

Theses and Dissertations

2014

The alignment of response to intervention with the Common Core State Standards for English language arts

Charles Newman

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/etd>

Recommended Citation

Newman, Charles, "The alignment of response to intervention with the Common Core State Standards for English language arts" (2014). *Theses and Dissertations*. 509.
<https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/etd/509>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by Pepperdine Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Pepperdine Digital Commons. For more information, please contact bailey.berry@pepperdine.edu.

Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

THE ALIGNMENT OF RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION WITH THE COMMON CORE
STATE STANDARDS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership, Administration and Policy

by

Charles Newman

November, 2014

Linda Purrington, Ed.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

Charles Newman

under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Doctoral Committee:

Linda Purrington, Ed.D., Chairperson

Robert Barner, Ph.D.

Molly McCabe, Ed.D.

© Copyright by Charles Newman 2014

All Rights Reserved

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES.....	vi
DEDICATION.....	vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	viii
VITA.....	ix
ABSTRACT.....	xi
Chapter 1: Background.....	1
Problem.....	6
Purpose.....	7
Research Question.....	7
Importance of Study.....	8
Delimitations.....	8
Limitations.....	9
Assumptions.....	9
Definition of Terms.....	9
Theoretical Framework.....	11
Organization of Study.....	12
Chapter 2: Introduction.....	13
Theoretical Framework.....	15
Political and Historical Context.....	19
Federal Accountability.....	24
Response to Intervention.....	29
Origin/Impetus for CCSS.....	41
College and Career Readiness.....	50
Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21).....	53
Common Core State Standards (English Language Arts).....	55
Common Core State Standards and California.....	57
College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards.....	58
ELA Strands.....	60
Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium.....	67
Instructional Shifts for English Language Arts.....	70
Potential Impact of CCSS.....	73
Recommendations.....	78
Organizational Reform Strategies.....	80
Summary.....	85

	Page
Chapter 3: Research Design.....	86
Restatement of Purpose.....	86
Research Questions.....	86
Research Design Overview.....	87
Settings.....	90
Subjects.....	90
Human Subject Considerations.....	92
Instrumentation.....	93
Data Collection Procedures and Data Management.....	96
Data Analysis and Reporting.....	97
Summary.....	98
Chapter 4: Results.....	99
Research Questions.....	99
Research Design Overview.....	100
Findings.....	100
Summary of Key Findings.....	111
Chapter 5: Discussion.....	113
Discussion of Key Findings.....	114
Conclusions.....	123
Recommendations.....	126
REFERENCES.....	134
APPENDIX A: Interview Protocol.....	145
APPENDIX B: Recruitment Letter.....	146
APPENDIX C: Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities.....	148
APPENDIX D: IRB Approval.....	150

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1. Balance of Informational Text and Literature	62
Table 2. PARCC and SBAC Comparison	67
Table 3. SBAC College Readiness Claims for ELA.....	69
Table 4. Targets for ELA Claim 1	69
Table 5. Advantages and Disadvantages of Interviews	90
Table 6. Research Participants.....	91
Table 7. Alignment of Research Questions and Interview Questions: Universal Screening and Progress Monitoring for Language Arts.....	94
Table 8. Modifications Needed to Align Universal Screening Practices.....	101
Table 9. Modifications Needed to Align Progress-Monitoring Practices.....	103
Table 10. Summary of Themes for Research Question One: Universal Screening and Progress Monitoring	105
Table 11. Anticipated Challenges to the Modifications for Universal Screening	105
Table 12. Anticipated Challenges to the Modifications for Progress Monitoring.....	106
Table 13. Summary of Themes for Research Question Two: Universal Screening and Progress Monitoring	108
Table 14. Recommended Strategies to Support Universal Screening	108
Table 15. Recommended Strategies to Support Progress Monitoring.....	110
Table 16. Summary of Research Question Three: Universal Screening	111

DEDICATION

To my wife who has always been there for me through the good and the bad, the happy and the sad. Thanks for all your support in this process. To my two boys, I hope you devote your life to making a difference for all of humanity. To my Dad, thanks for always being there, Pops.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this intense and transformational journey would not have been possible without the support of my dissertation committee members and C-8 Cohort members. Dr. Purrington, thank you for continually supporting me in developing as a professional. Your passion and commitment to your work and the students at Pepperdine is both remarkable and inspiring. You are a role model for all have the opportunity to be in your presence as you always demonstrate the qualities of a compassionate leader. Dr. Barner, thank you for the wisdom and knowledge you provided to us over the past years. Your wisdom and ability to break down theory into practical application has been valuable. Dr. McCabe, thank you for all the help you have given me throughout this process. Your willingness to share your time and expertise regarding my topic has been greatly appreciated.

There are several family members who deserve special acknowledgement in helping me reach this milestone. My wife, Angelia, who has been a constant support reminding me to never give up on my dreams. Thank you, Angelia, for sharing this adventure with me. To my Dad, who represented a role model for so many young men growing up without a father.

This work would not have been possible without the eight educational leaders who allowed me the opportunity to speak with them at length regarding my research topic. I am thankful for your willingness to participate and share your knowledge and expertise.

VITA

EDUCATION

Doctoral Candidate – Educational Leadership – Final Defense - July 2014
Pepperdine University, Los Angeles, CA

Master of Arts – Educational Administration – December 1999
National University, Los Angeles, CA

Bachelor of Arts – Recreation Administration/ Minor Sociology – August 1996
California State University, Dominguez Hills, CA

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Director of Pupil Services
Perris Union High School District, Perris, CA 2013 - present

Principal - Curriculum, Instruction and Expenditures
Pinacate Middle School, Perris, CA 2007 - present

Assistant Principal - Curriculum, Guidance & Discipline
Perris High School, Perris, CA 2005 - 2007

Assistant Principal - Categorical Programs, English Learners & Assessment
Lakewood School (K-8), Lakewood, CA 2004 - 2005

Dean of Discipline- Discipline and Safety
John C. Fremont High School, Los Angeles, CA 2001 - 2003

Teacher - Physical Education
John C. Fremont High School, Los Angeles, CA 1999 - 2003

Teacher - Physical Education, English Language Arts & Social Studies
Nimitz Middle School, Maywood, CA 1997 - 1999

CREDENTIALS

California Professional Clear Administrative Services Credential
Effective June 2010 - May 2017

California Preliminary Administrative Services Credential
Effective June 2005 - May 2010

California Clear Single Subject Credential in Physical Education
Effective April 2002 - May 2017

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Association of California School Administrators

American Association of School Administrators Association for Supervision and Curriculum

Development National Association of Secondary School Principals

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory research study was to examine the perceptions of K-12 educational leaders who have experience related to Response to Intervention (RtI) and Common Core State Standards (CCSS). This study was guided by the following three research questions:

1. What do K-12 educational leaders who have systems knowledge and experience, related to Response to Intervention and CCSS, perceive as the potential modifications needed to align the assessment components (universal screening and progress monitoring) of Response to Intervention with the CCSS for Language Arts?
2. What do K-12 educational leaders who have systems knowledge and experience, related to RtI and the CCSS, perceive as challenges that may result from any modifications to the assessment components needed to aligning the assessment components of RtI with the CCSS for Language Arts at?
3. What strategies do K-12 educational leaders who have systems knowledge and experience, related to RtI and CCSS, perceive might be utilized to address any challenges regarding aligning the assessment components (universal screening and progress monitoring) of RtI with the CCSS for Language Arts?

This research study utilized a qualitative exploratory design and involved eight educational leaders from Southern California. The findings from this study supported five practice recommendations. The first recommendation was for LEAs to develop a shared vision in regards to the role of RtI in supporting the CCSS for ELA. The second recommendation was for LEAs to develop teams of stakeholders to participate in the development of a comprehensive plan, throughout all phases of implementation, to align their RtI assessment tools to the CCSS

for ELA. The third recommendation was for LEAs to develop RtI assessment tools that aligned to the CCSS for ELA. The fourth recommendation was for LEAs to select a College and Career Readiness (CCR) or 21st century framework, in order to help teachers to support the CCR skills embedded in the CCSS. The fifth recommendation was for LEAs to create strategic professional development plans to ensure that teachers receive adequate training to teach the College and Career Readiness skills embedded in the CCSS for ELA.

Chapter 1: Background

In 1957, the launch of Sputnik, the first space satellite created by the Soviet Union, resulted in an increased federal focus on public education in America. According to Steeves, Bernhardt, Burns, and Lombard (2009), Sputnik produced fear and insecurity among many who felt that America was losing its global standing to communism. In response to the launch of Sputnik, the federal government wasted no time in their response, and drafted the National Defense Education Act (NDEA; Bracey, 2007; Jolly, 2009; Tröhler, 2010), which provided additional funding for programs to improve math, science, and foreign language instruction in public education (Jolly, 2009; Ravitch, 2001; Steeves et al., 2009). Additionally, NDEA provided millions of dollars to purchase equipment for science classrooms and professional development training programs for teachers. According to Steeves et al., the financial commitment made by the federal government after the launch of Sputnik emphasized that education reform had been elevated to a national priority.

Prior to the 1950s, early reform efforts in America had limited the decisions in the public education system to educational experts (Ravitch, 2001). It appears, when examining the research literature, that in previous periods, education reformers such as John Dewey and Horace Mann were a driving force in directing school reform. In contrast to this atmosphere, the 1950s have been characterized as a period in American history where the federal government began to take a more active role in the public education system (Bracey, 2007; Tröhler, 2010). According to Steeves et al. (2009), the inequities exposed by the Civil Rights movement regarding racial barriers in schools, and growing concerns following the launch of Sputnik regarding America losing the battle against communism, resulted in heightened public concerns regarding the efficacy of the public school system. During this crucial time period, the public education

system experienced the initial transition of increased government involvement in public education (Bracey, 2007; Jolly, 2009; Ravitch, 2001; Tröhler, 2010).

The launch of Sputnik marked the first example in the historical literature of how public opinion and government policy has influenced the direction of the public education system (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009; Ravitch, 2010; Steeves et al., 2009). This impact of public opinion and federal involvement in public education can be traced throughout the literature, as federal initiatives and policy have impacted the focus and direction of public education. Federal initiatives such as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA, 1965), the Education of Handicapped Children Act (EHCA, 1975) and *A Nation at Risk* (U.S. Department of Education, 1983) have all had an impact on the direction of public education. When examining the historical literature, it appears that each of these reforms has informed educational practices in terms of focus, direction, curriculum, and systems decisions on a national scale. Furthermore, when examined collectively, it is suggested that federal policy and initiatives have had a growing influence on the direction of public education over the past 50 years since the launch of Sputnik (Bracey, 2007).

Since Sputnik, the federal government's involvement in public education has continued to increase into the 21 century. Currently, two reform efforts supported by federal initiatives have created a national direction and focus in the public education system. The first is Response to Intervention (RtI), which has represented a systems focus for public education for the past 10 years, during which time RtI policy initiatives have been implemented at the federal, state, and local levels (D. Fuchs, Fuchs, & Stecker, 2010). According to the National Association of State Directors of Special Educators and the Council of Administrators of Special Education (NASDSE & CASE, 2006), "RtI is the practice of providing high-quality instruction and

interventions matched to student need, monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about changes in instruction or goals, and applying child response data to important educational decisions” (p. 2). RtI is the systematic process of providing high quality instruction, progress monitoring and interventions to support student academic success (D. Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006).

Supported by two significant federal initiatives—No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (2004)—“RTI has been implemented in schools nationwide and has shown promising results” (D. Fuchs et al., 2010, p. 301). Due to these results, the federal government and special education organizations began allowing RtI to be utilized as one of the factors in determining if a student has a specific learning disability (Fletcher, Coulter, Reschly, & Vaughn, 2004; NASDSE, 2006; Restori, Gresham, & Cook, 2008).

The second reform, currently receiving attention on a national scale, is the implementation of CCSS. Following *A Nation at Risk* (U.S. Department of Education, 1983), many researchers have suggested that the federal government’s role in education transitioned to a focus on educational outcomes (Jorgensen & Hoffman, 2003; Ravitch, 2010; U.S. Department of Education, 2008). Over the next 18 years, the federal government funded numerous commissions and research studies to determine how to improve and monitor the outcomes of students in public education (Spring, 2010). It was within this climate, focused on educational outcomes, that the literature traces the evolution of the testing and accountability movement, which culminated in the creation of NCLB (Jorgensen & Hoffman, 2003).

In examining the research literature, it appears that the implementation of NCLB in 2001 has been a controversial issue in education. According to Rentschler (2006), since the ESEA (1965) was authorized, there has never been a more strict focus on holding school districts

accountable for the achievement of all students. This strict accountability has forced schools to look at historically underachieving populations and develop plans to intervene with students who are performing below grade level. Although there have been many improvements in regards to education, since the implementation of NCLB, uncertainty has abounded regarding to the overall impact of NCLB on student achievement in the United States (Ravitch, 2010; Rentschler, 2006; Spring, 2010; U.S. Department of Education, 2008). Several years following the implementation of NCLB, many states found that a large percentage of their schools were identified as underachieving and there was no significant increase in student achievement, in comparison to the group of students attending school when *A Nation at Risk* was initially released (Jorgensen & Hoffman, 2003; Rentschler, 2006; U.S. Department of Education, 2008). In response to this reality, several years after the implementation of NCLB, the U.S. Department of Education (2008) declared that the United States was still a nation at risk and a benefit of NCLB was that the American public became more informed about educational outcomes, realizing that a great amount of improvement was still needed.

In this atmosphere of conflicting data reported by states testing under NCLB, state leaders were searching for common national standards to assess academic progress in public education more effectively (Rothman, 2012). During this time, the Council of Chief State School Officers, in a joint venture with the National Governors Association (NGA), spearheaded an effort to develop these national standards, which eventually became known as the Common Core State Standards (CCSS; National Governors Association [NGA], Council of Chief State School Officers, & Achieve, Inc., 2008). The overall goal of the CCSS is for these standards to be designed specifically based on the skills necessary for students to be successful in both college and career settings (McNulty & Gloeckler, 2011; Quay, 2010).

The CCSS were created on the premise of developing a clear connection between the skills students would need to be successful in college and a career (Quay, 2010; Rothman, 2012).

In order to address these challenges, the developers of the CCSS ensured that the new standards:

- Were aligned with college and work expectations
- Were clear, understandable and consistent
- Included rigorous content and application of knowledge through higher-order thinking skills
- Built upon strengths and lessons of current standards
- Were informed by other top performing countries, so that all students are prepared to succeed in our global economy
- Were evidence based. (McNulty & Gloeckler, 2011, p. 3)

Supporting the implementation of the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI), in March of 2010, the CCSS were endorsed by President Obama's administration. Endorsed under the title *Race to the Top*, some believe that the CCSS will provide an improved format for standards and assessments when compared to previous state standards (NGA et al., 2008).

Additionally, some believe that the CCSS will provide students in public education with an education that ensures readiness for college and careers upon graduation (Achieve, Inc., 2012; Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development [ASCD], 2012; NGA et al., 2008).

Currently, 43 states have adopted the CCSS (CCSS, n.d.a), and the goal is for all 43 states to complete full implementation of these standards by fall of 2015. To support this timeline, many districts have started providing staff development and trainings to prepare personnel for the fall of 2015 implementation.

In August of 2010, the California State Board of Education (CDE) voted to adopt the CCSS for both English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics. According to the CDE (2013), this vote demonstrated California's commitment to provide all students with a high quality, 21st century education. Additionally, CDE asserted that stakeholders throughout California are engaged in the process of examining their current practices and making preparation for 2015, when the CCSS will be fully implemented.

Problem

Since August 2013, school districts in southern California started allocating resources to support the implementation of the CCSS for ELA. This new implementation of CCSS came on the heels of districts in southern California allocating vast amounts of time and resources to implementing the RtI multi-tiered intervention model over the past decade. However, during the previous 3 years, as districts had been making preparation for the implementation of CCSS, few educational researchers or practitioners have discussed or examined how to align the assessment components of RtI with the CCSS for ELA.

Therefore, a great need and opportunity exists to examine the professional perceptions of K-12 educational leaders who have systems knowledge and experience, related to RtI and CCSS, regarding, (a) modifications that may be needed to align the assessment components (universal screening and progress monitoring) of RtI with the CCSS for ELA, (b) challenges that may result from RtI and CCSS assessment component alignment efforts, and (c) strategies that might be utilized to address any challenges related to RtI and CCSS assessment component alignment efforts.

Purpose

The purpose of this phenomenological exploratory research study was to examine the professional perceptions of K-12 educational leaders who have systems knowledge and experience related to RtI and CCSS with regard to: (a) any modifications that may be needed to align the assessment components of RtI (universal screening and progress monitoring) with the CCSS for ELA, (b) challenges that may result from any modifications to the assessment components (universal screening) needed to align the assessment components of RtI with the CCSS for ELA, and (c) strategies that might be utilized to address any challenges to aligning the assessment components of RtI with the CCSS for ELA.

Research Question

This study focused on the following central research questions:

1. What do K-12 educational leaders who have systems knowledge and experience, related to RtI and CCSS, perceive as the potential modifications needed to align the assessment components (universal screening and progress monitoring) of RtI with the CCSS for ELA?
2. What do K-12 educational leaders who have systems knowledge and experience, related to RtI and CCSS, perceive as challenges that may result from any modifications to the assessment components needed to align the assessment components of RtI with the CCSS for ELA?
3. What strategies do K-12 educational leaders who have systems knowledge and experience, related to RtI and CCSS, perceive might be utilized to address any challenges regarding aligning the assessment components (universal screening and progress monitoring) of RtI with the CCSS for ELA?

Importance of Study

Currently, many reviews and journal articles have been written about the considerations for implementing the CCSS. These journals and reviews provide insight into the scope and complexity of the CCSS, as well a thorough description of these assessments, which are to be implemented in 2015 by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). Likewise, a considerable amount of research has been conducted and published on the effectiveness of RtI in supporting at-risk learners. With numerous examples of success stories of school and districts that have implemented RtI, these journals provide a synthesis of best practices and lessons learned from the field, and support practitioners' interests in using RtI.

Although the academic literature is rich with research articles on RtI and journals on the CCSS, the professional literature is limited in articles available that support practitioners in the process of aligning RtI with the CCSS. The very nature of the complexities that may exist in the process of alignment supported a need to explore the professional experiences of educational leaders in Southern California related to RtI and CCSS. Their professional opinions related to the alignment of the assessment components of RtI with the CCSS for ELA could potentially serve to inform the work of practitioners in the implementation process. Thus, the goal of this study was to provide additional research to support practitioners, in the process of aligning RtI with the CCSS for ELA and RtI.

Delimitations

There were several delimitations to this study. The study focused on school site leaders in schools within Southern California. Participants were delimited to Principals, Coordinators, District Administrators, Academic Coaches and Consultants who had at least 2 years of

experience with both RtI and the CCSS for ELA. To that end, all participants needed to have had experience in providing professional development for both the CCSS and RtI.

Limitations

There were several limitations to this study. The first limitation of this study was the sample size of eight educational leaders in Southern California. Additionally, the results presented in this study may only apply to the schools and districts in which individual participants have developed their working knowledge and experiences of implementing RtI and the CCSS. Therefore, the results from this study may not represent all schools in Southern California.

Assumptions

This research study utilized a qualitative exploratory design and involved semi-structured interviews of eight educational leaders from selected schools, districts, and county levels within Southern California who had expertise related to RtI and CCSS. The researchers assumed that the participants would be knowledgeable about RtI and the CCSS. Additionally, the researchers assumed that participants would report their experiences honestly and candidly.

Definition of Terms

Common Core State Standards (CCSS): The CCSS are expectations that define the necessary skills needed for a student to be college and career ready upon high school graduation (Common Core State Standards Initiative [CCSSI], n.d.d).

Progress Monitoring: Progress monitoring is a process of analyzing a student's academic progress and utilizing this information to inform decisions about when to modify or adjust instruction (Hall, 2008).

Response to Intervention (RtI): According to the NASDSE and CASE (2006), RtI is the practice of (a) providing high-quality instruction/intervention matched to student needs and (b) using learning rates over time and level of performance to (c) make important educational decisions. In order to accomplish this, RtI systematically organizes the necessary instructional and academic resources of a school site to support student learning into three tiers in order to provide a more systematic approach to prevention and intervention. Within this framework, the supports for students experiencing difficulty at each level will become increasingly explicit and intensive as students progress through each tier (Brownell, Sindelar, Kiely, & Danielson, 2010).

Tier 1 Interventions: Tier 1 is designed to offer the primary level of support for all students within the RtI framework (Glover & Vaughn, 2010). The goal of Tier 1 is to successfully support at least 80% of the students within a school site.

Tier 2 Interventions: Students who are not able to meet the performance objectives based on universal screening or progress monitoring, are provided additional support within Tier 2, normally in a smaller group setting. The progress of these students is monitored closely to determine if they are responding to the additional support (Glover & Vaughn, 2010).

Tier 3 Interventions: Students who are not responding to the supports offered at the secondary tier will move to a more intensive, individualized tertiary support (Glover & Vaughn, 2010).

Universal Screening: Universal Screening is the practice of assessing all students at the beginning of the school year in order to identify students who are at risk of academic failure (D. Fuchs et al., 2010).

Theoretical Framework

According to Peter Senge (2006), learning organizations:

are organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together.

(p. 3)

The logic to support Senge's learning organization resides in the fact that the reality of current trends reveals that education is constantly changing and there is a need for organizations to be flexible and adaptive in order to survive (Smith, 2001). To facilitate this process, organizations need tools and guidance to achieve collective commitments from their members and to share information. To support the process of building collective commitment and sharing knowledge, Peter Senge proposes the five disciplines of a learning organization.

The first of Senge's (2006) disciplines is systems thinking, which represents the discipline of seeing the relationships of interconnected parts of the whole. Instead of viewing the world as separate disconnected forces, systems thinking provides a conceptual framework to identify patterns and structures that are involved in complex situations. The second discipline Senge identified is personal mastery, which he defined as the continual process of clarifying ones vision and focusing on efforts to seeing vision become reality. Senge also discussed the importance the discipline of mental models that encompasses the images, stories and assumptions that we people around in their minds that make up their schema. Building a shared vision, the fourth of Senge's disciplines, involves the skill of building a common picture of the future that results in commitment and enrollment of individuals an organization. Senge's collective discipline of team learning entails aligning the capability of team members to

construct the outcomes in the organization they desire. All five disciplines are discussed in more detail in the next chapter. The relationship of this study to the theoretical framework entails identifying Senge's learning organization as a framework to facilitate the sharing of knowledge among K-12 educational leaders regarding the alignment of two overlapping systems: the CCSS and RtI.

This study proposed to explore the perceptions and projections of practitioner experts in the field related to the modifications associated with the alignment of two overlapping systems, RtI and CCSS. Senge's (2006) framework provided a lens by which practitioner experts' perceptions and projections were discussed and interpreted. The experts' perceptions and projections were analyzed and examined to develop conclusions and recommendations to support successful alignment of these two overlapping systems.

Organization of Study

This study was organized into five chapters. The first chapter provided background information regarding federal support for both the CCSS and RtI. Chapter 2 provides an in-depth description of Peter Senge's (2006) learning organization as a theoretical framework for this study. Additionally, the political and historical context that brought about the CCSS and RtI are discussed. Chapter 2 concludes with a review of the literature on RtI and CCSS in greater detail. Chapter 3 outlines the research method used by the researcher in this study. Additionally, this chapter includes the research questions and research design, as well as a discussion of human subjects, the procedures for data collection, and the instrument used in the study. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study and Chapter 5 concludes with a discussion of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

Chapter 2: Introduction

The CCSSI, led by the NGA and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), was first launched in June 2010 and is focused primarily on the goal of preparing students in public education to be college and career ready. This goal of college and career readiness guides the CCSS (ASCD, 2012; California Department of Education, 2013; McNulty & Gloeckler, 2011). The process of developing these new standards was a joint project between the NGA, CCSSO, Achieve, the Alliance for Excellence in Education, and the James B. Hunt Jr. Institute for Educational Leadership and Policy (NGA et al., 2008). These standards are to establish a college and career readiness framework for all students in America. In June of 2010, the team released the final version of what has come to be called the CCSS (ASCD, 2012; California Department of Education, 2013; McNulty & Gloeckler, 2011).

Prior to the final release of the CCSS, on March 13, 2010, the Obama administration released *A Blueprint for Reform: The Revision of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)*, most commonly referred to as Race to the Top (Whilden, 2010). Entailed in the 2010 revision of ESEA, according to the American Institute for Research (2013), was a transition to a focus on college and career readiness. Running parallel to the development of the CCSS in terms of a focus on college and career readiness for students in America, Race to the Top recommended that all states adopt the new CCSS. A total of 21 states and Washington DC were awarded Race to The Top funding as of December 2011 and adopted these new standards. Additionally, resulting from this recommendation, 43 states have adopted the CCSS and are preparing for full implementation of the standards and assessments in the 2014-2015 school year (ASCD, 2012; National Education Association, 2013).

Ten years prior to *Race to the Top*, NCLB (the 2001 reauthorization of ESEA) endorsed RtI as a systematic process to improve and support student achievement for students at risk of academic failure (D. Fuchs et al., 2010). Several years later, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA, 2004) also endorsed RtI as an evidence-based early intervention program to provide at-risk students support to enhance their academic achievement (Burns & Gibbons, 2008; D. Fuchs et al., 2010). Additionally, IDEA allowed local education agencies (LEAs) to use RtI as an option for referring students for special education services (Hall, 2008).

Resulting from the endorsements of both NCLB and IDEA, school districts and state offices have invested resources and funding over the course of the last decade to implementing RtI (Global Scholar/Spectrum K12 Solution, 2011; Harr-Robins, Shambaugh, & Parrish, 2009; Hoover, Baca, Wexler-Love & Saenz, 2008; NASDSE & CASE, 2006). As of 2008, it was reported that all states were in the process of implementing or using RtI to support their at-risk students (Hoover et al., 2008). Although RtI has been implemented nationally, districts and states have had varying results in terms of successful implementation (Global Scholar/Spectrum K12, 2011; NASDSE & CASE, 2006, RtI Action Network & NCLD; Harr-Robins et al., 2009; Hoover et. al., 2008). In general, the results suggest that there are many unanswered questions in terms of how to respond to the challenges associated with implementing RtI.

Both RtI and CCSS have received support from the federal government, yet few researchers have discussed the implications of the integration of the CCSS and RtI. Considering the amount of resources that will be invested in CCSS and the amount of resources already invested in RtI, it is important to examine and explore how these two systems can work interdependently to increase student achievement.

This literature review will discuss the historical and political context that has resulted in the implementation of CCSS and RtI. In particular, by examining the political and historical context, the chapter will review the federal government's role in ensuring access for all students in public education and the government's role in transitioning to more of a focus on academic outcomes for all students. Additionally, this chapter will examine the origin and academic components of RtI. Following this examination will be a review of the literature examining the interventions that support the tiered approach to RtI.

After exploring the literature on RtI, the review will examine the impetus for the development of the CCSS and examine the organization and components of the CCSS. The chapter will conclude with an examination of the literature that discusses the potential challenges, benefits, and recommendations regarding at-risk students regarding the implementation of the CCSS. The chapter will conclude with an overview of Bolman and Deal's Four Frames of Leadership and additional educational reform strategies.

Theoretical Framework

Peter Senge's (2006) learning organization will serve as a theoretical framework for this research study. According to Peter Senge, learning organizations are

organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together.

(p. 3)

The logic to support Senge's learning organization resides in the fact that, given the reality of current trends, education is constantly changing and organizations must be flexible and adaptive

to survive (Smith, 2001). In order to facilitate this process, organizations need tools and guidance to build collective commitments from their members and share information. Peter Senge proposes the following five disciplines of a learning organization to support the process of building collective commitment and sharing knowledge.

