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A Study of Kindergarten Teachers' Ability to Teach the Kindergarten Informational Text Common Core Standards in Fifteen West Virginia School Districts

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**A STUDY OF KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS' ABILITY TO TEACH THE
KINDERGARTEN INFORMATIONAL TEXT COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS
IN FIFTEEN WEST VIRGINIA SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

A dissertation submitted to
the Graduate College of
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in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education
in
Curriculum and Instruction
by
Shelly Ann Ratliff
Approved by
Dr. Ronald Childress, Committee Chairperson
Dr. Edna Meisel
Dr. Louis Watts
Dr. Elizabeth Campbell

Marshall University
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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to West Virginia's kindergarten teachers who strive to prepare young children, our state's future, for an ever-changing world. Kindergarten teachers are charged to teach reading, writing, math, and many other skills while tying shoes, wiping away tears, and opening juice boxes. To say that kindergarten teachers are simply teachers would be an understatement. These rare breeds of teachers are caregivers, doctors, entertainers, counselors, and referees, rolled into one tired, but smiling individual who greets her students each morning. They are the pioneers who are implementing the Common Core State Standards.

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To my chair, Dr. Ronald Childress, my deepest gratitude for the countless conversations we have had where he has guided, encouraged, and sometimes pushed me toward completing a dissertation I would be proud of. His wisdom and expertise shaped my study to become a professional piece that will contribute to the field of education.

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CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

ABSTRACT

This study sought to determine kindergarten teachers' perceived knowledge of the informational text Common Core State Standards within the population of 185 kindergarten teachers in 15 West Virginia counties.

A four part researcher-developed survey was mailed to each participant. Subjects were also given the option of participating in a follow-up telephone interview and interviewees were asked a series of questions based on a researcher-developed interview protocol. Subjects that participated in the interviews were asked if they were willing to be observed by the researcher for 30 minutes during reading instruction and an observation checklist was used to guide the time spent in the classroom. The survey, interview protocol, and observation checklist were validated by a panel of early education experts.

In general, kindergarten teachers described their level of ability to implement the informational text Common Core State Standards as between adequate and mastery. When asked to describe the level of effectiveness of the professional development they had received, teachers responded that it was moderately effective. Statistically significant differences were found among the ability to implement the informational text Common Core State Standards and the total years of experience, as well as years of experience teaching kindergarten.

Findings from this study may help shape the types of professional development presented to teachers regarding the Common Core State Standards as well as how funding is allocated for resources related to the standards. The study will also assist teacher preparation program faculty in modifying courses that prepare pre-service teachers to teach using the Common Core State Standards.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Common Core State Standards were launched in 2010 by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). To date, 44 states, the District of Columbia, four territories, and the Department of Defense Activity have adopted the standards. Additionally, Minnesota adopted the English/Language Arts Standards, but not the Math Standards (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2010). The West Virginia Board of Education adopted the standards in 2010 and determined that kindergarten would be the first grade level to implement them.

Background

Reform is typically directed at changing or improving teachers' knowledge, skills, and abilities (Schmidt & Datnow, 2005). Reform is a complex undertaking which depends largely upon teachers to carry out whatever change is currently being implemented in public schools (Tubin & Oplatka, 2010). Fullan (2001) suggested that change in education depends upon what teachers think and do about the change; teachers effect school reform. Schmidt and Datnow (2005) concurred that teachers are at the heart of school reform because they are the targets of change. Fullan (2001) differentiated between two types of reform: restructuring (authorizing change) and reculturing (teachers change beliefs and then teaching practices). Fullan believed reculturing is more effective, but more difficult to implement. Fullan, Bertani, and Quinn (2004) suggested 10 components for large-scale reform: compelling conceptualization, collective moral purpose, the right structure, capacity building, lateral capacity building, ongoing learning, productive conflict, demanding culture, external partners, and focused financial investments.

The idea of school reform elicits positive and negative responses. Reform initiatives permeate the history of education in the United States. Craig (2010) identified school reform in America as truly dominating since 1983 when the *Nation at Risk* report was released. That document laid the foundation for the focus on national standards and accountability (Fiske, 2008). Since then, countless policies, documents, and legislation that affect public school teachers, administrators, and students have been developed. Rose (2011) argued that the focus has been on teachers as essential component of school reform and suggested that teachers live in a bipolar world where they are praised when their students do well or blamed when their students perform poorly on standardized tests. Rose also noted that No Child Left Behind views teachers as one-dimensional regarding school reform, thus, suggesting that teachers' lack of effort and low expectations are the factors that decrease student achievement.

One of the most recent educational reforms is the development of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), coordinated by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief States School Officers. The purpose of these standards is to provide a general understanding of what students should learn (NGA & CCSSO, 2011). Ideally, the Common Core State Standards define the knowledge and skills students should receive in their K-12 academic careers, enabling them to graduate high school prepared for college courses or workforce training programs. According to the CCSS, students that are college and career-ready possess specific characteristics: the ability to demonstrate independence; strong content knowledge; the ability to respond to changing demands of audience, task, and purpose; the ability to comprehend and critique text; skills in valuing evidence; the ability to effectively use technology; and an understanding of other cultures and perspectives (NGA & CCSSO, 2010).

Bomer and Maloch (2011) hypothesized that no other national policy will affect American schools like the adoption of the Common Core State Standards. The idea behind the Common Core Standards is that students across the United States will be learning the same concepts regardless of where they live or what school they attend. In addition to greater uniformity, the adoption of these standards implies the desire for higher, more stringent standards because fewer topics are covered at each grade level, but in much greater depth (Daro, McCallum, & Zimba, 2010). Simply put, these standards seek to go deeper, not wider, compared to previous standards. Conley (2011) suggested that another goal of the Common Core Standards is to increase student achievement to levels comparable to those of the best educational systems in the world.

Implementation of the Common Core State Standards

Conley (2011) discussed three key principles educators should adhere to when implementing the Common Core Standards. First, content mastery is not sufficient and regurgitating information on a test does not prepare students for college. Students need opportunities to think critically and problem solve. Second, instruction needs to engage students in critical thinking and problem solving applications of key content knowledge. This means staying away from test-prep instruction and engaging students in active learning activities such as debates, projects, and presentations. Third, students need exposure to a range of academic learning skills and behaviors. These skills and behaviors include goal setting, study skills, self-reflection, persistence, and time management. These skills and behaviors might not be assessed, but without them, students will more than likely struggle on complex learning tasks.

The West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) renamed the CCSS the Next Generation Standards (NxG). While making minor adjustments to the Common Core State

3

Standards, the WVDE adhered to the rule from the standards developers that no more than 15% of the CCSS could be altered by the states (Achieve, 2010). Two consortia, Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and Smarter Balanced, are working to create assessments aligned to the CCSS that are expected to be available for the 2014-2015 school year. Most states chose to be a part of one of these two consortia (NGA & CCSSO, 2010).

According to WVDE (2012), in West Virginia, kindergarten was the first grade level to implement the new standards. The WVDE held its first Teacher Leadership Institute (TLI) where kindergarten teachers representing all school districts in the state received a week long CCSS training session in summer 2011. Those that attended the TLI were viewed as "teacher leaders" and were expected to take the information learned back to their home districts and provide professional development workshops for other kindergarten teachers prior to the 2011-2012 school year. The new standards were to be implemented in the other grade levels over the next three school years with full implementation in kindergarten through grade 12 by the 2014-2015 school year.

Despite generally widespread acceptance of the standards themselves, the adoption and implementation of the CCSS does have detractors. The American Legislative Exchange Council's board of directors, made up of two dozen state legislators from across the country, proposed legislation to recommend that states withdraw from the CCSS initiative (Wolfgang, 2012). Garner (2012) described a backlash against the CCSS beginning in several states. Utah passed legislation that allows complete withdraw from implementing the standards. Indiana enacted a resolution for the state board to review the CCSS and then withdrew from using the CCSS in March 2014 (Hicks, 2014). Kansas is requiring a cost analysis and formal review

before implementing the standards and South Dakota is requiring four public hearings before implementation. California, Iowa, Maryland, and New Mexico are requiring either a formal review or a cost analysis before implementing the CCSS in their states. Other states introduced legislation as well; in fact, more than 56% of states that adopted the CCSS eventually rejected them or demonstrated hesitation or concern with implementing the standards (Garner, 2012).

English/Language Arts Common Core State Standards

One primary goal of the CCSS is to prepare students for college (Haycock, 2010). The CCSS divide English/Language Arts into standards for language, reading, writing, speaking and listening that grow increasingly more complex as students progress through school. Klock (2010) ascertained that the standards require students to read complex text independently; communicate and write about complex information effectively; listen attentively and critically and share information; collaborate efficiently with people from diverse backgrounds; and use technology effectively when reading, writing, speaking, and listening. These are just standards, however; they do not define how teachers should teach or what specific methods or strategies should be employed in classrooms.

Two central ideas are specific to the English/Language Arts Common Core Standards (Loertscher & Marcoux, 2010). First, students are expected to read widely; this means they will be reading more informational and complex text. These text could be printed or digital. Second, students are expected to be competent researchers. The students, in turn, also need to be able to write about their research. The most pronounced change in the elementary curriculum is the increased use of informational text (Neuman & Roskos, 2012; Roberts, 2012). Research supports the use of more challenging informational text in primary grade classrooms because the

text includes technical words and more high-frequency academic words when compared to narrative text (Price, van Kleek, & Huberty, 2009).

The Common Core Standards offer a national curriculum for mathematics and English language arts. The four potential benefits of such a curriculum include: (a) shared expectations for students allow for consistency across the country; (b) the standards provide for greater focus on the curriculum; (c) educators sharing the same standards streamlines the creation of assessments, curriculum materials, and professional development; and (d) the quality of assessments increases because the number decreases to only one or two high-quality, aligned assessments that may be administered electronically (Porter, McMaken, Hwang, & Yang, 2011). Students will remain at varying levels of skill development for several years until the Common Core Standards are fully implemented (Kendall & Ryan, 2012).

Early Childhood Education Reform

Not all see the CCSS as beneficial. The concept of standards in early childhood education has been around for several years, but the CCSS foreground cognitive domain standards at the expense of others such as physical and social-emotional (Scott-Little, Kagan, & Frelow, 2006). The focus on academics does not align with developmentally appropriate practices that early childhood educators advocate (Goldstein, 2008; Parker & Neuharth-Pritchett, 2006; Stipek, 2006; Wien, 2004). Kindergarten was instituted so that children could play and explore as they build a foundation for future school success (Leseman, Rollenberg, & Rispens, 2001; Ray & Smith, 2010). Ray and Smith (2010) believed that, over the years, these mandates have altered the playful atmosphere into one that is structured. Cullingford (2007) suggested this structured environment is not where children best learn.

Kindergarten is caught between two conflicting worlds—early childhood education and public education—that confer on kindergarten characteristics of both (Vecchioti, 2003). Kindergartens across the country vary in the length of the school day, the age requirement for admission, and even whether or not kindergarten is mandatory (Snow, 2012). These variations present special challenges when common standards are mandated (Meisels, 1992).

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) (2011), has expressed several concerns about implementing the CCSS. The main concern is the emphasis on language arts and math while leaving out social and emotional development. NAEYC and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS/SDE) articulate four conditions through which early learning standards should be developed and implemented. First, early learning standards should focus on developmentally appropriate content and outcomes, referring to the development of the whole child. NAEYC is concerned because only English language arts and mathematics are emphasized. Second, early learning standards should be developed and reviewed through informed, inclusive processes. The CCSS were developed rather quickly and early childhood educators had a limited voice in their development. Third, early learning standards are effective when implementation and assessment of the standards are ethical and developmentally appropriate. Fourth, early learning standards require a foundation of support for early childhood education programs, professionals, and families (NAEYC, 2011).

Professional Development

Teachers are responsible for the instruction and implementation of the CCSS (Coleman, Pimentel, & Zimba, 2012). Professional development will play a key role in the success of implementing the CCSS (Killion & Hirsh, 2012a; Loveless, 2012). Wilson (2009) noted key

components of successful professional development: emphasis on subject-matter knowledge; more than 40 hours with a year or more of follow-up; the connection of professional development to existing knowledge; the active involvement of teachers; and training of teachers from the same school at the same time. The Council of Chief State School Officers (2010) agreed with these components, but endorsed teachers completing at least 100 hours of training annually (Blank & de las Alas, 2009).

When school districts face budget cuts, professional development is typically reduced or taken away to compensate (Archibald, Coggshall, Croft, & Goe, 2011). If funding is reduced for CCSS professional development, this factor could prove detrimental to successful implementation because professional development has been proven to be a critical investment (Murphy, Regenstein, & McNamara, 2012). In studies of schools and school systems that have made significant improvements in terms of school reform, professional development has continually emerged as an essential factor (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescue, & Easton, 2010; Silva, 2008); indeed, professional development has been linked to increasing students' academic achievement (Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapely, 2007). Many researchers have agreed that professional development should be intensive and sustained to have a greater impact on teaching practices (Collinson & Cook, 2001; Day & Leith, 2007; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001). In addition, teachers have indicated that professional development should focus on the subject matter, provide opportunities for hands-on practice, and be a part of the daily life of the school (Garet et al., 2001).

Professional development supporting the implementation of the CCSS has been deemed as one of the most important aspects of the initiative (Williams, 2012). However, providing

effective professional development may pose an important obstacle to the initiative's success: a recent study conducted by the Center on Education Policy found that providing effective professional development will be a challenge for most states (Kober & Rentner, 2012; Sawchuk, 2012). Any shortcuts taken in professional development will have the potential of decreasing students' opportunities to be college and career ready (Killion & Hirsh, 2012b). Teachers have also voiced their requests for professional development related to the CCSS; the findings from a recent survey, *Primary Sources: 2012*, found that only 22% of teachers feel prepared to teach the CCSS (Scholastic, 2012).

Statement of the Problem

To date, the focus of the literature has been on disseminating knowledge of the Common Core State Standards. Traditionally, the assumption has been that educational leaders tell teachers to implement a new reform and, overnight, teachers are expected to change how and what they teach. Killion and Hirsh (2012a) have termed this idea "educator as miracle worker." Unfortunately, this approach will more than likely fail. Little is known about teachers' perspectives and beliefs about the standards. Gewertz (2013b) reported that teachers are caught up in a debate about whether the CCSS require them to cut back on or eliminate narrative text to make more time for informational text. Consequently, this study will address teachers' perceptions of their abilities to teach the kindergarten informational text reading Common Core State Standards as well as their self-reported abilities to implement the standards.

Research Questions. This study will explore the following specific research questions:

1) What is the kindergarten teacher's perceived level of ability to implement the kindergarten reading informational text Common Core State Standards?

2) What differences, if any, exist between the kindergarten teacher's level of ability to implement the kindergarten reading Common Core State Standards based on selected demographic/attitude variables?

3) What sources of professional development do kindergarten teachers perceive to be most effective in the implementation of kindergarten reading informational text Common Core State Standards?

