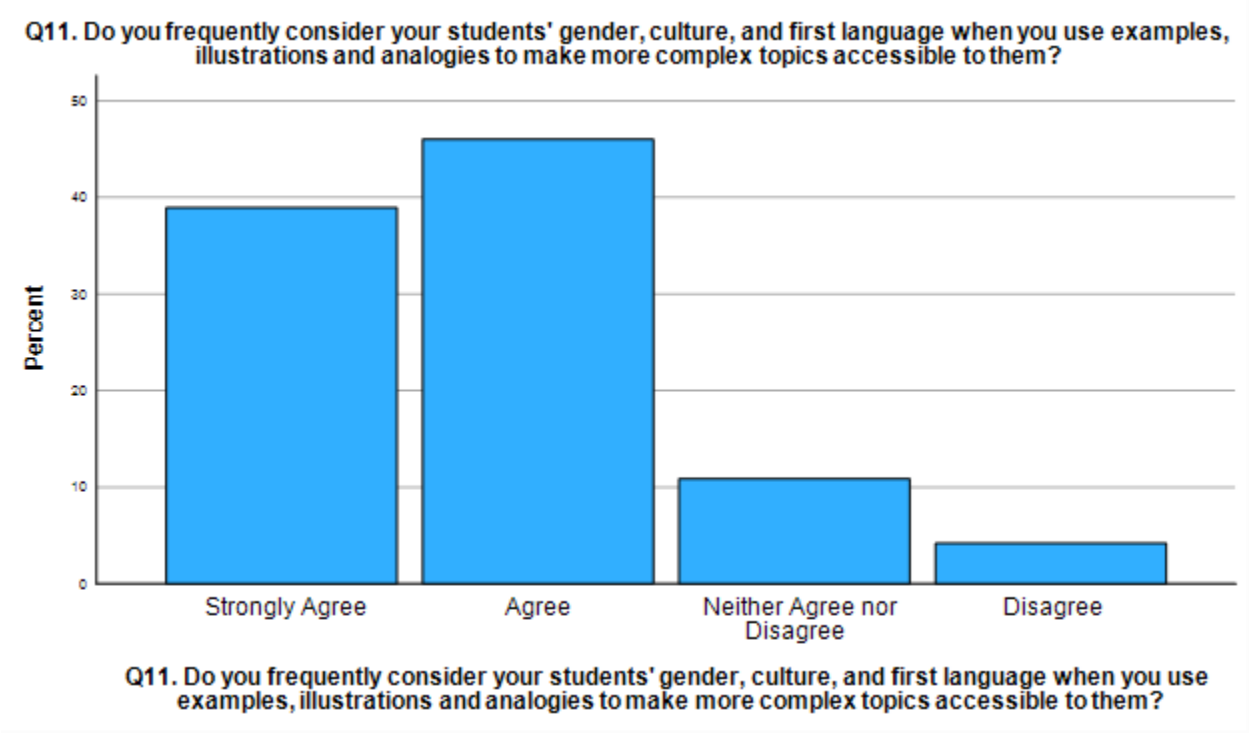
Question 11 Results

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	Strongly Agree	93	38.8	38.9	38.9
	Agree	110	45.8	46.0	84.9
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	26	10.8	10.9	95.8
	Disagree	10	4.2	4.2	100.0
	Total	239	99.6	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.4		
Total	240	100.0			

Table 13 showed that 93 teachers strongly agreed with this, accounting for 38.8% of the surveyed population. 110 teachers or 45.8% agreed with the statement while 10 teachers or 4.2% disagreed. 26 teachers or 10.8% were indecisive. On the whole, most participants who answered this question either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement. These results were reinforced through the bar graph in Figure 21.

Figure 21

Question 11 Bar Graph



The bar graph in Figure 21 solidified the results of the frequency table (Table 13) by highlighting that the teachers who responded positively to this statement were in the majority.

Question 12 asked survey participants to determine whether a teaching video was an effective example of pedagogical content knowledge in ELA teaching. Half of the participants received an effective teaching video in the survey titled EPCK Challenge 1, and the other half received an ineffective teaching video, titled EPCK Challenge 2. The question asked teachers to answer yes or no to whether they felt the video was a good example of pedagogical content knowledge. The answers were recorded in Table 14.

Table 14

Question 12 Responses to Was this video an effective example of PCK?

VIDEO	YES	NO
EPCK 1 (effective)	43	89
EPCK 2 (ineffective)	27	79

The results of the survey question on the PCK videos were depicted in Table 14. Teachers who received the effective video received the survey that was called EPCK 1. There were 132 responses to this question. 43 teachers were able to identify the effective PCK video, while 89 teachers were unable to identify the video as effective. The ineffective PCK video was distributed through the survey called EPCK 2. 106 teachers responded to this question. 27 teachers incorrectly stated that the video was an excellent example of PCK, while 79 teachers correctly identified the video as a poor example of PCK.

Sample t-tests

The researcher ran an inferential statistics t-test on question 12 which dealt with recognizing effective and ineffective pedagogy against question 15 which asked participants whether they have an ELA specific degree. The results of this t-test were recorded in Table 15.

Table 15

Sample T-Test for Choosing Correct Pedagogy Video and Degree

	Test Value = 0						
	t	df	Significance One-Sided p	Significance Two-Sided p	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Upper
Combined Answer Video	7.941	132	<.001	<.001	.64662	.4856	.8077
Q15. Do you hold a bachelor's degree in an ELA subject specific domain?	9.621	239	<.001	<.001	.279	.22	.34

A single-sample *t*-test that compared the mean of the correct answer to ELA pedagogy to the type of college degree (traditional bachelor's degree in ELA subject area vs. non-traditional) was conducted. A significance difference was found (t (239) = .6466, = p<.001). The sample mean of .28 (sd = .45) was significantly greater than the non-traditional degree mean.

The researcher ran another one sample t-test on the question on phonemic awareness and question 15 on the type of degree that participants had to see whether these results would offer an interesting comparative analysis with the first t-test. These results were recorded in Table 16.

Table 16

Inferential Statistics for Questions 15 and 5

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 0						
			Significance		Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	t	df	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p		Lower	Upper
Q15. Do you hold a bachelor's degree in an ELA subject specific domain?	9.621	239	<.001	<.001	.279	.22	.34
Q5. Phonemic awareness is the cornerstone of spelling instruction	106.560	238	<.001	<.001	4.448	4.37	4.53

A single-sample *t*-test that compared the mean of the correct answer to phonemic awareness is the cornerstone to spelling instruction to the type of college degree (traditional bachelor's degree in ELA subject area vs. non-traditional) was conducted. A significant difference was found (t (239) = 9.621, = p<.001). The sample mean of 4.45 (*sd* = .645) for the group possessing traditional bachelor's degree in ELA subject area was significantly greater than the non-traditional degree mean.

The juxtaposition of question 12 in relation to question 2 on the survey, which asked whether teachers in this sample population of novice ELA elementary school teachers their familiarity with the term "pedagogical content knowledge," was part of the impetus behind the qualitative part of this mixed methods, explanatory study. These t-tests were conducted to add another layer of analysis to the theme of understanding

pedagogical content knowledge as it relates to the teaching of ELA, which addressed through the second research question of this study.

Qualitative Data from the Surveys.

Question 6 of the survey asked respondents to state what their main focus was when teaching reading and to explain why that was their focus. The raw data for this question can be viewed in the combined datafile located in Appendix K. Participants were invited to provide an open-ended response to this question. A qualitative data analysis was conducted, where responses were coded and themed. There was a total of 240 responses to this question. Each ELA component that was identified in teacher responses was given a code. Themes emerged based on the number of responses that were related to these codes. Table 17 depicted this data.

Table 17

Question 6 Results

CODE	THEME	COUNT
1	Phonics	65
2	Comprehension and content	57
4	Grade Level differentiation	7
6	State Standards	7
3	Vocabulary	6
5	More than one ELA component	25
11	Knowledge and understanding	14
8	Love for reading	2
9	Content	2
10	Focusing on the child	8
7	Other ELA component	41
12	Invalid response	4
13	Skipped	2

Table 17 illustrated that 65 teachers, which comprised the majority, attributed phonics to their focus during reading instruction. The second most referenced component

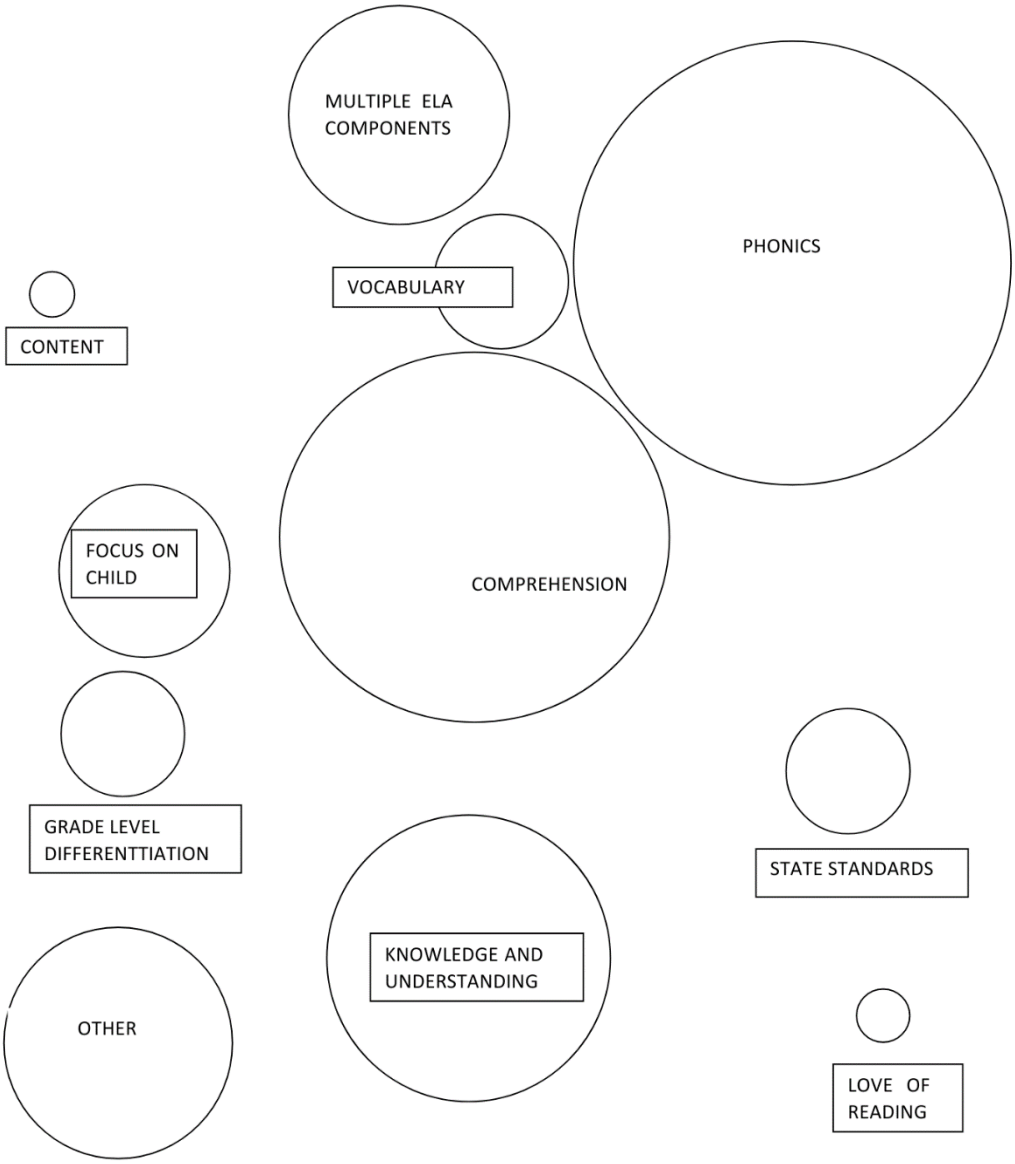
was comprehension and content. 57 teachers stated that this was their focus. The next dominant category was ‘other’ ELA component with a total of 41 respondents. The next category, which dealt with teachers who used more than one ELA component, was comprised of 25 teachers. The theme of knowledge and understanding was comprised of only 14 teachers. There were 7 teachers who fell under the themes of grade level differentiation and state standards, and there were 6 teachers in vocabulary. The least popular methods were love for reading and content. There were 4 invalid responses, and 2 teachers skipped this question.

The frequency and interrelatedness of themes was portrayed in a bubble word diagram, seen in Figure 22. The size of the bubble was determined by the number of responses; thus, the largest bubble indicated the greatest responses, and the smallest bubble indicated the lowest responses. The bubbles that were interrelated were placed in close proximity to one another.

The bubble diagram in Figure 22 served two primary functions. It captured the frequency of responses through the use of word bubbles that were dimensionally proportional to the frequency of thematic concerns, and it highlighted the interrelation of connected themes through the proximity of the word bubbles to one another. included other, state standards, love of reading, and content.

Figure 22

Bubble Diagram of Question 6 Results



As seen in the bubble word diagram in Figure 22, several teachers linked phonics to comprehension, some teachers made a connection between comprehension and vocabulary and phonics. Teachers who used more than one ELA component usually connected comprehension, phonics, and vocabulary. Some teachers who focused on the child mentioned grade level differentiation. Stand-alone categories in order of frequency of responses were other; focus on the child; grade level differentiation and state standards, which were tied; and finally, content and love of reading which also yielded the same number of responses. The bubble diagram also illustrated that the teachers who thought that phonics was the cornerstone of successful reading instruction were in the majority and the most frequently connected components were vocabulary, phonics, and comprehension. Some of the meaningful responses that supported this theme were presented in Table 18.

Table 18

Examples of Answers on Phonics from Question 6

Representative Answers on Phonics/Phonemic Awareness
Phonemic awareness review. Many students lack the foundational skills of phonemic awareness in order to blend sounds together successfully to read fluently. (T 5)
Phonological awareness followed by phonemic awareness they need to hear the sounds and then know the letters that make those sounds. (T 103)
Phonics and Phonemic Awareness because they are the foundational skills to reading. (T 119)
Phonics, because that is where my children are lacking the most. (T 207)

The researcher noted little variation among participant responses related to phonics as the instructional tool of choice in teaching reading.

The second largest category was comprehension. Representative examples are shown in Table 19.

Table 19

Examples of Answers on Comprehension from Question 6

Representative Answers on Comprehension
When teaching reading, the main focus is typically on developing reading comprehension skills. Reading comprehension is the ability to understand and make meaning from text, which is essential for academic success and lifelong learning. Here are some reasons why reading comprehension is the primary focus of reading instruction: Comprehension is the ultimate goal: The ultimate purpose of reading is to understand and extract information from written material. Whether it's reading a novel for pleasure, a textbook for learning, or instructions for a task, comprehension is the key goal. (T 97)
Comprehension is the primary focus when I teach reading. I teach advanced third grade English Language Arts. At this level, most of the students are able to decode efficiently and benefit from a heavier focus on vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension than phonics, or other foundational components of reading. All of my students read with excellent fluency, so we dig into literary devices, themes, poetry, structures, etc. (T 99)
In 5th grade, my main focus is comprehension. That is the end goal. All of the skills and strategies that we learn and practice are there to help us comprehend what we are reading. (T 121)
My main focus when teaching reading is comprehension. That is my focus because I teach gifted primary students and most of them have the ability to read words they do not understand; therefore I focus more on developing understanding. (T 123)
The majority need phonics in order to read but comprehension is necessary. (T 152)

Teacher responses which affirmed Comprehension as the main focus when teaching reading remained consistent regardless of grade level or student populations. Following on the heels of Phonics and Comprehension was the thematic category of other ELA components. It was noted that participant responses varied from minute grammatical constructs such as morphemes to broad theories such as the science of reading and Bandura's social learning theory in this section.

Teachers who attributed multiple ELA components to their focus when teaching Comprehension was the next thematic category. The most frequent combinations were Phonics and Vocabulary, and Vocabulary and Comprehension. These combinations were represented in Figure 22, the bubble word diagram.

The theme of Knowledge and Understanding yielded small results, with only 14 teachers identifying this area as their focus when teaching reading. Teachers emphasized the significance of building background knowledge through activities such as collaborative discussions, dissecting texts, and providing experiences in the classroom. Overall, the main idea was centered around the critical role of background knowledge in supporting student comprehension and understanding of texts, as seen in Table 20.

The main idea conveyed in these quotes is the importance of building student understanding through the development of background knowledge and the use of various strategies to support comprehension, particularly for struggling readers.

The themes of focusing on the individual child, grade level differentiation, and state standards all yielded lower responses, with 8 responses, 7 responses, and 7 responses, respectively. Love for reading and content each received 2 responses. It was noted that there were 4 invalid responses and that 2 teachers skipped this question.

Table 20

Examples of Answers on Knowledge and Understanding from Question 6

Representative Answers on Knowledge and Understanding
Student understanding: we build background knowledge, dissect the text and engage in collaborative discussions in order to build our knowledge together. Many students do not come from a background of experiences and I aim to provide them that in the classroom to ensure their understanding. (T 87)
Background knowledge helps build vocabulary and comprehension. For struggling readers we focus on phonics because they need to be able to decipher unknown words. Hopefully with background knowledge they can make sense of the text, even if they don't know a word. (T 181)

Question 8 of the data collection survey was "What do your writing assignments in class consist of?" 229 participants responded to this question. Of these, 218 teachers responded in a manner that facilitated analysis. 11 teachers referenced their grade level and 16 teachers either skipped the question or gave an invalid response. These responses were removed from the analysis. Using the valid responses received, a "thematic analysis" was conducted to identify the main themes or categories into which the responses could be meaningfully organized. The responses to this question can be seen in Appendix L. A qualitative analysis was conducted where a code was ascribed to each recurrent thematic concern. 6 main themes emerged from this dataset. Please see Appendix L for the complete dataset for this question. The results were depicted in Table 21.

Table 21

Question 8 Results

CODE	THEME	COUNT
1	Structured Writing	78
2	Curriculum Mandated Writing	27
3	Concentrated Focus	72
5	Mechanics of Writing	8
6	Creative and student-centered writing strategies	11
4	Combination of writing tools	22

The most prominent theme that emerged in response Question 8, "what do your writing assignments in class consist of?" was teaching structured writing. Within this theme, teachers mentioned prompts and responses to prompts, the formulaic five paragraph essay, journaling, drawing pictures, scribbling, writing sentences and writing letters. Writing responses to prompts was the most frequently referenced method. Teachers described the different types of prompts that were assigned to students. These ranged from informational to fictional, but the purpose of the writing assignment in each instance remained the same: to teach students how to construct responses based on a specific topic. Most teachers who referenced prompts or 5 paragraph essays mentioned district curriculum. It was noted that the sophistication of the required responses varied in accordance with the grade level that was being taught, thus scribbling, drawing and sentence responses were associated with lower elementary school while essays and journaling were associated with upper elementary school. This pattern was consistent. The essence of these responses was captured in Table 22.

Table 22

Examples of Answers on Structured Writing from Question 8

Representative Answers on Structured Writing
We use writing prompts and articles to help the students plan and write a multi paragraph essay while citing from multiple sources. One which is grammatically sound and provides evidence and elaboration to support their ideas. (T 32)
Showing an example of what the right format looks like. Discussing the parts of a paragraph. Helping students identify the verbiage in the prompt, and identify the resources needed to effectively write on topic. Introducing kernel sentences for the introduction of the paragraph. (T 5)
Sadly, it is geared to informational reading and responding to the texts while citing sources. As an elementary educator, students are learning to become conditioned writers. Reading for pleasure and writing for pleasure is moved out of their measured performance areas. (T 208)
In kindergarten, we start with communicating through drawings/pictures. Then add letter sounds to represent words. (T 219)
We mostly focus our writing around responses to text. Students no longer have exposure to creative writing. (T 102)

The responses in Table 22 clearly demonstrated that teachers placed emphasis on teaching writing skills within the context of responding to text or informational readings. Teachers highlighted a lack of creative expression and conditioned responses. This concern was reiterated in the next thematic concern that emerged from the transcription of responses, which encompassed educational mandates.

