

2014

College and career readiness anchor standards for English: preparedness of students and teachers as perceived by West Virginia English language arts teachers in grades six through twelve

Mary Ann Triplett
matriplett79@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <http://mds.marshall.edu/etd>

 Part of the [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](#), [Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Commons](#), and the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Triplett, Mary Ann, "College and career readiness anchor standards for English: preparedness of students and teachers as perceived by West Virginia English language arts teachers in grades six through twelve" (2014). *Theses, Dissertations and Capstones*. Paper 899.

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by Marshall Digital Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses, Dissertations and Capstones by an authorized administrator of Marshall Digital Scholar. For more information, please contact zhangj@marshall.edu.

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR ENGLISH:
PREPAREDNESS OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS AS PERCEIVED BY WEST VIRGINIA
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS TEACHERS IN GRADES SIX THROUGH TWELVE

Mary Ann Triplett
Marshall University
College of Education and Professional Development

Dissertation submitted to the faculty of the
Graduate College of Marshall University
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education
in
Curriculum and Instruction

Committee Chair, Lisa A. Heaton, Ph.D.
Ronald B. Childress, Ed.D.
Teresa R. Eagle, Ed.D.
Edna M. Meisel, Ed.D.

South Charleston, West Virginia, 2014

Keywords: College and Career Readiness Standards for English, Professional Development

Copyright 2014 by Mary Ann Triplett

ABSTRACT

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English: Preparedness of Students and Teachers as Perceived by West Virginia English Language Arts Teachers in Grades Six through Twelve

Mary Ann Triplett

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to determine how prepared students are to learn the competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts and how prepared teachers are to teach those same competencies as perceived by West Virginia English Language Arts teachers in grades six through twelve. In addition, this study examined differences, if any, between student preparedness and teacher preparedness as well as differences among respondents with different demographic or attribute variables. Finally, this study described effective instructional strategies and beneficial professional development topics identified by respondents. Data obtained from responses to the online survey, *College and Career Readiness Standards for English: How Prepared Are Students and Teachers* were compared using descriptive and inferential statistics as well as sorted, coded, organized, and analyzed to identify emergent themes. The study had a population of 1,274 West Virginia English Language Arts teachers employed to teach English in grades six through twelve during the fall semester of the 2013-2014 school year. Four hundred twenty-four teachers representing all eight Regional Education Service Agencies in West Virginia responded to the survey. Teachers' perceptions of student preparedness and teachers' perceptions of teacher preparedness were significantly different based on the different demographic and attribute variables. This study can support efforts that focus on ensuring that all teachers of English Language Arts, regardless of sex, years experience, certification, programmatic level, and Regional Education Service Agency feel fully prepared to teach the competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the English Language Arts teachers in West Virginia who work every day to better themselves and improve the lives of students in our state by providing students with rich, meaningful learning opportunities.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of others. I would like to thank each of the people who have helped me while on this journey.

I want to extend my gratitude and appreciation to my family for their support throughout my life. My parents instilled a love of learning and placed a high value on education. They always encouraged me to continue learning, work hard, and be the best I could be. Because I always wanted to be a teacher, I appreciate the time my sister spent being my first pupil as I went through elementary school. My husband has been on this journey with me every step of the way. I am forever indebted to him for the love and support he has given me throughout this process.

In addition to the support of my family, my doctoral committee provided guidance and support throughout the process. Dr. Lisa Heaton, chairperson of my committee, spent countless hours reading and rereading every word written and revised. The feedback she provided always made my work better. Dr. Ronald Childress shared a wealth of knowledge about survey research and writing. The feedback he provided kept the focus on what I wanted to accomplish. Dr. Teresa Eagle was relentless in her encouragement. Dr. Edna Meisel contributed much to the statistical analysis.

From my first grade teacher to the professors I had in the coursework for this degree, I thank you for laying the foundation for all of the learning I have done and continue to do throughout my life. To my colleagues throughout the state, thank you for sharing your expertise with me because I always learn something new from you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iv
LIST OF TABLES	ix
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
Background.....	2
Problem Statement	6
Purpose	6
Research Questions	7
Operational Definitions	8
Significance of Study	12
Delimitations.....	13
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	15
The Evolution of Standards	15
Moving Toward Common Standards	15
College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards	16
Common Core State Standards	17
From Instructional Goals and Objectives to the Next Generation Content Standards and Objectives for English Language Arts in West Virginia	22
Student Achievement in West Virginia	23
ACT Results	23
National Assessment of Educational Progress.....	24

Professional Learning	28
Modes of Professional Learning	28
Professional Learning and the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts	34
Professional Learning in West Virginia	36
Summary.....	42
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS	44
Research Design.....	44
Population and Sample	44
Instrumentation	45
Instrument Reliability and Validation	45
Data Collection Procedures	47
Data Analysis Procedures	49
Limitations	50
Summary.....	50
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS.....	51
Population and Sample	52
Respondent Demographics and Attributes	52
Major Findings.....	54
Research Question 1: How Prepared are Students	54
Research Question 2: How Prepared are Teachers	58
Research Question 3: Differences between Student and Teacher Preparedness.....	61
Research Question 4: Student Preparedness and Demographic Variables	62

Research Question 5: Teacher Preparedness and Demographic Variables	69
Research Question 6: Effective Instructional Strategies	77
Research Question 7: Professional Development Needs	80
Ancillary Findings	83
Summary of Findings	84
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION	88
Introduction.....	88
Summary of Purpose	88
Summary of Population.....	89
Conclusions, Discussion and Related Literature.....	89
Research Question 1: How Prepared are Students	90
Research Question 2: How Prepared are Teachers	92
Research Question 3: Differences between Student and Teacher Preparedness.....	93
Research Question 4: Student Preparedness and Demographic Variables	94
Research Question 5: Teacher Preparedness and Demographic Variables	96
Research Question 6: Effective Instructional Strategies	98
Research Question 7: Professional Development Needs.....	98
Ancillary Findings	99
Implications for Action.....	101
Recommendations for Future Research.....	103
REFERENCES.....	106
APPENDICES	118

Appendix A: College and Career Readiness Standards for English: How Prepared Are Students and Teachers	118
Appendix B: Panel of Experts.....	124
Appendix C: Content Validity Questions	126
Appendix D: IRB Approval.....	128
Appendix E: Initial Contact	131
Appendix F: Two Weeks After Survey Link Was Emailed	134
Appendix G: Three Weeks After Survey Link Was Emailed.....	136
Appendix H: Two Days Before Survey is Due.....	138
Appendix I: Author’s Curriculum Vitae.....	140