Personal mastery. “Personal Mastery is the phrase used for the discipline of personal growth and learning” (Senge, 2006, p. 131). According to Senge (2006), personal mastery is a continual process of clarifying one’s vision and focusing one’s efforts to ensuring that one’s vision becomes a reality. Senge identified a major challenge to personal mastery: tension that develops when one realizes the gap between his/her personal vision and reality. Although the gap between these two realities produces tension and emotional stress, this gap also provide what Senge has termed “creative tension” (p. 140). Creative tension is central to personal mastery as it integrates all components of personal mastery as one becomes aware that a vision is at odds with one’s reality. Senge believes it is here that the greatest opportunity for personal mastery and learning occurs as people view their reality objectively.

Mental models. Mental models are the images, stories, and assumptions that people carry around in their minds that make up their schema. According to Senge (2006), mental models are how people view the world and also how they take action. A mental model can be as simple as a generalization one may have about people or as complex as a theory regarding nature or human development. The power of mental models lies in how it impacts one’s vision and how one’s vision impacts one’s actions.

According to Senge (2006), the process of managing mental models provides an opportunity for a major advancement in the development of learning organizations. Senge further asserted that mental models can both inhibit learning and also promote learning. In order

to promote learning by examining mental models, Senge asserted that “reflective practice is the essence of the discipline of mental models” (p. 177). By examining and scrutinizing mental models in a reflective format, organizations are able to participate in “generative learning” (p. 177) prior to being compelled by external circumstances

Shared vision. A shared vision is another critical component of a learning organization. The practice of developing a shared vision entails the skill of building a common picture of the future that results in commitment and enrollment from individuals in an organization. Senge (2006) asserted, “no force is as powerful as a shared vision” (p. 192). A shared vision is essential for learning in an organization, as it provides the lens that determines the emphasis and drive toward learning. Most importantly, a shared vision is important to inspire the courage for individuals to collectively overcome challenges and take the necessary risk to achieve an improved future result in an organization.

Systems thinking. Senge (2006) asserted that systems thinking is the foundation of how a learning organization views the world. According to Senge, systems thinking is the discipline of seeing the relationships of interconnected parts of the whole. Instead of viewing the world as composed of separate disconnected forces, systems thinking provides a conceptual framework to identify patterns and structures that are involved in complex situations. According to Senge, systems thinking supports high leverage change in an organization by changing the lens via which one’s reality is interpreted. Senge further emphasized that by distinguishing between low and high leverage points within a system, a learning organization is able to foster positive systemic change. According to Senge, the other four disciplines—personal mastery, mental models, building a shared vision, and team learning—are the building blocks of system thinking.

Team learning. Senge's (2006) final discipline is team learning. The collective discipline of team learning entails aligning the capability of team members to construct the outcomes in the organization they desire. According to Senge, two essentials of team learning are the practice of dialogue and discussion where team members suspend their personal assumptions and initiate the process of thinking together. Within this context, Senge stresses the importance of team members viewing each other as colleagues. As team members participate in the process of dialogue and discussion, collective thinking is fostered. As collective thinking is practiced frequently, the team will inevitably experience collective learning.

Senge (2006) described that team learning as essential to the survival of a learning organization, considering that teams are the fundamental unit of learning and not individuals. It is his position that just as individual learning is vital to an organization, team learning is also essential for the survival of a learning organization. According to Senge (2006), if teams within an organization are not learning, the organization will stop growing. In contrast, when a team learns and aligns their efforts toward a common goal, there is less wasted time and energy. As byproduct of this state, resonance and synergy are developed in a learning organization that produces a clear purpose and a shared vision of how to work collectively.

The current study used Senge's (2006) framework as a lens by which practitioner experts' perceptions and projections were discussed and interpreted. The experts' perceptions and projections were also analyzed and examined to develop conclusions and recommendations to support successful alignment of these two overlapping systems. It was the researcher's intention to view the participants who all work in public education as part of a broader ecosystem that represents a learning organization on a macro scale.

Political and Historical Context

Federal intervention. As America entered the 1950s, the civil rights movement challenged the poor conditions of schools that educated African American students. Although there was a proclamation for separate but equal school facilities, the reality for many minority children was one in which schools had been deemed separate and unequal during this time period (Anderson, 2001). In response to this reality, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of the plaintiff in *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, deeming that the separate but equal facilities were unconstitutional. This Supreme Court ruling was instrumental not only in providing equal access to minority students in America; this legislation has also been cited as an important foundation toward the federal government's involvement in education (Brownell et al., 2010; Daniel, 1997; Schraven & Jolly, 2010; Tileston, 2011).

According to Brownell et al. (2010), several years after the Supreme Court made its landmark ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*, legislation began to emerge from the federal government to support equal access for the education of students with disabilities. One such legislation was the Education of Mentally Retarded Children Act of 1958. This piece of legislation made an effort to help support students with disabilities by ensuring that funding was available from the federal government to train teachers on how to educate mentally disabled students. Three years after this legislation was ratified, the federal government initiated the Teachers of the Deaf Act of 1961, which was designed to train teachers to educate students who were deaf and hard of hearing. Due to the fact that the current educational systems weren't equipped with teachers capable of working with students with disabilities, the initial federal initiatives were designed to provide funding to train personnel (Brownell et al., 2010).

In 1965 as part of his War on Poverty, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) into law. In the literature, ESEA is credited with having an impact on public education that has expanded over the last 40 years (American Institute for Research, 2013; Jorgensen & Hoffman, 2003; Whilden, 2010). According to Jorgensen and Hoffman (2003), the initial goal of ESEA was to provide additional funding for LEAs that educated students from low-income families. It was the intention of the federal government in establishing ESEA to provide additional funding to support schools in closing the achievement gap for low-income students. Additionally, the federal government mandated for all federal funds provided under this ESEA to be used for instructional materials, for professional development, and to increase parental involvement (Jorgensen & Hoffman, 2003). ESEA is an additional example of direct intervention from the federal government attempting to improve the quality of education for children in public education.

Following the establishment of ESEA, the 1970s brought on two federal court decisions that established the precedent of equal access for students with disabilities. In 1971, the Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children (PARC) won a monumental court battle regarding the educational rights for students with disabilities (Daniel, 1997). In *Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, the Supreme Court established that the state of Pennsylvania could not refuse a child's educational rights based on disability. PARC further declared that students with disabilities were to be provided the same educational opportunities as students without disabilities. This landmark decision ruled that students between the ages of 6-18 have the right to a free and appropriate education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE; Brownell et al., 2010; Daniel, 1997; Schraven & Jolly, 2010).

One year following the PARC decision, *Mills v. Board of Education (1972)* argued in federal court for the rights of 18,000 families who were denied access to public education due to their children being declared uneducable based on their disability. According to Daniel (1997), several outcomes emerged from the results of the Mills decision. The first was the federal government ruling to extend of the right to a FAPE (established under PARC) to students who were mentally disabled, emotionally disturbed, and physically disabled. The second outcome of Mills was the establishment of due process rights under the 14th Amendment for all students with disabilities. Furthermore, Mills resulted in the federal government creating explicit due process procedures that were to be written and communicated to the parents of all students with disabilities (Daniel 1997; Schraven & Jolly 2010).

Several years after the outcomes of PARC and Mills, Congress passed PL-142, the Education for all Handicapped Children Act (1975). PL-142 is described as the most comprehensive legislation to govern the educational rights of students with disabilities (Wedl, 2005). PL-142 was the first federal legislation established to ensure that students with disabilities received a FAPE (Burns & Gibbons, 2008; Daniel, 1997; Hall, 2008; Schraven & Jolly, 2010). The initial goal of PL-142 was to create federal legislation to protect the rights of children with disabilities and their parents. Additionally, within PL-142, the federal government intended to outline a comprehensive framework to ensure that states and LEAs provide adequate and equitable educational services for students with disabilities (Burns & Gibbons, 2008; Daniel, 1997; Hall, 2008; Schraven & Jolly, 2010).

It appears throughout the literature that PL-142, which was initially called the Education for all Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA), provided the first basic educational rights for students with disabilities. EAHCA is considered one of the most influential pieces of legislation

protecting of the rights of students with disabilities as it established several provisions for states to follow in providing services for students with disabilities (Burns & Gibbons, 2008; Daniel, 1997; Hall, 2008; Schraven & Jolly, 2010). The primary provision was that LEAs were to ensure that students with disabilities had a right to a FAPE. Additionally, EAHCA established due process rights for parents with disabilities. Lastly, this legislation ensured that all students would be educated in their LRE.

The initial focus of the federal government's involvement in supporting student achievement in America focused on issues relating to access. Much of what was accomplished in the initial era of gaining access resulted in large numbers of minority and disabled students gaining access to educational services (Hall, 2008). In contrast to this era, the following decade would move beyond access and challenge the efficacy of the American school system with an article entitled *A Nation at Risk*.

Federal involvement. In 1983, the Senate Commission for Excellence in Education completed a detailed report entitled *A Nation at Risk*, which discussed the state of American education. This report cautioned parents, educators, governors, and legislators that the current state of the American education system was mediocre at best (Ravitch, 2010). The report stressed the importance of improving teacher training programs, increasing academic learning time for students, and developing a national curriculum for schools (Jorgensen & Hoffman, 2003; Spring, 2010; U.S. Department of Education, 1983). A major shift in the American education system resulted from *A Nation at Risk* report, including the creation of numerous commissions, studies, and reports (Ravitch, 2010; Spring, 2010). According to several researchers, the most compelling result of this report was the development of the standards and

accountability movement in America (Jorgensen & Hoffman, 2003; Ravitch, 2010; Spring, 2010).

The implications of *A Nation at Risk* were two fold. First, the results released in this report, according to Jorgensen and Hoffman (2003), moved the focus of education reform into the national spotlight. In particular, by cautioning parents, educators, governors, and legislators that the current education system was mediocre at best, the report indicted all stakeholders for complacency. According to Ravitch (2010), *A Nation at Risk* led to a comprehensive nationwide reform effort in public education. Consequently, following *A Nation at Risk*, numerous commissions, studies, and reports would follow that would increase the focus at the federal level on improving public education (Ravitch, 2010; Spring, 2010).

The second implication of *A Nation at Risk* was a transition away from a focus on access in American education system to a focus on student outcomes (Jorgensen & Hoffman, 2003). In reviewing the literature, prior to *A Nation at Risk*, most of the concerns regarding public education in America centered on access for minority students and students with disabilities. In contrast, *A Nation at Risk* questioned the effectiveness of the American public education system for all students. According to several researchers, this transition from access to outcomes was instrumental in the development of the standards based movement in America (Jorgensen & Hoffman, 2003; Ravitch, 2010; U.S. Department of Education, 2008). Following *A Nation at Risk*, the federal government began the process of analyzing means of creating a systematic process of regular examination of student outcomes in the public school system with several reauthorizations of the ESEA.

Federal Accountability

Improving America's Schools Act (1994). Ten years after the publication of *A Nation at Risk*, several key revisions to the ESEA of 1965 would confirm the federal government increased involvement in education (Spring, 2010). In President Johnson's initial reauthorization of ESEA, emphasis was placed on providing additional funding to socioeconomically disadvantaged schools to promote greater equity in public education. This funding initially had very limited federal involvement and was to be used to support schools impacted by poverty in closing the achievement gap. However, in 1994 under the Clinton administration, ESEA was reauthorized with the passage of the Improving America's School Act of 1994 (IASA), which provided additional support to assist with the increased federal accountability in public education (Jorgensen & Hoffman, 2003; Rentschler, 2006). According to Rentschler (2006), IASA would require schools that received federal dollars under ESEA to create content standards and state assessments to monitor student progress annually. Additionally, the passage of IASA required states to create a process to identify schools that were not making adequate progress on annual assessments (Jorgensen & Hoffman, 2003). Although states were required to monitor and identify schools not making progress, there were no punitive measures for schools not making progress (Rentschler, 2006).

Goals 2000: Educate America Act. Supplementary to the reauthorization of ESEA in 1994 was the passage of Goals 2000: Educate America Act, which reinforced outcome-based education (Jorgensen & Hoffman, 2003). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2008), Goals 2000 provided states additional funding for the development of academic standards in order to measure student progress, and to provide interventions for students who may need additional help accessing these standards. The passage of Goals 2000 established a new role for

the federal government in public education with the development of a comprehensive framework that listed the expected outcomes for all students in public education. Several of the outcomes specified within the framework of Goals 2000 was for all students to start school prepared to be successful and that our national graduation rate would rise above 89%. Additionally, Goals 2000 specified that all students in grades four, eight, and 12 needed to demonstrate proficiency in state standards (Jorgensen & Hoffman, 2003; U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

In response to IASA and Goals 2000, over the next 6 years between 1994 and 2000, the focus of most states was to establish reforms based on this new direction of monitoring student outcomes in several ways. First, most states embraced the development of content standards for all grade levels. In addition to the creation of content standards, most states also embraced some form of standardized testing and also selected data systems to better monitor student performance (Jorgensen & Hoffman, 2003).

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The publication of *A Nation at Risk* resulted in development of the standards and accountability movement in America that culminated with the creation of NCLB under the Bush administration (Jorgensen & Hoffman, 2003; Ravitch, 2010; Rentschler, 2006; U.S. Department of Education, 2008). NCLB was built upon the reforms made during the late 1990s under IASA 1994 and Goals 2000. Retaining the requirements of IASA 1994, under NCLB, the federal government required states to build assessment systems and also standardized assessments to be administered annually to track if schools were making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) with their students. (Jorgensen & Hoffman, 2003). AYP targets were developed based on the goal set forth by policy makers that by 2014 all students in the U.S. would be proficient in math and ELA.

In order to support districts and schools in meeting this goal by 2014, yearly benchmarks were developed by the federal government for school sites (American Institute for Research, 2013). According to the American Institute for Research (2013), benchmark targets were developed based on the percentage of students expected to score proficient or above in math and ELA on the annual state test. These yearly benchmarks became known as Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO). Schools who met the AMO were considered to be making AYP under NCLB and schools that failed to meet their AMO were considered not to be making AYP.

In order to meet this goal, LEAs were held accountable to increase proficiency levels annually until all students within their schools were proficient in ELA and math (Jorgensen & Hoffman, 2003; Ravitch, 2010; Rentschler, 2006; U.S. Department of Education, 2008). According to Spring (2010), school sites that did not make AYP 2 consecutive years would enter program improvement (PI) status. If school sites remained in PI for subsequent years, the school site would be required to go through remediation ranging from restructuring, dismissing the staff and the principal or developing an alternative governance plan. Additionally, each individual school site was required under NCLB to post yearly test results publicly in order to notify their stakeholders of their progress. It appears that NCLB would mark the federal government's first effort to sanctions school sites for inadequate outcomes as measured by standardized test scores.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Similar to the transition from access to outcomes, PL-142 traveled a similar pathway due to inadequacies that existed in the process of determining if a student had a specific learning disability (SLD). Several decades following the authorization of PL-142, challenges begin to emerge due to “the now infamous discrepancy model (DM) in which children were identified with a learning disability” (Burns & Gibbons, 2008, p. 2). The DM had been used as the primary procedure for identifying if a student had an

SLD (Mack, Smith, & Straight, 2010). Determining if a student had an SLD under this model was established by identifying a considerable discrepancy between a student's intellectual ability and his/her academic achievement level. Empirical research exists that documents problems with the use of a discrepancy between these two factors as a means to determine if a student has an SLD (Burns & Gibbons, 2008; Fletcher et al., 2004). The most problematic issue with the DM is that students in need of additional support are identified too late (Hall, 2008). Consequently, researchers have labeled the DM a *wait to fail* approach to special education services (Burns & Gibbons, 2008). Furthermore, according to some researchers, waiting several years prior to intervening results in an accumulation of academic deficits (L. Fuchs, Fuchs, & Compton, 2010).

Resulting from the challenges experienced in special education using the DM, several changes to EHCA followed. For many years following the initial authorization of EHCA, the federal government remained silent regarding students with disabilities. However in the early and late 1990s, EHCA would undergo several reauthorizations from the federal government to address the issues surrounding the use discrepancy model (Itkonen, 2007). According to Itkonen, the initial modifications of PL-142 occurred in 1990 with a new mandate that required schools to complete an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for all students with disabilities. Additionally, in 1990 the name of PL-142 was changed from the Education of the Handicapped Act to the Individual with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Itkonen, 2007).

Following the changes in 1990, the reauthorization of IDEA in 1997 brought about several additional changes in this legislation. These modifications included the federal government requiring students with disability to participate in standardized testing for the first time (Itkonen, 2007). It appears that these changes aligned with the changes that were currently

taking place with the implementation of Goals 2000, which required all states to establish content standards and assessments to monitor student outcomes. Additionally, with a significant increase in the number of students labeled as having a SLD, the federal government was searching for alternatives to attaching struggling learners with this label (Burns & Gibbons, 2008). In response to this, IDEA introduced the notion that school sites needed to explore more effective instructional practices and whole school approaches to reduce the need to label students SLD (Wedl, 2005).

IDEA 2004. Resulting from the efficacy issues in the DM model regarding special education, researchers searched for a better alternative to use when identifying whether a student has a learning disability. Consequently, in 2004 with the reauthorization of IDEA, RtI was recognized as an option to use in determining if a student had an SLD (Mack et al., 2010). In addition to the recommendation from IDEA (2004), RtI was also identified by NCLB as a change initiative that met the goals of both NCLB and IDEA (Sansosti, Noltemeyer, & Goss, 2010). In reviewing the literature, RtI appears to be one of the few national reforms that trace its lineage to both ESEA 1965 and EAHCA 1975 (Burns & Gibbons, 2008). A resulting factor of the confirmation of RtI by the federal government is that states and districts now face the challenge of figuring out how to successfully implement RtI. Adding to the challenge of implementing RtI successfully, most recently the federal government has recommended that all states implement the CCSS by 2015 (ASCD, 2012).

While researching the historical and political context of RtI and CCSS, two noteworthy similarities have emerged. Both RtI and CCSS have been endorsed by the federal government under the ESEA, and both have been implemented on a national scale. It is now important to

examine RtI in further detail in order to build a deeper understanding about the components of RtI. Following the examination of RtI will be an examination of the new CCSS.

Response to Intervention

The origin of RtI. At the beginning of the 20th century, the American school system began to change from a one-room classroom into institutions of learning. According to Ravitch (2001), as the industrial revolution brought thousands of people into cities, the public school system faced rapid changes to educate massive numbers of children in these new communities. In the process of educating large numbers of children, schools faced the challenge of dealing with students who were not learning. It was in this environment that components of RtI began to emerge in the work of various practitioners.

Clinical teaching. During the 1920s, Marion Monroe and Samuel Orton began the concept of clinical teaching (D. Fuchs et al., 2010). The roots of RtI can be traced back to the 1930s when Samuel Orton conducted research on students who appeared to have difficulties learning to read. According to D. Fuchs et al. (2010), in the clinical teaching model, the teacher was responsible for making instructional adjustments based on how students were responding to their initial instruction. In this model, teachers would not assume one method would work for all students. Instead, teachers would search for potential solutions by adjusting their instruction to support students who were experiencing difficulties in their learning.

The role of teachers as a clinician that analyzes the needs of their students and develops plans can also be traced back to Monroe, who created a systematic process of identifying individual profiles that listed students reading errors to guide teacher's instructional approaches for remediation (D. Fuchs et al., 2010). For these reasons, according to D. Fuchs et al. (2010), it is believed that Monroe's and Orton's clinical teaching methods marks the start of special

education instruction. Fuchs et al. also noted that Monroe and Orton were implementing data-based decision making to drive instruction during a time when it was not common practice in education.

Direct instruction. According to Brownell et al. (2010), in the 1960s Engelmann and colleagues at the University of Oregon developed the direct instruction curriculum. Direct instruction was grounded in philosophies of behavior research and instruction, where researchers established specific behavioral objectives and utilized data to measure the impact of teaching on learning. This form of instruction entailed teachers taking an active role in the lesson delivery by creating a sequential and scripted process designed to help students who were experiencing difficulties learning to read. The direct instruction curriculum is supported by one of the largest, most expensive and time consuming studies conducted on instructional approaches in the U.S. (Meyer, Gersten, & Gutkin, 1983).

In 1967 the federal government conducted Project Follow Through to evaluate the effectiveness of several different instructional approaches that support economically disadvantaged students. After hearing from program designers of 20 different instructional programs, parents at each school site selected an approach to implement. The sample included 75,000 students in 170 communities and expanded over 20 years. According to Meyer et al. (1983), the results of this study revealed direct instruction as the only model that was effective with low performing students. Additionally, the direct instruction group experienced positive scores on all three (basic skills, cognitive, and affective) outcomes that were measured. Project Follow Through established direct instruction as a research-based practice that supports economically disadvantaged students.

Academic Learning Time. The third major component that RtI borrows from is the notion of Academic Learning Time (ALT). According to Carroll (1963), the time a student spends engaged in learning is the variable that determines if a student actually learns. Numerous researchers have supported the notion of ALT as a strategy to increase student success rates, which is a major component of RtI (Berliner, 1990; Brownell et al., 2010; Buffum et al., 2009; Carroll, 1963). According to Berliner (1990), the focus on ALT required teachers to have a clear focus and each minute used in a class session was devoted to helping students accomplish the focus of the lesson. The lesson in this model would proceed in clear sequence and structure with transitions between the teacher modeling the lesson first and then guiding students through the process of practicing the skill. Throughout the lesson, there would be multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning of the focus and constant checks of understanding for students to gauge the effectiveness of the learning.

Cascade model. The work of Stanley Deno was instrumental in the development two of the major components of RtI. The first was Deno's Cascade Model that outlined a continuum of services for special education students in their LRE (Buffum et al., 2009; D. Fuchs et al., 2010). This continuum of services outlined five different levels of services (home, special schools, self-contained classrooms, general education with pull-out support, and general education) to provide support for students with disabilities. In this model, educational resources were organized so that students could move from less restricted environments (general education setting) to more restrictive environments (home) depending on a student's educational needs. Deno's model was conceptualized in a five tier pyramid, similar to the tiers of interventions adopted in most RtI models.

Curriculum based measurement. The second major component that researchers traced to Stanley Deno is the development of Curriculum Based Measurements (CBMs; Brownell et al., 2010, Burns & Gibbons 2008; Buffum et al., 2009). CBMs are diagnostic tools designed to measure student progress and proficiency in the areas of reading, writing, and math. Ultimately, CBMs allow teachers to monitor their students' progress with formative assessments on an ongoing basis. According to Brownell et al. (2010), the use of CBMs allowed teachers to use assessments to analyze the effectiveness of their instruction. This form of assessment would serve as a temperature gauge to help teachers make decisions about how to adjust instruction for their students. Similar to Monroe's clinical teaching model, with CBM, teachers would use these assessments to determine the effectiveness of their teaching. This process would allow practitioners to make adjustments in their initial instruction for their students.

The contributions of the previously mentioned practitioners—Monroe, Orton, Carol, Engelmann, and Deno—provide an overview of several key practices and approaches that have supported the creation of RtI as a systematic process to support students. The convergence of their practices has been encapsulated in the creation of RtI. In concluding the review of the origins of RtI, the next sections of this literature review will present a definition of RtI and examine the suggested academic components of RtI.

RtI definition. According to the NASDSE and CASE (2006),

RtI is the practice of providing high-quality instruction and interventions matched to student need, monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about changes in instruction or goals and applying child response data to important educational decisions.

(p. 2)

RtI is a three-tiered systematic process of providing effective instruction and research-based interventions, with increasing intensity for non-learners at each tier (L. Fuchs et al., 2006; Restori et al., 2008; VanDerHeyden & Jimerson, 2005). Furthermore, because of regular progress monitoring, RtI provides increasingly intensive support for students who are not making progress in the general education classroom, similar to Stanley Deno's cascade model (Burns & Gibbons, 2008; Hall, 2008). The ability to provide this type of intensive support is accomplished when school sites ensure that their resources are organized in a multi-tiered model, which facilitates the delivery of research-based interventions to the students (D. Fuchs et al., 2010).

RtI academic core components. Despite such a national focus on RtI, there has been some variance among districts and school sites in regard to the components of RtI used at individual school sites (Harr-Robins et al., 2009; Hoover et al., 2008). In light of the variance it is important to identify the academic core components most agreed upon by most researchers in the literature:

1. Multi-tiered framework for instruction and intervention
2. Research-based instruction
3. Standard protocol approach
4. Problem solving approach
5. Universal screening
6. Progress monitoring

Multi-tiered intervention. RtI systematically organizes the resources necessary to support student learning into three tiers. This organization of resources is the source of RtI's strength. By organizing school resources into three tiers, schools are able to ensure a more systematic approach to prevention and intervention. Within each tier, students are provided with

increasingly intensive support when assessment data reveals students are not learning (Brownell et al., 2010; Mack et al., 2010). In theory, when done effectively, RtI provides students with multiple opportunities to learn prior to being referred for special education, and also works to prevent students from experiencing further failure as they progress through each tier (Buffum, Mattos, & Weber, 2009).

Tier I. The goal of Tier 1 is to prevent failure and ensure the greatest number of students experience success by providing them with the most effective instructional practices available. Tier 1 is designed for the general education setting and its success hinges on providing scientifically proven practices that will yield positive results for 80-100% of all students (Burns & Gibbons, 2008; L. Fuchs et al., 2006; Horowitz, 2005; NASDSE & CASE, 2006). The goal of Tier I, which is the core program, is to ensure that students are successful after initial instruction has been provided. When Tier 1 successfully supports a large majority of students, resources are available to support students in Tier II and Tier III who are in need of more intense support. If the percentage of students experiencing difficulty in Tier 1 increases above 30%, it immediately impacts the availability of resources available to support students who are experiencing academic difficulties at subsequent tiers (Buffum et al., 2009). This consideration requires school sites to implement instructional practices in the tier I program to ensure success for the majority of students.

Tier II. Despite the implementation of research based practices in the core program (Tier I), a percentage of students will still experience challenges in learning (Vellutino et al., 1996), and Tier II is designed to provide support for these students. By incorporating small group settings and providing scientifically based intervention, Tier II is designed to provide additional time and practice for students who are experiencing difficulty in the core program. According to

NASDSE and CASE (2006), in the RtI model, school sites will need to prepare to provide Tier II interventions to approximately 15-20% of their students. The ultimate goal of Tier II is to provide students the extra help and time needed to access the core curriculum being taught (Burns & Gibbons, 2008; L. Fuchs et al., 2006; Horowitz, 2005; NASDSE & CASE, 2006).

Tier III. Tier III is designed to provide not only support, but also accelerated learning for students who are in need of intensive support. Similar to Tier II intervention, Tier III provides students with small group instruction. However, at this stage, teachers begin to focus more on individual deficits and the specific learning needs of students. Students who continue to show minimal or no progress in Tier III are considered for special education (Burns & Gibbons, 2008; L. Fuchs et al., 2006, Horowitz, 2005; NASDSE & CASE, 2006).

Researched based practices. In order to maximize student learning at all three tiers, a key component of RtI is providing research-based instruction within each tier. In other words, in order to increase student success it is recommended that schools align their practices with what research has found to effectively support student learning. According to Hall (2008), “aligning with the research means making a commitment to follow the recommendations from eminent reviews, such as the National Reading Panel report” (pp. 38-39). This process requires teachers to provide students with instruction that is evidence-based and implemented according to the recommendations from leading researchers in the field of education (D. Fuchs et al., 2010). Instruction that has demonstrated proven results helps to ensure that the majority of students are successful in Tier 1 and also provides support for students experiencing learning failure in subsequent tiers.

Standard-protocol approach. Traditionally, RtI has been offered in two models: the standard protocol approach and the problem-solving model. A standard protocol approach to RtI

involves the utilization of the same research-based intervention for all students within similar performance levels. According to D. Fuchs and Fuchs (2006), a standard protocol approach has some benefits in comparison with the problem solving model. The first has to do with the ease of providing professional development to support teachers in how to effectively implement the intervention. Secondly, the standard protocol approach ensures that large numbers of students have access to a research-based intervention. Additionally, since all interventions are predetermined, teachers do not have to spend time figuring out which intervention to utilize for each student.

