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Graduate School of Education and Psychology

TEACHER INSIGHT: THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS IN CALIFORNIA SCHOOL DISTRICTS

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership Administration and Policy

by

Catherine Anne Martin

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Linda Purrington, Ed.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

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

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated first to my committee, Dr. Purrington, Dr. Rumack, and Dr. Winkler. You have been instrumental in my journey through the dissertation program at Pepperdine University. Dr. Purrington, you are the best professor! You have inspired me from the beginning with your warm heart and dedication to excellence. Dr. Rumack, you were an amazing professor because of your love of education. Dr. Winkler you are a fantastic professor and I'm so glad I had you at San Jose State University too! And to all of my C10 classmates at Pepperdine I'm so glad to know each of you. Thank you Tangela, Leslie, Brother Rob, Nora, Nicole, Cori, Pari, Maggie, and Svet.

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ABSTRACT

This study, *Teacher Insight: The Implementation of the Common Core State Standards in California School Districts* was designed to glean teacher voice on the large-scale reform. With a need for a global workforce in a 21st century society the existing education system is undergoing a tremendous change in order to prepare students for college and career. The purpose of this sequential explanatory mixed methods study was fourfold: (a) to determine how the implementation of the Common Core State Standards is changing teacher practices related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment; (b) to investigate the concerns and challenges faced by teachers as they implement the Common Core State Standards; (c) to determine what types of professional development teachers have been offered regarding the Common Core State Standards and what they perceive has been most beneficial; and (d) to determine what teachers still need from their site leadership to make the implementation successful. Additionally, this study was performed with surveys and interviews administered in three California school districts. Upon examination of the responses from teachers, this study yielded four conclusions. First, implementation of the Common Core State Standards has changed teacher instructional practices. With the fusion of the 21st century skills into the Common Core State Standards teachers are challenged with teaching the new academic standards and simultaneously providing instruction with 21st century skills. Second, implementation of the Common Core State Standards has generated concerns and challenges of teachers. Third, teachers state that collaboration is the most beneficial form of professional development. Fourth, the implementation has created needs from teachers of site leadership. The study also yielded four recommendations. First, it is recommended that school districts provide teachers with professional development on 21st century skills. Second, it is recommended that school districts

allocate funding for the purchase of Common Core State Standard resources that have both rigor

and relevance. Third, it is recommended that collaboration be the type of professional

development that districts utilize, as teachers state it is the most beneficial. Fourth, site leaders

are advised to address the needs of teachers by providing them with resources they need for the

implementation.

Chapter 1: The Problem

Chapter 1 presents a lens into this research study of teacher insight into the implementation of the Common Core State Standards. The chapter commences with a background of the problem, proceeds with an appraisal of the importance of a global workforce, an educated populace, and a 21st century education, and unveils the genesis of the Common Core State Standards. The chapter delineates the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, importance of the study, research questions, frameworks, clarification of terms, delimitations, limitations, and assumptions. The chapter concludes with an organization of the study that outlines how it will be presented.

Background of the Problem

Global workforce and educated populace. Today's global society requires a workforce consisting of individuals who are educated and prepared to succeed in a dynamic and rapidly changing world. This workforce must be highly knowledgeable and skilled (Luna, Rush, Gramer, & Stewart, 2014). Gregorian (2012), president of the Carnegie Corporation since 1997, a previous president of Brown University, and an outspoken advocate for education, supports the need for a prepared workforce, an educated populace, and recognition of the value of intellectual capital. In the article *Investing in Education Is Key to America's Future Success*, Gregorian (2012) stated that by the year 2018 two-thirds of the jobs in America would necessitate a postsecondary education (p. 2). He also advocated for the importance of being competitive in a "globalized and knowledge-based economy" (Gregorian, 2012, p. 1). According to Wagner of the Harvard Innovation Lab, a global economy also requires educators to engage with business leaders to align educational outcomes (Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2015).

Muhammad (2009) stated that foreign competition, coupled with a global workforce and a worldwide technological society, has made education more important than ever before.

To better prepare individuals for a global society and workforce, the existing education system is undergoing reform (Luna et al., 2014). The comprehensive reform is called the Common Core State Standards. It is touted as an opportunity to revolutionize and support achievement for all students (Duncan, 2012). The ontogenesis of the standards was inspired by the framework Partnership for 21st Century Learning (Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2015).

Twenty-first century education. A consortium of educators, policymakers, and industry leaders sought to meet the needs for 21st century skills in K–12 schools by creating a framework that incorporates life and career competencies (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2014; Duncan, 2013a; Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2015). A 21st century education is defined as one that engages students in learning, and prepares them for a global society (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2017). The consortium developed the P21 Framework with an image of a 21st century education that advocates for a world of economic competitiveness as well as civic and global objectives, along with digital literacy. The framework influenced the maturation of the Common Core State Standards to address the demands of a new interconnected global society.

The Partnership for 21st Century Learning, a national consortium, has identified the following four skills as essential for an educated workforce: communication, collaboration, creativity, and, lastly critical thinking. All are incorporated into the Common Core State Standards (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2017; Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2015). Twenty-first century skills with regards to career and life encompass various

life skills according to the Framework for 21st Century Skills (Partnership for 21st Century

Learning, 2007). The Partnership for 21st Century Learning (2015) further outlines student

outcomes, support systems, and instruction for the main academic subjects. The Common Core

State Standards include 21st century skills along with interdisciplinary knowledge such as

"global awareness, financial, economic, business, entrepreneurial literacy, civil literacy, health

literacy, and environmental literacy" (Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2015, p. 15). These

21st century skills, combined with global standards, reflect the mission to incorporate career

readiness into academic standards in order to drive a competitive workforce.

  Genesis of the common core state standards. To provide students with 21st century

skills and academic standards, the genesis of the Common Core State Standards began in 2009.

The movement led by governors, educators, and school leaders from 48 states, two territories,

and the District of Columbia sought to integrate skills and standards, and establish norms across

state boundaries (Hess & McShane, 2013; Marrongelle, Sztajn, & Smith, 2013; Porter, Fusarelli,

& Fusarelli, 2015). The standards originated through the National Governors Association and the

Council of Chief State School Officers (Marrongelle et al., 2013; Sabo, 2014; The Center for

Public Education, 2014). The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation provided private economic

funding and spent more than $200 million on the origination of the new standards. In addition,

the foundation provided political support in terms of lobbying for the Common Core State

Standards (Kamenetz, 2014; Layton, 2014; The Center for Public Education, 2014).

  Forces influencing development of common core state standards. Three important

forces prompted the development of the Common Core State Standards. First, the standards were

propagated out of a sense of urgency that students must become citizens in the global workplace

and meet the demands of a postsecondary education (Marrongelle et al., 2013). The standards

were written in two stages. The college and career standards were designed to specify what students would need to know by graduation and the academic expectations were added (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2017). Second, there was concern about student achievement and how it was measured in the nation's public schools. Having common standards will ensure that students acquire the same knowledge as other students across the country (Duncan, 2013b). Third, the Common Core State Standards also represent a change by delineating specific skills for each grade level (California Department of Education, 2014). Through relevant and rigorous lessons, these skills are designed to foster the 21st century education needed for participation in a global workforce (Chong & Kong, 2012). An objective of the new standards is that students will demonstrate their knowledge through the use of presentations, writing, and intuitive electronic tests (California Department of Education, 2014).

The Common Core State Standards also arose to supersede previously failed initiatives that were enacted to create educational reforms over the last few decades. To illustrate this point, the impetus for change began in the 1980s with the report *A Nation at Risk* (published by the National Commission on Excellence), which suggested that America's crumbling educational system could be a national security concern because education impacts economic well-being and the social requiescence of society (McCoy & Holt, 2012). In 1986, the report *A Nation Prepared* suggested providing teachers with greater latitude in the instructional process to improve academic achievement (Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2015). In 1994, President Bill Clinton approved the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, which defined a set of changes for education to begin in the year 2000 (Goals 2000: Educate America Act, 2011).

President George W. Bush took a different approach to educational reform when he signed the law *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB; Hess & McShane, 2013; Strauss, 2012). His

purpose was to implement testing to inaugurate academic accountability in our nation's education system. The program identified standards for academic performance and sanctioned schools that failed to achieve. Later, when the focus on teaching to the test took precedence over classroom learning, it became clear that this law had failed to reform schools in America (Holmes, 2010). As a result, U.S. Secretary of Education Arnie Duncan testified before the U.S. Congress in 2010 that 80% of schools might not achieve the goals ascribed by NCLB. Duncan attempted to change NCLB and was forced to offer states a process in which they could submit plans for improvement in the form of waivers. As the lack of NCLB's accountability became evident, the political opposition grew (Duncan, 2013a). The drive for reform led to the Common Core State Standards, and they are being implemented across most of the United States. The implementation process is outlined in *Implementing Common Core State Standards and Assessments* (U.S. Education Delivery Institute, 2012).

Counterperspectives. Although the Common Core State Standards have a wide base of support from the National Education Association, which states that the standards provide teachers with a more streamlined set of curriculum objectives, the American Federation of Teachers (another initial supporter) became increasingly concerned about the standards and warned they are being poorly implemented (Rosales, 2013; Strauss, 2014). A survey by the Center on Education Policy confirmed this concern; the survey showed that 37 states had reported challenges in implementing the standards (Strauss, 2014).

The Common Core State Standards face criticism from liberals and conservatives alike (Essawi, 2012). Sharon Stotsky, an educational reform scholar who served for more than a year on the standards validation committee, objected to the standards because they were approved without public comment (Rix, 2013). Diane Ravitch, former U.S. assistant secretary of education

during the Bush administration, asserted that the standards had not been validated and therefore had not been properly benchmarked (Rix, 2013). Ravitch also questioned the very need for the standards, as the United States has had the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) since 1992, a national report card for comparing race, gender, poverty, achievement gaps, disability status, and English Language Learners (Ravitch, 2015a). Known as a progressive educational leader, Ravitch proposed that the Common Core State Standards would drive even more testing and accountability. Ravitch was also concerned about the prospect of corporations having an undue influence over education (The Center for Public Education, 2014). Others shared her concern about corporate and political influence and noted the standards have received large contributions from billionaire David Koch and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (Zernike, 2015).

The Common Core State Standards have provoked fears as well as objections and criticism. Teacher union leaders fear the Common Core could serve as a method for destroying labor unions (Austin, 2015). There is another concern that the standards represent a government takeover of education, as they involve implementing a set of national standards (Rix, 2013; Zernike, 2015). The move to the standards has stimulated a fierce debate over curriculum and federalism (Rix, 2013). Ravitch (2015b) maintained that our nations laws specifically prohibit any federal official from trying to influence / control curriculum or instruction. She asserted that the establishment of national curriculum standards and testing violates federal laws. Furthermore, the federal government's involvement in establishing a national curriculum has led critics to refer to it as *Obamacore* (Zernike, 2015).

Political support for the Common Core State Standards and assessments has not been unanimous. Texas, Virginia, Alaska, and Nebraska never adopted the standards. Among the

states that initially adopted the standards, three governors have withdrawn their states from the

Common Core State Standards Initiative; as of June 9, 2014, South Carolina, Oklahoma, and

Indiana have backed out (Strauss, 2014). The governors reported issues with the standards, how

they were being administered, and the new electronic assessments. The governors also reacted to

objections from the anti-Common Core movement (Strauss, 2014). Some states are staying with

the standards but have opted out of the online assessments that measure student outcomes against

the standards. Georgia, Alabama, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and Utah decided not to use the tests

provided by the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College & Careers (PARCC) or the

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC; Rix, 2013). The State Board of Education in

Massachusetts voted in November 2015 to drop the assessment tests, Zernike (2015):

> "It's hugely symbolic because Massachusetts is widely seen as kind of the gold standard
>
> in successful education reform," said Morgan Polikoff, an assistant professor of
>
> education at the University of Southern California, who is leading an evaluation of the
>
> national tests. "It opens the door for a lot of other states that are under a lot of pressure to
>
> repeal Common Core." (p. 2)

In a survey conducted by the New York State Council of School Superintendents, 96% of

respondents felt that the debate over the Common Core has had an adverse impact on the school

environment. Although the superintendents believe the standards are beneficial, the officials are

frustrated with the ongoing controversy with those who oppose the standards, the amount of time

the testing process takes, and the length of time to get results (McMahon, 2015; Spector, 2015).

Henry W. Burke, an EducationViews contributor, disputed the financial estimates of the

shift to the Common Core State Standards. He stated that the costs are far more significant than

reports suggested. In his findings, the California Department of Education estimated the cost of

developing and producing the prevailing framework was approximately $1.2 million, and the accepted instructional adoption in Math and English Language Arts could require $2.1 million. California provided a one-time funding pool of $1.25 billion in 2013–2014 to support the transition activities (California Department of Education, 2014). However, Burke (2013) stated that the actual implementation costs total $2.1 billion, when all expenses are considered.

Loveless (2014), a Harvard University professor who is an expert on educational policy, is concerned about the implementation process of the Common Core State Standards because it is imperative to the success of the initiative. In an article for the Brookings Institution, *Implementing the Common Core: A Look at Curriculum*, Loveless (2014) referred to what Pressman and Wildavsky in 1965 called decision points, a series of hurdles for a policy or program to clear. Loveless (2014) explained that government programs with several layers create such decision points in which educators must make good choices while exercising discretionary authority on the program's behalf. Loveless (2014) observed that as far as the Common Core State Standards are concerned, there are major points of vulnerability. With implementation occurring at five levels (national, state, district, school site, and classroom), decisions are made at each level. In addition, Loveless (2014) suggested that the battle against the Common Core State Standards adds to its vulnerability, because the sheer number of decision points multiplies with each objection. He also referred to stakeholders as elitists who make decisions about implementation, while the real issues usually occur when the curriculum is presented to the students in the classroom (Loveless, 2014).

Despite opposition and objections, the Common Core State Standards have been almost universally accepted due to a large base of political support. The built-in financial component provides the motivation for compliance. The Obama administration required states adopt the

standards in order to receive federal funds from the Race to the Top competition (Fletcher, 2010). Conversely, David Whitman (2015) of the Brookings Institution stated there was "no federal mandate that requires states to adopt the Common Core standards" (p. 5), but that "the federal government did provide incentives encouraging states to adopt the Common Core State Standards" (p. 19).

To counteract common core resistance, several partnerships have formed to defend the Common Core State Standards. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, the Bipartisan Center, and the Hunt Institute have joined together to support the standards against those who oppose the standards (Ujifusa, 2014).

California's adoption of common core state standards. Faced with the changing educational climate in the United States, California embraced the Common Core State Standards on August 2, 2010. The state mandated that full implementation be accomplished by the 2014–2015 school year (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2017).

The California State Board of Education makes the decisions about the standards for all students in the state, from kindergarten through 12th grade. In adopting the new standards, California joined the rest of the country, intent on providing students with the education they need. The state provides districts, schools, and counties with resources such as an online Common Core State Standards Systems Implementation Guide (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2017). California approved the Common Core Standards Systems Implementation Plan for California on March 7, 2012. The plan identified the major steps and activities in adopting the Common Core State Standards as the awareness phase, the transition phase, and the implementation phase (California Department of Education, 2014). The State has also

established deadlines for the adoption of the framework, with the implementation focused on

Math, English Language Arts (ELA), and English Language Development (ELD).

California school districts are transitioning, albeit at different rates. Due to the enormity

of the change, the process will likely continue well past into the future. Although more than half

of the districts reported that teachers have examined the standards, other districts reported that

fewer than 20% of their teachers had completed the lesson planning to teach the new standards

beforehand. This reflects a discrepancy in the implementation among districts in California

(Warren & Murphy, 2014).

For a successful implementation, teacher leadership roles should be developed (Wilhoit,

2012). With a large-scale change, teacher leaders can inspire collaboration and effective

teamwork. Teachers who feel their peers contribute to their success are empowered to work

together as a team. However, teachers may not feel this is realistic in a top-down implementation

strategy (Ledesma, 2012). Therefore, teacher participation is paramount in the execution of the

Common Core State Standards (Albuquerque Teachers Federation, 2012; Ledesma, 2012). Mike

Kirst (2014) said:

> There is a need to ensure that teachers have a leading role in Common Core
>
> implementation plans at the local level, so they can identify emerging issues and
>
> strengthen existing initiatives. The future success of Common Core will require
>
> continued support that enables teachers to instruct students successfully in each
>
> classroom. (p. 29)

The impetus for teacher participation and leadership has created concerns and challenges.

First, the California Teachers Association reported more than half of surveyed respondents gave

the implementation a failing grade due to unmet needs for collaboration time, training, materials,

and technology (Hess & McShane, 2013). Some teachers unions are even using the standards as a bargaining issue, with teachers seeking participation in the implementation process and in obtaining collaboration time (Posnick-Goodwin, 2014).

This dissertation is in a quest to add to the body of research and glean insight from practitioners involved in the implementation of the Common Core State Standards. Although research on teacher practices, concerns and challenges, professional development, and site leadership is plentiful, the findings indicate little empirical research can be specifically tied to the Common Core State Standards. This study will contribute to the research and advance the standards initiative. The study investigated how the implementation of the Common Core State Standards is changing teacher practices as related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The study also ascertained the concerns and challenges of teachers as they administer the Common Core State Standards, assessed what type of professional development teachers have been offered, inquired about what they perceive has been most beneficial, and determined what teachers still need from their site leadership to make the implementation of the Common Core State Standards successful. Therefore, this study identified and explored several factors necessary for implementing the Common Core State Standards. Site leaders and teachers can profit from such knowledge and make adjustments to their own implementation strategies.

Statement of the Problem

The Common Core State Standards are designed to present clear, consistent guidelines outlining skills and knowledge for all students, from kindergarten through 12th grade, specifically in Math and English Language Arts. When creating the standards, experts and teachers from across the country focused on analytical and critical thinking skills, along with problem-solving strategies. The intent of the Common Core State Standards is to ensure that

students are ready for a college program and ultimately a career. The Common Core State Standards have been adopted by 43 of the 50 United States, the District of Columbia, four territories, and the Department of Defense Education Activity (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2017).