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for ELA	3
Table 2. Summary of Strands in CCSS for ELA and Other Subjects	19
Table 3. Condition of College and Career Readiness in West Virginia and the Nation	24
Table 4. Average Reading Scale Scores of Fourth Graders in West Virginia and the Nation	25
Table 5. Average Writing Scale Scores of Fourth Graders in West Virginia and the Nation	25
Table 6. Average Reading Scale Scores of Eighth Graders in West Virginia and the Nation	26
Table 7. Average Writing Scale Scores of Eighth Graders in West Virginia and the Nation	26
Table 8. Average Reading Scale Scores of Twelfth Graders in West Virginia and the Nation	27
Table 9. Average Writing Scale Scores of Twelfth Graders Nationally	27
Table 10. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient for Instrument Reliability: Teachers' Perceptions of Student Preparedness	47
Table 11. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient for Instrument Reliability: Teachers' Perceptions of Student Preparedness	47
Table 12. Demographic and Attribute Variables	53
Table 13. Level of Student Preparedness by Competency	56
Table 14. Level of Student Preparedness by Strand	57
Table 15. Level of Student Preparedness as a Total	57
Table 16. Level of Teacher Preparedness by Competency	59
Table 17. Level of Teacher Preparedness by Strand	60
Table 18. Level of Teacher Preparedness as a Total	61
Table 19. Level of Student Preparedness and Level of Teacher Preparedness by Strand	62

Table 20. Level of Student Preparedness by Strand: Male vs. Female.....	63
Table 21. Level of Student Preparedness by Strand: ELA Certified vs. Non-ELA Certified	64
Table 22. Level of Student Preparedness by Strand: Middle School/Junior High vs. High School	65
Table 23. Level of Student Preparedness and Significance by Strand: Years Experience	66
Table 24. Level of Student Preparedness and Significance by Strand: RESA 1-8.....	67
Table 25. Post-hoc Analysis: RESA 1-8	69
Table 26. Level of Teacher Preparedness by Strand: Male vs. Female	70
Table 27. Level of Teacher Preparedness by Strand: ELA Certified vs. Non-ELA Certified	71
Table 28. Level of Teacher Preparedness by Strand: Middle School/Junior High vs. High School	72
Table 29. Level of Teacher Preparedness and Significance: Years Experience	74
Table 30. Level of Teacher Preparedness and Significance by Strand: RESA 1-8.....	75
Table 31. Post-hoc Analysis: RESA 1-8	77
Table 32. Preferred Mode(s) of Professional Development	83

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR ENGLISH: PREPAREDNESS OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS AS PERCEIVED BY WEST VIRGINIA ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS TEACHERS IN GRADES SIX THROUGH TWELVE

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Students must receive explicit literacy instruction throughout adolescence to meet the reading, writing, and thinking skills required by colleges and employers (Berman & Biancarosa, 2005). Employers cite reading comprehension and written communication as very important, yet it is the top deficiency in new hires (National Endowment for the Arts, 2007). Not only do employers identify lack of reading and writing skills as a problem, results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) also indicate a decline in those skills (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009). According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the average reading scale score on the National Assessment of Education Progress in West Virginia was below the average scale score of all public school eighth graders in the country, and the percentage of students scoring below basic was higher in West Virginia than the national average. Successful initial accomplishments in reading proficiency often disappear as students move through middle school unless explicit instruction in reading and writing continues throughout a child's education (Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy, 2010).

“There are probably few primary teachers who think of themselves as directly preparing their children for college and career,” (Bomer & Maloch, 2011, p. 39) while “middle school and high school are important times for early postsecondary planning” (Wimberly & Noeth, 2005, p. viii). Results from tools used to assess students' academic readiness for college, such as the ACT, ACT Plan, and ACT Explore indicate that too many West Virginia students do not meet the benchmarks for college and career readiness in English and Reading (ACT, 2012b).

The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts are divided into two sections: Kindergarten through Fifth Grade and Sixth through Twelfth Grade (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officials, 2010b). If middle school and high school are important times for post-secondary planning, then focus needs to be on those students and teachers. If the tools used to assess college and career readiness are administered in middle school and high school, then focus needs to be on those students and teachers. Therefore, this study targeted West Virginia English Language Arts teachers in grades six through twelve focusing on the extent to which teachers perceived students are prepared to learn and teachers are prepared to teach the competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts because what is asked of students in classes appears to matter more than what classes students take (ACT, 2006).

Background

Although reading is an essential component of college and career readiness, current state standards and instruction in high school reading are insufficient (ACT, 2006). According to ACT (2006), the biggest difference in students who reach the college and career readiness benchmark for reading and those who do not is their ability to respond to questions about complex texts with those below the college and career readiness benchmark answering only a slightly higher number of questions correctly than the level suggested by chance. Therefore, students who can master the skills necessary to read and comprehend complex texts are more likely to reach the college and career readiness anchor standards than those who do not. Although current state standards do not address the issue of text complexity (ACT, 2006), the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts do. States need to revise their current standards to define specific grade level reading expectations and incorporate increasingly complex texts into all subject areas while

providing teachers with strong guidance, support, and professional development to strengthen reading instruction that incorporates complex texts (ACT, 2006). The College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts, as outlined in Table 1, plan to do that.

Table 1. College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for ELA

Domain	Cluster	Cluster	Cluster	Cluster
Reading	Key Ideas and Details	Craft and Structure	Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity
Writing	Text Types and Purposes	Production and Distribution of Writing	Research to Build and Present Knowledge	Range of Writing
Speaking/Listening	Comprehension and Collaboration	Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas		
Language	Conventions of Standard English	Knowledge of Language	Vocabulary Acquisition and Use	

Source: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers. (2010b)

ACT (2010a) analyzed the test results of 256,765 eleventh grade students, representing several states, who were administered forms of the ACT Plus Writing in the spring of 2010 as part of their states’ annual testing programs. By analyzing the results of students required to complete the ACT as part of their states’ testing program as opposed to students who selected to take the ACT, the sample consisted of typical eleventh grade students like those found in high schools throughout the United States.