Closely related to structured writing and using writing prompts was the ardent need that 27 teachers felt to adhere to this type of writing instruction due to state and district mandates through curriculum mandated writing. These teachers referenced curriculum instruction with the Top Score Writing curriculum being mentioned the most frequently. The researcher noted that these teacher responses possessed negative

connotations. Teachers stated that their teaching content and pedagogy were strictly guided by state and district curriculum mandates. The word ‘prescribed’ was used repeatedly in these teacher responses, presented in Table 23.

Table 23

Examples on Answers on Curriculum Mandated Writing from Question 8

Representative Answers on Curriculum Mandated Writing
I love to incorporate daily writing prompts of different types (creative writing, argumentative questions, etc.) but the curriculum support specialist from the district told me last school year that I was wasting time with that activity. That unless students had various texts to read and gather information from for their writing, the exercise was useless. I want my students to find writing fun. I want to know what they think, how they think. I don't simply want them regurgitating information they read from various articles. (T 1)
Boring district mandatory writing. My kids hate it, I hate it. There is very little buy in or interest. (T 83)
Benchmark writing curriculum is not good, Students jump from one type of writing to another weekly and do not have time to grasp each type. They also do not get enough time on each piece to be able to really practice the steps of writing. (T 239)
I have to follow the curriculum and do what the textbook says so I do that during reading block. (T 238)
Our writing is prescribed by the district's textbook adoption and includes responses to text (both short and detailed responses). I also include a unit project that gives kids opportunities to form their own ideas and creativity. Our district curriculum map is strictly enforced and doesn't leave much time for creative writing. (T 101)
Prescribed lesson from the district- follow the curriculum for all writing assignments. (T 76)
Our writing is very limited at this point and too much teacher lead. My students are unbale to write a complete sentence so we spend time writing with an organizer then meeting with students to try and fix major things. (T 179)
Writing assignments in my classroom are district directed, uninteresting, and well above the developmental level of students. We do not have enough time between the initiatives and mandates to teach children to write properly and even less time to teach them to enjoy writing. (T 123)

The main idea conveyed in the responses in Table 23 dealt with the dissatisfaction that participants felt with the state and district-mandated writing curriculum. Teachers intimated that the curriculum stifled creativity and that the time constraints that the curriculum placed on teaching limited opportunities for meaningful teaching and learning experiences.

The next major theme that the researcher gleaned from responses dealt with a concentrated focus on a particular aspect of writing. These elements dealt with the methods used to teach students to convey ideas in an effective manner. Teachers mentioned paragraph development, restating the prompt, citations, making clear transitions, and summarizing important information. Stylistic elements were placed under this theme as they are directly related to the specific shape of any piece of writing. Stylistic writing components that were mentioned by participants included the genre, the writing style, the tone of a piece of writing, the voice, and the point of view that the student was asked to write from. Some of the most representative responses are represented in Table 24.

It is clear through these responses that several teachers focused on developing paragraphs, restating the prompt, effectively using citations, using clear transitions, and condensing key points for the purposes of clarity, along with guiding their students along state mandated stylistic lines, inclusive of various genres.

Table 24

Examples of Answers on Concentration Writing from Question 8

Representative Answers on Concentration Writing
My writing consists of introducing the topic and then using First, Next, and Last with a feeling sentence at the end. This type of writing leads to writing a paragraph. I am in first grade. (T 190)
We spend one week a month working on a writing piece (3 paragraphs). We started with narrative and are moving into opinion writing. I also like to include written responses to reading where students can restate text evidence. (T 185)
I hate to admit but writing is my weakest area in teaching and unfortunately my lessons my county expects my kids to write informational and opinion essays and I have to teach writing the best I can. (T 149)
During writing instruction I model for students how to write an essay, give guided practices opportunities, and give students time to independently practice skills learned from mini lessons. They build on their writing pieces until they are full multi-paragraph essays containing elements of voice, central idea and relevant details, proper citations, transitions, etc. (T: 123)
Various genres such as fiction narrative, opinion, poetry, informational, procedural. (24)

The next area that teachers mentioned most frequently in relation to writing instruction dealt with the mechanics of writing. The mechanics of writing fell under specific technical tools that helped students to achieve proficiency. Areas that were identified by teachers included grammar, punctuation, handwriting, spelling, and sight words, which were also called heart words. Table 25 shows representative answers that support this theme.

Table 25

Examples of Answers on Mechanical Writing from Question 8

Representative Answers on Mechanical Writing
For the most part, we do guided spelling. I am in a reading intervention class using SIPPS curriculum. (T 56)
A review of the basics of writing and grammar before anything else. (T 98)
Writing phonetically would be ideal... but invented spelling is accepted. (T 161)
Spelling and high frequency word practice, as well as writing as a response to reading. Additionally, there is curriculum focused writing but I do not believe that is beneficial to my students (T 207)
Grammar structure first then short sentences. (T 229)

It is clear from the quotes in Table 25 that teachers focused on these specific techniques because they felt that they were an essential part of producing clear and coherent writing.

The final theme in the answers to question 8 dealt with writing strategies. This theme presented the responses of teachers who fostered creative writing, free writing and allowed for brainstorming and other imaginative modes of expression. Some of these teachers encouraged student reflection and peer review. The answers in Table 26 illustrate this theme.

The teachers who focused on creative and student-centered approaches to writing emphasized student engagement and self-expression in writing instruction. Numerous strategies were referenced with the focus consistently pointed towards developing creativity within the individual child. Teachers also mentioned the power of reflection and peer review. These strategies gave children greater autonomy in charting their

educational course in writing, which teachers linked to motivation and meaningful expression.

Table 26

Examples of Answers on Writing Strategies from Question 8

Representative Answers on Writing Strategies
I try to align the writing assignment to the children's interest and opportunity to express their interests first for motivation. We use the writing cycle for plan, write, re-write, and publish. To aide in motivation, when children publish, they share their writing to peers with a microphone. Peers are allowed to give positive comments to completed work. During the writing process, they often will pair up in the revision stage with peers to make corrections. This helps them to notice their own errors and/or help a peer correct for meaning, punctuation, and/or spelling. The main emphasis stressed is meaning for these young writers. (T 127)
Personal narratives, opinions, letters, informational. (T 59)
Sometimes writing just for enjoyment to tell a story that they have made up in their mind, sometimes having them take something that they have learn and explain what they learned and how it helped them understand the topic. (T 96)
Short, free-responses, Creative writing prompts as warm-ups, respond to the readings in class, and essays. (T 131)

The final type of writing that teachers mentioned was a combination approach. This thematic category consisted of combining several of the aforementioned thematic approaches. The most significant responses were seen in Table 27.

Table 27

Examples of Answers on Combination Style Writing from Question 8

Representative Answers on Combination Style Writing
I always use a combination of things for writing. Short and extended responses to questions. Having students write story summaries, complete graphic organizers, learn 2-column notes (depending on grade level), paragraph/essay writing (based on grade level), "free writing"/journaling, prompts with responses, and much more that I'm sure I am forgetting. (T 85)
My writing assignments consist of many things. To begin with most elementary students come to you with no knowledge of the writing process. They don't remember how to put sentences together. Most don't remember the difference between the subject and the very. We start off with short writing assignment first. We teach the students that they must understand the prompt before they can write. Next, we work on more complex sentences. They learn how to add transitional works, prepositional phrases and all of the other things that make writing more interesting. (T 30)
It depends on the goal and the student. I teach a variety of grade levels in small group. Some groups are remediation, some are acceleration. Each type of writing has different components. Creative writing. Expository or Argumentative Essays. How to write for your audience. Use of figurative language, academic vocabulary, letter writing, responses to a prompt, restating a question and captions are the most included in lessons. (T 50)

The main idea conveyed in these answers is the diverse and comprehensive approach to teaching writing. These teachers stressed the incorporation of different types of writing activities and assignments to address different aspects of writing skills and knowledge. The focus for these teachers was on building students' understanding of the writing process, from understanding prompts to constructing complex sentences with transitional words and phrases. Additionally, there is recognition of the need to adapt teaching strategies based on the goals and abilities of the students, whether they require remediation or acceleration. The main emphasis is on providing a comprehensive writing

curriculum that addresses a range of writing components and skills to support students' development as writers.

Summary of Phase 2

Results for Research Question 2

Qualitative data from the focus groups

Teachers 1-7

Method

The second part of the study addressed the qualitative part of the research. The final question on both EPCK Challenge 1 and 2 asked whether participants would be interested in participating in follow-up focus groups. These focus groups were intended to address the second research question of the dissertation, which aimed at discovering why novice elementary school teachers had problems with PCK in ELA. There were three questions that the researcher posed to participants. These questions were specifically crafted based on participant responses to the survey questions. These questions were:

1. Why did you think that the video was/ was not a good example of PCK in ELA?
2. Are the curriculum documents provided to you by the state useful in your teaching?
3. Do you feel that your teacher's education and training were sufficient?

These questions and the videos from question 12 that participants would have seen when they initially took the survey were sent to the 79 survey participants who expressed an interest in follow-up focus groups.

These 79 individuals were invited to the focus group sessions via email, but only 14 expressed an interest in continuing the process. The researcher sent an email with staggered dates and times to these 14 participants, having grouped them in accordance with their respective responses to question 12. There were four focus groups which spanned 4 days. The researcher encountered challenges with focus group attendance. Only seven teachers showed up to the four focus groups at different times and on different days. The focus group dynamic thus evolved during the study into one-on-one interviews. The interviews were held using Zoom. The interviews were recorded. The researcher transcribed the seven participant responses. Transcriptions were sent to participants for member checking to add a layer of trustworthiness to the study.

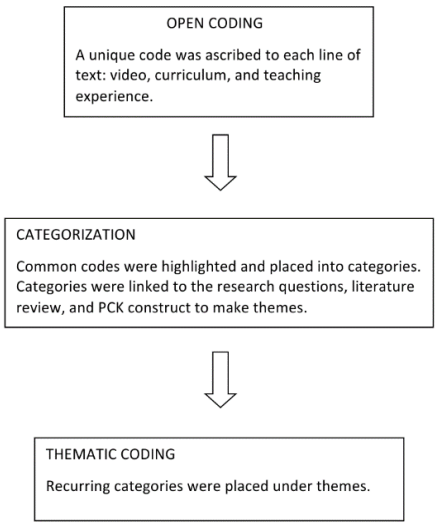
The first focus group, EPCK 1.1, pertained to respondents who recognized that the good teaching video was effective. One teacher agreed to participate in the focus group but did not show up on the day. The researcher contacted her again, and she agreed to a phone call but did not answer the phone. This interview was cancelled; thus, no data was collected for this group. The second focus group, EPCK 1.2, dealt with teachers who felt the good video was ineffective. There were four participants in this group who committed to different days and times. Thus, they were interviewed separately. There was one teacher who felt that the ineffective video in EPCK 2.1 was effective. Although this teacher stated in her survey response that the bad video was good, she changed her stance during the interview process and stated that the video was bad. The final session, EPCK 2.2 was comprised of teachers who recognized that the bad video was ineffective. There were two teachers in this session. The video results were summarized collectively since the feedback was negatively connotated, regardless of whether the video was the

effective video or the ineffective video. These results surprised the researcher; however, in an effort to mitigate bias, the researcher maintained a stoic and unemotive affect throughout the interview process.

The researcher spent ample time cleansing this data. The process of cleansing across all seven interviews included: improving the readability of sentences by adding additional words, converting fragments into sentences, writing out abbreviations and acronyms in full, moving text to appropriate questions in instances where participants may have answered a question in hindsight, and removing information from the transcription that was personal and unrelated to the interview. It should be noted that the unanticipated one-on-one interview dynamic offered the opportunity for greater intimacy. Consequently, teachers shared information about their families and lives, which was an amazing experience for the researcher. Though the information did not pertain to the study, it demonstrated that the researcher successfully inspired trust. The researcher's field notes were useful during this process as emerging themes and poignant participant reactions were noted. Once the data cleansing process was completed and field notes were organized, the researcher combined participant data into a single file using Microsoft Word. One word document was used for each of the three questions; participant responses were copied and pasted from the transcriptions under pseudonyms that were ascribed to each of the seven participants. The researcher also color-coded participant responses to facilitate analysis.

Figure 23

Depiction of the Coding Process



With participant responses cleansed and organized, the process of manual coding began. The comments from each interview were organized beneath three broad categories: (1) Video responses, which were divided into smaller subsets named EPCK 1.1, EPCK 1.2, EPCK 2.1, and EPCK 2.2; (2) Curriculum, and (3) Teacher education and training. These responses were analyzed line by line and unique codes were generated. The codes were rooted in the research questions, literature review, and the PCK framework. Figure 23 depicts the coding process.

After open coding and selective coding were completed, the researcher generated themes. The researcher then applied significant quotes from the transcripts to the themes. Transcripts were uploaded into ChatGPT, and these themes were compared to the manual themes for validation. The major themes for question 1 were content knowledge and teaching pedagogy. The major themes for question 2 were educational policy and diverse

learners. The major themes for question 3 were professional development and adaptability, and preparation. Discussion of each theme and accompanying participant responses follow.

Results

Table 28 presented the codes that were created from the transcripts based on the 3 interview questions for EPCK groups 1.2. Each teacher was given a pseudonym. The codes that were extracted from their transcriptions were in Table 28.

Teachers who responded to the survey titled EPCK 1 received the good pedagogical content knowledge teaching video. The interview sessions were broken into EPCK 1.1 and EPCK 1.2. As previously noted, there were no interview participants for EPCK 1.1 where respondents correctly stated that the video was an effective teaching example. EPCK 1.2 participants stated that the good video was ineffective.

Table 28

EPCK 1.2 Interview Answers

Interview Question	Mary EPCK 1.2 good video was bad	Jane EPCK 1.2 Good video was bad	Ingrid EPCK 1.2 Good video was bad	Carol EPCK 1.2 Good video was bad
Do you think this video was a good example of PCK?	No depth No explanations	No illustrations or examples Diverse learners/ bilingual	No explanation No guidance/expression	Poor questions No interaction Wrong pace No preparation
Are the curriculum documents helpful in your teaching?	Teach to the test/standards. No planning Curriculum leads to shortcuts. Overworked Kids can't write. Restrictive	No guidance on implementation Socio-economic factors for some students State standards impede teaching	Scripted and forced. Affects ability to teach. ESOl students Text complexity too high Student behaviors Overworked Vetted materials frustrate teachers.	Micromanaging No freedom Test scores and data No guidelines Restrictive First year too rigorous Not enough planning Teachers train each other.
How have your education and training prepared you for the classroom?	Career change	Career change Inadequate training	Teaching fundamentals lacking Takes 3 years to master content. Training cannot prepare you for the classroom	Self-taught

Table 29 depicted the codes for interview questions for EPCK groups 2.1 and 2.2. Again, pseudonyms were given to protect the identity of participants.

Table 29

EPCK 2.1 Interview Answers

Interview Question	**Ann EPCK 2.1 Poor video was poor**	**Janet EPCK 2.2 Bad video was bad**	**Christina EPCK 2.2**
Do you think this video was a good example of PCK?	Poor word choice No interpretation	No details Basic	Narrow view Students did not speak
Are the curriculum documents helpful in your teaching?	Individual learning is lost. Home environments Changes in standards Teaching to meet standards not to learn	No guidelines Cannot implement. No training Subjects pushed differently so no preparation for standardization	Useful ELA opens the door. Phonics curriculum good Demanding
How have your education and training prepared you for the classroom?	Certified New teachers don't respect teaching. No preparation	No classroom preparation No guidance on how to teach.	Vocal Training major/ M.Ed. Can't learn classroom management. Low pay Education helped.

These codes were categorized and placed under broad themes. These themes were discussed in the following sections with supporting quotations.

Question 1: Do you think this video is a good example of pedagogical content knowledge?

Of the seven teachers who were interviewed, none were unable to identify the effective video. Data was exported into an excel code book, where 14 codes were obtained from this data; this was categorized into eight categories. Two main themes emerged from the feedback on both videos. The first dealt with content knowledge and the second dealt with teaching pedagogy.

Theme 1: Content Knowledge

Teachers highlighted insufficient details and vagueness regarding content, which they felt indicated a lack of depth which led to inadequate explanations. Teachers also mentioned the lack of clear examples and illustrations which could have assisted with student understanding. There were criticisms of the lack of open-ended statements to allow for interpretation and critical thinking. Additionally, participants felt that there was a lack of justification for statements made which pointed to a need for greater analysis of the content presented in the video. Teachers also referenced concerns with the lesson being improperly paced, and some attributed this to inadequate preparation. The researcher remained mindful throughout this analysis that the four EPCK 1.2 participants felt that the effective video was ineffective, the EPCK 2.1 participant changed her initial positive stance on the ineffective video to a negative stance, and the two EPCK 2.2 participants recognized the ineffectiveness of the video.

The following vignettes captured the sentiments about content knowledge. In EPCK 1.2, Mary, said, “There was no depth to this lesson and there were no clear explanations of anything.” Jane, said, “There were no illustrations or examples to help students understand the poem.” Ingrid said, “He did not explain the poem. He asked open-ended questions and then did not explain them. His expression was off.” Carol said, “Questions

were bad. He should have restated questions. The pace was wrong maybe because there was no preparation."

In EPCK 2.1, Ann, said, "The video was bad because of the word choice. The statements should have been open-ended to allow for interpretation of what a person might think. There was also no justification for the statements that were made."
IN EPCK 2.2, Janet, said, "The video was bad because there weren't enough details; it was vague and too basic." Christina, said, "The teacher had a very narrow view and was not open minded."

Thus, in terms of participant responses to the two videos, EPCK 1.2 participants generally expressed dissatisfaction with an inability to understand the lesson. The EPCK 2.1 teacher changed her stance from her survey response where she stated that the ineffective video was an effective example. In her interview she stated that the video was ineffective. She supported this by referencing a lack of free interpretation. There were two participants in EPCK 2.2. These teachers correctly identified the ineffective video as such. They both referenced a narrow point of view.

Theme 2: Teaching Pedagogy

The second theme that emerged from Question 1 dealt with the manner in which content was conveyed to students, or with the instructor's pedagogical style. Teachers stated that the instructor did not interact with students and did not take diverse needs into consideration during the lesson.

In EPCK 1.2, Jane said, "There was no diversity and students with a limited vocabulary would not be able to understand the lesson. If there was a bilingual student they would be lost." Carol said, "There was no student interaction." Christina said, "He

did not give the students a chance to speak." There were two teachers, under this category of teaching pedagogy, who felt the good video was bad, and one teacher who recognized that the ineffective video was such.

Question 2: Do you find the curriculum documents from the state useful in your teaching?

Six of the teachers who were interviewed expressed dissatisfaction with the educational policies of the state. These educators were open and spoke freely about their challenges with the state mandated curriculum. This part of the interviews was the longest since the teachers became passionate, angry, and frustrated. Only one of the teachers who was interviewed stated that she was satisfied with the curriculum. The researcher created 41 unique codes, which were placed into 8 categories. The following two themes, educational policies and diverse learners were created from these categories, with supporting quotes from these teachers.

Theme 3: Educational Policies

The six teachers spoke freely about the constraints they felt because of the curriculum. Some referenced the micromanagement of their state or school district, while others spoke about the restrictions that curriculum implementation placed on their teaching. Teachers spoke about the standards, and they highlighted the pressure they felt to teach to standardized tests. They acknowledged that their focus was on raising test scores and not on meaningful instruction.