Problem solving approach. The second approach to RtI involves a problem solving approach (PSA) to interventions. According to Burns and Gibbons (2008), the PSA requires a teacher to follow a five-step approach (identification, analysis, development, implementation and evaluations) to assigning students to interventions. Within the PSA teachers work to first identify the problem students are experiencing and secondly analyze potential causes. Once teachers identify the causes of the problem, an intervention is developed and implemented for the students (Burns & Gibbons, 2008; D. Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). Throughout this process the students are closely monitored and evaluated to determine if they are making progress (D. Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). If the student isn't responding to the intervention, modifications are implemented. When students fail to respond to intervention, more intense interventions are implemented (Burns & Gibbons, 2008; Hall, 2008; D. Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006).

Universal screening. According to NASDSE and CASE (2006), a core component of RtI is to intervene early with students who are at risk of academic failure. The preventative nature of this component is to identify students who are potentially at risk of experiencing academic failure as early as possible by utilizing universal screening assessments. Universal

screening entails all students undergoing a series of assessments at the start of the school year as a means to identify students at risk of academic failure (D. Fuchs et al., 2010; Mellard, McKnight, & Woods, 2009). According to Mellard et al. (2009), universal screening is the first step schools should utilize in determining which students will need interventions.

Typically, in completing universal screening, schools assess their entire student body by administering ELA and math assessment tools to identify performance levels for all students (California Department of Education, 2009; NASDSE & CASE, 2006). Once this is completed, a second round of assessments is conducted to determine if students who appear to be in need of intervention have been correctly identified (L. Fuchs et al., 2010). The importance of the second round of assessments is to ensure that only students, who are in need of intervention receive services. Once students have been identified, they are immediately referred for intervention and their progress is monitored regularly (Mellard et al., 2009).

A number of researchers (Case, Speece, & Molloy, 2003; Burns & Senesac, 2005; VanDerHeyden, Witt & Naquin, 2003; Vaughn, Linan-Thompson, & Hickman, 2003) have suggested the importance of universal screening for identifying students in need of additional support. For example, two research studies, one conducted by Vellutino et al. (1996) and one conducted by Torgesen et al. (1999), showed that early identification and intense intervention have promise in supporting impaired readers in developing grade level reading skills. In both of these studies, the researchers initiated the intervention by using a universal screening tool to diagnose students who were at risk of reading failure. VanDerHeyden et al. (2003) suggested that universal screening was an effective and efficient method of identifying students at-risk of reading failure. Additionally, VanDerHeyden et al.'s research concluded that the use of universal screening tools offers a more accurate approach to identifying at-risk students in comparison to

teacher referrals. In viewing the research studies to support RtI, it appears that the use of universal screening to identify students who are at risk of academic failure is essential for any form of remediation. Considering the importance of universal screening, it is the intent of this research to provide support for practitioners conducting universal screening for schools using the CCSS for ELA.

Progress monitoring. Once universal screening is complete and students who are at risk of academic failure have been identified, researchers have suggested that monitoring the progress of these students in their areas of weakness (e.g., math, reading, spelling) is essential to their remediation (Burns & Gibbons, 2008). Multiple researchers (Burns & Gibbons, 2008; D. Fuchs et al., 2010; Mellard et al., 2009) have suggested this practice, known as progress monitoring, in the attempt to support at-risk learners. According to the California Department of Education (CDE, 2009), progress monitoring is the process of teachers and school staff using assessment “data to determine the effectiveness of the acceleration or intervention” (p. vi) in order to make adjustments or modifications when needed. Additionally, Burns and Gibbons (2008) have suggested that progress monitoring should occur more frequently for students who are farther from reaching the benchmark level. Since students who are assigned to intervention are already identified as at risk of academic failure, Burns and Gibbons believe it is essential that teachers monitor their progress frequently in order to adjust instruction when students are experiencing any sign of academic failure.

RtI: Analysis. When reviewing the research on RtI, numerous researchers (Burns & Gibbons, 2008; Case et al., 2003; Burns & Senesac, 2005; Mellard et al., 2009; VanDerHeyden et al., 2003; Vaughn et al., 2003) have suggested that progress monitoring is an essential component of supporting students who are at risk of academic failure in ELA. A meta-analysis

conducted by L. Fuchs and Fuchs (1986) examining 23 studies on formative assessments concluded that the use of systematic formative evaluation procedures resulted in enhanced student performance for students with mild learning disabilities. L. Fuchs and Fuchs's research also suggested that the implication of this meta-analysis supports the importance of frequent progress monitoring of students with learning deficits.

The previously mentioned components are the key components of RtI listed in the research literature. According to D. Fuchs et al. (2010), the most important factor in accelerating learning for students performing several years below grade level is using these components interdependently; this is an example of the systematic approach of RtI. When teachers ensure the use of validated instructional practices and conduct frequent progress monitoring of student outcomes, the research suggest that overall student success is increased. Given this example, a teacher would provide constant progress monitoring of students who are receiving research based interventions, and students who are not responding are identified early and alternative interventions are implemented. Universal screening and progress monitoring, combined with the implementation of research based instructional strategies, provide the foundation of RtI within each of the three tiers.

RtI in California. It was not until 4 year after the Reauthorization of IDEA in 2004, that the California Department of Education began the initial stage of implementing RtI statewide. According to Harr-Robins et al. (2009), California decided to delay the implementation of RtI in order to build an appropriate foundation for statewide success. Consequently, in 2008, California issued the following statement in regard to RtI:

RtI2 is a systematic, data-driven approach to instruction that benefits every student. RtI2 integrates resources from general education, categorical programs, and special education

through a comprehensive system of core instruction and tiered levels of interventions to benefit every student. (CDE, 2011, p. 5)

California extended RtI to RtI2, and with the goal of accentuating the importance of both instruction and intervention within the RtI framework (CDE, 2011). Additionally, CDE recommended several additional key program components for educators in California that are relevant to this study: namely the importance of leadership, fidelity of implementation and professional development. These three considerations are in addition to the previous five components mentioned earlier. According to the CDE (2011), “California’s Ten Core Components were designed to make clear the elements of cohesive Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI2) processes” (p. 8). For the purpose of this study, this review will briefly discuss the additional components that are relevant to the research questions.

Leadership. CDE cites leadership as a critical component of effective implementation of RtI2, and research conducted on school sites has revealed similar findings (Burn & Gibbons, 2008; Duffy, 2007; Hall, 2008). Additionally, CDE (2011) also recommended the creation of leadership teams to develop interventions, monitor school wide achievement data, and support ongoing professional development. Also, the need for leadership teams has been a key finding in case studies conducted on RtI2 at the secondary level (Duffy & Scala 2012; National High School Center, National Center on Response to Intervention, & Center on Instruction, 2010).

Fidelity. CDE (2011) described fidelity as a crucial component to RtI2 implementation. Several researchers have suggested that fidelity of interventions and curriculum has been a challenge posed by implementation of RtI2 (Burns & Gibbons, 2008). According to CDE, fidelity is a critical component because when interventions are implemented inconsistently or indifferent to the prescribed manner, it becomes problematic to determine possible causes of

student failure. The second issue that CDE identified in regards to fidelity is that it is a crucial component in the analysis of assessments. According to the CDE, a lack of fidelity threatens and reduces the reliability of assessments, which are critical in monitoring the progress of students.

Professional development. According to CDE (2011), effective implementation of RtI2 also requires effective professional development to support the expanding and changing roles of staff members. This includes administrators, teachers, counselors, school psychologists, para-educators, and support personnel. Research conducted by Sansosti, Telzrow, and Noltemeyer (2010) in implementation of RtI2 determined that staff capacity can be a major barrier to the implementation of RtI. This research reinforces California's decision to include professional development as a major component of rti2.

Many researchers believe that RtI is an effective systematic approach to ensure at-risk learners are provided the necessary supports to be successful in school. The three-tiered approach research suggests organizing school resources to provide a systematic response when student are identified as at-risk. Additionally, the assessment practices of universal screening and progress monitoring provide for early identification of at-risk students and also an effective mechanism to monitor them throughout their remediation process. These are the best practices that can be identified when reviewing the literature on RtI. The next section of this literature review will provide a historical overview and examination of the CCSS for ELA.

Origin/Impetus for CCSS

Standards-based instruction. Prior to examining the historical literature, it is important to note that many definitions appear in the literature when attempting to develop a working knowledge of standards-based instruction. According to the National Academy of Education (2009), there is great confusion in education circles in attempting to develop an operational

definition of what is meant by the term *standard*. In an attempt to provide clarity, it is helpful to identify the three acceptable meanings of standards-based instruction found in the literature. During this review of standards-based instruction, an attempt will be made to also trace the development of standards-based instruction to previous reforms in the U.S.

The first definition, *content or academic standards*, describes what teachers should teach specifically and what students should learn. This form of standards-based instruction entails a clear focus for teachers as to what subject matter should be covered and mastered by their students. It is important to note that this is the definition that will be utilized in this review of the literature. The second definition, performance standards, defines what level of mastery should students attained in specific subject matter covered in classrooms (Hamilton, Stecher, & Yuan, 2008; National Academy of Education, 2009; National Council on Education Standards and Testing [NCEST], 1992; Ravitch, 1995). According to Ravitch (1995), the measurement of student mastery in these subject areas typically involves the use of standardized test to assess student achievement levels. Ravitch proposed that performance standards also include more authentic assessments such as essays, science projects, and group assignments. The final form of standard involves what has come to be known as *Opportunity-to-Learn* or *School Delivery Standards*. According to the 1992 report by the National Council on Educational Standards and Testing (NCEST, 1992), Opportunity-to-Learn Standards refer to what services, programs, and opportunities should schools provide to support students in meeting high academic standards. It appears that Opportunity-to-Learn Standards attempt to define what resources should be offered to all students to ensure access to a high quality education. The NCEST suggested that Opportunity-to-Learn Standards are necessary to address equity concerns in education.

History of academic standards. The following sections will present an overview of the history of academic standards in the United States.

Pre-1900s. According to Horn and Raymond (2004), standardized testing can be traced back to Horace Mann, Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, who was recorded as the first to use standardized testing in schools in the U.S. However, Goertz (2009) asserted that standards for public education in the U.S. can be traced further back to the Founding Fathers. In examining Article 83 of the New Hampshire constitution of 1783, Goertz identified that the Founding Fathers listed as a focus of education to promote the arts, sciences, commerce, trade, and history of the United States. In examining the Goertz reference to Article 83, it can be concluded that the Founding Fathers had an opinion as to what students should be taught in public schools in America.

In reviewing the historical literature, a more intentional attempt to develop national standards first appeared in 1893 with what has come to be known as the Committee of Ten. According to Horn and Raymond (2004), the Committee of Ten was appointed by the National Education Association with the goal of developing a national curriculum. In essence, what the Committee of Ten attempted to accomplish was a national curriculum that was available to all students in America (Goertz, 2009; Horn & Raymond, 2004). This national curriculum would be available for both students who would attend college and those who would enter the workforce after school. In examining the literature, it appears that the initial discussion about equity in education started with the goals set forth by the Committee of Ten.

1950s-1970s. After Russia launched Sputnik, the first human-made satellite to orbit the Earth, many believed that the U.S. appeared to be losing the space race to the moon (Bracey, 2007; Jolly, 2009; Tröhler, 2010). According to Bracey (2007), as people began contemplating

the reasons why the U.S. was losing its competitive edge, eventually criticism turned to the public education system. The criticism centered around the thought that the public school system was falling short of producing enough engineers and scientists to compete with other nations. Additionally, it was thought that schools needed to offer more science, technology, and math classes (Bracey, 2007; Jolly, 2009; Tröhler, 2010). In response to this idea, the National Defense Act was initiated in 1957 by the federal government to provide additional funding for an increased focus on technology, foreign language, math, and science in public education. Although the launch of Sputnik began a discussion that moved schools to focus more on improving outcomes in education, the challenges presented by the civil rights movement during the 1960s and 1970s would occupy the nation's attention in regard to public education through the next 2 decades (Goertz, 2009; Jolly, 2009).

NAEP testing. Following the 1950s, the next 2 decades of education reform evolved around civil rights issues pertaining to students of color and students with disabilities (Goertz, 2009; Jolly, 2009). Even though civil rights issues appear as the focus of education reform during this period, it is important to note that the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) was created within this period of time. According to Ravitch (1995), the initiation of NAEP testing in the 1960s was marked by public concerns of it paving the way for a national curriculum, a national testing program, and increased federal control of education. As *accountability* became the new buzzword of the 1980s, many in education viewed the NAEP as a model that states could use to develop their own tests to measure quality of public education (Ravitch, 1995). It appears that the NAEP served as the first model for states to follow in developing their own standardized tests to assess the progress of their educational systems. By

the end of the 1980s, eight southern states had developed state tests similar to the NAEP in order to measure student performance.

1980s. In the early 1980s, the Reagan administration's focus on excellence versus equity would come to characterize education reform (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009; Ravitch, 2010; Spring, 2010). It was under this focus on excellence versus equity that the Reagan Administration formed the National Commission on Excellence in Education that produced the *A Nation at Risk* report. According to Horn and Raymond (2004), in response to the negative findings of this report, the goal of excellence in education followed, and, as a byproduct, the country started the process of exploring options to better measure outcomes in the public education system.

Resulting from *A Nation at Risk*, many states began exploring options to create their own state standards (Hamilton et al., 2008). Under the leadership of State Superintendent Bill Honig, California developed a standards-based framework for each subject area (Hamilton et al., 2008; Ravitch, 1995). This initial attempt at standards-based instruction was developed around *big ideas* of what all students should learn in each subject area. According to Ravitch (1995), Honig's work in California influenced policymakers in the Bush and Clinton administrations in their efforts to develop national standards in the early 1990s.

1990s. In the 1990s, momentum would build toward the development of national academic standards (Goertz, 2009). As mentioned earlier, *A Nation at Risk* resulted in numerous states working toward developing their own academic standards. This momentum resulted in President Bush calling an education summit in 1989 in Charlottesville, Virginia to develop a plan to implement national standards (Deville & Chalhoub-Deville, 2011; Goertz, 2009; Hamilton et

al., 2008). According to Hamilton et al. (2008), the following goals for public education, which have come to be known as Goals 2000, resulted from the education summit:

- By the year 2000, every child must start school ready to learn.
- The United States must increase the high school graduation rate to no less than 90%.
And we are going to make sure our schools' diplomas mean something.
- In critical subjects—at the 4th, 8th, and 12th grades—we must assess our students' performance
- By the year 2000, U.S. students must be first in the world in math and science achievement.
- Every American adult must be a skilled, literate worker and citizen.
- Every school must offer the kind of disciplined environment that makes it possible for our kids to learn. And every school in America must be drug-free. (p.)

In order to accomplish these goals, the members of the summit recommended the development of national standards with the enactment of Goals 2000 (Brown, 2009; Goertz, 2009). Unfortunately, the challenge with this proposal was that it lacked a clear plan of how to implement national standards (Ravitch, 1995). During the conference it had not been decided as to who was responsible for developing these standards or who would create the new assessments to measure these new standards. In response to this ambiguity, President Bush turned to professional organizations to build consensus around what students should learn and the development of what has come to be known as “voluntary national standards” (Ravitch, 1995, p.). Some believe this ambiguity was the reason why this initial attempt at national standards was unsuccessful (Goertz, 2009).

Learning from the challenges faced by Bush and a failed attempt at getting national standards for social studies approved by Congress, the Clinton administration pursued a different approach to the development of national standards (Ravitch, 1995). According to Goertz (2009), the Clinton administration took a “carrot and stick” (p. 8) approach to implementing academic standards. The Clinton administration used the Reauthorization of ESEA of 1994 to require all states receiving federal funds to develop their own state standards and assessments to measure student outcomes in public education (Brown, 2009; Hamilton et al., 2008). Resulting from this path, by the year 2000 all 50 states created their own state standards and assessments to measure students’ progress, a step that created a framework for the development of NCLB (2001).

Standards in California. California is listed as one of the first states to initiate systematic reform to create a foundation for the development of content standards (Hamilton et al., 2008; Ravitch, 1995). As mentioned earlier, under the leadership of Bill Honig as state superintendent of public instruction, California developed frameworks for ELA built on the *big ideas* that should be covered in ELA. According to Hamilton et al. (2008), during this time period, California also developed state assessments to measure student progress. Additionally, in 1997, California adopted its first set of academic content standards (CDE, 2013). According to research conducted by the Fordham Institute (as cited in Carmichael, Martino, Porter-Magee & Wilson, 2010), the standards California created in 1997 are still among the strongest in the nation in terms of clarity, content, and rigor. This research concluded that these standards were also superior to the new CCSS for ELA being implemented elsewhere across the nation. When examining the literature on the early standards-based reforms develop in California, it appears that California has led many facets of education reform in America. Many believe these early

reform efforts adopted in California during the 1990s served as a blueprint for the development of academic standards nationwide (Hamilton et al., 2008)

When examining the historical literature, it appears that there has been great opposition to the development of national standards. For example, in the 1990s, the initial attempts to develop national history standards were criticized by conservatives who felt that the national standards portrayed a negative slant on American history and the national English standards were criticized for a lack of attention to grammar and literature, while deemphasizing content and stressing process (Brown, 2009). Additionally, the math standards created in 1989 by the National Council of Teacher of Mathematics were scrutinized in 1995 because of their increased focus on problem solving and higher order thinking skills (Brown, 2009; Goertz, 2009). According to Brown (2009), throughout all stages of development, the standards-based movement has involved politics and resistance. However, it now appears that as the country moves toward implementation of the CCSS, public opinion has become more receptive toward national standards. According to the National Academy of Education (2009), there is increased political support for national standards in the United States. This may be a result of 43 states signing on to adopt the new CCSS for ELA and mathematics, which marks a difference in comparison to the initial efforts in the 1990s to develop consensus around national standards.

2000s. Appearing in the literature shortly after the implementation of NCLB 2001, many critics began to surface, challenging the validity of standardized testing (Ravitch, 2010; Rentschler, 2006; Rothstein, 2004). The initial criticism centered on the inability of standardized tests to support higher order thinking skills and also the disparities that existed in how states defined proficiency (ASCD, 2012). As this initial criticism increased, data begin to emerge in support of the notion that NCLB was not resulting in any significant improvements in student

achievement (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). According to a report published by the U.S. Department of Education (2008), reading scores of fourth graders in public education remained stagnant during the first 4 years of NCLB, despite a significant increase in educational funding. Additionally, the report by the U.S. Department of Education noted that fourth grade proficiency rates for reading in 2004 was just slightly improved, in comparison to fourth grade proficiency rates in 1983, when *A Nation at Risk* was initially published.

Additionally, policymakers and practitioners began identifying the discrepancies in how individual states defined proficiency (ASCD, 2012; Ravitch, 2010; Rothman, 2012; Rothstein, 2004). Considering that the proficiency targets developed by NCLB placed increased accountability on the academic performance of all students, many states established less rigorous standards and minimal proficiency cut scores on their standardized testing. These discrepancies are evident the performance of fourth grade students on state level assessments in comparison to the NAEP. According to Ravitch (2010), there are noticeable disparities when one examines the NAEP scores in comparison to the proficiency levels reported by individual states. For example, in 2005, Tennessee reported that 90% of its fourth grade students scored proficient on their reading assessment; however, only 26% of these students scored proficient on the NAEP. Similarly, North Carolina also reported in 2005 that 86% of their fourth graders scored proficient in reading, yet only 28% of this fourth grade class scored proficient by on the NAEP (Rothman, 2012). Based on the disparities evident in NAEP testing results, there was a need to create a level of consistency in determining student achievement levels on a national scale (Quay, 2010).

Additionally, as concerns about NCLB began to surface, America's performance on international assessments continued to decline over the past decade. According to the NGA et al. (2008), over the last decade fourth grade students declined from 12th to 15th in math and from

sixth to 11th in science in comparison to other countries around the world based on the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), which assesses the mathematics and science knowledge of fourth and eighth grade students internationally. Similar to TIMSS is the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), an international assessment that measures 15 year-old students in reading, mathematics, and science. According to the NGA et al., 15 year-old students in the U.S. ranked 25th in math and 21st in science based on PISA scores in 2005.

Furthermore, the NGA et al. (2008) concluded that PISA and TIMSS scores of American students do not imply that its public education system is getting worse, but that the American public education system has remained the same over the past 20 years. During this same period, nations that at one time trailed behind have experienced rapid improvement.

College and Career Readiness

Simultaneously, while concerns regarding education under NCLB were mounting, in the past decade, the higher education and industry sectors have reported that a large percentage of students graduating from public education in America are ill prepared for both the workforce and college. Multiple researchers and organizations have highlighted this phenomenon in the literature (Achieve, Inc., The Education Trust, & Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, 2004; Conley, 2007; NGA et al., 2008; Rothman, 2012; Westover & Hatton, 2011). As recently as 2008, ACT (2008) reported that only one in five high school graduates is college ready or prepared for entry level college work. In terms of career readiness, surveys conducted by the Manpower Group (2011) found that in 2011 52% of U.S. employers reported having difficulty finding qualified applicants. This phenomenon has been described as a skills gap that exists currently in the U.S. (Achieve, Inc., 2012; Friedman, 2007; Manpower Group, 2011). In

response to the challenges associated with NCLB and the lack of College and Career Readiness (CCR) skills of graduating seniors, policymakers during the previous decade began the process of considering options to ensure that a high school diploma equates to CCR for American students (Achieve, Inc., 2012; ACT, 2008; NGA et al., 2008).

Several researchers have concluded that the lack of achievement for many American students can be traced to practices in high schools, which oftentimes does not align with the practices of colleges and universities (Achieve, Inc., 2012; Conley, 2007; Hyslop & Tucker, 2012; Westover & Hatton, 2011). An example of this lack of alignment that currently exists has been emphasized in research conducted by David Conley. According to Conley (2007), high school teachers typically focus on literature, fictional characters, and storylines. In contrast, college professors tend to focus more effort on informational text, analytical skills, and writing to persuade or inform. Conley has concluded that because of the differences that exist in terms of focus, high school competency does not necessarily equate to college readiness. Furthermore, Conley asserted that this phenomenon reveals contradicting expectations between these two entities.

In defining the concept of CCR, researchers throughout the literature cite the work of David Conley for his domains of CCR (Westover & Hatton, 2011). According to Conley (2007), CCR addresses four key domains that students must have to be successful in college. These areas, termed the *big four* by Conley, represent the four domains that public education must address in order to adequately prepare students for college: cognitive strategies, content knowledge, self management knowledge, and knowledge about postsecondary education.

The first of the four domains addressed by Conley (2007) entails key cognitive strategies, which describes a student's ability to conduct research, problem solve, and interpret information

(Conley, 2007; Westover & Hatton, 2011). Second of the four domains is key content knowledge, which describes a student's ability to read and purposefully write about complex textual information, in addition to a deep understanding of algebra. Academic behaviors include students' study skills and ability to self-monitor their own behavior. The final domain is a student's knowledge and ability to guide him/her through the challenges of the college system and interact in an academic setting. Since students typically have varying skill levels in each of the four domains, Conley suggested that schools develop comprehensive programs to address these four domains intentionally (Conley, 2007; Westover & Hatton, 2011).

In addressing the goal of CCR, multiple researchers have emphasized the importance of aligning high school practices to what is expected of students in college and careers (Achieve, Inc., et al., 2004; Conley, 2007; Hyslop & Tucker, 2012; Westover & Hatton, 2011). In support of this goal, Achieve Inc. et al. (2004) initiated the American Diploma Project (ADP) with the goal of identifying the English and math skills necessary for students to perform successfully at the university level and also in the working world (Achieve, Inc. et al., 2004; Westover & Hatton, 2011). According to Achieve, Inc. et al., the ultimate goal of the ADP was to create alignment between what is taught and expected of students in high school, college, and a career. At the conclusion of two years of collaborating and discussing this concept with high school teachers, college professors, and employers, the ADP partnership released the CCR Benchmarks.

The CCR Benchmarks developed by the ADP described the skills high school graduates need to master in order to be prepared for the rigors of college level coursework and the demands of a career (Achieve, Inc. et al., 2004; Westover & Hatton, 2011). The ADP benchmarks included eight strands that included literature, informational text, communication skills, writing,

media, logic, language, and research. These standards, created by Achieve, Inc., served as the foundation of the development of the CCSS (Achieve, Inc. et al., 2004; NGA et al., 2008).

The Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI) was first launched in June 2010, led by the NGA and the CCSSO, with the goal of creating CCR standards for public education (ASCD, 2012; McGraw-Hill Education, 2011; National Education Association, 2013). The process of developing these new standards was a joint project between the NGA, CCSSO, Achieve, Inc., the Alliance for Excellence in Education, and the James B. Hunt Jr. Institute for Educational Leadership and Policy (NGA et al., 2008). The focus of policymakers was to develop new standards and assessments, with the intent of addressing the challenge of CCR and improving the competitiveness of children in America for the 21st century global economy (Achieve, Inc., 2012; Conley, 2007; NGA et al., 2008). This focus is also shared by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills.

Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21)

In 2002, The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21) was founded, bringing together leaders from education, business and political settings, all with the goal of 21st century readiness for students in America. According to P21 (2014), its goal is to start a national discussion about the significance of 21st century skills for all students in America. Resulting from the work conducted by P21, a 21st century framework was created that describes four components and a list of skills that students should master in order to achieve success in the 21st century. The four components developed by P21 are (a) core subjects and 21st century themes; (b) learning and innovation skills; (c) information, media, and technology skills; (d) and life and career skills. additionally, P21 identifies the importance of 21st century support systems to provide connections in the classrooms to this 21st century framework.

Core subjects and 21st century themes. Within this component of the 21st Century Framework, P21 (2014) identifies nine core academic subjects, and indicates that math, English, science, and history are essential for all students in the 21st century. Additionally, P21 (2014) lists the skills of global awareness, financial, economic, business, entrepreneurial literacy, and civic and environmental literacy as important skills for students to acquire.

Learning and innovation skills. This component within the P21 Framework represents the critical skills that define students who are prepared for the 21st century. According to P21 (2014), skills such as creativity, innovation, thinking creatively, and the ability to work creatively with others and implement innovations comprise this component. Critical thinking (including the ability to reason effectively and the use of systems thinking) and problem solving are additional important skills that are represented in this component of the P21 Framework.

Information, media, and technology skills. This component of the P21 Framework highlights the importance of technology and its involvement in every area of life in the 21st century. According to P21 (2014), in order for students to be successful in the 21st century, they must exhibit a wide range of skills in connection with mastering information and technology, including skills that assist students in accessing, evaluating and managing information, as well as media literacy, which involves analyzing media and creating media products. Lastly, informational, communication, and technology literacy are described as supporting students' ability to apply technology effectively.

Life and career skills. According to P21 (2014), this component of the 21st Century Framework reinforces the importance of the necessary life skills to be successful in a complex and globally competitive environment. Skills listed within this component of the framework emphasize the importance of flexibility and adaptability to various roles and responsibilities.

Also listed under the life and career skills component of the P21 Framework are initiative and self-direction, which are necessary in order to work independently and manage goals and time. This component also includes the skill of being a self-directed learner, as well as social and cross-cultural skills, the ability to interact effectively with others, and the ability to work effectively in diverse teams. The last skill, productivity and accountability, addresses the ability to manage projects, produce results, and lead others.

21st century support systems. According to P21, 21st century support systems describe the important systems required to support students in mastering the skills included in the P21 Framework. The five critical support systems are:

- 21st century standards
- 21st century assessments
- 21st century curriculum and instruction
- 21st century professional development
- 21st century learning environments

P21 expresses the need for alignment of all five support systems to the 21st Century Framework, in order to support students in mastering the specific skills it describes. The 21st Century Framework requires an innovative approach to organizing standards, assessments, professional development, curriculum, and instruction in order to support students in mastering critical skills that are necessary to prepare them for the 21st century.

Common Core State Standards (English Language Arts)

In order to ensure a succinct overview of the CCSS, this section will review the five major ELA strands, in addition to the organizational plan to link each standard to an anchor standard to ensure CCR. Considerable time will also be given to reviewing the new computer-

based assessments developed by the SBAC and also the major instructional shifts recommended in the literature. When examining the new format for assessments and the instructional shifts for ELA, a clearer picture can be created to identify the potential impact that the implementation of CCSS will have on the academic components of RtI. Additionally, this section will examine several of the potential challenges and benefits listed in the literature regarding the CCSS for ELA.