The shift to the Common Core State Standards presents its share of concerns. First, many teachers have reported feeling unprepared to meet the challenges created by the Common Core State Standards (Gewertz, 2012). Second, the available data focus primarily on the establishment of the Common Core State Standards, instead of how to include teachers in the process and provide a successful implementation. The importance of addressing such concerns is imperative, as Fullan (2010) stated that the collective capacity across schools is a change imperative for whole system reform.

What has not been fully studied is the following: how the operationalization of the Common Core State Standards is changing teacher practices related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment, the concerns and challenges faced by teachers as they implement the Common Core State Standards, what type of professional development teachers have been offered and what they perceive has been the most beneficial, and what teachers still need from their site leadership to make the implementation of the Common Core State Standards successful. With a scarcity of available research on the Common Core State Standards, mainly due to limited teacher feedback, there is a need to further investigate the Common Core State Standards implementation experiences of teachers. This will glean valuable information in order to ascertain a successful implementation from the teacher's point of view (Loveless, 2014).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this sequential explanatory mixed methods study was fourfold: to

determine how the implementation of the Common Core State Standards is changing teacher practices related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment; to investigate the concerns and challenges faced by teachers as they implement the Common Core State Standards; to determine what type of professional development teachers have been offered regarding the Common Core State Standards and what they perceive has been most beneficial; and to determine what teachers still need from their site leadership to make the implementation of the Common Core State Standards successful. Additionally, this study examined responses from teachers in districts of varying sizes.

Importance of the Study

This study of the Common Core State Standards represents a nationwide initiative implemented across most of the country, as states decide whether or not to participate. Research related to the Common Core State Standards has focused on the importance of the implementation of the standards. Researchers have not addressed or fully studied how the implementation of the Common Core State Standards is changing teacher practices related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment or delineated the concerns and challenges faced by teachers as they implement the Common Core State Standards. Researchers have not clarified what type of professional development has been offered to teachers or what they perceive has been most beneficial. Last, researchers have not uncovered what teachers still need from their site leadership to make the implementation of the Common Core State Standards successful. This study identified and described how teachers have changed their practices, explained teacher concerns and challenges, identified the professional development that is the most beneficial, and provided feedback on what teachers still need from their site leadership.

The current literature on the Common Core State Standards includes guidelines for

implementation; however, the literature does not address the actual operationalization of the Common Core State Standards by site practitioners. More must be learned about the successful methods and strategies for implementing the Common Core State Standards at the classroom level. The teachers in the classroom are integral in the shift to the Common Core State Standards because teacher knowledge, skills, and dispositions are some of the most important factors that affect student learning and achievement.

This study is particularly important at this time because the Common Core State Standards represent a nationwide drive to create an educated citizenry with academic knowledge, 21st century skills, and global competencies to collaborate and compete on an international level. The convergence of economic, social, political, technological, and cultural forces which exists in the global society have ignited a demand for high standards of student achievement in our schools. The drive for achievement creates the need for high expectations from our schools. Although the Common Core State Standards are being fully implemented now, there is a great deal of anticipation about the success of the standards, which will be measured with online assessments.

The first reports of test scores for the Common Core State Standards (taken in Spring 2015) were released and publicized in the media. School districts across the country continue to interpret the data. With no previous scores to provide a basis for comparison, the present study can provide qualitative insight from teachers to further explain the quantitative data. The test results may stimulate additional changes in teacher practices for curriculum, instruction, and assessments, explain the concerns and challenges that teachers face, provide recommendations for the continuing professional development of the Common Core, and offer insight into how site leadership can continue to facilitate the implementation of the new standards effectively and

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successfully. School districts, administrators, and teachers might utilize the outcomes of the study to inform best practices in the ongoing employment of the Common Core State Standards. Therefore, this study can add insight into the test data and give teachers a voice in the implementation of the Common Core State Standards. As a result, this study can aid in the pursuit of student achievement and a highly educated workforce in a global society.

Research Questions

The following four guiding research questions were applied to purposely selected California K–12 school districts of various sizes that have been implementing the Common Core State Standards for more than a year:

1. How, if at all, has the implementation of the Common Core State Standards changed teacher practices related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment?

2. What are the concerns and challenges faced by teachers as they implement the Common Core State Standards?

3. What types of professional development for the Common Core Standards have teachers been offered, and what do they perceive has been the most beneficial?

4. What do teachers still need from their site leadership to make the implementation of the Common Core State Standards successful?

Frameworks

The implementation of the Common Core State Standards is a systemic change in education. With the shift to new standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessments the degree of change is immense. In order to elucidate this study of the implementation and its influence on teacher practices, two frameworks are utilized. Each framework is relevant to the concept of change, and both are valuable for interpreting this study's findings.

The model of teacher change is a conceptual framework that examines how to create enduring change in individuals' attitudes and perceptions. Developed by Dr. Thomas R. Guskey at the University of Kentucky, the model portrays how a sequence of events in professional development can facilitate teachers' perceptions and attitudes. Guskey (2002) viewed professional development opportunities as "systematic efforts to bring about change in the classroom practices of teachers, in their attitudes and beliefs, and in the learning outcomes of students" (p. 381). He asserted that a majority of professional development programs fail because they do not inspire teachers to engage in the process and do not understand the process of change in teachers (Guskey, 2002). Therefore, this model allows the researcher to investigate and explain teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions in terms of professional development and the shift to the Common Core State Standards.

The concerns-based adoption model is a framework for discerning how individuals respond to change. The model is premised on the belief that people who are experiencing change evolve during the process and their concerns change during the evolution. Initially, their questions may be self-oriented and then become more task-oriented, and finally, educators consider the impact of the change itself. Discovering concerns and dealing with them are essential to progress in a change initiative (Loucks-Horsley, 2005). As a result, the concerns-based adoption model explains the concerns and needs of teachers who are implementing the change to the Common Core State Standards.

Through the use of a survey and interviews, the researcher unearthed teacher concerns and examined the quantitative and qualitative data. After the data were collected and analyzed, the model of teacher change and the concerns-based adoption model would be used to offer

insight into the change process, teacher concerns, and teacher practices in the implementation of the Common Core State Standards.

Clarification of Terms

Accountability. In education, accountability refers to the notion that a school or district should be responsible for academic achievement and will be rewarded or sanctioned for the outcome. Accountability can also be defined as the willingness to take responsibility ("Accountability," 2017).

Collaboration. In education, collaboration is to work in tandem with others or together, especially in an intellectual undertaking ("Collaboration," 2017).

Professional development. In the education workplace, professional development is defined as the process of improving the capacity of staff through training opportunities ("Professional development," 2017).

Teacher leaders. Teacher leaders are educators who have taken on roles that provide leadership and additional professional responsibilities (Great Schools Partnership, 2014).

Delimitations

This study had four delimitations. First, this study was delimited to the specific boundaries in the selected California urban and suburban school districts that are currently implementing the Common Core State Standards. Second, the three school districts in the study were selected based on population size in urban and suburban areas. Urban school districts are defined as those with characteristics that constitute a city. Suburban school districts are identified as residential neighborhood schools near a large city. As school districts were identified for participation in the study, the sample included those that were selected for participation. Third, the delimitations of this study were the variables chosen to accompany the study, which were

teacher practices, teacher concerns, professional development, and site leadership. This study did not investigate other possible factors related to the Common Core State Standards. Four, a delimitation of this study was that it focused on districts that began shifting to the Common Core State Standards within the last 5 years, which could include districts that began implementing the standards before other districts. Therefore, the length of time a district has been involved in the implementation may be a factor.

Limitations

This study had two limitations. First, the samples used in the study were from California school districts that are of various sizes; therefore, results might not be representative of, or generalizable, to all districts implementing the Common Core State Standards across the United States. Second, the location of the school districts selected to participate in this study could constitute a limitation, as school districts in California might have different needs based on their student population.

Assumptions

Five primary assumptions exist in this study. The first assumption was that the Common Core State Standards is a valuable and timely educational reform that will have a positive impact on student learning and achievement. The second assumption was that the Common Core State Standards will continue to be implemented nationwide by the 45 states and the District of Columbia that are currently implementing the standards. The third assumption was that the Common Core State Standards implementation experiences and related beliefs of classroom teachers were credible data sources for the purpose of this study. The fourth assumption was that participants would answer questions honestly and the data were interpreted accurately. The fifth

assumption was that the survey and interview questions were based on the variables, were well designed, and were interpreted accurately.

Organization of the Study

This research study is promulgated in five chapters. Chapter 1 includes the background of the problem, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, research questions, frameworks, a clarification of terms, the delimitations, limitations, assumptions, and the organization of the study. In Chapter 2, an encyclopaedic review of the relevant literature is presented. Chapter 3 delineates the study methodology, including the selection of participants, instrumentation, and data collection, and the procedure(s), for the data analysis. Chapter 4 presents the study findings, including demographic information and the results for the research questions. In Chapter 5, a summary of the study and a discussion of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations are presented.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Overview

The purpose of this study was to investigate and describe the implementation of the

Common Core State Standards at the classroom level from the teacher's point of view. This

chapter presents a comprehensive review of the existing literature related to the purpose of this

study and is organized in several sections. The first section begins with two conceptual models.

The concern-based adoption model (CBAM) explains the concept of teacher concerns during a

change process. Additionally, Guskey's model of teacher change addresses how an innovation

impacts teacher practices regarding curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The second section

continues with a review of the research on education in a global society, a 21st century

education, and the Common Core State Standards. The third section looks at literature on teacher

practice regarding curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Teacher concerns and challenges

regarding the execution of the Common Core State Standards will be described. Additionally,

this section will discuss teacher insight into how site leaders and professional development can

further facilitate the implementation process.

Frameworks

The concern-based adoption model. The Concern Based Adoption Model (CBAM) is a

widely used framework for understanding how individuals respond to change (Khoboli &

O'Toole, 2011; Kwok, 2012; Loucks-Horsely, 2005; Posnick-Goodwin, 2014; Walker & Carr-

Stewart, 2006). Dr. Frances Fuller, an educational psychologist from the University of Texas

Research and Development Center for Teacher Education, originated this conceptual model in

1969. In 1998, Hall, Hord, Huling-Austin, and Rutherford developed Fuller's concept into the

concern-based adoption model (Kwok, 2012). The concern-based adoption model forms an

analytical lens as it investigates participants' responses in top-down situations (Khoboli &
O'Toole, 2011). The strength of this model focuses on people and their needs for information,
skills, and moral support (SEDL, 2015). Consequently, the framework has additional
implications for professional development practices, as participants are engage in the structure
and delivery of training (Loucks-Horsely, 2005).

CBAM postulates that individuals go through predictable stages during the paradigm of
change, and individuals' concerns must be addressed as they go through seven stages (Khoboli &
O'Toole, 2011; Kwok, 2012; Loucks-Horsely, 2005; Posnick-Goodwin, 2014; Resource
International, n.d.; Walker & Carr-Stewart, 2006). The seven stages are defined as: unconcerned,
informative, personal, management, consequence, collaboration, and refocusing (SEDL, 2015).
The model maintains that individuals evolve as they learn and that evolution stimulates various
concerns, questions, expertise, or levels of use with increased pedagogical knowledge. A premise
of the model is that people learn at different rates, in various settings, and possess an array of
experiences. In this way the concern-based adoption model takes on a humanist approach in that
it incorporates the power of the human element in the implementation process (SEDL, 2015).
Consequently, professional development needs to monitor and support people throughout the
ascribed stages of concern to support them as they implement a new program (Loucks-Horsely,
2005).

There are considerations to keep in mind when using the concern-based adoption model,
according to Loucks-Horsely (2005). For one, teachers are not the only ones with concerns,
although teachers are ultimately responsible for an implementation. Administrators,
policymakers, parents, and students may also have concerns about educational reform (Loucks-
Horsely, 2005). In addition, changing teaching practices requires time and reinforcement of good

teaching once new practices are established (Loucks-Horsely, 2005). Last, the length of time for concerns to emerge and be resolved can be at least 3 years, which means that professional development must be long-term. By considering the factors in the concern-based adoption model, districts can address the challenges of the shift to the Common Core State Standards.

Several diagnostic dimensions are designed to accompany the concern-based adoption model. The innovation configuration map can provide a clear picture of what high-quality professional development looks like, while the stages of concern tool includes a questionnaire, open-ended questions, and an interview component. An additional diagnostic tool is a levels-of-use item, which can determine how well an individual or staff uses the implementation. By assessing the situation, districts can get a real understanding of people's concerns as the implementation progresses (SEDL, 2015).

The concern-based adoption model is relevant because it shows the value of diagnosing the concerns of individuals when implementing an innovation. As people develop confidence and competence, they look beyond their own concerns and concentrate on outcomes such as student achievement. The model illustrates the importance of paying particular attention to the people who will do the work, instead of just providing them with resources to achieve a successful implementation of an initiative such as the Common Core State Standards.

The model of teacher change. The model of teacher change is a conceptual framework based on the idea that change is an experiential learning process (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002). Thomas Guskey designed a model to illustrate how a sequence of events in professional development can create long-lasting change in individuals' attitudes and perceptions (see Figure 1). The premise is that positive student outcomes facilitate favorable attitudes and beliefs, and they are correlated with changes in instructional practice (Guskey, 2002). In 1985, Michael

Fullan asserted that a change in attitudes, beliefs, and understandings follows a shift in behavior (as cited in Guskey, 2002).
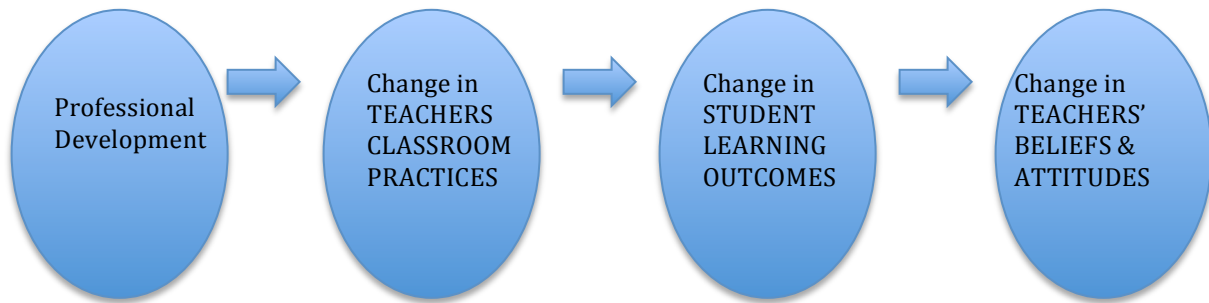
Figure 1. A model of teacher change.

Early theorists influenced the model of teacher change; thus, the model is grounded on theoretical frameworks. In 1935, Lewin, an early change theorist, conceptualized the paragon predicated on psychotherapeutic models. According to Guskey (2002), William James designed a version similar to the model of teacher change more than 100 years ago in order to describe the relationship between behavior and emotion. Later Carl Lange, a Danish physiologist espoused the same idea, which became known as the James-Lange theory (Guskey, 2002). Guskey's (2002) model differs in that it focuses on the order of outcomes most likely to create change.

Central to Guskey's (2002) model of teacher change are three enduring understandings. The first is that change is a gradual, stressful process. The second understanding is giving teachers regular feedback on student learning, and the third understanding is that offering support in a change initiative is key. These understandings acknowledge that change can provoke fear, anxiety, and reluctance among teachers.

The model of teacher change maintains that attitudes and beliefs evolve after an implementation; therefore, follow-up support and pressure are crucial for a change to last. Additionally, understanding what motivates teachers is vital for effective professional

development. To do so, leaders first need to know why teachers engage in the process, and second, leaders must understand the process by which teachers change. Guskey (2002) found teachers are inspired by professional development that expands their repertoire of knowledge and skill, and makes them more effective in the classroom.

Professional development programs, in large part, may not succeed in changing teacher practices, beliefs, or attitudes or in improving student learning, because the programs tend to focus on creating change at the onset of an innovation. Leaders can assume that inspiring a change effort with enthusiasm, acceptance, and commitment will be enough to change practice. Leaders also believe that including teachers in the planning, such as with a survey, is enough to stimulate a strong commitment. These beliefs are counterintuitive to the model of teacher change, which is based on the idea that change occurs only after teachers have clear evidence of successful student outcomes of the innovation (Guskey, 2002).

The model of teacher change can be advantageous in this study on teacher practices as the model illustrates how to create real change. With teachers at the forefront of the shift to the Common Core State Standards, it is vital to understand the influence of professional development and its impact on teachers. Developing teacher's skills will help them prepare students for an education in a global society.

Education in a Global Society

In today's dynamic interconnected society, global competencies were incorporated into the Common Core State Standards to meet the needs of students, as they will become citizens in an international economy. To achieve this new educational perspective, The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) teamed with the Asia Society Partnership for Global Learning to

define how global competence would be reflected in the new standards (Saavedra & Opfer, 2012).

The objective of a global education is to have teachers provide instruction on how to obtain relevant print and digital information, complete investigative research projects, communicate ideas, and take action (Saavedra & Opfer, 2012). This focus on providing students with a 21st century education, which prepares them for a global society and economy, has led to a need to change teaching practices.

A 21st Century Education

The demand for a 21st century education stems from the need for highly competent employees who can enter the workforce with the essential skills (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). The 21st century skills gap is estimated to cost businesses worldwide more than $200 billion a year to find, hire, and train new employees to develop them for the needs of the global economy (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). As a result, corporate wealth and competitiveness depend on a highly educated workforce (Trilling & Fadel, 2009).