> Mary: There are too many chiefs in creating the curriculum. It forces teachers to teach to the test to raise test scores. The district does not like teachers who actually want to teach, the kids cannot write because there is nothing creative.

They just get passages to read. The curriculum moves so fast that it leads to many shortcuts. The curriculum is terrible.

Jane: There are socio-economic restrictions. It is a guide but does not give specific direction.

Ingrid: Curriculum affects my ability to teach because it's scripted- it forces my hand as to what I teach each day. Material all has to be vetted and many things that could be useful are just not used, If anyone from the district visits my school, the principal calls the teachers to a meeting to tell us not to mention using certain programs or resources that have not been vetted. These materials help the kids, yet we are told we cannot use them because they need to be vetted. We sometimes use it anyway without getting it vetted.

Carol: I like the Math curriculum because they give examples, but ELA is a failure, there is no in-depth explanation or guidelines. Curriculum training comes from other teachers. The passages are too restrictive and sacrifices knowledge.

Janet: There are no guidelines and there is no training so there is no knowledge on how to implement them. Standards change so much; students cannot keep up. You end up teaching the standards and not teaching.

Christina: I like the curriculum, especially the phonics curriculum. The ELA curriculum opens the way to critical thinking.

Theme 4: Diverse Learners

Ingrid: I teach ESOL 4th grade and the curriculum is above their level and there is no guided practice. You cannot generate anything and they cannot read the text, far less glean a standard. You cannot expect 4th grade ESOL students to test at this

level. My ESOL kids are lost and drop out of school. You cannot assess if they can't understand. Even for typical kids, the text complexity is too high. There is no opportunity to help kids individually so they just do not understand and many kids who get promoted should not be there.

Ann: The curriculum is not designed to meet learners where they are. Individual learners are not accounted for in this plan. There are socio-economic factors that prevent learners from all being at the same level.

These quotes illustrate that the majority of interview participants felt that their state or district educational mandates were restrictive and counterproductive. Rigidity, misalignment with student needs, a stringent focus on standardization, and a lack of guidance regarding implementation were repeatedly referenced. This concern over a lack of guidance ushered in the final interview question and results.

Question 3: Do you feel that your teacher's education and training were sufficient?

The final question in the survey asked teachers whether they felt their teacher education and training were sufficient. 21 codes were created for this section, out of which 12 categories were created. The resultant two themes were professional development and adaptability and preparation. The following vignettes captured these thematic concerns.

Theme 5: Professional Development and Adaptability

Mary: This is new for me. I changed my career.

Jane: I was a business management major so this is a career change.

Ingrid: It takes at least 3 years to feel comfortable and take ownership of the material.

The state adds new programs or new methods each year because they are always looking for the perfect answer.

Ann: I have a bachelor's degree and I'm certified. Training was offered.

Janet: Subjects are pushed differently in different areas so there is no real way to prepare for standardized tests.

Christina: My background in vocal training but I have a master's in education with a focus on reading. I Feel my education helped me learn how to teach. You have to love teaching as it is demanding and the pay is low.

Theme 6: Teacher Preparation

Jane: I find my training was inadequate. Books do not prepare you for the classroom and the state standards impede my teaching ability.

Ingrid: No training can prepare you. Teaching is dynamic and you have to adapt and change. This is what we think it might look like but there is no research and there are different kids in the school, within each population and in each year.

Carol: I do not feel I was adequately prepared. I am self-taught.

Ann: New teachers are not prepared. Most jumped majors to graduate, they don't have any respect for the profession, they don't take materials home, they watch YouTube videos to teach, they just don't put in the work, the state says anyone can teach but this is far from the truth!

Janet: There is no training for classroom preparation and I don't understand how I'm expected to teach.

Christina: Classroom management cannot be taught; you must be able to make connections with students.

On the whole, teachers felt that their need to adapt to change was paramount to their ability to survive in the teaching profession. The clear majority stated that their education and training were insufficient to withstand the rigor of teaching. Thus, the interviews revealed that a lack of guidance, depth, and specific direction in the curriculum, coupled with inadequate training and preparation for new teachers, were a common concern.

Triangulation of data

As explained in Chapter III of this study, the quantitative data gathered from the survey was used to inform the qualitative part of this study. This qualitative data was then used to contextualize and enrich the quantitative data, and to provide a more holistic view. The triangulation of data assisted the researcher in answering the two research questions that informed this study.

Research Question 1 aimed at discerning whether certified, novice ELA public school teachers experienced problems with pedagogical content knowledge. Question 2 on the survey asked teachers whether they were familiar with the term pedagogical content knowledge. 84.6% of teachers either agreed or strongly agreed that they were familiar with the term. The first focus group question asked teachers to state whether a teaching video was an effective example of pedagogical content knowledge. The majority of participants were unable to identify the effective teaching video. This indicated that although teachers may have heard the term PCK, they were largely unfamiliar with the practical application of PCK as it applied to ELA.

Throughout this study, PCK was described as the ability to transform knowledge into information that was accessible to students. Though 92.5% of survey participants

stated in response to survey question 3, that they considered their students' preconceptions of a topic before teaching a lesson, consideration of a student's preconceptions was never mentioned during the interviews and is a possible explanation for the ineffectiveness of the videos.

In response to Question 11, the majority of teachers stated that they agreed or strongly agreed that their students' culture, gender, and sexual orientation needed consideration when teaching a topic. However, during the interviews, only two teachers out of seven mentioned diversity in terms of socio-economic factors and non-English speakers, when they referenced the inadequacies of the video.

To determine whether having a background in English impacted the way teachers responded to the survey questions, two one sample t-tests were run through SPSS. T-tests were run on questions 12 and 15, and on questions 6 and 15. These results both indicated that having a background in English impacted PCK instruction in ELA.

Research Question 2 of this study aimed at discovering why this population of teachers experienced problems with pedagogical content knowledge. Question 4 on the survey asked participants whether district curriculum documents were useful in their lesson plans. 68.8% of teachers either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. In terms of qualitative data, question 8, which was an open-ended survey question about writing assignments, and interview question 2 which asked teachers whether the curriculum documents provided by their district were useful in their teaching, affirmed the opposite. The thematic concern that ran through both stands of qualitative data dealt with the restrictions imposed on teachers and on teaching by district mandated curriculum and the consequent ineffectiveness of same.

Teacher education and training were examined in the survey through the various demographic survey questions. In terms of education and classical training, question 15 asked teachers whether they had a bachelor's degree in an ELA subject specific domain. The majority of teachers did not hold this type of degree: 173 teachers out of 240 or 72.1% of teachers did not have an ELA specific degree. 67 teachers or 27.9% did have a bachelor's in an ELA specific domain. This quantitative data was supported through the qualitative data gathered through interviews, where it was discovered that several participants embarked on a career change that led them to the teaching profession. In terms of training, survey question 16 asked what type of teacher preparation program these teachers graduated from. 65% stated that they graduated from a 4-year university, and 13.3 % stated that they had no teaching background. Though more than half of the survey participants were properly trained, the interviews suggested that teachers felt that their education and training were insufficient.

Summary of Results

The surveys were the primary mode of data collection for this study. The data gathered from the surveys informed the interviews. The interviews offered insights into the quantitative data that would not have otherwise been revealed. Survey results revealed that although teachers stated that they were familiar with the term pedagogical content knowledge, this knowledge was inadequate in terms of its practical application to several components of English Language Arts. In terms of educational policies, teachers seemed satisfied and in terms of education and training, many teachers seemed to satisfy the criteria demanded by the state. The interviews offered deeper insights into the survey data. The themes that emerged dealt with content knowledge, teaching pedagogy,

educational policy, diversity, teacher education and adaptability. Both surveys and interviews revealed that there was a need for a deeper examination into how curriculum impacts teaching, and a need for a greater focus on ELA in teacher education and training. Thus, this qualitative data exposed the challenges that ELA teachers faced with PCK and explained through its contradictions of the quantitative data why these teachers were facing this challenge.

Chapter V: Conclusions

Introduction

The previous chapters presented the problem of practice, the significance of this research, the research questions that guided the study, an extensive review of the literature related to PCK and its practical application to ELA, along with the methodology used for this study and the subsequent results of the surveys and interviews. This final chapter presented a discussion of the results along with recommendations. The purpose of this study was to discover whether certified novice public elementary school teachers in a southeast state of the United States encountered challenges with pedagogical content knowledge in ELA and, if it was determined that teachers did encounter challenges with PCK, to discern why these challenges existed. In attempting to address these concerns, a two-phased mixed methods explanatory research design was created. Phase 1 aimed at answering research question 1, which asked whether this sample of teachers experienced challenges with PCK in ELA. The researcher designed a survey that was sent statewide to the target population. Phase 2 sought to address research question 2, which investigated the causes of these challenges. This part of the study was conducted through one-on-one interviews. Data from both phases of this study was analyzed using a gamut of quantitative and qualitative research tools and strategies. The surveys revealed that teachers experienced difficulties with identification and application of pedagogical content knowledge with some of the ELA components that appeared on the survey and with curriculum. Survey data also suggested that some of these challenges could be linked to certain demographic characteristics. The qualitative interview data generated meaningful

thematic concerns which included content knowledge, teaching pedagogy, educational policies, professional development and adaptability, and preparation. The triangulation of data confirmed that this group of teachers experienced challenges with PCK in ELA. These results were fleshed out in the following sections.

Summary of Results

There were two research questions that directed this study. These were:

RQ 1: Do certified nonveteran ELA teachers in public elementary schools in a state in the southeast United States recognize the relationship between content knowledge and teaching pedagogy?

RQ 2: What are the major challenges that ELA teachers in public elementary schools in the southeast region of the United States face in terms of pedagogical content knowledge?

Research question 1 investigated whether teachers were able to recognize the relationship between content knowledge and teaching pedagogy. To this end, the ultimate aim was to discover whether teachers were aware of PCK elements in various ELA components. Additionally, demographic factors were taken into consideration, to see how these impacted the teachers' ability to recognize this connection. The results of the survey revealed that the majority of teachers who took the survey were either in 5th grade or in kindergarten. 3rd grade teachers were in the minority. Most teachers who took the survey passed the ELA component of their teaching examination; however, the majority of participants did not possess an ELA specific degree. More than half of the survey participants graduated from a 4-year university, but the combination of teachers who did not have a teaching background or who were trained in another way accounted

for 67 teachers out of the 240 who were surveyed. The Likert scaled questions revealed that 84.6% of teachers stated that they were familiar with the term PCK. Of these, 92.5% stated that they considered their students preconceptions before teaching a topic. A total of 68.3% agreed that curriculum documents were useful in their lesson planning and 46.7% stated that phonemic awareness was the cornerstone of spelling instruction. Question 7 asked participants if there was more to learn about reading from spelling. The results were that 46.8% of teachers stated that there was more to learn about reading from spelling, and 53.2% claimed that there was more to learn about spelling from reading. In terms of the ELA component of vocabulary, 23.1 % agreed or strongly agreed that purposeful memorization was the key to vocabulary instruction, while 22.1 % were undecided. More than half of these teachers stated that this was not the way to teach vocabulary; these participants accounted for 58.3% of the sample. The majority of teachers either agreed or strongly agreed that they considered their students' gender, culture, and language when teaching. Teacher responses to the video indicated that the majority of teachers were unable to identify the effective teaching example. The majority were able to identify the ineffective video as such.

The first open ended survey question asked teachers what their focus was when teaching reading. The majority stated that phonics was their focus, followed by comprehension. The third most important factor was knowledge, though the variation between the top two choices and the third was steep, with only 14 participants identifying knowledge as their focus compared to 65 for phonics and 57 for comprehension. The second open ended question asked teachers what their writing assignments consisted of, and the most frequent response was writing prompts which fell under the thematic concern

of structured writing. The other thematic categories for writing were curriculum mandated, concentration, mechanical, creative and student centered, and combination style writing. In order to address research question 2, survey participants were invited to take part in focus group sessions. These focus groups did not materialize but morphed into one-on-one interviews. Three questions were posed to participants: (1) Why did you think that the video was/ was not a good example of PCK in ELA? (2) Are the curriculum documents provided to you by the state useful in your teaching? (3) Do you feel that your teacher's education and training were sufficient?

The major thematic concerns that emerged were content knowledge, teaching pedagogy, educational policies, diverse learners, professional development and adaptation, and teacher preparation. The researcher's insights on these results are detailed in the discussion of results.

Discussion of Results

Research question 2 aimed at discovering whether teachers understood the connection between content knowledge and teaching pedagogy. The survey questions were crafted to identify teachers' understanding of broad PCK concepts, individual components of ELA, and to see whether particular demographic factors impacted their knowledge. The second question on the survey asked teachers if they were familiar with the term PCK. Though the majority of teachers stated that they were familiar with the term, question 12 of the survey asked teachers to identify an effective example of pedagogical content knowledge and most teachers were unable to do so. The results of subsequent survey questions illustrated that teachers were largely unfamiliar with pedagogical content knowledge within the ELA framework. These results point to the

need for greater awareness of the connection between content knowledge and teaching pedagogy, which could be achieved through revamping ELA teacher education and training.

Question 3 of the survey asked whether teachers considered their students' preconceptions of a topic before teaching a lesson. The vast majority of teachers stated that they did. The researcher questioned how they would be able to consider student preconceptions when the majority of teachers stated in question 3 that they relied heavily on curriculum documents in planning their lessons. Curriculum documents do not take student preconceptions into account so the question then becomes, how are teachers straddling between considering their students preconceptions while adhering to curriculum mandates? The researcher believed that in some cases, teachers answered questions 2 and 3 the way they felt they were expected to.

In response to survey question 5, the majority of teachers stated that they believed phonemic awareness was the cornerstone of spelling instruction. The expert opinions that were referenced in the literature review in Chapter II of this dissertation affirm the opposite, where it was stated that the key to spelling lies in a better understanding of the American English orthographic system. Orthography "involves the development of learners' awareness, understanding and application of the relationships between written and spoken words" (Lapp & Fisher, 2017, p. 207). edAs the researcher discussed in Chapter II, many studies on the effectiveness of phonics have been executed over the years, yet there is no concrete information on how phonics enhances spelling or reading instruction. Thus, the teachers in this study, like many researchers, advocated for the effectiveness of phonics perhaps because this is the time-honored educational norm.

This was proven in the t-test that was performed on this question where it was found that significantly more teachers with ELA specific degrees stated that phonics was the cornerstone of spelling instruction.

Spelling was tied into survey question 7 which asked teachers to choose the correct reciprocal relationship between reading and spelling. 46.8% of teachers felt that reading was more important than spelling and 53.2% felt that spelling was more important than reading. The experts in the field suggested that there is more to be learnt about reading from spelling rather than the reverse (Graham & Santangelo, 2014). Given that less than half of the survey participants got this correct points to shortcomings in teacher knowledge and to a need for expanding, or, in some cases, introducing effective methods for teaching spelling and reading into the teacher's orthographic knowledge base. This would facilitate the transfer of awareness regarding the influence of spelling on reading for students. In terms of vocabulary, only 58.3% of teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed that vocabulary should be taught through purposeful memorization. This percentage was still alarming to the researcher. As Manyak et. al (2014) stated, educators must focus on teaching individual words. They need to develop strategies that enhance the appreciation of words through teaching words and their meanings. To this end, word consciousness must be encouraged. Word consciousness refers to understanding words and meanings versus memorizing words and meanings (Kucan, 2012). The fact that more teachers were not aware of this highlights the need for education and training. The teacher responses to these ELA component survey questions demonstrated that novice ELA educators do not have sufficient PCK.

Education today is focused on completing the curriculum and on preparing students for standardized tests. This was reiterated in question 10 where the majority of participants demonstrated an over reliance on diagnostic tools, depending on i-Ready or FAST scores in evaluating students and not on the child as an individual. Again, in question 11, the researcher noted that teachers answered in accordance with what they felt should be said as they asserted that they considered their students' culture, gender, and language when teaching. If this were true, many more teachers would have stated that knowledge was the foothold of teaching reading in question 6. Unfortunately, teachers referenced phonics once again. Readers use knowledge to read, and they develop that knowledge from personal knowledge. Personal knowledge refers to students' life experiences. Making connections to personal life increases reading motivation, which boosts reading achievement. It is imperative, therefore, for literacy educators to devote a significant amount of time to building students' knowledge and to understanding their personal knowledge. Additionally, comprehension is more important than phonics, as reading and specialized knowledge are based on the reader's comprehension skills (Cervetti & Hiebert, 2015). In question 6, the researcher created a bubble word diagram (Figure 22, pg. 94) to show the interconnectedness of teacher responses to their focus when teaching reading. Notably, teachers connected phonics to vocabulary and to spelling. In the literature review, scholars stated that teachers very often attempt to integrate phonics, spelling, and vocabulary. Lapp and Fisher state that the relationships among these curricula are often not well integrated (Lapp & Fisher, 2017, p. 207). These findings highlighted the need for greater education and training in the areas of vocabulary and reading.

Question 9 asked teachers what their main focus was when teaching writing. Teachers overwhelmingly referenced writing prompts in this question. As discussed in the literature review, Stephen Graham's (2008) first recommendation was to dedicate time to writing, with writing occurring across the curriculum, and to involve students in various forms of writing over time. Teachers frequently stated that they wished their writing instruction did not have to be prescribed, yet they felt coerced into adopting this style due to curriculum requirements. This highlighted the need for a curriculum change. The researcher also believed that teacher writing education has been sacrificed because of the fixation on training teachers to teach a certain way.

The demographic questions showed that teachers responded to certain questions based on the grade that they taught. The results also suggested that passing the certification exam was not indicative of an awareness of PCK in ELA instruction. Furthermore, teacher education took diverse paths, so some attempt at ensuring that a consistent ELA education is provided to teachers, despite the path they take, needs to be made. Standardization of teacher education should be more of a priority than standardized student exams. Finally, placing a non-ELA expert into an elementary school classroom without proper training seemed commonplace as the majority of teachers in the survey did not possess an ELA specific degree. Some attempt must be made to equip these teachers with sufficient ELA knowledge before they enter the classroom. The researcher performed two separate one sample t-tests to determine whether having an ELA specific degree impacted knowledge of PCK. Both tests produced highly significant results. In the first test, which aimed at discerning whether teachers who had an ELA degree could recognize effective PCK in an ELA video, it was found that the number of

teachers who were able to respond correctly to the PCK videos held an ELA bachelor's degree.

Research question 2 was investigated through interviews. The researcher was disappointed that the focus group dynamic did not materialize since the interviews were extremely insightful. There was diversity among interviewees. They were of different races, had different educational backgrounds, and came from different parts of the state.

What these participants shared was an inability to recognize effective PCK instruction, an adamant disdain for educational policies, and the common belief that their formal education and training were inadequate. When discussing the video example of effective or ineffective use of PCK, the researcher noted that most teachers were preoccupied with the actor's demeanor. Effective instruction of poetry hinges on background knowledge and on identifying theme, meaning, and specific words. These were all present in the good video, yet teachers stated that the explanations were insufficient. Was this truly their fault? Or can it be suggested that their creativity has been stifled so severely that they are unable to recognize anything outside of a stagnant curriculum-based approach? The restrictions of curriculum disempowered and disengaged the amazing teachers who participated in this process. It is important to recognize that teacher disengagement leads to student disengagement. The researcher's overall feelings coming out of the interviews were that the curriculum needs to be revisited so that teachers are empowered. Though well-intentioned, education policies were found to be misguided and too focused on standardized testing and rigid curricula at national and state levels. These policies have resulted in an overemphasis on test preparation, which consumed valuable classroom time, and ultimately stifled teachers'

creativity in lesson planning. It was also noted that teachers are being placed into the classroom with inadequate ELA knowledge, stemming both from their educational background and teacher training.