4) What factors, if any, do kindergarten teachers identify as supports to their efforts to implement the kindergarten reading informational text Common Core State Standards?

5) What factors, if any, do kindergarten teachers identify as barriers to their efforts to implement the kindergarten reading informational text Common Core State Standards?

Operational Definitions. The following variables were operationally defined for use in this study:

Total years of teaching experience. The number of years the teacher has taught full time in the classroom. In this study, it was measured by participant response to survey question 1 in Part A of the survey instrument, *Teaching Informational Text Common Core State Standards (NxG) in Kindergarten Survey*. Participants selected the appropriate response from the following categories: less than 5, 6-10, 11-15, and 16 or more.

Years of teaching experience in kindergarten. The number of years the teacher has taught full time in a kindergarten classroom. In this study, it was measured by participant response to survey question 2 in Part A of the survey instrument, *Teaching Informational Text Common*

Core State Standards (NxG) in Kindergarten Survey. Participants selected the appropriate

response from the following categories: less than 5, 6-10, 11-15, and 16 or more.

School Socioeconomic Status. Overall percentage of the student body qualifying for free

and reduced lunch measured by participant response to survey question 3 in Part A of the survey

instrument, *Teaching Informational Text Common Core State Standards (NxG) in Kindergarten*

Survey. Participants selected the appropriate response from the following categories: less than

35%, 35-50%, 51-75%, and 76% or more.

Resource Support Received. The range of support made available to respondents to assist

them in implementing the Common Core State Standards. In this study, resource support

received was measured by participant response to a list of resource items indicating those

resources they had received. The sum of responses to each item was calculated and used as a

basis for analysis.

Total level of ability to implement kindergarten informational text Common Core State

Standards. A teacher's level of ability to teach the Common Core State Standards as self-

reported on the survey instrument, *Teaching Informational Text Common Core State Standards*

(NxG) in Kindergarten Survey, using a seven-point descriptive scale (1=novice; 4=adequate;

7=mastery). The total level of ability to teach the standards was measured by the sum of

participant responses to each item in Part B of the survey instrument.

Level of ability to implement kindergarten informational text Common Core State

Standards by cluster. A teacher's level of ability to teach the Common Core State Standards as

self-reported on the survey instrument, *Teaching Informational Text Common Core State*

Standards (NxG) in Kindergarten Survey, using a seven-point descriptive scale (1=novice;

4=adequate; 7=mastery) provided for each standard included in Part B of the survey instrument; individual cluster ability level scores were calculated by summing the responses to the standards in each cluster.

Effectiveness of Professional Development. Resources that assisted kindergarten teachers in implementing the Common Core State Standards. These data was collected from participant response to Part C of the survey instrument, *Teaching Informational Text Common Core State Standards (NxG) in Kindergarten Survey*, using a seven-point descriptive scale (1=least effective; 4=moderately effective; 7=most effective). The level of professional development effectiveness was measured by participant responses to each item in Part C of the survey instrument.

Supports. Factors identified by kindergarten teachers as being positive or helpful influences in their efforts to implement the reading informational text Common Core State Standards. These data were collected from participant response to Part D, Item 1 of the survey instrument, *Teaching Informational Text Common Core State Standards (NxG) in Kindergarten Survey*.

Barriers. Factors identified by kindergarten teachers as being negative or obstructive influences in their efforts to implement the reading informational text Common Core State Standards. These data were collected from participant response to Part D, Item 2 of the survey instrument, *Teaching Informational Text Common Core State Standards (NxG) in Kindergarten Survey*.

Significance of the Study

The Common Core State Standards were to be implemented across all grade levels in West Virginia by 2014 for English/language arts and mathematics. The research study data will benefit teachers because their perceptions may be shared with local, county, and state administrators and thus may improve future K-12 professional development regarding the Common Core State Standards. In addition, study results may increase the financial support allocated to assist teachers in implementing the standards. The perceptions shared by teachers may influence what resources administrators may make available to teachers. Those resources may include items for the classrooms to help teachers better implement the standards or additional professional development that may be needed. Also, the research study data will assist Glenville State College's Teacher Education Department in planning and implementing its curriculum to prepare pre-service teachers to effectively use the Reading Information Text Common Core State Standards since the college's 15 county service area was utilized.

Finally, the findings may provide educators with information to better serve students including the development of differentiated instruction and developmentally appropriate strategies and content. One example may include greater focus on the increased use of informational text in kindergarten. Since school reform is ever present, teacher preparation is crucial and this study may provide data that will shed light on how this preparation can occur.

Delimitations of the Study

A delimitation for this study was that only kindergarten teachers in the 15 county service area for Glenville State College's Teacher Education Department were included in the study

population. The study also focused only on the reading informational text standards of the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards.

Summary of the Study

The Common Core State Standards are being implemented not only in West Virginia, but across the nation. Teachers are in the forefront of this implementation, yet little is known about their perceptions of the Common Core State Standards. This study investigated teachers' perspectives regarding their knowledge of the standards and their ability to implement the standards.

Organization of the Study

Chapter One provides an introduction to the study. Chapter Two is a review of the related literature. Chapter Three outlines research methods and data collection. Chapter Four presents and describes findings. Finally, Chapter Five presents a brief summary of this study, conclusions, implications, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a review of the relevant literature. The chapter is divided into seven sections: History of the Common Core State Standards, English/Language Arts Common Core State Standards, Professional Development, Early Childhood Education Reform, Literacy Reform, Assessments Aligned to the Common Core State Standards, and Opposition to the Common Core State Standards.

History of the Common Core State Standards

Rothman (2012a) suggested the idea of setting standards for the knowledge and skills students need surfaced in the United States in the late 1980s. The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTE) drafted standards in 1989 stating what students should learn in mathematics. The concept of setting national academic standards gained support from the George H.W. Bush administration and grants were awarded to subject-matter organizations that agreed to develop standards for their disciplines (Rothman, 2012a).

In 1994, the National Education Standards Improvement Council was created through legislation that provided grants to states to write their own standards. However, before individuals were appointed to serve on this council, Congress abolished it in 1995 (Rothman, 2012a). Rothman suggested that after this debate, most educators believed the idea of national standards would disappear; however, the Clinton administration tried to bring the issue of national standards in front of Congress again by proposing voluntary tests in reading and math. Once again, the idea did not make it past Congress.

Rothman (2012a) noted that with the idea of national standards dead, the 1994 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act required states to develop and

implement state standards and assessments. By the late 1990s, all states except Iowa had

standards in place. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 further strengthened the

need for standards and assessments through its stringent accountability measures.

The NCLB Act, with its focus on discrepancies across states, refueled the fire for national

standards. For example, the National Assessment of Academic Progress (NAEP) test (Achieve,

2010) revealed disproportionate proficiency scores between NAEP and state assessments. Tepe

(2013) believed there is a lack of identifying the inconsistency of 50 states having 50 different

sets of standards; this inconsistency perpetuates inconsistent student outcomes. In addition, Tepe

noted that students were graduating high school not prepared for college-level courses and as a

result, first-year college students were being placed in remedial courses. The CCSS were

designed to eliminate this expectation gap (Achieve, 2010).

Quay (2010) suggested that when states develop their own content standards, five major

criticisms surface. First, some states have developed standards too numerous to effectively

teach. Instead of creating standards that grow increasingly complex with each new grade, most

states write standards that cover the same topics in first through eighth grades, in addition to

adding new standards at each grade level. Numerous standards force teachers to pick and choose

what to teach and thus, eliminate some standards completely. Second, state standards tend to be

confusing and inconsistent in comparison to each other. Inconsistencies include what material is

covered, how specifically material is described, what grade the material should be taught, and for

how many grades the material should be addressed. In a study of teachers in five states, Massel

(2008) found that teachers reported being frustrated by too many standards and the decision of

which standards to teach. Another study by Goertz (2008) found teachers believed that most

state standards are too vague to be helpful in planning instruction. Third, state standards established set low expectations for students (Quay, 2010). Numerous analyses confirm that state expectations for student achievement fall below National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) expectations (NCES, 2010). Fourth, state standards are not aligned to college and career readiness. In 2009, fewer than one in four high school graduates who completed an academic curriculum and took the ACT were considered ready for college-level work (ACT, 2009). Fifth, state standards do not measure up to international comparisons (Quay, 2010).

America's education standards fall behind higher-ranking countries in the number of standards, the composition and progression of standards across grade levels, the rigor of the standards, and the level of mastery expected from students (Quay, 2010). In 2006, the Programme for International Assessment that found American students ranked 35th among 40 countries in math and 29th in science (Cleaver, 2011). All of these factors combined spurred the idea again for national standards.

In summer 2006, former North Carolina governor, James Hunt, Jr., called a meeting of education policy leaders to discuss common national standards. Later in 2006, former West Virginia governor, Bob Wise, met with a larger group of education leaders in Washington, D.C. to discuss the same topic. It was generally understood that the idea of common national standards would be better accepted if the initiative were led by states, rather than federally mandated like past attempts. The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association (NGA) emerged as leaders of the common national standards movement (Rothman, 2012a).

NGA and CCSSO (2012) established the criteria for the writers of the CCSS that emphasized fewer, clearer, and higher standards. Since the mission of the Standards is to prepare students for college and careers, Achieve, American College Test (ACT), and the College Board were given the task of drafting the English language arts and math standards. In addition to the focus on having fewer, clearer, and higher standards, those who drafted the CCSS also adhered to the following criteria: standards are aligned with college and career expectations so that all students are ready for college or career after high school, rigorous content and applications of knowledge through higher-order thinking skills, internationally prepared to be competitive in a global society, and research/evidence based.

When the draft standards were distributed for public comment, nearly 10,000 people responded. Writers developed a second draft based on public comment and the final version of the CCSS for kindergarten through twelfth grade was released in June 2010. The formation of the CCSS is considered to be the most ambitious endeavor taken on in public education (Smith, Schiano, & Lattanzio, 2014). In addition, teachers appear to be accepting the CCSS because a poll conducted by the National Education Association (NEA) in 2013 reported two-thirds of its members either were entirely in favor of the standards (26%) or support the CCSS with some reservations (50%) (Busser, 2013).

The U.S. Department of Education (USDE) implemented the Race to the Top Program (RTP) at about the same time the standards were released. This federal program encouraged states to adopt the standards because in doing so, states were awarded points that could lead to millions of dollars in grant money. By the deadline for the RTP grant application, 40 states had

adopted the CCSS, even though a survey revealed that only 27% of the states let the opportunity for grant money influence their decision to adopt the Standards (NGA & CCSSO 2012).

According to Tienken (2011), over 170 organizations, both educational and corporate, have supported the CCSS Initiative. Some of the education-related organizations that pledged their support also provided input in the development of the CCSS. The National Education Association (NEA) (2010) noted that leaders of the CCSS Initiative have been attentive to the ideas and feedback provided by teachers that will strengthen the standards and their use in classrooms. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) (2010) supported the initiative, but made clear that much work lay ahead in implementing the CCSS, especially in developing appropriate curricula and assessments, offering effective professional development, and providing resources that ensure all children have opportunities to meet challenging expectations. The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) (2010) affirmed the CCSS would meet the needs of students with disabilities, gifts and talents; the new standards would provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to be successful in college and career. The National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) (2010) endorsed the CCSS and believed the CCSS would improve academics as well as help America's economy grow. The International Reading Association (IRA) (2012) supported the CCSS Initiative, but provide a document to address specific literacy issues related to implementing the CSSS that have proven to be confusing or challenging. The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) (2012) endorsed the implementation of the CCSS, but encouraged its members to critique and oppose any CCSS that conflicts with NCTE policies. The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) (2013) supported the CCSS Initiative, but recognized other

critical factors in the implementation of the standards: professional development, teacher evaluation systems, funding, and assessment.

English/Language Arts Common Core State Standards

Four anchor standards for English/Language arts include reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language (WVDE, 2012). Each of these standards is organized around clusters that further delineate the anchor standards into specific objectives that are aligned to the clusters. Each grade level shares the same anchor standards and clusters, but the objectives are grade-level specific.

Alberti (2012) identified three key shifts in thinking with the new English language arts standards. The first shift is building knowledge through content rich nonfiction. Alberti suggest this is especially true for students in the elementary grades because it is essential for later reading growth and achievement. Typically, less than 10% of elementary reading text are nonfiction (Duke, 2004). This emphasis does not mean traditional literature will be discarded; instead, teachers will incorporate content area nonfiction as well. Content-rich nonfiction text will build students' background knowledge and vocabulary. Teachers will find themselves focusing more instructional time on persuasive and informational text (McLaughlin & Overturf, 2012). Alberti's (2012) second shift in thinking was including reading and writing grounded in evidence. Students will be asked to answer more in-depth questions based on reading instead of the traditional lower-level, literal questions. Students will be required to write narrative essays in addition to writing that persuades and informs readers, a new experience for most students. The third shift in thinking was regular practice with complex text and academic language. Text

complexity, in fact, is emphasized as the most significant factor in preparing students for college (Alberti, 2012).

Colleges and careers require the ability to read informational text (Roberts, 2012). The CCSS's shift from primarily narrative text to informational text grew from research that suggests employers and college instructors found individuals weak at comprehending technical, scientific, and historical works (Gewertz, 2012). Text complexity is determined by a number of components, such as syntax and vocabulary. The CCSS refer to this as the staircase of text complexity to expose students to increasingly difficult text through the grades (Alberti, 2012). The level of complexity expected at each grade level was determined by using the Lexile score of freshman level textbooks and career manuals and then reversing the Lexile scores down through the grades (Jaeger, 2013). In a study published by the Aspen Institute (2012), the ability to read complex text is identified as the single greatest predictor of college success and this factor is true regardless of gender, race, or socio-economic status. While the level of text complexity has remained steady in college and career writing, the complexity of text given to elementary and secondary students has decreased. The decline in text complexity resulted in a large gap where less than 50% of high school graduates are able to read college and career level complex text independently (Aspen Institute, 2012).

Fisher and Frey (2014) noted that the quantitative measures used to determine the level of text do not consider other pertinent factors such as developmental concerns, quality instruction, and students' interests. The quantitative measures are ideally used to find text within a specified grade level. Walpole, Hayes, & Robnolt (2006) believe that while quantitative measures

indicate whether or not students might be able to read a text, these measures cannot assist teachers in identifying factors that may negatively impact comprehension.

Research has supported the increased use of informational text in the primary grades because expository text exposes students to more technical words and high-frequency academic words (Hiebert & Pearson, 2012; Price, van Kleek, & Huberty, 2009). Informational text assists students in developing background knowledge which accounts for as much as 33% of the variance in students' achievement (Marzano, 2000). Hiebert and Pearson (2012) agreed that informational text supports background knowledge. Also, informational text typically includes glossaries, diagrams, and indices that convey technical information essential for students to learn (Duke & Bennett-Armistead, 2003). The CCSS require the use of 50% informational text (Coleman & Pimental, 2012; Gewertz, 2013b). Duke (2000) additionally found that first grade students spent only 3.6 minutes per day reading informational text. One study revealed that a typical first grade classroom contained only 9.8% informational text (Duke, 2000). Kindergarten and first grade students are not expected to read large amounts of informational text, but instead young students will be exposed to more informational text through read-alouds (Coleman & Pimental, 2012; IRA, 2012). As students move through the upper elementary grades, they shift from learning to read to reading to learn; this shift becomes critical in middle school (Guthrie & Klauda, 2012). The issue has been that middle school students have had very little exposure to informational text and the CCSS should help to remedy that issue (National Institute for Literacy, 2007).