A 21st century education signifies a new paradigm in the educational reform movement as it is designed to be experiential as well as content-based. With 21st century skills defined as communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking, they are incorporated into the curriculum of the K–12 core subject areas of Math and English Language Arts as well as life/career, information/technology, global awareness, and environmental literacy. Teachers, administrators, and scholars can facilitate the desired knowledge and skills for a 21st century education (Lave & Wenger, 2014).

The P21 Framework was created by the Partnership for 21st Century Learning, a coalition of educators, policymakers, and industry leaders, to position 21st century skills in K–12

schools. The founding members were the AOL Time Warner Foundation, Apple Computer, Inc., Cable in the Classroom, Cisco Systems, Inc., Dell Computer Corporation, Microsoft Corporation, the National Education Association, SAP, the U.S. Department of Education, and two individuals, Ken Kay and Diny Golder-Dardis. The organization began in 2002, and the skills were infused in the Common Core State Standards in 2009.

The Common Core State Standards

The Common Core State Standards were intentionally created by the National Governors Association, along with the Council of Chief State School Officers in 2009, along with the Partnership for 21st Century Learning and a host of educators throughout the country. The Common Core State Standards signify the first time in America's history in which common standards have been devised and enacted across the United States. When California adopted the standards in 2010, the California Teachers Association supported them because they emphasize critical thinking, relevance, deeper learning, collaboration, technology, and because the standards can be combined for instructional purposes (Posnick-Goodwin, 2014). The intent behind the new paradigm is that students will be held to the same standards regardless of which state they live. The goal is standards that are more challenging than the previous ones. In a survey of school districts that have embraced the Common Core State Standards, three-fifths agreed that the standards are more rigorous (Overturf, 2011).

Integrated together, global competencies, 21st century skills, and Common Core State Standards were established for English Language Arts and Math. Collaboration, communication, and critical thinking are essential qualities incorporated into the Common Core State Standards. As a communication skill, collaboration is infused to create dialogue and engagement between students to develop meaningful learning. According to Matt Davis (2012) in the article *How*

Collaborative Learning Leads to Student Success, teaching students to work together and share knowledge enables collaboration skills. Working together leads to deeper learning and understanding, as students can be resources for each other, test their theories, and listen to others' interpretations. The communication component includes oral and written abilities and 21st century digital or social media computer skills. In addition, as students navigate technology and the media in a global world, they must be proficient in communication with a wide variety of people from various cultures and backgrounds (The Whole Child, 2015). Critical thinking incorporates rigor and challenge, which is beneficial to students for problem solving and creativity. One indicator of critical thinking is perseverance, which can be described as completing tasks while analyzing situations or overcoming obstacles. This skill is particularly demonstrated in the Math Common Core State Standards, as students are now required to explore ways to solve problems and explain their strategies (The Whole Child, 2015). With the fusion of global competencies and 21st century skills into the Common Core State Standards, students can learn to think and communicate in a global economy.

The effectiveness of the implementation of the Common Core State Standards will determine its success (Posnick-Goodwin, 2014). Across the country, almost every school district is engaged in implementing the standards and is making changes to professional development, curriculum, and testing. As a result, the Common Core State Standards have the potential for great change or great harm (Hess & McShane, 2013). According to William McCallum, a University of Arizona professor who coauthored the standards for Math, "implementation is everything." (as cited in Hess & McShane, 2013, p. 62)

Implementation and the Key Variables of Teacher Practice: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Introduction. The transition to the Common Core State Standards represents an immediate and far-reaching change that impacts virtually every single public school in America in terms of curriculum, instruction, and assessment (Marrongelle et al., 2013). Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are so important that Joan Polinar Shapiro and Steven Jay Gross (2013), professors at Temple University and the authors of *Ethical Educational Leadership in Turbulent Times*, stated:

> It can be argued that curriculum, instruction and assessment are the heart of the educational enterprise and, therefore, at the center of many controversial questions, such as: Who sets the learning agenda? Who determines what gets included in a new canon or that there needs to be a unitary set of ideas learned by all? Whose values are elevated and at the cost of what other person or group? These challenging queries have been at the heart of educational debate since the first schools were organized in North America, and have continued to our time. What has been called 'the struggle for the American curriculum' reflects this dynamic tension. (p. 80)

In this section of the review, literature in the three stated areas is examined to determine how the commission of the Common Core State Standards is changing teacher practices. In the following, Research Question 1 is addressed: How, if at all, has the implementation of the Common Core State Standards changed teacher practices related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment?

Curriculum. An evaluation of the current literature indicates a deficit of curriculum aligned to the Common Core State Standards. Due to the high demand for resources, teachers are

experiencing concerns and challenges, particularly due to the breakneck speed at which they need to create materials (Hess & McShane, 2013). For example, two-thirds of the elementary school math teachers state they had changed three-fourths of their materials as a result of the Common Core Stated Standards (Kane, 2015). This is an example of why a significant amount of state and district resources are being devoted to creating curriculum (DiGisi, 2013). Loveless (2012) of the Brookings Institution has expressed concern regarding how educators are making decisions about curriculum under these circumstances. He believed that teachers are making blind choices that vary in effectiveness. According to the National Governors Association for Best Practices, to be effective the Common Core State Standards must "be complimented by a well-developed, content-rich curriculum" (DiGisi, 2013, p. 12). This reinforces the need for carefully chosen quality curriculum.

Angela Pascopella's (2012) research showed that curriculum development typically takes one of three approaches. A district may provide business as usual training that is traditional with a text and paper/pencil format, a bare bones structure that emphasizes the use of open source materials/online professional development and webinars, or a balanced form of professional development that provides a combination of in-person and online access (Pascopella, 2012). The Pinellas County Schools district in Largo, Florida, exemplifies the balanced approach with cadres of teachers who take courses with both formats in order to effect change as they work with each other on content and pedagogy (DeNisco, 2013).

Access to technology can be an equity and management issue for districts as they integrate the Common Core State Standards (Fletcher, 2012). Without access to technology, teachers cannot easily obtain online curriculum, which can impact instructional practices. Technology allows teachers to collaborate and share materials online (Ash, 2011; DiGisi, 2013;

Fletcher, 2012). Technological innovations can also be instrumental in an implementation such as the Common Core State Standards. Digital textbooks offer teachers online resources that can be updated quickly (DeNisco, 2013; Fletcher, 2012). Educational publishers such as Houghton Mifflin are creating materials to utilize real-time learning. In this way, curriculum is experiential instead of consumable (DeNisco, 2013). In addition, McGraw-Hill has sought to make learning more relevant through the use of apps and games (DeNisco, 2013).

Likewise, students could be at a disadvantage if teachers do not have access to technology, do not become proficient in its use, or do not change their practices. Jeff Livingston, senior vice president of educational policy at McGraw-Hill Education, (as cited in DeNisco, 2013) claimed that students without access to technology would be at a disadvantage. The new curriculum incorporates the expectations for students to digitally plan, organize, gather, and present information. Students need access to technology in order to perform these tasks (Cravey, 2013). For teachers and students, the need for access and equity means that school districts must invest in the infrastructure for technology to effectively implement the Common Core State Standards.

Instruction. The administration of the Common Core State Standards is creating instructional challenges for teachers. Teachers are being asked to rethink long-standing instructional strategies and commit to new delivery techniques (DiGisi, 2013; Sawchuk, 2012; Wilhoit, 2012). The significance of this shift can be seen in a study from the Center on Education Policy Research at Harvard University, which found more than half of the elementary teachers and two-fifths of middle school teachers said they had changed more than three-fourths of their instruction (Kane, 2015). The Common Core requires an emphasis on critical thinking which means teaching methods have had to change along with the standards (Moser, 2015). The Bill

and Melinda Gates Foundation report that teachers need to develop the practice of engaging students in higher-order thinking skills. "It is a capacity building process, without question" (Sawchuk, 2012, p. 16).

In an effort to motivate teachers to demonstrate evidence of instructional practices for the Common Core State Standards, some districts are obtaining accountability by refining their teacher evaluation systems. Principals are educated to look for best practices that include challenging students and using multiple sources. This strategy is based on the assumption that teachers will change their practices if professional expectations are established (DeNisco, 2013; Sawchuk, 2012). The focus on best practices and instruction exemplifies that teachers play an essential part in the transition to the Common Core (Marrongelle et al., 2013).

California faces a bigger challenge in instruction than almost every other state in the country due to several factors. There are 6.2 million children in California schools, instructed by approximately 280,000 teachers in about 1,000 school districts, with two-thirds of California students considered poor, in the foster care system, or are English Language Learners who cannot speak English fluently (The Editorial Board, 2015). Although the California state budget allocates 40% of its funds to K–12 education, spending per pupil is among the lowest in the country (The Editorial Board, 2015). As of January 2015, halfway through the full implementation year of 2014–2015, only one-third of California teachers had been trained on the Common Core State Standards. Last, a math teacher shortage also influences California's ability to implement the standards (The Editorial Board, 2015). All of these factors impact the curriculum, instruction, and assessment of the Common Core State Standards.

Assessment. U.S. Secretary of Education Arnie Duncan asserted that the Common Core assessments are "an absolute game changer in public education." (as cited in Hess & McShane,

2013, p. 62). He also stated the standards are vital for the prosperity of America (Duncan, 2013a). Therefore, $350 million were directed to fund the Race to the Top competition to align the new standards and determine student growth. The SBAC and the PARCC were selected, with the SBAC offering intuitive testing and the PARCC taking a streamlined computer-based approach (Fletcher, 2010; The Center for Public Education, 2014). Both assessments are technology driven and require a costly infrastructure of hardware, software, servers, bandwidth, computer equipment, resources, and teacher training in order to perform the testing (Fletcher, 2010; Gewertz, 2012; Hess & McShane, 2013; The Center for Public Education, 2014).

Assessment test scores for the Common Core are stated in four distinct categories and identify if standards are exceeded, met, nearly met, or if they are not met. Individual student scores are reported in numbers ranging from 2,000 to 3,000. In addition to an individual score, parents also see details about their child's performance such as problem solving in Math and research inquiry in Language Arts (Tully, 2015). The new assessments can identify strengths and weaknesses in academic achievement and economic, gender, and racial data (Wan, 2015).

The first 2015 SBAC and PARCC test score results, released in 2015, will increase the debate about the standards and the desire for accountability. The underperformance in the results was received with mixed reactions. Some claimed the lower-than-expected results were negligible and that a larger decline was to be expected because the new tests were based on new standards (Kane, 2015). Of the 3.2 million students in California, from third to eighth and eleventh grade who took the SBAC in Spring 2015, 44% were proficient in Language Arts and 34% scored proficient in Math (Moser, 2015; Wan, 2015). These scores do not explain the whole picture as racial disparities are hidden in the numbers. Forty-six percent of African Americans, 41% of Native Americans, 39% of Hispanics, and 65% of English Language Learners all scored

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in the bottom category, standards not met. In contrast, only 12% of Asians and 18% of Whites scored in this bottom category (Wan, 2015). Looking at the Math results, students from non-socioeconomically disadvantaged homes are twice as likely to meet or exceed proficiency standards than those less fortunate (Wan, 2015). As a result, the assessment has identified achievement gaps that need to be addressed (Moser, 2015). Michael Fullan (2010), a consultant on educational reform initiatives, asserted that addressing gaps in education is important as they are the economic equivalent of a recession, and the costs to society are enormous.

In an effort to make the scores look better, some districts framed how they communicated the Common Core State Standards assessment results to parents (Camera, 2015). For example, California projected the disparities among subgroups, instead of focusing on the test scores alone. Ohio altered its scoring rubric, which inflated results, instead of showing how the scores align with the testing company's rubric (Camera, 2015). In New York, state officials claimed the scores increased, but they failed to disclose that data were altered by reducing the number of correct answers necessary, so half of the examinees passed (Edelman, 2014). In the Los Angeles Unified School District, district officials met with school leaders about communicating the scores to the community, because the scores were lower than what people typically expect (CBS News, 2015). Some people called this communication strategy framing, while others referred to it as score manipulation (Camera, 2015; Edelman, 2014). All of this was in response to the demand for educational accountability that will continue to figure prominently in public education, as states strive to deliver on the promise of the new standards (Hess & McShane, 2013). The current focus on high standards and accountability has added complexity to education (Hunzicker, 2012).

The frustration over the online assessments has caused some states to abandon the tests that measure the standards' effectiveness. The PARCC originated with 26 states in affinity, but only six states and the District of Columbia use the test. The SBAC commenced with 31 states—some states affiliated with both groups—and now counts 15. However, with states dropping out of the tests, comparisons remain challenging (Zernike, 2015). The intent of the Common Core State Standards is to evaluate students from around the country with common standards and assessments. With states creating their own tests, it makes it more difficult to draw comparisons (CBS News, 2015). The 2015 assessments will serve as a baseline (The Times Editorial Board, 2015).

Implementation and the Key Variable of Teacher Concerns and Challenges

As districts actualize the Common Core State Standards, the districts must address the issue of teachers' concerns. Research has shown that teachers are vital to the success of a large-scale change (Kwok, 2012; Luna et al., 2014; Porter et al., 2015; Stear, 2013). In this section, Research Question 2 is addressed: What are the concerns and challenges faced by teachers as they implement the Common Core State Standards?

Teachers are considered agents of change as well as instructors. Thus, the manner in which teachers embrace a new idea makes a difference. Teachers are the most important part of the change process; their perceptions are paramount (Kwok, 2012). Some teachers may see change as an opportunity, while others may view innovation as a threat to their roles as professional educators (Stear, 2013).

Understanding teachers' concerns during a change process is important for school leaders and crucial to how they proceed. Teachers have the pressure of incorporating new skills in an education system of accountability and high standards (Hunzicker, 2012). Teachers' concerns

and challenges may include a lack of resources, time, issues with management, or genuine dislike of the change (Stear, 2013). In addition to these factors, professional development can contribute to teachers' concerns, whether alleviating or elevating them (Kwok, 2012; Michalec, 2013).

In the first segment of this literature review, the researcher identified two conceptual models to explain the theoretical reasons for teacher concerns and challenges. The concern-based adoption model is premised upon the idea of addressing the concerns of individuals as they are engaged in an innovation, in order to increase a sense of efficacy. In contrast, the model for teacher change illustrates how attitudes or concerns are shaped by events. Both models are relevant in that a large-scale change can produce concerns and attitudes, which must be addressed for a long-lasting transformation to be successful.

The resistance and initiative fatigue theories can accelerate the understanding of teacher concerns and challenges. From a theoretical point of view, resistance seeks to explain negative attitudes toward professional development (Stear, 2013). The premise of this concept is that in order to avoid negative outcomes professional development must incorporate positive reinforcement, meet learners' needs, and involve enthusiastic teaching. A trainer who establishes a good rapport will create a process to ascribe meaning that will to promote learning (Posnick-Goodwin, 2014; Stear, 2013). Additionally, the theory of initiative fatigue states that teachers can feel deluged by a plethora of decrees. McLester (2012) explained that when initiatives are too frequent, or presented concurrently, they can subscribe to teachers' concerns, and thus impede efforts to establish viable learning practices. When a district has numerous mandates, its leaders need to demonstrate how the initiatives can be fused together with the overall district and

site goals (McLester, 2012). Understanding and implementing these theories can create success in the face of change.

Teacher efficacy can be an important factor when implementing a new initiative, because teachers who have a greater self-efficacy feel that they can make positive changes and are more innovative (Chong & Kong, 2012; Ross & Bruce, 2007; Walker & Carr-Stewart, 2006). Bandera's theory of social cognition states there are four ways efficacy can be strengthened (Chong & Kong, 2012). First, one must demonstrate mastery; second, support and resources must be availed; third, coaching and modeling are vital; and fourth, one must possess a positive stress free state of tension or anxiety (Chong & Kong, 2012). These four strategies can sway "behavior in terms of cognitive processes (especially goal setting), motivational processes (especially attributions for success and failure), affective processes (especially control of negative feelings), and selection processes" (Ross & Bruce, 2007, p. 50). Thus, efficacy can be developed to facilitate a change initiative and reduce teacher concerns.

The emotional impact of a large-scale change can be of concern individually, as well as collectively. For that reason, leaders needs to recognize the role of emotions involved in the process of change. Professor Ruth Williams (2009) of the University of Auckland cited Bandura's view that one's beliefs impact one's choices in the determination to pursue a goal. Williams observed that understanding the significance of emotions is salient because stress and anxiety can influence educational reform (Michalec, 2013; Williams, 2009). Chong and Kong (2012) stated that teachers' well-being, adaptability, and adjustment influence teachers' abilities. Chen (2006) contended that actions are intentional and the result of emotions, along with cognition and behavior. Therefore, emotions, thoughts, and actions play a role in implementing a new program, and teachers' emotions need to be pertinent to the site leadership.

Although Bandera's social cognition theory explains the interactions and emotions that influence decisions, social relationships are another facet of teacher efficacy. The social capital theory postulates that there are qualities of social relationships such as trust and altruism among participants of a community. Interpersonal relationships are said to strengthen efficacy as they involve a positive social connectedness and altruistic motives to cooperate in a group (Tseng & Kuo, 2013). The social capital theory also maintains that individuals feel vested through their social networks and their ability to obtain influence and means as a result. Having efficacy in social capital theory is premised on an individual's ability to accomplish goals and achieve objectives, as one weighs whether the possible outcomes will produce satisfaction. The way someone deals with the social environment, manages his or her behavior, or overcomes obstacles can increase a capability to feel altruistic, empathetic, and efficacious (Tseng & Kuo, 2013). The Social Capital theory relates the importance of social relationships on efficacy, which can impact a teacher's ability to facilitate the Common Core State Standards.

Implementation and the Key Variable of Professional Development

In this section, Research Question 3 is addressed: What types of professional development on the Common Core State Standards have teachers been offered, and what do they perceive has been the most beneficial?