As previously mentioned, one of the primary reasons for the development of the CCSS was to ensure that a high school diploma is aligned with standards that researchers have agreed promote CCR (Achieve, Inc. et al., 2004; Conley, 2007; Hyslop & Tucker, 2012; Westover & Hatton, 2011). In order to accomplish this goal, Achieve, Inc. (2010) has noted that the developers who worked on the CCSS utilized the ADP benchmarks as a blueprint to align the skills to develop college and career ready students. The ADP CCR benchmarks served as an anchor to ensure that all of the standards created for the CCSS were clearly aligned with the skills needed for students to be successful in college and in entry-level careers.

Initially, in a review of the CCSS, they do not appear much different than the current ELA standards that are in place, depending on the state. In research conducted by the Fordham Institute (as cited in Carmichael et al., 2010), it was determined that many states currently have standards superior or equal to CCSS in regards to rigor and complexity. Additionally, the researchers concluded that three states—California, Indiana, and the District of Columbia—have standards that are superior to the CCSS for ELA. However, what appears to separate the CCSS for ELA from previous standards depends how each standard is anchored in the skills needed for students to be CCR. An additional difference involve the new assessments developed by SBAC, which will now measure not only content knowledge, but also a student's level of CCR. In other

words, the new assessments developed by SBAC are no longer designed to measure only a student's proficiency of each standard, but also the CCR skills linked to each standard.

Common Core State Standards and California

As stated earlier, California selected with 43 other states to implement the CCSS in both ELA and also mathematics. In August of 2010, the California State Board of education voted to adopt the CCSS for both ELA and mathematics. According to the CDE (2013), this vote demonstrated California's commitment to provide all students with a quality 21st century education. Additionally, CDE asserted that stakeholders throughout California are engaged in the process of examining their current practices and making preparation for the fall of 2015 when the CCSS will be fully implemented.

The CDE (2013) also developed an implementation plan to support LEAs in their efforts to implement the CCSS. According to CDE (2013), this plan was designed to provide a clear pathway of activities LEAs were suggested to follow in California in order to implement the CCSS by 2015. Additionally, the following guiding strategies were selected by CDE and suggested to LEAs in the process of implementing the CCSS:

1. Facilitate high quality professional learning opportunities for educators to ensure that every student has access to teachers who are prepared to teach to the levels of rigor and depth required by the CCSS.
2. Provide CCSS-aligned instructional resources designed to meet the diverse needs of all students.
3. Develop and transition to CCSS-aligned assessment systems to inform instruction, establish priorities for professional learning, and provide tools for accountability.

4. Collaborate with parents, guardians, and the early childhood and expanded learning communities to integrate the CCSS into programs and activities beyond the K-12 school setting.
5. Collaborate with the postsecondary and business communities and additional stakeholders to ensure that all students are prepared for success in career and college.
6. Seek, create, and disseminate resources to support stakeholders as CCSS systems implementation moves forward.
7. Design and establish systems of effective communication among stakeholders to continuously identify areas of need.

California's plan was to phase in the standards over the course of 4 years in order to give adequate time for LEAs to build staff capacity. Additionally, CDE (2013) selected a three-phase approach for each of the guiding strategies to outline each phase of the transition process to the new CCSS. The first is the awareness phase, which involves introducing the new standards and starting the collaboration process for planning purposes LEAs. The next phase is the transition phase, where California would focus on building resources, conducting needs assessments, and providing professional development in order to build the capacity of staff to implement the new standards effectively. In the final phase of implementation, CDE plans to increase professional development opportunities for staff members, introduce new curriculum sources, and assessments in preparation for the 2015 implementation.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards

In reviewing the ELA standards, it is important to note that these standards were built on a CCR framework (Achieve, Inc., 2010; CCSSI, n.d.a; NGA et al., 2008). In order to preserve this focus, the developers of the CCSS developed college and career anchor standards for each of

the five strands for ELA. These anchor standards define the essential skills needed for students to have success in college and the workforce (Achieve, Inc., 2010; Common Core State Standards Initiative [CCSSI], n.d.b, n.d.c; CDE, 2013). Additionally, these anchor standards are embedded throughout all grade levels to provide a foundation for K-12 teaching and learning of the ELA Standards (CCSSI, n.d.b, n.d.c; CDE, 2013).

The CCSS for ELA are organized by grades level standards for reading, writing, speaking/listening, and language (CCSSI, n.d.b, n.d.c). Figure 1 provides an organizational chart that displays the connection of standard two and three for Reading Literature (RL) in elementary for both kindergarten and first grade. The anchor standards are listed above to show the connection of each grade level standard with the coinciding anchor standard. There is an anchor standard for all standards in the areas of reading, writing, speaking/listening, and language (CCSSI, n.d.b, n.d.c; CDE, 2013).

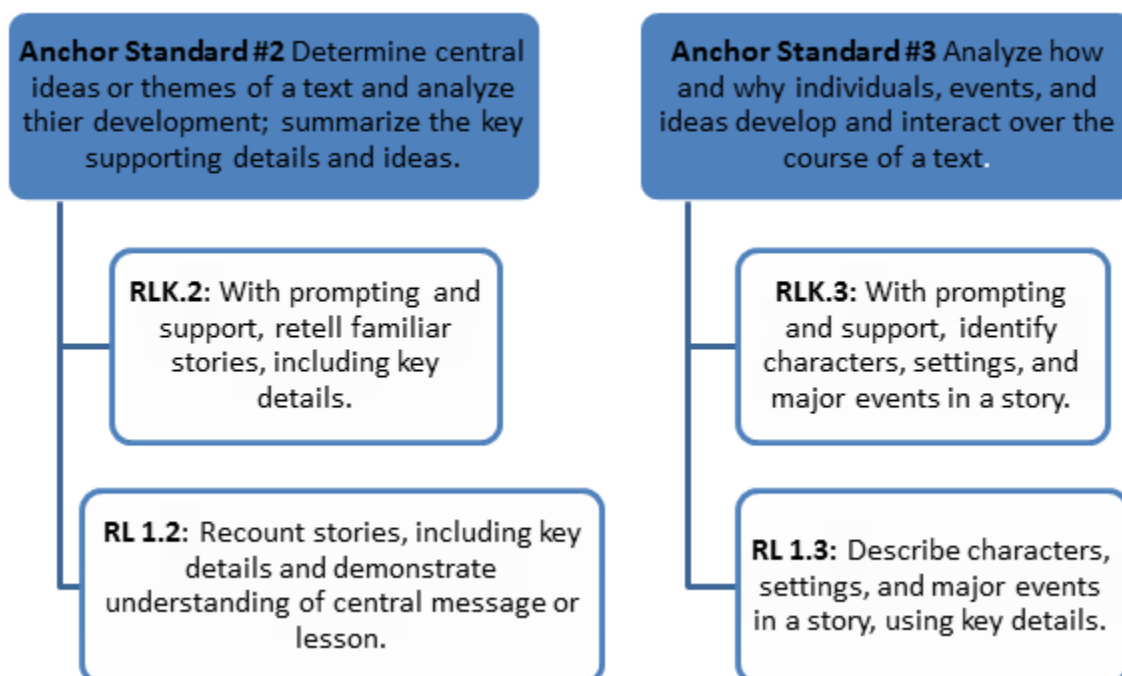


Figure 1. CCR anchor standards for reading: Key ideas and details.

In examining Figure 1, the anchor standards at the top of the figure describes the expectations in regards to the skills necessary for students to be considered college- and-career ready (CCSSI, n.d.b, n.d.c; CDE, 2013). The standards at each grade level provide what is referred to in the literature as a *staircase of complexity*, where the designated skills gradually progress in complexity (Achieve, Inc., 2012; Arizona Department of Education, 2012; Delaware Department of Education, 2012; Oregon Department of Education, 2011). For example, the expectation in Figure 1 regarding Reading Literature standards K.2, regarding students in kindergarten, requires students to provide answers to a given story when prompted by the teacher. In the first grade, students are expected to recount the story without the prompt from the teacher, provide answers from a given story, and be able to respond on their own in order to re-tell and describe key details within the story. The goal of the standards is for students to retain and further develop their skills learned in reading each year (CCSSI, n.d.b, n.d.c; CDE, 2013).

ELA Strands

Reading. The CCSS for ELA include a staircase of complexity regarding what students are expected to read with a focus on preparing students to read college level material at the completion of high school (Achieve, Inc., 2012; Arizona Department of Education, 2012; Delaware Department of Education, 2012; Oregon Department of Education, 2011). In order to support the staircase of complexity, the standards are designed to ensure students read high quality, complex texts from a range of disciplines and topics (Achieve, Inc., 2010). Additionally, the reading standards for ELA were developed with a clear pathway for reading acquisition starting in the primary grades with an increased focus on informational text as students progress through school (Carmichael et al., 2010). According to Williamson, Fitzgerald, and Stenner (2013), throughout all grade levels, the CCSS for ELA provide a clear focus on supporting

students in developing their ability to work on increasingly complex text with an increased focus, moving to a 50/50 split between informational and literary texts in K-5, and gradually increasing to a 70/30 split in grade 12 as students progress through elementary, middle school and high school levels. Additionally, the reading strand is organized into the following four areas throughout all grade levels.

Key ideas and details. The first strand of reading, key ideas and details, entails students demonstrating their ability to identify important concepts and topics in both information and literary text (Burke, 2013). The goal of this strand is for students to demonstrate the ability to understand the deeper meaning of a text and not just the surface meaning (CCSSI, n.d.d; CDE, 2013). In understanding the deeper meaning of a text, students should be able to trace the development of important ideas and details in a text and also cite specific textual evidence when writing or participating in classroom discussions about the text (Burke, 2013; CDE, 2013; CCSSI, n.d.d).

Craft and structure. According to CDE (2013), the second strand of reading connects with the first strand by placing emphasis on students' ability to analyze how ideas and details shape the style of a given text. The standards included in this strand call for students to analyze the decisions and choices an author makes such as sentences and paragraphs to support the author's purpose (Burke, 2013; CDE, 2013).

Integration of knowledge and ideas. The third strand, integration of knowledge and ideas, emphasizes students' ability to trace how more than one text addresses a similar theme or topic. According to Haager and Vaughn (2013), this strand requires students to be able to review an idea by comparing a range of sources in diverse formats. Finally, the standards in the third strand require a student to evaluate the validity of the author's arguments and claims in a text to

determine if it has sufficient support based on textual evidence (Burke, 2013; CDE, 2013; CCSSI, n.d.d).

Range of reading and level of text complexity. The final reading strand, range of reading and level of text complexity, requires students to continue to develop their skills to read and understand a broad range of complex and challenging text (Burke, 2013; CDE, 2013; Haager & Vaughn, 2013).

Balancing informational text and literature. Additionally, in terms of the reading standards, the CCSS have provided explicit recommendations for the balance between informational text and literacy at each grade level (CCSSI, n.d.b, n.d.c). The recommendation is for elementary school teachers to devote 50% of reading to literature and 50% to informational text (CCSSI, n.d.b, n.d.c; CDE, 2013). By middle school, it is expected that students should be reading 45% literature and 55% informational text. As students enter high school, informational text increases to 70% of what students are reading, with literature reducing to 30% of the high school reading program. This recommendation provides an intentional focus on increasing the use of informational text at all three levels (CCSSI, n.d.b, n.d.c; CDE, 2013; McGraw-Hill Education, 2011). Table 1 provides an overview of the recommendations for balancing informational text and literature at each grade level.

Table 1

Balance of Informational Text and Literature

Grade Level	Informational Text	Literature
K-5	50%	50%
Middle School	55%	45%
High School	70%	30%

Writing. The writing standards of CCSS were designed to support students in developing their writing skills in three specific areas: argumentative, informative/explanatory, and narrative (Carmichael et al., 2010; National Education Association, 2013). Within each of the three genres, students are expected to write logical and sound arguments based on evidence gained from reading text. As students progress through the K-12 system, the CCSS requires them to focus more on using writing to present arguments and explain sources from informational text and literature (CCSSI, n.d.b, n.d.c; CDE, 2013; McTighe & Wiggins, 2012; National Education Association, 2013). According to Achieve Inc. (2010), the developers of the CCSS wanted to ensure that argumentation extended into the elementary grades, considering argumentation is critical to writing in both college and the workplace. Additionally, the writing strand is organized into the following four areas throughout all grade levels.

Text types and purposes. In examining this strand, students are expected to write for the many different purposes of writing (i.e., argumentative, informational, and narrative). In terms of developing arguments in their writings, students are expected to use information gathered from the text to identify information that support the topic being covered in their writing (Burke, 2013; CDE, 2013; CCSSI, n.d.d). According to the CDE (2013), narrative writing would include the development of real or imagined experiences to create sequential, detailed, and structured story lines. In regard to informational text, students are required to draw from a range of primary and secondary sources to present complex ideas regarding information, events, and findings (Burke, 2013; CDE, 2013).

Production and distribution of writing. The standards in this strand require students to produce clear and coherent writing products. According to the CDE (2013), this strand also emphasizes the importance of students using the appropriate style and format for the purpose of

their writings. Also included within this strand are the stages of the writing process (i.e., planning, revising, editing, and re-writing) that support students in strengthening and developing their products (Burke, 2013; CDE, 2013). Finally, the standards in this strand require students to produce and publish their writing using technology in addition to interacting and collaborating with others (Burke, 2013; CDE, 2013; CCSSI, n.d.d).

Research to build and present knowledge. The standards in this strand are designed to provide student the skills needed to conduct investigations about a specific topic (Burke, 2013; CDE, 2013; CCSSI, n.d.d). In their investigations, according to the CDE (2013), students are expected to gather relevant information from multiple sources, evaluate each sources, and also include source information in their writing without plagiarizing.

Range of writing. Range of writing emphasizes the frequency and duration with which students should be participating in writing. Also included in these standards are the wide array of purposes, audiences, and tasks students about and for which should be required to write (CDE, 2013). Range of writing emphasizes the importance of students consistently participating in the task of writing in their classes (Burke, 2013; CDE, 2013).

Speaking and listening. The CCSS has developed expectations for students to gain the necessary skills to listen and speak well regarding academic content (Achieve Inc., 2010). According to the CDE (2013), “students must have ample opportunities to take part in a variety of rich structured conversations” (p. 21) in order to develop a foundation for CCR. Considering this, the CCSS explicitly developed expectations for student in speaking and listening. The speaking and listening standards are designed to align with the standards developed for writing and reading around informational text. The CCSS speaking and listening standards require students to become proficient in utilizing information from informational text to support their

answers in classroom conversations. Additionally, there are standards for collaborative conversations along with asking and answering questions about key details from informational text (CCSSI, n.d.b, n.d.c; CDE, 2013). The standards in this section are organized into the following two areas.

Comprehension and Collaboration. The standards within this strand require students to actively participate in a range of academic conversations, to build on the ideas of team members in a collaborative format. (Burke, 2013; CCSSI, n.d.b, n.d.c; CDE, 2013;). According to Burke (2013), students are expected to investigate, read and write about specific topics outside of the class environment in order to be prepared for classroom discussions. Lastly, students are expected to listen for key details to evaluate arguments and use rhetoric and evidence in their responses (Burke, 2013; CCSSI, n.d.b, n.d.c; CDE, 2013;).

Presentation of knowledge and ideas. The standards within this strand require students to develop the skills necessary to present information, findings, and evidence in a clear, understandable, and concise manner. Additionally, students are required to use technology strategically to strengthen their presentations to enhance the audience's understanding of the information covered. Students should also be able to use demonstrate appropriate use of formal English (Burke, 2013; CCSSI, n.d.b, n.d.c; CDE, 2013;).

Language. CCSS language standards focus on helping students develop the skills necessary to determine word meanings and also increase their academic vocabulary (CCSSI, n.d.b, n.d.c; CDE, 2013). The goal is for students to not only learn new words, but also use these words in academic discourse (Achieve, Inc., 2010). The creators of the CCSS realized the necessity for a focus on academic vocabulary that is shared across subject matter and content-

specific words (McGraw-Hill Education, 2011). The standards in this section are organized in the following three strands.

Conventions of Standard English. The standards within this strand require students to demonstrate the proper use of grammar in creation of writing samples or verbal presentations (Burke, 2013; CCSSI, n.d.b, n.d.c; CDE, 2013). According to Burke (2013), this strand focuses on the critical role of spelling, grammar usage and conventions in developing writing samples or verbal presentations.

Knowledge of language. Knowledge of language entails the application of language in different contexts. According to the CDE (2013), this involves a student's ability to make the appropriate choice as to the best words to use depending on the audience and purpose. Additionally, this standard requires students to apply the appropriate use of diction and syntax for speaking and writing (Burke, 2013; CDE, 2013; CCSSI, n.d.d).

Vocabulary acquisition and use. According to the CDE (2013), an essential component of this strand is for students to be able to use context clues to determine the meaning of unknown words. Additionally, students should also have the ability to use contextual clues to determine the multiple meaning of words and phrases in a text. In analyzing how a word is used, students should also be able to understand figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings (Burke, 2013; CDE, 2013; CCSSI, n.d.d). According to the CDE, students should acquire high frequency academic terms in addition to content specific words that prepare students to work at a college level.

Literacy skills in science, social science, and technical subjects. Reflected in CCSS is the critical and important role that teachers in other content areas (social science and science) play in

teaching literacy along with ELA teachers. For this reason, beginning in sixth grade, reading and writing standards are divided into two separate strands: one strand for the ELA teacher and one strand for social science, science, and technical subjects teachers. This separation reflects the importance of a school-wide focus that researchers believe is needed to ensure that students are college and career ready (Achieve Inc., 2010).

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

In March of 2010, the U.S. Department of Education initiated a competitive grant process for organization to develop a new system of assessments to support the implementation of the CCSS (Center for K-12 Assessment & Performance Management at ETS, 2012). Of the many organizations that applied, two were selected to develop the next wave of assessments that will be administered in public education. The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career Readiness (PARCC) and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) were the two organizations selected (Center for K-12 Assessment & Performance Management at ETS, 2013). Although both were selected, only SBAC will develop the assessments for Southern California, which will have a direct impact on this research study. For that reason, Table 2 briefly summarizes the similarities and differences between the two consortiums.

Table 2

PARCC and SBAC Comparison

PARCC	SBAC
ELA and math grades 3-11	ELA and math grades 3-8 plus grade 11
Computer-based	Computer-adaptive testing
Four summative assessments throughout the year (three through-course, 1 end-of-year)	Last quarter performance task assessment; optional interim assessments
Digital library (Formative assessments)	Digital library (Formative assessments)
Field testing 2012-2014	Field testing 2013
Operational 2014-2015	Operational 2014-15

Computer adaptive testing. SBAC will utilize a computer adaptive testing format to assess the CCSS. According to SBAC (2010), computer adaptive testing is superior to the basic paper and pencil test of the past. The computer will adjust to student performance levels based on student responses. For example, when students give a correct answer, the next question will increase in difficulty. In the same way, when students answer incorrectly, the computer will issue a less rigorous question. SBAC asserts that computer adaptive testing will be more safe and secure and provide better information for teachers in a timely manner.

Performance task. In order to support the CCR focus of CCSS, SBAC designed specific performance tasks that will measure students' ability to apply the standards to real-world work situations. Performance tasks are designed to measure students' depth of knowledge to determine if the ELA learning targets aligned with the new standards are met. According to SBAC (2010), skills such as conducting research, problem solving, or complex analysis are difficult to measure with a multiple-choice test. Given that, a performance task provides a platform to assess higher-order thinking skills that are neglected by multiple-choice tests.

Claims, targets, and standards. In contrast to previous standardized assessments, the SBAC was created based on four claims for both ELA and math. These claims were developed based on the CCR standards. In alignment with the CCR benchmarks, both sets of claims for ELA and math were created with the emphasis on application of the standards in relation to a real-world setting (SBAC, 2010). Table 3 lists the four claims that were developed for ELA. Each of these claims corresponds with the learning targets that students are required to meet. Targets represent a cluster of skills. For example, Claim 1 states the following: *Students can read closely and analytical to comprehend a range of increasingly complex literary and*

informational texts. In order to demonstrate proficiency with respect to this claim, students will need to master seven targets. Table 4 presents a list of the targets that comprise Claim 1.

Table 3

SBAC College Readiness Claims for ELA

Claim #	Claim
1	Students can read closely and analytical to comprehend a range of increasingly complex literary and informational texts.
2	Students can produce effective and well-grounded writing for a range of purposes and audiences.
3	Students can employ effective speaking and listening skills for a range of purposes and audiences.
4	Students can engage in research and inquiry to investigate topics, and to analyze, integrate, and present information.

Table 4

Targets for ELA Claim 1

Target	Description
Target 1: Key details	Use explicit details from the text to support answers or basic inferences.
Target 2: Central Ideas	Identify and summarize central ideas, key events from the text.
Target 3: Word Meanings	Determine intended meaning of words/Tier II vocabulary based on context and word relationships.
Target 4: Reasoning and Evidence	Use supporting evidence to interpret and explain evidence inferences about character traits, motivation, point of view or authors lesson or message.
Target 5: Analysis within or Across Text	Specify or compare relationships across text.
Target 6: Text Structure & Features	Relate knowledge of text structure or text features to gain or interpret explain or connect information.
Target 7: Language	Interpret use of language by distinguishing literal meaning of words and phrases used in context.

In addition to the claims and targets, multiple standards are represented in each target cluster (SBAC, 2010). Furthermore, a list of standards comprises each of the targets; mastery of those standards indicates mastery of the target. For example, multiple standards are embedded in Target 1, which requires students to use explicit details from the text to support answers or basic

inferences. Once students demonstrate mastery of the standards embedded in Target 1, they have demonstrated mastery of this target.

During the initial California standards movement, teachers were trained to align their work from the standards being taught back to the objectives and lesson activities in the classroom. McTighe and Wiggins (2012) termed this process “mapping backward” (p. 6). In contrast, the CCSS will require students to align their efforts to the major claims within SBAC, which will require them to cover multiple targets for each claim. This difference appears to add an additional step and also signifies a change in how teachers prepare the scope and sequence of instructional units.

Consequently, the shift in assessments results in changes as to how teachers must prepare their students. Researchers have suggested that implementing CCSS will require a paradigm shift in instructional in practices (Achieve, Inc., 2012; Arizona Department of Education, 2012; Delaware Department of Education, 2012; Oregon Department of Education, 2011). If students have to demonstrate CCR skills using the content being taught in the classroom, it appears that teachers will now be required to teach these skills in alignment with the assessment that will be used to measure these skills. In order to align classroom instruction to this new assessment format, researchers suggest several instructional shifts that will need to take place in the ELA classrooms.

Instructional Shifts for English Language Arts

The first instructional shift addresses the balance of informational text and literary texts (Achieve, Inc., 2012; Arizona Department of Education, 2012; Delaware Department of Education, 2012; Oregon Department of Education, 2011). According Achieve, Inc. (2012), the CCSS will require teachers to be intentional about balancing the reading of informational text

and literary text in the classroom. (Achieve, Inc., 2010; Oregon Department of Education, 2011). The CCSS suggestion for teachers to provide students with an increased focus on informational text ensures that students are prepared for the complexity and format of text required in the college classroom (Conley, 2007; Oregon Department of Education, 2011). According to Achieve, Inc., accessing the world through informational text in all content areas provides students with multiple exposures to the use of informational text. It is worth noting that the shift in focus from literary texts toward informational texts is due to CCSS being grounded in informational text as a CCR skill.

The second instructional shift emphasizes the importance of building knowledge in the disciplines (Achieve, Inc., 2012; Arizona Department of Education, 2012; Delaware Department of Education, 2012; Oregon Department of Education, 2011). The important role that all teachers have in all subjects in developing students' literacy skills is the point emphasized within this shift (Achieve, Inc., 2012; Oregon Department of Education, 2011). Additionally, teachers should use the text in different subject areas (e.g., science and social science) utilizing different strategies to analyze different forms of text to build content area knowledge. Furthermore, the second shift supports school wide literacy programs along with reading and writing across all domains to facilitate the development of literacy skills (Achieve, Inc., 2012).

The third instructional shift focuses on text-based answers (Achieve, Inc., 2012; Arizona Department of Education, 2012; Delaware Department of Education, 2012; Oregon Department of Education, 2011). This shift requires teachers to ensure that all classroom experiences (discussions and writings) are connecting to the text directly. This would include students developing arguments and participating in conversations in addition to writing about the text covered in class (Achieve, Inc., 2012). According to the Delaware Department of Education

(2012), to support the use of text-based answers, students will need multiple opportunities to answer questions, participate in academic discussions, and write using information from the text. Additionally, teachers will need to be intentional about planning opportunities for students to read, analyze, and reference the text in daily class discussions.

The fourth instructional shift highlights the staircase of complexity built into the CCSS (Achieve, Inc., 2012; Arizona Department of Education, 2012; ASCD, 2012; Delaware Department of Education, 2012; Oregon Department of Education, 2011). The complexity of college-level text requires students to grow in their ability to understand increasingly difficult text (Achieve, Inc., 2012). According to Achieve, Inc. (2012), teachers will need to ensure that students are involved in more complicated tasks at each grade level using text. In order to achieve this goal, teachers will need to provide enough time during class for structured reading of informational text as well as opportunities to participate in conversations about the text (Oregon Department of Education, 2011). Additionally, teachers will need to provide support and scaffolds for struggling readers to have access to grade level text (Delaware Department of Education, 2011).

The fifth instructional shift addresses the importance of students writing from sources (Achieve, Inc., 2012; Arizona Department of Education, 2012; Delaware Department of Education 2012; Oregon Department of Education, 2011). According to Achieve, Inc. (2012), the CCSS will require teachers to plan activities where students will be expected to produce writing samples using information gathered from their classroom readings. These activities would include essays, brief research projects, and writing on demand assignments. Teachers will need to provide students with opportunities to analyze and discuss classroom readings in order to develop coherent and focused arguments in their writing (Oregon Department of Education,

2011). Additionally, teachers should model expectations for writing and utilize student writing samples to provide examples of writing using source information (Delaware Department of Education, 2012).

The sixth instructional shift involves the development of academic vocabulary (Achieve, Inc., 2012; Arizona Department of Education, 2012; Delaware Department of Education, 2012; Oregon Department of Education, 2011). According to the Delaware Department of Education (2012), the instructional implication of developing academic vocabulary requires teachers to plan activities for students to develop their capacity of using words in text marginally above their current academic level. Achieve, Inc. (2012) has stated that a capacity to use and understand academic vocabulary is necessary to access college-level material. With this link to college readiness, teachers will need to ensure that instruction focuses less time on esoteric terms and more on commonly used academic words (Achieve, Inc., 2012; Arizona Department of Education, 2012; Delaware Department of Education, 2012). In examining the research, it is also suggested that sites develop more of a school wide focus on teaching academic vocabulary, as teachers will need to teach academic vocabulary across all content and grade levels (Delaware Department of Education, 2012).

Potential Impact of CCSS

The consensus throughout the literature is that the CCSS will create possible benefits and challenges for practitioners in supporting groups of students who have underperformed in education. Additionally, there is limited information in the literature regarding how the ELA CCSS will impact students in special education or English learning. Considering that the CCSS is currently in the in the introduction phase, it is important to review some of the literature describing the challenges and the benefits that CCSS may offer to students from at-risk

backgrounds. It will also be beneficial to review some of the recommendations these researchers suggest for supporting these populations in the CCSS for ELA.

Benefits. In the literature, the most significant benefits listed by researchers refer to the reduction in the number of standards required for students to master. Multiple researchers referenced the concept of fewer, higher, and deeper; this refers to the idea that teaching fewer standards to a higher degree of rigor will result in deeper learning for students (ASCD, 2012, NGA et al., 2008; Troia & Olinghouse, 2013). This process is considered beneficial for all students including students with disabilities, English learners, and struggling learners (McNulty & Gloeckler, 2011).

In discussing students with disabilities (SWDs), multiple researchers noted that the CCSS appears to have been created with all students in mind (McNulty & Gloeckler; 2011; Sheinker, 2010; Thurlow, 2012). According to McNulty and Gloeckler (2011), for the first time creates a clear focus on SWDs in the initial planning stages instead of considering their needs as an afterthought (McNulty & Gloeckler 2011; Sheinker, 2010). Furthermore, the CCSS were developed with the goal of focusing on what all students need to succeed in college and careers. This would include students who are struggling learners, English learners, and special education students (McNulty & Gloeckler 2011). It has been noted that teams representing special education and English learners participated in the development of the CCSS to ensure all groups of student needs were considered (Thurlow, 2012).