The focus on informational text is also a result of a previous educational reform, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). NCLB quietly removed social studies and science from most

elementary classrooms to make more time for reading and math, which were assessed using standardized tests (VanFossen, 2005). Since informational text is now being emphasized, elementary school teachers have found interest in teaching these once ignored disciplines such as science and social studies (Duke, Caughlan, Juzwik, & Martin, 2012; Kucan & Palinscar, 2013).

Professional Development

Standards alone will not raise student achievement, nor do standards implement themselves. Teachers are responsible for the instruction and implementation of the CCSS (Coleman, et al, 2012). Professional development will play a key role in the success of the CCSS (Killion & Hirsh, 2012a; Loveless, 2012; Nielson, 2012; Sheninger, 2013). Research has revealed that increasing teachers' knowledge through professional development is the most important factor for improving student achievement (Grossman, 2009).

Wilson (2009) noted key components of successful professional development: emphasis on subject-matter knowledge, more than 40 hours with a year or more of follow-up, connecting it to existing knowledge, actively involving teachers, and training teachers from the same school at the same time. The Council of Chief State School Officers agreed with these components, and endorsed teachers completing 100 hours or more of training (Blank & de las Alas, 2009). A groundbreaking study supported the request that teachers receive a large amount of hours targeting the CCSS. Carpenter, Fennema, Peterson, Chiang, and Loef (1989) found that students in a class where the teacher received 80 hours of comprehensive, targeted professional developed on a specific type of instruction outperformed the students on three of the six student achievement measures compared to the class where the teacher received only four hours of training. Fullan et al. (2004) suggested 10 components for large-scale reform: compelling

conceptualization, collective moral purpose, the right structure, capacity building, lateral capacity building, ongoing learning, productive conflict, demanding culture, external partners, and focused financial investments.

According to Birman, Desimone, Porter, and Garet (2000), most evidence supporting effective professional development is anecdotal. These researchers, therefore, surveyed more 1,000 teachers nationwide to identify effective approaches to professional development. Literature and survey data indicated three structural features that created the context for professional development: form (study group, task force, mentoring, internship, etc.), duration (length of PD), and participation (group participation by grade level, school, department or individual participation). The study also revealed three features that characterize the processes that happen during professional development: content focus (how well the PD emphasized the intended content); active learning (opportunities for teachers to practice or analyze teaching/learning); and coherence (provision for continued support and alignment with goals and standards). The number of teachers that reported attending professional development exhibiting all six characteristics was very small (Birman et al., 2000).

The assumption has traditionally been that educational leaders tell teachers to implement a new reform and, overnight, teachers are expected to change how and what they teach. Killion and Hirsh (2012a) suggest this "educator as miracle worker" approach will more than likely fail. When school districts face budget cuts, professional development is typically reduced or taken away (Archibald et al., 2011). If this occurs for professional development needed to support implementation of the CCSS, budget cuts could prove detrimental to the success of the CCSS

because professional development has been proven to be a major implementation investment in the initiative (Murphy et al., 2012).

When schools and school systems that have made significant improvements in terms of school reform are studied, professional development continually emerges as an essential factor (Bryk et.al, 2009; Silva, 2008). Professional development is linked to increasing students' academic achievement (Yoon et al., 2007). Many researchers have agreed that professional development should be intensive and sustained to have a greater impact on teaching practices (Collinson & Cook, 2001; Day & Leith, 2007; Garet et al., 2001). Teachers have reported that professional development should focus on the subject matter, provide opportunities for hands-on practice, and be a part of the daily life of the school (Garet et al., 2001).

Professional development for the CCSS has been deemed as critical for successful implementation (Williams, 2012). Concurrently, the CCSS poses a different issue for professional development because in this case, students are not the first learners of the CCSS; the teachers are the first learners (Walsh, 2014). If teachers do not effectively learn how to implement the CCSS, then student achievement will not increase.

A recent study conducted by the Center on Education Policy found that providing effective professional development will be a challenge for most states (Kober & Rentner, 2012; Sawchuk, 2012). Any shortcuts taken in professional development will have the potential for decreasing students' opportunities to be college and career ready (Killion & Hirsh, 2012b). In a survey by the Center on Education Policy (2012), 53% of school districts reported not providing professional development related to the CCSS in math and 55% reported not providing training in English language arts.

At the same time, teachers are voicing their requests for professional development

related to the CCSS. The EPE Research Center that assists in publishing *Education Week* asked

teachers to rate how prepared they felt to teach the CCSS (Gewertz, 2013a). On a scale from 1

to 5 with 5 being very prepared and 1 being not prepared at all, 49% of teachers rated themselves

as a 1, 2, or 3. The study also revealed how varied the amount of professional development has

been for teachers. Nearly 3 in 10 teachers reported having no training for the CCSS and of the

70% who had been trained, only 41% had had four or more days of professional development.

Guskey (1986) suggested that when professional development fails, the failure can be linked to

two factors not taken into account: the motivation for teachers to participate in professional

development and the process that occurs to change teachers' beliefs and instruction. When

professional development is designed to change teachers' attitudes in hopes of securing strong

commitments, the typical result is failed professional development (Jones & Hayes, 1980). In a

more recent article, Guskey (2002) expanded on this previous research and suggested an

alternative model in which teachers' attitudes and beliefs change some time after the professional

development occurs because teachers have experienced an increase in student achievement due

to changes made in classroom practices. Support from other studies has also emphasized that

teachers became committed to specific reforms after they have opportunities to practice in their

classrooms and experience change in student learning (Crandall, 1983; Huberman & Miles,

1984).

Early Childhood Reform

The concept of standards for early childhood education has been around many years.

Historically, these standards have focused on the development of the cognitive domain in young

children while the physical and social domains were essentially ignored (Scott-Little et al, 2006). Emphasizing only academics is in conflict with how early childhood educators are trained. Based on the works of Piaget, Vygotsky, and Erikson, specific theoretical principles of child development and learning have been identified (Bredekamp, Knuth, Kunesh, and Shulman, 1992). First, children learn best when their physical needs have been met and they feel safe. Second, children construct knowledge through dynamic interactions among themselves and the physical and social environments. Third, children learn through social interaction with adults and other children. Fourth, children learn through play because play provides opportunities for exploration, experimentation, and manipulation. Fifth, children's interests motivate learning by fostering curiosity, attention, and self-direction (Bredekamp, Knuth, Kunesh, and Shulman, 1992).

Responding to stakeholder expectations, early childhood educators have felt pressured to focus on academics at the expense of their developmentally-appropriate pedagogical practices (Goldstein, 2008; Parker & Neuharth-Pritchett, 2006; Wien, 2004). Early childhood educators have reported much more pressure now to make their field academically based (Stipek, 2006). Kindergarten, specifically, has been described as "the new first grade" (Tyre, 2006). Hatch (2002) christened the movement in which primary grade expectations are being pushed into early education as the "curriculum shovedown".

De Cos (2001) noted that the creation of kindergarten has been traced back to 1863 when Elizabeth Peabody, credited as being the pioneer of kindergarten, believed children should be led to learning by music, games, pictures, and curiosity. A century later, kindergarten has become part of public elementary school but its focus is no longer social, emotional, and moral

development; rather, its focus is on the beginning of formal academic instruction (Tyre, 2006; Russell, 2011). The change in kindergarten's purpose is attributed to several factors. First, housing kindergarten in elementary schools forced it to assimilate to the environment (Beatty, 1995; Cuban, 1992; Tyack & Cuban, 1997). Second, kindergarten educators aligned with the primary education movement to make the field more professional (Bloch, 1987). Third, the Head Start program and increasing preschool education decreased the need for children to be socialized into formal schooling during kindergarten (Dombkowski, 2001). Fourth, accountability and standardized testing bolstered academics for kindergarten instruction (Hatch, 2002; Jeynes, 2006).

In prior decades, early education has focused on traditional scope and sequence that emphasized drill and practice (Bredekamp et al., 1992). That methodology does not align with current knowledge of human learning and does not produce students that have high-order thinking and problem-solving skills. As a result, national organizations advocating for best practices in early education have mandated that young children should be in classrooms that emphasize hands-on learning, conceptual learning that leads to acquiring basic skills, meaningful learning experiences, interactive teaching and cooperative learning, and content integrated across the curriculum.

This emphasis on academics concerns many educators since kindergarten is typically a child's first time in a formal school experience. Ray and Smith (2010) have advocated that kindergarten provides the foundational skills required for future school success. They have maintained that government and school districts have made kindergarten into a structured environment that has decreased time for play and creativity and increased standardized

assessments. Leseman et al. (2001) suggested the emphasis on the cognitive domain was not the basis on which kindergarten was formed; on the contrary, kindergarten was developed to give young children a setting where they could play and explore. A structured atmosphere is not aligned with how young children best learn (Cullingford, 2007). Structured atmospheres in early childhood education will decrease or eliminate the opportunities for teachers to include teachable moments in their classrooms (Hyun & Marshall, 2003). Ray and Smith (2010) questioned whether this current method of teaching young children will lead to future school success.

Kindergarten has fallen victim to the middle child syndrome because it is caught between early childhood education and public education and, as a result, kindergarten exhibits features of both types of education (Vecchioti, 2003). Snow (2012) discussed how children's kindergarten experiences vary from state to state because the length of school day and the age requirement for when children can enter kindergarten can differ. Some school districts offer whole day kindergarten programs while others provide only half-day programs. Eleven of the 43 states that offer kindergarten provide full day programs. Additionally, kindergarten is not mandated across the country as only 16 states require that children attend kindergarten. These differences in kindergarten experiences can affect whether or not children will meet the CCSS expectations. Meisels (1992) suggested that establishing common standards is an essential component of education, but doing so without a common delivery system may prove to have unintended, negative consequences.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) (2011) voiced concerns about the developmental appropriateness of implementing CCSS in kindergarten. Its main concern was the focus on language arts and mathematics while ignoring social and

emotional development. In light of the fact that states can add additional standards related to the other domains of the child as they see fit, NAEYC realized that what is added will not be common across all states. NAEYC has also expressed concern about offering professional development, providing resources related to the CCSS, and determining how young children will be assessed.

Literacy Reform

One of the most critical predictors of whether a child will competently progress through school and continue to function in society is the level at which the child progresses in reading and writing (NAEYC, 1998). Over the past generation, learning standards for reading and writing have shifted from one grade level to the next lowest grade level. For example, what was expected from first grade students in the past is now required of kindergarten and even preschool students (Gehsmann & Templeton, 2012). The literature indicates most teachers, regardless of grade level, are at odds with how and what they are expected to teach since they understand the importance of teaching from a learner-centered and developmentally appropriate perspective (Gehsmann & Woodside-Jiron, 2005; Woodside-Jiron & Gehsmann, 2009).

The adoption of the CCSS will continue to change the face of literacy education. Strickland (2012) recommended considering five components when planning a literacy curriculum aligned with the CCSS: integrated model of literacy, cumulative model of expectations, shared responsibility for students' literacy development, associated research and media skills, and greater use of on-grade-level text. Davis (2012) suggested five additional strategies for literacy classrooms to meet the expectations of the CCSS: (a) include informational text, (b) include foundational skills (i.e. phonics and print concepts), (c) teach grammar in the

context of writing, (d) implement authentic, open-ended assignments, and (e) spend more time on speaking and listening skills.

According to Coleman and Pimental (2012), the most notable changes in the early grades, including kindergarten, are including more explicit instruction in preparing students to read informational text and using reading materials that are substantive and linked to content-area instruction. An emphasis on vocabulary development is introduced so students are required to listen to complex text being read aloud to them while still learning to read and write. Of course, foundational reading skills should still be taught but viewed as only one piece of a comprehensive literacy program. Sutherland, Botzakis, Moje, & Alvermann (2007) suggested the change in what students are expected to read reflects how literacy evolved because students today read differently and how teachers teach students must change to meet their needs in the world they will live.

One of the most prominent changes for literacy instruction in the early grades is the inclusion of more informational text. In a study by Duke (2000), only 9.8% of text in first grade libraries were informational, and these first grade students spent less than four minutes a day reading informational text. Research has shown that it is just as important that students read and comprehend informational text as much as narrative text (Goodwin & Miller, 2012), especially since 96% of text that is found on the Internet is considered informational (Kamil & Lane, 1998). Informational text have been shown to increase students' background knowledge accounting for as much as 33% of variance in student achievement (Marzano, 2000). Other studies have suggested that implementing informational text in the younger grades can decrease deficiencies attributing to low reading scores beyond the fourth grade (Duke, 2000). Students that read

fluently and comprehend informational text have a better chance of receiving a grade of *C* or better in an introductory-level college course such as United States history or psychology (NGAC BP & CCSSO, 2010).

Additionally, the ability for students to read fluently and comprehend informational text will help them in college and their careers (Roberts, 2012). At some point, as employees, they may be asked to create budgets, present at training seminars, read about best practices in their respective fields, or communicate information to various audiences. As citizens, they will be required to read countless rules and regulations, interpret their children's report cards, and decipher the fine print on legal documents (Roberts, 2012).

According to Botzakis, Burns, and Hall (2014), implementing the CCSS in literacy has been considered by some an autonomous model of literacy. This model refers to a one-size-fits-all approach to teaching children. The authors suggested that if the CCSS are taught using the autonomous model, literacy instruction could emphasize covering each standard separately and reducing teaching to academic checklists where instruction is driven by standardized assessments, not student learning.

Assessments Aligned to the Common Core State Standards

Two consortia, the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (Smarter Balanced), are working to create assessments aligned to the CCSS and these instruments are expected to be available for schools to administer during the 2014-2015 school year (NGA & CCSSO, 2010). Both consortia have received funding from the U.S. Department of Education to create assessments aligned to the new standards. PARCC (2014) developed a set of computer-based assessments for K-12 to

assess mathematics and English language arts/literacy. PARCC's members include Arkansas, Colorado, District of Columbia, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island. PARCC is creating policies pertaining to assessment administration, scoring, and reporting results. The policies include performance level descriptors, administration procedures, and assessment accommodations (PARCC, 2014).

Smarter Balanced developed a set of computer adaptive, summative assessments that are mandatory in grades 3-8 and 11 for mathematics and English language arts/literacy (SBAC, 2014). The comprehensive assessment will be administered during the last 12 weeks of the school year. Along with the summative component, Smarter Balanced offers interim assessments and formative tools and processes. The interim assessments are optional and clustered by content. Interim assessments are administered throughout the school year at teachers' discretion. Scores are reported on the same scale as summative assessments and serve as a tool for monitoring students' progress. The formative tools and processes provide resources for teachers relating to the CCSS and can be accessed throughout the school year. Smarter Balanced member states are California, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming (SBAC, 2014).