To facilitate the objectives of the Common Core State Standards, school leaders must provide professional development to increase teachers' abilities and skills (Essawi, 2012; Gemeda, Massimiliano, & Catarci, 2013). School districts must carefully evaluate their training, as research shows the implementation of large-scale reform movements has produced mixed outcomes (Kwok, 2012). As there are many genres of professional development and different types of learners, site leaders are challenged with providing long-term professional development

that will ensure the successful implementation of the Common Core State Standards (Luna et al., 2014; Wilhoit, 2012). The site leadership needs to utilize a multifaceted approach for a quality professional development program (Guskey & Sparks, 1991). Professional development and follow-up assessment(s) are important to the success of the Common Core State Standards, as both are deemed critical to the standards' ongoing success (Essawi, 2012; Porter et al., 2015).

To effect changes in behavior, professional development can be delivered in various formats, settings, and time periods. The training can be structured as formal or informal, planned or unplanned, or on a collective vs. individual basis (Gemeda et al., 2013). Research shows that professional development needs to encourage actions that are specific, measurable, and observable and provide feedback or reflection (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2013; Chong & Kong, 2012; Runhaar, Sanders, & Yang, 2010). The reality is that professional development is aimed at adults, which explains why it requires an understanding of adult learning theories, as this knowledge is essential for effecting change in the behavior of adults (Essawi, 2012; Galloway & Lesaux, 2014; Gemeda et al., 2013).

Collaboration is an effective professional development approach. As a form of knowledge sharing, collaboration develops social capital and promotes innovation within organizations (Lave & Wenger, 2014). In order for a collaborative learning design to be effectual, it must be connected to one's profession, be ongoing and rigorous, and encourage strong connected relationships among the members (Swan, Day, Bogle, & Matthews, 2014; Tseng & Kuo, 2013). For example, the Stanford Redesign Program advocates a collaborative approach between administrators and teachers. The program recommends a changeover from accountability and a move toward an environment of learning (McLester, 2012). According to

Matt Davis (2012), a collaborative learning culture is a school community in which everyone feels he or she can learn from one another.

A community of practice is a participative approach that was first conceptualized as a legitimate form of peripheral participation in 1991 by and Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (2014). Lave and Wenger (2014) assert that in a community of practice the members need to have a commitment in which they can learn from each other and develop a repertoire of experiences and tools that can be shared over time. More importantly, the members need to be considered practitioners who have a shared identity and seek to engage because they share a passion. Whether people are practicing in a small or large group, or sharing online, each structure involves a network of people coming together for a shared purpose (Tseng & Kuo, 2013). Lave and Wenger (2014) said, "Communities of Practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly" (p. 1).

Appreciative inquiry is another participative, collaborative approach. It involves the art and practice of inquiry with the intention of "strengthening a systems capacity" (Walker & Carr-Stewart, 2006, p. 22). This approach reveals that what makes one feel most alive, dynamic, and consequently "most effective, and most constructively capable in economic, ecological, and human terms" (Walker & Carr-Stewart, 2006, p. 22). This is a paradigm in which professionals engage in a community in which they also "accept the complexity and subjectivity of the world" (Walker & Carr-Stewart, 2006, p. 23). Practicing appreciative inquiry can enhance professional development or a professional learning community.

Self-directed learning is an alternative form of professional development with a structure best used for independent learners who can create goals and determine their own learning needs (Cremers, Wais, Wesselink, Nieveen, & Mulder, 2013). For these individuals, there is an internal

desire to work toward their own learning goals. Self-directed learning has an inherent social component, due to the need for trust and safety (Cremers et al, 2013). This form of professional development utilizes technology, and a district can use a self-directed approach to stimulate thinking, communication, and an engaging environment for the learner.

Professional development can include a technological format. The use of technology in the form of video can be advantageous in developing self-awareness, providing insight into one's assets and deficits, and developing a sense of mastery and stimulates a deep analysis and conversation about instruction (Kuter, Gazi, & Aksal, 2012). Other types of propitious technology include classes streamed in real-time, and collaborative online structures (McLester, 2012). Some districts also use online groups of practitioners, which have become a new, engaging strategy for teachers to develop their knowledge and abilities. Studies of online groups show that a teachers' feeling of efficacy increases and contributes to the realization of professional development, as well as student achievement.

According to Kwok (2012), additional work is needed to evaluate the effects of collaboration with technology while implementing educational innovations. Although these information and communication technologies (ICTs) are valuable, practitioners caution against using ICTs as a substitute for interpersonal communication, because they reduce the humanistic aspect associated with a face to face community of practice (Tseng & Kuo, 2013). Because today's society is characterized by changes in communication and informational technologies, people can make choices as to how they can interact. As a result, technological communication must also be socially engineered and requires a meaning making process in professional development (Essawi, 2012). Therefore, it is vital that professional development includes

participants' thoughts, experiences, and skills (Gemeda et al., 2013). Districts may strive to consider their approaches to professional development in order to meet different objectives.

Implementation and the Key Variable of Leadership

Leadership at the site level is a salient quality in a transition when implementing change at the site level, leadership is important to facilitate success in implementing the Common Core State Standards. In this section of the review, Research Question 4 is addressed: What do teachers still need from their site leadership to make the implementation of the Common Core State Standards successful?

The Common Core State Standards represent a significant change in the U.S. education system. To facilitate this transformational change, leadership can influence teachers and motivate them to question old assumptions and create new outcomes (Beers, 2013; Runhaar et al., 2010).

A social change requires an understanding of theory, and one way for leaders to gain that knowledge is with Bandera's social cognition theory. The theory explains the interactions of individuals and the factors that impact change. This mental model postulates that preexisting beliefs are powerful predictors of behavior and is based on a social, dynamic, and reciprocal paradigm that takes into account people, behaviors, and the environment itself (Chong & Kong, 2012). Using a social cognitive approach, leaders can facilitate the relationship between interactions and change (Kezar, 2001).

Judith Zimmerman (2011) maintained that in order for leadership to create an organizational change a leader's efficacy is an essential factor. The connection between leadership and efficacy is an integral part of preparing for change. According to Walker and Carr-Stewart (2006), there is very little research on the efficacy of educators. The authors stated that administrators who gain skills/knowledge and believe in their own effectiveness can be more

influential in empowering teachers. This suggests that the ability, efficacy, and effectiveness of a school leader are profound in guiding school reform (Gemeda et al., 2013; Walker & Carr-Stewart, 2006). Sue Beers (2013) a K–12 curriculum director in Iowa, suggested that school leaders assess their own abilities in order to facilitate change and understand the transformative nature of instruction. In addition to an understanding of the transformation process, leaders must have an awareness of their own capabilities to lead a large-scale change.

In *Leading Change*, Kotter (2012) emphasized the need for leadership to possess transformative qualities. His model shows the importance of a solid base of support and new approaches that must be incorporated into the culture to produce successful change. Susan McLester (2012) illustrated this idea as she argued for a distributed leadership model, in which teachers feel empowered, which ultimately leads to more influence and sustainability. In the article *Teachers' Professional Development in Schools: Rhetoric versus Reality*, the authors concurred that a top-down management approach is ineffective and hinders change (Gemeda et al., 2013). Others have agreed that one must move from a top-down approach toward a leadership style that emphasizes relationships and collaboration (Shapiro & Gross, 2013). Therefore, an inclusive leadership approach is important in effecting change.

The research illustrates the significance of a participatory and reciprocal relationship between leadership and teachers in order to create a transformational change such as the Common Core State Standards. The literature also reveals the need for leadership to be savvy in organizational change and understand the theories behind the change process. To illustrate that point, Dr. Williams (2009) contends that a leader must be aware that people are not as concerned with change as they are about the process of transition to that change. The transition time can be seen as a disturbance when significant change is initiated. Disturbances can create opposition,

emotional reactions, a turbulent environment, as well as positive aspects and opportunities (Shapiro & Gross, 2013). This indicates a need for leadership to understand the human condition, which is why Pink advocated that organizations understand what motivates people. He advised that organizations allow for the intrinsic drive along with people's need for autonomy and creativity (Pink, 2009). Therefore, leaders must be salient in leadership strategies but also in human dynamics and motivational theories.

Summary

The Common Core State Standards represent a seismic shift in education; therefore, implementing them is critically important (Noguchi, 2013). Kirst, professor emeritus at Stanford University, suggests there will always be some kind of pushback to something that creates a large shift in education (Rix, 2013). He noted it would take 5 years to assess the Common Core State Standards fairly (The Editorial Board, 2015). Much can be learned and changed during this implementation period. Inspired by this vision of a global society and 21st century prowess, the Common Core State Standards were developed to assure that students graduate with the abilities they will need in higher education and to be globally competitive (Noguchi, 2013). The standards are a major educational reform and a huge investment in time, money, materials, and technology. Teacher feedback is vital to the implementation, as teachers are responsible for creating changes.

Discovering how the Common Core State Standards have impacted teacher practice in curriculum, instruction, and assessment, finding out what teachers' concerns and challenges are, gaining insight into the professional development that is most effective, and receiving feedback on what assistance site leadership can provide is all valuable information. The success of the implementation of the Common Core State Standards is at stake, as it can either lead to a systemic change in education or it can end up as yet another failed initiative.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter provides specific information regarding the research methodology and rationale. The chapter begins with the research methodology and rationale, setting, population, sample and sampling procedures, instrumentation, data collection procedures, data management, data analysis and reporting, positionality, and concludes with a chapter summary.

The purpose of this study was fourfold: to determine how the implementation of the Common Core State Standards has changing teacher practices related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment; to investigate the concerns and challenges faced by teachers as they implement the Common Core State Standards; to determine the professional development teachers have been offered, and what they perceive has been most beneficial; and to determine what teachers still need from their site leadership to make the implementation of the Common Core State Standards successful.

This study examined the experiences and perceptions of teachers in purposely chosen California school districts of various sizes who have been engaged in the process of implementing Common Core State Standards for 1 or more years. The study focused on the following four research questions:

1. How, if at all, has the implementation of the Common Core State Standards changed teacher practices related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment?

2. What are the concerns and challenges faced by teachers as they implement the Common Core State Standards?

3. What types of professional development on the Common Core State Standards have teachers been offered, and what do they perceive has been the most beneficial?

4. What do teachers still need from their site leadership to make the implementation of the Common Core State Standards successful?

Research Methodology and Rationale

This research study utilized a sequential explanatory mixed methods design. According to Creswell (2014), this format is one in which the researcher initially conducts research that is quantitative and analyzes the results. The researcher then employs a qualitative instrument. Through this design, the qualitative research builds upon the quantitative research in an effort to further explain the initial data. Therefore, this was a sequential design, as the first phase was quantitative and the second phase was qualitative. This two-phase methodology involved a sequence of information gathering, using different methods, in order to collect more in-depth data.

The origins of the sequential explanatory mixed-methods design can be found in the 1980s and the 1990s with work by individuals in a myriad of fields such as "evaluation, education, management, sociology, and health sciences" (Creswell, 2014, p. 217). The term mixed methods is a synonym for mixed methodology, quantitative and qualitative methods, integrative or synthesis; however, "recent writings tend to use the term mixed methods" (Creswell, 2014, p. 217). The premise of a mixed methods design is it is comprised of a "collection of both qualitative (open-ended) and quantitative (closed-ended) data in response to research questions or hypothesis" (Creswell, 2014, p. 217).

In the first phase of this study design, the researcher obtained quantitative (and some qualitative) data from a group in the form of a survey. The survey was administered in order to obtain as much information as possible from a broad-based group. Teacher participants were asked to respond to an online survey. An advantage of this design is that the survey could be

administered electronically, and a significant amount of data could be gleaned. The disadvantage

of this design is that survey responses were limited to the questions, and additional information

may be needed in order to explain a phenomenon.

The second phase of this study design involved interviewing individuals who volunteered

to participate in an interview, and this phase was strictly qualitative. Participants in this second

phase further explained and elaborated upon their experiences and perceptions. The advantage of

this phase was that the researcher ascertained data from individuals who wished to share

additional information. The researcher conducted the interview with five open-ended questions,

which allowed for a deeper level of explanation. The disadvantage of this phase was that fewer

people chose to participate, as it required additional time on their part.

The sequential explanatory mixed methods design was especially appropriate for this

particular study, as the researcher ascertained data in a sequential method. Ultimately, this design

gave the researcher with an opportunity to perform the study in a two-phase sequence. It also

allowed the researcher to use two different instruments in the pursuit of understanding the

phenomenon of the implementation of the Common Core State Standards.

Setting

This study took place in California. The study focused on teachers in public schools

districts whom experienced the implementation of the Common Core State Standards and work

in school districts of various sizes. Table 1 displays school district names and their

corresponding student population figures from the 2015–2016 school year, as provided by the

School Accountability Report Card (SARC) and published by the California Department of

Education.

Population, Sample, and Sampling Procedures

Population. The target population includes all K–12 classroom teachers who were currently involved in the transition to the Common Core State Standards. The group was drawn from three California school districts of different population sizes, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Student Demographics by School District

	Portola Valley School District 2015-2016	Hope Elementary School District 2015-2016	San Jose Unified School 2015-2016
Enrollment	678 (Grades K-8)	316 (Grades K-6)	33,184 (Grades K-12)
African American	1.4%	3.20%	2.7%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.0%	0.00%	
Asian	6.2%	5.40%	12.9%
Caucasian	68.5%	54.10%	24.3%
Filipino	0.0%	0.90%	1.9%
Hispanic / Latino	14.3%	34.80%	53.3%
Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	1.1%	0.30%	0.4%
2 or more races or multi-racial	6.7%	1.30%	3.7%
Other	1.8%		
Special Education		13.3%	
Fee/Reduced Lunch		31.6%	48.4%
Economically/Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	8.1%	31.60%	
Students with Disabilities	8.4%	13.30%	
English Learners	3.7%	15.80%	22%
Foster Youth	0.0%		0.003

Note. The data in this table are from "School Accountability Report Cards" by California Department of Education, 2014. Copyright 2014 by California Department of Education. Reprinted with permission.

Sample. This study had two sample groups. The first sample group consisted of participants from the target population who responded to the survey. For the second stage of the

study, the sample included participants who agree to be interviewed and provided contact information.

Sampling procedures. The sampling procedure involved several steps to accomplish the two phases. First, the researcher identified the California school districts targeted for this study that met the objective of having different sizes and student demographics. Second, the researcher contacted each district requesting permission to perform the first phase of the study (see Appendix A). Then, upon IRB approval, the researcher asked the contact at each district to disseminate the introductory e-mail provided by the researcher with a link to the study. Fourth, the researcher contacted the participants from the survey phase who elected to participate in the second phase of the study, which was the follow-up interview.

Human Subject Considerations

To protect the participants in the study, the researcher completed the Social and Behavioral Research for Human Subjects Consideration training via the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI), as a standard protocol for similar social science research (see Appendix B).

Permission to conduct this study was obtained from either the superintendent or district designee responsible for research approval in each of the three school districts to be included in this study. Once district permission was obtained, the researcher sought and obtained Pepperdine University's Graduate Professional Schools IRB approval (see Appendix C).

Teachers within each district first received an electronic letter of introduction from the researcher with a link to the study (see Appendix D). The letter described the nature of the study, the data collection methods that would be used, and it included information regarding the

protection of human subjects. Clicking on the link indicated consent to participate in the study. Signed consent was not required as each participant's identity was protected through anonymity.

The study consisted of two phases: surveys and interviews. The surveys were anonymous, since no identifying information was requested. If participants indicated a willingness to participate in the follow-up interviews, they were to provide contact information, which would remain confidential. To respect the identity of those who chose to be interviewed, and safeguard data to protect identities, the researcher referred to them as SJUSD 1 or PVSD 1 or HSD 1, et cetera, as Creswell (2014) suggests such a system (P1, P2, P3) in the published research paper.

Any potential risks to participants in this study were minimal. Participants in this study were adults who consented to participate on a voluntary basis, and the researcher maintained confidentiality and the participants' rights to privacy. A potential risk could have included a loss of time. To minimize this potential risk, the researcher adhered to the stated timeline for survey and interview data collection. This timeline was based on the expert review feedback and a pilot study. Additionally, since teachers were speaking about perceptions regarding their work, there could have been a perceived risk of having their responses shared with colleagues and/or supervisors, however district administrators could not know who chose to participate in either the survey or the interview process. The researcher made sure to de-select the option of tracking participants so the survey remained anonymous. Lastly, each of the participants in the interview phase was provided with a copy of their own interview transcript to determine the accuracy. This was sent to each one of them via e-mail. All participants were also offered the opportunity to receive a copy of the study findings. The researcher safeguarded the data gleaned from this study on a personal laptop that was password protected. Furthermore, the researcher will not destroy

the data any sooner than three years after the study was completed. Also, if there were a breach in confidentiality, the nature of the interview did not put subjects at more than minimal risk.

Instrumentation

Two means of data collection were used in this study. An online survey was utilized in the first phase of the study (see Appendix E), and a follow-up interview was in the second phase (see Appendix F).

Specifics of the Process

Survey. The survey was comprised of three sections with 10 questions in total (see Appendix E). The first section included two demographic questions (1, 2). Question 1 asked: How many total years have you been teaching? Participants chose one of five responses: 0–5, 6–10, 11–15, 16–20, and 21 or more years of teaching experience. Question 2 asked: How many total years have you been implementing the Common Core State Standards? Respondents were given six options, ranging from 1 year to more than 5 years of implementation.