In regard to ELA, Hakuta (2012) asserted that the shift in focus on informational text provides a great opportunity for English language learners. The shift in focus to the use of text in speaking, writing, and listening provides multiple opportunities for English learner students to extend their learning through discourse of complex ideas. It can be noted that the benefits

asserted to English language learners by Hakuta could possibly also extend to SWDs and struggling learners. That is to say, the increased focus on informational text in writing and speaking has the potential to support all students in developing and improving their literacy skills.

The assessment structure also appears to offer a more improved format from the previous paper and pen assessment over the past decade. According to Sheinker (2010), the comprehensive assessment system provides improved access for special education students. The fact that the SBAC provides LEAs with multiple forms of assessments aligned to the standards has the potential to improve site level ability to monitor student progress throughout the school year. It must be noted that the CCSS for ELA have created formative assessments: interim assessments in addition to the yearly assessment that take place in the spring. This could possibly strengthen the process of progress monitoring for not just SWDs, but all students, by moving the emphasis away from making decisions about students based on a single test score.

In reviewing the literature, there appear to be some key structural benefits to the CCSS for ELA. According to Troia and Olinghouse (2013) who conducted an analysis of the CCSS, the CCSS is succinct, consistent, and coherent among all grade levels. Additionally, they concluded from their analysis that the CCSS provides a great framework to guide instruction and assessment considering the standards are spiraled throughout each grade level. Built into the CCSS for ELA, there is also an explicit focus on teaching students to be better writers and using text to develop writing products. According to Graham and Harris (2013), the writing standards within the CCSS provide a clear progression for writing instruction. Although the CCSS does not address specifically how to teach writing, the standards are organized in a sequence to support students in mastering the skills of good writing. Lastly, the structure of the CCSS for

ELA has made the teaching of writing, reading, speaking, and listening a shared responsibility across all subject areas (Straub & Alias, 2013).

Additionally, in supporting the research questions pertaining to universal screening and progress monitoring practices at school sites, the CCSS for ELA appears to provide an improved format and organization in comparison to the previous California State Standards. According to Saunders, Spooner, Brownder, Wakeman, and Lee (2013), the organization of the CCSS supports teachers in identifying what skills are missing from previous grade levels for students in need of intervention. Considering that the standards provide clear indication of what skills come before and after each standard, this progression makes creating intervention plans seamless and more readily available for teachers (Graham & Harris, 2013; Saunders et al., 2013). This structural improvement provided by the CCSS would yield improved support for both universal screening and progress monitoring.

Challenges. Several researchers have raised concerns surrounding an increased focus on text complexity built into the CCSS (Gamson, Lu, & Eckert, 2013; Graesser, McNamara, & Kulikowich, 2011; Williamson et al., 2013). Researchers appear to believe that the increased focus on text complexity has the potential to pose challenges to struggling readers. According to Williamson et al. (2013), pushing reading levels too high for struggling readers has the potential to lead to decreased motivation for students who have experienced years of reading failure. Researchers have warned that increasing text complexity for struggling readers might have a negative effect of increasing the achievement gap if not implemented with the necessary supports. It has been suggested in the literature that exposing students, especially struggling readers and SWDs, to text that is too challenging for their reading levels has the potential to exacerbate their deficits and decrease their motivation (Graesser et al., 2011; Williamson et al.,

2013). There is also the concern that the increased focus on text complexity might overlook high interest reading material (Gamson et al., 2013).

In examining the challenges associated with the implementation of the CCSS for ELA, researchers also expressed a concern regarding how implementation would impact the performance of struggling students, student with disabilities, and English learners (Quay, 2010; Straub & Alias, 2013; Troia & Olinghouse, 2013; Williamson et al., 2013). According to Quay (2010) a critical implementation issue exists with CCSS: namely, the challenge of offering a college preparatory framework to students who are currently performing well below grade level. Quay's concerns were based on the research conducted in Chicago's public schools where a mandatory college preparatory curriculum was required for all students entering high school in 1997. Research conducted by Allensworth, Nomi, Montgomery, and Lee (2010) found that during the 7 years of the curriculum's implementation, the Chicago public schools witnessed a decline in college going rates and also experienced a decline in graduation rates. Additionally, overall math grades decreased and absenteeism increased among average and high performing students. Although there are many factors to Allensworth et al.'s finding, one of the most significant findings was that test scores in math and English remained stagnant during the implementation of the mandatory college preparatory curriculum.

The literature also features concerns regarding whether teachers have had the proper preparation for teaching a CCR format to struggling learners. According to Quay (2010), few teachers are prepared to provide instruction for students with varying performance levels in rigorous standards. When considering that the CCSS for ELA has made the teaching of writing, reading, speaking, and listening a shared responsibility across all subject areas, it is important for all teachers to have the necessary skills to support students in writing (Straub & Alias, 2013).

Additionally, it is important to note that most teachers who teach subjects other than ELA oftentimes have not had the necessary preparation to teach writing or reading in a general education setting to students who are performing at grade level (Gewertz, 2012). Subsequently, many of these teachers will face the challenge of teaching both reading and writing to struggling readers. This is also true for many special education teachers who support students who are in greatest need of assistance (Graham & Harris, 2013). For this reason, Quay (2010) suggested that the challenge of teaching English learners, SWDs, and struggling readers must be considered when planning to implement the CCSS for ELA. This challenge appears to have implications on professional development for teachers, curriculum implementation, and the selection of reading materials. For this reason, it is likely that the success of CCSS will be determined by the quality of professional development provided in this area to staff members.

Recommendations

The literature offers several recommendations to consider in implementing the CCSS with respect to the assessment components of RtI and supporting struggling learners. According to a report published by the ASCD (2012), it is important for districts to be given guidance and support in preparing assessment systems to support the 2014-15 roll out of the CCSS for ELA. This would include a clear system of screening tools to assess students in need of interventions and also assessment tools to monitor student progress at all levels. These screening tools are most important for districts to develop effective universal screening practices. According to McNulty and Gloeckler (2011), districts must address the needs of SWDs and struggling learners at the front end of implementation of the CCSS. However, without effective tools, the process of consistently identifying identification of students at risk for academic failure has the potential to cause students with severe learning needs to go unidentified and unsupported. Regarding these

students, it has been suggested that they will need major supports and accommodations to master the CCSS. For this reason, LEAs are advised to develop systems to identify students most impacted by the increase in text complexity and ensure scaffolds are in place to provide them with additional support (Williamson et al., 2013).

Several researchers have suggested the importance of professional development for teachers working with at-risk populations using the new CCSS for ELA (Graham & Harris, 2013; Haager & Vaughn, 2013; McNulty & Gloeckler, 2011; Quay, 2010; Williamson et al., 2013). Considering the increase in rigor of the CCSS, it appears that teachers will need a clear understanding of the new standards and also the needs of their students in order to align supports to meet these new expectations (Straub & Alias, 2013). With this in mind, it is suggested that teacher professional development must be improved dramatically if there is any chance of supporting students who are below grade level in their achievement (Quay, 2010).

Researchers have suggested several specific areas of training that will be critical to provide support for struggling learners. The first would include training all teachers in the instructional modifications that are available for students in need of additional supports (Williamson et al., 2013). For example, teachers should have knowledge of how to match students reading level to “best fit” (p. 66) text complexity material in order to help struggling readers overcome their deficits (Williamson et al., 2013). This practice would help support students with the increase in text complexity built into the CCSS. Additionally, special education teachers will need opportunities to develop a thorough understanding of grade level standards and also use K-5 CCSS foundational skills to support small group instruction for struggling readers (Haager & Vaughn, 2013). It is suggested that modifications similar to these

could likely increase the success rate and provide the needed supports for struggling learners in accessing the CCSS.

The literature also offered a suggestion regarding the importance of increasing general education and special education teachers' knowledge regarding writing development. Some researchers have suggested that evidence-based writing practices should be implemented in all general education classes to support students in mastering the CCSS (Graham & Harris, 2013). According to Haager and Vaughn (2013), the implementation of evidence-based writing practices has been connected to improved student outcomes. Considering that the CCSS makes writing a school-wide focus, it appears to be a great suggestion that not just general education teachers receive training in evidence based writing practices, but also special education teachers and support staff as well. Additionally, to support writing, it was suggested to work with staff on building capacity in how to use technology as an instructional tool (ASCD, 2012).

In reviewing the literature on the CCSS for ELA, it appears that these new standards are an improvement over previous state standards. Offering a CCR focus will help better prepare students for the future. Additionally, the new format in which students are assessed appears to offer an improved format in comparison to the multiple-choice format of earlier assessments. Despite all of the listed benefits, researchers have also raised several concerns regarding the implementation of these standards and offered recommendations that might support practitioners in their implementation of the CCSS for ELA.

Organizational Reform Strategies

Throughout this section of the literature review, the four frames of Bolman and Deal (2002) will be utilized to organize the strategies that exist regarding supporting effective reform initiatives. As this study attempted to examine the impact that the CCSS will have on the

assessment components of RtI, it is important to examine some of the best practices that relate to organizational reform in the literature. The complexity of change and the transformational process required for successful completion provided a framework to support this study. This information will serve to inform the conclusion of this study, which will be presented in Chapter 5.

In *Reframing the Path to School Leadership*, Bolman and Deal (2002) stated,

Your first challenge as a new professional is to get the lay of the land. You need a way to make sense out of a confusing and messy terrain, so that you can master what's going on and figure out your options. (p. 2)

In order to successfully interpret your surroundings, Bolman and Deal discussed the importance of addressing the four frames of leadership in an organization. Bolman and Deal asserted that when leaders lead change initiatives and have a clear plan for addressing these four frames, their chances of success increase significantly. In contrast, when leaders attempt to lead change initiatives and fail to address these frames effectively, the results are rarely favorable.

The first frame a leader will need to consider is the political frame. According to Bolman and Deal (2002), analyzing an organization's political frame is the process of identifying the power structures that exist in an organization prior to making significant changes in how business is done. These power structures exist within every organization, among the individuals who have the greatest amount of influence with staff members, and their influence can either be positive or negative.

A number of researchers have offered recommendations that support navigation through the political frame. According to Kotter (1996), it's important, when leading change, to develop a guiding coalition of people who have enough power to support the new initiative. Kotter further

stated that, “because major change is so difficult to accomplish, a powerful force is required to sustain the process” (p. 51). Several researchers have also listed the importance of developing leadership teams in order to build collective commitments and also to foster sustainable support for change initiatives (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2008; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Reeves, 2009). Bolman and Deal (2002) stated that the political frame demands attention because all future initiatives introduced will be viewed through this frame and when used correctly, the political frame can create momentum for new initiatives, instead of serving as the traditional roadblock against reform.

The second frame identified by Bolman and Deal (2002) is the human resource frame. According to Bolman and Deal, the human resource frame views the importance of the human connection in organizations, and discusses concepts such as seeing the organization as an extended family, with individuals who have specific needs, feelings, prejudices, skills, and limitations that must be addressed and supported. The human resource frame views people and their collective capacity as the most critical investment in the organization.

Several researchers support the importance of addressing the human resource frame when leading change initiatives (DuFour et al., 2008; Marzano et al., 2005; Senge, 2006). In order to ensure that staff members have the necessary skills to sustain the change, various authors recommend a systematic process of supportive practices such as collaborative meeting, professional development, and coaching in order to address this frame (DuFour et al., 2008; Reeves, 2009). Kotter (1996) discussed two reasons for the failure of organizations that neglect the human resource frame. First, Kotter asserted that organizations often do not invest in the process of effectively assessing what skills are needed and the amount of training it will take to help their workers acquire new skills. Secondly, Kotter argued that, although an organization

understands and recognizes the skills needed for those within their organization to successfully support a change initiative, they are not willing to invest the money or time required to support them in learning these new skills. It appears that organizations that effectively address the human resource frame will have an intentional plan to examine the skills needed for change and a clearly designed plan for training those within the organization effectively.

The third frame is the structural frame. According to Bolman and Deal (2002), the structural frame focuses on the creation of goals, roles, and formal systems of accountability. Concepts such as rules, policies, and procedures are developed through the structural frame. Through this frame, it appears that organizations are able to create systems that value accountability. The implementation of goals and strategic planning supports the structural frame, as well as the successful implementation of change initiatives (DuFour et al., 2008; Marzano et al., 2005; Reeves, 2009).

Fullan's (2010) notion of the importance of intelligent accountability in leading systems reform appears to have implications related to the importance of addressing the structural frame properly. According to Fullan, "Intelligent accountability, in essence, involves building cumulative capacity and responsibility that is both internally held and externally reinforced" (p. 66). Several researchers support the importance of addressing the structural frame in a format that supports intelligent accountability. For example, according to DuFour et al. (2008), the professional learning community framework supports the structural frame and practices; this support is demonstrated when the teachers collaborate to develop goals, create action plans to support the goals, and have ongoing collaborative meetings to review team progress toward the goal. Kotter's (1996) discussion of the development of a clear vision also supports Bolman and Deal's structural frame. According to Kotter, "Vision helps align individuals, thus coordinating

the actions of motivated people in a remarkably efficient way” (p. 70). In examining Kotter’s structural model, vision serves as the foundation for the structural frame, as all strategies and actions that create structure should align with the strategic vision, which is created to support the current change through intelligent accountability.

The final frame described by Bolman and Deal (2002) is the symbolic frame. According to Bolman and Deal, the symbolic frame represents the symbols, ceremonies, rituals, and stories that represent what is valued in an organization. The symbolic frame views an organization as having specific cultural norms that are shared and valued collectively by the organization. Bolman and Deal’s structural frame encompasses the actions, assumptions, and beliefs that represent the culture of an organization.

Several researchers have emphasized the importance of culture or the symbolic frame in supporting organizational reform. According to DuFour et al. (2008), “The culture of an organization is found in the assumptions, beliefs, expectations and habits that constitute the norm of that organization” (p. 107). DuFour et al. further asserted, “Reculturing is extremely difficult, and neither top-down nor bottom-up strategies have proven effective in reculturing schools or districts” (p.). DuFour et al. discussed the importance of developing a shared mission and values with staff members in intentionally shaping the culture within an organization from within and addressing the structural frame. Reeves (2009) also discussed the importance of culture, asserting, “If we have learned anything in the educational standards movement in the last decade, it is that policy change without cultural change is an exercise in futility and frustration” (p. 37). Reeves listed a few imperatives that educational leaders should consider when addressing the symbolic frame or culture of an organization. The first is to inform individuals what will not change in the organization. That is to say, leaders should communicate clearly to staff members

the traditions, practices, and procedures that will not change. Secondly, Reeves the tools being implemented must match the culture of the organization. In other words, leaders should ensure that all practices that are developed in the change process to address the structural, political and human resource frame align with the culture or structural frame of an organization.

Summary

This chapter provided a literature review of both RtI and also the CCSS for ELA. In the next chapter, the researcher will provide an in-depth overview of the research design and methodology utilized for this study.

Chapter 3: Research Design

Restatement of Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory research study was to examine the professional perceptions of K-12 educational leaders who have systems knowledge and experience related to RtI and CCSS, with regard to: (a) any modifications that may be needed to align the assessment components of RtI (universal screening and progress monitoring) with the CCSS for ELA, (b) challenges that may result from any modifications to the assessment components (universal screening) needed to aligning the core academic components of RtI with the CCSS for ELA, and (c) strategies that might be utilized to address any challenges to aligning the assessment components of RtI with the CCSS for ELA.

Research Questions

This study focused on the following central research questions:

1. What do K-12 educational leaders who have systems knowledge and experience, related to RtI and CCCSS, perceive as the potential modifications needed to align the assessment components (progress monitoring and universal screening) of RtI with the CCSS for ELA?
2. What do K-12 educational leaders who have systems knowledge and experience, related to RtI and CCSS, perceive as challenges that may result from any modifications to the academic components needed to aligning the assessment components of RtI with the CCSS for ELA?
3. What strategies do K-12 educational leaders who have systems knowledge and experience, related to RtI and CCSS, perceive might be utilized to address any

challenges regarding aligning the assessment components (universal screening and progress monitoring) of RtI with the CCSS for ELA?

Research Design Overview

This research study utilized a qualitative exploratory design and involved semi-structured interviews of eight selected educational leaders from schools, districts, and counties in Southern California. The educational leaders had expertise related to RtI and CCSS. The interviews consisted of eight questions designed to elicit information about each subject's professional experience related to RtI and CCSS and their professional opinion related to the possible modifications needed to align the assessment components of RtI to the CCSS for ELA. The researcher conducted interviews with subject participants face-to-face, via telephone, or via other media means, depending on what was most convenient for the participant.

Qualitative research. According to Creswell (2007), a qualitative research study seeks to make sense of a social or human problem by analyzing the experiences of individuals who have personal knowledge of the problem or phenomenon. This form of research study attempts to learn from the meaning the participants ascribe to the problem or phenomenon, and not the interpretation the investigator brings to the study. Furthermore, qualitative researchers seek to provide a holistic account of a problem or phenomenon by providing multiple viewpoints, identifying differences and similarities of perceptions from individuals in their natural settings. The qualitative approach selected for this study corresponded to the researcher's intention to explore the perceptions of the eight educational leaders by conducting individual interviews in order to answer the research question.

Exploratory methodology. A qualitative exploratory design was selected for this study, as it lent itself to exploring individual perceptions about a perceived phenomenon or problem.

According to Churchill and Iacobucci (2009), exploratory research is utilized when a problem or phenomenon is yet to be clearly understood or defined. Exploratory research affords the investigator the opportunity to become familiar with the concept or problem under examination. The primary situation explored in this study was the possible modifications that may be needed to align the assessment components of RtI to the CCSS for ELA. This form of research can take an informal approach, as it can rely on secondary research, such as literature sources and documentary evidence. It also can lend itself to a more formal application, such as focus groups, case studies, and in-depth interviews. In the context of this design, the researcher attempted to identify general themes that to characterize the situation under examination. Afterward, the researcher wrote a description of the phenomenon by developing generalizations of the individuals' perceptions regarding the situation under exploration.

The desired outcome of an exploratory research study is to develop generalizations about a given situation, process, or phenomenon under exploration that may lead to a possible hypothesis regarding two separate variables. For this reason, it is recommended that exploratory researchers remain flexible and open minded about the topic under examination and the data collected. A limitation of using an exploratory design is that the outcomes of the research study can only provide a better understanding of a given situation; however, these insights are not designed to arrive at final conclusions in isolation.

Interviews. In the context of this qualitative exploratory research study, data were collected via in-depth semi-structured interviews. According to Krathwohl (2004), interviews are the primary data collection tool utilized in qualitative research. As a tool for qualitative researchers, interviews are a way to examine a participant's feelings, emotions, or perceptions regarding a specific phenomenon. For example, a researcher might utilize interviews to

investigate or explore what is significant about a participant's situation. Additionally, a researcher may use interviews to identify cause and effect relationships. This form of data collection best lends itself to the study of the particular thought processes of participants.

Creswell (2005) described interviewing as a process where a researcher examines a particular situation or phenomenon by asking participants open-ended questions and recording their responses. This process would typically include collecting data by examining participants' responses regarding a specific situation, and examining these responses for general themes that are shared by all participants. Once this step is completed, the researcher should start the process of synthesizing the data by identifying consistent experiences and statements, which can be developed into common themes. To conclude this process, the researcher develops a "textual (what was experienced) and structural (how was it experienced) description of the participants overall experience" (Creswell, 2007, p. 60).

This form of data collection offers several advantages and disadvantages for researchers. For example, according to Creswell (2005), interviews provide useful information in cases where one cannot directly observe the participants in action. Additionally, interviews provide greater depth, in contrast to observations, since the researchers can ask specific questions regarding the phenomenon or situation under investigation. The primary disadvantage has to do with the potential for personal bias and subjectivity by the interviewer, in regard to the participants' responses and the interpretation of the results. Since the interviewer is the primary interpreter of all information, his/her inability to avoid personal biases may flaw the results. Furthermore, interviews can be time-consuming and inconvenient for both the researcher and the participants, in comparison to completing a survey or observation. Table 5 presents a list of advantages and disadvantages of interviews, according to Isaac and Michael (1995).

Table 5

Advantages and Disadvantages of Interviews

Advantages	Disadvantages
Permits greater depth	The interview only provides information filtered through the interviewer. The research summarizes the participants view. Personal biases and subjectivity can possibly occur
Permits probing to obtain more complete data	Costly, time consuming and inconvenient
Make possible to establish or maintain rapport with respondents	Interview data may be deceptive and provide the perspective the interviewee wants the interviewer to hear
Provides means of checking the effectiveness of communication between the respondent and interviewer	The presence of the researcher may affect the participant's response. For example, the participant may not be as articulate, perceptive or clear

Settings

This study involved a purposeful sampling of educational leaders from K-12 school sites, district offices, county offices of education, and educational consulting firms located in Southern California.

Subjects

Criteria for subject inclusion in study. According to Creswell (2005), a purposeful sampling occurs when a researcher outlines the specific criteria for all individuals or sites that will be examined in order to understand the phenomenon under investigation. As this study attempted to examine the modifications needed to align the assessment components of RtI to the CCSS for ELA, it was a goal for all subject participants to have a minimum of 2 years of experience working in a leadership capacity at a school site, county office of education, district office, or a consulting firm. This included, but was not limited to, Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents, Principals, Coordinators, Directors, Academic Coaches, and Consultants.

Additionally, participants were selected based on having experience implementing the academic components of RtI at a school site, or providing professional development to site leaders for RtI. Participants were also selected based on having in-depth knowledge about the CCSS for ELA, and involvement in the implementation and training of individuals regarding CCSS for ELA. Table 6 provides a brief overview of the study participants and their current roles in public education. All names given are pseudonyms used to protect subjects' confidentiality.

Table 6

Research Participants

Research Study Participants	Current Position
1. Vincent Atlast	Educational Consultant
2. Sandra Bullock	Educational Consultant
3. Jon Zangle	District Coordinator
4. Pippi Longstocking	Director of Curriculum and Instruction
5. Romelo Rosarito	High School Principal
6. Dru Goodman	District Coordinator, Elementary Level
7. Montel Williams	Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction
8. Dave Miller	Elementary Principal

Subject recruitment. The researcher recruited study participants from his professional network of educational leaders, for whom he had individual contact information. The list of participants included, but was not limited to, Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents, Principals, Coordinators, Directors, Academic Coaches, and Consultants who had expertise related to RtI and CCCS. Once this list was developed, the researcher contacted participants via email or phone to solicit their participation in this research study. The purpose of the initial email or phone call was to describe the purpose of the study, clarify the criteria for subject participation, discuss subject participation, and to determine each individual's eligibility for and interest in participating in the study. Participants were not permitted to comment on any specific educational settings, including their own settings, as the focus of the interview was to solicit their

professional perspectives and opinions about two education reforms in general. Additionally, the researcher informed all subjects that participation in this study was completely voluntary.

Individuals who met the participation criteria and who expressed interest in participating were contacted by the researcher via email and provided an informed consent form. Participants were also required to return the signed informed consent forms by mail or via email. The researcher contacted all individuals, who return their informed consent forms by telephone or via email to schedule a 30-45 minute interview appointment. The interview location and time was discussed and determined, based on what was most convenient for the participant.

Human Subject Considerations

Prior to January 21, 2014, the researcher obtained approval from the Pepperdine University Institutional Review Board to conduct this research study. The researcher had no contact with any participants until the research procedures, methods, and design of the study received IRB approval. After receiving IRB approval and collecting all informed consent forms, the researcher scheduled meetings with all participants to review the purpose and scope of the study. Prior to all interviews, participants were informed that their participation in this study was solely voluntary.

In order to ensure confidentiality, all participants were assigned pseudonyms in order to protect their identities throughout the study. Following each interview, participants' responses were kept in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's home, to which only the researcher had access, to ensure confidentiality and security. This included all digital hard copies and researcher field notes. In preparation for data analysis, all interviews were first transcribed into a Microsoft Word document and stored in a password-protected computer, for which only the

researcher has password access. Three years after completing this research study, the researcher will destroy all transcripts and field notes.

The potential risk of participation included fatigue, exhaustion, boredom, or slight discomfort while completing a 45-minute interview. All participants were notified that at any time during the study, they had the option to stop the interview. Additionally, the researcher gave each participant the option to select the location and format of the interview in order to minimize the potential risks associated with this research study.

Instrumentation

Semi-structured interviews were used in this study and consisted of eight open-ended questions. According to Isaac and Michael (1995), semi-structured interviews are developed with several structured questions that the researcher utilizes to explore a topic in-depth. Since accurate and precise information is desired, the researcher will probe to examine or uncover the underlying issues, which are typically difficult to identify with straightforward questions.

The eight open-ended interview questions were developed to capitalize on the experiences of the educational leaders selected for this research study. The researcher selected eight open-ended questions in order to avoid influencing the participants' responses. The first four interview questions were designed to solicit participants' perceptions regarding universal screening, as it related to the guiding research questions. Similarly, the final four questions were designed to collect responses relating to the guiding research questions regarding progress monitoring. The researcher utilized a digital recorder for each semi-structured interview. At the conclusion of all interviews, the researcher offered each participant the opportunity to review the transcript and receive a copy.

Table 7 provides a graphic organizer to identify the alignment between the interview questions and the guiding research questions. This table also presents the researchers whose findings support each research and interview question. For example, in regard to universal screening, several researchers are listed (i.e., D. Fuchs et al., 2010; L. Fuchs et al., 2010; Mellard et al., 2009) who have provided a conceptual understanding of the process of universal screening.

Table 7

Alignment of Research Questions and Interview Questions: Universal Screening and Progress Monitoring for Language Arts

Research Questions	Interview Questions	Literature Source
RQ # 1) What do K-12 educational leaders who have systems knowledge and experience, related to RtI and CCSS, perceive as modifications that may be needed to align the core assessment components (universal screening and progress monitoring) of RtI with the CCSS for ELA?	Question #2: What modifications do you anticipate for practitioners aligning their universal screening practices with the CCSS for ELA?	D. Fuchs et al., 2010; L. Fuchs et al., 2010; Mellard et al., 2009; McNulty & Gloeckler, 2011; Sheinker, 2010; Thurlow, 2012
	Question #6: What modification for progress monitoring would you suggest for practitioners implementing the CCSS for ELA?	ASCD, 2012; Burns & Gibbons 2008; Hall, 2008; NASDSE & CASE, 2006
RQ #2) What do K-12 educational leaders who have systems knowledge and experience, related to RtI and CCSS, perceive as the possible challenges that may results from the modifications to the academic components needed to aligning the core academic components of RtI with the CCSS for ELA?	Question #3: What challenges do you anticipate practitioners will face implementing these modifications?	ASCD, 2012; McNulty & Gloeckler, 2011; Sheinker, 2010; Thurlow, 2012
	Question #7: What challenges do you anticipate practitioners will experience relating to these modifications?	
RQ # 3) What do K-12 educational leaders who have systems knowledge and experience, related to RtI and CCSS, perceive the strategies that may exist to successfully address the challenges to aligning the core academic components of RtI with the CCSS for ELA?	Question #4: What strategies would you recommend to support practitioners in overcoming these challenges?	ASCD, 2012; McNulty & Gloeckler 2011; Williamson et al., 2013
	Question #8: What strategies would you suggest for practitioners to overcome these challenges?	Graham & Harris, 2013; Haager & Vaughn, 2013; Quay, 2010

In regard to challenges that are associated with the implementation of CCSS for ELA, which addresses research question #3, several researchers (e.g., ASCD, 2012; McNulty & Gloeckler; 2011; Sheinker, 2010; Thurlow, 2012) have cited areas that appear to be problematic to practitioners in implementing the CCSS. These areas include Sheinker's (2010) concerns regarding the challenges associated with implementing a college readiness curriculum with unprepared students, in addition to Thurlow's (2012) concerns with the challenges that SWDs will face. These two references, along with additional practitioners who address these challenges, are listed in column three of the Table 7.