Implications for Practice

Ineffective pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) can significantly hinder the effectiveness of teaching and learning in various educational contexts. Through the observations discussed, it becomes evident that lacking a deep understanding of how to teach ELA specific content can lead to suboptimal outcomes. Inadequate planning, limited differentiation, and a lack of meaningful connections between content and instructional strategies can result in disengaged students, missed learning opportunities, and a failure to meet educational objectives. Furthermore, ineffective PCK may contribute to a perpetuation of educational inequities, as students from diverse backgrounds may not receive the support and instruction they need to succeed. This highlights the importance of ongoing professional development, collaboration with colleagues, and a commitment to reflective practice to enhance pedagogical content knowledge.

Moving forward, addressing ineffective PCK requires a concerted effort from educators, educational leaders, and policymakers. This includes providing targeted support and resources for teacher training and development, fostering a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement within schools and districts, and advocating for policies that prioritize effective teaching practices.

It is clear based on this study that enhancing PCK in ELA instruction through education and training is only half of the solution. Addressing educational policies so that

teachers feel empowered in their teaching roles is the other. As it stands, teachers are stressed, exhausted, undervalued, and feel powerless in their roles. This affects their level of engagement. Teacher engagement and empowerment are critical to the future of education in the United States. It is important to address these concerns because teachers pave the way for every other profession by molding future generations. A reduction in teacher engagement due to poor training and stringent education policies will witness a decline in student engagement. Enrollment and attendance will continue to decline if these issues are not addressed.

Limitations

There were ample survey participants in this research study; however, the researcher felt that in some instances teachers answered survey questions based on what they thought the correct response should be. This could be attributed to the participants' desire to seem knowledgeable. Additionally, the researcher questioned the value of survey responses from participants who stated that they were unfamiliar with the term pedagogical content knowledge. The follow up focus groups did not evolve as the researcher had anticipated. Initially the result seemed promising, with 79 teachers confirming an interest in continuing the process. Only 14 teachers signed up to continue and out of the 14 only seven teachers actually showed up on the day and time that they agreed to. These seven did not participate in any one group, so the focus group dynamic evolved into one-on-one interviews which prevented any open discussion since the researcher maintained a neutral affect to mitigate bias. The researcher assumed that the focus group turnout was attributed to a lack of incentive and busy teacher schedules. In terms of the first interview question, the researcher noted that many teachers needed to be

reminded of their response to the video and in one case, the teacher forgot that she answered positively and gave feedback from a negative perspective.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study revealed that certified, novice elementary school teachers in the state that was studied experienced challenges with PCK in teaching ELA which could have stemmed from curriculum mandates, their formal education and subsequent training or lack thereof. Some recommendations for research could include:

Creating an English Pedagogical Content Knowledge (EPCK) Model

The ultimate aim of this study was to show that there was a dire need for a greater focus on teacher education, the educational policies, and the teaching practices that affect the discipline of ELA. Novice teachers must expand their knowledge and learn how to incorporate pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) into English Language Arts (ELA) instruction within their elementary school classrooms. The most efficient way to accomplish this feat would be to create an English Pedagogical Content Knowledge (EPCK) model, capable of withstanding fluctuating educational policies, which could serve as an ultimate guide. This process involves several steps and would necessitate dedicated research over time. In order to create this model, the core components of PCK in ELA must be clearly identified. Each ELA component must be examined individually and then in tandem with like elements that have been proven worthy of integration. These essential elements of PCK specific to ELA instruction for each of these individual or combination components must then be fleshed out. It is important to continuously evaluate and refine the model based on feedback from novice teachers and other key stakeholders. It is also important to incorporate insights from research and best practices

in teacher education to enhance the effectiveness of the model over time. Once the model has been created, refined, and tested, the next step would entail creating a statewide curriculum based on the model.

Systemic Educational Policy Changes

It is imperative to consider systemic reformation within educational policies before any ameliorative strategies can have an impact. Teachers must receive requisite respect and support. Teachers' demands must be streamlined to afford them the latitude to develop and implement the EPCK curriculum that is proposed in the following section. To achieve this, their workload must be reduced. Teaching schedules must be adjusted to accommodate the ongoing training and professional growth opportunities that have been outlined here.

Curriculum Changes

The state should develop a curriculum that is based on the PCK model. The curriculum should include theory and practice to achieve maximum efficiency. Thus, it should introduce novice teachers to the foundational concepts of PCK in ELA and should include instructional materials, inclusive of lesson plans, case studies, classroom observations, and model teaching videos, to facilitate learning and application of PCK principles. The learning objectives for novice teachers must be clearly outlined so that teachers are aware of the specialized knowledge and skill sets that they are expected to acquire related to PCK in ELA. Once the novice teacher has mastered the theory, hands-on, experiential learning opportunities for novice teachers to apply PCK principles in real classroom settings should be offered. This would mitigate confusion in the face of diverse district mandates since there would be one refined model upon which instruction

can be built. Consistency, detail, and guidance will empower our novice teachers. Any new initiative should be monitored. Thus, the researcher feels that each school district should be state mandated to implement formative and summative assessments to evaluate novice teachers' mastery of PCK concepts and their ability to effectively integrate PCK principles into ELA instruction. A variety of assessment methods, such as classroom observations, portfolio reviews, written reflections, and performance tasks could be used to measure learning outcomes. There may be instances where additional support is needed. Policy makers must remain mindful that the existing workforce is comprised of individuals from different backgrounds. Thus, some new teachers may need additional support.

Teacher Education

The study revealed that most teachers did not have an ELA specific degree. Teacher courses at 4-year universities should cater more to the practical ELA demands of the classroom and the ELA component of the teacher certification exam should be realigned with the EPCK model. Additionally, offering ELA graduate courses to teachers could be another way to expand an ELA knowledge base. Creating these types of educational opportunities are vital to ensure that teachers have the knowledge and skills they need to teach effectively. A strong base would assist teachers in navigating any type of change that is made to educational policies. Measures must be taken to help teachers integrate this knowledge into practice since any information that is external to the lived experience of the teacher can only be applicable to their classroom if they are properly implemented. The cost of these types of courses should be the responsibility of the district.

Teacher Preparation Programs

Teacher preparation programs must be adequate to equip pre-service teachers with pedagogical content knowledge in ELA. The timing and content of workshops should be carefully considered to maximize efficiency. Holding workshops after a long day of teaching and basing the lessons on theory and philosophy would probably meet with minimal results. Workshops have proven ineffective in the past due to poor timing, or an overemphasis on theory. These workshops should be held over many sessions and focus on teaching novice educators how to understand the PCK model as it applies to the curriculum and then on how to transform their knowledge into material that is transferable to the classroom. This is indeed the essence of PCK.

Professional Development Programs

Additional support can be given through professional development programs that are specifically tailored to enhance teachers' understanding of pedagogical content knowledge in ELA. These programs should build upon the practical strategies outlined in the curriculum documents for integrating subject matter content with effective teaching methods. Professional development activities, such as workshops, seminars, webinars, and conferences, focused on enhancing novice teachers' understanding and application of PCK in ELA should be developed to offer ongoing opportunities for continued learning and skill development beyond initial training, including access to online resources, communities of practice, and professional learning networks.

Teacher Reflection

Teachers should be encouraged to engage in reflective practices to deepen their understanding of pedagogical content knowledge in ELA. Teachers could identify their

strengths and areas that need improvement. In this way they can set professional goals for themselves. These reflections should be shared with peers and mentors.

Mentorship Programs

Mentorship programs should be introduced, where experienced ELA teachers mentor novice teachers to support their development of pedagogical content knowledge. These types of programs offer guidance and support. A novice teacher should, where possible, be paired with an experienced teacher. The partnership should be ongoing through the novice teacher's first year. The district should follow up to determine the impact of mentorship on teachers' instructional practices and student learning outcomes.

Promote Collaboration and Community Building

Along the lines of mentorship, schools should foster a collaborative learning environment where novice teachers can share experiences, resources, and best practices related to PCK in ELA instruction.

Future Research Studies

Researchers can perform case studies to examine specific instances where teachers struggle with applying pedagogical content knowledge in ELA instruction. The factors contributing to these challenges and targeted interventions based on the findings should be developed. Apart from case studies, the researcher would like to propose future research that would expand the parameters of the study. Other categories that can be studied include middle school teachers, high school teachers, veteran teachers and teachers from other states. Some of these studies can be longitudinal studies which examine the long-term impact of professional development efforts on teachers' pedagogical content knowledge in ELA and student outcomes. Changes in teachers'

instructional practices and student achievement over time can be undertaken to assess the effectiveness of interventions.

Summary

This two-phased, mixed methods research study grew out of the researcher's genuine love for the discipline of English. The researcher desired to improve conditions for novice teachers, and, consequently, the educational outcomes for the students of the state that was being studied. The study illustrated that certified, novice ELA elementary school teachers in a southeast state of the United States, experienced challenges with identifying and implementing pedagogical content knowledge in English Language Arts due to a myriad of factors. These included specific challenges with broad PCK concepts and with the content of different components of ELA. The results of the study showed that this stemmed from a lack of the integration of pedagogical content knowledge in ELA at the foundational level of teacher education, a lack of comprehensive ELA instruction on ELA specific certification exams, a disregard for alternative entry points into the teaching profession, and the consequent absence of support, frequent curriculum changes, and a lack of guidance and support. The researcher put forth several potential remedial strategies but remains cognizant that these ameliorative propositions will not result in the aspired outcomes without full participation from stakeholder groups, including the school district, policy makers, administrators, veteran teachers, and the novice teachers themselves. The researcher hopes that this study will be used as a platform from which open and honest conversations and collaborative reformation exercises among those responsible for educational change can begin, so that we can

preserve the integrity of English Language Arts while retaining and supporting our novice workforce.

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Chat GPT

Appendix A: FLDOE Listserv Request

Division of Accountability Research and Measurement
Bureau of PK-20 Education Reporting and Accessibility
Report Specification Form
One form per request

Filled in by Requester. Please provide as much information as possible and submit this form to: PeraDataRequests@fldoe.org

Section 1	**FDOE REQUESTER**			
	Name: Lindsay Medford-Fazio	**Date Submitted:** 7/15/2023		
	Entity: Lynn University	**Due Date Requested:** 7/31/2023		
	Phone: 561-788-1356	**Email:**		
Section 2	**REQUEST TYPE** (check one below)			
	☒ New Report			
	☐ Annual Update to Existing Report (Provide details in Section 5 below.)		PERA #	
	☐ Modification to Existing Report (Provide details in Section 5 below.)		PERA #	
Section 3	**ORIGINS OF REQUEST**			
	Organization: Lynn University			
	Legislative Entity (if Applicable): Choose an item.			
	Request Title/Description or Question Asked by Requester: E-mail list			
Section 4	**OUTPUT REQUESTED**			
	Type of File Requested: Excel			
Section 5	**REQUEST DETAILS**			
	Report Level: Check all that apply			
	☒ State			
	☐ College			
	☐ District			
	☐ School			
	☐ Program			
	☐ Course			
	☐ Combination Specify Combination: Click here to enter text.			
	Staff	☒ Fulltime	☐ Part Time	☐ Instructional only	☐ All Staff
	Year(s): 5 years or less			
	Cohort Description (if applicable): Elementary School certified teachers			
	Count Un-duplication Level: Click here to enter text.			
	Name and e-mail address			

File Layout: name and e-mail address

Appendix B: Emails To Gain Study/Participant Entry

Dear valued educator,

You are invited to participate in a survey that is geared towards assessing pedagogical content knowledge in English Language Arts.

This survey is a part of my doctoral dissertation, which is entitled "An 'EPCK' (English pedagogical content knowledge) challenge: an examination of the challenges that novice ELA elementary school teachers have with pedagogical content knowledge.

Pedagogical content knowledge refers to the amalgam of content knowledge and teaching pedagogy.

Participation in this survey is completely voluntary. There is no immediate benefit to you, however; the results of this survey may be able to improve ELA teaching strategies, teacher support and student outcomes in the future.

There are no risks to taking this survey and your confidentiality and privacy will be protected to the full extent of the law. Please refer to the informed consent form for further clarification,

If you feel anxious at any time during the survey, you are welcome to exit by pressing the X at the top of the page.

I look forward to your participation as it will help to fill a gap in the literature that exists on English pedagogical content knowledge.

Yours in education,

Lindsay Medford-Fazio
LLuckyMedford@email.lynn.edu

Survey link #1: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WTQ95D6

Survey link #2: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WT9XWY7

Appendix C: Consent Forms

Lynn University, Boca Raton, Florida

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN SURVEY RESEARCH

Informed Consent

Medford-Fazio Research Study

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Lindsay Medford-Fazio, M.A.., Ed.D. candidate from Lynn University's Donald E. and Helen L. Ross College of Education, which is partnered with the Carnegie Foundation. You were selected as a potential participant in this study because you are an elementary school teacher with 5 years of experience or less. Your participation in this research is voluntary. The faculty director for this research is Dr. Kathleen Weigel. You may contact her at Kweigel@lynn.edu .Thank you for participating in this survey. Your feedback is important.

AGE OF CONSENT
Please note: You must be 18 or older to participate in this study.

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH
You are invited to participate in a research study about the challenges that novice ELA elementary school teachers face with pedagogical content knowledge.

SPECIFIC PROCEDURES
Your participation in this study will assist in learning more about progression and success within a competency-based education environment.

DURATION OF PARTICIPATION, COMPENSATION AND WITHDRAWAL
The total duration of your participation should be no longer than 10 - 15 minutes. There will be no compensation for participation. You may withdraw your consent at anytime and discontinue participation without consequences of any kind. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS
While the investigator(s) will keep your information confidential, there are some risks of data breeches when sending information over the internet that are beyond the control of the investigator.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND SOCIETY
There are no benefits for answering the survey questions; however, participants may enjoy answering questions regarding competency-based education.

CONFIDENTIALITY
This survey is strictly anonymous and there is no identifying information. No IP addresses will be kept or known to the researcher. Your answers to questions will be stored for two years on a password-protected computer and after that time will be deleted. This project's research records may be reviewed by the departments at Lynn University responsible for regulatory and research oversight. Study findings will be presented only in summary form

IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATOR
If you have any questions about the research project you may contact Lindsay Medford Fazio (561-788-1356) LLucky-Medford@Lynn.email.edu

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS
For any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you may e-mail Dr. Jennifer Lesh, Chair of the Lynn University Institutional Review Board for Protection of Human Subjects, at jlesh@lynn.edu

Appendix D: Survey Questions

Survey instrument

The researcher created two surveys. The questions are the same on both surveys except for question twelve. Question twelve on survey one is a short video which is an example of effective pedagogical content knowledge. Question twelve on survey two is an example of ineffective pedagogical content knowledge.

Survey 1

1. Do you agree to take this survey?

   Yes
   No

2. Are you familiar with the term pedagogical content knowledge?

   Strongly agree.
   Agree
   Neither agree nor disagree
   Disagree
   Strongly disagree

3. Do you consider your students pre-conceptions of a topic before you teach a lesson?

   Strongly agree.
   Agree
   Neither agree nor disagree
   Disagree
   Strongly disagree

4. Are the curriculum documents provided to you by your district useful in lesson planning?

   Strongly agree.
   Agree
   Neither agree nor disagree
   Disagree
   Strongly disagree

5. Phonemic awareness is the cornerstone of spelling instruction.

   Strongly agree.
   Agree
   Neither agree nor disagree
   Disagree
   Strongly disagree

6. What is your main focus when teaching reading and why is that the focus?

7. Choose which statement you agree with and why.
   1. There is more to learn about spelling from reading.
   2. There is more to learn about reading from spelling.

8. What do your writing assignments in class consist of?
   Write as much as you would like.

9. The most effective way to build a students' vocabulary is to encourage purposeful memorization of words and meanings.

   Strongly agree.
   Agree
   Neither agree nor disagree
   Disagree
   Strongly disagree

10. What do you depend on when evaluating your students' readiness for upcoming instruction? Select all that apply.

    i-Ready
    STAR or FAST
    Exit Tickets
    Progress Reports
    Other (Please specify)

11. Do you frequently consider your students' gender, culture, and first language when you use examples, illustrations and analogies to make more complex topics accessible to them?

    Strongly agree.
    Agree
    Neither agree nor disagree
    Disagree
    Strongly disagree

12. Watch the following video. Is this a good example of pedagogical content knowledge?

    https://youtu.be/R5RHJ-oJXBA

    Yes
    No

13. What grade do you teach?

    Kindergarten
    1st grade
    2nd grade
    3rd grade
    4th grade
    5th grade

14. Did you pass the ELA component of your teacher certification exam on your first attempt?

    Yes

No

15. Do you hold a bachelor's degree in an ELA subject specific domain?

    Yes
    No

16. What type of teacher preparation program did you graduate from?

    Teacher's College from a $ year University program
    Liberal Arts college
    Other (Please specify)

17. Are you willing to participate in a focus group? If so, please provide your e-mail address.

Survey 2

1. Do you agree to take this survey?

Yes
No

2. Are you familiar with the term pedagogical content knowledge?

Strongly agree.
Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

3. Do you consider your students pre-conceptions of a topic before you teach a lesson?

Strongly agree.
Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

4. Are the curriculum documents provided to you by your district useful in lesson planning?

Strongly agree.
Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

5. Phonemic awareness is the cornerstone of spelling instruction.

Strongly agree.
Agree

Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

6. What is your main focus when teaching reading and why is that the focus?

7. Choose which statement you agree with and why.
3. There is more to learn about spelling from reading.
4. There is more to learn about reading from spelling.

8. What do your writing assignments in class consist of?
Write as much as you would like.

9. The most effective way to build a students' vocabulary is to encourage purposeful memorization of words and meanings.

Strongly agree.
Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

10. What do you depend on when evaluating your students' readiness for upcoming instruction? Select all that apply.

i-Ready
STAR or FAST
Exit Tickets
Progress Reports
Other (Please specify)

11. Do you frequently consider your students' gender, culture, and first language when you use examples, illustrations and analogies to make more complex topics accessible to them?

Strongly agree.
Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree.

12. Watch the following video. Is this a good example of pedagogical content knowledge?

https://youtu.be/N4S37I2P5hE

Yes

No

13. What grade do you teach?

Kindergarten
1st grade
2nd grade
3rd grade
4th grade
5th grade

14. Did you pass the ELA component of your teacher certification exam on your first attempt?

Yes
No

15. Do you hold a bachelor's degree in an ELA subject specific domain?

Yes
No

16. What type of teacher preparation program did you graduate from?

Teacher's College from a 4-year University program
Liberal Arts college
Other (Please specify)

17. Are you willing to participate in a focus group? If so, please provide your e-mail address.

Appendix E: Consent Form for Focus Groups

Dear valued educator,

Thank you for completing the survey. You are now invited to participate in a focus group that is geared towards assessing the challenges that you encounter with pedagogical content knowledge in English Language Arts.

This focus group is a part of my doctoral dissertation, which is entitled "An 'EPCK' (English pedagogical content knowledge) challenge: an examination of the challenges that novice ELA elementary school teachers have with pedagogical content knowledge.

Pedagogical content knowledge refers to the amalgam of content knowledge and teaching pedagogy.

Participation in this focus group is completely voluntary. There is no immediate benefit to you, however; the results of this survey may be able to improve ELA teaching strategies, teacher support and student outcomes in the future.

There are no risks to taking this survey and your confidentiality and privacy will be protected to the full extent of the law. Please refer to the informed consent form for further clarification,

If you feel anxious at any time during the focus group, you are welcome to exit the discussion.

I look forward to your participation as it will help to fill a gap in the Literature that exists on English pedagogical content knowledge.