ACT (2010a) estimated the percentage of students in the eleventh grade sample who met or exceeded the college and career readiness anchor standards associated with each Common Core State Standards cluster that is tested on the ACT. According to ACT’s estimation, 38% of

eleventh graders met the college and career readiness standards for reading with 40% meeting or exceeding the standards for key ideas and details while only 24% met or exceeded the standards for literacy in science. Fifty-one percent met or exceeded the standards in writing with 51% meeting or exceeding the standards for production and distribution of writing while only 39% met or exceeded the standards for text types and purposes as well as range of writing. Fifty-three percent met or exceeded the standards in language with 54% meeting or exceeding the standards for the conventions of Standard English while only 35% met or exceeded the standards for knowledge of language and vocabulary clusters. The ACT does not have test items that match the Common Core State Standards for the Speaking/Listening domain or the Research to Build and Present Knowledge cluster in the Writing domain. Based on the results of ACT's estimation of students' performance on the Common Core State Standards, the time has come to strengthen teaching and learning by focusing on the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards outlined in the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts (ACT, 2010a).

The Common Core State Standards, upon which the Next Generation Content Standards and Objectives for English Language Arts in West Virginia Schools are based, are designed to reflect the knowledge, skills, and understanding that students need to be college and career ready (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officials, 2010a). Increasing the rigor of standards is not enough; high expectations deserve high support (Garrett, 2009). Students need support from teachers and teachers need professional development on the standards to successfully meet the challenge of increased rigor if implementation is to be successful (Marrongelle, Sztajn, & Smith, 2013).

Although the new trend in education should be sustained professional development where communities of teachers collaborate with each other to improve their teaching skills (Dierking &

Fox, 2013), not all professional development is the same (Marrongelle, Sztajn, & Smith, 2013). Money is invested each year in professional development that does not make a difference in classrooms (Marrongelle, Sztajn, & Smith, 2013). Some of the professional development does not make a difference because it is delivered ineffectively or is not integrated into the workplace (Blair & Seo, 2007). To ensure that money is invested wisely, decisions must be made about what professional development is provided to enhance teachers' knowledge and skills, to improve teaching practices, and to increase student learning (Heck, Weiss, & Pasley, 2011).

Characteristics of successful professional development include a substantial number of hours aligned to professional development and school improvement goals while fostering strong professional relationships among teachers (Marrongelle, Sztajn, & Smith, 2013). However, programs with all of the characteristics of successful professional development do not always lead to significant improvements in teacher knowledge and student learning (Garet, Wayne, Stancavage, Taylor, Eaton, Walters, & Doolittle, 2011). Developing teachers' capacity to implement new standards in ways that support the intended student competencies will require instructional changes in classrooms that are likely to occur only if there are sustained professional development opportunities focused on the needs of teachers and students (Marrongelle, Sztajn, & Smith, 2013). Professional development responsive to teachers' perceived needs is promising for increasing instruction and improving student skills (Reed, 2009). Therefore, it is important to ask teachers how prepared they are to teach students the competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts and what type of professional development topics would be most beneficial. Conducting a needs assessment to ask teachers what they perceive as their professional development needs will allow providers to avoid training on topics not needed. Training on

unnecessary topics leads to participants who become frustrated and question the credibility of the organization providing the professional development (Blair & Seo, 2007).

Problem Statement

The 2012 ACT college and career readiness tools indicate that 30% to 39% of students in West Virginia who took the ACT, ACT Plan, or ACT Explore did not meet the college and career readiness benchmark for English and 47% to 61% did not meet the benchmark for reading (ACT, Inc., 2012b). As West Virginia moves to standards that include more rigorous content and application of knowledge through higher-order thinking skills (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officials, 2010a), teachers must be prepared to help students meet these challenges. The statistics cited indicate a need to examine teacher perceptions of how prepared students are to learn the competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts and the extent to which West Virginia English Language Arts teachers perceive they are prepared to teach students these same competencies. Therefore, this study focused on the preparedness of students and teachers as perceived by West Virginia English Language Arts teachers in grades six through twelve.

Purpose

Adopting the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) is just the beginning. Effective implementation in the classroom is what is important. Therefore, how the standards are implemented in classrooms will make the difference in student achievement. The success of the implementation of the Common Core State Standards rests on the quality of the professional development given the teachers charged with implementation (Gerwitz, 2012). To ensure successful implementation that benefits students, teachers need professional development that

boosts content knowledge with an emphasis on engagement strategies. “Policy leaders and educators must have the data necessary to determine the impact of the CCSS on curriculum, instruction, assessments and teacher professional development in their individual state” (Achieve, 2010, p. 19).

The purpose of this study was to identify how prepared students are to learn the competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts and the extent to which West Virginia English Language Arts teachers in grades six through twelve perceive they are prepared to teach students these same competencies.

Research Questions

This mixed-methods study addressed the following research questions:

1. How prepared are students to learn the competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts as perceived by West Virginia English Language Arts teachers in grades six through twelve?
2. How prepared are teachers to teach students the competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts as perceived by West Virginia English Language Arts teachers in grades six through twelve?
3. What differences, if any, exist between student preparedness to learn the competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts and teacher preparedness to teach these same competencies as perceived by West Virginia English Language Arts teachers in grades six through twelve?
4. What differences, if any, exist among selected demographic and attribute variables in terms of how prepared students are to learn the competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts?

5. What differences, if any, exist among selected demographic and attribute variables in terms of how prepared teachers are to teach the competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts?
6. What instructional strategies do teachers identify as most effective in helping prepare students to learn the competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts?
7. What professional development topics do teachers identify as most needed in helping prepare them to teach students the competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts?

Operational Definitions

The following operational definitions were used for the purpose of this study:

1. Level of Student Preparedness refers to the teacher's perception based on a Likert scale of how prepared students are to demonstrate the competencies outlined by the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts on a scale where 1=Not at All Prepared and 7=Fully Prepared as reported on the researcher-developed self-reporting survey found in Appendix A.
2. Level of Teacher Preparedness refers to the teacher's perception based on a Likert scale of that person's preparedness related to teaching students the competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts on a scale where 1=Not at All Prepared and 7=Fully Prepared and qualitative responses to open-ended questions about instructional strategies and professional development as reported on the survey found in Appendix A.