Also, the researcher developed an interview protocol (see Appendix A) for both individual participants and the researcher. According to Creswell (2005), interview protocols provide a means for structuring the interview and supporting the process of taking detailed notes of participants' responses. The interview protocol encompassed the questions that were asked, the purpose of the study, and the approximate length of time needed for the interview.

Content validity. The researcher had two experts review the interview protocol and provide feedback. The experts had extensive experience working with RtI, and also had experience with research practices and data collection. The goal of this expert review was to determine if the items adequately addressed the variables explored in this study. The selected experts were asked to examine the interview prompts in regard to the following areas: (a) appropriateness of the interview questions, (b) order of the questions, and (c) alignment to the research questions. Based on the recommendations of these experts, the researcher did not need to make any changes to the interview questions, and the experts concluded that the interview questions were clear and aligned to the research questions.

Data Collection Procedures and Data Management

In preparation for data collection, the researcher implemented the following steps once IRB approval was completed, eligible subjects were recruited, and all consent forms were collected. First, the researcher contacted each participant to schedule a time, day, and place to conduct the interview. All informants had the interview options of face-to-face, via telephone, or other media means, depending upon what was most convenient for participants. Interviews were scheduled in 30-45 minute time slots in order to accommodate the busy schedules of educational leaders. Once interviews were scheduled, the interview questions were emailed to all participants. A day prior to all interviews, the researcher contacted all participants to confirm the time previously scheduled with the participants.

The researcher started each interview by reviewing the purpose of the research study. Additionally, the researcher reminded each participant that his/her responses were confidential and pseudonyms would be used to identify all participants in order to protect their identities. The researcher also requested permission from each participant to use an audio recording device to record the interview. Additionally, participants were notified that at any time during the interview they had the option to opt out of the study and have the researcher turn off the audio recording. Next, the researcher set up the audio recording device and proceeded with the interview. In order to ensure standardization and collection of field notes from each interview, an interview protocol was utilized along with an interview field notes template. At the conclusion of each interview, the researcher provided an opportunity for all participants to ask questions or add any closing remarks. Afterward, all participants were notified of their right to review the transcript of the interview for accuracy and also their right to request a copy of the research findings of this study. Participants could request a copy of the research findings for this

study via email or by contacting the researcher by telephone. Once each interview was completed, all transcripts and field notes were stored in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's home.

Data Analysis and Reporting

In preparation for data analysis, all interviews were transcribed into a Microsoft Word document and stored in a password-protected computer. All transcriptions were reviewed and examined thoroughly several times for quality and accuracy. The final preparation for data analysis entailed the researcher completing a process developed by Moustakas (1994), known as bracketing. This process entailed the researcher examining the personal assumptions and bias the researcher may have regarding the phenomenon under investigation. Bracketing one's own personal bias and assumptions is intended to reduce the potential for arriving at inaccurate findings.

The next step entailed exploring the data at first glance as a first analysis in order to code specific information. According to Creswell (2005), a preliminary exploratory analysis in qualitative research involves examining the data to gather a "general sense" (p. 237) of the data. During this phase, the researcher conducted an initial read and review of the data, creating notes, short phrases, and general ideas regarding the data. Next, the researcher coded information into significant statements and meaningful units. This process entailed the researcher highlighting and assigning specific codes to text segments that were significant.

The final phase of data analysis involved reducing the number of codes by identifying general themes shared by the participants. Creswell (2005) recommends condensing the number of codes to five to seven themes. This process allows a researcher to provide detailed information

in a qualitative report on a few themes, in comparison to writing a general report on many themes.

For outcome validity purposes, the researcher identified two experienced coders to conduct the identical process of data analysis in order to compare their results. This process first included comparing results in order to identify discrepancies with the researcher's findings. The next step entailed a negotiation process to determine the final analysis of the outcomes. To conclude the analysis process, the researcher listed the final themes in a table, and a narrative was developed to highlight the key findings.

Summary

This chapter presented an overview of the research design and methodology that was selected for this research study. Additionally, this chapter reviewed the data collection procedures and the process of data analysis the researcher used to answer the selected research questions. The next chapter will provide a summary of the findings as a result of the data collection and analysis conducted during this study.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory research study was to examine the professional perceptions of K-12 educational leaders who had systems knowledge and experience related to RtI and CCSS with regard to: (a) any modifications that may be needed to align the assessment components of RtI (universal screening and progress monitoring) with the CCSS for ELA, (b) challenges that may result from any modifications to the assessment components (universal screening and progress monitoring) needed to align the core academic components of RtI with the CCSS for ELA, and (c) strategies that might be utilized to address any challenges to aligning the assessment components of RtI with the CCSS for ELA. This chapter will report the results of the data collected during this investigation, based on the research questions presented.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following central research questions:

1. What do K-12 educational leaders who have systems knowledge and experience, related to RtI and CCSS, perceive as the potential modifications needed to align the assessment components (universal screening and progress monitoring) of RtI with the CCSS for ELA?
2. What do K-12 educational leaders who have systems knowledge and experience, related to RtI and CCSS, perceive as challenges that may result from any modifications to the academic components needed to align the assessment components (universal screening and progress monitoring) of RtI with the CCSS for ELA?

3. What strategies do K-12 educational leaders who have systems knowledge and experience, related to RtI and CCSS, perceive might be utilized to address any challenges regarding aligning the assessment components (universal screening and progress monitoring) of RtI with the CCSS for ELA?

Research Design Overview

This research study utilized a qualitative exploratory design and involved semi-structured interviews of eight educational leaders from selected schools, districts, and counties within Southern California, each participant had expertise related to RtI and CCSS. The interviews consisted of eight questions designed to solicit information about each subject's professional experience related to RtI and CCSS and his/her professional opinion related to the possible modifications needed to align the assessment components (universal screening and progress monitoring) of RtI to the CCSS for ELA. The researcher conducted interviews with subject participants face-to-face, via telephone, or via other media means, depending upon what was most convenient for subject participants.

Findings

The findings are organized by research question and the correlating interview question. Themes that emerged from participant responses to each of the interview questions are presented in a table format following each interview question. Additionally, several participants' comments are also listed following each table to present a sample response that led to the development of each theme. Lastly, a summary concludes the findings for each research question.

Research question one. Research question one asked, What do K-12 educational leaders who have systems knowledge and experience, related to RtI and CCSS, perceive as the potential modifications needed to align the assessment components (universal screening and progress

monitoring) of RtI with the CCSS for ELA? Data collection to answer research question one included two questions from the interview instrument.

Interview results. The first interview question related to research question one asked participants, “What modifications do you anticipate for practitioners aligning their universal screening practices with the CCSS for ELA?” Table 8 presents the categories that emerged in the responses from the eight educational leaders.

Table 8

Modifications Needed to Align Universal Screening Practices

Themes	Number of Coded Responses
Shift from Knowledge to Skill Focus	3
Multiple Forms of Assessment	3
Greater Connection Between Grade Levels	2
Text Complexity	1
Expository Writing and Informational Text	1

In reviewing the themes that emerged from interview question two, *shift from a knowledge focus to a skill focus* was one of the most common responses. A shift from a knowledge focus to a skill focus is related to the shift to practical application of the skills learned in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Three participants believed this is a modification to consider for universal screening once the CCSS for ELA are implemented. For example, Vincent responded, “The CCSS for ELA are not about what kids need to know, but about what kids need to do.” Similarly, Sandra responded, “In other words, when considering the CCSS for ELA, it is the application of the skill more than just the measurement of the skill itself.” Jon stated,

The jump that we are having to make is gigantic, so universal screening is more important than ever. I do think that it is going to be easier, because it is more skills base. So, with our old standards, it was about standards and it was about content, and now we

really are looking at skills, and can you write, can you read, can you speak, and can you use language.

Three participants also identified a need for *multiple forms of assessment* as a possible modification for practitioners when conducting universal screening with the CCSS for ELA. Multiple forms of assessment relate to the different types of assessments that practitioners use to measure proficiency in the CCSS for Language Arts at all grade levels. Montel stated, “The tools that we currently have are not going to fully assess students on the deeper levels or higher level thinking skills, which is the big challenge, and where some changes will need to be made.” Pippie asserted, “There is a need for great universal screening tools that are also aligned with the CCSS, that uses the new format of how students will be tested.” Romelo stated,

I think a lot of the data that we are able to use to screen students is still valid, as I said earlier, we should use attendance data, behavioral data in terms of referrals, data on psychosocial aspects, and grey data is still available to screen students. Teacher input on how the student did the previous year, can also be quantified and made available for the screening process

Two participants mentioned that there was a greater connection between grade level standards, which related to the ability to trace every standard, across grade levels, back to the individual anchor standard upon which it was built. This connection allows practitioners to identify the level of rigor required for each standard at all grade levels. For example, one participant shared,

When we are looking at RtI, the whole concept of RtI, this toolbox full of instruments, this toolbox full of remedial devices that we built in there...we can look backwards there,

through grade levels, and monitor what was done there, and without too much difficulty, we can transcribe those into incremental change.

Additionally, text complexity, expository writing and informational text were all listed by at least one participant as a modification to universal screening when using the new CCSS for ELA.

The second interview question related to research question one asked participants, “What modification for progress monitoring would you suggest for practitioners implementing the CCSS for ELA?” Table 9 presents the frequency with which each resulting theme was mentioned.

Table 9

Modifications Needed to Align Progress-Monitoring Practices

Themes	Number of Coded Responses
Multiple Forms of Assessment	3
Monitoring Grade Level Progress	2
Clearer Expectations	1

In reviewing the themes that emerged from interview question six, multiple forms of assessment was shared by three participants. Multiple forms of assessment related to the new performance tasks and also writing assignments that are expected to be utilized to monitor student progress. For example, Montel stated, “I think we are now forced to use multiple measures for assessments and in determining progress for students.” Miller stated, “I think the kinds of progress monitoring we must do can no longer be choose A, B, C, or D.” Dru stated,

So, in the past, short cycle assessment could have been, and now we have a culminating task, which will assess a bundle of standards with some sort of a project that is going to be assessing whether they understood all of these standards. Before they get to a culminating project, students are to be assessed informally and formally on specific standards for that project. This is a change, as we did not have to consider how to assess a

culminating task in the past, and we did not have the different types of questions in the past.

Two participants mentioned the ability to monitor grade level progress as a modification for progress monitoring with the CCSS for ELA. As stated earlier, the organization of the CCSS for ELA allows teachers to identify a student's proficiency level in each of the anchor standards, based on grade level. For example, Vincent stated, "You can literally start in the twelfth grade and trace a standard all the way back, so that you can determine what skill a kid needs." Similarly, Sandra stated, "We can look backward, through grade levels, and monitor what was done there, and without much difficulty, we can transcribe those into incremental changes." Additionally, in response to interview question six, one of the participants noted that clearer expectations were needed.

Summary of themes for research question one. Research question one asked, What do K-12 educational leaders who have systems knowledge and experience, related to RtI and CCSS, perceive as the potential modifications needed to align the assessment components (universal screening and progress monitoring) of RtI with the CCSS for ELA? Table 10 displays the seven themes that resulted from the responses to both interview questions. *Multiple forms of assessment* was the only common theme for both interview questions. The two themes that received the most responses were a *shift from a knowledge focus to a skill focus* and *multiple forms of assessment*. There were also five additional themes reported by participants, and they were, *a greater connection between grade levels, monitoring grade level progress, text complexity, clearer expectations, and expository writing and informational text*.

Table 10

Summary of Themes for Research Question One: Universal Screening and Progress Monitoring

Themes	Number of Coded Responses
Multiple Forms of Assessment	6
Shift from a Knowledge Focus to a Skill Focus	3
Greater Connection Between Grade Levels	2
Monitoring Grade Level Progress	2
Text Complexity	1
Expository Writing and Informational Text	1
Clearer Expectations	1

Research question two. Research question two asked, What do K-12 educational leaders who have systems knowledge and experience, related to RtI and CCSS, perceive as challenges that may result from any modifications to the academic components needed to align the assessment components (universal screening and progress monitoring) of RtI with the CCSS for ELA?

Interview questions. Data collection for research question two included two interview questions. The first interview question asked participants, “What challenges do you anticipate practitioners will face when implementing these modifications for Universal Screening?” Table 11 presents the frequency of the emerging themes.

Table 11

Anticipated Challenges to the Modifications for Universal Screening

Themes	Number of Coded Responses
Dealing with Change	2
Knowledge Gap	2
Two Dimensional Focus (College Readiness and Skill Base)	1
Lack of Resources	1

In reviewing the themes that emerged from question three, two participants mentioned *dealing with change* as a challenge. Dealing with change related to the challenge of working with a new system of standards. For example, Sandra stated, “The CCSS for ELA is a complete

paradigm change in comparison to the previous standards.” Similarly Jon stated, “I think the one challenge is dealing with change.”

Two of the participants mentioned a *knowledge gap* as a challenge to using universal screening with the CCSS for ELA. This theme related to the lack of understanding and familiarity that teachers and administrators have with the CCSS for ELA. For example, Jon stated, “I think it’s going to take administrators and teachers a couple of years to understand the standards.” Pippie stated, “The greatest challenge is to get teachers to understand the instructional shifts with the CCSS for ELA.” Additionally, a *two dimensional focus* and *lack of assessment tools* were also identified as themes for question three.

The second interview question related to research question two asked participants, “What challenges do you anticipate practitioners will experience, relating to these modifications for progress monitoring?” Table 12 presents the themes that emerged from participants’ responses.

Table 12

Anticipated Challenges to the Modifications for Progress Monitoring

Themes	Number of Coded Responses
Knowledge Gaps	4
Lack of Resources	4
Defining Proficiency	1
Time for Planning	1
Lack of District Preparation	1
Development of a Shared Vision	1

In reviewing the themes from question seven, four participants mentioned *knowledge gaps* as a challenge. Knowledge gaps, as stated earlier, relates to the lack of understanding and familiarity that teachers and administrators have with the CCSS for ELA. For example, Vincent stated, “Our teachers are not ready, because we do not understand the standards yet, and what is going to be required of our kids and us.” Jon stated, “I think that the challenge is a lack of

leadership at the district and site level, in understanding what teachers need to do.” Pippie stated, “One of the challenges, again, is many of our teachers don’t understand how to facilitate progress monitoring.” Miller noted, “I think the biggest challenge is that teachers really don’t understand how deep they are going to have to go in their instruction.”

Four participants mentioned the *lack of resources* as a challenge to the modifications of progress monitoring for the CCSS for ELA. Lack of resources related to the lack of curriculum and assessment tools available that are aligned to the CCSS and also the new SBAC. Jon stated, “I also think the challenge is that we do not have clear RtI materials; there is nothing really out there for us to use.” Pippie stated, “The key is to find appropriate tools.” Dru stated, “We still don’t have the availability of the types of assessments that we need.” Montel stated, “The big challenge is curriculum, right now we are on a holding pattern, when it comes to curricular adoption.” *A lack of clarity regarding proficiency, time for planning, lack of district preparation, and developing a shared vision* were additional themes for question six that emerged from the participants’ responses.

Summary of themes for research question two. Research question two asked, What do K-12 educational leaders who have systems knowledge and experience, related to RtI and CCSS, perceive as challenges that may result from any modifications to the academic components needed to align the assessment components (universal screening and progress monitoring) of RtI with the CCSS for ELA? Table 13 displays the eight themes that resulted from the responses to both interview questions. *Knowledge gaps* and *lack of resources* were the only common themes for both interview questions; these two themes also received the most responses. Six additional themes were also reported by participants: *dealing with change, two dimensional focus, defining proficiency, time for planning, lack of district preparation, and development of a shared vision.*

Table 13

Summary of Themes for Research Question Two: Universal Screening and Progress Monitoring

Themes	Responses
Knowledge Gaps	7
Lack of Resources	5
Dealing with Change	2
Two Dimensional Focus (College Readiness and Skill Base)	1
Defining Proficiency	1
Time for Planning	1
Lack of District Preparation	1
Development of a Shared Vision	1

Research question three. Research question three asked, What strategies do K-12 educational leaders who have systems knowledge and experience, related to RtI and CCSS, perceive might be utilized to address any challenges regarding aligning the assessment components (universal screening and progress monitoring) of RtI with the CCSS for ELA?

Interview results. The first interview question related to research question three asked participants, “What strategies would you recommend to support practitioners in overcoming these challenges (Universal Screening)? Table 14 presents the categories that emerged in the responses from the eight educational leaders.

Table 14

Recommended Strategies to Support Universal Screening

Themes	Number of Coded responses
Targeted Professional Development	7
Teacher Coaching	2
Multiple Forms of Assessment	1
Leadership	1

In reviewing themes that emerged for question four, professional development was recommended by seven participants. *Professional development* related to training teachers and administrators in the CCSS for ELA. For example, Sandra responded, “We need a lot of

professional development, specifically targeted towards moving teachers forward.” Pippie stated, “Two things: number one, we really have to do a better job of developing our professional development. We have to devise site-based professional development with follow-up coaching.” Rosarito said, “I think there is going to be an ongoing need for training; I mean, it is obvious that teachers are going to need support in training and coaching in the instructional shifts.” Vincent stated, “Teachers need to really understand how to really deconstruct a standard and determine what kids need to do in second grade, and what does it look like in third grade.” Jon responded, “I think that one of the most important practices that the district can do right away is to have teachers be a part of the work of digging into the standards.” Miller stated, “We need teachers to go through their lessons and identify where each activity falls into the depth of knowledge.”

Two teachers mentioned the importance of *coaching*, which related to teachers being allowed to receive in-class support (in terms of lesson planning or instructional delivery) from instructional coaches who have a higher level of expertise in the CCSS for ELA. Pippie mentioned, “We have to get into those classrooms, and we have to coach those teachers.” Rosarito said, “It is obvious that teachers are going to need coaching and training in the instructional shifts.” Additionally, one teacher mentioned multiple forms of assessment and as well as the importance of leadership.

The second interview question related to research question three asked participants, “What strategies would you recommend in supporting practitioners in overcoming these challenges for progress monitoring? Table 15 presents the categories that emerged in the responses from the eight educational leaders.

Table 15

Recommended Strategies to Support Progress Monitoring

Themes	Number of Coded Responses
Identification of New Measurement Tools	3
Collaboration	2
Targeted Professional Development	2
Provide Time for Progress Monitoring	1

In reviewing themes that emerged for question eight, *identification of new monitoring tools* was recommended by three participants. Monitoring tools related to assessment tools that allow practitioners to monitor student progress in the CCSS for ELA. For example, Vincent stated, “I would strongly recommend that whatever we are using for progress monitoring, looks very much like what those children will be taking in May.” Sandra responded, “What needs to happen, is we need to share and collaborate with a big ‘C,’ in order to find the best measurement tools available to measure common core.” Dru stated,

I know that the State had said that we would have resources to be able to use here, so that we would have some form of assessments. We do not have that yet. It is set to come out in the fall, but we still have to plan in case it doesn’t, because we know that things change from one day to the next.

Two participants mentioned the importance of *professional development*, which related to training teachers and administrators in the CCSS for ELA. Dru responded, “I would say strategies in both for professional development, for administrators, and teachers to understand everything that is going on.” Jon stated, “I think that is it, teachers desperately need instructional coaching, they need to be given the gift of having someone come into their room and support them with best instructional practice.” Additionally, *providing time for progress monitoring* was mentioned by one participant.

Summary of themes for research question three. Research question three asked, What strategies do K-12 educational leaders who have systems knowledge and experience, related to RtI and CCSS, perceive might be utilized to address any challenges regarding aligning the assessment components (universal screening and progress monitoring) of RtI with the CCSS for ELA? Table 16 displays the seven themes that resulted from the responses to both interview questions. *Targeted professional development* was the only theme in common from both interview questions. The two themes that received the most responses were *targeted professional development* and *identification of new assessment tools*. Five additional themes were also reported by participants: *teacher coaching*, *collaboration*, *multiple forms of assessment*, *leadership*, and *provide time for progress monitoring*.

Table 16

Summary of Research Question Three: Universal Screening

Themes	Number of Coded Responses
Targeted Professional Development	8
Identification of New Measurement Tools	3
Teacher Coaching	2
Collaboration	2
Multiple Forms of Assessment	1
Leadership	1
Provide Time for Progress Monitoring	1

Summary of Key Findings

Research question one asked, What do K-12 educational leaders who have systems knowledge and experience, related to RtI and CCSS, perceive as the potential modifications needed to align the assessment components (universal screening and progress monitoring) of RtI with the CCSS for ELA? Table 10 displays the seven themes that resulted from the responses to both interview questions. *Multiple forms of assessment* was the only theme in common from both interview questions. The two themes that received the most responses were a *shift from a*

knowledge focus to a skill focus and multiple forms of assessment. Five additional themes were also reported by participants: *a greater connection between grade levels, monitoring grade level progress, text complexity, clearer expectations, and expository writing and informational text.* The results of these five themes were inconclusive, as they did not relate to any of the research questions.

Research question two asked, What do K-12 educational leaders who have systems knowledge and experience, related to RtI and CCSS, perceive as challenges that may result from any modifications to the academic components needed to align the assessment components (universal screening and progress monitoring) of RtI with the CCSS for ELA? Table 13 displays the eight themes that resulted from the responses to both interview questions. *Knowledge gaps* and *lack of resources* were the only themes in common from both interview questions. These two themes also received the most responses. Six additional themes were also reported by participants: *dealing with change, two dimensional focus, defining proficiency, time for planning, lack of district preparation, and development of a shared vision.*

Research question three asked, What strategies do K-12 educational leaders who have systems knowledge and experience, related to RtI and CCSS, perceive might be utilized to address any challenges regarding aligning the assessment components (universal screening and progress monitoring) of RtI with the CCSS for ELA? Table 16 displays the seven themes that resulted from the responses to both interview questions. *Targeted professional development* was the only theme in common from both interview questions. The two themes that received the most responses were *targeted professional development* and *identification of new assessment tools.* Five additional themes were also reported by participants: *teacher coaching, collaboration, multiple forms of assessment, leadership, and provide time for progress monitoring.*

Chapter 5: Discussion

In August 2010, school districts in southern California started allocating resources to support the implementation of the CCSS for ELA. This new implementation of CCSS came on the heels of districts in Southern California allocating vast amounts of time and resources to implementing the RtI multi-tiered intervention model over the past decade. However, during the past 3 years, as districts had been making preparation for the implementation of CCSS, few researchers or practitioners have discussed or examined how to align the academic components of RtI with the CCSS for ELA.

Therefore, a great need and opportunity existed to examine the professional perceptions of K-12 educational leaders who have systems knowledge and experience related to RtI and CCSS regarding: (a) modifications that may be needed to align the assessment components (universal screening and progress monitoring) of RtI with the CCSS for ELA, (b) challenges that may result from RtI and CCSS assessment component alignment efforts, and (c) strategies that might be utilized to address any challenges related to RtI and CCSS assessment component alignment efforts.

This chapter explores the results presented in Chapter 4 and discusses the key findings and recommended strategies identified by educational leaders in Southern California. Following the discussion of the findings, conclusions are presented along with recommendations for policy and practice. The chapter concludes with the researcher providing several recommendations for future research and additional research questions that may warrant further exploration.

This study was guided by the following three research questions:

1. What do K-12 educational leaders who have systems knowledge and experience related to RtI and CCSS perceive as the potential modifications needed to align the

- assessment components (universal screening and progress monitoring) of RtI with the CCSS for ELA?
2. What do K-12 educational leaders who have systems knowledge and experience related to RtI and the CCSS (CCSS) perceive as challenges that may result from any modifications to the assessment components needed to aligning the assessment components of RtI with the CCSS for ELA at?
 3. What strategies do K-12 educational leaders who have systems knowledge and experience related to RtI and CCSS (CCSS) perceive might be utilized to address any challenges regarding aligning the assessment components (universal screening and progress monitoring) of RtI with the CCSS for ELA?

This research study utilized a qualitative exploratory design and involved eight selected school, district, and county level educational leaders from Southern California who had expertise related to RtI and CCSS in semi-structured interviews. The interviews consisted of eight questions designed to solicit information about each subject's professional experience related to RtI and CCSS and their professional opinions related to the possible modifications needed to align the assessment components of RtI to the CCSS for ELA. The researcher conducted interviews with subject participants face-to-face, via telephone, or via other media means depending based on what was most convenient for subject participants.

Discussion of Key Findings

Research question one. Findings related to research question one are summarized in Table 10, which presents the seven themes that resulted from the responses to both interview questions. Multiple forms of assessment was the only theme in common from both interview questions. The two themes that received the most responses were a shift from knowledge to a

skill focus and multiple forms of assessment. Five additional themes were also reported by fewer than three of the participants: a greater connection between grade levels, monitoring grade level progress, text complexity, clearer expectations, and expository writing and informational text.

Multiple forms of assessment. The theme that received the greatest number of responses for research question one was the need for multiple forms of assessments in regard to the needed modifications to align RtI assessment practices to the CCSS for ELA. This theme was mentioned by six of the eight participants during the interview process. For example, prior to the CCSS assessment, the primary assessment practice was multiple choice testing; however, CCSS requires more application of knowledge such as performance tasks that measure the application of multiple skills for reading and writing. Additionally, the different forms of assessment within the CCSS are designed to measure if students are attaining the reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills necessary (toward the overall goal of becoming CCR), and if not, this is where RtI would be implemented in order to bridge the gap. The importance of multiple forms of assessment is supported by one of the guiding strategies listed in the CCSS System Implementation Guide, created by the CDE (2013) which discusses the need for LEAs to “Develop and transition to CCSS-aligned assessment systems to inform instruction, establish priorities for professional learning, and provide tools for accountability (p. 4). Within this guiding strategy, CDE supports the notion that as the CCSS for ELA are implemented, LEAs will need to develop a system for assessments that aligns with these new standards.

In considering multiple forms of assessment there is a connection between Senge’s (2006) systems thinking. Multiple forms of assessment implies the use of various assessment formats to determine student proficiency in the CCSS. According to Senge, systems thinking is

the discipline of seeing the relationship of the interconnected parts and how those parts compliment the whole. Systems thinking provides a conceptual framework to identify patterns and structures that are involved in complex situations.

The complex situation in this scenario is the implementation of the CCSS for ELA, and its effects on the assessment practices of RtI. Senge (2006) stated the importance of identifying high leverage points within a system in order to foster positive systemic change. According to the participants' responses, multiple forms of assessment appears to be a high leverage point in response to research question one.

Shift from a knowledge focus to a skills focus. The second theme that emerged in response to research question one was a shift from a knowledge focus (California State Standards) to a skills focus (CCSS). This theme was mentioned by three of the participants during the interview process. This theme was related to the participants' belief that the implementation of the CCSS for ELA will require a shift away from a focus that was primarily on basic knowledge and skills (i.e., California State Standards) to more of a focus on practical application (i.e., CCSS). Participants believed that this is where the separation exists when comparing the previous California State Standards to the CCSS.

CCR is the overriding goal of the CCSS and is woven throughout all grade-level standards. These CCR anchor standards, which support the CCSS for ELA, entail how each standard is anchored in the skills needed for students to be college and career ready. The literature asserts that these anchor standards define the essential skills needed for students to be successful in college and the workforce (Achieve Inc., 2012; CCSSI, n.d.a; CDE, 2013). The participants believe that this shift would require modifications in how practitioners conduct universal screening and progress monitoring for students in the CCSS for ELA.

This shift in focus shared by the participants aligns with Senge's (2006) belief that when an organization participates in a shift in focus, it is important for individuals in that organization to participate in the process of managing and examining their mental models. According to Senge, mental models are how people view the world and take action. A mental model can be as simple as a generalization about people or as complex as a theory regarding nature or human development. The complex theory relates to the previous schema that practitioners had developed while working with the previous California State Standards. As the new CCSS for ELA are implemented, many of the participants believe this will require updated mental models as practitioners attempt to align the assessment practices for RtI to the CCSS for ELA.

Additional themes. Five additional themes were also reported by fewer than three of the participants: a greater connection between grade levels, monitoring grade level progress, text complexity, clearer expectations, and expository writing and informational text. The results of these five themes appear to relate to possible considerations that the educational leaders believed that LEAs should take into account, when determining the modification needed to align the RtI assessment components to the CCSS for Language Arts.