If you have any questions about the research project, you may contact Lindsay Medford Fazio (561-788-1356) LLucky-Medford@Lynn.email.edu

Yours in education,

Lindsay Medford-Fazio

Appendix F: Consent to Participate in Focus Group Research

Lynn University, Boca Raton, Florida

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN FOCUS GROUP RESEARCH

Informed Consent

Medford-Fazio Research Study

Thank you for completing the survey. You are invited to participate in a focus group conducted by Lindsay Medford-Fazio, M.A., Ed.D. candidate from Lynn University's Donald E. and Helen L. Ross College of Education, which is partnered with the Carnegie Foundation. You were selected as a potential participant in this study because you agreed to participate in phase 2 of this research. Your participation in this research is voluntary. The faculty director for this research is Dr. Kathleen Weigel. You may contact her at Kweigel@lynn.edu .Thank you for participating in this survey. Your feedback is important.

AGE OF CONSENT

Please note: You must be 18 or older to participate in this study.

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

This study seeks to investigate challenges with pedagogical content knowledge within the context of elementary school English Language Arts. The researcher is particularly interested in how teachers understand the ELA content and how they transform this content knowledge into pedagogy that is accessible to their students. The purpose of this focus group is to give you the opportunity to expand on the elements of English pedagogical content knowledge that challenge you the most. Your participation in this focus group will assist with learning more about the challenges of pedagogical content knowledge in English Language Arts.

SPECIFIC PROCEDURES

If you participate in this focus group, the researcher will ask that you agree to and expect the following

Data Collection and Timeline

Examples of data that the researcher intends to collect will include audio recordings, transcriptions and field notes taken during the focus groups. Focus groups will occur once.

Types of Questions in Focus Groups

Questions during focus groups will focus on the challenges that novice elementary school children have with pedagogical content knowledge.

The focus group will consist of 3 open-ended questions. Open ended questions will ensure that your voice will be heard.

Questions will be sent to participants in advance to allow for preparation.

Location

All in person data collection will take place at the participant's elementary school
A zoom option will be offered to participants.

Some remote data may take place via e-mail.

.

DURATION OF PARTICIPATION, COMPENSATION AND WITHDRAWAL

The total duration of your participation should be no longer than 30-45 minutes. There will be no compensation for participation. You may withdraw your consent at anytime and discontinue participation without consequences of any kind. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

While the investigator(s) will keep your information confidential, there are some risks of data breeches when sending information over the internet that are beyond the control of the investigator.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND SOCIETY

There are no benefits for answering the survey questions; however, participants may enjoy answering questions regarding competency-based education.

CONFIDENTIALITY

This survey is strictly anonymous and there is no identifying information. No IP addresses will be kept or known to the researchers. Your answers to questions will be stored for two years on a password-protected computer and after that time will be deleted. This project's research records may be reviewed by the departments at Lynn University responsible for regulatory and research oversight
The information you will share with us if you participate in this study will be kept

completely confidential to the full extent of the law.

IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATOR

If you have any questions about the research project you may contact Lindsay Medford-Fazio (561-788-1356) LLuckyMedford@email.lynn.edu

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

For any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you may contact Dr. Jennifer Lesh, Chair of the Lynn University Institutional Review Board for Protection of Human Subjects, at jlesh@lynn.edu

Appendix G: Sample Focus Group Questions

Sample questions may change after the results of the survey.

1. Why did you think that the video was an example of good pedagogical content knowledge?
2. What aspects of the ELA curriculum create the largest challenges for you?
3. Do you feel that you were adequately prepared in your training?

Appendix H: IRB Approval(s)


IRB Protecting Human Subjects
CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

LYNN
UNIVERSITY

This certificate is granted to

Lindsay Medford-Fazio

To certify that they have completed IRB Training

Appendix I: Responses to Question 10 on Methods for Evaluation

Count	Q10.1 What do you depend on when evaluating your students' readiness for upcoming instruction? Select all that apply.	Q10.2	Q10.3	Q10.4	Q10.5
1		STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets		in class assessments
2		STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets	Progress Reports	
3	i-Ready				Progress Monitoring
4		STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets		
5	i-Ready				
6	i-Ready	STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets	Progress Reports	
7	i-Ready	STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets		
8					
9				Progress Reports	Teacher observation
10	i-Ready	STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets		Formative evaluations
11	i-Ready	STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets		Participation
12		STAR or FAST			
13					
14	i-Ready		Exit Tickets		
15		STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets		Learning checks
16					I really just do a lot of observation. I can't wait around until students are all "ready" to learn new things. There are so many things that have to be taught and so little time. I just continue to teach new things and then keep reviewing all that we've learned, hoping that they will begin to learn the material that has been taught.
17					
18		STAR or FAST		Progress Reports	Other assignments and computer programs I use
19			Exit Tickets		
20	i-Ready	STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets		
21	i-Ready	STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets	Progress Reports	
22		STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets	Progress Reports	Classwork
23	i-Ready		Exit Tickets		Grades and teacher made assessments tools.
24		STAR or FAST			
25	i-Ready			Progress Reports	
26	i-Ready	STAR or FAST			
27					
28					
29	i-Ready	STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets		
30					

Count	Q10.1 What do you depend on when evaluating your students' readiness for upcoming instruction? Select all that apply.	Q10.2	Q10.3	Q10.4	Q10.5
31	i-Ready	STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets	Progress Reports	
32	i-Ready	STAR or FAST		Progress Reports	
33	i-Ready	STAR or FAST			Observation
34	i-Ready	STAR or FAST			
35					
36	i-Ready	STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets	Progress Reports	Informal observations, what they say when they are collaborating with their peers.
37					
38	i-Ready	STAR or FAST			
39			Exit Tickets		FSQâ€™s and USAâ€™s
40					
41	i-Ready	STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets	Progress Reports	Formative mid unit tests
42			Exit Tickets		Daily class work
43	i-Ready	STAR or FAST		Progress Reports	
44					
45	i-Ready	STAR or FAST		Progress Reports	spontaneous observation on what they still need help with.
46	i-Ready	STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets		
47	i-Ready				SIPPS
48				Progress Reports	
49	i-Ready	STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets		
50	i-Ready		Exit Tickets		KWL chart
51					Anticipation guides, results of previous module tests, background knowledge surveys, pre test
52	i-Ready	STAR or FAST			
53	i-Ready	STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets		
54		STAR or FAST		Progress Reports	
55					early literacy testing
56	i-Ready	STAR or FAST			
57					
58			Exit Tickets		For my students, I also focus on background knowledge of the topic with a pretest or conversation. Quite often today, students do not have enough knowledge to fully comprehend what we are reading and make connections.
59	i-Ready	STAR or FAST			Formative samples by students.
60	i-Ready	STAR or FAST			
61					
62					
63	i-Ready	STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets	Progress Reports	
64					
65					
66	i-Ready		Exit Tickets		Their responses to open ended questions, small group data, turn and talk data
67					
68					
69					
70	i-Ready		Exit Tickets		

Count	Q10.1 What do you depend on when evaluating your students' readiness for upcoming instruction? Select all that apply.	Q10.2	Q10.3	Q10.4	Q10.5
71		STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets	Progress Reports	F.A.S.T
72	i-Ready		Exit Tickets	Progress Reports	
73	i-Ready	STAR or FAST			assessments
74					
75	i-Ready	STAR or FAST			
76	i-Ready	STAR or FAST			
77					
78	i-Ready	STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets		
79					
80					
81	i-Ready				FAST progress monitoring
82					
83					
84	i-Ready		Exit Tickets	Progress Reports	
85					
86					classroom participation and observation
87	i-Ready	STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets		
88					Teacher observations
89					
90					
91					in class assessments, formative assessments
92	i-Ready		Exit Tickets		AVID Note -Taking
93		STAR or FAST			Informal assessments and checkpoints
94					
95					
96			Exit Tickets		Background knowledge quick check with hook activities, prior formative assessments
97		STAR or FAST			
98	i-Ready		Exit Tickets		Istation data
99	i-Ready	STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets		Daily work
100			Exit Tickets		
101			Exit Tickets		
102	i-Ready		Exit Tickets		
103	i-Ready	STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets		
104	i-Ready	STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets	Progress Reports	
105	i-Ready	STAR or FAST			
106					
107			Exit Tickets		Formative assessment. Working hand in hand with them in the classroom.
108	i-Ready	STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets	Progress Reports	Teacher observation
109					I do pretesting on all of the skills that we are required to teach each quarter. This gives me a baseline for developing effective instruction for each student.
110	i-Ready	STAR or FAST			

Count	Q10.1 What do you depend on when evaluating your students' readiness for upcoming instruction? Select all that apply.	Q10.2	Q10.3	Q10.4	Q10.5
111					
112					
113	i-Ready				
114	i-Ready	STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets		Teacher observation of students' in-class abilities
115	i-Ready				Comprehension
116	i-Ready			Progress Reports	FAST
117					
118	i-Ready	STAR or FAST			Ongoing progress monitoring
119				Progress Reports	
120					
121	i-Ready	STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets	Progress Reports	The district now uses Exact Path but I prefer Iready
122					Informational conversations
123	i-Ready		Exit Tickets		
124					
125	i-Ready	STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets	Progress Reports	anything a student does or responds can be used
126					
127					
128					N/A
129	i-Ready				first hand observation and evaluation
130			Exit Tickets	Progress Reports	
131					
132					Common Formative Assessments
133					
134					
135	i-Ready	STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets		
136	i-Ready		Exit Tickets		
137					
138					
139			Exit Tickets		progress monitoring
140					
141					I depend upon a variety of assessments, including IReady Diagnostic, performance in class and on class assignments and mini formative assessments.
142		STAR or FAST			Cbm
143	i-Ready	STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets		
144		STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets		District benchmarks on current FL benchmark
145					
146	i-Ready	STAR or FAST			
147					
148					
149	i-Ready		Exit Tickets	Progress Reports	
150					

Count	Q10.1 What do you depend on when evaluating your students' readiness for upcoming instruction? Select all that apply.	Q10.2	Q10.3	Q10.4	Q10.5
151			Exit Tickets		Classroom assessments
152	i-Ready	STAR or FAST			ESGI
153					IXL
154		STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets		
155					
156			Exit Tickets	Progress Reports	Data Folders and classroom observation
157					One on one student testing ESGI
158			Exit Tickets		
159	i-Ready	STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets	Progress Reports	
160	i-Ready	STAR or FAST			Class discussion
161	i-Ready	STAR or FAST		Progress Reports	Class work
162					classwork assignments, quizzes, and tests
163	i-Ready	STAR or FAST		Progress Reports	Classwork, formative assessments, summative assessments
164	i-Ready	STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets	Progress Reports	
165	i-Ready	STAR or FAST			DAZE, oral reading, mastery of previous skills taught in class
166	i-Ready				
167					
168		STAR or FAST			In class conversation, Dibels
169	i-Ready		Exit Tickets		
170					
171	i-Ready	STAR or FAST			FSQs, USAs
172					
173					
174					
175					
176	i-Ready	STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets	Progress Reports	
177					
178	i-Ready	STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets	Progress Reports	student work and responses in class to instruction
179				Progress Reports	observation of individual needs of student.
180	i-Ready	STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets	Progress Reports	One specific test does not determine how I evaluate my students. I use a variety of informative and formative assessments.
181					
182					
183					
184					
185	i-Ready	STAR or FAST			
186	i-Ready	STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets	Progress Reports	
187					
188					
189					
190					

Count	Q10.1 What do you depend on when evaluating your students' readiness for upcoming instruction? Select all that apply.	Q10.2	Q10.3	Q10.4	Q10.5
191	i-Ready	STAR or FAST			
192					
193		STAR or FAST			
194					A pre assessment or formative assessment
195	i-Ready		Exit Tickets		
196			Exit Tickets	Progress Reports	
197	i-Ready	STAR or FAST	Exit Tickets		
198					
199					
200					Unit Assessments
201	i-Ready				
202					
203					Student work samples, work ethic, abilities and limitations. Sometimes a short well thought out and applies concept is better than 50 longer ones. Quality not quantity. Saying or doing more with less explaining and more doing.
204					Constant formative assessment using a wide variety of methods to assess mastery of needed skills, vocabulary, and background knowledge.
205					
206					
207		STAR or FAST			
208					
209					
210					
211					Observation, class or one on one discussion. I Ready and Star are useless in kindergarten.
212					
213					Weekly assessments
214				Progress Reports	
215					
216		STAR or FAST			
217					informal observations - I'm conferring with them or watching them as they work. Constantly observing and taking notes.
218					My observations of behaviors in class
219		STAR or FAST			
220					
221					
222					Benchmark..... as well as teacher observations, coffering with students
223					
224			Exit Tickets		
225			Exit Tickets		
226					Subject area tests
227					observation
228			Exit Tickets		
229	i-Ready				
230			Exit Tickets		

Count	Q10.1 What do you depend on when evaluating your students' readiness for upcoming instruction? Select all that apply.	Q10.2	Q10.3	Q10.4	Q10.5
231	i-Ready				
232					I use sight word knowledge and Rigby readers at the beginning of the year to determine reading levels and where to start my phonics instruction in small group. I also use my State standards and my 25 years experience teaching first grade to drive my instruction. I developed a scope and sequence a few years ago that I use.
233			Exit Tickets		
234					Daily and weekly observation of lessons and progress.
235					
236					
237		STAR or FAST			
238					
239					dynastics activities which entails previous grade
240	i-Ready				
241					unit assessments
242					Phonics, observations and small group needs
243					
244					
245			Exit Tickets		
246					
247					teacher observations
248			Exit Tickets		
249			Exit Tickets		
250					Preview resources and determine what most students would not know from the resource and then build background knowledge and enrich the core resource with additional resources for context and interest
251					
252					Progress monitoring of specific skills taught both whole class and small group
253					Brigance
254					
255					
256					
257					
258					
259					
260		STAR or FAST			
261					
262					
263					
264					Rubric and teacher observations or preassessments.
265					
266					
267					Weekly testing
268		STAR or FAST			
269					formative assessments and in time progress monitoring
270	i-Ready				

Count	Q10.1 What do you depend on when evaluating your students' readiness for upcoming instruction? Select all that apply.	Q10.2	Q10.3	Q10.4	Q10.5
271					
272					Preview content and quick check
273					
274					
275					
276					Running records
277					
278					
279		STAR or FAST			
280			Exit Tickets		
281			Exit Tickets		
282					
283					
284					
285			Exit Tickets		
286		STAR or FAST			
287		STAR or FAST			
288					Results of weekly assessments.
289		STAR or FAST			
290					
291		STAR or FAST			
292					
293					
294		STAR or FAST			
295					
296					teacher made pre-assessments of the upcoming skills
297					
298					
299		STAR or FAST			
300			Exit Tickets		
301					
302					I use a variety of methods I don't think just one test can tell how much a student knows what if they are having a bad day or just have bad testing anxiety. I think by evaluating several aspects you can develop a better student and feel for what the students know.
303	i-Ready				
304		STAR or FAST			
305					daily anecdotal records
306					Fsq and usa from the district
307					The novels I have chosen are quality literature.
308					
309					
310					

Count	Q10.1 What do you depend on when evaluating your students' readiness for upcoming instruction? Select all that apply.	Q10.2	Q10.3	Q10.4	Q10.5
311				Progress Reports	
312		STAR or FAST			
313					
314	i-Ready				
315			Exit Tickets		
316					
317			Exit Tickets		
318					
319					
320					FSQs and USAs
321					iReady, STAR, and daily summative assessments
322					
323					
324					The students are put through a plethora of assessments. Their readiness is not considered when the calendar is moving forward to the testing window in April and May.
325					
326					core phonics survey, data from Benchmark advance on standards mastered
327					Weekly formal/ and informal assessments
328					
329	i-Ready				
330					
331					
332					RRR (reading running records)
333					
334			Exit Tickets		
335					teacher observation
336			Exit Tickets		
337			Exit Tickets		
338					
339					oberservation
340					Informal reading records, star, iready
341					observations in the classroom
342					all of the above and classroom performance, oral records and weekly assessments
343					Reading Records
344					student engagement in class instruction
345					STAR, but that is only3 times a year. I use a learning continuum. Have they mastered this? Okay, next goal.
346	i-Ready				
347					
348					
349					
350					Observation, informal assessments, skills checklists, assessments (formative)

Count	Q10.1 What do you depend on when evaluating your students' readiness for upcoming instruction? Select all that apply.	Q10.2	Q10.3	Q10.4	Q10.5
350					Observation, informal assessments, skills checklists, assessments (formative)
351	i-Ready				
352					
353					
354	i-Ready				
355					
356					
357					
358		STAR or FAST			
359					
360					
361			Exit Tickets		
362					
363			Exit Tickets		
364					Teacher observation of student and their work.
365					
366					
367					small group
368	i-Ready				
369					observation
370		STAR or FAST			
371	i-Ready				
372					
373					
374					
375			Exit Tickets		
376					
377					small group instruction
378					
379		STAR or FAST			
380			Exit Tickets		
381					observations with edit ticket type assignments
382			Exit Tickets		
383	i-Ready				
384					
385	i-Ready				
386					

Appendix J: Question 16, What Type of Teacher Program Did You Graduate From?