3. Student Preparedness in Reading refers to the teacher's perception based on a Likert scale of how prepared students are to demonstrate the first six competencies outlined by the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts on a scale where 1=Not at All Prepared and 7=Fully Prepared as reported on the researcher-developed self-reporting survey found in Appendix A.
4. Teacher Preparedness in Reading refers to the teacher's perception based on a Likert scale of how prepared they are to teach the first six competencies outlined by the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts on a scale where 1=Not at All Prepared and 7=Fully Prepared as reported on the researcher-developed self-reporting survey found in Appendix A.
5. Student Preparedness in Writing refers to the teacher's perception based on a Likert scale of how prepared students are to demonstrate competencies seven through twelve outlined by the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts on a scale where 1=Not at All Prepared and 7=Fully Prepared as reported on the researcher-developed self-reporting survey found in Appendix A.
6. Teacher Preparedness in Writing refers to the teacher's perception based on a Likert scale of how prepared they are to teach competencies seven through twelve outlined by the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts on a scale where 1=Not at All Prepared and 7=Fully Prepared as reported on the researcher-developed self-reporting survey found in Appendix A.
7. Student Preparedness in Speaking/Listening refers to the teacher's perception based on a Likert scale of how prepared students are to demonstrate competencies 13 through 16 outlined by the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language

Arts on a scale where 1=Not at All Prepared and 7=Fully Prepared as reported on the researcher-developed self-reporting survey found in Appendix A.

8. Teacher Preparedness in Speaking/Listening refers to the teacher's perception based on a Likert scale of how prepared they are to teach competencies 13 through 16 outlined by the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts on a scale where 1=Not at All Prepared and 7=Fully Prepared as reported on the researcher-developed self-reporting survey found in Appendix A.
9. Student Preparedness in Language refers to the teacher's perception based on a Likert scale of how prepared students are to demonstrate competencies 17 through 20 outlined by the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts on a scale where 1=Not at All Prepared and 7=Fully Prepared as reported on the researcher-developed self-reporting survey found in Appendix A.
10. Teacher Preparedness in Language refers to the teacher's perception based on a Likert scale of how prepared they are to teach competencies 17 through 20 outlined by the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts on a scale where 1=Not at All Prepared and 7=Fully Prepared as reported on the researcher-developed self-reporting survey found in Appendix A.
11. Years of Teaching Experience refers to the number of years, including the present year, self-reported on question number one in Part A of the survey found in Appendix A. Respondents selected the best fit from the following categories: 0, 1-4, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, 21-25, 26-30, or more than 30. If respondents selected zero, they were taken to the end of the survey because they have not taught English Language Arts.

12. Sex refers to the respondent's sex as self-reported on question number two in Part A of the survey found in Appendix A. Respondents selected the best fit from male or female.
13. Area of Certification refers to whether the respondent has specific certification in English Language Arts as self-reported on question number three in Part A of the survey found in Appendix A. Respondents selected the best fit from yes or no.
14. Programmatic Level refers to the grade band where the respondent is presently teaching as self-reported on question number four in Part A of the survey found in Appendix A. Respondents selected the best fit from middle school/junior high or high school.
15. RESA refers to the Regional Education Service Agency where the respondent teaches as self-reported on question number five in Part A of the survey found in Appendix A. Respondents selected the best fit from the range of RESA 1 to RESA 8.
16. Mode of Professional Development refers to the preferred format(s) of professional development self-reported on question number six in Part A of the survey found in Appendix A. Respondents selected all that apply from a list of nine professional development formats gleaned from the literature.
17. Strategies refers to practices that have been effective in preparing students to demonstrate the English language arts competencies outlined in Section B of the survey found in Appendix A.
18. Professional Development Topics refers to topics identified as beneficial in preparing students to demonstrate the competencies outlined in Section B of the survey found in Appendix A.

Significance of Study

This study has significance to those responsible for teaching the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts and those responsible for designing professional learning opportunities for teachers, such as the West Virginia Department of Education, the West Virginia Center for Professional Development, the Regional Education Service Agencies, district level and school level administrators and professional development coordinators, and higher education officials responsible for teacher preparation programs. Findings from this study should be of assistance to teachers working to strengthen curriculum and instruction in their classrooms. Findings should also help state, regional, district, and school level administrators make decisions regarding budgeting for professional development and hiring teachers who are prepared to teach the competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts. Those responsible for designing professional development should benefit from identification of competencies teachers are least prepared to teach along with identification of professional development formats teachers feel are needed to help them successfully teach the competencies.

The significance of exploring teachers' perceptions of how prepared students are to learn the competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts was to cause teachers to reflect on student preparedness, so teachers can identify student strengths and weaknesses which could shape decisions affecting curriculum and instruction. Information gleaned as teachers reflected on student preparedness can be used by individual teachers to establish the student learning goals required in the educator evaluation system.

The significance of exploring teachers' perceptions of the extent to which they are prepared to teach students the competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards was to gain new information about the nature and scope of the professional development needs for teaching each competency in hopes of increasing student learning.

The information gained from this study provides a framework for identifying the professional development needs of West Virginia English Language Arts teachers in grades six through twelve in regards to the implementation of the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts. Additionally, the information gained should benefit those responsible for teacher preparation programs in higher education in their efforts to align what pre-service teachers need to know and be able to do as well as what the students they are teaching are to be able to do.

Existing research related to the implementation of the college and career readiness anchor standards was limited, and this study sheds light on the perceptions of West Virginia teachers responsible for implementing the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards in English Language Arts in grades six through twelve. This study provides greater understanding to those who are responsible for teaching the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts and those who are responsible for designing professional development opportunities for teachers.

Delimitations

This study was limited to teachers in West Virginia public schools who taught English in grades six through twelve during the 2013-2014 school year as provided by county English Language Arts contacts. This study was also limited to teachers' perceptions of students' preparedness to learn the competencies outlined in the survey and teachers' perceptions of their

own preparedness to teach those same competencies. This study was also limited to the competencies addressed on the researcher-developed survey.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The Evolution of Standards

This section includes a discussion of the national standards movement starting in 1983 with the publication of *A Nation at Risk* and continuing up to the launch and adoption of the Common Core State Standards Initiative within all but four states: Alaska, Nebraska, Texas, and Virginia. Initiation of this movement within the state of West Virginia is also discussed.

Moving Toward Common Standards

Although some view standards as a loss of local control and community input because decision-making is placed in the hands of outside experts (Foster, 2004), the move toward national standards can be traced to 1983 with the publication of *A Nation at Risk*. This report is credited with igniting the focus on academic standards. In 1989, under the leadership of President George H. W. Bush, the governors agreed to set national educational goals. Although the America 2000 Act failed to pass Congress in 1991, the Bush administration found the funding to develop national standards that states could voluntarily adopt. The Goals 2000: Educate America Act, which provided money to help states develop state standards, was signed into law by President Bill Clinton in 1994, at the same time voluntary national standards were released in all core content areas except mathematics. After the history standards were attacked by Lynne Cheney and later denounced by the United States Senate, funding for the English standards was withdrawn. When George W. Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act into law, states were mandated to align their state tests to their academic standards (Education Week, 2012).