The second section included six questions (3–8). Each question asked about the participant's experiences and perceptions of the shift of the Common Core State Standards. The survey questions offered open-ended and closed-ended opportunities for the participants to respond. Question 3 asked: How, if at all, have your practices changed during the implementation of the Common Core State Standards as related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment? A Likert scale was employed, and participants were asked to determine their perceptions on a scale ranging from *greatly* to *not at all*, with four choices in total. Question 4 asked: What concerns do you have regarding the implementation of the Common Core State Standards? The seven choices were limited training, limited materials/resources, limited planning time, limited leadership support, uncertainty, value/effectiveness of the Common Core State

Standards, and impact on student achievement. Question 5 asked: What challenges have you faced while implementing the Common Core State Standards? Participants were asked for open-ended response only. Question 6 stated: Identify the types of professional development, if any, that you have received on the Common Core State Standards. Question 7 asked: Which type of professional development on the Common Core State Standards do you perceive has been the most beneficial? Participants can respond to questions 6 and 7 with up to seven choices. In questions 6 and 7, participants chose as many choices as applied from the following list: district training, site-based training, district or site coach, collaboration by department, grade-level, or cadre/learning community, collaboration with colleague(s) on an informal/sharing basis, online resources (websites, district sites, etc.), and courses outside the district (seminars, college/university classes, etc.). Question 8 asked: What do you still need from your site leadership in order to successfully implement the Common Core State Standards? The multiple choices included shared decision-making, transformational leadership, support and understanding, technology, training, materials/resources, funding, planning time, and other. Five of the six questions in this section offered an open-ended comment section, in addition to the Likert scale or multiple-choice options.

The third section invited participants to participate in a follow-up interview and asked for contact information. It consisted of questions 9 and 10. Question 9, asked: Would you be willing to participate in a 10–15 minute telephone follow-up interview? Participants who responded "Yes" continued to question 10, whereas those who responded "No" continued to the "Thank you" comment from the researcher. Question 10 asked: When would you prefer to be contacted? Participants were asked for the best days of the week, the best times of day, name, phone number, and e-mail address.

Interview. The purpose of the interview was to gain additional insight from the respondents who participated in the study. The interview consisted of five open-ended questions (see Appendix F). Interviews were conducted with individuals, either in person face-to-face or via telephone.

Before the interview began, the researcher first thanked the participant for his or her time, explained that there were only five questions with no right or wrong answer, and that all interviews would remain confidential. The researcher then asked for permission to record the interview and asked if the participant had any questions. The interview questions were as follows:

1. Tell me what grade level/subject area you teach and about your experience with the Common Core State Standards.

2. Tell me more about any changes related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment you made to your classroom practices due to the Common Core State Standards assessment.

3. Tell me about your successes/concerns/challenges regarding the implementation of the Common Core State Standards.

4. Might you further describe your professional development experiences on the Common Core State Standards, especially those that were positive?

5. Based on your experience, what can site leadership provide to facilitate the implementation of Common Core State Standards?

Table 2

Relationship Between Research, Survey, and Interview Questions, and Literature

Research Questions	Survey Questions	Interview Questions	Literature
RQ 1: How, if at all, has the implementation of the Common Core State Standards changed teacher practices related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment?	How, if at all, has your practice changed during the implementation of the Common Core State Standards related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment?	Tell me more about any changes related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment you made to your classroom practices due to the Common Core State Standards assessment.	DiGisi, 2013 Michalec, 2013 Noguchi, 2013 Porter, et al, 2015 Posnick-Goodwin, 2014 Sawchuk, 2012 Saavedra & Opfer, 2012
RQ 2: What are the concerns and challenges faced by teachers as they implement the Common Core State Standards?	What concerns do you have regarding the implementation of the Common Core State Standards? What challenges have you faced while implementing the Common Core State Standards?	Tell me about your successes/concerns/ challenges regarding the implementation of the Common Core State Standards.	Chen, 2006 Chong & Kong, 2012 Khoboli & O'Toole, 2011 Kwok, 2012 Loucks-Horsely, 2005
RQ 3: What types of professional development on the Common Core State Standards have teachers been offered, and what do they perceive has been the most beneficial?	Identify the types of professional development you have received on the Common Core State Standards. Which type of professional development on the Common Core State Standards do you perceive has been the most beneficial?	Might you further describe your professional development experiences on the Common Core State Standards, especially those that were positive?	Bambrick-Santoyo, 2013 Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002 Marrongelle et al., 2013 Guskey & Sparks, 1991 Guskey, 2002 Hunzicker, 2012 Essawi, 2012 Gemeda et al., 2013 Cremers et al., 2013 McLester, 2012 Ross & Bruce, 2007
RQ 4: What do teachers still need from their site leadership to make the implementation of the Common Core State Standards successful?	What do you still need from your site leadership in order to successfully implement the Common Core State Standards?	Based on your experience, what can site leadership provide to facilitate the implementation of Common Core State Standards?	Beers, 2013 Kotter, 2012 McCoy & Holt, 2012 Walker & Carr-Stewart, 2006

Content validity. Content validity of the instrumentation was determined in two ways, first by providing support from a review of the relevant professional literature, and second by conducting an expert review.

Literature support. Table 2 depicts the alignment of the instrument questions with the guiding research questions. The table also identifies professional literature that supports each of the instrument questions. The literature listed in Table 2 reflects one form of content validity.

Expert review. An expert panel of educators reviewed the survey and interview questions and provided feedback on them as well. The input of the expert reviewers served as content validity for this study. The feedback provided by the expert review panel contributed to the revisions already made by the researcher. The expert review panel consisted of a retired professor from The School of Education at San Jose State University with a doctorate in organizational leadership, a graduate of the Graduate School of Education and Psychology at Pepperdine University with a doctorate in educational leadership, and an experienced principal who is an administrator in the Portola Valley School District and has a graduate degree from Santa Clara University. Each content expert was asked to review three items: the research question alignment matrix, the survey, and the interview questions. Each expert reviewed the three items, and the experts' feedback was incorporated into the instruments. The research question alignment matrix, which included the survey questions and the interview questions, the survey, and the interview questions were all reviewed.

The feedback received on the research question alignment matrix for the survey and interview noted minor wording changes. For the research questions on the alignment matrix, the reviewers did not suggest any changes. Regarding the survey, the following reflects the feedback from the expert reviewers. The reviewers suggested that question 1 should use the word *has*

instead of *have*. In two interview questions, 2 and 3, the reviewers suggested using *tell me* instead of *can you*. The reviewers also stated that the curriculum, instruction, and assessment variables should move from the end of the sentence to the beginning in research question 2 for the interview. In interview question 3, the reviewers recommended using *might you* instead of *can you*. The reviewers also suggested that survey question 2 should use the word *limited* instead of *lack of*, as it may affect the reporting if a participant selected a *lack of* to account for *limited*, which really means that time was constrained. On question 4, the words *if an*y were added after professional development. The reviewers also recommended that the participant demographics be included in the survey. The request to contact if interested in participating in the next level of an individual interview also needed to be incorporated.

Data collection. The study proceeded in two phases. In the first phase, an e-mail was sent out by each of the districts to teachers in the form of an electronic survey. The districts then sent an additional e-mail after 1 week to remind teachers to complete the survey. In the second phase of the study, the researcher contacted the teachers who volunteered to participate in the follow-up interviews.

Phase 1: The survey. In Phase 1, the online survey included multiple-choice questions, a Likert scale, and open-ended questions (see Appendix D). The researcher contacted the school districts face-to-face, by phone, or via e-mail in order to understand the district policy on educational research. If the policy permitted the study, the researcher then solicited participation and gain permission on district letterhead from the superintendent or the district designee responsible for research approval. Permissions from each district were included in the researcher's IRB application.

To initiate the study, each district e-mailed its teachers to enable the administration of the survey. The first district e-mail contained an introductory letter that explained the study and participation with a link to the electronic survey. When teachers clicked on the survey served as consent for those who agreed to participate in the study. After one to two weeks, the districts sent its teachers a reminder e-mail to complete the survey. The survey closed after 2 weeks. Phase 2 of the study followed as the researcher contacted those who volunteered for the 15- to 20-minute follow-up interviews at the end of the survey.

Phase 2: The interview. Phase 2 of the study consisted of the follow-up interview. Participants were interviewed based on the fact that they volunteered to do so at the end of the survey. Before the interview began, the researcher requested permission to audio record it. The participants were assured that their identities were kept confidential. Each question was asked one at a time, and the interviews lasted from 15 to 20 minutes in total. The follow-up interviews were semi-structured through a design of open-ended questions (see Appendix E). The researcher used identical guiding questions in each interview and audio recorded the participant responses with the participants' permission. The recordings were transcribed adhering to the confidentiality agreements outlined in the IRB proposal.

Data Management

All data from the electronic surveys and interviews were securely stored in the researcher's personal laptop, which was password protected. The survey data were collected and managed electronically. Participants had the option of participating in the follow-up interviews in person face-to-face, by phone, or virtually. Participants were audio recorded with their permission. The interview recordings were stored in the researcher's personal, password-protected laptop. A transcriber delineated the data for the researcher. The recordings did not

contain identifying information, to protect participant identity. All electronic data were deleted, and any remaining documentation will be shredded 3 years after the study is completed.

Data Analysis and Reporting

Survey. Once data from the survey were collected, the researcher analyzed the survey results. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010), quantitative researchers "typically reduce their data to means, medians, correlations and other summarizing statistics" (p. 97). Qualitative researchers, in contrast, construct narratives and make interpretations derived from their data. Interviews reflect a qualitative approach that generates the data from the participants' experiences. An overview is valuable as it can capture the "complexity of the phenomenon under study" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010, p. 97). Data collected from the surveys were analyzed for patterns and trends.

Interviews. Once the data from the phone interviews were collected, the researcher had the audio files transcribed. The researcher read through the transcripts with another unbiased researcher looking for common themes and began the coding process. According to Creswell (2014), reading and making notes on the actual transcripts helps when one begins to identify themes. Coding is a process in which one identifies categories to help analyze the information gleaned from the transcripts (Creswell, 2014). The researcher aimed to mitigate the list of themes to five to seven, as recommended by Creswell (2014). Creswell (2014) explained that one can discriminate the five to seven themes by examining codes that the participants most frequently mentioned, are distinctive or surprising, have the most substantiation to support them, or those that reflect diverse views.

The researcher analyzed the themes for each question. In addition, the researcher asked two experienced coders to examine the transcribed data collected from the interviews. Each

volunteer was asked to code the data independently, and the researcher compared and analyzed the results in order to report the findings of the study.

Once the data had been collected and coded, and themes had been identified, the researcher interpreted the information. According to Creswell (2014), data are interpreted to capture the essence of the lessons learned. The interpretations reflected the researcher's personal interpretations or a meaning derived from comparisons of the findings gleaned from the literature. Culture, history, and one's personal experiences may impact interpretations as well. To explain the themes identified by the researcher, Creswell (2014) stated that interpretations could be reflected in various forms, adapted for different designs. In this study, the researcher used a table format to report the findings.

Positionality

As a K–12 classroom teacher in a large California school district, and someone who was currently involved in the implementation of the Common Core State Standards, the researcher made sure to set aside her position, in order to eliminate bias while involved in this research study.

Summary

Chapter 3 described the methodology for this study. The study was a sequential explanatory mixed methods design, using online surveys and follow-up interviews in order to better understand the perceptions of teachers on the implementation of the Common Core State Standards. This study sought to determine how the standards had changed teacher practices and/or created concerns and challenges for teachers. The study identified the professional development that best facilitated the implementation of the standards. Last, it explored what was still needed from site leadership to implement the standards and create enduring change.

Chapter 4: Results

Chapter 4 presents the comprehensive and detailed findings of this sequential explanatory mixed methods study. It commences with an introduction, which is subsequently followed by the presentation of the detailed findings for each of the four guiding research questions. The chapter concludes with a summary of the study findings.

The purpose of this sequential explanatory mixed methods study was to determine how the implementation of the Common Core State Standards is changing teacher practices related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment; to investigate the concerns and challenges faced by teachers as they implement the Common Core State Standards; to determine the professional development teachers have been offered, and what they perceive has been most beneficial; and to determine what teachers still need from their site leadership to make the implementation of the Common Core State Standards successful.

This research study employed four guiding research questions:

1. How, if at all, has the implementation of the Common Core State Standards changed teacher practices related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment?

2. What are the concerns and challenges faced by teachers as they implement the Common Core State Standards?

3. What types of professional development for the Common Core Standards have teachers been offered, and what do they perceive has been the most beneficial?

4. What do teachers still need from their site leadership to make the implementation of the Common Core State Standards successful?

This sequential explanatory mixed methods study was implemented with three California school districts between November 2016 and March 2017. In each district, the survey was administered first and the interviews were performed next.

In November 2016, Portola Valley School District (PVSD), a K-8 grade district, administered the survey. In February 2017, San Jose Unified School District (SJUSD), a K-12 district, administered the survey. San Jose Unified also requested that two additional demographic questions be added to their survey in order to provide further understanding of their district results. One question asked respondents to identify their subject area and the other asked about the type of school a teacher taught at, such as elementary, middle, or high school. Portola Valley School District and the San Jose Unified School District are located in Northern California. The third district in this study, Hope Elementary School District, which has grades K-6, is located in Southern California in Santa Barbara. Hope Elementary administered the survey at the beginning of March 2017. A total of 89 teachers participated in the survey and nine of the 89 survey respondents also participated in an interview. All nine interviews for the second phase of this study were conducted in March of 2017.

The survey was comprised of two demographic questions, six that were teacher experience and perception questions, and two questions about the option of participating in a follow up interview. Eighty-nine people responded to the survey, 55 from the San Jose Unified School District, 28 from the Portola Valley School District, and six from the Hope Elementary School District. The pre-interview instrument consisted of three questions. The first asked how long the teacher had been involved in the implementation, the second asked for permission to audio record the interview, and the third asked if the participant had any questions before the interview began. In the interview itself there were five questions, all asking about the teacher's

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perceptions and experiences with the implementation of the Common Core State Standards.

There were nine teachers interviewed, two in person and seven over the phone.

Findings

      Participant profiles. The findings began with a profile of the study participants in terms

of years of teaching experience and their level of experience with the Common Core State

Standards. Table 3 and Table 4 provide the demographic information of the survey participants.

Table 3 shows participants' number of years of teaching experience. Table 4 shows participants'

number of years implementing the Common Core State Standards.

Table 3

Participants' No. of Years of Teaching Experience

Survey Question	Total	PVSD	HSD	SJUSD
	$N = 89$	$N = 28$	$N = 6$	$N = 55$
Survey Question 1: How many total years have you been teaching?				
o 0-5	17	2	0	15
o 6-10	18	5	1	12
o 11-15	16	7	1	8
o 16-20	14	3	2	9
o 21 or more	24	11	2	11

Table 4

Participant No. of Years of Experience Implementing the Common Core State Standards

Survey Question	Total	PVSD	HSD	SJUSD
	$N = 89$	$N = 28$	$N = 6$	$N = 55$
Survey Question 2: How many total years have you been implementing the Common Core State Standards?				
o 1	6	2	0	4
o 2	14	7	1	6
o 3	21	10	1	10
o 4	35	2	2	31
o 5+	13	7	2	4

Research question 1. Research Question 1 asked: How, if at all, has the implementation of the Common Core State Standards changed teacher practices related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment? Survey Question 3 and Interview Question 2 were aligned with Research Question 1.

Survey question 3. Survey Question 3 asked: How, if at all, have your practices changed during the implementation of the Common Core State Standards as related to curriculum, instruction and assessment? Table 5 summarizes the magnitude and nature of change related to teacher practices.

Table 5

Magnitude and Nature of Change in Teacher Practices

Survey Question	Magnitude of Change				Nature of Change
Survey Question 3: How, if at all, have your practices changed during the implementation of the Common Core State Standards as related to:	Total	PVSD	HSD	SJUSD	Sample Comments
	$N = 89$	$N = 28$	$N = 6$	$N = 55$	

Curriculum
  o Greatly
  o Somewhat
  o Very little
  o Not at all
	
	42
	29
	9
	9
		
		8
		13
		3
		4
			
			4
			1
			1
			0
				
				30
				15
				5
				5
					The focus is on critical thinking and developing students speaking and listening skills. (PVSD)
					
					Students need to explain their thinking in math. (PVSD)

Instruction
  o Greatly
  o Somewhat
  o Very little
  o Not at all
	
	28
	36
	6
	8
		
		7
		13
		4
		3
			
			3
			3
			0
			0
				
				18
				20
				2
				5
					It has made me very mindful about ensuring that each lesson I teach is closely aligned with the common core standard(s) I am teaching. (SJUSD)

Assessment
  o Greatly
  o Somewhat
  o Very little
  o Not at all
	
	27
	56
	7
	8
		
		7
		17
		1
		2
			
			2
			3
			1
			0
				
				18
				36
				5
				6
					Assessment: more options, less "this-is-the-only-right-answer." (HSD)

The quantitative data from the survey showed a majority of teachers reported that their practices had changed in all three areas as a consequence of the Common Core State Standards implementation. Eighty percent reported that their curriculum practices had changed greatly and somewhat. Seventy-two percent shared that their instructional practices had changed greatly and somewhat, and 94% communicated that their assessment practices had changed greatly and

somewhat. When looking only at the category *greatly* the greatest magnitude of change was related to changes in curriculum practice. Approximately 50% of the teachers reported that their curriculum practices had changed.

The qualitative data from the survey also showed data in the three stated areas of curriculum, instruction, and data. These qualitative data for this research question included responses with 15 participants who discussed instruction, nine commenting on curriculum, and four gave feedback about assessment. With regards to curriculum, teachers reported the lack of curriculum at the onset of the implementation and having to create material to fill the gaps. The greatest nature of change involved critical thinking, communication, rigor, and relevancy. Lastly, in terms of assessment several teachers reported a shift from multiple choice/short answer tests to the open-ended /free response type.

Interview question 2. Interview Question 2 reads: "Tell me more about any changes related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment you made to your classroom practices due to the Common Core State Standards."