Count	Q16. What type of teacher preparation program did you graduate from?		Count	Q16. What type of teacher preparation program did you graduate from?
1	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		21	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
2	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		22	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
3	College Prep Classes for Teaching Students		23	No teaching background/career change
4	Alternate route teacher program		24	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
5	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		25	No teaching background/career change
6	Liberal Arts College		26	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
7	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		27	
8			28	
9	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		29	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
10	No teaching background/career change		30	
11	No teaching background/career change		31	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
12	master's degree		32	No teaching background/career change
13			33	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
14	Alt certification: 21 hours education courses, teach 3 years and pass state exams		34	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
15	No teaching background/career change		35	
16	Liberal Arts College		36	Liberal Arts College
17			37	
18	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		38	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
19	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		39	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
20	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		40	

Count	Q16. What type of teacher preparation program did you graduate from?		Count	Q16. What type of teacher preparation program did you graduate from?
41	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		71	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
42	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		72	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
43	State College of Education		73	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
44			74	
45	I graduated from McGill University in Montreal Canada, and I was in a 5 year University program for Elementary Education. I earned my Teaching Degree for K to 6th grade.		75	Liberal Arts College
46	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		76	No teaching background/career change
47	Teacher Ready		77	
48	No teaching background/career change		78	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
49	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		79	
50	Liberal Arts College		80	
51	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		81	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
52	No teaching background/career change		82	
53	Pro Teach, UF five year BA/MA program.		83	
54	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		84	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
55	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		85	
56	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		86	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
57			87	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
58	Liberal Arts College		88	BS EARLY CHILDHOOD ADMINISTRATION
59	Master's in Elementary Education		89	
60	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		90	
61			91	Liberal Arts College
62			92	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
63	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		93	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
64			94	
65			95	
66	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		96	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
67			97	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
68			98	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
69			99	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
70	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		100	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program

Count	Q16. What type of teacher preparation program did you graduate from?		Count	Q16. What type of teacher preparation program did you graduate from?
111			141	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
112			142	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
113	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		143	Liberal Arts College
114	Liberal Arts College		144	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
115	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		145	
116	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		146	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
117			147	
118	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		148	
119	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		149	Liberal Arts College
120			150	
121	Communications Master, which was Speech Drama, is Speech/ Debate for post-secondary and will be ENC effective January 2024		151	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
122	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		152	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
123	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		153	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
124			154	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
125	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		155	
126			156	Masters of Science on Primary Education
127			157	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
128	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		158	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
129	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		159	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
130	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		160	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
131			161	I did a double major psychology and a teacher program with a focus on elementary education.
132	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		162	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
133			163	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
134			164	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
135	No teaching background/career change		165	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
136	Elementary Education Master's Degree		166	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
137			167	
138			168	No teaching background/career change
139	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		169	Liberal Arts College
140			170	

Count	Q16. What type of teacher preparation program did you graduate from?		Count	Q16. What type of teacher preparation program did you graduate from?
171	Career Change/ alternate courses through a district approved program		201	No teaching background/career change
172			202	
173			203	Bachelors and Masters in ESE - University
174			204	Started with no teaching background. Got my degree while teaching.
175			205	
176	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		206	
177			207	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
178	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		208	
179	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		209	
180	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		210	
181			211	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
182			212	
183			213	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
184			214	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
185	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		215	
186	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		216	No teaching background/career change
187			217	2 year master program in Elem. Education. Also have Ed.S in curriculum
188			218	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
189			219	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
190			220	
191	No teaching background/career change		221	
192			222	My Bachelor's degree is in psychology, but my two masters degrees are in education
193	No teaching background/career change		223	
194	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		224	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
195	Lynn uni masters in Ed leadership. I'm alt cert		225	No teaching background/career change
196	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		226	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
197	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		227	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
198			228	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
199			229	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
200	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		230	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program

Count	Q16. What type of teacher preparation program did you graduate from?		Count	Q16. What type of teacher preparation program did you graduate from?
231	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		261	
232	A Public University, with a Master's Degree in Elementary Education.		262	
233	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		263	
234	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		264	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
235			265	
236			266	
237	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		267	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
238			268	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
239	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		269	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
240	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		270	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
241	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		271	
242	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		272	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
243			273	
244			274	
245	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		275	
246			276	No teaching background/career change
247	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		277	
248	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		278	
249	No teaching background/career change		279	Bachelor in environmental science but have taken several teaching courses
250	MA education degree		280	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
251			281	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
252	Liberal Arts College		282	
253	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		283	
254			284	
255			285	No teaching background/career change
256			286	No teaching background/career change
257			287	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
258			288	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
259			289	No teaching background/career change
260	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		290	

Count	Q16. What type of teacher preparation program did you graduate from?		Count	Q16. What type of teacher preparation program did you graduate from?
291	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		321	No teaching background/career change
292			322	
293			323	
294	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		324	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
295			325	
296	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		326	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
297			327	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
298			328	
299	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		329	Alternative certification program -- Seminole State College
300	No teaching background/career change		330	
301			331	
302	Science Major iwith childhood development		332	Liberal Arts College
303	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		333	
304	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		334	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
305	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		335	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
306	Masters in ELL		336	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
307	Masterâ€™s of Arts in Teaching National Louis University		337	No teaching background/career change
308			338	
309			339	AA UAGC
310			340	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
311	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		341	Liberal Arts College
312	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		342	Master's Program in Elementary Education
313			343	Liberal Arts College
314	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		344	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
315	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		345	No teaching background/career change
316			346	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
317	No teaching background/career change		347	
318			348	
319			349	
320	Palm Beach State Teacher Preparedness Program (EPI)		350	No teaching background/career change

Count	Q16. What type of teacher preparation program did you graduate from?		Count	Q16. What type of teacher preparation program did you graduate from?
351	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		381	No teaching background/career change
352			382	No teaching background/career change
353			383	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
354	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program		384	
355			385	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program
356			386	
357				
358	PhD in Education			
359				
360				
361	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program			
362				
363	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program			
364	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program			
365				
366				
367	No teaching background/career change			
368	Liberal Arts College			
369	Masters plus certification program in elementary ed			
370	Career change, took college credit courses through a district approved program.			
371	Liberal Arts College			
372				
373				
374				
375	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program			
376				
377	IEP Program			
378				
379	Teacher's College from a 4 year University program			
380	No teaching background/career change			

Appendix K: Answers from Question 6

Count	Q6. What is your main focus when teaching reading and why is that the focus?
1	my main focus is vocabulary acquisition since most of my student population is
2	Comprehension, because students need to comprehend; understand what they are
3	Sounding and choral reading. Students can hear and practice at the same time.
4	phonemic awareness review. Many students lack the foundational skills of phonemic awareness in order to blend sounds together successfully to read fluently
5	comprehension- state-district FAST results are looked at
6	Improving comprehension through skills like; text features, cause & effect,
7	I donâ€™t teach reading.
8	
9	understanding of meaning
10	Metacognition
11	Using Vocabulary to aid comprehension.
12	decoding
13	
14	Depends on the grade level and the students abilities, they need firm foundations in
15	prefixes and suffixes are my main focus; it helps with pronunciation and vocabulary
16	phonics and phonemic awareness - I feel we need a combination of both to make
17	
18	Phonics and vocabulary along with strategiesâ€¦I teach ese students
19	Identifying the critical content of the lesson because the standard/benchmark is goal.
20	Explicit and direct instruction in the components of reading.
21	Phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, phonological awareness, decoding, vocab, comprehension, writing
22	My main focus is teaching students foundational skills so that they are able to become good readers and writers!
23	The primary focus should always be on the student having understanding or content knowledge of the subject; as well as, the background data (or information) to successfully complete the task at hand.
24	My main focus is Phonemic Awareness.
25	Comprehension for critical thinking
26	Comprehension. Readers need to understand the message contained in text
27	
28	
29	Decoding if they aren't decoding yet and comprehension if they are fluent readers
30	
31	comprehension. many of my students can read but their comprehension is low.
32	sight words - to increase fluency
33	Comprehension
34	helping students see purpose of story
35	

Count	Q6. What is your main focus when teaching reading and why is that the focus?
36	When teaching reading, my focus is comprehension. If you aren't comprehending or engaged with the text, you are just calling out words.
37	
38	Letter sounds and phonics because it helps the students be able to sound it out and figure out new words off those skills
39	Comprehension. Without comprehension, students donâ€™t glean information from the text.
40	
41	Comprehension because I teach fourth grade and we are focused more on reading to learn not learning to read. All the main data points for fourth grade standards focus on comprehension and writing.
42	Letters/letter sounds
43	Vocabulary strategies are a fundamental focus because if students don't understand the vocabulary or how to access the vocabulary, the struggle with comprehension.
44	
45	Letter sound combination, 2 vowel sounds, phonemic awareness, fluency, automaticity. These are all vital to have mastered in order to comprehend what is being read.
46	Phonological awareness is key to children learning how to put sounds together to make meaning from words they are reading.
47	It depends on the needs and level of the students, but if decoding skills are absent then I focus on fluency and decoding.
48	The topic and the grade level.
49	comprehension
50	Student interest in content and comprehension because a student can phonetically read but without comprehension reading has not occurred.
51	Comprehension. I teach intermediate grades.
52	Reading comprehension and vocabulary
53	I teach math, but we have lots of word problems. Students need to comprehend what is being asked of them so they don't waste time doing incorrect math.
54	I set up the purpose for the less because it helps the kids listen with a purpose.
55	TO get the students to know what to do to help themselves so they can become a independent reader
56	Foundational skills because of the need in the class
57	
58	My main focus is comprehension because I teach upper elementary students.
59	The Science of Reading. All components must be included with direct and explicit instruction in each. Learning HOW to read must come first in order to build upon to develop Vocabulary and Comprehension.
60	Students are able to independently decode words accurately. Because if they can do that, then with time they will get better and succeed
61	
62	
63	Comprehension
64	
65	

Count	Q6. What is your main focus when teaching reading and why is that the focus?
66	Phonological and phonemic awareness because students need to be able to decode words to read.
67	
68	
69	
70	n/a
71	Morphology is my main focus because in grade 3 they are becoming aware of how to use base words and suffixes.
72	What letters and digraphs make what sounds as that is what my students seem to need the most.
73	the current standard
74	
75	My main focus is having my students look at the sounds in the word so they can decode it.
76	Comprehension to prepare for high stakes testing/retention law
77	
78	The five Key components: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension.
79	
80	
81	Comprehension because I teach 3rd grade in Florida
82	
83	
84	Comprehension of the text.If students do not understand what they are reading, then it is a waste of time.
85	
86	Teaching a solid foundation of letter sounds, blends and digraphs. Later, I focus on reading for comprehension
87	PHONIC AND HFW
88	Phonics. It's foundational
89	
90	
91	comprehension-students are already reading above a 3rd grade level
92	Comprehension and Fluency
93	It depends on the grade level and standard being addressed. The students I teach usually struggle with comprehension. I spend a great deal of time addressing strategies to determine the Central Idea of a passage and textual evidence.
94	
95	

Count	Q6. What is your main focus when teaching reading and why is that the focus?
96	My main focus at the 5th grade level is to build fluency, vocabulary skills, and fill in background knowledge gaps when needed to increase comprehension of text.
97	Helping them correctly pronounce letter sounds to accurately blend them and read words.
98	For the students to be able to understand what they read and to think beyond the text.
99	Phonics and phonemic awareness, decoding, and using a multi-sensory approach.
100	Letter sounds. Blending words. I teach kindergarten.
101	Fluency because that is large part of the battle to comprehension
102	Reading Comprehension
103	Comprehension strategies. Students must grasp the content of what they are reading, and fully understand it in order to answer questions about parts of it.
104	Comprehension - because if the students don't comprehend what they are reading, then what is the point.
105	Vocabulary because the more they build their vocabulary, and the more they read the more they will comprehend.
106	
107	I teach kindergarten so when we are working on reading I teach my students blending their sounds together, but also to make sure they look at the whole word. Often they see a similar initial placement of a letter and automatically go to a known word instead of taking the time to look at all the letters. So with phonemic instruction we focus on the metacognition of reading.
108	Depends on the student.
109	I teach Kindergarten so my main focus is on developing phonological awareness understanding, basic sight words, and beginning to read books.
110	Comprehension... 5th grade needs to be able to locate and understand the information presented.
111	
112	
113	Comprehension because I teach fifth grade.
114	Depends on the grade level I am teaching and the needs of the students. In lower grades, the main focus is phonics and phonemic awareness. They are the most important foundational blocks to reading. If a student cannot read the words, there is no understanding of what a text says or means. In the upper grades, my focus is mainly on comprehension but with remediation of phonics and decoding skills addressed in small groups as needed.
115	Comprehension
116	Student understanding: we build background knowledge, disect the text and engage in collaborative discussions in order to build our knowledge together. Many students do not come from a background of experiences and I aim to provide them that in the classroom to ensure their understanding.
117	
118	Comprehension/Tested State Standards
119	I don't directly teach reading but sounding out and trying to find context clues on what the vocabulary word.
120	

Count	Q6. What is your main focus when teaching reading and why is that the focus?
121	Bandura's social learning theory and Erik Erikson's stages of development
122	Building background with example. Familiarity either the subject
123	Comprehension, decoding and fluency.
124	
125	reading skill to increase analysis of content
126	
127	
128	Compression
129	Phonics and phonemic awareness. If you don't know the sounds the letters represent you can't read.
130	The main focus would be to understand what you are reading and enjoying what you are reading. Students that struggle with reading sometimes needs Phonics to help with reading the words but also helping them understand what they are reading. Just because a student can call words does not mean that they can read for understanding. When they are grades 2 through 5 is the grades that they learn how to comprehend what they are reading thus understanding what they had read. Once they can understand what it is they are reading then they can read for enjoyment.
131	
132	When teaching reading, the main focus is typically on developing reading comprehension skills. Reading comprehension is the ability to understand and make meaning from text, which is essential for academic success and lifelong learning. Here are some reasons why reading comprehension is the primary focus of reading instruction: Comprehension is the ultimate goal: The ultimate purpose of reading is to understand and extract information from written material. Whether it's reading a novel for pleasure, a textbook for learning, or instructions for a task, comprehension is the key goal. Foundation for other skills: Reading comprehension forms the foundation for other literacy skills, such as critical thinking, writing, and effective communication. Without understanding what one reads, it's challenging to engage in meaningful discussions or produce coherent written work. Higher-order thinking: Developing reading comprehension skills encourages critical thinking and analysis. It requires students to infer, evaluate, and synthesize information from the text, which are essential skills for academic and real-world problem-solving. Life-long learning: Strong reading comprehension skills are crucial for continuous learning throughout one's life. Whether it's reading news articles, research papers, or self-help books, the ability to comprehend and apply information is invaluable. Assessment and accountability: In many educational systems, reading comprehension is a key component of standardized assessments. Schools and educators are often evaluated based on how well students perform in reading comprehension, which adds to its importance. Reading across disciplines: Reading comprehension skills are transferable across various subjects and disciplines. Whether a student is reading a science textbook, a historical document, or a piece of literature, the ability to comprehend what they read is essential for success. To support the development of

	reading comprehension skills, educators often employ strategies like guided reading, close reading, questioning techniques, and vocabulary development. Additionally, fostering a love for reading and providing a wide range of texts and genres can also enhance comprehension skills by motivating students to engage with written material regularly. While reading fluency (the ability to read text accurately and quickly) and phonics (understanding the relationship between sounds and letters) are important components of reading instruction, they are usually seen as prerequisites to reading comprehension. Once students have a reasonable level of fluency and phonemic awareness, the focus tends to shift towards comprehension to ensure that they can effectively understand and utilize the information they encounter in texts.
133	
134	
135	Reading skills and comprehension. If students can't read and understand what they've read, the rest of the content will be fruitless.
136	Comprehension is the primary focus when I teach reading. I teach advanced third grade English Language Arts. At this level, most of the students are able to decode efficiently and benefit from a heavier focus on vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension than phonics, or other foundational components of reading. All of my students read with excellent fluency, so we dig into literary devices, themes, poetry, structures, etc.
137	
138	
139	comprehension because in third grade it is a focal point
140	
141	The literacy skill or concept is the main focus of my lessons. These skills are essential to comprehension and can be delivered across different levels/abilities of reading.
142	Understanding that we read for a purpose so students know words have meaning
143	Phonological awareness followed by phonemic awareness they need to hear the sounds and then know the letters that make those sounds.
144	Teaching students to independently extract meaning from the text
145	
	Phonemic awareness and phonics. This allows students to make sense of print.
146	Phonemic awareness and phonics. This allows students to make sense of print.
147	
148	
149	Fluency is the main focus because when students are able to read the words it leads to better comprehension.
150	
151	Student engagement to increase proficiency
152	I teach foundational skills such as phonemic awareness and explicit phonics instruction. I also teach high frequency words.
153	Comprehension
154	our district requires we focus our time and attention mainly on standards based comprehension.
155	

Count	Q6. What is your main focus when teaching reading and why is that the focus?
156	Fluency so students can comprehend what they're reading as oppose to putting all their effort on decoding.
157	Letters, sounds, and vowel teams. It's the foundation for learning to read.
158	Instruction given at their instructional level
159	We are doing the science of reading. Balanced literacy is gone!
160	To be aware of their own thinking while reading
161	Comprehension due to grade level.
162	My main focus is assessing students' knowledge and understanding. I focus on this because it is what guides every other part of my instruction.
163	Phonics and Phonemic Awareness because they are the foundational skills to reading
164	Comprehension, I struggled as a child with this topic.
165	In 5th grade, my main focus is comprehension. That is the end goal. All of the skills and strategies that we learn and practice are there to help us comprehend what we are reading.
166	To make sure all understand concepts and skill and be able to put into use.
167	
168	My main focus when teaching reading is comprehension. That is my focus because I teach gifted primary students and most of them have the ability to read words they do not understand; therefore I focus more on developing understanding.
169	pronounciation
170	
171	Author's purpose, when a reader understand the author's purpose, it will help improve reading comprehension.
172	
173	
174	
175	
176	I have to follow Benchmark curriculum because we are told to
177	
178	comprehension/ Understanding of content is the main reason to read. Plus, understanding does assist in determining new words using context clues.
179	Phonics, writing, and reading comprehension. Children must have these 3 componets in order to be good readers.
180	I(n general, early elementary preK-2 - learn to read using phonics and phonemic awareness. In grades 3-6, understanding what is read. Of course it is all individual. There are many students who just deserve to get a year's worth of growth. Even the top readers.
181	
182	
183	
184	
185	Vocabulary, because it is necessary for understanding

Count	Q6. What is your main focus when teaching reading and why is that the focus?
186	Getting my students to build comprehension of what they are reading. This is a focus because I do teach third grade - hence I want them to pass state assessments; but, also because I want them to understand what they read on their day-to-day.
187	
188	
189	
190	
191	Decoding for easy comprehension.
192	
193	State standards
194	I teach reading to learn. Reading to acquire new knowledge, determine message or theme of content and to understand purpose if text. We continue deeper from yhere.
195	Focus: ensuring the students are able to comprehend the basic nuances of the texts. Why: because the foundational skills are imperative to reading comprehension.
196	It depends on the student. I teach 5th, so typically comprehension is the focus; however, for some kids the focus is phonological awareness/ fluency. Kids cannot focus on reading comprehension if they struggle to read.
197	Reading Standards since that is my focus for the lessons
198	
199	
200	Phonics
201	Reading for understanding
202	
203	Immersion, As I have progressed through my career I have noticed the focus shift many times in ELA. There doesn't seem to be a balance. There is a trickle down of higher order skills that are often not developmentally appropriate for younger elementary students to conceptualize, process, and master. Creating a feeling of defeat while decoding, spelling, defining The focus has been trending toward rigor and volume of lessons, standardized tests and performance based academics, rather than understanding and quality of the process. Focus has shifted from how to immerse one's self in the story, discussions, replications comparisons of the classics which hold vocabulary rich passages, to "high" interest low level stories which provide no real lasting value and don't "stay" with reader and shape their ability to think for themselves. They are not taught how to think but what to think.
204	Depends on the needs of the student. Comprehension is always the ultimate goal.
205	
206	
207	Comprehension- due to students need to understand what they read.
208	
209	
210	

Count	Q6. What is your main focus when teaching reading and why is that the focus?
211	To love reading, to feel confident when reading.
212	
213	Comprehension is main focus. Reading comprehension is essential for language and literature, as well as developing a studentâ€™s critical thinking and memory skills, focus and their ability to solve problems.
214	Sight words- they need to be able to read these words in order to start level a books
215	
216	CVC words- because I feel it helps them learn how to sound out the words
217	Phonics/phonemic awareness- students need to understand letters and sounds make up words that they read. (Kindergarten) 2nd grade- phonics in order to learn multisyllabic words. 3rd-5th - self monitoring for comprehension. Also learning to read multisyllabic words.
218	Combination of phonemic awareness, phonics instruction and comprehension and application of knowledge
219	Comprehension because I teach third grade and they have to actually understand what they read not just read the words
220	
221	
222	vocabulary and comprehension
223	
224	For my grade level, comprehension is such crucial piece of our benchmarks. We focus on reading and answering questions that require text evidence and others that require inferencing.
225	The majority need phonics in order to read but comprehension is necessary
226	Comprehension because it helps develop good readers
227	It depends upon the child/group- but I strongly believe in making sure the phonemic aspects are solid. You cannot build upon a weak foundation. My next focus (and somewhat concurrently) is phonics; do they hear the sounds, and do they know the symbol(s) that stand for the sound?
228	Phonemic awareness
229	Foundational skills of breaking down a question
230	comprehension strategies, to improve understanding
231	Foundational Skills- They are the cornerstone of reading.
232	phonics because I teach first grade and my students need a strong phonics base to learn to read and spell.
233	Inferencing is the main focus because students need read to comprehend.
234	Phonics and Phonological strength
235	
236	
237	Phonics because that is what the students are lacking
238	
239	vo Reason for the understanding of they readcabulary knowledge and fluency
240	Comprehension - My students need to comprehend what they are reading

Count	Q6. What is your main focus when teaching reading and why is that the focus?
241	Phonics and vocabulary fare the main focus because students need to know the makeup of words .
242	When teaching reading, I focus on the benchmark we are looking for. Example, with fables we are looking at Theme, Plot, Characters. When teaching informational text we are looking at text features.
243	
244	
245	Phonemic Awareness and Phonics because that is what my ESL students need.
246	
247	phonics
248	Comprehension
249	Letter sounds and things like diagraphs to help students sound a word out and not be dependent on me to spell a word or read one on their own.
250	Building fluency and stamina. Research shows that the more words read, the better the reader
251	
252	Phonics. Without thoes skills, reading can not happen
253	I teach PreK students so phonics is the first thing I teach. The students need to know and understand sounds along with symbols in order to begin reading.
254	
255	
256	
257	
258	
259	
260	That my students learn the foundations of reading
261	
262	
263	
264	It would depend on the grade level, pirmary, phonics and phonemic awareness to begin sounding out words and spelling. The upper grades would be comprehension to understand what they are reading.
265	
266	
267	I teach reading in a different language
268	To make sure that the students can understand what they are reading.
269	phonemic awareness then phonics
270	Phonemic Awarenss so students are able to read the words.