In 2008 the National Governors Association (NGA), the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), and Achieve, Inc. released a report advocating state standards comparable to

the expectations of students in academically successful countries. The National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers launched the Common Core State Standards Initiative in 2009 with all but four states pledging support within four months of launching the initiative. During the summer of 2009, work began on the development of College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards and grade by grade K-12 standards. The Common Core State Standards were issued in June, 2010 and were adopted by all but four states as of November, 2011 (Education Week, 2012).

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards

College and career readiness has been defined as the level at which students need to be prepared to enroll and succeed without remediation at a two-year or four-year institution, trade school, technical school, or in the workplace (ACT, 2004). All students need to graduate from high school ready for success in either college or a career (ACT & The Education Trust, 2005), yet according to the United States Department of Education's National Commission on the High School Senior Year (2001), the majority of students are not college and career ready even if they have a diploma. Since completing the core curriculum suggested for high school graduation and college and career readiness does not guarantee students are ready to succeed after high school, perhaps it is time to redefine the core curriculum by identifying and incorporating as expectations for all students the college and career readiness standards that are missing from state standards (ACT, 2004).

ACT (2005) recommends rigorous content and skill expectations aligned from the middle grades through college along with more consistent secondary to postsecondary curriculum alignment. Students are entering high schools without the knowledge and skills to help them be on target for college and career readiness upon graduation, and the knowledge and skills needed

for college and career readiness are not usually defined in state standards. Therefore, it is important that college and career readiness standards be aligned both vertically and horizontally and clarified throughout the entire educational system if we are to address the college and career readiness issue (ACT, 2007). Too much instructional time is spent reteaching objectives students should have mastered previously (ACT, 2007).

“College and career readiness standards lead students and educators in the right direction because they are anchored by known postsecondary academic and workplace requirements” (ACT, 2010b, p. 46). The Common Core State Standards Initiative moves toward establishing college and career readiness standards for all students (ACT, 2010b) by focusing on higher expectations of what students are to know and be able to do (Blackburn, 2011).

Common Core State Standards

The Common Core State Standards, upon which the Next Generation Content Standards and Objectives for English Language Arts in West Virginia Schools are based, are designed to reflect the knowledge, skills, and understanding that students need to be college and career ready (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010a). Like the 21st Century Reading and English/Language Arts Content Standards and Objectives for West Virginia Schools and the Reading English Language Arts Content Standards and Objectives for West Virginia Schools before them, the Common Core State Standards are designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills they need in order to compete successfully in a global community and to provide teachers and parents with a clear understanding of what they need to do to help students succeed (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officials, 2010c).

The Common Core State Standards do not address content or instructional strategies. Based on the belief that all students are capable of critical thinking skills and higher order thinking skills (Jago, 2011), the Common Core State Standards define the skills that students are expected to master and the level at which the students are expected to perform those same skills (Crawford, 2012). The English Language Arts Standards include the following strands: reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language as referenced in Table 2 (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officials, 2010b).

Reading. One of the key aspects of the reading standard, summarized in Table 2, addresses the growing difficulty gap between the text complexity of high school textbooks and the text complexity encountered by students in their postsecondary lives by requiring high school students to read and comprehend at the text complexity levels commonly found in their postsecondary options. While the complexity level of texts encountered in postsecondary education have remained steady or increased during the last 50 years, the complexity of texts used in K-12 education has declined, leaving students without the ability to meet the reading requirements of postsecondary education. Text complexity is defined with quantitative dimensions, qualitative dimensions, and reader and task considerations. The quantitative dimensions consider word length or frequency, sentence length, and text cohesion and measurements, such as lexile range. The qualitative dimensions consider the level of meaning or purpose, structure, language conventionality, clarity, and knowledge demands. The reader and task considerations include variables specific to an individual reader, such as motivation, background knowledge and experience, as well as the purpose and complexity of the task assigned and the questions posed (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officials, 2010b). In addition to the increasing degree of text

complexity, more challenging expository texts are used in postsecondary education than in high schools (Kendall, 2011).

Table 2. Summary of Strands in CCSS for ELA and Other Subjects

Reading	Writing	Speaking/Listening	Language
Read closely to analyze key ideas and details.	Write arguments, informative texts, and narratives.	Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric while participating in conversations and collaborations.	Demonstrate command of Standard English.
Analyze how word choice and text structure shape content and style.	Use technology to produce coherent writing.	Use digital media and visual displays to present knowledge and ideas.	Make effective choices for meaning and style.
Integrate knowledge and ideas presented in diverse media.	Conduct research to build knowledge and ideas.		Use a range of words and phrases.
Comprehend complex text.	Write for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.		

Source: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers. (2010b)

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (2012) claims students will read and comprehend increasingly complex texts. The reading objectives will be assessed with both literary and informational texts sometimes requiring students to read one text while other times requiring students to synthesize information from multiple texts. Students could be expected to cite supporting textual evidence when responding to text-dependent questions (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, 2012).

Writing. One of the key aspects of the writing standard, summarized in Table 2, is the increased emphasis on argument. The College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards require

students to write arguments to support claims using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010b). This forces students to think critically and deeply because they must use sound logic in their response to various perspectives (Kendall, 2011).

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (2012) claims students will produce writing for a range of purposes and audiences. All three types of writing, argumentative, informative, and narrative, will be assessed through consortium assessments. Some revising and editing objectives will be assessed using selected response items or short constructed response items. Items assessing the production and distribution of writing could be assessed using performance tasks that could be scored both holistically by a computer and analytically by a human. Although not all writing tasks will be text-dependent, informative and argumentative writing tasks could require students to read and locate evidence to support their claims (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, 2012).

Speaking and Listening. The College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening, as summarized in Table 2, indicate students should be able to evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric while participating in conversations and collaborations. Students should also be able to use digital media and visual displays to present knowledge and ideas (National Governors' Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officials, 2010b). One of the key aspects of the speaking and listening standards is the use of effective communication to interpret and analyze messages in a variety of formats and settings (Kendall, 2011).