The Common Core State Standards has created changes in curriculum, instruction and assessment. Eight of the nine teachers interviewed described how they adapted their practices. The first theme to emerge was that teachers reported a need for curriculum that was rigorous and relevant. As one teacher said, this is another big change, as she now incorporates real world and relevant examples. The second theme to emerge from the interviews lay in the area of instruction and assessment. Teachers stated that they now instruct and assess students with 21st century skills in mind. They explained that students are being asked to interpret, explain, think critically, justify, and demonstrate their understanding in various ways. Also, instruction now includes having students work collaboratively in groups. These changes have impacted teachers and

students, as they are now expected to demonstrate their learning. San Jose Teacher #7 states: "…the biggest thing is more group work, in terms of instructional strategies…more focus on having students explain what their thinking" (San Jose Teacher #7, personal communication, March 30, 2017). A high school math teacher reflected on the fact that his juniors and seniors were older when the Common Core State Standards implementation began, and as a result, he finds that his students are more resistant to incorporating writing to explain their answers in math, or in working collaboratively in groups. Lastly, a math teacher voiced: "I do a lot more ways of solving problems. That's a huge change" (San Jose Teacher #4, personal communication, March 30, 2017).

Triangulation of survey and interview data. Triangulation of survey and interview data corroborated the finding that the majority of teacher participants had experienced change, adaptive change, in curricular, instructional, and assessment practices. With regards to the nature of changes in practice, three themes emerged from teacher's responses. The first theme stems from curriculum. The lack of curriculum, and the need for it, has fueled the demand for a repository of aligned curriculum that has rigor and relevance. The other two themes emanate from instructional practices, with the greatest nature of change reported in critical thinking and in communication and collaboration.

Research question 2. Research Question 2 asked: What are the concerns and challenges faced by teachers as they implement the Common Core State Standards? Survey Questions 4 and 5, and Interview Question 3 were aligned with Research Question 2.

Survey questions 4 and 5. Survey Question 4 asked: What concerns do you have regarding the implementation of the Common Core State Standards? Survey Question 5 asked:

What challenges have you faced while implementing the Common Core State Standards? Table

6 and Table 7 summarize the participant responses.

Table 6

Survey Question Four: Responses for Research Question Two

Survey Question	Total	PVSD	HSD	SJUSD	Sample Comments
	N = 89	*N* = 28	*N* = 6	*N* = 55	
Survey Question 4: What concerns do you have regarding the implementation of the Common Core State Standards? (Mark as many that apply):					
o Limited training	24	9	0	15	NA
o Limited materials/ resources	52	8	2	42	Prior to this year, we did not have materials at our school that applied to the common core standards so teachers had to create all of their lessons from scratch. Now with Springboard we have a common core aligned curriculum, however, some of the lessons are not designed with the thoroughness or complexity that would make them successful lessons. (SJUSD)

Lack of resources, Lack of district support for paid time for curriculum creation, lack of paid time for grading assessments that are now primarily free response and take a tremendous number of hours to grade. When the district did finally adopt a textbook they did not consider a large variety of publishers or take input from the teachers in the classroom, and it is not a very good resource even now that we have one. (SJUSD)

Have been "in it" for a while now. Have a good grasp. Finding great resources, even for NGSS. (HSD) |

Survey Question	Total	PVSD	HSD	SJUSD	Sample Comments
	$N = 89$	$N = 28$	$N = 6$	$N = 55$	
o Limited planning time	55	15	3	37	Teachers need time to plan collaboratively, this is the biggest challenge at my site (PVSD) More teacher time outside of school hours is required to develop regular assessment and CCSS related homework. (SJUSD)
o Limited Leadership support	10	3	1	6	NA
o Uncertainty	14	4	0	10	We are given lots of ideas, but it feels very broad and over whelming. There is not enough time to figure it all out. (SJUSD)
o Value/effectiveness of the Common Core State Standards	9	1	1	7	I feel a lot of what is expected from students is beyond their developmental ability -- especially in math. We are a Title 1 school and the curriculum is especially challenging for below grade-level students and ELLs. (SJUSD)
o Impact on student achievement	19	4	1	14	Common core effectiveness - it may be too early to tell the benefits to student achievement but in my classroom I do think their is a benefit to a greater use of word problems and more emphasis on academic vocabulary and conceptual understanding. (SJUSD)
1. Describe:	28	11	1	16	Less content is covered; emphasis often placed on issues of minor importance in the name of "rigor", "depth" and other buzzwords. (SJUSD) As a music teacher, there are no standards written specifically for my subject area. (PVSD)

Table 7

Survey Question Five: Responses for Research Question Two

Survey Question	Total	PVSD	HSD	SJUSD
	N = 89	*N* = 28	*N* = 6	*N* = 55
Survey Question 5: What challenges have you faced while implementing the Common Core State Standards? Describe below:		Lack of time-curriculum, resources, support, in classroom, for grading (PVSD) Parents!! Many parents are still interested in having Math instruction be purely numbers, no written explanation, nor "Math talks!" (PVSD) Trying to implement new programs at the same time. (PVSD) Lack of clarity over what it looks like when standards are being incorporated effectively for student growth. (PVSD) Understanding what it is & how to apply (PVSD)	Just having time to really dive into each area of the curriculum. (HSD) Takes more time to get a concept across (HSD) Time to master new curriculum (HSD) Newly adopted "Common Core" materials are not really revised or different. (HSD) State tests results still not being received in a timely manner. (HSD) Always hard to change. Getting my Admin Credential was hugely influential to my excitement, understanding of it (where the change came from and why). (HSD)	Initially the largest challenge was to take the standards and develop all of my own materials that align with these objectives. Now the greatest challenge is adjusting to the Spring Board curriculum and finding my own teaching style with these resources. (SJUSD) Lack of resources, Lack of district support for paid time for curriculum creation, lack of paid time for grading assessments that are now primarily free response and take a tremendous number of hours to grade. (SJUSD) Not enough training. (SJUSD) Typical kinks of anything new. It's getting better the longer we're in it. (SJUSD)

In an analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data from Survey Questions 4 and 5 the participants reported three concerns/challenges. The nature of change has been most significant in the need for planning time and materials /resources.

Interview question 3. Interview Question 3 inquired about the experiences of teachers in the implementation of the Common Core State Standards, in terms of whether those experiences were successful or challenging. The interview question stated: "Tell me about your successes/concerns /challenges regarding the implementation of the Common Core State Standards."

Three themes originated from this Interview Question. The first two themes to surface were related to teachers concerns and challenges with planning time and the need for materials. Seven of the nine teachers, or 78% described challenges in the implementation process. Sixty-two percent of teachers were concerned about the need for planning time and 59% attributed the previous lack of materials and current lack of materials and resources as a concern/challenge.

In contrast to the challenges or concerns that have been identified above, a third theme emerged which illustrated that teachers were experiencing success, and have developed an increased sense of efficacy about the shift to the Common Core State Standards. As some teachers described success with the implementation it showed a positive sign that one can experience success and efficacy at this point in the implementation. For example, one teacher reported that in her previous school reading and writing scores went through the roof. She also shared that she has become a better teacher through the shift to the Common Core State Standards.

Triangulation of survey and interview data. Triangulation of survey and interview data revealed three themes and they were: the need for more planning time, the previous lack of and need for materials, and efficacy and success.

Research question 3. Research Question 3 asked: What types of professional development for the Common Core Standards have teachers been offered, and what do they perceive has been the most beneficial? Survey Questions 6 and 7, and Interview Question 4 were aligned with Research Question 3.

Survey questions 6 and 7. Survey Question 6 asked: Identify the type of professional development that you have received on the Common Core State Standards. Survey Question 7 asked: Which type of professional development on the Common Core State Standards do you perceive has been the most beneficial? Table 8 and Table 9 summarize the participant responses for Survey Questions 6 and 7.

Table 8

Survey Question Six: Responses for Research Question Three

Survey Questions	Total	PVSD	HSD	SJUSD	Sample Comments
	N = 89	*N* = 28	*N* = 6	*N* = 55	
Survey Question 6: Identify the type of professional development that you have received on the Common Core State Standards. (Mark as many as apply.)					

(continued)

Survey Questions	Total	PVSD	HSD	SJUSD	Sample Comments
	$N = 89$	$N = 28$	$N = 6$	$N = 55$	
District Training	68	15	5	48	Our district tried to interpret the common core standards and create assessments the very first year. After three years with these assessments they have been abandoned. They do not align well with the state's interpretation of common core based on the end of year state testing and are very time consuming to give and grade. The district should have waited longer until professional resources were available to implement common core. A lot of teacher's man hours were wasted with good intentions but slightly off target efforts. (SJUSD) Excellent training offered by the district after school hours, one-two days before class begins in August (SJUSD)
Site-based training	48	14	5	29	Reader's and Writer's Workshop (PVSD)
District or site coach	39	6	1	32	NA
Collaboration by department, grade level, or cadre/learning community	50	15	5	30	NA
Collaboration with colleague(s) on an informal/sharing basis	54	15	6	32	NA
Online resources (websites, district sites, etc.)	52	15	3	23	Initially I sought out information via webinars, articles, website's. Gradually the district I was in before this one provided resources to share with parents. (PVSD)
Course outside the district (seminars, college/university classes, etc.	25	12	3	10	NA
Describe:	11	5	0	6	Started the credential program when common core was rolling out

Table 9

Survey Question Seven: Responses for Research Question Three

Survey Question	Total	PVSD	HSD	SJUSD	Sample Comments
	$N = 89$	$N = 28$	$N = 6$	$N = 55$	
Survey Question 7: Which type of professional development on the Common Core State Standards do you perceive has been the most beneficial? (Mark all that apply)					
District training	29	4	0	25	I want to hear from the district what they expect. (SJUSD)
Site-based training	22	9	1	12	A challenge is that the administrator sometimes asks for things to be done a different way than the district. (SJUSD)
District or site coach	28	5	0	23	I also enjoy having a coach for RW & WW to help give feedback and model lessons. (PVSD) Instructional coach providing training during all day grade level release time (SJUSD)
Collaboration by department, grade-level, or cadre/learning community	41	8	4	28	It's great working with my grade level to implement and design new units or review new curriculum. (PVSD)
Collaboration with colleague(s) on an informal sharing basis	50	14	4	31	NA
Online resources (websites, district sites, etc.)	17	7	2	8	Webinars were my favorite source; they are easily accessed and can be tailored to my needs/interests. (PVSD) Engage NY Website is very helpful (HSD)
Courses outside of district (seminars, college/university classes, etc.)	17	8	2	7	County level training and Admin Credential (reading Amanda Ripley, etc.) (HSD)
Describe:	9	5	1	3	

The quantitative data revealed that the most frequent type of professional development that had participants received was district training. The quantitative and qualitative survey data revealed that collaboration is the preferred form of professional development.

Interview question 4. Interview Question 4 sought to understand the teacher's perceptions on professional development. The question included the word positive in order to also ascertain what types of professional development are most beneficial and may be recommended in order to facilitate the ongoing implementation of the Common Core State Standards. The question read: "Might you further describe your professional development experiences on the Common Core State Standards, especially those that were positive?"

In the interviews participants identified the types of professional development they had experienced and they were: district training, site training, textbook training, online support training, or training with the instructional coach. While district training represented the primary form of professional development teachers received on the Common Core State Standards, the one that emerged as the most beneficial was collaboration.

All of the teachers interviewed in this study described opportunities for teacher collaboration with those of their own grade level or department, or with a colleague on an informal basis, as being positive professional development experiences. They cited the value of collaborating and planning together. To exemplify this San Jose Teacher #6 refers to a training she went to with teachers of her own grade level when she states: "That's always the best part of any training, meeting other teachers, sharing ideas" (San Jose Teacher #6, personal communication, March 30, 2017). Furthermore, two teachers expressed frustration at district and site trainings that did not include collaboration. They stated that some training's do not address the needs of their grade level or of their school's student population.

Triangulation of survey and interview data. Triangulation of survey and interview data identified the most beneficial type of professional development was reported to be collaboration. Whether it was collaboration with colleague, or collaboration by department, respondents clearly identified collaboration as the single most preferred form of professional development.

Research question 4. Research Question 4 asked: What do teachers still need from their site leadership to make the implementation of the Common Core State Standards successful? Survey Question 8 and Interview Question 5 were aligned with Research Question 4.

Survey question 8. Survey Question 8 asked: What do you still need from your site leadership in order to successfully implement the Common Core State Standards? Table 10 summarizes the participant responses for Survey Question 8.

Table 10

Survey Question Eight: Responses for Research Question Four

Survey Question	Total	PVSD	HSD	SJUSD	Sample Comments
	N = 89	*N* = 28	*N* = 6	*N* = 55	
Survey Question 8: What do you still need from your site leadership in order to successfully implement the Common Core State Standards? (Mark all that apply)					
Shared- decision making	20	5	0	15	NA
Transformational leadership	12	4	1	7	NA
Support and understanding	38	6	1	31	
Technology	17	4	2	11	NA
Training	28	6	1	21	NA

(continued)

Survey Question	Total	PVSD	HSD	SJUSD	Sample Comments
	$N = 89$	$N = 28$	$N = 6$	$N = 55$	
Materials / resources	46	7	2	37	I need curriculum mandated materials to better implement the Common Core Standards. (SJUSD) Flexibility regarding usage of the textbook (SJUSD)
Funding	17	5	1	11	NA
Planning time	63	18	4	41	Blocks of uninterrupted time for core subjects (PVSD) Planning time with colleagues (SJUSD)

The quantitative and qualitative data showed that time, materials, and support and understanding were the top three needs of teachers, in that order. The qualitative data from the survey supported this as well.

Interview question 5. The purpose of Interview Question 5 was to determine what site leadership could do to assist teachers in the ongoing implementation of the Common Core State Standards. The question read: Based on your experience, what can site leadership provide to facilitate the implementation of the Common Core State Standards?

With respect to site leadership the teachers interviewed expressed a need for more site training, as well as support and understanding. San Jose Teacher #2 stated: "I'm going to be honest here…I don't feel that we've gotten the training or support" (San Jose Teacher #2, personal communication, March 30, 2017). Teachers would like the training to be in the form of instructional coaching. Forty-four percent of the teachers state the need for either an administrator who is actively involved in an instructional coaching capacity (not just performing an observation), or in working with a site coach. San Jose Teacher #6 states:

> What really bothers me is when people come in and just observe and they don't step in or
>
> help or anything. I think of coaches like a sports coach would say stuff while you're

doing it, tell you to move here, tell you to do this…whereas my coaching experiences

here is someone watching me and we'll talk about it later…I want some support, I want

some direction, and I want someone to step in. (San Jose Teacher #6, personal

communication, March 30, 2017)

Triangulation of survey and interview data. Triangulation of survey and interview data

corroborated the finding that the majority of teacher participants need site leadership to provide

planning time, materials, support and understanding, and training.

Summary of Key Findings

Research Question 1 sought to discover the nature of change to teaching practices that

may have been experienced as a result of implementing the Common Core State Standards.

Survey responses indicated that the majority of teacher participants changed their practices

greatly or somewhat with regards to curriculum (80%), instruction (72%) and assessment (94%).

The greatest magnitude of change from the survey was reported to be curriculum. Forty-two

percent of participants reported that their curriculum practices had changed greatly. With

regards to the nature of change in curriculum, one theme emerged. Teachers reported that with

the implementation of the Common Core State Standards they need resources and materials, and

still need a curriculum with rigor and relevance. With the quantitative data from the survey and

from the follow-up interviews, two themes surfaced and they both pertained to the area of

instruction. Teachers reported a focus on teaching with 21st century skills. That said, the first

theme was identified as critical thinking, and the second theme was communication

/collaboration.

Research Question 2 sought to discover the concerns and challenges of teachers

associated with the implementation of the Common Core State Standards. Three themes surfaced

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and they were: a need for planning time with colleagues or departments, a need for curriculum, and efficacy and success. The word success was inserted into the interviews in order to determine positive experiences, in addition to concerns and challenges. This encouraged teachers to unveil any positive feelings and/or experiences, or an increasing sense of efficacy about the standards.

Research Question 3 sought to discover the types of professional development that teachers been offered on the Common Core State Standards. The question also sought to determine the most beneficial form(s) of professional development from the teacher's point of view. Teachers selected the types of trainings they received as: district training, site-based training, district or site coach, collaboration by department, grade level or cadre/learning community, collaboration(s) on an informal/sharing basis, online resources, and courses outside the district. The overwhelming majority of teachers reported the most frequent type of training was district training. Despite the frequency of district training, collaboration proved to be the one form of professional development that teachers deemed most beneficial.

Research Question 4 sought to identify what teachers still need from their site leadership in order to successfully implement the Common Core State Standards. Participants identified their needs as time, materials, support, understanding, and training.

To conclude this summary of the key findings, each of the four research questions the implementation to the Common Core State Standards. Questions were asked of the teachers who chose to participate in the surveys, and also those who agreed to participate in the interview phase. From those surveys and interviews the identified themes will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Chapter 5 presents an analysis of the key findings for the study T*eacher Insight: The Implementation of the Common Core State Standards in California School Districts*. The chapter begins with the study problem and purpose, followed by the research questions and an overview of the methodology. The chapter continues with a discussion of findings, conclusions, recommendations for policy/practice and further study, and it concludes with a summary of the study.

The Study Problem

The American education system has been going through a reform from the inception of the Common Core State Standards (Luna et al., 2014). This initiative was extolled as an opportunity to revolutionize the education system and support student achievement for all students (Duncan, 2012).

The Common Core State Standards began as a call to action in 2009 from the National Governors Association and Council of Chief State School Officers (Marrongelle et al., 2013; Sabo, 2014; The Center for Public Education, 2014). The call for change was based on the fact that America is now part of a global economy and needs a workforce that can be competitive (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). As a result, the Common Core State Standards were designed to educate students with specific skills that were delineated at each grade level to prepare them for college, and they were integrated with 21st century skills to ready students for the global workforce as well (California Department of Education, 2014). Educators were given the responsibility of facilitating the desired skills and knowledge for a 21st century education (Lave & Wenger, 2014).