Count	Q6. What is your main focus when teaching reading and why is that the focus?
271	
272	Comprehension
273	
274	
275	
276	Background knowledge helps build vocabulary and comprehension. For struggling readers we focus on phonics because they need to be able to decipher unknown words. Hopefully with background knowledge they can make sense of the text, even if they donâ€™t know a word.
277	
278	
279	Phonemic awareness and phonological awareness
280	Comprehension, state assessment
281	informational text in science and social studies
282	
283	
284	
285	Reading comprehension because in third grade, students need to be able to read to learn.
286	Comprehension - students often can read fluently but are not comprehending texts.
287	My main focus when teaching reading is ensuring the words are read correctly and if they are not, correcting the behavior, and repeating the correct pronunciation.
288	Phonics, Phonemic Awareness, and Comprehension
289	Phonological Awareness due to the age of children I have usually worked with.
290	
291	My focus is for my students to understand phonemic awareness before going into decoding skills which will then lead to reading fluently.
292	
293	
294	Phonics for struggling readers.
295	
296	Foundational skills (phonological awareness, phonics, etc) are my primary focus because I am a first grade teacher and my focus must be on teaching students how to decode and encode words, because they are highly unlikely to learn it if not taught in first.
297	
298	
299	Comprehension; The student needs to understand fully what he or she is reading.
300	Phonemic Awareness as a foundation. Once mastered, focus on phonics and decoding skills. It is my understanding this is an evidence based approach.

Count	Q6. What is your main focus when teaching reading and why is that the focus?
301	
302	First of all students need a strong foundations in phonics. The phonics helps the students learn different things about reading. Also I want to develop a love for reading so having them engage in the read alouds I read.
303	Phonics - being able to decode using strategies and rules, I focus on this to give my students the ability to work through their words leading to higher levels of fluency in reading
304	Phonological awareness and phonics - both skills help students to read and write.
305	Comprehension strategies since the stories are not at my students reading level. The whole group lesson is more about comprehension than instruction of being able to read on their own.
306	Comprehension is taught in 5th grade
307	My main focus is to expose different genres of literature that challenge gifted fifth grade readers.
308	
309	
310	
311	Letter and sound recognition
312	Phonics. They need to know the sounds the letters make in order to learn to read.
313	
314	Reading Comprehension. Because it is the bedrock for reading to learn new academic content in all core subjects.
315	Comprehension, understanding the text
316	
317	phonics, phonemic awareness and making connections. That is the focus because students need to find ways to make sense of the words and develop skills to add new words to their abilities.
318	
319	
320	Comprehension- third graders are switching from learning to read to reading to learn.
321	Phonics, because that is where my children are lacking the most
322	
323	
324	Phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension
325	
326	I teach 2nd grade. I teach PA/Phonics as my foundational skills and then work on Fluency next. I teach the comp BEST standards, but know that comp is a result of the simple view of reading.
327	Comprehension- I want my students to understand what they have read
328	
329	comprehension and author's purpose/central idea/relevant details, because many students can read but cannot comprehend
330	

Count	Q6. What is your main focus when teaching reading and why is that the focus?
331	
332	phonics and HF word recognition to be able to sound out words and read
333	
334	Decoding words and background knowledge. This is the focus because if we cannot decode, we cannot read. Background knowledge can help a student make connections
335	phonemic awareness because that is where my kids are developmentally at age 4-5
336	Phonics, Decoding, Fluency - these are foundations to becoming a good reader and for good comprehension.
337	Phoenemic awareness and phonics, because I teach emergent readers.
338	
339	comprehension
340	My main focus is to make it enjoyable for the kids first so they are excited and want to read then helping them build skills to decode words and build their vocabulary
341	Phonics and phonological awareness is foundational in teach kindergarten.
342	I focus on deepening understanding of word study through phonics and building a natural love of reading. Finding what a child enjoys and move on from there.
343	Reading Strategies
344	Phonics/Phonemic Awareness fluency and reading comprehension
345	This depends on where students are in their reading journey according to Ehriâ€™s model. I have to meet students where they are. I cannot teach someone in the partial alphabetic stage the same as someone in the full alphabetic stage. Whole group I focus on the learning continuum, small group I focus on the need of the group and group them according to their needs.
346	Gdruj
347	
348	
349	
350	Phonological awareness that incorporates visual, auditory, social, and kinesthetic learning modalities.
351	Phonics - if students canâ€™t decode, they wonâ€™t be strong readers
352	
353	
354	Vocabulary and use of context clues is my main focus, especially in students that are able to decode words on grade level. Without vocabulary students will struggle with comprehension.
355	
356	
357	
358	Depends on the level but beginners students should know phonics before learning how to read
359	
360	

Count	Q6. What is your main focus when teaching reading and why is that the focus?
361	Gr 1-2 phonics G4-5 vocab/background bldg for comp
362	
363	Phonics
364	Comprehension- That's what reading is all about- understanding the message.
365	
366	
367	Reading for meaning and making connection. If you are not doing this you are just decoding words.
368	
369	Comprehension
370	Author's purpose
371	Comprehension in 5th grade
372	
373	
374	
375	The main focus of reading is meaning making. The reason it is the main focus is because that is why the written language is used. Using pictures, numbers, signs or written text--all forms of writing are to express some message. Reading is used to understand what is being communicated.
376	
377	Phonics - decode words
378	
379	Making sure my students recognize phonics rules and using said rules as they decode and read. Making sure they understand vocabulary. For instance, the grapheme ck sounds like /k/ but if that /k/ sound falls behind a short vowell it will be spelled ck such as in black, slack, crack, back, and rack. Students need to understand that rules are necessary for reading. If you ask a teacher how to pronounce the word /the/ they will say /th/E/ or th/ugh/ where as in the first spelling th/E/ says th/EEEEEE/ [key an upper case E represents a long e and a lower case e will represent a short e] /tH/UGH is heard when the reader does not stress the syllable. Instead they say th followed by the schwa sound. It sounds kind of lazy. This is often thought of as a locatioal dialect. This is incorrect. There are 2 versions of the grapheme /th/E and /th/ugh. It is a simple rule. If letter beginning the word that follows the then we fix the rule. The rule says if the word following (the) begins with a consonate then we pronounce the grapheme the as th/ugh/ using the schwa sound. However, if the word following (the) is a vowel then we pronounce the grapheme with a long E. An example of the long E thE would be: thE apple. Apple begins with a vowel. Example 2, thE oven. Oven begins with a vowel. If we have the grapheme the directly in front of a word that begins with a consonant you use the schwa sound. Example, thugh boy--- thugh cat--- thugh zebra. Phonics rules are the key to reading like professionals. Sorry if there are typos the box was tiny and hard to review. Let us consider it a grammar test.
380	phonics
381	Dependent on the child. I follow the foundational order of phonological awareness, then phonics, building then into vocabulary and comprehension
382	Phonics and phonemic awareness to lay the foundation for my students
383	teaching strategies so that students can think critically and analyze text
384	
385	Phonics skills because without the actual ability to sound out a word not matter if youâ€™ve seen it many times or not your cannot read fluently
386	

Appendix L: Answers from Question 8

Count	Q8. What do your writing assignments in class consist of? Write as much as you would like.
1	I love to incorporate daily writing prompts of different types (creative writing, argumentative questions, etc.) but the curriculum support specialist from the district told me last school year that I was wasting time with that activity. That unless students had various texts to read and gather information from for their writing, the exercise was useless. I want my students to find writing fun. I want to know what they think, how they think. I don't simply want them regurgitating information they read from various articles.
2	Writing mostly implies justifications about their answers, different types of essays, free writing about their interests, worries, likes and dislikes, etc
3	my writing is pretty much limited because I am actually teaching the LEP students which have very limited writing ability.
4	Showing an example of what the right format looks like. Discussing the parts of a paragraph. Helping students identfiy the verbage in the prompt, and identify the resources needed to effectively write on topic. Introducing kernal sentences for the introductiong of the paragraph.
5	argumentative writing
6	We usually search the text for a particular skill, like cause and effect or chronology, and then use that information to write a summary of the text.
7	I teach Math.
8	
9	No. Quality not quantity
10	Using the RACE strategy for constructed responses to multiple step or multiple part questions.
11	Focusing on the Prompt, the audience, and the type of writing.
12	5 paragraph essays
13	
14	I am currently not a classroom teacher but a Literacy Coach. It is expected that the students write daily in all content areas.
15	begin with prompts and addressing that question in 2 to 3 sources
16	I am a Kindergarten teacher, so writing assignments are very teacher guided because students are just learning how the whole writing process works. I do a lot of differentiation and give students what they need to be sucessful in writing. Usually our writing is about a certain topic we're studying in science or social studies, but there are other times when writing is more opinion. I'm teaching the writing process - sentences structure, using high frequency words and sounding out to write other words.
17	
18	Formulating a proper sentence
19	Step by step of writing essays. We use Top Score
20	My writing assignments consist of following the Write Score curriculum. First and foremost, my writing assignments begin with a clear and concise goal/objective and structure for the students to follow.

Count	Q8. What do your writing assignments in class consist of? Write as much as you would like.
21	Handwriting, sentence formation
22	Our writing assignments consist of a focus text that determines the topic of our writing. Students are able to freely write about the topic. I teach handwriting at a different time than writing.
23	The focus of writing (at elementary, middle and high school) has to give attention to proper grimmer, punctuation, and spelling together with solid sentence (or paragraph) structure! Therefore, my writing assignments are designed to ensure the development (or enchantment) of the aforementioned proficiencies along with how to correctly cite others work and ideas. Additionally, my writing projects necessitate that students use encyclopedias, books, or a credible internet source to validate (or invalidate) their findings and conclusions. Lastly, students are required to infuse as much background knowledge (or personal experiences) as possible. In doing so, the topic become more personalized, further motivating students to analyze the subject matter and develop their creative thinking skills.
24	Students write letters, words then sentences apart of the UFLI curriculum.
25	Topscore
26	various genres such as; fiction narrative, opinion, poetry, informational, procedural,
27	
28	
29	Teaching them to write an essay.
30	
31	I like to first show my students what we are writing about. That would be opinion writing or informative writing. After I show them an example I have done then we do a class essay together with their ideas. Finally they go independently to work on an essay on their own.
32	It depends on the grade level. In general penmenship, spacing, and grammar are foundational skills.
33	Reading responses, argumentative essays, informational essays, creative writing
34	teach kindergarten, simple topics
35	
36	My writing assignments consist of many things. To begin with most elementary students come to you with no knowledge of the writing process. They don't remember how to put sentences together. Most don't remember the difference between the subject and the very. We start off with short writing assignment first. We teach the students that they must understand the prompt before they can write. Next, we work on more complex sentences. They learn how to add transitional works, prepositional phrases and all of the other things that make writing more interesting.
37	
38	Small writing prompts
39	We use writing prompts and articles to help the students plan and write a multi paragraph essay while citing from multiple sources. One which is grammatically sound and provides evidence and elaboration to support their ideas.
40	

Count	Q8. What do your writing assignments in class consist of? Write as much as you would like.
41	We work in 10 day units days 8,9,10 are for writing. We work on a small skill for the week and examine it then they apply it at the end of the unit through the writing.
42	Mostly narrative
43	Writing assignments include writing to explain in math and science, paragraph responses to reading comprehension questions, and essay writing based off of a prompt and sources.
44	
45	Teaching primarily 1st, 2nd and 3rd, building good sentence structure, paragraph writing, journaling about what we read, and using evidence from the text to answer prompts.
46	Usually they consist of grammar checks, spelling, and format. Students are given a certain "prompt" along with reading that goes with this prompt and they are to create their writing based on what they read and what is asked of them to write.
47	We don't do extensive writing with the SIPPS intervention program, but the students practice writing words by syllable as I say them.
48	Phonics, Morphology, Sentence construction
49	reader response
50	Narrative, expository, persuasive and creative writing. Students really enjoy writing about personal experiences and making their own books to become authors.
51	We have a free write journal, grammar practice, essays.
52	Traditional essay writing skills.
53	Restating the question and giving evidence for the answer.
54	introduction, 2 body paragraph and conclusion
55	1. What do I write - have comprehension conversation. 2. Write - students should write what they know, teacher can assist with knowledge around what they almost know - either practice hf words or use boxes for easym words to sound oug
56	I am a media specialist.
57	
58	OUr writing focus is on three things: expository and opinion essays; writing about what we are reading, such as themes, character development, etc; and writing paragraphs about ourselves.
59	It depends on the goal and the student. I teach a variety of grade levels in small group. Some groups are remediation, some are acceleration. Each type of writing has different components. Creative writing. Expository or Argumentative Essays. How to write for your audience. Use of figurative language, academic vocabulary, letter writing, responses to a prompt, restating a question and captions are the most included in lessons.
60	Identifying the topic of a text/visual, the supporting details, and identifying what the Authors point is of the writing. Use of correct grammar, and punctuation is also practiced here.
61	
62	

Count	Q8. What do your writing assignments in class consist of? Write as much as you would like.
63	What the students like, have interest in
64	
65	
66	I teach kindergarten so usually I start with modeling each step of the writing process. For example on Monday I model thinking, saying and drawing/labeling and provide students opportunities to come up and help label. Then they are sent off to draw and label. On Tuesday I will model how I use my picture to remind me of my sentence and models how to write a proper sentence. Again I will have students come up and help me build the sentence. Then they get to do the same with the pictures they drew. The next day I model how I go back and check/ add extra details. Students are given the opportunity to work on their writing more. On Thursday I focus on doing one final check and students will finish their piece. On Friday we all share what we worked on for the week.
67	
68	
69	
70	I teach math, science, & social studies.
71	Our writing is provided and scripted by the district. All types of writing are introduced, unpacked, modeled, and created.
72	For the most part, we do guided spelling. I am in a reading intervention class using SIPPS curriculum.
73	sentences, spelling words, passages
74	
75	At this point in Kindergarten we are writing short sentences that include sight words we have learned and cvc words.
76	Personal narratives, opinions, letters, informational
77	
78	Summaries of stories - rising action, climax, resolution (using evidence). Opinion writing to tell why you think something based on evidence from the reading from the reading. Answering questions based on the reading with evidence to support.
79	
80	
81	We begin with three paragraph essays: an introduction, a body paragraph, and a conclusion. We start with simple one sentence intros and conclusions and expand over a school year until they are proficient
82	
83	
84	Responding to prompts.

Count	Q8. What do your writing assignments in class consist of? Write as much as you would like.
85	
86	As a first grade teacher, my focus is sentence structure
87	WRITING
88	Structured writing. Answers are chosen from a word bank to answer the writing question of our literature big book.
89	
90	
91	Answering simple prompts in complete sentence. Conventions are a weakness....capitalization, punctuation, etc.
92	Journal in all subjects (ELA, Math, Science) Writing Essays (expository & Informative)
93	My writing assignments usually involve providing a written response to a textual based question. Students are required to support their response with textual based evidence while using appropriate grammar and conventions.
94	
95	
96	My writing assignments include short response, graphic organizer, document based expository and argumentative writing, narrative writing, creative writing including poetry, and PowerPoint design.
97	practicing their heart words. Incorporating heart words into simple sentences. Free writing with picture dictation
98	During Writing class we work on learning how to write a five paragraph essay. Two of my main targets is for them to plan their essays based on reliable sources and elaboration. I do have the benefit of being biligua which helps me teach tricks and tips to my kids. When having newcomers, we work on dissecting the prompt and coming up with at least three sentences using words from the prompt.
99	Whole group modeled writing lesson with emphasis on sound to letter correspondence
100	We draw a picture. Color it with details. Then write a sentence telling about the picture. Then we build on that sentence.
101	All types: expository, narrative, opinion
102	Prescribed lesson from the district- follow the curriculum for all writing assignments
103	I am a fourth grade teacher. Most of my writing assignments consist of having students write 5 paragraph essays based off a prompt and a given text set.
104	Argumentative, Expository, and Persuasive
105	I currently do not teach writing, but in the past when I did we would do a lot of modeling and sometimes we would pick a topic and I would provide resources and I would write the first paragraph then the next group with Wright, Andwe would do a lot of modeling and sometimes we would pick a topic and I would provide sources and I would write the first paragraph. Then the next group would write the next paragraph and so on and so forth, and they really really love doing that.
106	

Count	Q8. What do your writing assignments in class consist of? Write as much as you would like.
107	Kindergarten here so we start with fill in the blank statements at the beginning of the year. Towards the end of the year, and depending on the student. It may look like writing a complete sentence with proper punctuation or write as many sentences as you want. The key for me is to meet the students where they are at and then challenge them to the next level. Overwhelm them and they shut down.
108	Follow district Top score curriculum
109	We are writing words and starting to form sentences. I model the writing process and they are tracking at this time. My goal is to have them writing sentences independently by the end of Quarter 2.
110	Boring district mandatory writing. My kids hate it, I hate it. There is very little buy in or interest.
111	
112	
113	Essays and short responses.
114	I always use a combination of things for writing. Short and extended responses to questions. Having students write story summaries, complete graphic organizers, learn 2-column notes (depending on grade level), paragraph/essay writing (based on grade level), "free writing"/journaling, prompts with responses, and much more that I'm sure I am forgetting.
115	The Writing Process/Steps
116	Students typically spend 3-5 days building knowledge and understanding and then engage in writing a well structured paragraph. At the end of each module, they then write an essay based on those smaller paragraphs they wrote.
117	
118	4 to 5 paragraph essays with planning thru final copy
119	They are a variety of prompts.
120	
121	all kinds, journaling, descriptive writing, cross curriculum, modeled writing, etc.
122	Formation of a topic. Development of storylines and clarifications of the topic
123	Since I am a gifted teacher I am able to select writing assignments that match my students' interest. I usually have them relate to content we are working on in class and/or things that occurred in history on that day. They are often asked to give their opinion or write about how they would feel had they been in a similar situation. Sometimes they are given a task of simply writing a story with the topic being of their choosing.
124	
125	teach skills to compose beginning with expectations, sentences, structure / format, how to plan, writing each component (intro, transitions, citing evidence, elaboration techniques and when to use them) conclusion, editing / revising. From there, other skills are added in based upon the needs of students to advance them or fill in gaps in skills.
126	
127	
128	I am not a classroom teacher

Count	Q8. What do your writing assignments in class consist of? Write as much as you would like.
129	They are usually a response to a story or activity we read/experienced. Something that all the students would have experienced or have knowledge of.
130	Sometimes writing just for enjoyment to tell a story that they have made up in their mind, sometimes having them take something that they have learn and explain what they learned and how it helped them understand the topic.
131	
132	Effective writing assignments in a classroom should be thoughtfully designed to achieve specific educational goals and promote the development of essential writing skills. Here are some key components and considerations for crafting writing assignments: Clear Purpose and Learning Objectives: Specify the purpose of the assignment. What do you want students to learn or demonstrate through their writing? Define clear learning objectives that align with course goals. What skills or knowledge should the assignment help students acquire or enhance? Audience Awareness: Consider the intended audience for the assignment. Are students writing for their peers, the instructor, or a broader audience? Encourage students to adapt their writing style, tone, and content to suit the target audience. Clear Instructions and Guidelines: Provide clear and detailed instructions for the assignment. Include information on length, format, citation style (if applicable), and any specific content requirements. Explain the evaluation criteria or rubric that will be used to assess the assignment. Relevance to Course Content: Ensure that the writing assignment is directly related to the course material and objectives. It should reinforce or extend what students are learning in class. Connect the assignment to relevant readings, discussions, or concepts to contextualize the writing task. Authentic and Engaging Topics: Select topics that are relevant, interesting, and meaningful to students. Engaging topics can motivate students to invest more effort in their writing. Encourage students to explore personal interests within the scope of the assignment whenever possible. Opportunities for Critical Thinking: Design assignments that require critical thinking, analysis, and synthesis of information. Challenge students to go beyond summarization and engage with course content deeply. Encourage students to form and articulate well-supported arguments or viewpoints. Feedback and Revision: Consider incorporating opportunities for feedback and revision. This can include peer review, instructor feedback, or draft submissions to help students improve their work. Emphasize the importance of the writing process, including planning, drafting, revising, and editing. Alignment with Learning Levels: Tailor the complexity of the assignment to the students' skill levels and the course level. Ensure that expectations are appropriate for the grade or academic level. Integration of Writing Skills: Promote the development of specific writing skills, such as organization, clarity, coherence, grammar, and style, through the assignment. Encourage students to use evidence, citations, and proper referencing where relevant. Variety of Writing Formats: Consider using a variety of writing formats to expose students to different genres and styles of writing. This can include essays, reports, reflections, creative writing, and more. Assessment and Grading: Clearly communicate how the assignment will be assessed and graded. Use rubrics or grading criteria that align with the learning objectives. Ensure fairness and consistency in grading by providing specific feedback to students. Consider Inclusivity and Accessibility: Be mindful of accessibility considerations, such as providing accommodations for students with disabilities and using inclusive language in prompts and instructions. Deadlines and Time Management: Set reasonable deadlines that allow students adequate time to complete the assignment effectively. Consider students' other coursework and commitments. Reflection and Self-Assessment: Encourage students to reflect on their writing process and the skills they've developed. Self-assessment can help them become more self-aware and proactive in improving their writing. By carefully planning and structuring writing assignments with these considerations in mind, educators can create meaningful and effective opportunities for students to develop their writing skills, engage with course content, and achieve specific learning outcomes.