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (2012) claims students will use speaking and listening skills for a variety of purposes and audiences. To assess speaking skills, the

consortium will provide students a stimulus and ask them to respond to a question. Given time to prepare, students will respond and their responses will be recorded for scoring by an external evaluator. Students could also be asked to deliver an oral presentation to the class, which would be recorded and scored locally using a rubric and annotated exemplars. Classroom-based tasks could be used to address the learning targets in the first speaking and listening cluster (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, 2012).

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (2012) also claims students will analyze, integrate, and present information. This claim integrates objectives from all four standards of language arts as well as 21st Century skills, such as use of technology and collaboration. This claim could be assessed using extended performance tasks that span more than one day. Students could be required to work independently, with a small group, or with the whole class during the planning phases. At times the claim could also be assessed with extended constructed response items (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, 2012).

Language. One of the key aspects of the language standard, summarized in Table 2, is the emphasis placed on the use of general academic words and domain-specific words (Kendall, 2011). In addition to this emphasis on vocabulary, the standard also focuses on how the command and application of the conventions of Standard English progress from grade to grade (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010b).

Although the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (2012) does not offer an assessment claim specific to language, the language objectives will be assessed throughout the claims addressing reading, writing, speaking and listening, and research. Students will demonstrate mastery of the conventions of language and their knowledge of language as well as

their use and acquisition of vocabulary through close reading and word analysis skills, including use of specialized resources, context clues, and interpretation of figurative language and literary devices. Students will also demonstrate mastery of language objectives through writing, speaking, and research assessment tasks (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, 2012).

From Instructional Goals and Objectives to the Next Generation Content Standards and Objectives for English Language Arts in West Virginia

Although West Virginia had learner outcomes prior to the Instructional Goals and Objectives (IGOs), the journey for standards-based instruction in West Virginia really began when the IGOs became effective on July 1, 1997 (West Virginia Department of Education, 2002). In April 2001, committees of educators throughout the state began rewriting the IGOs to reflect national standards and research-based best practices. Revisions to the drafts were made based on input from teachers and principals (West Virginia Department of Education, 2001). By November 20, 2002, the West Virginia Department of Education replaced the IGOs with Content Standards and Objectives (CSOs) (West Virginia Department of Education, 2002).

After joining the Partnership for 21st Century Skills in 2005, committees of educators representing the PreK through 12 system and institutions of higher education throughout the state revised the Reading and English Language Arts Content Standards and Objectives (CSOs) to include rigor, relevance, and 21st Century skills and to align with national standards and national assessments (West Virginia Department of Education, 2006). The 21st Century Reading and English Language Arts Content Standards and Objectives for West Virginia Schools became effective September 14, 2009 (West Virginia Department of Education, 2009).

In May, 2010, the West Virginia Board of Education adopted the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts. A group of 24 West Virginia teachers joined two

representatives from higher education and nine representatives from the West Virginia Department of Education to begin an in-depth study of the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and place them in the West Virginia Framework along with performance descriptors intended to describe the knowledge and skills students need to perform at the various performance levels.

The West Virginia Board of Education adopted this policy known as the Next Generation Content Standards and Objectives for English Language Arts in West Virginia Schools in July, 2011. The proposed timeline for implementation of the Next Generation Content Standards and Objectives for English Language Arts in West Virginia Schools was August 15, 2011 for kindergarten, July 1, 2012 for first grade, July 1, 2013 for second grade, and July 1, 2014 for third through twelfth grades (West Virginia Department of Education, 2011).

Student Achievement in West Virginia

This section considers student achievement in West Virginia since 1992 including a review of data from ACT, ACT Plan, ACT Explore, and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The literature indicates that a percentage of students are not ready for college or career upon graduation from high school.

ACT Results

According to ACT National Curriculum Survey 2012 (2013), only 26% of college educators indicate students are entering postsecondary classrooms well prepared for college level work, yet 89% of high school teachers report their students are well prepared for college-level work. As summarized in Table 3, the 2012 ACT results indicate that too few high school graduates both in West Virginia and across the nation who took the ACT met the college and career readiness benchmarks for English or reading. The same holds true for tenth graders who

took the ACT Plan and eighth graders who took the ACT Explore (ACT, Inc, 2012a & 2012b). This is alarming because the level of academic achievement that students attain by eighth-grade has a larger impact on their college and career readiness than anything that happens academically in high school (ACT, 2008).

Table 3. Condition of College and Career Readiness in West Virginia and the Nation

Test	English		Reading	
	West Virginia	United States	West Virginia	United States
ACT	70%	67%	53%	52%
ACT Plan	64%	70%	40%	52%
ACT Explore	61%	65%	39%	45%

Source: ACT (2012a & 2012b)

During the past five years in West Virginia there has been a steady decline in the percentage of graduating students meeting the college and career readiness standards in English, from 72% in 2008 to 70% in 2011 and 2012. Only 52% of graduating students in West Virginia met the college and career readiness standards for reading in 2008 spiking to 54% in 2009 and 2010 while declining to 53% in 2011 and 2012. (ACT, 2012b). Not only are West Virginia students not meeting the benchmarks for college and career readiness as indicated by ACT, ACT Plan, and ACT Explore, West Virginia students are not keeping pace with students throughout the nation on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011).

National Assessment of Educational Progress

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2011), as summarized in Table 4, the average scale score of fourth grade West Virginia students has decreased over time while the average scale score of fourth grade students in the nation has increased or remained steady. Even though the average scale score of West Virginia students has decreased, the percentage of

West Virginia students scoring at or above the proficient level and at or above the basic level has increased slightly (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011).

Table 4. Average Reading Scale Scores of Fourth Graders in West Virginia and the Nation

Year	Average Reading Scale Score		Percent at Performance Levels in West Virginia	
	West Virginia	United States	Proficient or Above	Basic or Above
1992	216	215	25%	61%
2009	215	220	26%	62%
2011	214	220	27%	61%

Source: National Center for Education Statistics (2011)

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2011), the average writing score of fourth-grade students in West Virginia on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) was lower than the average score of fourth-grade public school students in the nation as summarized in Table 5. In 2002, the only year writing results for fourth-grade were found, less than one-fifth of West Virginia students performed at or above the NAEP Proficient level (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011).

Table 5. Average Writing Scale Scores of Fourth Graders in West Virginia and the Nation

Year	Average Writing Scale Score		Percent at Performance Levels in West Virginia	
	West Virginia	United States	Proficient or Above	Basic or Above
2002	147	153	19%	84%

Source: National Center for Education Statistics (2011)

Although the average scale score of eighth grade students in West Virginia was higher than the average scale score of eighth grade students in the United States in 1992, the average scale score of West Virginia students has decreased over time while the average scale score of students in the nation has increased. The percentage of West Virginia students scoring at or

above the proficient level and at or above the basic level has declined, but might be on the rebound, as summarized in Table 6 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011).