The assessments PARCC and Smarter Balanced will both measure and influence the effectiveness of the CCSS. Unresolved issues surround the two assessment consortia. The issues include the amount of time required for students to complete the assessment, the validity

of assessment results to justify its use in accountability, the ability of the two consortia to sustain current funding/resources, the timely availability of assessments for the 2014-2015 school year, and testing incentives for continued teaching of a rich, comprehensive, and engaging curriculum (Mathis, 2012). In spring 2014, more than a million students participated in pilot testing for the PARCC and Smarter Balanced computer-based assessments (O'Hanlon, 2013). States are waiting for pilot assessment results, however, some states have reported major technological glitches (Davis, 2013).

NAEYC (2009) promotes firm beliefs about the purposes of assessment in early education: to make decisions about teaching and learning, identify concerns for specific children that may require intervention, and improve programs' educational and developmental interventions. Recent reports have indicate that the number of states requiring kindergarten assessments has increased by 72% over the past five years (CCSSO, 2012; Daily, Burkhauser, and Halle, 2010). The issue with most kindergarten assessments is that very few are reliable and valid. For example, based on several commonly-used kindergarten entry and placement assessments, the chance of a child being misplaced is 50% (NAECS/SDE, 2000).

Opposition to the Common Core State Standards

The CCSS currently face growing opposition. The American Legislative Exchange Council's board of directors proposed legislation to recommend that states withdraw from the CCSS initiative (Wolfgang, 2012). In March 2014, Indiana became the first state to withdraw from using the CCSS (Hicks, 2014). South Carolina and Oklahoma followed by withdrawing in June 2014 (Ujifusa, 2014b). Ujifusa (2014a) noted that Alabama, Louisiana, Arizona, Georgia, Kansas, Florida, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Tennessee, Wyoming, Maryland, New

Hampshire, and New York have introduced legislation to repeal the CCSS. The bill in Missouri has passed the House, but not the Senate. The bills in Arizona, Louisiana, Georgia, and Wyoming have failed. Additionally, Colorado, New Hampshire, Illinois, New Jersey, and West Virginia have introduced legislation to delay or review PARCC/Smarter Balanced assessments aligned to the CCSS (Ujifusa, 2014a).

Some researchers have refuted what supporters cite as reasons why America needs common standards. Several supporters argue that America's students are lagging behind when compared to other countries, but Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2009) reported that the United States accounted for 25% of the world's top scientists, while Japan has only 13%, Korea has 5%, and China has 1%. Other supporters of the CCSS Initiative believe the new standards will improve the country's economy. Tienken (2010) reported that several studies over the past 12 years reveal that the relationship between economic vitality and rankings on international tests are very weak or statistically insignificant. The U.S. has ranked either first or second in economic competiveness since 1998 and fell from those rankings only once in 2006 as a result of Hurricane Katrina (Schwab, 2009).

Reasons vary as to why the CCSS have come under fire. Some of the reasons include arguments that the CCSS are a disguised national curriculum, they set unrealistic expectations, their rigor is inflated, and they emphasize testing (Ujifusa, 2013; Ujifusa & Molnar, 2013; Yatvin, 2013). Some critics cite the lack of creativity as a pitfall of the CCSS (Ohler, 2013). Not once are the words creative, innovative, or original mentioned in any of the CCSS. Cost of implementation, another criticism, varies depending upon the extent to which professional development is offered (Rothman, 2012b). Pascopella (2012) noted the Fordham Institute named

three approaches for professional development related to the CCSS. The first approach is termed business as usual. It is the traditional approach in which states purchase textbooks aligned to the standards, administer pencil-paper assessments, and offer in-person professional development that can cost around $1.6 billion depending on the size of the state. The second approach, bare bones, is the least expensive with a cost of around $380 million. This approach to implementing the CCSS includes teachers using open-source materials, computer-administered assessments, and online professional development. The final approach, balanced implementation, combines the first two approaches including teacher-published text or district-made materials, summative assessments, and in-person and online professional development; it has a price tag of about $681 million. This financial commitment could prove to be difficult in the face of budget cuts.

Some who oppose the CCSS are researching past reforms and the data that surrounds those reforms. Quay (2010) described one of the more recent reforms occurring in 1997 in the Chicago Public Schools. The reform required all students to enroll in college-preparatory English and math courses in 9th grade. Results from the early stages of the reform found that course failure rates increased, grades slightly declined, standardized test scores did not improve, and students were no more likely to enroll in college after high school. Even though Chicago Public Schools are considered urban, these urban schools share similar characteristics to rural schools such as high rates of poverty and English language learners, so Chicago's results might be similar to reforms undertaken by rural schools (Monk, 2007).

While some oppose the CCSS, the Center for Public Education (2013) noted that a Gallup poll revealed that most Americans have not heard of the new standards; of those who have, 21% believe that the CCSS will make the country less competitive. A national poll by

Achieve (2011) reported that 66% of Americans support the idea of common standards in math and English across all grade levels; however, 60% of Americans reported having no knowledge of the CCSS. Achieve's national poll cited strong support for the CCSS regardless of age, education level, race, ethnicity, or party affiliation.

Opposition is being felt in the education arena as well. Thirty-eight states responded to a survey conducted by the Center on Education Policy (2012). Findings suggested four common challenges. First, states are struggling to find adequate resources to support all the events necessary to implement the CCSS. Second, challenges related to teachers transitioning to the CCSS surfaced. These include professional development, aligning teacher preparation programs with the new standards, and creating evaluation systems that hold teachers and principals accountable for students mastering the CCSS. Third, several states reported facing resistance from the K-12 education system. Fourth, many states anticipate major technology challenges in administering online assessments aligned to the new standards.

Chapter 3: Research Methods

The purpose of Chapter Three is to describe the methods employed in gathering and analyzing the data collected in this study. This chapter is organized into the following sections: research design, population and sample, instrument development and validation, data collection, and data analyses.

Research Design

The purpose of this research was to generalize from a sample the perspectives of kindergarten teachers regarding their ability to teach reading informational text Common Core State Standards. A mixed-methods design was used to conduct this study, allowing collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. The mixed-methods design included three data-collection strategies: surveys, telephone interviews, and classroom observations.

The benefits of mixed-methods study designs include lowering costs, shortening timelines, reducing measurement error, and improving response rates (Dillman, Smyth & Christian, 2009). Using both quantitative and qualitative methods allow customized data collection and triangulation of findings. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) state that triangulation "…came to mean that many sources of data were better in a study than a single source because multiple sources lead to a fuller understanding of the phenomena you were studying" (p. 116). Specifically, concurrent triangulation was used as quantitative and qualitative data were collected together as participants answered single-response items as well as open-ended questions on this study's survey (Creswell, 2003).

Population and Sample

The population for this study included all kindergarten teachers in the 15 West Virginia counties included in Glenville State College's service area in fall 2013. At the time of this study, the WVDE website indicated that approximately 185 kindergarten teachers were in this 15 county service area. All subjects in the population were included in the study.

Instrument Development and Validation

Three instruments were used to collect data in this study. The first, a teacher self-report survey, *Teaching Informational Text Common Core State Standards (NxG) in Kindergarten Survey* (Appendix C)*;* the second, an interview protocol, *Interview Protocol for Teaching Informational Text Common Core State Standards (NxG)in Kindergarten* (Appendix D)*;* and the third, an observation protocol, *Observation Checklist for Teaching Informational Text Common Core State Standards (NxG) in Kindergarten* (Appendix E)*.*

The survey instrument, *Teaching Informational Text Common Core State Standards (NxG) in Kindergarten Survey*, was a two-page, researcher-developed questionnaire consisting of four parts. Part A requested respondent demographic information. Part B asked respondents to use a seven-point scale to indicate their level of ability to teach the reading informational text standards. Part C requested respondents to use a seven-point scale to indicate the level of effectiveness of various types of professional development related to the Common Core State Standards. Part D contained three open-ended questions asking respondents to identify factors that support and factors that are viewed as barriers in the implementation of the Common Core State Standards.

An interview protocol, *Interview Protocol for Teaching Informational Text Common Core State Standards (NxG) in Kindergarten*, contained ten questions focused on clarifying information gathered through the survey as well as gathering additional information not provided through the survey. An observation protocol, *Observation Checklist for Teaching Informational Text Common Core State Standards (NxG) in Kindergarten,* was utilized to gather additional information regarding kindergarten teacher classroom behavior. The observational checklist contained the same thirteen standards found in Part B of the survey.

An expert panel of five individuals (Appendix F) validated the survey instrument, interview protocol, and observation checklist. The panel included kindergarten teachers, administrators, and higher education faculty who have played key roles in the development and implementation of the Common Core State Standards. Comments provided by panel members suggested the instruments were valid for their collection purposes. Since the panel made no suggestions for changing the instruments, the instruments were not revised.

Additionally, a pilot study was conducted to further validate the survey instrument. Three kindergarten teachers representative of the study population were selected for this study. The pilot study resulted in no revisions to the survey instrument.

Data Collection

Data were collected in three phases. Phase one included a pencil and paper survey completed by participants. Phase two included telephone interviews with 14 survey respondents. Phase three included field observations of eight teachers who responded to the survey and participated in the interview process.

In phase one, 185 subjects were asked to complete the pencil and paper self-administered cross-sectional survey, *Teaching Informational Text Common Core State Standards (NxG) in Kindergarten Survey* (Appendix C). Physical school addresses and names of kindergarten teachers for the 2013-2014 school year were obtained from the West Virginia Department of Education website and the websites of specific schools in the 15 county service area. To verify the names of the kindergarten teachers, the researcher contacted the personnel department in the central office of each county. An initial letter (Appendix B) was mailed to all 185 kindergarten teachers. The letter invited them to participate in the study, provided information regarding confidentiality, and included instructions for returning the completed survey. Participants completed a four-part survey pertaining to demographics and attributes, teachers' perspectives of their knowledge and ability to implement the CCSS, effectiveness of professional development related to the CCSS, and supports and barriers in implementing the CCSS. A survey method was chosen for data collection because it was the most efficient method for obtaining the perspectives of teachers (Babbie, 1990).

A final question on the survey asked respondents if they were willing to participate in a follow-up 30-minute telephone interview. If so, they provided contact information. The purpose of the telephone interviews in phase two was to validate survey results and gain a deeper understanding of kindergarten teachers' survey responses. Fourteen telephone interviews were conducted. The researcher-developed instrument, *Interview Protocol for Teaching Informational Text Common Core State Standards (NxG) in Kindergarten* (Appendix D)*,* was used to guide the telephone interviews. At the end of the interviews, participants were asked if they were willing to participate in a 30-minute classroom observation conducted by the researcher.

Phase three of data collection consisted of eight kindergarten teachers observed for at least 30 minutes while they were engaged in whole-group, direct instruction in reading. These eight teachers who agreed to participate during the telephone interviews, represented eight different counties in the 15 county service area. The purpose of the observations was to further understand participant responses on the survey and to gather more detailed data. The researcher used the instrument, *Observation Checklist for Teaching Informational Text Common Core State Standards (NxG) in Kindergarten* (Appendix E), to guide the classroom observations.

Data Analysis

Data collected to address Research Question 1 (RQ1) were analyzed by item, cluster, and total. Mean scores and standard deviations were calculated for each item, cluster, and the total and a one-sample *t-test* was conducted to determine the level of significance with a *p<.05*. For Research Question 2 (RQ2), data were analyzed by cluster and total scores. An independent sample *t-test* and ANOVA were calculated as appropriate. Data collected to address Research Question 3 (RQ3) were analyzed item-by-item and by total. Mean scores and standard deviations were calculated for each item and the total and a one-sample *t-test* conducted to determine the level of significance with a *p<.05*. Research Question 4 (RQ4) and Research Question 5 (RQ5) qualitative responses were analyzed using Emergent Category Analysis.

Limitations

A limitation of the study was the assumption that the teachers who responded to the survey and participated in the interview and observation were honest in their responses. Subjects were also assumed to have sufficient knowledge of the Common Core State Standards to respond to the study instruments.

Chapter 4: Findings

The purpose of this study was to determine kindergarten teachers' perspectives regarding their ability to teach the informational text Common Core State Standards. The purpose of this chapter is to present and discuss study findings. This chapter is organized into data collection, demographic/attribute data, major findings, and instrument reliability sections. The presentation of the major findings is organized around the major research questions. A final section provides a summary of the findings.

Data Collection

The study was a mixed-methods design and data were collected in three phases. Phase one included a pencil-and-paper self-administered survey consisting of four demographic/attribute questions, 18 Likert-scale questions, and three open-ended questions. Following IRB approval on September 25, 2013, a letter (Appendix A) and survey (Appendix C) were mailed to 185 kindergarten teachers in Glenville State College's 15 county service area. The letter served as the participant consent form and described the purpose of the study. Additional mailings were conducted on October 14 and November 1, 2013. A total of 55 *(N=55)* kindergarten teachers responded to the survey. Data collection was terminated on January 1, 2014.

The survey included an invitation to participate in a telephone interview. If kindergarten teachers agreed to do so, they included their contact information and best time to contact them. Phase two included telephone interviews with 14 of the 55 (25% of respondents) kindergarten teachers who completed to the survey. Fourteen respondents agreed to be interviewed and all 14 were interviewed. The purpose of the interviews was to validate and gain a deeper

understanding of survey results. The telephone interview protocol consisted of 10 open-ended

questions (Appendix D) and each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes.

In Phase Three, kindergarten teachers that participated in the telephone interviews were

asked if they would agree for the researcher to observe them for 30 minutes while they were

teaching reading. Phase three included classroom observations of 8 of the 14 (15% of survey

respondents) kindergarten classrooms. Twelve of the 14 teachers that participated in the

telephone interviews agreed to be observed, but 8 teachers were selected for observation to avoid

duplication of counties included in the 15 county service area. If the kindergarten teacher

agreed, the participant provided the name of the school where he/she taught and the time of

his/her reading block. During the classroom observation, the researcher took field notes and

completed an observation checklist (Appendix E). Written permission was obtained from each

building principal (Appendix G) before the researcher observed in the kindergarten classrooms,

Demographic/Attribute Data

Survey participants were asked three demographic questions: total years of teaching

experience, number of years of experience teaching kindergarten, and school socioeconomic

status (SES) level based on federal guidelines for percent of students eligible for free and

reduced lunch. Participants were provided four response categories for each demographic

question. Insufficient cell size required collapsing the four response categories into three options

for each variable for purposes of data analysis. The categories of 11-15 years and of 16 or more

years were combined to make a new category of 11 or more years for total teaching experience

and for years of teaching experience in kindergarten. The categories of less than 35% and 35-

50% were combined to form a new category of less than 50% to represent the approximate percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch.