Research question two. Findings related to research question two are summarized in Table 13, which presents the eight themes that resulted from the responses to both interview questions. *Knowledge gaps* and *lack of resources* were the only common themes for both interview questions; these two themes also received the most responses. Six additional themes were also reported by participants: dealing with change, two dimensional focus, defining proficiency, time for planning, lack of district preparation, and development of a shared vision.

Knowledge gaps. The most common theme for research question two was the existence of a knowledge gap. This theme was mentioned by four of the eight participants during the

interview process. Knowledge gaps related to the lack of understanding many teachers currently have regarding the CCSS for ELA. Participants believed a knowledge gap posed a challenge to the potential modifications needed to align the RtI assessment components to the CCSS for ELA. For example, a lack of understanding that teachers have of the CCSS for ELA will impact the RtI assessment practices when universal screening is conducted. Resulting from the lack of understanding, teachers may be challenged with developing the necessary plans to address a student's area of weakness, which are identified during the universal screening process. This is the point at which the knowledge gap may be first realized. It is an assumption that a depth of understanding may lead to a depth of instruction. Likewise, the teacher's inability to teach a standard to the depth necessary for a student to make adequate progress could possibly impact the progress students are making in the CCSS for ELA. This concern was supported in the research literature, as several researchers mentioned that few teachers are prepared for the level of instruction that will be required to support students (Gewertz, 2012; Quay, 2010; Straub & Alias, 2013). Furthermore, Quay (2010) asserted that few teachers are prepared to provide instruction for students with varying degrees of performance in the CCSS for ELA. Participants believed that the knowledge gap or practitioners' lack of understanding of the CCSS presented a challenge that was worth noting when considering the necessary modification to align assessment practices to the CCSS for ELA.

The participants' notion of a knowledge gap aligns with Senge's (2006) discipline of personal mastery. In applying Senge's theory, a practitioner may need to overcome the knowledge gap associated with the CCSS in ELA in order to achieve personal mastery. According to Senge, one of the major challenges to personal mastery is the creative tension that develops when one realizes the gap between one's vision and reality. This gap that exist

between an organization's current schema and the necessary schema to ensure success of future efforts produces creative tension that is central to developing personal mastery. It is at this juncture that Senge believes that the greatest opportunity exists in closing the knowledge gap. Practitioners work to close this gap by pursuing personal mastery, and learning occurs as people view reality objectively. Senge believes that the continual process of working to align the gaps between one's personal vision, which is at odds with reality, leads to personal mastery.

Lack of resources. The second theme that surfaced for research question two was a lack of resources, which was mentioned by four of the eight participants during the interview process. Lack of resources related to the current lack of assessment tools and curriculum materials that align with the CCSS for ELA. Participants mentioned that assessment tools for universal screening and progress monitoring that are specifically aligned with the CCSS for ELA continue to be unavailable. Additionally, participants mentioned that there is currently no available state-adopted curriculum that aligns to the CCSS. The participants believed that the lack of resources was a challenge to practitioners as they attempt to align their practices of universal screening and progress monitoring to the CCSS. The CDE (2013) emphasizes the importance of providing LEAs with the necessary resources in order to align with the CCSS, in their CCSS Systems Implementation Plan. In their implementation plan, one of the guiding strategies is the following idea; "seek, create, and disseminate resources to support stakeholders as CCSS systems implementation moves forward" (p. 4). CDE appeared to support this finding at the time of release of this document in 2013; however, the participants in this study believe this is yet to be addressed.

Lack of resources has the potential to play a critical role in the modifications necessary to align the RtI assessment components (universal screening and progress monitoring) to the CCSS

for ELA. In considering Senge's (2006) systems thinking, all parts of a system are interconnected and related to the whole. If there is a breakdown in one of the interconnected parts, the entire system is in jeopardy of not functioning effectively. Herein lies the potential challenge to which participants referred: the possibility of a lack of necessary resources to support the alignment of the RtI assessment components with the CCSS for ELA. When taking into account the important role of adequate resources within a system, those resources may perform a vital role in helping practitioners assess students. The lack of resources listed by participants can be considered what Senge describes as a high leverage point, pertaining to the success or failure of an organization.

Additional themes. Six additional themes were reported by fewer than three of the participants: dealing with change, two dimensional focus, defining proficiency, time for planning, lack of district preparation, and development of a shared vision. Several of the additional themes were in some way related to the two key themes. For example, dealing with change and defining proficiency appeared to connect to participants' perception that the transition to the new standards has produced a knowledge gap for professionals, as they are in the process of learning new standards for students. A two dimensional focus relates to the understanding that there is now a focus for practitioners not on only basic knowledge, but also CCR. Lack of district preparation relates to lack of resources both indirectly and directly, and was one of the common themes expressed by participants.

Research question three. Findings related to research question three are summarized in Table 16, which presents the seven themes that resulted from the responses to both interview questions. Targeted professional development was the only common theme originating from both interview questions. The two themes that received the most responses were targeted

professional development and identification of new assessment tools. Five additional themes were also reported by participants: teacher coaching, collaboration, multiple forms of assessment, leadership, and provide time for progress monitoring.

Targeted professional development. One of the most common themes reported by educational leaders in response to Research Question Three was the recommendation to provide targeted professional development, a theme that was mentioned by all eight of the participants. Targeted professional development related to specific training to support teachers and administrators in deepening their understanding of the CCSS for ELA. Several researchers have suggested the importance of professional development for teachers who work with at-risk populations (Graham & Harris, 2013; Haager & Vaughn, 2013; McNulty & Gloeckler, 2011; Quay, 2010; Williamson et al., 2013). Targeted professional development also aligns with one of the guiding strategies from the CDE (2013), which emphasizes the need to “Facilitate high quality professional learning opportunities for educators, to ensure that every student has access to teachers who are prepared to teach to the levels of rigor and depth, required by the CCSS” (p. 6). CDE further asserted that,

it is critical to the success of the CCSS system that every educator, at every stage of his or her career, has access to high quality professional learning opportunities that develop facility with the new standards and a variety of instructional strategies that will support student attainment of them. (p. 6)

The importance of targeted professional development is in alignment with Peter Senge’s (2006) concept of team learning: the continual process of building the capacity of individual members of an organizational team that builds on the concept of personal mastery. Teams are made up of individuals team members, and as individuals in an organization continue to improve

and learn, the team as a whole is better suited to fulfill its shared vision. Within the concept of team learning lies the need for team members to see their critical role as a team member and the need for a coordinated action toward improvement of the team.

Identification of assessment tools. This study found that one of the most common themes reported by educational leaders in response to research question three was the recommendation for the identification of assessment tools. Identification of assessment tools related to the identification of assessment tools to conduct universal screening and progress monitoring which is aligned to the CCSS for ELA. This theme was mentioned by three of the eight participants. The participants perceived that it was important for practitioners to focus on efforts to identify viable assessment tools to conduct universal screening and progress monitoring of students in the CCSS for ELA. This theme is supported by one of the CDE's (2013) guiding principles, which emphasizes the importance of LEAs transitioning to a CCSS-aligned assessment system, one that informs instruction, establishes priorities for professional learning, and provides tools for accountability.

Additional themes. Five additional themes were also reported by participants: teacher coaching, collaboration, multiple forms of assessment, leadership, and provide time for progress monitoring. Several of the additional themes were in some way related to the two key themes. For example, teacher coaching is a form of professional development, and leadership is needed to support targeted professional development. The importance of collaboration was a recommendation to support practitioners in identifying and developing assessment tools that are aligned to the CCSS for ELA. Lastly, multiple forms of assessment was related to the format that needs to be considered, as practitioners focus on the identification of assessment tools.

Conclusions

Four conclusions were derived from an analysis of the data collected in response to the guiding research questions. These four conclusions relate to lack of a clear vision regarding RtI, RtI assessment tools aligned to the CSS for ELA, staff capacity, and strategic professional development.

Lack of a clear vision regarding the role of RtI. The researcher concluded that there is currently not a clear vision regarding the role of RtI in supporting the CCSS for ELA. This was determined based on interviews with the eight educational leaders, where was no clear consensus surrounding the use of RtI now that school have started to focus on implementing the CCSS. Additionally, when examining the current research literature, very few journals or reports discuss the connection or the role of RtI in supporting the CCSS for ELA. This lack of vision could possibly be a result of the seismic efforts required by districts in preparation for implementing the CCSS. In order for LEAs to prepare for such a paradigm shift toward CCR in addition to basic skills, RtI may have been overlooked or may not be receiving the appropriate attention to inform practitioners who are supporting at-risk students in the CCSS for ELA.

RtI assessment tools aligned to CCSS. Secondly, in the near future, RtI assessment tools for universal screening and progress monitoring will need to be modified in order to align to the CCSS for ELA. RtI assessment tools will need to transition to reflect the shift that has transpired with the implementation of the CCSS for ELA to a greater emphasis on college-and-career readiness and 21 century skills. The CDE (2013) has emphasized the importance of creating tools aligned to the CCSS in order for LEAs to create a systematic process for universal screening and progress monitoring of students in the CCSS. Furthermore, in considering the six instructional shifts of the CCSS for ELA (Achieve, Inc., 2012; Arizona Department of

Education, 2012; Delaware Department of Education, 2012; Oregon Department of Education, 2011), it appears appropriate that a shift in student expectations and teacher instructional practices would require a shift in terms of the assessment tools that are utilized to measure progress in these new standards.

Considering the shift in focus, the assessment format of these new tools should include multiple forms of assessments to measure students' outcomes in regard to not just ELA content, but also CCR skills. These assessments should also include brief performance tasks that measure students' ability to apply their knowledge in comparison to the traditional multiple-choice instruments that have traditionally been used in the past. Additionally, these tools will need to be adapted to function in the dual role of screening and monitoring not just content knowledge, but also CCR and 21st century skills.

The systematic process of assessment and alignment to the instructional shifts will require updated RtI assessment tools to provide teachers the resources to conduct the assessment components of RtI effectively. P21 (n.d.) has also emphasized the importance of the alignment that must be in place among standards, assessments, curriculum, instruction, professional development, and learning environments in order to support students in mastering the 21st century outcomes of today. This new reform that is prompting new 21st century skills for students (i.e., the CCSS) will require new and diverse tools. This work in aligning the RtI assessment components with the CCSS for ELA reveals a need to update and modify universal screening and progress monitoring tools to support the gap in the current assessment system.

The staff capacity barrier/knowledge gap. A third conclusion is that building staff capacity may present the greatest challenge to LEAs in their modification efforts to align the RtI assessment components to the CCSS for ELA. The shift in focus of the CCSS will require a shift

for staff members to support students successfully. Teachers will also need time and practice to gain a level of mastery in their personal understanding of the CCSS for ELA.

Considering that the transition to the CCSS is adaptive in nature, it will require staff members to develop new knowledge and skills in order to support students with new standards related to the integration of 21st century skills. Teachers' lack of knowledge and understanding regarding the introduction of the CCSS for ELA appears to pose a critical challenge for successful implementation of the RtI assessment components. Correspondingly, half of the educational leaders interviewed in this study mentioned that staff capacity (i.e., a knowledge gap) posed a challenge to the successful implementation of the modification of the RtI assessment components with the CCSS for ELA. The challenge of successfully navigating new ideas, when staff capacity fails to match the skills needed to successfully implement the change, is supported in the literature by several authors (DuFour et al., 2008; Kotter, 1996; Senge, 2006). Likewise, when considering the shift to in focus of the CCSS (i.e., CCR and 21st century learning skills), it appears that teachers will need a clear understanding of these new skills and as well as of their students' needs in order to align supports to meet these new expectations (Straub & Alias, 2013).

Strategic professional development. A fourth conclusion emphasizes the importance of LEAs engaging in strategic professional development to support practitioners in overcoming the challenges caused by the modification to align the RtI assessment components to the CCSS for ELA. Considering the emphasis on 21st century learning and CCR embedded in the CCSS, a projected need entails the building of staff capacity. It appears that reaching this projected need will require a more systematic approach to professional development that support teachers in deepening their understanding of the CCSS in ELA in order to support problem-solving, critical

thinking, and other 21st century skills. This can be considered adaptive change, which will require a more strategic approach to staff development that addresses multiple domains and multiple forms of professional development to support practitioners.

Recommendations

The findings from the study support five practice recommendations. The first recommendation is for LEAs to develop a shared vision in regard to the role of RtI in supporting the CCSS for ELA. The second recommendation is for LEAs to develop teams of stakeholders to participate in the development of a comprehensive plan, throughout all phases, to align their RtI assessment tools to the CCSS for ELA. The third recommendation is for LEAs to develop RtI assessment tools that align to the CCSS for ELA. The fourth recommendation is for LEAs to select a CCR or 21st century framework in order to help teachers in support these skills. The fifth recommendation is for LEAs to create strategic professional development plan to ensure that teachers receive adequate training to teach the skills assessed in the 21st century framework that are embedded in the CCSS for ELA.

Develop a shared vision for RtI. The first recommendation is for LEAs to develop a shared vision for the role of RtI in support of the CCSS for ELA. According to Kotter (1996), “Vision helps align individuals, thus coordinating the actions of motivated people in a remarkably efficient way” (p. 70). In examining Kotter’s beliefs, vision serves as the foundation for the structural frame, as all strategies and actions that create structure should align with the organization’s vision, which is created to support the current change. Consequently, LEAs will need to ensure the development of a shared vision prior to creating new structures, in order to effectively support the alignment of the RtI assessment components with the CCSS for ELA. Senge (2006) has provided a framework for these conversations. According to Senge, a shared

vision answers the question, “What do we want to create” (p. 192)? Once this question is answered, it provides the structure, focus, and energy necessary to develop collective commitments of individuals in an organization.

As this transition to the CCSS is adaptive in nature, it will require a vision for what is expected for all students and the role that RtI will play in supporting at-risk students. A shared vision will help anchor the transition to a focus on CCR in the culture of an organization. DuFour et al. (2008) discussed the importance of developing a shared vision in order to support the process of intentionally shaping the culture within an organization. Reeves (2009) asserted, “If we have learned anything in the educational standards movement in the last decade, it is that policy change without cultural change is an exercise in futility and frustration” (p. 37). As school sites invest the time and energy necessary to align the RtI assessment components to the CCSS for ELA, it will be essential for them to engage intentionally in efforts that anchor the vision of RtI in supporting all students in the culture of the district. The work of creating a shared vision provides the framework for LEAs to intentionally shape the culture of the school in their district regarding the role of RtI in supporting the CCSS for ELA.

Developing collaborative teams to align RtI to the CCSS. The second recommendation is for LEAs to develop teams of stakeholders to participate in the development of a comprehensive plan, throughout all phases, to align their RtI assessment tools to the CCSS for ELA. This will assist organizations in making collaborative decisions and provide the necessary transparency, which supports stakeholders in developing ownership of a reform or change initiative. This process of involving stakeholders in the development of change initiatives is of primary importance, when engaging in adaptive the complexity associated with adaptive change will require a “powerful force to sustain the process” (Kotter, 1996, p. 51). Therefore, involving

stakeholders or creating guiding coalitions is a critical component when engaging in adaptive work within organizations. Several researchers have also discussed the importance of developing leadership teams in order to build collective commitments and also to foster sustainable support for change initiatives (DuFour et al., 2008; Marzano et al., 2005; Reeves, 2009). In particular, when creating new systems, this practice supports and values the professionalism of stakeholders and it reinforces a sense of cohesiveness, which fosters a sense of ownership in the development of a new system (DuFour et al., 2008; Reeves, 2009).

This recommendation requires LEAs to provide stakeholders with opportunities to participate in collaborative teams that will research and develop new RtI assessment tools that are aligned to the CCSS for ELA. Additionally, it will be equally important for LEAs to ensure that stakeholders are involved in the discussions and decisions regarding structural interventions that assess and support at-risk students. In supporting the teaching of 21st century skills and CCR, stakeholders should play a critical role in the development of the CCR framework selected by LEAs.

Development of RtI tools aligned to the CCSS. The third recommendation is for LEAs to develop RtI assessment tools that align to the CCSS for ELA. This recommendation will require LEAs to develop assessment tools for universal screening and progress monitoring, with respect to students acquiring 21st century skills (learning and innovation skills, information, media and technology skills, and life and career skills) as well as CCR. In the previous decade, RtI tools focused on identifying students who were at risk of academic failure and also engaging in progress monitoring of these students once they were placed in interventions. As there is now a transition beyond basic skills, districts must be prepared with a plan to address and support students who also lack 21st century skills. Considering the increase in rigor and the new focus

on 21st CCR skills, there is a need for new and improved assessment tools that measure these skills. The P21 (2014) addresses the importance of the alignment that must be in place between standards and assessments in order to support students in mastering the 21st century outcomes of today. The CDE (2013) has also emphasized the importance of identifying CCSS-aligned assessment tools as a guiding strategy.

The process of aligning these assessments could have a significant impact on the number of students needing interventions. Previously, for example, RtI was designed based on an 80-15-5 rule, in terms of the use of resources in supporting at-risk learners. Essentially, this meant that 80% of students should be successful in regular education setting and 15% of students would possibly need strategic support, ranging from additional tutoring to pull out sessions, in order to be successful in ELA. The five percent was designated for students who were several years behind grade level and would need intensive one on one support. As the CCSS for ELA transition moves forward, LEAs will need to determine how to not only assess students in basic ELA skills, but also include the CCR skills. School sites may possibly experience an additional increase in the number of students in need of intervention when the 21st century skills are considered, as a result of the administration of the initial universal screening.

In order to support this process, LEAs will need to create or modify existing universal screening and progress monitoring tools to take into account the 21st century skills. The development of these new assessments could possibly be supported by LEAs revisiting and strengthening the development of professional learning communities (PLCs) on all school campuses. The PLC process could possibly provide the necessary framework to engage educational professionals in collaborative teams by guiding their efforts in creating appropriate assessments and action plans to support all students (DuFour et al., 2008). This process will

ensure that the new assessments are created collaboratively, which will support teacher ownership of the new CCSS-aligned universal screening and progress monitoring tools. In terms of structure, these updated RtI assessment tools will provide teachers an improved format to help analyze and guide their action plans to support at-risk learners.

The development of assessment tools aligned to the CCSS for ELA will support not only the RtI assessment components, but also the work of teachers supporting all students (Brownell et al., 2010; Buffum et al., 2009; Burns & Gibbons, 2008). The new assessment tools should also support the identification of grade level proficiency in the standards. Considering that the organization of the CCSS for ELA provides clear indication of what skills come before and after each standard, this will make the progression of creating intervention plan seamless and more readily available for teachers (Graham & Harris, 2013; Saunders et al., 2013). It is imperative for LEAs to address the gap in assessment tools aligned to assessing these new skills with the implementation of the CCSS occurring in the upcoming school year.

Selecting a CCR framework/21st century framework. The fourth recommendation is for LEAs to select a CCR/21st century framework to help guide teachers in their instruction. According to Conley (2007), CCR addresses four key domains in which students must be proficient in order to have the opportunity for success in college. These areas, termed the *big four*, represent the four domains that public education must address in order to adequately prepare students for college: cognitive strategies, content knowledge, self management knowledge, and knowledge about postsecondary education.

In addition to Conley's (2007) big four, there are several additional frameworks from which to choose in order to prepare students for college and career success. The P21 framework addresses four components: learning and innovation skills, information, media and technology

skills, and life and career skills. Additionally, AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) is a framework that supports the teaching of college and career readiness skills. AVID has presented the acronym, WICOR, which represents the importance of writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization, and reading, as critical skills for college readiness. Any of these three frameworks (the big four, P21, and AVID), if selected by LEAs, could serve to support teachers in addressing CCR skills.

Once the framework is in place, local grade level teams can begin the process of experimenting with mechanisms that effectively pre-assess these critical CCR skills prior to each unit of study or lesson. This will allow teachers to identify a missing CCR skill and or basic skill for each student, and teachers will then be able to build the necessary supports into their lesson plans. Additionally, once students are identified, this framework will also support school sites in determining how to progress monitor for CCR and 21st century skills.

Strategic professional development plan. The fifth recommendation is for LEAs to create a strategic professional development plan to ensure that teachers receive adequate training to teach the skills assessed in the 21st century framework and CCSS for ELA. Also, this plan should include training on how to effectively use all CCSS-aligned assessment tools, and would include trainings on how to administer assessments, analyze data, and create action plans to support the needs of students.

As LEAs continue the process of aligning and developing RtI assessment tools, the development of a comprehensive approach to address staff capacity in the CCSS is essential. Several researchers have suggested the need for a strategic plan to improve staff capacity for teachers working with at-risk populations using the new CCSS for ELA (Graham & Harris, 2013; Haager & Vaughn, 2013; McNulty & Gloeckler, 2011; Williamson et al., 2013)

Considering the increase in rigor of the CCSS, it appears that teachers will need a clear understanding of the new standards and also the needs of their students in order to align supports to meet these new expectations (Straub & Alias, 2013). With this in mind, the strategic plan should include plans to support teacher content knowledge and also address the essential skills/components listed in the 21st century framework. Skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, information literacy, communication and collaboration must be considered, as districts implement professional development training for teachers. Lastly, within this strategic plan for professional development, teachers should be offered multiple formats for support, such as team teaching, coaching, visiting other classrooms and schools, and attending subject-specific conferences.

Recommendations for Future Research

There are several recommendation that exist for further research in regards to the alignment of the assessment components of RtI with the CCSS for Language Arts. The first would be the recommendation to examine the general challenges and benefits to the RtI assessment components once the CCSS for Language Arts is fully implemented and assessment tools are available. There also exist the opportunity to replicate this study with a different sample of participants. It would be interest to examine the conclusion that may result from interviewing general education or special education teachers. Lastly, it was also be beneficial to examine the effectiveness of LEA initial attempts at aligning RtI assessment practices to the CCSS for Language Arts. This could provide possible models of excellence to support practitioner in the field.

Summary

Over the past several years, Districts throughout Southern California have been investing resources toward the implementation of the CCSS for Language Arts. During the initial stages

of implementation, it is important for districts to determine a comprehensive plan to support at-risk learners. When utilized properly, RtI can offer districts the necessary framework to identify and provide support for at-risk learners. In order to accomplish this, districts will need to consider the adjustments and modifications necessary to align the assessment practices of RtI to CCSS. The alignment of these assessment components will ensure that all teachers and school sites have the necessary resources to effectively identify students at-risk of academic failure, and also monitor their progress.

REFERENCES

- ACT. (2008). *ACT profile report - National graduating class of 2008*. Retrieved from <http://www.act.org/newsroom/data/2008/pdf/profile/National2008.pdf>
- Achieve, Inc. (2010). *A comparison of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for language arts and literacy in history/social studies & science to the American Diploma Project (ADP) Benchmarks for English*. Retrieved from <http://www.achieve.org/files/AchieveCCSSEnglishcomparisonwithADPBenchmarks061610.pdf>
- Achieve, Inc. (2012). *The expectations gap: A 50-state review of high school graduation requirements*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Achieve, Inc., the Education Trust, & Thomas B. Fordham Foundation. (2004). *The American diploma project: Ready or not: Creating a high school diploma that counts*. Washington, DC: Achieve, Inc.
- Allensworth, E., Nomi, T., Montgomery, N., & Lee, V. E. (2010). College preparatory curriculum for all: Academic consequences of requiring Algebra and English I for ninth graders in Chicago. *Education Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 31(4), 367-391. doi:10.3102/0162373709343471
- American Institute for Research. (2013). *Reauthorizing ESEA: Making research relevant*. Retrieved from http://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/0669_PG_SchoolTurnaround_Online_d41_0.pdf
- Anderson, J. (2001). 1950-1980 Separate and unequal. In S. Mondale (Ed.), *School: The story of American public education* (pp. 123-130). Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Arizona Department of Education. (2012). *Overview of the six instructional shifts in the implementation of the ELA Common Core*. Retrieved from http://www.azed.gov/azcommoncore/files/2012/05/may17_elashifts.pdf
- Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development. (2012). *Fulfilling the promise of the common core standards: Moving from adoption to implementation to sustainability*. Retrieved from: <http://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/siteASCD/commoncore/CCSSSummitReport.pdf>
- Berliner, D. C. (1990). What's all the fuss about instructional time? In M. Ben-Peretz & R. Brommel (Eds.), *The nature of time in schools: Theoretical concepts, practitioner perceptions*. (pp. 3-35). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. E. (2002). *Reframing the path to school leadership: A guide for teachers and principals*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Bracey, G. W. (2007). The first time "everything changed." *The Phi Delta Kappan*, 89(2), 119-136. Retrieved from <http://www.kappanmagazine.org/content/89/2/119.abstract>

- Brown, B. (2009). *Standards-based education reform in the United States since "A Nation At Risk."* Retrieved from http://manoa.hawaii.edu/hepc/pdf/Reports/FINAL-History_of_Standards-Based_Education_in_Hawaii.pdf
- Brownell, A., Sindelar, P., Kiely & Danielson, L. C. (2010). Special education teacher quality preparation: Exposing foundations, constructing a new model. *Exceptional Children*, 76(3), 357-377. doi:10.1177/001440291007600307
- Buffum, A., Mattos, M., & Weber, C. (2009). *Pyramid response to intervention: RTI, professional learning communities, and how to respond when kids don't learn.* Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.
- Burke, J. (2013). *The Common Core Companion: The standards decoded.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Burns, M. K., & Gibbons, K. (2008). *Implementing response to intervention in elementary and secondary schools.* New York, NY: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Burns, M. K., & Senesac, B. V. (2005). Comparison of dual discrepancy criteria to assess response to intervention. *Journal of School Psychology*, 43, 393-406. doi:10.1016/j.jsp.2005.09.003
- California Department of Education. (2009). *Determining specific learning disability eligibility using Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI2).* Retrieved from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/sr/documents/sldeligibltyr2.pdf>
- California Department of Education. (2011). *Response to Instruction and Intervention: An implementation and technical assistance guide for districts and school.* Retrieved from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/ri/documents/rti2techassist.doc>
- California Department of Education. (2013). *Common core state standards system implementation plan for California.* Retrieved from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/cc/documents/ccssimplementationplan.doc>
- Carmichael, S. B., Martino, G., Porter-Magee, K., & Wilson, W. S. (2010, July). *The state of state standards—and the common core—in 2010.* Retrieved from http://www.edexcellencemedia.net/publications/2010/201007_state_education_standards_common_standards/SOSSandCC2010_FullReportFINAL.pdf
- Carroll, J. B. (1963). A model of school learning. *Teachers College Record*, 64(8), 723-733. Retrieved from <http://www.tcrecord.org>
- Case, L. P., Speece, D. L., & Molloy, D. E. (2003). The validity of a response-to-instruction paradigm to identify reading disabilities: A longitudinal analysis of individual differences and contextual factors. *School Psychology Review*, 32, 557-582. Retrieved from <http://www.nasponline.org/publications/spr/abstract.aspx?ID=1652>

- Center for K-12 Assessment & Performance Management at ETS. (2012, April). *Coming together to raise achievement: New assessments for the Common Core State Standards*. Retrieved from http://www.k12center.org/rsc/pdf/Coming_Together_April_2012.pdf
- Center for K-12 Assessment & Performance Management at ETS. (2013, June). *Coming together to raise achievement: New assessments for the Common Core State Standards*. Retrieved from http://www.k12center.org/rsc/pdf/Coming_Together_June_2013.pdf
- Chubb, J., & Ravitch, D. (2009, Summer). The future of No Child Left Behind: End it? Or mend it? *Education Next*, 49-56. Retrieved from <http://educationnext.org>
- Churchill, G. A., & Lacobicci, D. (2009). *Research: Methodological foundations* (10th ed.). Mason, VA: Cengage Learning.
- Common Core State Standards Initiative. (n.d.a). *College and career readiness*. Retrieved from <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/R/>
- Common Core State Standards Initiative. (n.d.b). *ELA standards*. Retrieved from <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/>
- Common Core State Standards Initiative. (n.d.c). *ELA standards: Key design considerations*. Retrieved from <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/introduction/key-design-consideration/>
- Common Core State Standards Initiative. (n.d.d). *Common core state standards for English language arts & literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects*. Retrieved from <http://www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards>
- Conley, D. T. (2007). *Redefining college readiness*. Eugene, OR: Educational Policy Improvement Center.
- Creswell, J. (2005). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.
- Creswell, J. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Daniel, P. (1997). Educating students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment: A slippery slope for educators. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 35(5), 397-410. doi:10.1108/09578239710184556
- Delaware Department of Education. (2012). *A guide to the shifts in the ELA Common Core State Standards*. Retrieved from <http://www.doe.k12.de.us/commoncore/ela/files/ELAInstructionalShifts.pdf>
- Deville, C., & Chalhoub-Deville, M. (2011). Accountability-assessment under No Child Left Behind: Agenda, practice, and future. *Language Testing*, 28, 307-321. doi:10.1177/0265532211400876