Table 6. Average Reading Scale Scores of Eighth Graders in West Virginia and the Nation

Year	Average Reading Scale Score		Percent at Performance Levels in West Virginia	
	West Virginia	United States	Proficient or Above	Basic or Above
1998	262	261	27%	74%
2009	255	262	22%	67%
2011	256	264	24%	68%

Source: National Center for Education Statistics (2011)

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2011), the average writing score of eighth-grade students in West Virginia on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) was lower than the average score of eighth-grade public school students in the nation. West Virginia’s eighth-grade students have not indicated significant increases in the percent of students proficient or basic from 1998 to 2007, as summarized in Table 7 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011).

Table 7. Average Writing Scale Scores of Eighth Graders in West Virginia and the Nation

Year	Average Writing Scale Score		Percent at Performance Levels in West Virginia	
	West Virginia	United States	Proficient or Above	Basic or Above
1998	144	148	18%	82%
2002	144	152	21%	81%
2007	146	154	22%	84%

Source: National Center for Education Statistics (2011)

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2011), the average reading score of twelfth-grade students in West Virginia on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) was lower than the average score of twelfth-grade public school students in the

nation. The percentage of twelfth-grade students in West Virginia who performed at or above the NAEP proficient level and the percentage of twelfth-grade students in West Virginia who performed at or above the NAEP basic level were smaller than the national percentage as summarized in Table 8.

Table 8. Average Reading Scale Scores of Twelfth Graders in West Virginia and the Nation

Year	Average Reading Scale Score		Percent at Performance Levels in West Virginia	
	West Virginia	United States	Proficient or Above	Basic or Above
2009	279	287	29%	68%

Source: National Center for Education Statistics (2011)

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2007), the average writing score of twelfth-grade public school students in the nation was higher than previous average scale scores for twelfth grade students in the United States. The percentage of students scoring at the proficient level or above nationally was not significantly different; however, there was some variability in the percent scoring at basic or greater as summarized in Table 9. Scores were not disaggregated by state.

Table 9. Average Writing Scale Scores of Twelfth Graders Nationally

Year	Average Reading Scale Score	Percent at Performance Levels in the United States	
	in the United States	Proficient or Above	Basic or Above
1998	150	22%	78%
2002	148	24%	74%
2007	153	24%	82%

Source: National Center for Education Statistics (2007)

When trend data are examined, test scores in West Virginia are consistently below the national average and have shown little if any meaningful growth during the last 20 years (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2011). Therefore, West Virginia needs to examine

the extent to which students are prepared to learn the competencies outlined in the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts upon which the Next Generation Content Standards and Objectives for English Language Arts in West Virginia are based, but it is not enough to make substantial changes in what students are expected to know and do with the implementation of these more rigorous standards and objectives.

What teachers know and do in their classrooms, so students can learn, must also change significantly. In addition to the higher expectations for students, there must be increased support. Because the key to successful implementation is the classroom teacher, it is imperative that teachers are prepared as they embark on teaching these more rigorous standards (Blackburn, 2011). Teachers must learn how to teach the standards and objectives and how to support students in learning the standards and objectives (Rothman, 2011). Spillane (2004) noted that teachers are more likely to change their practices in ways intended by standards when they have professional development about the standards and their implications; whereas Long (2011) noted that teachers want to choose what they need to learn in order to teach better.

Professional Learning

A discussion of professional learning indicates a need to ensure all teachers are prepared to teach the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards in order for the standards and objectives to make a difference in student learning. Preferred modes of professional learning specific to implementation of the Common Core State Standards in West Virginia are also discussed.

Modes of Professional Learning

According to Mizell (2011), Learning Forward, formerly known as the National Staff Development Council, noted that most professional learning experiences should be deep,

sustained job-embedded professional development focused on understanding student needs. During this job-embedded professional development, educators should meet in small teams to develop the knowledge, skills, and understanding necessary to be responsive to student needs through collaboration and shared inquiry. Teachers need support to effectively apply what they learn and assess how it affects student learning.

Teachers must understand their content area deeply to address the learning needs of their students (Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy, 2010). According to Starnes (2011), “understanding what children need to learn doesn’t ensure that we know how to help them learn it” (p. 72). All students must have the benefit of teachers prepared (ACT, 2004) and qualified to teach the more rigorous college and career readiness standards effectively (ACT & The Education Trust, 2005). Student achievement is hindered when teachers are not qualified or experienced enough to teach the standards well (ACT, 2007). Professional development to support teachers in understanding the college and career readiness standards is important, but professional development must also support teachers in improving the quality of their courses (ACT, 2007) and in understanding how to teach the college and career readiness standards.

Because the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts are a shared responsibility, all middle school and high school content area teachers need professional development in building their capacity to teach reading in their respective content areas (ACT, 2010a) and to teach writing across the disciplines (National Commission of Writing, 2003). Sewell (2009) states, “Far too little support exists for teachers, new and old, struggling to overcome apathy and incompetence” (p. 98). Knowing all teachers are expected to participate in continuing education to enhance their knowledge and practice, professional development must be

focused if teachers are to learn to implement the expected changes meaningfully and effectively (Cooter & Perkins, 2011).

Applebee and Langer (2009) found that most English Language Arts teachers are aware of the usefulness of standards and respond positively to professional development opportunities that help teachers learn how to support students in working with reading and writing standards, yet some teachers do not get these opportunities or the value of the opportunities they do receive is unclear. According to Crawford (2012), one of the specific issues associated with the implementation of the Common Core State Standards is the professional development because teachers must operationalize the standards in order to put them into practice. In order to operationalize the standards, teachers must have the time necessary to familiarize themselves with the expectations by studying and discussing the standards if they are to fully implement the standards as intended. Although teachers may feel confident in their knowledge of the standards, as they study the standards more, they become more comfortable with their knowledge of the standards and are willing to admit they need to learn more (Crawford, 2012).

Perry (2011) concurred that teachers need first to become learners of the standards who observe and carefully notice what exists in the standards and what they are asking students to do before they will be able to implement them as part of their practices. In addition to thinking about what they do, teachers must also think about why they do it (Perry, 2011).