More than half (56.4%, *n = 31*) of the respondents reported having 11 or more years of total teaching experience and half (50.9%, *n = 28*) reported having less than five years of kindergarten teaching experience. More than half (60.0%, *n = 33*) of the survey respondents reported student eligibility for free and reduced lunch at 76% or greater. Respondent demographic data are provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic/Attribute Data of Responding Kindergarten Teachers

Demographic/Attribute Variable	*n*	*%*
Total Years of Teaching Experience		
Less than 5	10	18.2
6-10	14	25.5
11 or more	31	56.4
Years of Teaching Experience in Kindergarten		
Less than 5	28	50.9
6-10	13	23.6
11 or more	14	25.5
School SES Level (Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch)		
50% or less	13	23.6
51-75%	9	16.4
76% or more	33	60.0

N=55

Survey respondents were also asked to report any additional resources received to aid them in implementation of the CCSS. Responses were organized into five categories: funding, additional planning time, classroom materials, on-going professional development, and collaboration with other teachers. More than two-thirds (70.9%, n=39) of the respondents

reported receiving on-going professional development and collaboration time with other teachers. Eight (14.5%) of the teachers reported they had received funding, and 13 (23.6%) received additional planning time as resources to support implementation of the Standards. Data are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
CCSS Resources Received to Aid in Implementation of Standards

Resource/Support	*n**	*%*
Funding	8	14.5
Additional Planning Time	13	23.6
Classroom Materials (i.e. books, manipulatives, etc)	21	38.2
On-Going Professional Development	39	70.9
Collaboration with Other Teachers	39	70.9

N=55   *Duplicated count

Major Findings

This section includes major findings organized by research question. The sections include level of ability to implement kindergarten informational text standards, level of ability to implement standards by demographic variables, perceived effectiveness of professional development related to Common Core State Standards, and supports and barriers to implementing the Common Core State Standards.

Levels of Ability to Implement Kindergarten Informational Text Standards.
Participating kindergarten teachers were asked to indicate their level of ability to teach each of

the 13 informational text standards on a Likert scale of 1-7, with 1=Novice, 4=Adequate, and 7=Mastery. A one sample *t-test* was conducted to compare the sample mean for each informational text standard to a comparison mean score *(CM = 4.0, R = 1.0-7.0)* from a hypothetical normal distribution.

The 13 informational text standards were organized into four categories and the total mean of each category was compared to a comparison mean from a hypothetical normal distribution. The four categories are key ideas and details *(CM = 16.0, R = 4.0-28.0)*, craft and structure *(CM = 16.0, R = 4.0-28.0)*, integration of knowledge and ideas *(CM = 12.0, R = 3.0-21.0)*, and range of reading and level of text complexity *(CM = 8.0, R = 2.0-14.0)*. A one-sample *t-test* was used to compare the sample category means to a mean from the hypothetical normal distribution for each category

A total level of ability to implement informational text standards score was also calculated by summing the individual responses for each of the 13 informational text standards. A one-sample t-test was used to compare this total mean score with the mean *(CM = 52, R = 13.0-91.0)* from a hypothetical normal distribution.

Analysis of respondent mean scores for the 13 informational text standards yielded three levels of response. Two informational text standards had mean scores greater than 6.5. Four standards had mean scores that fell between 6.0-6.49, and seven standards had mean scores less than 6.0. Means ranged from 5.55-6.76.

Informational text standards with means greater than 6.5 included: identifying the front cover, back cover, and title page of a book *(M = 6.76, SD = .54, p<.05)* and naming the author and illustrator *(M = 6.53, SD = .86, p<.05)*. Standards with means ranging from 6.0-6.49

included: defining the role of author and illustrator in presenting the ideas or information in a text *(M = 6.45, SD= .77, p<.05)*, with prompting and support, describing the relationship between illustrations and the text in which they appear *(M = 6.11, SD = .92, p<.05)*, actively engaging in group reading activities with purpose *(M = 6.24, SD = .86, p<.05)*, and actively engaging in group reading activities with understanding *(M = 6.16, SD = .94, p<.05)*.

Informational text standards with means less than 6.0 included the following standards: with prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in text *(M = 5.76, SD = 1.05, p<.05)*; with prompting and support, identify the main topic *(M = 5.89, SD = .98, p<.05)*, with prompting and support; retell key details in text *(M = 5.95, SD = .89, p<.05)*; with prompting and support, describe the connection between two individuals, events, ideas, or pieces of information in text *(M = 5.67, SD = 1.02, p<.05)*; with prompting and support, ask about unknown words in a text *(M = 5.95, SD = 1.01, p<.05)*; with prompting and support, identify the reasons an author gives to support points in a text *(M = 5.55, SD = 1.09, p<.05)*; and with prompting and support, identify the basic similarities in and differences between two text on the same topic *(M = 5.69, SD = 1.08, p<.05)*. These data are provided in Table 3.

Table 3
Level of Ability to Implement Kindergarten Informational Text Standards

Standard	M	SD	t-value
1. Ask and answer questions about key details in text.			
	5.76	1.05	12.42*
2. Identify the main topic.			
	5.89	0.98	14.38*
3. Retell key details in text.			
	5.95	0.89	16.20*
4. Describe the connection between two individuals, events, ideas, or pieces of information in text.	5.67	1.02	12.17*
5. Ask about unknown words in text.	5.95	1.01	14.32*
6. Identify the front cover, back cover, and title page of a book.			
	6.76	0.54	37.74*
7. Name the author and illustrator of a text.			
	6.53	0.86	21.86*
8. Define the role of author and illustrator in presenting the ideas or information in a text.			
	6.45	0.77	23.78*
9. Describe the relationship between illustrations and the text in which they appear.	6.11	0.92	17.07*
10. Identify the reasons an author gives to support points in a text.	5.55	1.09	10.56*
11. Identify basic similarities in and differences between two text on the same topic.	5.69	1.08	11.54*
12. Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose.			
	6.24	0.86	19.29*
13. Actively engage in group reading activities with understanding.	6.16	0.94	17.10*

*p<.05 Scale: 1=Novice 4=Adequate 7=Mastery   N=55 CM=4.0

The 13 informational text standards (Appendix C) were grouped into four categories: 1-4 (Key Ideas and Details), 5-8 (Craft and Structure), 9-11 (Integration of Knowledge and Ideas), and 12-13 (Range of Text Complexity).   One-sample *t-test* results for the respondent mean scores for the four categories yielded the following results: key ideas and details *(M = 23.36, SD = 3.86, p<.05)*; craft and structure *(M = 25.71, SD = 2.52, p<.05)*; integration of knowledge and ideas *(M = 17.35, SD = 2.88, p<.05)*; and range of reading and level of text complexity *(M = 12.51, SD = 1.91, p<.05)*.

A total level of ability to implement informational text standard score was calculated by summing the individual responses for each of the 13 informational text standards. A one-sample *t-test* was used to compare the total mean score *(M = 78.93, SD = 9.93, p<.05)* with the mean from a hypothetical normal distribution. These data are provided in Table 4.

Table 4
Level of Ability to Implement Kindergarten Informational Text Standards by Categories and Total

Category/Total	*M*	*SD*	*R*	*^CM*	*t-value*
Key Ideas and Details	23.36	3.86	4-28	16	14.15*
Craft and Structure	25.71	2.52	4-28	16	28.56*
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	17.35	2.88	3-21	12	13.79*
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity	12.51	1.91	2-14	8	17.48*
Total	78.93	9.93	13-91	52	20.11*

N=55   ^CM=comparison mean   *p<.05

Level of Ability to Implement Standards by Demographic Variables. Survey respondents were asked a series of demographic questions. This section examines the differences in ability to implement informational text standards based on these selected demographic variables: total years of teaching experience, years of kindergarten teaching experience, and SES level measured by percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch. These differences were analyzed by subcategory and total only.

A one-way between groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to explore the differences in ability to implement informational text standards based on total years of teaching experience for each of the four categories. Differences in ability to implement standards based on total years of teaching experience were significant at $p<.05$ for the key ideas and details and range of reading and level of text complexity categories. No significant differences in ability to implement standards based on total years of teaching experience were found for the craft and structure and integration of knowledge and ideas categories.

The analysis of the key ideas and details category yielded the following results: less than 5 years of total teaching experience *(M = 20.90, SD = 4.51)*; 6-10 years of teaching experience *(M = 22.29, SD = 4.91)*; and 11 or more years of teaching experience *(M = 24.65, SD = 2.46)*. The effect size, calculated using eta squared, was 0.158. Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for the less than five years of total experience group *(M = 20.90, SD = 4.51)* was significantly different from the 11 or more years *(M = 24.65, SD = 2.46)* group. The 6-10 years of experience group *(M = 22.29, SD = 4.81)* was not significantly different from the less than five years of experience *(M = 20.29, SD = 4.51)* and the 11 or more years of experience groups *(M = 24.65, SD = 2.46).*

For the range of reading and text complexity category, the following results were calculated: less than 5 years of total teaching experience *(M = 11.50, SD = 2.07)*, 6-10 years of teaching experience *(M = 11.93, SD = 2.67)*, and 11 or more years of teaching experience *(M = 13.10, SD = 1.17)*. The significant differences were between the least experienced and the most experienced kindergarten teachers. The effect size, calculated using eta squared was 0.129. Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for the less than five years of total experience group *(M = 11.50, SD = 2.07)* was significantly different from the 11 or more years of experience *(M = 11.93, SD = 1.17)* group. The 6-10 years of experience group *(M = 11.93, SD = 2.67)* was not significantly different from the less than five years of experience *(M = 11.50, SD = 2.07)* and the 11 or more years of experience group *(M = 13.10, SD = 1.17)*. These data are provided in Table 5.

When the total level of ability to implement standards score was analyzed based on total years of experience, the highest mean score was reported by the 11 or more years of experience group *(M = 82.19, SD = 6.40)*. The lowest mean score *(M = 73.30, SD = 11.91)* was reported by the less than five years of teaching experience group. These differences were significant at *p<.05*. The effect size, calculated using eta squared, was 0.149. Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for the less than five years of experience group *(M = 73.30, SD = 11.91)* was significantly different from the 11 or more years of experience group *(M = 82.19, SD = 6.40)*. The 6-10 years of experience group *(M = 75.71, SD = 12.50)* did not differ significantly from the less than five years of experience *(M = 73.30, SD = 11.91)* or 11 or more years of experience *(M = 82.10, SD = 6.40)* groups. These data are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Differences in Levels of Ability to Implement Informational Text Standards Based on Total Years of Teaching Experience

	Total Years of Experience						
	Less than 5 (n=10)		6-10 (n=14)		11 or more (n=31)		
Category/Total	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	F
Key Ideas and Details	20.90	4.51	22.29	4.91	24.65	2.46	4.91*
Craft and Structure	24.80	3.55	24.86	2.88	26.39	1.73	2.74
Integration of Knowledge And Ideas	16.10	3.45	16.64	3.22	18.06	2.35	2.45
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity	11.50	2.07	11.93	2.67	13.10	1.17	3.87*
Total	73.30	11.91	75.71	12.50	82.19	6.40	4.54*

N=55   *p<.05

A one-way between groups ANOVA was conducted to explore the differences in ability to implement informational text standards by category based on total years of teaching experience at the kindergarten level for each of the four categories and total score. Differences in ability to implement informational text standards based on total years of teaching experience at the kindergarten level were statistically significant at *p<.05* for all categories and total scores.

The analysis of the key ideas and details category produced the following results: less than 5 years of kindergarten teaching experience *(M = 21.79, SD = 4.19);* 6-10 years of kindergarten teaching experience *(M = 25.38, SD = 2.63);* and 11 or more years of kindergarten

teaching experience *(M = 24.64, SD = 2.79).* The effect size, calculated using eta squared was 0.181. Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for the less than 5 years of experience group *(M = 21.79, SD = 4.19)* differed significantly from the 6-10 years of experience group *(M = 25.38, SD = 2.63)* and the 11 or more years of experience group *(M = 24.64, SD = 2.79).*

The analysis of the craft and structure category produced the following: less than 5 years of kindergarten teaching experience *(M = 24.96, SD = 2.96),* 6-10 years of kindergarten teaching experience *(M = 25.85, SD = 1.95),* and 11 or more years of teaching experience *(M = 27.07, SD = 1.21).* The effect size, calculated using eta squared was 0.122. Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for the less than 5 years of experience group *(M = 24.96, SD = 2.96)* differed significantly from the 11 or more years of experience group *(M = 27.07, SD = 1.21).* The 6-10 years of experience group *(M = 25.85, SD = 1.95)* did not differ significantly from the less than 5 years of experience group *(M = 24.96, SD = 2.96)* or the 11 or more years of experience group *(M = 27.07, SD = 1.21).*

Findings for the integration of knowledge and ideas category were as follows: less than 5 years of kindergarten teaching experience *(M = 16.46, SD = 3.135),* 6-10 years of kindergarten teaching experience *(M = 18.92, SD = 1.66),* and 11 or more years of kindergarten teaching experience *(M = 17.64, SD = 2.68).* The effect size, calculated using eta squared was 0.124. Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean scores for the less than 5 years of kindergarten teaching experience group *(M = 16.46, SD = 3.135)* was significantly different from the 6-10 years of kindergarten teaching experience group *(M = 18.92, SD = 1.66).* The 11 or more years of kindergarten teaching experience group *(M = 17.64, SD = 2.68)* did not differ significantly from the five years of kindergarten teaching experience group *(M = 16.46,*

SD = 3.135) or the 6-10 years of kindergarten teaching experience group *(M = 18.92, SD = 1.66).*

The following results were calculated for the range of reading and text complexity category: less than 5 years of kindergarten teaching experience *(M = 11.82, SD = 2.31),* 6-10 years of kindergarten teaching experience *(M = 13.31, SD = .95),* and 11 or more years of kindergarten teaching experience *(M = 13.14, SD = 1.10).* The effect size, calculated using eta squared was 0.137. Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for the less than 5 years of experience group *(M = 11.82, SD = 2.31)* was significantly different from the 6-10 years of experience group *(M = 13.31, SD = .95).* The 11 or more years of experience group *(M = 13.14, SD = 1.10)* did not differ significantly from the less than 5 years of experience group *(M = 11.82, SD = 2.31)* or the 6-10 years of experience group *(M = 13.31, SD = .95).* These data are provided in Table 6.