- Duffy, H. (2007). *Meeting the needs of significantly struggling learners in high school: A look at approaches to tiered intervention*. Retrieved from <http://www.centeroninstruction.org/files/Meeting%20the%20Needs.pdf>
- Duffy, H., & Scala, J. (2012). *A systematic approach to implementing response to intervention in three high schools*. Retrieved from http://www.betterhighschools.org/documents/NHSC_CORTI_Mar12.pdf
- DuFour, R., DuFour, R., & Eaker, R. (2008). *Revisiting professional learning communities at work: New insights for improving schools*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.
- Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, Pub. L. No. 94-142.
- Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, Pub. L. No. 89-10.
- Fletcher, J. M., Coulter, W. A., Reschly, D. J., & Vaughn, S. (2004). Alternative approaches to the definition and identification of learning disabilities: Some questions and answers. *Annals of Dyslexia*, 54(2), 304-331. doi:10.1007/s11881-004-0015-y
- Friedman, T. (2007). *The world is flat: A brief history of the twenty-first century* (Release 3.0). New York, NY: Picador.
- Fuchs, D., & Fuchs, L. S. (2006). Introduction to response to intervention: What, why, and how valid is it? *Reading Research Quarterly*, 41, 93-99. doi:10.1598/RRQ.41.1.4
- Fuchs, D., Fuchs, L., & Stecker, P. (2010). The “blurring” of special education in a new continuum of general education placements and services. *Exceptional Children*, 76(3), 301-323. doi:10.1177/001440291007600304
- Fuchs, L. S., & Fuchs, D. (1986). Effects of systematic formative evaluation: A meta-analysis. *Exceptional Children*, 52(2), 199-208. Retrieved from <http://journals.cec.sped.org/ec/>
- Fuchs, L. S., Fuchs, D., & Compton, D. (2010). Rethinking response to intervention at middle and high school. *School Psychology Review*, 39(1), 22-28. Retrieved from <http://www.nasponline.org/publications/spr/abstract.aspx?ID=1994>
- Fuchs, L. S., Fuchs, D., Hamlett, C. L., Hope, S. K., Hollenbeck, K. N., Capizzi, A. M., Craddock, C. F., & Brothers, R. L. (2006). Extending responsiveness-to-intervention to math problem solving at third grade. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 38(4), 59-63. doi:10.1177/004005990603800409
- Fullan, M. (2010). *All systems go*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Gamson, D. A., Lu, X., & Eckert, S. A. (2013). Challenging the research base of the common core state standards: A historical reanalysis of text complexity. *Educational Researcher*, 42(7), 381-391. doi:10.3102/0013189X13505684

- Gewertz, C. (2012). *Districts gear up for shift to informational text*. Retrieved from http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2012/03/14/24informational_ep.h31.html
- Global Scholar/Spectrum K12 Solution. (2011). *Response to intervention (RTI) adoption survey*. Retrieved from http://www.spectrumk12.com/rti/the_rti_corner/rti_adoption_report
- Glover, T. A., & Vaughn, S. (Eds.). (2010). *The promise of response to intervention: Evaluating current science and practice*. New York, NY: Guilford.
- Goertz, M. E. (2009). Standards-based reform: Lessons from the past, directions for the future. In K. Wong & R. Rothman (Eds.), *Clio at the table: Using history to inform and improve education policy* (pp. 201-219). New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Graesser, A. C., McNamara, D. S., & Kulikowich, J. M. (2011). Coh-metrix: Providing multilevel analyses of text characteristics. *Educational Researcher*, 40, 223-234. doi:10.3102/0013189X11413260
- Graham, S., & Harris, K. R. (2013). Common Core State Standards, writing, and students with LD. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, 28, 28-37. doi:10.1111/ldrp.12004
- Haager, D., & Vaughn, S. (2013). The Common Core State Standards and students with learning disabilities: Introduction to the special issue. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, 28, 1-4. doi:10.1111/ldrp.12005
- Hakuta, K. (2012). *Getting to the core of the language demands in the common core is essential for English learners* [PowerPoint Presentation]. Retrieved from http://relwest_production.s3.amazonaws.com/related_materials/171/Hakuta_PPT_508a.pdf?1348265159
- Hall, S. (2008). *Implementing response to intervention*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Hamilton, L. S., Stecher, B. M., & Yuan, K. (2008). *Standards-based reform in the United States: History, research, and future directions*. Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation.
- Hargreaves, A., & Shirley, D. (2009) *The fourth way*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Harr-Robins, J. J., Shambaugh, L. S., & Parrish, T. (2009). *The status of state-level response to intervention policies and procedures in the west region states and five other states*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. Retrieved from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/west/pdf/REL_2009077_sum.pdf
- Hoover, J., Baca, L., Wexler-Love, E., & Saenz, L. (2008). *National implementation of response to intervention (RTI): Research summary*. Alexandria, VA: National Association of State Directors of Special Education.
- Horn, J., & Raymond A. (2004). *Standards primer*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.

- Horowitz, S. (2005). *Response to Intervention: Tears without fears*. Retrieved from <http://www.ncl.org/at-school/general-topics/parentschool-partnership/response-to-intervention-tiers-without-tears>
- Hyslop, A., & Tucker, B. (2012). *Ready by design: A college and career agenda for California*. Retrieved from [http://www.educationsector.org/sites/default/files/publications/Ready byDesign-RELEASED.pdf](http://www.educationsector.org/sites/default/files/publications/Ready%20by%20Design-RELEASED.pdf)
- Improving America's Schools Act. (1994). Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/legislation/ESEA/index.html>
- Individuals with Disabilities Act, 20 U. S. C. Sec. 1400 (1990).
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, Pub. L. No. 108-446, § 1400 et seq.
- Isaac, S., & Michael, M. B. (1995). *Handbook in research and evaluation* (3rd ed.). San Diego, CA: Educational and Industrial Testing.
- Itkonen, T. (2007). P.L. 94-142: Policy, evolution, and landscape shift. *Issues in Teacher Education*, 16(2), 7-17. Retrieved from <http://www.amle.org/Research/ResearchSummaries/Inclusion/tabid/2581/Default.aspx>
- Jolly, J. L. (2009). The National Defense Education Act, current STEM initiatives, and the gifted. *Gifted Child Today*, 32(2), 50-53. Retrieved from <http://gct.sagepub.com/content/32/2/50.refs>
- Jorgensen, M. A., & Hoffmann, J. (2003). *History of the No Child Left Behind Act*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.
- Kotter, J. P. (1996). *Leading change*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
- Krathwohl, D. (2004). *Methods of educational and social science research* (2nd ed.). Long Grove, IL: Waveland.
- Mack, F., Smith, V., & Straight, H. (2010). Response to intervention: Implications for the proficiency of early childhood special educators. *The Journal of the International Association of Special Education*, 11(1), 15-21. Retrieved from <http://iase-biz1.webs.com/publications.htm>
- Manpower Group. (2011). *Manpower Group talent shortage survey 2011*. Retrieved from <http://us.manpower.com/us/en/multimedia/2011-Talent-Shortage-Survey.pdf>
- Marzano, R., Waters, T., & McNulty, B. (2005). *School leadership that works: From research to results*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

- McGraw-Hill Education. (2011). Education brief: The Common Core Standards Initiative. Retrieved from http://www.commoncoresolutions.com/PDF/education_brief.pdf
- McTighe, J., & Wiggins, G. (2012). *From common core standards to curriculum: Five big ideas*. Retrieved from http://grantwiggins.files.wordpress.com/2012/09/mctighe_wiggins_final_common_core_standards.pdf
- McNulty, R. J., & Gloeckler, L. C. (2011). *Fewer, clearer, higher common core state standards: Implications for students receiving special education services*. Rexford, NY: International Center for Leadership in Education. Retrieved from <http://www.leadered.com/pdf/Special%20Ed%20&%20CCSS%20white%20paper.pdf>
- Mellard, D. F., McKnight, M., & Woods, K. (2009). Response to intervention screening and progress-monitoring practices in 41 local schools. *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice, 24*(4), 186-195. doi:10.1111/j.1540-5826.2009.00292.x
- Meyer, L., Gersten, R., & Gutkin, J. (1983). Direct instruction: a project follow through success story in an inner-city school. *Elementary School Journal, 84*, 241-252. doi:10.1086/461360
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- National Academy of Education. (2009). *Standards, assessments, and accountability: Education policy white paper*. Retrieved from http://www.naeducation.org/Standards_Assessments_Accountability_White_Paper.pdf
- National Association of State Directors of Special Education and Council of Administrators of Special Education. (2006). *Response to intervention: NASDSE and CASE white paper on RTI*. Retrieved from <http://www.nasdse.org/Portals/0/Documents/Download%20Publications/RtIANAdministratorsPerspective1-06.pdf><http://www.nasdse.org/Portals/0/Documents/DownloadPublications/RtIANAdministratorsPerspective1-06.pdf>
- National Council on Education Standards and Testing. (1992). *Raising standards for American education*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- National Education Association. (2013). *NEA common core state standards toolkit*. Retrieved from <http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/Common-Core-State-Standards-Toolkit.pdf>
- National Governors Association, Council of Chief State School Officers, & Achieve, Inc. (2008). *Benchmarking for success: Ensuring U.S. students receive a world-class education*. Retrieved from <http://www.achieve.org/files/BenchmarkingforSuccess.pdf>
- National High School Center, National Center on Response to Intervention, & Center on Instruction. (2010). *Tiered interventions in high schools: Using preliminary "lessons learned" to guide ongoing discussion*. Washington, DC: American Institute for Research. Retrieved from http://betterhighschools.org/pubs/documents/HSTII_LessonsLearned.pdf

- No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Public Law 107-110. 20 U.S.C. §§ 6301 *et seq.* (2001). Retrieved from <http://www.ed.gov/legislation/ESEA02/index.html>
- Oregon Department of Education. (2011). *Common core "shifts" English Language Arts & literacy*. Retrieved from <http://www.ode.state.or.us/teachlearn/subjects/science/curriculum/ccss--shifts-in-ela-literacy.pdf>
- Partnership for 21st Century Skills. (2014). *Framework for 21st century learning*. Retrieved from http://www.p21.org/storage/documents/1.__p21_framework_2-pager.pdf
- Quay, L. (2010). *Higher standards for all: Implications of the common core for equity in education*. Retrieved from https://www.law.berkeley.edu/files/Education_Roundable_Standards_Brief_4_10.pdf
- Ravitch, D. (1995). *National standards in American education: A citizen's guide*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institute.
- Ravitch, D. (2001). 1900-1950 As American as public school. In S. Mondale (Ed.), *School: The story of American public education* (pp. 63-67). Boston, MA: Beacon Press
- Ravitch, D. (2010). *The life and death of the great American school system*. New York, NY: Basic Books
- Reeves, D. (2009). *Leading change: In your school*. Alexandria, VA: Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development
- Rentschler, T. (2006). No Child Left Behind: Admirable goals, disastrous outcomes. *Widener Law Review*, 12(2), 637-700. Retrieved from <http://widenerlawreview.org/files/2011/02/09-RENTSCHLER-redone.pdf&embedded=true>
- Restori, A. F., Gresham, F. M., & Cook, C. R. (2008). "Old habits die hard." Past and current issues pertaining to response-to-intervention. *The California School Psychologist*, 13(1), 67-78. doi:10.1007/BF03340943
- Rothman, R. (2012). A common core of readiness. *Educational Leadership* 69(7), 10-15. Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/apr12/vol69/num07/A-Common-Core-of-Readiness.aspx>
- Rothstein, R. (2004). *Class and schools: Using social, economic, and educational reform to close the Black-White achievement gap*. Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute.
- Sansosti, F., Noltemeyer, A., & Goss, S. (2010). Principals' perceptions of the importance and availability of response to intervention practices within high school settings. *School Psychology Review*, 39(2), 286-295.
- Sansosti, F., & Telzrow, C., & Noltemeyer, A. (2010). Barriers and facilitators to implementing response to intervention in secondary schools: Qualitative perspectives of school

- psychologist. *School Psychology Forum*, 4(1), 1-21. Retrieved from <http://www.nasponline.org/publications/spf/index.aspx?vol=4&issue=1>
- Saunders, A. F., Spooner, F., Browder, D., Wakeman, S., & Lee, A. (2013). Teaching the common core in English Language Arts to students with severe disabilities. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 46(2), 22-33. doi:10.1177/004005991304600203
- Schraven, J., & Jolly, J. (2010). Section 504 in public schools: An ongoing response to change. *American Educational History Journal*, 37, 419-436. Retrieved from <http://www.infoagepub.com/index.php?id=89&i=90>
- Senge, P. (2006). *The fifth discipline: The art & practice of the learning organization*. Santa Fe, NM: Doubleday.
- Sheinker, J. (2010, June). *Assessing the Common Core, comprehensive assessment systems, and students with disabilities: Opportunities and consequences*. Paper presented at the Council of Chief State School Officers Conference, Detroit, MI. Retrieved from <https://ccsso.confex.com/ccsso/2010/webprogram/Presentation/Session1959/Assessing%20the%20Common%20Core%20and%20Students%20with%20Disabilities.pdf>
- Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. (2010). *A summary of core components*. Retrieved from <http://www.k12.wa.us/smarter/pubdocs/SBACSummary2010.pdf>
- Smith, M. K. (2001). Peter Senge and the learning organization. In *The encyclopedia of informal education*. Retrieved from <http://www.infed.org/thinkers/senge.htm>
- Spring, J. (2010). *Political agendas for education*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Steeves, K., Bernhardt, P., Burns, J. P., & Lombard, M. K. (2009). Transforming American educational identify after Sputnik. *American Educational History Journal*, 36(1/2), 71-87. Retrieved from <http://www.infoagepub.com/index.php?id=89&i=89>
- Straub, C., & Alias, A. (2013). Next generation writing at the secondary level for students with learning disabilities. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 46(1), 16–24. Retrieved from <http://journals.cec.sped.org/tec/>
- Thurlow, M. L. (2012). Common Core Standards: The promise and the peril for students with disabilities. *The Special Edge*, 25(3), 1, 6-8. Retrieved from <http://www.calstat.org/infoPublications.html>
- Tileston, W. (2011). *Closing the Rtl gap: Why poverty and culture count*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.
- Torgesen, J. K., Wagner, R. K., Rashotte, C. A., Rose, E., Lindamood, P., Conway, T., & Garvan, C. (1999). Preventing reading failure in young children with phonological processing disabilities: Group and individual responses to instruction. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 91(4), 579-593. doi:10.1037/0022-0663.91.4.579

- Tröhler, D. (2010). Harmonizing the educational globe. World polity, cultural features, and the challenges to educational research. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 29(1), 5-17. doi:10.1007/s11217-009-9155-1
- Troia, G. A., & Olinghouse, N. G. (2013). The Common Core State Standards and evidence-based educational practices: The case of writing. *School Psychology Review*, 42(3), 343-357. Retrieved from <http://www.nasponline.org/publications/spr/index.aspx?vol=42&issue=3>
- U.S. Department of Education. (1983). *A nation at risk: The imperative for education reform*. Retrieved from <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/NatAtRisk/risk.html>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2008). *A nation accountable: Twenty-five years after A Nation At Risk*. Retrieved from <http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/accountable/accountable.pdf>
- VanDerHeyden, A. M., & Jimerson, S. (2005). *Using response to intervention to enhance outcomes for children*. *The California School Psychologist*, 10, 21-32. doi:10.1007/BF03340918
- VanDerHeyden, A. M., Witt, J. C., & Naquin, G. (2003). Development and validation of a process for screening referrals to special education. *School Psychology Review*, 32, 204-227. Retrieved from <http://www.nasponline.org/publications/spr/index.aspx?vol=32&issue=2>
- Vaughn, S., Linan-Thompson, S., & Hickman, P. (2003). Response to instruction as a means of identifying students with reading/learning disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 69, 391-409. Retrieved from <http://journals.cec.sped.org/ec/>
- Vellutino, F. R., Scanlon, D. M., Sipay, E. R., Small, S. G., Pratt, A., Chen, R., & Denckla, M. B. (1996). Cognitive profiles of difficult-to-remediate and readily remediated poor readers: Early intervention as a vehicle for distinguishing between cognitive and experiential deficits as basic causes of specific reading disability. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 88(4), 601-638. doi:10.1037/0022-0663.88.4.601
- Wedl, R. (2005). Response to intervention: An alternative to traditional eligibility criteria for students with disabilities. *Education Evolving*. Retrieved from http://www.educationevolving.org/pdf/Response_to_Intervention.pdf
- Westover, J., & Hatton, L. (2011). *Closing the gaps of college and career readiness*. Retrieved from http://innovateed.com/docs/InnovateED_-_Closing_the_Gaps_of_College_and_Career_Readiness.pdf
- Whilden, E. B. (2010). *The Elementary and Secondary Education Act: A primer on reauthorization in 2010*. <http://www.congressweb.com/aascu/docfiles/ESEA%20PRIMER%20FINAL.pdf>

Williamson, G., Fitzgerald, J., & Stenner, A. J. (2013). The Common Core State Standards complexity goal: Figuring out how much complexity is enough. *Educational Researcher*, 42(2), 59-69. doi:10.3102/0013189X12466695

APPENDIX A

Interview Protocol

Project: The Alignment of Response to Intervention (RtI) with the Common Core Standards (CCSS) for Language Arts

Date: Place: Time of Interview:
 Interviewer:
 Interviewee:
 Current Position:
 Years in current position:
 Years of experience: a) RtI: b)CCSS for Language Arts:

Universal Screening for Language Arts: Universal Screening is the practice of assessing all students at the beginning of the school year, in order to identify students who are at-risk of academic failure (Burns & Gibbons, 2008).

1. What is your current understanding of universal screening and its importance in terms of Response to Intervention?
2. What modifications do you anticipate for practitioners aligning their universal screening practices with the Common Core Standards for Language Arts?
3. What challenges do you anticipate practitioners will face implementing these modifications?
4. What strategies would you recommend to support practitioners in overcoming these challenges?

Progress Monitoring for Language Arts: Progress monitoring is a process of analyzing a students' academic progress and utilizing this information to inform decisions about when to modify or adjust instruction (Hall, 2008) This process is typically conducting on prearranged schedule ranging from every 3-6 weeks with students who are most at-risk receiving the most frequent monitoring.

1. How would you describe best practices you are familiar with in terms of progress monitoring for students in Language Arts?
2. What modification for progress monitoring would you suggest for practitioners implementing the CCSS for Language Arts?
3. What challenges do you anticipate practitioners will experience relating to these modifications?
4. What strategies would you suggest for practitioners to overcome these challenges?

APPENDIX B

Recruitment Letter

To: Educational Leaders in Southern California
From: Charles Newman, Doctoral Student
Date: Fall 2013

Subject: Interviews on Alignment of RtI and the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for Language Arts - Doctoral Dissertation Research

Dear Educator:

I am a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership, Administration, and Policy program at Pepperdine University. I am currently working under the guidance of my Chair, Dr. Linda Purrington.

The purpose of this letter is to invite you to participate in a research study on the Alignment of Response to Instruction and the CCSS for Language Arts. I am conducting this research study for partial fulfillment of my dissertation.

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory research study is to explore the professional perceptions of K-12 educational leaders who have system's knowledge and experience related to Response to Intervention (RtI) and Common Core State Standards (CCSS) with regards to: a) any modifications that may be needed to align the assessment components of RtI (universal screening & progress monitoring) with the CCSS for Language Arts at the elementary and secondary levels, b) challenges that may result from any modifications to the assessment components (universal screening & progress monitoring) needed to aligning the core academic components of Response to Intervention with the CCSS for Language Arts at the elementary and secondary level, and c) strategies that might be utilized to address any challenges to aligning the assessment components of Response to Intervention with the CCSS for Language Arts at the elementary and secondary levels.

The very nature of the complexities that may exist in the process of alignment supports a need to explore the perceptions of educational leaders in Southern California, related to Response to Intervention and Common Core Standards. Your professional opinions related to the alignment of the assessment components of RtI with the Common Core Standards for Language Arts could potentially serve to inform the work of practitioners in the implementation process. Thus, the goal of this study is to provide additional research to support practitioners, in the process of aligning RtI with the CCSS for Language Arts and RTI. Available upon request will be a summary of the study's findings.

If you agree to participate in this study, your participation will involve participating in an interview exploring your professional perceptions related to Response to Intervention and Common Core Standards in semi-structured interviews. The interview will consist of eight questions designed to solicit information about your professional experience related to Response to Intervention and Common Core Standards and your professional opinion related to the possible modifications needed to align the assessment components of RtI to the CCSS for Language Arts. The interview will take approximately 30-45 minutes and participants will have a choice between interview formats that are either face to face, via telephone or others means of communication. Additionally, the interview will take place outside of school hours and your participation in this study is voluntary. There are certain risks and discomforts that might be

associated with this research. These risks are minimal, and include possible boredom, fatigue, exhaustion or slight discomfort while completing a 30-45 five minute interview.

It is important to note that you may choose not to participate in this research and your participation is voluntary. Additionally, you may refuse to participate and or withdraw your consent and discontinue participation in the project or activity at any time. In conducting this study, the investigator(s) will take all reasonable measures to protect the confidentiality of your records and your identity will not be revealed in any publication that may result from this project. The confidentiality of your records will be maintained in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. Under California law, there are exceptions to confidentiality, including suspicion that a child, elder, or dependent adult is being abused, or if an individual discloses an intent to harm him/herself or others.

If you need further information about this research study, the investigator is willing to answer any inquiries you may have concerning the research herein described. You can contact the researcher, Charles Newman at Charles.newman@puhsd.org and 951-830-8980). You may also contact the researcher's chair, Dr. Linda Purrington, at Linda.Purrington@pepperdine.edu or (949) 223-2568 if I have other questions or concerns about this research.

Please indicate your interest in participating in this study by sending a reply email to Charles.newman@pepperdine.edu. If you respond that you are interested in participating in this study, I will then contact you to clarify any questions you may have regarding your potential participation in the study, provide informed consent and obtain your signature, and schedule an interview location and time that is mutually convenient.

Sincerely, Charles A. Newman
Pepperdine University Doctoral Student

APPENDIX C

Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities

Participant: _____

Principal Investigator: Charles A. Newman

Title of Project: THE ALIGNMENT OF RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RtI) WITH THE COMMON CORE STANDARDS (CCSS) FOR LANGUAGE ARTS

1. I, _____, agree to participate in the research study being conducted by Charles A. Newman under the direction of Dr. Linda Purrington. I understand that this research is being conducted for partial fulfillment of a dissertation.
2. The overall purpose of this qualitative exploratory research study is to examine the professional perceptions of K-12 educational leaders who have system's knowledge and experience related to Response to Intervention (RtI) and Common Core State Standards (CCSS) with regards to: a) any modifications that may be needed to align the assessment components of RtI (universal screening & progress monitoring) with the CCSS for Language Arts at the elementary and secondary levels, b) challenges that may result from any modifications to the assessment components (universal screening) needed to aligning the core academic components of Response to Intervention with the CCSS for Language Arts at the elementary and secondary level, and c) strategies that might be utilized to address any challenges to aligning the assessment components of Response to Intervention with the CCSS for Language Arts at the elementary and secondary levels.
3. My participation will involve participating in an interview regarding my expertise and professional perceptions related to Response to Intervention and Common Core Standards in semi-structured interviews. The interview will consist of eight questions designed to solicit information about my professional experience related to Response to Intervention and Common Core Standards and my professional opinion related to the possible modifications needed to align the assessment components of RtI to the CCSS for Language Arts. At any time during the interview, I may choose to discontinue participation.
4. My participation in this study will last 30-45 minutes and I will be provided with the option to select the location and format of the interview. Additionally, I am aware that the researcher will conduct an interview with subject participants face-to-face, via telephone, or via other media means depending upon what is most convenient for subject participants. This study cannot happen during the school day on campus.
5. I understand the possible benefits to schools or society from this research. This research topic is opportune in light of the past focus on RtI and the current nationwide implementation of the Common Core Standards of Language Arts as the study proposes to add to the literature pertaining to alignment considerations. The results of this study may be used to further support practitioners in their efforts to align the assessment components of RtI with the CCSS for Language Arts. Available upon request will be a summary of the study's findings.

6. I understand that there are certain risks and discomforts that might be associated with this research. These risks are minimal, and include possible boredom, fatigue, exhaustion or slight discomfort while completing a 30-45 five minute interview.

7. I understand that I may choose not to participate in this research.

8. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may refuse to participate and or withdraw my consent and discontinue participation in the project or activity at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.

9. I understand that the investigator(s) will take all reasonable measures to protect the confidentiality of my records and my identity will not be revealed in any publication that may result from this project. The confidentiality of my records will be maintained in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. Under California law, there are exceptions to confidentiality, including suspicion that a child, elder, or dependent adult is being abused, or if an individual discloses an intent to harm him/herself or others.

10. I understand that the investigator is willing to answer any inquiries I may have concerning the research herein described. I understand that I may contact the researcher, Charles Newman at XXXXX@XXXX.XXX and XXX-XXX-XXXXX. I may also contact the researcher's chair, Dr. Linda Purrington, at Linda.Purrington@pepperdine.edu or (XXX) XXX-XXXX if I have other questions or concerns about this research. If I have questions about my rights as a research participant, I understand that I can contact Dr. Thema Bryant-Davis, Chairperson of the Pepperdine University Graduate and Professional Schools IRB, at thema.bryant@pepperdine.edu or (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

11. I understand to my satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have received a copy of this informed consent form, which I have read and understand. I hereby consent to participate in the research described above.

Subject's Signature: _____ Date: _____

I have explained and defined in detail the research procedure in which the subject has consented to participate. Having explained this and answered any questions, I am cosigning this form and accepting this person's consent.

Principal Investigator: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX D

IRB Approval

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board

January 17, 2017

Charles A. Newman

Protocol #: E1113D01

Project Title: Alignment of Response to Intervention with the Common Core Standards for Language Arts

Dear Mr. Newman:

Thank you for submitting your application, *Alignment of Response to Intervention with the Common Core Standards for Language Arts*, for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Graduate and Professional Schools Institutional Review Board (GPS IRB). The IRB appreciates the work you and your faculty advisor Dr. Purrington, have done on the proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations (45 CFR 46 - <http://www.nihtraining.com/ohsrsite/guidelines/45cfr46.html>) that govern the protections of human subjects. Specifically, section 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) states:

(b) Unless otherwise required by Department or Agency heads, research activities in which the only involvement of human subjects will be in one or more of the following categories are exempt from this policy:

Category (2) of 45 CFR 46.101, research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: a) Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and b) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit a **Request for Modification Form** to the GPS IRB. Because your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the GPS IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite our best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the GPS IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete explanation of the event and your response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the GPS IRB and the appropriate form to be used to report this information can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* (see link to "policy material" at <http://www.pepperdine.edu/irb/graduate/>).

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all further communication or correspondence related to this approval. Should you have additional questions, please contact Kevin Collins, Manager of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at gpsirb@pepperdine.edu. On behalf of the GPS IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thema Bryant-Davis".

Thema Bryant-Davis, Ph.D.
Chair, Graduate and Professional Schools IRB

cc: Dr. Lee Kats, Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Initiatives
Ms. Alexandra Roosa, Director Research and Sponsored Programs
Dr. Purrington, Faculty Advisor