In order to implement this initiative nationwide state governors were told that they had to adopt the standards in order to qualify for federal funding (Fletcher, 2010). California adopted the Common Core State Standards in 2010 and mandated that school districts be in full implementation by the 2014-2015 school year (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2014). California school districts transitioned at different rates and it was stated that the process would continue at different rates well past 2014-2015 (Warren & Murphy, 2014). This study *Teacher Insight: The Implementation of the Common Core State Standards in California School Districts* sought to examine the implementation of the Common Core State Standards in California School District. The study was designed to investigate the implementation through the experiences of teachers. The literature review substantiated the need to investigate the Common Core State Standards experiences of teachers (Loveless, 2014).

Michael Fullan, an educational researcher in Canada and the former Dean of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, advocates for the collective capacity across schools as a change imperative for large-scale reform. The researcher was inspired by Fullan's (2010) assertion that a collective capacity was essential and by Loveless' (2014) recommendation that teacher's experiences be investigated in the shift to the Common Core State Standards. Therefore, this study explored the initiative from the teacher's point of view, with the objective of gleaning insight that could facilitate the ongoing implementation.

Study Purpose

The purpose of this sequential explanatory mixed methods study was fourfold: to determine how the implementation of the Common Core State Standards is changing teacher practices related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment; to investigate the concerns and challenges faced by teachers as they implement the Common Core State Standards; to determine

the professional development teachers have been offered, and what they perceive has been most beneficial; and to determine what teachers still need from their site leadership to make the implementation of the Common Core State Standards successful.

Research Questions

The study addressed the following four research questions:

1. How, if at all, has the implementation of the Common Core State Standards changed teacher practices related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment?

2. What are the concerns and challenges faced by teachers as they implement the Common Core State Standards?

3. What types of professional development for the Common Core Standards have teachers been offered, and what do they perceive has been the most beneficial?

4. What do teachers still need from their site leadership to make the implementation of the Common Core State Standards successful?

Methodology Overview

The sequential explanatory mixed-methods study was conducted with 89 teachers who were surveyed and nine teachers who participated in an additional optional follow up interview. The participants in the study were all classroom teachers in the public school system in California, and had been involved in the implementation of the Common Core State Standards. Participants were employed in one of three school districts at various K-12 grades at the elementary, middle or high school levels. The survey and interview data were collected between November 2016 and March 2017.

Creswell (2014) explains this sequential explanatory mixed-methods design as one that has two instruments performed sequentially, with the first being quantitative and the second

being qualitative. In this way the qualitative research builds upon the quantitative research, with the intention of explaining the initial data. For this specific sequential research study the first phase was a survey and the second phase was an interview. Therefore, this two-phase methodology involved a sequence of information gathering using different methods, in order to collect a variety of data.

Discussion of Findings

This study *Teacher Insight: The Implementation of the Common Core State Standards in California School Districts* was designed to ascertain teacher voice in the form of an electronic survey, and phone or face-to-face interviews. All of the teachers who participated had been involved in the implementation of the Common Core State Standards. The researcher sought to discover the experiences of the teachers, as they are integral to the ongoing implementation of the standards. The study was conducted in several California school districts in order to compare the teacher's experiences in districts of different sizes and demographics.

Research question 1. Research Question 1 asked: How, if at all, has the implementation of the Common Core State Standards changed teacher practices related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment? Three themes emerged from analysis of study data related to research question one that teacher's practices have changed significantly as a result of the Common Core State Standards and they are: rigor and relevance, critical thinking, as well as communication and collaboration.

Rigor and relevance. Initially, when the implementation of the Common Core State Standards began there was an urgency for common core aligned curriculum. With little curriculum that could meet the new standards in the full implementation year of 2014-2015, teachers experienced the challenge of creating materials at breakneck speeds (Hess & McShane,

2013). Participants described what it was like for them to implement the new standards without a curriculum in place. "That first year when we were doing that it was pretty confusing and frustrating, because we just didn't have the resources" (San Jose Teacher #4, personal communication, March 30, 2017). The lack of resources was against the recommendation of the National Governors Association for Best Practices, which states that to be effective the Common Core State Standards must "be complimented by a well-developed, content-rich curriculum" (DiGisi, 2013, p. 12).

Participants asserted that even though common core curriculum became more plentiful, challenges remain. In the survey respondents stated a need for aligned curriculum that had both rigor and relevance, as the new standards require curriculum that includes rigor and relevant or real world problems. The literature supports this as Chong and Kong (2012) assert that to achieve this goal relevant and rigorous common core lessons must be designed to foster these qualities.

Critical thinking. The Partnership for 21st Century Learning (2015) cited critical thinking as one of the four components of a 21st century education. The other three were communication, collaboration and creativity.

The Common Core State Standards incorporate critical thinking and problem solving which means that instruction and assessment strategies needed to change along with the standards (Moser, 2015). From the beginning Bill and Melinda Gates, through their foundation, were proponents and supporters of the standards, and one reason for that, in their view, was the need for teachers to develop the practice of engaging students. They felt the way to do that was through the use of higher-order critical thinking skills as it "is a capacity building process, without question" (Sawchuk, 2012, p. 16).

The assertion that higher order thinking skills are a capacity building process parallels the study findings as teachers are involved in developing that capacity. Participants stated that using critical thinking skills was a huge shift in their instruction. In the study respondents said they now focus on in-depth questioning, having students use multiple strategies, or justifying their answers for example. As one respondent explained, "Curriculum - more rigorous, different standards learned...instill more critical thinking...less memorization. Instruction: more student-led, more of a collaboration and communication time" (Hope Elementary Teacher #1, personal communication, February 2, 2017).

Communication and collaboration. The Partnership for 21st Century Learning (2015) lists communication and collaboration as two of the four components in a 21st century education, the Common Core State Standards included these 21st century skills. The organization advocates for students to articulate, listen, communicate in a variety of ways, collaborate in diverse environments, be flexible and take responsibility for themselves. These principles were incorporated into the standards.

In the study teachers reported that they emphasized communication and collaboration in their lessons in order to meet the standards. They provide instruction with the objective of having students explain their answers, debate concepts, and discuss text to name a few. They reported having students use more verbal skills, which also enables them to collaborate with others. The literature supports the fact that teachers are now asked to rethink long-standing instructional strategies and provide new delivery techniques (DiGisi, 2013; Sawchuk, 2012; Wilhoit, 2012).

Research question 2. Research Question 2 asked: What are the concerns and challenges faced by teachers as they implement the Common Core State Standards? Three themes came forth upon analysis of the study data related to research question two. The three identified themes

were: the need for more planning time, the previous lack of and current need for materials, and efficacy and success.

Planning time. In this study teachers reported the need for time to collaborate with each other, in order to reduce their own stress and save time outside of school. This finding was indicative of how teachers were frustrated at spending so much of their own time looking for materials. One participant explained that more teacher time outside of school hours is required to develop regular assessment and Common Core State Standards related homework. Yet another participant said that for her having more collaboration time would signify "…not staying up until one in the morning" (San Jose Teacher #4, personal communication, March 30, 2017).

A repository of curriculum. The literature states that the transition to the Common Core State Standards impacts almost every public school in America in terms of curriculum, instruction, and assessment (Marrongelle et al., 2013). That said; the second largest concern that teachers reported this study was a need for curriculum and materials. Even though curriculum has become more plentiful teachers still reported a need for more. As one participant said, "I need curriculum mandated materials to better implement the Common Core Standards" (Anonymous, personal communication, March 30, 2017). Another teacher stated, "The first two years we taught common core standards, our school district did not provide any resources. We had to interpret the standards ourselves and create worksheets every day, essentially creating our own textbook" (San Jose Teacher #1, personal communication, March 30, 2017). The implication of this was that it is essential for teachers to receive the curriculum they need in for the implementation to be successful.

Efficacy and success. From this study evidence showed that some participants reported feeling a sense of efficacy and success with the implementation of the Common Core State

Standards. One respondent said, "Overall, I would say it has been a positive experience working with standards" (San Jose Teacher #1, personal communication, March 30, 2017). Another participant said,

> Now I feel like we have a curriculum piece and we can be successful. It's not perfect, I'll say that. There are still things we need, but we're going in a better direction than two years ago, that's for sure. (San Jose Teacher #4, personal communication, March 30, 2017)

A math teacher stated she has seen, "Success! Overall kids' reading and writing scores went through the roof. I became a better teacher" (San Jose Teacher #2, personal communication, March 30, 2017).

Guskey's (2002) Model of Teacher Change explains that feelings of satisfaction develop as teachers see a positive impact in the classroom. Guskey (2002) asserts that as teachers observe positive student outcomes it correlates with changes in instructional practice. Additionally, the Model of Teacher Change also advocates for the importance of providing people with support and understanding in a change. The logic behind this is that giving people support will facilitate the change initiative and success (Guskey, 2002). The implication of this finding is that teacher's concerns, challenges and positivity can influence an implementation. These needs may be unseen to administrators, but they are influencing the success of the common core. For that reason it is imperative that site administrators survey their staff to find out how they feel about the implementation. With the results the administrator can provide the support and understanding, and facilitate the implementation.

Research question 3. Research Question 3 asked: What types of professional development for the Common Core Standards have teachers been offered, and what do they

perceive has been the most beneficial? When it comes to effective professional development this study found that collaboration is the preferred type. Survey participants chose collaboration as the most beneficial form even when compared to district training, which was listed as the most common form of professional development.

Collaboration. Collaboration was the preferred type of professional development, whether or not it was done on an informal basis with a colleague, or in a group with one's team/department/grade level. As a result collaboration was deemed the best form of a professional development given a range of choices. The literature shows that collaboration is effective because it is a strategy for knowledge sharing, it promotes innovation within organizations, and it develops social capital (Lave & Wenger, 2014).

Participants stated that collaboration requires planning time, and for that reason they advocate for release/planning time, whether it is by department, grade level, or across grade levels. One elementary teacher said, "It's great working with my grade level to implement and design new units or review new curriculum" (Portola Valley Teacher #4, personal communication, March 30, 2017). The participants did not suggest that planning time be on their own, rather it was in conjunction with collaborating with colleagues informally or formally.

That participants chose collaboration as their preferred type of professional development can have implications for districts as they make decisions on training. This finding supports the importance of collaboration as a professional development strategy, and that teacher's value collaborative planning time.

Research question 4. Research Question 4 asked: What do teachers still need from their site leadership to make the implementation of the Common Core State Standards successful? Respondents stated the need for four items from their site leadership and they were: planning

time, materials and resources, support and understanding and training. Leadership at the site level is a powerful quality, and as a result leadership is important to facilitate success. The implication is that teachers see site leaders as having the power to support the four needs stated above.

Planning time. As stated above in the findings regarding professional development, teachers need planning time from their site leaders in order to plan and collaborate. One middle school science teacher stated, "Teachers need time to plan collaboratively. This is the biggest challenge at my site" (Anonymous, personal communication, March 30, 2017). It is important to note here that the literature states that if planning time is a concern to teacher they may have an issue with management, or develop a genuine dislike of the change at hand (Stear, 2013). The implication here is that teacher's need planning time built into their day, and this can facilitate the implementation of the Common Core State Standards.

Materials and resources. In this study 52% of teachers stated the need for their site leaders to provide curriculum, materials and resources. One teacher said she needs her site administrator to assist with "…more support materials needed for differentiation" (San Jose Teacher #2, personal communication, March 30, 2017). Materials include various things, but can include technology as well. Twenty percent of respondents stated technology as a need. Teachers need technology to obtain online curriculum, which can facilitate instructional practices (Ash, 2011; DiGisi, 2013; Fletcher, 2012).

The use of technology in the classroom is referred to as digital literacy in the Common Core State Standards (Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2015). The implication here is that technology needs to be a priority for site administrators, as digital literacy is a component of the common core standards for students.

Support and understanding. Teachers need site administrators to demonstrate support and understanding. This was illustrated when one middle school Math teacher shared, "I'm going to be honest here. In my current district I don't feel we've gotten the training or support" (San Jose Teacher #2, personal communication, March 30, 2017).

The Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM) explains why people need support and understanding in an implementation, and it discusses the importance of how people respond to change (Khoboli & O'Toole, 2011; Kwok, 2012; Loucks-Horsely, 2005; Posnick-Goodwin, 2014; Walker & Carr-Stewart, 2006). The strength of this model is that it focuses on an individuals need for skills, information, and moral support (SEDL, 2015). Through the seven stages of the CBAM model it is premised upon the idea that people evolve as they learn and gain pedagogical knowledge (SEDL, 2015). This model supports the finding that emotions are inherent in the implementation to the Common Core State Standards. The implication here is that site administrators can be a powerful influence on the implementation by giving teachers support and understanding.

Training. In the study, participants identified training as a need from their site administrators. Instructional coaching was cited as a preferred method of training. In fact 44% of respondents stated they would like instructional coaching, either from their site coach or from their site administrator. One participant stated, "I also enjoy having a coach… to give feedback and model lessons" (Anonymous, personal communication, March 30, 2017). Because both types of coaching are under the control of the site administrator, he/she has the ability to fulfill this need.

The fact that teachers want instructional coaching from their site administrator is based on Bandera's Theory of Social Cognition. The theory stipulates that there are several ways

efficacy can be developed (Chong & Kong, 2012). For a teacher to have a sense of self-efficacy one must achieve mastery; second, guidance and resources must be available; third, coaching and modeling are essential; and fourth, there must be a positive physiological state, free of stress or anxiety (Chong & Kong, 2012).

The need for coaching is evidenced by the literature in that coaching and modeling are important for one to build self-efficacy. The implication here is that teachers are seeking self-efficacy, and that site leadership can provide the coaching to facilitate efficacy.

Conclusions

Four conclusions resulted from the data analysis in this study. The conclusions are derived from the study findings and discussion that correlate to the research questions. These conclusions were gleaned from the survey and interview responses, along with literature that authenticates the study findings.

Teacher practices. Implementation of the Common Core State Standards has changed teacher practices due to the fact that teachers have been challenged with providing instruction of the new academic standards in tandem with the 21st century skills that were infused into them. Learning to combine those 21st century skills (critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity) with the Common Core State Standards was cited as a challenge of participants in the study. Evidence from the study supports this conclusion, as the respondents stated having to incorporate critical thinking (depth of knowledge) communication (students explaining their answers, etc.) and collaboration (group work) with the Common Core State Standards. The literature corroborates the conclusion as it states the importance of teachers developing the 21st century skills in instruction, while simultaneously teaching content knowledge (Alismail &

McGuire, 2015). Additionally, Lave and Wenger (2014) state that teachers are instrumental in facilitating the knowledge and skills for a 21st century education.

Concerns and challenges. Implementation of the Common Core State Standards has generated concerns and challenges for teachers as they began the implementation without the necessary curriculum/resources, or the planning time to design lessons for instruction. In the study respondents stated their concerns about the implementation; 58% cited limited planning time, and 62% said they had limited materials and resources. The literature supports the view that teachers will have concerns and challenges if there is a lack of resources, insufficient planning time, issues with management, or genuine dislike of the change (Stear, 2013). Additionally, teachers can feel the pressure of incorporating new skills in an environment of accountability and high expectations (Hunzicker, 2012).

Professional development. Collaboration is perceived by the teachers responsible for the implementation of the Common Core State Standards as the most beneficial means of professional development for successfully implementing the Common Corse State Standards, and collaboration is prompting a shift in school culture from accountability to continuous learning. Implementation of the Common Core State Standards requires effective professional development in order to promote success, and those teachers responsible for the implementation state that collaboration is the most beneficial form of professional development. Whether it was collaboration with colleagues on an informal sharing basis, or with a department, team or grade level, teachers prefer collaboration to other types of professional development. 57% of survey respondents ranked collaboration with a colleague on an informal sharing basis as beneficial and 46% chose collaboration with their department or team as beneficial also. In a triangulation of survey and interview data, respondents in this study identified collaboration as the most

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beneficial type of professional development. The literature supports the preference for a collaborative environment. Lave and Wenger (2014), and Tseng and Kuo (2013) explain that when participants come together for a common purpose they learn from each other, and develop a repertoire of experiences and tools that can be shared.

According to Lave and Wenger (2014) collaboration is a strategy for knowledge sharing, it encourages innovation within organizations, and it develops social capital (Lave & Wenger, 2014). Social capital, or relationship building that occurs through collaboration, is explained by the Social Capital Theory, which postulates that interpersonal relationships strengthen efficacy as they involve a pro-social tendency (Tseng & Kuo, 2013). As a result, collaboration can generate the sharing of knowledge, build efficacy, capacity, and stimulate innovation. This desire to collaborate reflects a shift from accountability to a culture of learning.

Linda Lambert (2002), in *A Framework for Shared Leadership* explains that generating shared knowledge can become an energy force in a school, whereby teachers, parents and administrators can build their capacity by participating in a culture of learning for knowledge and skills. Through this collaborative process Lambert (2002) asserts that a collective responsibility instills a sense of responsibility for one another. This capacity building process is analogous to Fullan's (2010), premise as he surmises the importance of a collective capacity in a large-scale reform.

Teacher needs from site leadership. Implementation of the Common Core State Standards has identified the resources teacher's need from their site leadership, namely: planning time, materials and resources, and support and training. In the survey, 71% of respondents stated they would like their site leaders to provide planning time, 52% would like more resources, 43% want site leaders to give them support and understanding, and 31% want site leadership to

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provide training. Triangulation of survey and interview data confirmed that teachers have these four needs. That teachers are looking to their site leadership to provide these resources speaks to the fact that leadership at the site level is a salient quality in the implementation of the Common Core State Standards.

Additionally, Pink (2009) argues that leaders need to be cognizant of anything that could be inferred as a disturbance as these can create emotional reactions or a turbulent environment. Hence, addressing the needs of teachers will enable site leadership to avoid turbulence and provide support, and ultimately, facilitate change.