When the total ability to implement informational text standards score based on years of kindergarten teaching experience were analyzed, the highest mean score was reported by the 6-10 years of experience group *(M = 83.46, SD = 6.39).* The lowest mean score *(M = 75.04, SD = 11.31)* was reported by the less than five years of kindergarten teaching experience group. The effect size, calculated using eta squared was 0.163. Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for the less than five years of kindergarten teaching experience group *(M = 75.04, SD = 11.31)* differed significantly from the 6-10 years of kindergarten teaching experience group *(M = 83.46, SD = 6.39)* and the 11 or more years of kindergarten teaching experience group *(M = 82.50, SD = 6.30).* These data are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Differences in Levels of Ability to Implement Informational Text Standards Based on Total
Years of Teaching Experience at the Kindergarten Level

	Total Years of Kindergarten Experience							
	Less than 5 (n=28)		6-10 (n=13)		11 or more (n=14)			
Category/Total	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*F*
Key Ideas and Details	21.79	4.19	25.38	2.63	24.64	2.79	5.75*
Craft and Structure	24.96	2.96	25.85	1.95	27.07	1.21	3.60*
Integration of Knowledge And Ideas	16.46	3.13	18.92	1.66	17.64	2.68	3.68*
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity	11.82	2.31	13.31	.95	13.14	1.10	4.14*
Total	75.04	11.31	83.46	6.39	82.50	6.30	5.07*

N=55   *p<.05

A one-way between groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to explore the

differences in ability to implement informational text standards based on schools' socioeconomic

status, measured by the percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch. Findings for the

key ideas and details category were as follows: less than 50% of students receiving free or

reduced lunch *(M = 24.62, SD = 2.53)*, 51-75% of students receiving free or reduced lunch *(M =*

23.56, SD = 4.10), and 76% or more of the students receiving free or reduced lunch *(M = 22.82,*

SD = 4.19). The craft and structure category yielded the following results: less than 50% of

students receiving free or reduced lunch *(M = 26.31, SD = 1.60)*, 51-75% of students receiving

free or reduced lunch *(M = 25.44, SD = 3.13)*, and 76% or more students receiving free or

reduced lunch *(M = 25.55, SD = 2.67).* Findings for the integration of knowledge and ideas

category included the following: less than 50% of students receiving free or reduced lunch *(M =*

17.62, SD = 3.10); 51-75% of students receiving free or reduced lunch *(M = 17.78, SD = 3.23)*,

and 76% or more students receiving free or reduced lunch *(M = 17.12, SD = 2.76).* Findings for

the range of reading and level of text complexity category were: less than 50% of students

receiving free or reduced lunch *(M = 12.77, SD = 1.54)*, 51-75% of students receiving free or

reduced lunch *(M = 12.89, SD = 1.45)*, and 76% or more students receiving free or reduced

lunch *(M =12.30, SD = 2.16).* None of the differences in teacher ability to implement

informational text based on school SES levels were significant *(p<.05)* for any category. These

data are presented in Table 7.

When the total level of ability to implement score was analyzed based on differences in

SES, the highest mean score reported was by the 50% or less group *(M = 81.31, SD = 8.36)* and

the lowest mean score *(M = 77.79, SD = 10.34)* was reported by the 76% or more group. These

differences were not significant at *p<.05*. These data are presented in Table 7.

Table 7
Differences in Levels of Ability to Implement Informational Text Standards Based on Socioeconomic Status

| Category/Total | Percentage of Students Receiving Free or Reduced Lunch | | | | | | |
| | 50% or less (n=13) | | 51-75% (n=9) | | 76% or more (n=33) | | |
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*F*
Key Ideas and Details	24.62	2.53	23.56	4.10	22.82	4.19	1.03
Craft and Structure	26.31	1.60	25.44	3.13	25.55	2.67	.48
Integration of Knowledge And Ideas	17.62	3.10	17.78	3.23	17.12	2.76	.25
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity	12.77	1.54	12.89	1.45	12.30	2.16	.48
Total	81.31	8.36	79.67	10.89	77.79	10.34	.61

N=55

Perceived Effectiveness of Professional Development Related to Common Core State Standards. Participants were provided with a list of CCSS professional development sources and asked to rate the effectiveness of those in which they had participated. The largest number of respondents participated in professional development led by kindergarten teachers from their respective counties *(n = 52, 94.5%)*. The least common source of professional development experienced by respondents was participation in the Teacher Leadership Institute *(n = 20, 36%)*. Respondents also participated in other sources of professional development provided by county office personnel *(n = 46, 83.6%)*, state department personnel *(n = 37, 67.2%)*, and a Regional Educational Service Agency *(n = 36, 65.4%)*. These data are represented in Table 8.

Survey respondents also were asked to indicate their level of perceived effectiveness for five selected sources of CCSS professional development. Respondents also had the option of choosing not applicable (NA) if they did not participate in that particular source of professional development. The frequencies were summed for responses of 1-3 and deemed "least effective," a frequency of 4 was deemed "moderately effective," and frequencies were summed for responses of 5-7 and deemed "most effective." The data represent duplicated counts as respondents may have participated in more than one of the sources of professional development included on the survey. The most effective form of professional development as perceived by respondents was the Teacher Leadership Institute *(n = 16, 80.0%)* and the least effective was professional development provided by state department personnel *(n = 14, 37.8%)*. These data are presented in Table 8.

Table 8
Effectiveness of Professional Development

PD Source	Least Effective		Moderately Effective		Most Effective		Total	
	n*	*%*	*n**	*%*	*n**	*%*	*n**	*%*
Teacher Leadership Institute (TLI)	2	10.0	2	10.0	16	80.0	20	36.3
Kindergarten teachers from county	4	7.2	9	17.3	39	75.0	52	94.5
County office personnel	14	30.4	13	28.3	19	41.3	46	83.6
State department personnel	14	37.8	7	18.9	16	51.4	37	67.2
Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA)	13	36.1	11	30.6	12	33.3	36	65.4

N=55   *duplicated counts

Supports and Barriers to Implementing the Common Core State Standards.

Survey respondents were asked two open-ended questions—one requesting teachers to identify factors that support the implementation of the standards and one requesting respondents to identify barriers to implementation. Responses were analyzed using emergent category analysis. Overall, teachers reported more barriers than supports to implementing the standards.

The most frequently reported support for implementing the CCSS was collaboration/common planning time with other kindergarten teachers *(n = 20, 36.3%)*. The least common reported support by kindergarten teachers was instructional coaches *(n = 2, 3.6%)*.

Additional supports noted were online resources/websites *(n = 7, 12.7%)* and the adopted

reading series *(n = 3, 5.5%).* The most frequently reported barrier was insufficient time to plan

and collaborate with other kindergarten teachers *(n = 14, 25.4%).* The least common barrier

reported by kindergarten teachers was students varying backgrounds/experiences *(n = 5, 9.1%).*

Additional barriers reported were lack of funding to purchase CCSS materials *(n = 10, 18.2%),*

lack of professional development *(n = 9, 16.4%)*, and curriculum materials not aligned to CCSS

(n = 9, 16.4%). These data are provided in Table 9.

Table 9
Supports and Barriers in the Implementation of the Informational Text Standards

Supports	*n**	*%*	Barriers	*n**	*%*
Collaboration/common planning time with other kindergarten teachers	20	36.3	Lack of age appropriate informational text	11	20.0
			Insufficient planning /collaboration time	14	25.4
Online resources/ websites	7	12.7			
Adopted reading series	3	5.5	Lack of funding to purchase CCSS materials	10	18.2
Instructional coaches	2	3.6			
			Lack of professional development	9	16.4
			Curriculum materials not aligned to CCSS	9	16.4
			Students varying backgrounds/ experiences	5	9.1

N=55   **duplicate count*

Interviews with Kindergarten Teachers

Fourteen kindergarten teachers agreed to participate in a 30-minute telephone interview and all 14 teachers were interviewed. A ten-question interview protocol, *Interview Protocol for Teaching Informational Text Common Core State Standards (NxG) in Kindergarten* (Appendix

D), was used to guide these interviews. Interview findings, organized by interview prompt, are provided in the following sections.

What do you like about the Reading Informational Text Common Core State Standards? Five teachers liked that the standards allow them to incorporate other content areas such as science and social studies. One teacher noted, "The standards allow me to incorporate science and social studies into reading and makes *[sic]* the content areas more interesting for students." Three teachers noted that informational text provides more real life applications like reading newspapers and magazines. Another respondent said, "The informational text is true information for children. It provides real-life application, and by being exposed to this, the students will be ready for real-life reading like reading the newspaper." Six teachers mentioned that students seem to like reading informational text so it assists with motivation. One respondent noted, "The standards allow me to delve deeper into a book, really get into it instead of reading it to children just for fun."

What do you perceive to be the shortcomings of the Common Core State Standards?

Three teachers noted that the CCSS are very broad and only touch upon concepts. One teacher noted, "The standards only scratch the surface of most concepts." Three teachers suggested that the standards are not developmentally appropriate because they lack a focus on foundational skills such as social and emotional development; also, the standards set expectations that are too high for young children. For example, one teacher noted, "Kindergarten students do not have the fine motor skills needed for the writing component emphasized in the CCSS." Two teachers shared concerns about not knowing if they are teaching the same standards in the same way as other kindergarten teachers in their counties because they

do not have time for collaboration. For example, one respondent said, "I don't know if every kindergarten teacher is teaching the standards the same way because there is no stable continuity among the standards broad nature." One teacher mentioned the school district had difficulty understanding the CCSS which resulted in county-wide confusion and another teacher noted that teachers' editions are no help because they are not aligned with the CCSS. Three teachers found no shortcomings with the CCSS.

How do you believe the Common Core Standards compare to the previous CSOs?

Six teachers believed the CCSS are not that much different than the existing Content Standards and Objectives (CSOs), while five teachers thought the CCSS are broader, but allow them to teach more in-depth. One teacher responded, "The new standards are similar, but easier to use compared to the CSOs. It is a lot easier to find materials related to the Common Core." Two teachers only had experience teaching with the CCSS and were not familiar with the previous CSOs. One teacher did not think the CCSS challenged kindergarten students like the CSOs did because of all the prompting required by the CCSS and responded, "The Common Core State Standards are watered down because of all the prompting required by the new standards."

How has your teaching changed since the adoption of the Common Core Standards?

Three teachers discussed how their teaching is more student-centered by incorporating more hands-on activities and centers/work stations. One teacher explained, "The new standards allow my teaching to be more student-centered which makes the students more engaged and actively involved in their learning." Three teachers noted they have more time for play-based learning, teachable moments, and exploration. For example, one teacher stated, "I feel like I can

move away from the scripted curriculum and be more creative in lesson planning." Two teachers felt like their teaching had not changed at all and two teachers had only taught using the CCSS, so they did not have a frame of reference. One teacher noted the use of more informational text while one teacher mentioned spending more time on writing instruction. Another teacher felt compelled to assess more to determine if students are meeting the new standards and one teacher thought the biggest change in teaching has been in math, not reading.

How have the Common Core State Standards affected student achievement? Seven teachers perceived that no change has occurred in student achievement and five teachers believe that student achievement has increased because students seem to be mastering concepts sooner and performing better on assessments. One teacher noted that her students were "…reading by January." Two teachers noted that it is too soon to give an opinion, while another respondent suggested, "...but someone will change what standards we are required to use before we get the opportunity to see whether or not they will impact achievement."

Describe what kind of professional development has been provided for you. Four of the kindergarten teachers discussed attending the TLI the summer before implementation occurred "…which was very beneficial." All teachers noted that professional development was provided by county or RESA personnel, but as one teacher noted, "…professional development was not on-going and there was not enough of it."

How effective was the professional development you received? Generally, respondents believed the professional development provided was somewhat effective, but not on-going or frequent enough. Teachers noted that some of the professional development did not focus on kindergarten or was too general in nature. For example, one teacher noted, "Most of the

professional development tends to focus on the upper elementary grades and not kindergarten." Most kindergarten teachers look online for assistance in implementing the CCSS because "…the professional development I received was informative, but I find more resources on my own."

How has your feedback affected the implementation of the Common Core State Standards? Thirteen of the 14 teachers interviewed reported not being asked for any type of feedback pertaining to the CCSS. One teacher noted, "I was asked by county level personnel during an instructional support (IS) day what I thought of the new standards, but it really didn't turn into a conversation about them." Generally, respondents were disappointed that they had no opportunity to share feedback, especially with school, county, and state administrators. Teachers suggested that not being asked to provide feedback about new initiatives is typical.

Have there been other changes related to the CCSS that have influenced your teaching or education in general? Seven teachers indicated that collaboration time with other kindergarten teachers has been a positive addition to their teaching positions because "…collaborating with other kindergarten teachers has been helpful and we share what has been working and what has not." Three teachers noted that nothing has been provided or taken away that has influenced how they have taught because the new standards "…are just more work for me." Aligning the kindergarten report card to the CCSS and using data folders to monitor student progress were mentioned by two teachers. One teacher discussed how the new teacher evaluation form used by principals requires teachers to choose two CCSS on which to improve.

Classroom Observations of Kindergarten Teachers

Twelve of the 14 teachers interviewed agreed to be observed. Eight kindergarten teachers were selected for observation from eight different counties. Teachers were observed for 30 minutes during their reading/language arts instruction. The *Observation Checklist for Teaching Informational Text Common Core State Standards (NxG) in Kindergarten* (Appendix E) was used to guide and record what informational text standards were taught. The teachers' total years of experience and years of experience teaching kindergarten were also recorded on the observation checklist.

The findings reflected that the informational text standards are being taught in kindergarten. Two teachers taught all 13 informational text standards. The other six teachers taught at least half of the informational text standards, except for one teacher who taught four of the standards. The most frequently observed standards category was range of reading and text complexity and the least frequently observed category was integration of knowledge and ideas. Table 10 presents these data.

Table 10
Informational Text Standards Observed in Kindergarten Classrooms

Standard	Kindergarten Teacher							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Ask and answer questions about key details in text.	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
2. Identify the main topic.		X	X	X		X	X	X
3. Retell key details in text.		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
4. Describe the connection between two individuals, events, ideas, or pieces of information in text.			X	X		X		
5. Ask about unknown words in text.		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
6. Identify the front cover, back cover, and title page of a book.		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
7. Name the author and illustrator of a text.		X	X		X	X	X	
8. Define the role of author and illustrator in presenting the ideas or information in a text.		X	X		X	X	X	
9. Describe the relationship between illustrations and the text in which they appear.		X	X		X		X	
10. Identify the reasons an author gives to support points in a text.		X	X				X	X
11. Identify basic similarities in and differences between two text on the same topic.		X	X		X			
12. Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Standard	Kindergarten Teacher							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
13. Actively engage in group reading activities with understanding.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Years of Total Teaching Experience	10	5	28	31	28	16	2	4
Years of Experience in Kindergarten	10	2	28	31	20	6	2	4

N=8   X=observed the standard

Instrument Reliability

The internal consistency of the *Informational Text Common Core State Standards (NxG) in Kindergarten Survey* instrument, Part B, was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The alpha coefficients for the levels of ability to teach for each of the four categories and the total level of ability to teach were calculated. The internal consistency for the levels of ability for the four categories ranged from a high of 0.954 *(M = 12.40, SD = 1.76)* for range of reading and text complexity to a low of 0.776 *(M = 25.69, SD = 2.51)* for craft and structure. The internal consistency for the total score was 0.952 *(M = 78.71, SD = 9.06).* These alpha coefficients indicate an acceptable level (above .7) for one category (craft and structure) and a desirable level of reliability (above .9) for the other three categories (key ideas and details, integration of knowledge and ideas, and range of reading and text complexity). The internal consistency for the total instrument suggests a desirable level of reliability (above .9) overall for the scale. These data are provided in Table 11.