Count	Q8. What do your writing assignments in class consist of? Write as much as you would like.
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135	A review of the basics of writing and grammar before anything else.
136	The majority of the writing the students produce is writing short responses to comprehension questions. When covering comprehension skills, I will pair a creative writing project that mirrors the structure of a mentor text, e.g. students write short story with a clear, given theme when studying short stories for story elements and theme.
137	
138	
139	vocabulary, grammar, respond to comprehension, and writing topics
140	
141	Our writing is prescribed by the district's textbook adoption and includes responses to text (both short and detailed responses). I also include a unit project that gives kids opportunities to form their own ideas and creativity. Our district curriculum map is strictly enforced and doesn't leave much time for creative writing.
142	We mostly focus our writing around responses to text. Students no longer have exposure to creative writing.
143	Students start with an attention grabber of some sort in an introductory paragraph which also includes their purpose. This is followed by 3 supporting paragraphs and then a conclusion. The conclusion should restate the purpose and tie it all together.
144	Top score writing curriculum, writing revolution sentence and kernel sentence expansion
145	
146	We have to guide student to write simple paragraphs about a given topic. We also write in response to stories.
147	
148	
149	Currently, students are learning notetaking strategies which will help with building paragraphs.
150	
151	Responding to a prompt in an expository or argumentative writing mode using evidence from the text and elaborating on the evidence using their own thoughts and background knowledge
152	I teach Kindergarten, therefore, we work on drawing pictures or dictation. We then begin to explore sentences writing. I model correct sentence writing for the students. We also talk about grammar during sentence writing.
153	whole group lessons, Shared writing, independent writing
154	We are a state-run school due to low school grades, so we are not allowed to teach writing in third grade
155	
156	I'm a KG teacher so our writing assignments are simple. Draw a picture of what animal you liked the most from our farm unit. I encourage students to use inventive spelling.

Count	Q8. What do your writing assignments in class consist of? Write as much as you would like.
157	I teach kindergarten so itâ€™s a checklist of capital letter, end mark, inventive spelling, finger spacing etc.
158	I work on writing complete sentences that build into paragraphs on topic.
159	I use a writing program that teaches kids to write at first in a formulaic style, then they learn to expand their skills.
160	Text based writing. Students respond to a prompt and read informational articles to generate points and evidence
161	Students writing an essay in response to a prompt. There are usually reading passages that students use as text evidence to support their thinking.
162	During reading instruction my students write open-ended responses to text dependent questions ranging from one sentence to a paragraph. During writing instruction I model for students how to write an essay, give guided practices opportunities, and give students time to independently practice skills learned from mini lessons. They build on their writing pieces until they are full multi-paragraph essays containing elements of voice, central idea and relevant details, proper citations, transitions, etc.
163	I teach kindergarten so we use a lot of sentence stems where students have to finish the sentence. Towards the end of the year students begin writing independently.
164	Lots of things, writing thoughts in science, journaling, completing sentence starters, etc.
165	Most of my writing assignments are paragraphs or essays. Some are steps toward those like outlines, graphic organizers, or planning sheets.
166	Just following District
167	
168	Writing assignments in my classroom are district directed, uninteresting, and well above the developmental level of students. We do not have enough time between the initiatives and mandates to teach children to write properly and even less time to teach them to enjoy writing.
169	small correct sentences
170	
171	Text-based writing in a multi-paragraph format.
172	
173	
174	
175	
176	Kindergarten we work on forming complete sentences and we do narrative, opinion, informational writing
177	
178	I try to align the writing assignment to the children's interest and opportunity to express their interests first for motivation. We use the writing cycle for plan, write, re-write, and publish. To aide in motivation, when children publish, they share their writing to peers with a microphone. Peers are allowed to give positive comments to completed work. During the writing process, they often will pair up in the revision stage with peers to make corrections. This helps them to notice their own errors and/or help a peer correct for meaning, punctuation, and/or spelling. The main emphasis stressed is meaning for these young writers.

Count	Q8. What do your writing assignments in class consist of? Write as much as you would like.
179	It relates to comprehesion of what was read.
180	Writing assignments consist of responding to a prompt by using text evidence from sources given and elaborating on the evidence. It also consists of writing in every subject. For example, reflecting on a or explaining how they solved a math problem
181	
182	
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185	Expressing complete ideas
186	Short, free-responses, Creative writing prompts as warm-ups, respond to the readings in class, and essays.
187	
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191	Simple sentences that tell a story or opinion
192	
193	Top Score writing curriculum
194	Writing informative/expository or argumentative essays. Citing evidence to support claims, and writing summaries
195	Itâ€™s usually curriculum based writing prompts
196	Reading 3+ articles on the same subject and answering a related prompt.
197	I do, We do, you do. I model how to write each components of the writing process, Introduction, Body Paragraphs and Conclusion
198	
199	
200	A Five Paragraph essay in Second grade.
201	Based on what we have read either a book or a short story.
202	
203	Narrative, informative, opinion writing. Word choice, transitions. Pre-writing, four squares, draft(sloppy copy), revise & edit(including how to use edit marks/codes), publish.
204	Two types of writing assignments. One type is very structured in the beginning. Providing sentence frames when learning to write full sentences. Using graphic organizers to plan writing, and writing about specific topics. Students are gradually given more freedom as they master the structures. The other type is free writing with only one rule: keep your pencil moving on the paper. This to build the ability to get their thoughts quickly down on paper.

Count	Q8. What do your writing assignments in class consist of? Write as much as you would like.
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207	Writing simple sentences- with at least 2 details.
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211	Can they write a true story, beginning, middle and end. Do they have characters, (themselves) and setting. Can they label their pictures, and write or attempt to write a complete sentience.
212	
213	Using spelling words in complete sentences that go with grade level grammar skills. Using vocabulary words in complete sentences. Using HFW in complete sentences. Using spelling and vocabulary words in paragraphs weekly. Following weekly Florida Writes lessons in paragraph structure. Monthly writing assignments, expository, and narrative essays each month.
214	Students write one sentence with matching picture
215	
216	I'm kindergarten- so they are very basic in october. One sentence with a picture. I hope to have them writing 5 sentences before the end of the year.
217	Currently I teach Kindergarten- they are working on writing CVC words. Not a lot of writing words mostly labeling their drawings and talking about them. In 5th grade writing 4-5 paragraph essays with topic and point for each paragraph. An overall clear focus of essay that has one topic and point for entire essay. Strong introductions and conclusions.
218	I teach kindergarten so we are beginning with foundational knowledge
219	I hate to admit but writing is my weakest area in teaching and unfortunately my lessons my county expects my kids to write informational and opinion essays and I have to teach writing the best I can
220	
221	
222	In my classes, students write about their thinking, gathering their thoughts on paper is a very helpful practice. We use prompts and/or short answer responses to increase their understanding of texts.
223	
224	In our grade level, students do argumentative, expository, and narrative writing. The students are required to write a complete paragraph with a topic sentence, transitional phrases, elaborate on their ideas, and have a conclusion sentence.
225	Our writing assignments are essays meant to follow the district's schedule. We write informative, personal narrative and opinion writing. They usually contain 4 paragraphs which are shorter in the beginning of the year and expand by the end of the year.
226	They are a mix of practicing writing in cursive all the way to writing essays.

Count	Q8. What do your writing assignments in class consist of? Write as much as you would like.
227	In the past, my writing assignements would start with a prompt to answer. I oftern pulled a small group with whom to work so I could help with stretching words, spacing, left-to-right progression, and clarity of ideas.
228	Journals, reading response logs, completing sentences, free writing
229	Each grade level is different. K- write as much as possible about themselves and what they did the night before (every morning journal writing). 1st- adding thoughts to a topic sentence to form a paragraph that flows.
230	journal writing, respond to reading, sentences with spelling words, modeling how to write personal narrative
231	Starting at the word level and building up to ensure proper understanding of what makes a sentence.
232	First half of the year, we work on writing a complete sentence with a capital letter and a period. The second half of the year, we work on writing a 5 sentence paragraph on a topic.
233	Showing text evidence.
234	Writing phonetically would be ideal... but invented spelling is accepted.
235	
236	
237	Students are expected to write multi-sentence paragraphs on one topic. My students are working on writing complete sentences. Once they have that down, then we try to write about a topic.
238	
239	expressing their point of view, summary, understanding of text
240	Reading prompts, annotating, practice writing multiparagraphs, identifying main ideas and reasons along with identifying text evidence that supports their thoughts, increasing background knowledge of topics...
241	Story frames, Opinion narratives essay, brain storming, text referencing
242	Based on style of writing, we focus on central idea, Ker details, introductions, sequencing events, and conclusions
243	
244	
245	Basic sentence structure and practicing sound spellings we are working on.
246	
247	Expository, opinion, and narrative writings
248	We use the R.A.C.E strategy for answering questions. Restate the question, answer the question, cite where the answer came from, and elaborate. This allows students to understand how to write a paragraph and answer reading questions.
249	I teach first grade so we are learning the basics, capital letters at the beginning of sentences, finger spaces and punctuation.
250	Currently, free-writing and argumentative essays. 5th grade

Count	Q8. What do your writing assignments in class consist of? Write as much as you would like.
251	
252	Shared lessons, independent practice, confiring.
253	My beginning writing assignments consist of tracing. My students also write with a moveable alphabet which is a wooden box with all the letters in it. Once they can write with that, they begin putting pencil to paper.
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260	I have PreK and they draw pictures and dictate to me and I write it down
261	
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264	I work on research skills with Cornell note-taking skills, and CER with final projects being creative to explain how they have learned from their research.
265	
266	
267	A consist how to start a paragraph punctuation etc..
268	My writing assignments consist of re-telling what the central idea of a topic is based on text evidence. I also give my students prompts for opinion writing.
269	We use the Benchmark Curriculum. We have three genres of writing in Kindergarten (argumentative/opinion, expository, and narratives that are in response to a text. Kindergarteners draw, dictate, and phonetically write in response to texts everyday.
270	Our writing is very limited at his point and too much teacher lead. My students are unbale to write a complete sentence so we spend time writing with an organizer then meeting with students to try and fix major things.
271	
272	Write a story
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274	
275	
276	We work on creating coherent sentences and from there, building paragraphs. Getting thoughts on paper is important. Then we try to organize those thoughts so that they make sense to the reader.

Count	Q8. What do your writing assignments in class consist of? Write as much as you would like.
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279	We use writescore program. Itâ€™s new to me and has students writing about topics in different content. I like to have students work on drawing to help with writing.
280	Writing is aligned with state and district assessments. Students respond to a prompt, either an informative or argumentative essays. Students are also working on their typing skills.
281	Responding to Science and social studies prompts
282	
283	
284	
285	We spend one week a month working on a writing piece (3 paragraphs). We teach syntax, grammar, and purpose of writing. We started with narrative and are moving into opinion writing. I also like to include written responses to reading where students can restate text evidence.
286	A writing mini lesson where a targeted area of instruction is provided and then students work on their own and share in pairs.
287	Expository, narrative and opinion
288	Writing complete sentences. Using proper punctuation and capitalization. Making sure each sentence is a complete thought. We also focus on handwriting and spacing.
289	Copying sentences, completing sentence fragments
290	
291	My writing consists of introducing the topic and then using First, Next, and Last with a feeling sentence at the end. This type of writing leads to writing a paragraph. I am in first grade.
292	
293	
294	Jounaling, Response to a prompt, and notes in math and science
295	
296	Most of our writing is shared writing or writing single sentences. This is because the majority of my students need that level of support and are just beginning to be able to put their own thoughts to paper.
297	
298	
299	I teach 1st grade...sentence structure
300	Response to reading in the different writing styles.
301	
302	In Pre-K and Kindergarten we start with pictures then we begin to add words to the pictures. These words are spelled as they sound. We always fix the word with a different color pen but we encourage the students to sound the words out and use the word wall when writing.

Count	Q8. What do your writing assignments in class consist of? Write as much as you would like.
303	During centers, I allow students to free write utilizing season-related words (school supplies in August/September, farm animals and weather in March/April). They are able to use these words as ideas and starting points in their writing. During whole-group writing lessons, we write based on a specific prompt as created by our curriculum. I also allow students to free write as an early finisher activity.
304	I begin modeling sentence structure. Then discuss nouns, verbs, and adjectives. Then we use those to create sentences.
305	We are still in the process of working on an age appropriate writing curriculum that actually teaches the students to write with mastery. We do more model writing than shared as the students are not ready to be writing independently from a shared lesson.
306	5 paragraph essays
307	Weekly, my students have a writing prompt that incorporates Greek/Latin prefixes, roots and suffixes. We are practicing five paragraph.essay writing .
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310	
311	Right now itâ€™s drawing pictures and writing 1 or 2 words
312	Planning, introduction paragraphs, 2 supporting details and an ending
313	
314	Creative writing (opinion) about the reading passage.
315	We use model lessons, planning days, writing, editing and sharing assignments
316	
317	Writing involves a planner, draft and then final copy. Students do editing and peer review. They also
318	
319	
320	Top score program- digestible chunks to get them used to essay writing in later grades.
321	Spelling and high frequency word practice, as well as writing as a response to reading. Additionally, there is curriculum focused writing but I do not believe that is beneficial to my students
322	
323	
324	Sadly, it is geared to informational reading and responding to the texts while citing sources. As an elementary educator, students are learning to become conditioned writers. Reading for pleasure and writing for pleasure is moved out of their measured performance areas.
325	
326	Journals daily, andf then direct instruction writing lessons, using the 5 paragraph essay model and building on topics.

Count	Q8. What do your writing assignments in class consist of? Write as much as you would like.
327	NA
328	
329	paragraph writing/expository/persuasive/entertaining
330	
331	
332	I introduce and continue stresses writing strategies, provide examples, and HF word dictionaries.
333	
334	Currently my class is doing draw and write.
335	Just writing their names or their friends names. They mostly draw instead of write.
336	expository, descriptive, persuasive, and narrative
337	Writing at least three sentences about a given prompt. These have to an an introduction and conclusion. Students are expected to sound out and spell words they do not know.
338	
339	scribbling letters of first names
340	The main focus of all the writing assignments my students do is to write about what they read. They write short responses that to text-based questions, they write informative/expository, opinion, and personal narrative essays in response to a prompt using evidence from a text that they read.
341	In kinder, we start with communicating through drawings/pictures. Then add letter sounds to represent words.
342	Teaching a template to follow to organize the thoughts of a second grader. I encourage the use of passages and texts for expository and persuasive compositions. Narratives start with template to jot ideas
343	They write expository essays, opinion essays, research papers and personal narratives.
344	Basic Sentence Structure, Grammar and Respond to Text
345	This year I actually shifted my thinking a little bit - I saw something on social media and decided to try it. Instead of just writing whatever weâ€™re talking about, I am asking students to think about WHO they are writing to. Sometimes itâ€™s me, I think they think they will please me, but sometimes Iâ€™m also the easy answer. I wasnâ€™t with them whenâ€¦so I canâ€™t validate or invalidate their story, but I will also ask them to choose someone that was with them, or not, so that person understands things from their perspective (narrative) or have them explain things to another person so they can understand it (expository). This has shifted the way my students think about things.
346	Ffgguuhb
347	
348	
349	
350	A process of oral language, accompanied by drawing, then labeling, then captioning, then writing of phrases that include phonetic spelling and high frequency words, then formal sentences.

Count	Q8. What do your writing assignments in class consist of? Write as much as you would like.
351	We have weekly writing assignments that vary from expository, to narrative, to opinion writings for 2nd grade.
352	
353	
354	My writing assignments in class consist of an introduction, statements of reasons, evidence to support the reasons and a conclusion.
355	
356	
357	
358	grammar structure first then short sentences
359	
360	
361	RACE reading responses; writing to sources
362	
363	Comprehension of text
364	I have to follow the curriculum and do what the textbook says so I do that during reading block. During writing, I focus on one genre at a time, such as personal narratives. I model a story of my own or read a book with a trait I want them to notice and I provide time for them to practice writing- usually on a topic I pick or related to the book I've read. I encourage them to talk about their ideas and they share what they've written with a partner. I pull individual students to conference about writing. The next day, I start with a few examples of student work. We also build anchor charts with writing characteristics.
365	
366	
367	We are using Benchmark and using Topscore for structure. They are simple prompts right now: what is your favorite activity, etc. Then we will read texts and write expository essays.
368	
369	Summarizing what was read in class
370	Text-based writing
371	Writing essays
372	
373	
374	
375	Most of the writing consists of shorter passages in response to our investigations, experiments, and observations.
376	

Count	Q8. What do your writing assignments in class consist of? Write as much as you would like.
377	Benchmark writing curriculum is not good, Students jump from one type of writing to another weekly and do not have time to grasp each type. They also do not get enough time on each piece to be able to really practice the steps of writing.
378	
379	My classroom writing assignments begain with organized writing beginning with a capital letter, end in punctuation, and shows complete thought. They should, by end of 1st grade be able to wrote an opening followed by two or three supportiing details.
380	Mainly the grammar part of sentences.
381	Daily writing through writing process with focus of genre of writing(opinion/expository)
382	
383	smaller portions of an essay (a complete paragraph, restating a prompt, elaboration, etc.)
384	
385	Engaging writing prompts with gradual release
386	