Recommendations

Four recommendations have resulted from this study:

1. First, it is recommended that school districts in California continue to support teachers with professional development in the ongoing implementation of the Common Core State Standards. However, training needs to be specific to the 21st century skills of critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity. As the 21st century skills are intrinsically linked to the success of the standards, it is essential that teachers receive professional development on how to instruct with the skills. In this study respondents cite the nature of change in instruction due to the infusion of 21st century skills. Additionally, research shows that a 21st century education represents a new paradigm in the educational reform movement, as it is designed to be experiential as well as content-based (Lave & Wenger, 2014). Teaching the skills requires teachers to incorporate new strategies into their repertoire, as there is no one size fits all approach to teaching with 21st century skills (Alismail & McGuire, 2015). Since 21st century skills represent a

new paradigm, districts must require the recommended training on the Common Core State Standards with 21st century skills (Lave & Wenger, 2014). Lastly, follow-up assessment(s) are recommended for the success of the Common Core State Standards, as they are deemed critical to the standards' long-term success (Essawi, 2012; Porter et al., 2015).

2. Second, it is recommended that school district leaders allocate financial resources to include materials and resources that have both rigor and relevance. The primary reason for this is that the Common Core State Standards have more rigor than previous ones. In a study of school districts that adopted the Common Core State Standards, three-fifths of the districts concurred that the standards were indeed more rigorous (Overturf, 2011). In this particular study teachers asserted the need for both rigor and relevance in the curriculum. This is important because critical thinking is a component of the standards, and it contains rigor and challenge (The Whole Child, 2015). The literature supports this conclusion as Chong and Kong (2012) state that to achieve success with the standards rigorous and relevant common core lessons must be created to develop these qualities.

3. Third, it is recommended that collaboration be a primary form of professional development utilized by California school districts as teachers state that this is the most beneficial form of professional development. In this study, a triangulation of survey and interviews revealed that respondents preferred collaboration with colleagues or in groups as they found the ability to share ideas and materials was invaluable. The literature reflects that teachers prefer a collaborative environment that emphasizes relationships as opposed to a top-down (Shapiro & Gross, 2013).

Districts can take note that collaboration is an effective professional development strategy. In order for a collaborative learning structure to be effective, it must be tied to one's practice, be ongoing and intensive, and inspire strong working relationships among the participants (Swan et al., 2014; Tseng & Kuo, 2013). The Stanford Redesign Program recommends for a collaborative approach as it shifts away from accountability and a move toward a culture of learning (McLester, 2012). According to Davis (2012), a collaborative learning culture is a school community in which everyone feels he or she can learn from one another. Districts will benefit from utilizing collaboration as it promotes knowledge sharing, social capital, innovation, efficacy, responsibility and a collective capacity (Fullan, 2010; Lambert, 2002; Lave & Wenger, 2014; Tseng & Kuo, 2013).

4. Fourth, it is recommended that site leaders address the needs of teachers by providing them with the following resources: planning time, materials, support and understanding, and training. Evidence from the study shows that teachers from the three school districts who participated in this study rank the above resources as their four most important needs, with planning time the number one need. The study also reveals that teachers want planning time in order to plan collaboratively with their colleagues or as a department. With a symbiotic relationship between planning time and collaboration leaders can provide both at the same time. Additionally, it is advised that site leaders survey teachers to assess the specific needs for materials, support and understanding or training in order to prioritize them. The literature supports the importance of site leadership

responsiveness to teachers' concerns and challenges that may include: a lack of resources, insufficient planning time, issues with management, or genuine dislike of the change (Stear, 2013). School leaders must recognize that teachers have the pressure of incorporating new skills in an educational climate of accountability and high standards (Hunzicker, 2012). By administering a needs assessment and working to provide the resources site leadership can facilitate the implementation of the Common Core State Standards.

Recommendations for Further Study

This research study began as the implementation of the Common Core State Standards was in the works, but had not yet begun. With the full implementation to begin in the 2014-2015 school year, the study was designed to address a completely new initiative. At the time there was little research on the standards. At present, 2016-2017, California is in the third year of the shift to the Common Core State Standards. With the findings from this study the researcher has three recommendations for further study and they are:

1. This study concentrated on three school districts of different demographics in California. Further study could broaden the scope to an even larger sample size, or to districts in another state to verify if the results are consistent with those in this study.

2. This study focused on the implementation from the teacher's point of view. Further study could examine the implementation of the Common Core State Standards from the point of view of site administrators.

3. This study was completed in the 2016-2017 school year. Further study could determine the concerns, challenges or successes in several more years after the implementation has been in place longer.

Summary

This study *Teacher Insight: The Implementation of the Common Core State Standards in California School Districts* set out to assess the implementation of the Common Core State Standards from the teacher's point of view. Before the study commenced, the researcher discovered literature that stated teacher feedback was lacking on the implementation of the Common Core State Standards, and this could be valuable to the success of the standards (Loveless, 2014). Therefore, this study sought to obtain the teacher perspective on the implementation to the Common Core State Standards. The literature supports the concept of teacher voice as it stated that teacher participation is critical to the implementation of the Common Core State Standards (Albuquerque Teachers Federation, 2012; Ledesma, 2012). The importance of the Common Core State Standards cannot be underestimated. Since the standards were designed to prepare students for a postsecondary education, be competitive in a global economy, learn specific skills at each grade level, and possess the four essential skills for a 21st century education the implementation is important (Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2015). To support this, Muhammad (2009) is adamant that education is more essential than ever before as foreign competition, paired with a global workforce and technological society is the norm.

The study used a sequential mixed methods research design in which the researcher performed both surveys and interviews to glean the data. Participants included teachers from

three California school districts. With 89 teachers surveyed and nine teachers interviewed, the researcher evaluated the data for themes and stated the key findings.

In preparation for writing this summary the researcher re-examined the literature review found in Chapter 2 of this study. In doing so an interesting discovery was made. The California Teachers Association did a study several years ago which cited that more than half of the respondents surveyed gave the implementation a very low rating due to unmet needs for collaboration time, training, materials, and technology (Hess & McShane, 2013). Therefore, the findings from that study largely correlate, as the first three findings from CTA surfaced in this study as well. As a result, the findings from this study are similar and supported by another study.

While the National Governors Association was instrumental in the genesis of the standards, it is ironic that California schools started the implementation without an established curriculum to meet the recommendation of the National Governors Association. The deficit of available curriculum at the onset of the implementation contradicts the recommendation of the National Governors Association for Best Practices, which states that to be effective the Common Core State Standards must "be complimented by a well-developed, content-rich curriculum" (DiGisi, 2013, p. 12). "That first year when we were doing that it was pretty confusing and frustrating, because we just didn't have the resources" (San Jose Teacher #4, personal communication, March 30, 2017). Had the recommendation been followed, the implementation may have taken a different course. This study reinforces the National Governors Association that the standards have a high quality curriculum to support the standards.

This study compared three different districts on the basis of size and demographics. The San Jose Unified School District is a large urban district in a major metropolitan city in Northern

California. The Portola Valley School District is a small school district, near Palo Alto/Stanford University in an affluent area of Northern California. The Hope Elementary School District is also a small school district located in Santa Barbara, which is in Southern California.

In comparing the teacher voices of the three school districts there were some noticeable differences found in the data that could reflect the size of the district, the socioeconomic/funding type of the district, or the values /philosophies of a district. With respect to funding it is important to note that Portola Valley School District (PVSD) is considered a Basic Aid district, which means they get their monies from property taxes. The San Jose Unified School District (SJUSD) and the Hope Elementary School District (HESD) are funded by student enrollment.

In conclusion, teachers from the three districts expressed their views on the implementation of the Common Core State Standards. The participants in this study are like many teachers nationwide, who are on the front lines of the implementation. The teachers in the classroom have the responsibility of implementing the standards. As Fullan (2010) states, the collective capacity is required for a whole school reform. That said, the collective capacity must include the voices of teachers in order to facilitate the implementation of the Common Core State Standards.

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APPENDIX A

Introduction Letter to the School Districts

Welcome!

Your district is being asked to participate in a research study regarding the Common Core State Standards conducted by Catherine Bagan. I am a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership Program at Pepperdine University, and my dissertation chair is Dr. Linda Purrington. Results from this study will contribute to research being gathered for my dissertation entitled: Teacher Insight: The Implementation of the Common Core State Standards in California School Districts. Your district was chosen because I am selecting school districts of various sizes in California.

> The purpose of this Sequential Explanatory Mixed Methods study is fourfold:
> 1. To determine how the implementation of the Common Core State Standards is changing teacher practices related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment;
> 2. To investigate the concerns and challenges faced by teachers as they implement the Common Core State Standards;
> 3. To determine what type of professional development teachers have been offered and what they perceive has been the most beneficial; and
> 4. To determine what teachers still need from their site leadership to make the implementation of the Common Core State Standards successful. Additionally, the study will examine teacher responses from districts of varying sizes.

There are two phases in this study in which your teachers can participate:

1. The first phase is an electronic survey with 10 questions.
2. The second phase is an optional 10-15 minute follow-up interview with five questions. Teacher participation will provide deeper insight into the implementation of the Common Core State Standards.

The researcher has completed the Collaborative Training Initiative (CITI) for human subject training. I am requesting the district send two e-mails to its teachers:

1. The first e-mail will begin the study. It will have an introductory letter with a link to the electronic survey.
2. The second e-mail will be sent a week later and serve as a reminder e-mail, again with the introductory letter with a link to the electronic survey.

I have attached a copy of the introductory letter to the teachers, a copy of the survey questions, and a copy of the interview questions. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Catherine Bagan

APPENDIX B

Training via the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI)

COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COURSEWORK TRANSCRIPT REPORT**

** NOTE: Scores on this Transcript Report reflect the most current quiz completions, including quizzes on optional (supplemental) elements of the course. See list below for details. See separate Requirements Report for the reported scores at the time all requirements for the course were met.

- **Name:** catherine bagan (ID: 5499862)
- **Email:** cabagan@pepperdine.edu
- **Institution Affiliation:** Pepperdine University (ID: 1729)
- **Institution Unit:** education
- **Phone:** 408-805-2763

- **Curriculum Group:** GSEP Education Division
- **Course Learner Group:** GSEP Education Division - Social-Behavioral-Educational (SBE)
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course

- **Report ID:** 19245236
- **Report Date:** 04/24/2016
- **Current Score**:** 88

REQUIRED, ELECTIVE, AND SUPPLEMENTAL MODULES	MOST RECENT	SCORE
History and Ethical Principles - SBE (ID: 490)	04/11/16	5/5 (100%)
Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE (ID: 491)	04/11/16	5/5 (100%)
Belmont Report and CITI Course Introduction (ID: 1127)	04/11/16	3/3 (100%)
The Federal Regulations - SBE (ID: 502)	04/11/16	4/5 (80%)
Assessing Risk - SBE (ID: 503)	04/11/16	4/5 (80%)
Informed Consent - SBE (ID: 504)	04/11/16	4/5 (80%)
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE (ID: 505)	04/11/16	4/5 (80%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

CITI Program
Email: citisupport@miami.edu
Phone: 305-243-7970
Web: https://www.citiprogram.org

APPENDIX C

IRB Approval Letter

PEPPERDINE

Pepperdine University
24255 Pacific Coast Highway
Malibu, CA 90263
TEL: 310-506-4000

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

Date: November 03, 2016

Protocol Investigator Name: Catherine Bagan

Protocol #: 16-04-243

Project Title: Teacher Insight: The Implementation of the Common Core State Standards in California School Districts

School: Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Dear Catherine Bagan:

Thank you for submitting your application for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). We appreciate the work you have done on your 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 46.101 that govern the protections of human subjects.

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 an amendment to the IRB. Since 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 IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite the 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 IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete written explanation of the event and your written 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 IRB and documenting the adverse event can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* at community.pepperdine.edu/irb.

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all communication or correspondence related to your application and this approval. Should you have additional questions or require clarification of the contents of this letter, please contact the IRB Office. On behalf of the IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

Judy Ho, Ph.D., IRB Chair

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APPENDIX D

Introduction Letter to the Teachers

Welcome!

You are being asked to participate in a research study regarding the Common Core State Standards conducted by Catherine Bagan. I am a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership Program at Pepperdine University, and my dissertation chair is Dr. Linda Purrington. Results from this study will contribute to research being gathered for my dissertation entitled: Teacher Insight: The Implementation of the Common Core State Standards in California School Districts. Participation in this research study will be strictly voluntary. Your district was chosen because I am selecting school districts of various sizes in California.

The purpose of this Sequential Explanatory Mixed Methods study is fourfold: to determine how the implementation of the Common Core State Standards is changing teacher practices related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment; to investigate the concerns and challenges faced by teachers as they implement the Common Core State Standards; to determine what type of professional development teachers have been offered and what they perceive has been the most beneficial; and to determine what teachers still need from their site leadership to make the implementation of the Common Core State Standards successful. Additionally, the study will examine teacher responses from districts of varying sizes.

There are two phases in this study in which you can participate:

1. The first phase is an electronic survey with 10 questions. Participation in the survey is completely anonymous, as no identifying information will be collected. To participate in the survey, please click on the link below. Clicking on the link indicates your consent to participate in the survey.

2. The second phase is an optional 10-15 minute follow-up interview with five questions. Your participation will provide deeper insight into the implementation of the Common Core State Standards. Your contact information for the interview will be requested so the researcher can interview you via phone, face-to-face, or electronically. Providing your contact information will indicate your consent to participate in the interview.

The researcher has completed the Collaborative Training Initiative (CITI) for human subject training. If at any time during the survey you feel uncomfortable, you may terminate your participation. Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey!

Sincerely,
Catherine Bagan

Please click on this link to participate in the survey:

LINK…………

APPENDIX E

Survey Questions

Demographic:
1. How many total years have you been teaching?
  o 0 to 5
  o 6 to 10
  o 11 to 15
  o 16 to 20
  o 21 or more

2. How many total years have you been implementing the Common Core State Standards?

  o 1
  o 2
  o 3
  o 4
  o 5+

Teacher Experiences and Perceptions:
3. How, if at all, have your practices changed during the implementation of the Common Core State Standards as related to:

  a) Curriculum
      Greatly   Somewhat   Very little   Not at all

    Describe:
    _____
    _____

  b) Instruction
      Greatly   Somewhat   Very little   Not at all

     Describe:
    _____
    _____

  c) Assessment
      Greatly   Somewhat   Very little   Not at all

     Describe:
    _____
    _____

4. What concerns do you have regarding the implementation of the Common Core
   State Standards? (Mark as many as apply)
   - o Limited training
   - o Limited materials/resources
   - o Limited planning time
   - o Limited leadership support
   - o Uncertainty
   - o Value/effectiveness of the Common Core State Standards
   - o Impact on student achievement

   Describe:
   _____
   _____

5. What challenges have you faced while implementing the Common Core State
   Standards?

   Describe:
   _____
   _____

6. Identify the types of professional development that you have received on
   the Common Core State Standards. (Mark as many as apply)

   - o District training
   - o Site-based training
   - o District or site coach
   - o Collaboration by department, grade-level, or cadre/learning community
   - o Collaboration with colleague(s) on an informal/sharing basis
   - o Online resources (websites, district sites, etc.)
   - o Courses outside the district (seminars, college/university classes, etc.)

   Describe:
   _____
   _____

7. Which type of professional development on the Common Core State Standards do
   you perceive has been the most beneficial? (Mark all that apply)

   - o District training
   - o Site-based training
   - o District or site coach
   - o Collaboration by department, grade-level, or cadre/learning community
   - o Collaboration with colleague(s) on an informal/sharing basis
   - o Online resources (websites, district sites, etc.)
   - o Courses outside of district (seminars, college/university classes, etc.)

Describe:

_____

_____

8. What do you still need from your site leadership in order to successfully implement the Common Core State Standards? (Mark all that apply)

- o Shared decision-making
- o Transformational leadership
- o Support and understanding
- o Technology
- o Training
- o Materials/resources
- o Funding
- o Planning time
- o Other: _____

Describe:

_____

_____

Additional Questions:

9. Would you be willing to participate in a 10–15 minute telephone follow-up interview?

- o Yes (Respondent continues)
- o No (Respondent continues to researcher closing comments)

If You Would Be Willing to Participate in a Telephone Interview:

10. When would you prefer to be contacted?

Best Days of the Week: _____

Best Times of Day: _____

Name: _____

Phone Number: (_____)

_____

E-mail: _____

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study. If you are interested in obtaining a copy of the final results or have any questions for the researcher, you may contact her.

APPENDIX F

Interview Protocol and Questions

Date of Interview:

Teacher is identified in code such as P1, P2, P3, etc.

Length of Interview: Beginning time _____ Ending time:_____

Format of Interview: Phone _____ / Face-to-Face_____ / Electronic _____

Script and questions for the phase two follow-up interviews:

Before we begin the interview, let me first thank you for your time. I know how busy you are. You are one of _____ who agreed to be interviewed. This interview is intended to provide a deeper understanding of teacher insights into the implementation of the Common Core State Standards in California school districts. To begin, I would like to ascertain your eligibility to be interviewed:

Are you a teacher who has been involved in the implementation of the Common Core State Standards for at least 1 year? _____

I will keep all interviews confidential. I will take notes during the interview. Do I have your permission to audio record this interview? (The audio will be transcribed and analyzed.)_____

I have only five interview questions for you, and I want you to know there are no right or wrong answers. Do you have any questions before we begin? _____

The Interview Questions

1. Tell me what grade level/subject area you teach, and about your experience with the Common Core State Standards.

2. Tell me more about any changes related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment you made to your classroom practices due to the Common Core State Standards.

3. Tell me about your successes / concerns / challenges regarding the implementation of the Common Core State Standards.

4. Might you further describe your professional development experiences on the Common Core State Standards, especially those that were positive?

5. Based on your experience, what can site leadership provide to facilitate the implementation of the Common Core State Standards?