Table 11

Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient for Instrument Reliability: Kindergarten Informational Text
Standards

_____

		Internal Consistency		
Categories/Totals	*n* scale items	*M*	*SD*	Alpha Coefficient
Key Ideas & Details	4	23.27	3.65	.945
Craft & Structure	4	25.69	2.51	.776
Integration of Knowledge & Ideas	3	17.35	2.88	.920
Range of Reading & Text Complexity	2	12.40	1.76	.954
Total	13	78.71	9.06	.952

_____

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this chapter was to present data gathered for a study to examine

kindergarten teachers' perceived ability to implement the reading informational text Common

Core State Standards in 15 counties in West Virginia. Respondents were asked to use a seven-

point scale to indicate their level of ability to implement 13 reading informational text standards

and to indicate the level of helpfulness of various types of professional development related to

the Common Core State Standards. Respondents were also asked to identify factors which either

supported or obstructed the implementation of the standards.

In general, kindergarten teachers described their level of ability to implement the

informational text standards as adequate or mastery. The same patterns were found when

responses were analyzed by cluster and totals. When asked to describe their level of perceived

helpfulness pertaining to five sources of professional development, kindergarten teachers

indicated that, overall, professional development they had received was mostly effective, with

the TLI being the most effective. Statistically significant differences were found between ability

to implement the informational text Common Core State Standards and total years of experience

(two categories and total) and years of experience teaching kindergarten, but were not found for

schools' socioeconomic status. Generally, more years of kindergarten teaching experience

resulted in higher levels of ability to implement the informational text standards.

When teachers were asked to identify factors that supported their implementation of the

Common Core State Standards, teachers most often noted collaboration and common planning

time with other kindergarten teachers followed by online resources/websites. Factors most often

identified as barriers in implementing the standards were insufficient planning/collaboration

time, lack of age appropriate informational text, and lack of funding to purchase materials related

to the standards.

Interview findings indicated that teacher reaction to the CCSS depend to a large extent on

the type and frequency of professional development experiences related to the CCSS. Overall,

kindergarten teachers reported not having opportunities to provide feedback about implementing

the CCSS; in addition, and they stated that they had not been given the resources needed to

effectively implement the CCSS. Observation data suggested that kindergarten teachers are

implementing the informational text CCSS.

The internal consistency for the total of the four categories suggested a desirable level of

reliability (above .9) overall for the scale. Alpha coefficients also indicated an acceptable level

of reliability for one category (craft and structure) and a desirable level for the other three

categories (key ideas and details, integration of knowledge and ideas, and range of reading and text complexity).

Chapter 5: Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

This chapter reviews the purpose of the study, demographic data, and methods. It also includes a summary of the findings. The chapter finishes with a presentation of conclusions for the five research questions, discussion and implications, recommendations for further research and concluding remarks.

Purpose of the Study

The Common Core State Standards are being implemented in West Virginia and across the nation. Teachers are in the forefront of this implementation; however, little is known about their perspectives of the Common Core State Standards. The purpose of this study was to determine kindergarten teachers' perspectives about their ability to implement the informational text Common Core State Standards. The study also investigated differences in levels of ability to implement the standards based on total years of experience, years of experience teaching kindergarten, and schools' socioeconomic status. In addition, this study determined sources of professional development that kindergarten teachers perceived to be most effective in helping them implement the CCSS. Finally, the study sought to identify supports and barriers, if any, that teachers faced in implementing the CCSS. The following research questions guided the study:

RQ1   What is the kindergarten teacher's perceived level of ability to implement the kindergarten reading informational text Common Core State Standards?

RQ2   What differences, if any, exist between the kindergarten teacher's level of ability to implement the kindergarten reading Common Core State Standards based on selected demographic/attitude variables?

RQ3   What sources of professional development do kindergarten teachers perceive to be

most effective in the implementation of kindergarten reading informational text

Common Core State Standards?

RQ4   What factors, if any, do kindergarten teachers identify as supports to their efforts

to implement the kindergarten reading informational text Common Core State

Standards?

RQ5   What factors, if any, do kindergarten teachers identify as barriers to their efforts

to implement the kindergarten reading informational text Common Core State

Standards?

Demographic Data

The population for this study included all kindergarten teachers in Glenville State

College's 15 county service area in fall 2013. Based on the WVDE website there were 185

kindergarten teachers in these counties at that time. All subjects in the population were included

in the study.

Methods

This study was completed using a mixed-methods research design, using both qualitative

and quantitative methods. Data were collected in three phases. Phase one data were collected

using a pencil-and-paper, cross-sectional survey focused on determining kindergarten teachers'

perceived abilities in implementing the informational text Common Core State Standards. Data

on selected attributes and demographic variables were also collected. Phase two of data

collection consisted of 14 telephone interviews with teachers who expressed their willingness to

participate in a 30-minute telephone interview on the survey. A researcher-developed interview protocol was used to guide data collection. Phase three of data collection consisted of eight classroom observations. Teachers who were observed were selected on the basis of agreeing to do so at the conclusion of the telephone interview. The researcher observed each classroom for 30 minutes during reading/language arts instructional time and completed an observation checklist containing the 13 informational text standards.

An expert panel of three individuals (Appendix F) validated the instrument, *Teaching Informational Text Common Core State Standards (NxG) in Kindergarten Survey* (Appendix C), the interview protocol, and the observation checklist. The panel included kindergarten teachers, administrators, and state department specialists who have key roles in the development and implementation of the Common Core State Standards. To validate the survey instrument, three kindergarten teachers representative of the study population participated in the pilot study; they were chosen for convenience and rapid turnaround.

Data collected to address RQ1 were analyzed by item, cluster, and total. Mean scores and standard deviation were calculated for each item, cluster, and the total and a one-sample t-test was conducted to determine the level of significance with a $p<.05$. For RQ2, data were analyzed by cluster and total scores. Independent sample *t-tests* and ANOVAs were calculated as appropriate. Data collected to address RQ3 were analyzed item-by-item and by total. Mean scores and SD were calculated for each item. RQ4 and RQ5 qualitative responses were addressed by emergent category analysis.

Summary of the Findings

In general, kindergarten teachers described their level of ability to implement the informational text Common Core State Standards as between adequate and mastery. When asked to describe the level of effectiveness of the professional development they have received, teachers responded that it was moderately effective. Statistically significant differences were found among ability to implement the informational text Common Core State Standards and total years of experience, as well as years of experience teaching kindergarten.

Interview findings suggested that teacher experiences with the CCSS depend upon the type and frequency of CCSS-related professional development experienced. Overall, kindergarten teachers reported not having opportunities to provide feedback about implementing the CCSS. They also stated that they had not been given the resources needed to effectively implement the standards. Despite these reports, observation data suggested that kindergarten teachers are implementing the informational text standards.

Conclusions

Data collected as a part of this study were sufficient to support the following conclusions:

Research Question One: Levels of Ability to Implement. Overall, kindergarten teachers reported that they had more than adequate ability to implement the informational text standards with scores falling between adequate and mastery categories. The level of implementation was fairly consistent across the 13 individual items, the four categories, and the total implementation level. Interview findings supported survey findings, as teachers consistently mentioned incorporating other content areas with informational text reading and implementing a more student-centered approach. All but one of the observed kindergarten

teachers taught at least half of the informational text standards so data collected during classroom observations indicate that kindergarten teachers are teaching the informational text standards.

Research Question Two: Differences in Levels of Ability to Implement. Kindergarten teachers with more total years of teaching experience reported significantly higher levels of ability to implement the standards for the key ideas and details category, range of reading and level of text complexity category, and total score. No significant differences in levels of ability to teach existed based on total years of experience for the two remaining categories.

A significant difference emerged for all categories and the total score in levels of ability to implement the standards based on total years of teaching experience in kindergarten. Kindergarten teachers with 6-10 and 11 or more years of teaching experience reported significantly higher levels of ability to implement the informational text standards than teachers with less than five years of kindergarten teaching experience.

No significant differences existed in teacher levels of ability to teach informational text standards based on school SES levels. This was true for all four category scores and the total score.

Research Question Three: Effectiveness of Professional Development. The largest number of respondents reported participating in professional development provided by other kindergarten teachers from their respective counties. The smallest number of respondents reported participating in the TLI, but teachers reported TLI as being the most effective source of professional development related to the Common Core State Standards. The least effective source was professional development delivered by state department personnel in professional development experiences other than TLI.

All interviewed teachers reported receiving professional development by county or RESA personnel and believed it was somewhat effective, but not on-going. Interviewed teachers that had attended the Teacher Leadership Institute shared positive comments about the standards and alignment information obtained there.

Research Question Four: Supports in Implementation. The most frequently available support for implementing the Common Core State Standards reported by kindergarten teachers was collaboration/common planning time with other kindergarten teachers. The least frequently available support was instructional coaches. Overall, teachers interviewed indicated that collaboration/planning time with other kindergarten teachers had been a positive addition.

Research Question Five: Barriers in Implementation. The most frequently reported barrier for implementing the Common Core State Standards was insufficient planning/collaboration time with other kindergarten teachers. The least frequently reported barrier was students having varying backgrounds. Overall, teachers reported more barriers to implementing the Common Core State Standards than supports in implementation. Kindergarten teachers that participated in the interviews commented about the lack of planning/collaboration time; they also expressed concern about the standards not providing foundational skills kindergarten students need to meet the high expectations set by the standards.

Discussions and Implications

The following discussion of implications is organized into five sections. Section one discusses Research Question 1 regarding levels of ability to implement the standards and section two pertains to Research Question 2 concerning differences based on demographics. The third section relates to Research Question 3 pertaining to effectiveness of professional development

and section four takes into account Research Questions 4 and 5 discussing responses to the open-ended questions about supports and barriers in the implementation of the standards. The final section provides a summary of the implications.

Levels of Ability to Implement. Kindergarten teachers who responded to the survey reported adequate levels of ability to implement the informational text standards. For teachers to have consistent patterns of implementation, research suggests teachers are complying with the standards. Busser (2013) supported this finding with a poll conducted by the National Education Association that found two-thirds of its members are either entirely in favor of the standards or support them with reservations. Concurrently, Tienken (2011) reported that over 170 educational and corporate organizations are in favor of implementing the CCSS. Supporting the adoption of the CCSS initiative is a positive step as changes have occurred in kindergarten classrooms, such as the introduction of more informational text (Coleman & Pimental, 2012).

Research has supported the need to use more informational text in all grades because less than 50% of high school graduates are able to read college and career level text independently (Aspen Institute, 2012). Numerous studies have argued that incorporating large amounts of informational text in the younger grades is critical and just as important as reading narrative text. For example, one study revealed that only 9.8% of text in first grade libraries were informational text and students spent less than four minutes per day reading informational text (Goodwin & Miller, 2012; Duke, 2000).

Differences Based on Demographics. Findings from this study indicate that years of teaching experience affects kindergarten teachers' ability to implement the standards; generally, more years of total teaching experience and years of kindergarten teaching experience equates to

higher levels of ability. Overall, respondents with 6-10 years of kindergarten teaching experience reported higher levels of ability to implement standards in three of the four categories. Several studies confirm that new teachers are less effective compared to teachers with some teaching experience (Harris & Sass, 2007; Kane, Rockoff, & Staiger, 2006; Ladd, 2008). In a study by Ladd (2008), teachers with 20 years of experience were more effective than new teachers, but were only marginally more effective than teachers with 5 years of teaching experience. A study by Mackenzie, Hemmings, and Kay (2011), focused on a specific strategy implemented in early education classrooms (i.e. kindergarten), found that teachers with less experience teaching in early education classrooms were less likely to have positive attitudes toward the strategy compared to more experienced colleagues.

Effectiveness of Professional Development. Teachers who responded to the survey reported participating in various forms of professional development with some types being more effective than others. Research has supported the influence of professional development on implementing educational changes because teacher training will play a key role in the success of the CCSS (Killion & Hirsh, 2012a; Loveless, 2012; Nielson, 2012; Sheninger, 2013). Carpenter et al. (1989) found that students in a class in which the teacher received 80 hours of comprehensive, targeted professional development on a specific type of instruction outperformed the students on three of the six student achievement measures compared to the class where the teacher received only 4-hours of training. Short, sporadic professional development is not effective. Researchers have agreed that professional development should be intensive and sustained to have a greater impact on teaching practices (Collinson & Cook, 2001; Day & Leith, 2007; Garet et al., 2001).

Supports and Barriers in Implementation. Overall, kindergarten teachers responding to the survey suggested supports and barriers in implementing the CCSS that provide insight for policymakers and administrators to improve and increase levels of implementation. Respondents believed that collaboration and planning time with other kindergarten teachers and online resources have supported implementation of the standards. The findings in this study are similar to findings from an EPE Research Center study (2012) where over 70% of teachers reported that more planning time and collaboration with colleagues would better prepare them to teach the CCSS. Additional research supports the use of collaboration/common planning, especially when implementing new initiatives. In a study by Chissick (nd), collaboration was ranked as the most important factor in implementing a new reform/initiative by teachers. Many teachers believe that collaborating with other teachers has been the best form of professional development experienced during their careers (Phillips & Hughes, 2012). Collaboration/common planning time has been linked to higher levels of students achievement, especially in schools with higher percentages of students receiving free or reduced price lunches (Flowers et al, 1999; Mertens & Flowers, 2003; Mertens, Flowers, & Mulhall, 1998).

In addition to collaboration/common planning, teachers are turning to the Internet to search for resources that will aid them in implementing the new standards; that is likely because as Blitz (2013) and Bruder (2013) suggested, an increasing number of websites that provide free, quality professional development with an interactive/collaborative component. Relying on the Internet for resources is particularly popular for a growing number of early childhood professionals (Weigel, Bales, & Moyses, 2012) because going online is convenient and according to early educators, the web provides useful information and learning experiences (Olsen, 2007).

Respondents to the survey reported more barriers than supports in implementing the standards. Barriers noted are insufficient collaboration/planning time, absence of funding to purchase materials aligned to CCSS, lack of age-appropriate informational books, inadequate professional development, and students' diverse backgrounds. Research agrees that one of the most dire characteristics of American education has to do with teacher isolation; thus, teachers often do not have opportunities to work together (Phillips & Hughes, 2012).

Lack of funding seems to be an issue in every educational reform, including the CCSS initiative. In the face of budget cuts, finding funds to purchase materials aligned to the new standards will be increasingly difficult. Rentner and Kober (2012) pointed out that 76% of school districts that have adopted the CCSS report not having enough funds to support related activities and materials needed for effective implementation. Insufficient funding means that teachers will not receive materials aligned to the CCSS. According to the Center on Education Policy (2012), 47% of school districts that have adopted the CCSS view lack of aligned curriculum materials as a major challenge. Lack of funding may also contribute to the absence of age-appropriate informational text. Research by Yopp and Yopp (2000) revealed that only 14% of the text teachers read on any given day was informational. Hall and Sabey (2007) suggested that teachers incorporate content-area reading to increase the use of informational text.

Professional development is key to the success of implementing the CCSS and when teachers believe they are not receiving adequate training, concern exists. A study by the Center on Education Policy found that providing effective professional development pertaining to the CCSS will prove to be a challenge for most states (Kober & Rentner, 2012; Sawchuk, 2012). A study by the EPE Research Center (2012) that found nearly 3 in 10 teachers have not had any

training for the new standards, 59% of teachers that have participated in professional development reported three or less days of training, and only 11% of participants in the study reported that the professional development was high quality in nature.

The presence of diversity in schools is not a new issue, but students' with varying backgrounds are challenging to teach; coupling the challenges of diversity with a new reform results in greater demands for classroom teachers. Burkham and Lee (2002) reported that disadvantaged children begin kindergarten with significantly lower cognitive abilities than more advantaged children and that nany factors influence socioeconomic status including race, ethnicity, family structure, child care, home reading, computer use, and television habits.

The CCSS aim to make instruction more equal across the country, but Biddle and Berliner (2002) suggested that public education in America is not equal for all students because of large differences in school funding which results in lower quality buildings, curriculum, and equipment available to support instruction. New standards do nothing to address these inequities. In a survey by the American Federation of Teachers (2013), 45% of teachers working in schools that are ranked as having students in poor economic situations report feeling somewhat/not prepared to implement the CCSS.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study investigated kindergarten teachers' perspectives of their ability to implement the informational text Common Core State Standards in Glenville State College's 15 county service area. The study also looked at differences in levels of ability to implement the standards based on total years of experience, years of experience teaching kindergarten, and schools' socioeconomic status. In addition, the study determined sources of professional development

kindergarten teachers perceived to be most effective in helping them implement the CCSS. Finally, this study sought to identify supports and barriers teachers faced in implementing the CCSS. Based on study findings, the following recommendations for further research are provided:

1. This study focused on kindergarten teachers in Glenville State College's 15 county service area. Expanding this study to include a larger population such as the entire state of West Virginia may provide additional data that would support general conclusions and implications regarding implementation of the informational text standards.

2. This study focused on kindergarten teachers because the increased introduction of informational text standards was an addition to this grade level. Expanding this study to include a larger population such as another grade level may provide data that would support general conclusions and implications regarding implementation of the informational text standards.

3. Respondents in this study report collaboration/planning time with other kindergarten teachers supports the implementation of the CCSS, but also report that they have not had enough collaboration/planning time. Conducting a study that would include kindergarten teachers that received collaboration/planning time with other kindergarten teachers may provide additional data that would support general conclusions and implications regarding implementation of the CCSS.

4. Respondents in this study report that professional development influences the implementation of the CCSS. A study investigating forms and lengths of

professional development may provide data that would improve professional development related to the CCSS.

5.   Respondents in this study indicated that the most effective form of professional development was the Teacher Leadership Institute (TLI) which was reported as being the least common source of professional development. A study investigating teachers that have and have not attended TLI may provide data that would improve professional development related to the CCSS.

6.   Respondents in this study report that schools' socioeconomic levels influence levels of implementation. A study investigating characteristics of schools with varying socioeconomic levels may provide data that would improve implementation of the standards for all levels.

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Office of Research Integrity   FWA 00002704
Institutional Review Board
401 11th St., Suite 1300   IRB1 #00002205
Huntington, WV 25701   IRB2 #00003206

September 17, 2013

Ron Childress
MUGC

RE: IRBNet ID# 502538-1
At: Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral)

Dear Dr. Childress:

Protocol Title:	[502538-1] A Study of Kindergarten Teachers' Ability to Teach the Kindergarten Informational Text Common Core State Standards in Fifteen West Virginia School Districts	
Expiration Date:	September 17, 2014	
Site Location:	MUGC	
Submission Type:	New Project	APPROVED
Review Type:	Exempt Review	

In accordance with 45CFR46.101(b)(2), the above study and informed consent were granted Exempted approval today by the Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral) Designee for the period of 12 months. The approval will expire September 17, 2014. A continuing review request for this study must be submitted no later than 30 days prior to the expiration date.

This study is for student Shelly Ratliff.

If you have any questions, please contact the Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/ Behavioral) Coordinator Michelle Woomer, B.A., M.S at (304) 696-4308 or woomer3@marshall.edu. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

APPENDIX B: Participant Information Letter

37 Deer Valley Lane
Glenville, WV 26351

Dear Kindergarten Teacher:

You are invited to participate in an anonymous research survey entitled **"**A Study of Kindergarten Teachers' Ability to Teach the Kindergarten Informational Text Common Core State Standards in Fifteen West Virginia School Districts." As a kindergarten teacher, you are in a unique position to offer your insight about kindergarten's reading standards since you have implemented them for the longest period of time compared to other grade level teachers in West Virginia. The information you provide will offer assistance in providing stakeholders valuable information as to what resources you may need including professional development along with the opportunity of sharing your general thoughts about the Reading Informational Text Common Core State Standards (NxG Standards).

This study is being conducted as a part of doctoral research at Marshall University. The survey will take approximately fifteen (15) minutes to complete. Your responses will be anonymous, so do not put your name anywhere on the survey unless you decide to participate in a phone interview. If you decide to be a part of the interview phase of the research, you will be asked to provide me with you name and contact information. That information will be kept confidential. Participation is completely voluntary. If you choose to withdraw or not participate there is no penalty or loss of benefits; you may discard the survey. You may choose to not answer any question by simply leaving it blank.

Returning the completed survey to me end of the third work week following receipt of this letter confirms that you are 18 years of age or older, that you are a kindergarten teacher, and gives your consent for use of the answers you provide.

If you have any questions about the study you may contact me by phone at (304) 462-6213 during the day, via email shelly.ratliff@glenville.edu, or at my personal mailing address above. If you have questions concerning your rights as a research participant you may contact the Marshall University Office of Research Integrity at (304) 696-4303.

If you wish to view results of this survey, that information will be made available to teachers during spring 2014. You may wish to keep this letter for your records. Your participation is greatly appreciated in my quest in earning a doctorate degree in Curriculum & Instruction.

Thank you,
Shelly Ratliff, Ed.S.
Assistant Professor of Education
Glenville State College

APPENDIX C: Survey Instrument

TEACHING INFORMATIONAL TEXT COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS (NxG) IN

KINDERGARTEN

Part A. Teacher Information--Please answer the following questions:

1. Total years of teaching experience: (check one)

___a. less than 5

___b. 6-10

___c. 11-15

___d. 16 or more

2. Years of teaching experience in kindergarten: (check one)

___a. less than 5

___b. 6-10

___c. 11-15

___d. 16 or more

3. What is the approximate percentage of students in your school receiving free or reduced lunch? (check one)

___a. less than 35%

___b. 36-50%

___c. 51-75%

___d. 76% or more

4. What additional resources have you received to aid in the implementation of the Common Core State Standards?
(check all that apply)

___a. funding

___b. additional planning time

___c. classrooms materials (i.e. books,

manipulatives, etc.)

___d. on-going professional development

___e. collaboration with other teachers

___f. other (please list:_____)

Part B. *Level of Ability to Teach--Following is a list of Informational Text Common Core State Standards (NxG). Using a scale from 1-7, with 1 being novice ability to teach, 4 being adequate ability to teach, and 7 being mastery of teaching, circle the response that best describes your ability to teach each standard listed below.*

Level of Your Ability to Teach Each Standard

	Novice			*Adequate*			*Mastery*

Kindergarten Informational Text Common Core State Standards (NxG) Students will be able to...

Standard	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in text	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. With prompting and support, identify the main topic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. With prompting and support, retell key details in text	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. With prompting and support, describe the connection between two individuals, events, ideas, or pieces of information in text	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. With prompting and support, ask about unknown words in a text	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Identify the front cover, back cover, and title page of a book	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Name the author and illustrator of a text	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Define the role of author and illustrator in presenting the ideas or information in a text	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the text in which they appear (e.g., what person, place, thing, or idea in the text an illustration depicts)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. With prompting and support, identify the reasons an author gives to support points in a text	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. With prompting and support, identify basic similarities in and differences between two text on the same topic (e.g., in illustrations, descriptions, or procedures)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. Actively engage in group reading activities with understanding	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Part C. Professional Development--*Following is a list of sources that may have provided professional development for you for the Common Core State Standards. Using a scale from 1-7, with 1 being least effective, 4 being moderately effective, and 7 being most effective, circle the response that best describes your experience with that particular professional development. Please circle NA if you did not receive that type of professional development.*

Level of Helpfulness of Professional Development

	Least Effective			Moderately Effective			Most Effective	

Professional Development Source

Source	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA
1.Teacher Leadership Institute (TLI)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA
2. Kindergarten teachers from your county	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA
3. County office personnel	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA
4. State department personnel	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA
5. RESA	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA
6. other (please list:_____)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA

Part D. Teacher Comments:

1. Please list factors which you view as **supporting and/or facilitating** your efforts to implement the kindergarten Information Text Common Core State Standards (NxG):

2. Please list factors you view as **barriers** to your efforts to implement the kindergarten Information Text Common Core State Standards (NxG):

3. How has the increased use of informational text in kindergarten affected students' motivation to read?

Please read the following page

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

REQUEST FOR TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

In an effort to gain additional information pertaining to the teaching of Kindergarten Informational Reading Common Core State Standards, the co-principal investigator, Shelly Ratliff, invites you to participate in a fifteen (15) telephone interview. If you choose to participate in the telephone interview, please provide your contact information below. This personal contact information will be separated from the survey so your survey responses will not identify you in any way.

Please provide your name, phone number, and a time I can best call you.

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone number: _____

Best time to call: _____

THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR CONSIDERING THIS REQUEST

APPENDIX D: Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol for Teaching Informational Text Common Core State Standards (NxG)

in Kindergarten

1) What do you like about the Reading Informational Text Common Core Standards?

2) What do you perceive to be the shortcomings of the Common Core Standards?

3) How do you believe the Common Core Standards compare to the previous CSOs?

4) How has your teaching changed since adoption of the Common Core Standards?

5) How have the Common Core Standards affected student achievement?

6) Describe what kind of professional development has been provided for you.

7) How effective was the professional development you received?

8) How has your feedback affected the implementation of Common Core Standards?

9) Have there been other changes related to the Common Core Standards that have influenced your teaching or education in general?

10) Would you be willing to allow the researcher to observe your reading class for 30 minutes?

APPENDIX E: Observation Protocol

Observation Checklist for Teaching Informational Text Common Core State Standards (NxG) in Kindergarten

During a 30 minute observation of a kindergarten reading/language arts class while the teacher was engaged in whole group and direct instruction, the researcher observed the following objectives from the Informational Text Common Core State Standards as noted by a check mark.

Kindergarten Informational Text Common Core State Standards (NxG)	*Observed*	*Not Observed*
1. With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in text	_____	_____
2. With prompting and support, identify the main topic	_____	_____
3. With prompting and support, retell key details in text	_____	_____
4. With prompting and support, describe the connection between two individuals, events, ideas, or pieces of information in text	_____	_____
5. With prompting and support, ask about unknown words in a text	_____	_____
6. Identify the front cover, back cover, and title page of a book	_____	_____
7. Name the author and illustrator of a text	_____	_____
8. Define the role of author and illustrator in presenting the ideas or information in a text	_____	_____
9. With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the text in which they appear (e.g., what person, place, thing, or idea in the text an illustration depicts)	_____	_____
10. With prompting and support, identify the reasons an author gives to support points in a text	_____	_____
11. With prompting and support, identify basic similarities in and differences between two text on the same topic (e.g., in illustrations, descriptions, or procedures)	_____	_____
12. Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose	_____	_____
13. Actively engage in group reading activities with understanding	_____	_____

Notes:

APPENDIX F: Panel of Experts

Connie Stout, Assistant Professor of Education

Toni Bishop, Principal

Julie Perrin, Kindergarten Teacher

Judy Prusack, Kindergarten Teacher

Vicki Hardway, Kindergarten Teacher

APPENDIX G: Observation Consent Form for School Principals

Dear Principal:

You are invited to participate in a research study focused on gathering kindergarten teachers' perspectives of the Informational Text Common Core State Standards. Kindergarten teachers are in a unique position to offer insight about the implementation of the Common Core State Standards in West Virginia. Observational data collected will provide information that will be useful to stakeholders as they provide support for the continued implementation of the Reading Informational Text Common Core State Standards (NxG Standards). This study is being conducted as a part of my doctoral research at Marshall University.

The duration of the observation will be approximately thirty (30) minutes. The co-principal investigator will complete an observation checklist during her time in the kindergarten classroom. The checklist contains the 13 kindergarten informational text Common Core State Standards. The observation will be kept confidential and all data will be reported as group data. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you choose to withdraw or not participate there is no penalty or loss of benefits.

Signing this observation consent letter confirms that you are 18 years of age or older, that you are the school principal, that you allow the co-principal investigator to observe a kindergarten classroom in your school, and indicates your consent for use of the observation information. No individual teachers, schools, or school districts will be identified in the study.

If you have any questions about the study you may contact Shelly Ratliff (co-principal investigator) at shelly.ratliff@glenville.edu and (304) 462-6213 or Dr. Ron Childress (principal investigator) at rchildress@marshall.edu and (304) 746-1904. If you have questions concerning your rights as a research participant you may contact the Marshall University Office of Research Integrity at (304) 696-4303.

You may wish to keep a copy of this letter for your records. Thank you in advance for your participation in this study. A summary of the study findings will be mailed to all participants at the completion of the study.

Thank you,

Shelly Ratliff, Ed.S.
Co-Principal Investigator
Assistant Professor of Education
Glenville State College

_____   _____
        Principal's Signature   Date

                                                            _____
                                                            Co-PI initials/date

APPRENDIX H: Vita

Shelly Ann Ratliff
Assistant Professor of Education
Glenville State College

Education

2012   Certification in Administration   Salem International University
2004   MA Reading   Marshall University
2002   BA English Education, Elementary
        Education, Early Education   Glenville State College

Work Experience

2008- present   Glenville State College
2005-2008   Calhoun County Schools

Publications

Ratliff, S. A. (2009). 10 Ways Working Moms Can Bond with Their Infants. *West Virginia Quarterly.*

Presentations

2004   Celebrating Connections Conference in Charleston, WV

Presentation with early education interns, *Hands-on Activities to Enhance Movement*

2003   Huntington Early Education Conference in Huntington, WV

Presentation, *From Storybooks to Activities to Computer Apps: Making*

Meaningful Connections for Pre-K and K

2012   Huntington Early Education Conference in Huntington, WV

Presentation, *Book Bags: Building the Basics of Learning Through Great Stories*

2011   Mountain Heart Conference in Beckley, WV

Presentation, *Making Books Come to Life Through Movement and Healthy Snacks*

2011   International Reading Association Conference in Orlando, FL

Presented at Round Table, *Reading in the Content Areas*