According to a position statement on the principles of professional development approved by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Executive Committee in November of 2006, professional development is a central factor leading to student success when professional developers treat educators as professionals and support educators at all levels of expertise. Professional development that relies on a mix of resources and various modes of

engagement for teachers and administrators should be sustained and community-based (NCTE, 2008).

Mizell (2010) identifies conferences, seminars, institutes, classes, peer observation, coaching, mentoring, study groups focused on a shared need or topic, grade level or content area team meetings, faculty meetings, professional learning communities, and individual reading and research as various modes of professional development. In order for these modes of professional development to be effective, they must enable educators to develop the knowledge, skills, and understanding needed to improve instruction and better address the needs of students (Mizell, 2010).

The Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development conducted an online poll where respondents were asked to choose the one method of professional development they preferred from the following choices: off-site conferences/institutes, job-embedded learning, print materials, online materials, webinars/podcasts, streaming video/DVD, or online courses (Harris, 2012). The majority of respondents preferred professional development opportunities where participants could interact with others with 33% of respondents preferring off-site conferences/institutes and 32% preferring job-embedded learning including coaching, professional learning communities, and study groups.

“Determining what secondary school teachers need to know, ensuring they learn it, and supporting them in implementing that knowledge in classrooms is basic to achieving our goal of literacy for all” (Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy, 2010, p. 18). Perry (2011) says, “planning and teaching are collaborative processes strengthened with the support of colleagues” (p. 84). Because teachers need ongoing support, Sanacore (1996) spoke of study

groups as a means of teachers supporting “one another through meetings, professional literature, peer observations, and constructive feedback” (p. 58).

The National Governors Association (NGA) and ACT (2008) emphasized the importance of professional learning communities with the time and resources to collaborate within and across disciplines as a crucial part of efforts to redesign curriculum and develop teaching strategies to address the needs of students. Professional learning communities afford opportunities for professional growth and development because teachers engage in study and reflection that can help them interpret and plan to enact upon the standards, as well as try new instructional strategies (Perry, 2011).

ACT (2010a) recommends a comprehensive professional development program to support teachers in their efforts to improve the quality of instruction through the effective implementation of standards and objectives. Teachers are empowered to be innovative and try new approaches when they have the time and resources to engage in professional conversations with colleagues about the standards (Rothman, 2011) and their experience in applying the standards in the classroom because “they can learn from each other, support one another, and hold each other accountable for applying what they learn” (Mizell, 2010, p. 14).

Print and online materials are other methods of professional development. Thirteen percent of respondents in the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development poll (Harris, 2012) chose print materials, such as books, magazines, and newsletters as their preferred mode of professional development while 7% of respondents chose online materials, such as electronic books and digital publications.

Educators can use online professional development opportunities, such as webinars and podcasts, to increase content knowledge, view demonstrations of effective teaching, and

participate in discussions with other participants; however, only 7% of those polled by the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (Harris, 2012) cited online professional development opportunities as their preferred method of professional development when presented with other choices. According to Mizell (2010), online professional development opportunities are more powerful when they are tailored to the specific needs of the teachers participating and relate to the specific learning challenges faced by those teachers and their students. Online professional learning is more powerful when the entire faculty shares the experience. When participants share their individual expertise, experience, and insights as they apply what they are learning, there is collective growth among the faculty.

Videos of actual classroom interactions can be used as models of best practices or as a reflective tool for both pre-service and inservice teachers so teachers can learn better strategies to improve instruction (Chavez, 2007). However, only 5% of respondents in the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development poll (Harris, 2012) chose actual classroom videos as the method they preferred when given other choices.

Online classes could be one avenue of professional development to address the needs of both pre-service and inservice teachers. By offering online courses to both pre-service and inservice teachers, a common language and knowledge develop between the two groups (Walker, Downey, & Sorensen, 2008). Pre-service teachers can also see the connection between theory and practice when what they are learning in their teacher preparation programs and what they experience during their classroom observations and experiences are complementary. Although online courses could be more cost effective for school districts and more time effective for teachers (Walker, Downey, & Sorensen, 2008), the Association for Supervision and Curriculum

Development (Harris, 2012) found only 4% of the respondents preferred online courses when presented with other choices.

One way to make the expected changes in instructional practices meaningfully and effectively is to form a professional development coalition whose goal is to present teachers with the best research-based instructional strategies that are most effective for overcoming student apathy through affordable ongoing professional development (Sewell, 2009). The NGA and ACT (2008) found that the most successful teachers kept students involved in learning through the use of relevant bell to bell instruction connected to prior learning that focused on the big idea and essential questions while incorporating probing questions, group work, and higher-level reasoning using research-based instructional strategies. These teachers, who were personally committed to all students, also shared the objectives and goals of daily lessons with students, required students to keep a notebook, and routinely reported student progress to both students and parents (NGA & ACT, 2008).

Professional Learning and the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts

Teachers need assistance in determining how to make the Common Core State Standards a part of their daily practice. Although the Common Core State Standards do not tell teachers how to teach (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officials, 2010b), teachers need the opportunity to share instructional practices that best support student learning of the Common Core State Standards (Wessling, 2011).

Eighty-five percent of teachers surveyed by Scholastic and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (2012), suggested professional development aligned to teachers' personal and school goals has a strong to very strong impact on improving academic achievement. Therefore, to prepare for the challenge of students learning and teachers teaching the Common Core State

Standards, teachers need quality professional development, especially for teachers who feel unprepared to teach the new standards. Sixty-three percent of those surveyed noted that they needed assistance in understanding the requirements of the Common Core State Standards while 60% of those surveyed noted that they needed support on how to teach the parts of the standards that are new to them.

According to Liebling and Meltzer (2011), teachers will need professional development to implement the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and other Technical Subjects. Teachers will likely need professional learning opportunities that help them learn how to scaffold students to the higher performance levels required by the Common Core State Standards because the expectations outlined in the Common Core State Standards are most likely more challenging than the standards presently used in classrooms (Liebling & Meltzer, 2012). Teachers will also likely need professional development to help students learn to read informational text across content areas because of the increased attention given to vocabulary development, informational text, and increasingly complex text in the Common Core State Standards (Liebling & Meltzer, 2011). The International Reading Association's Common Core State Standards Committee (2012) concurs that teachers will need professional development to help them provide the necessary instructional scaffolding for students to handle the increasing demands of text complexity.

In addition to providing professional development to assist teachers in addressing the shifts in the reading standards, professional development is likely to be needed to help address the shifts in the writing standards. With the expectation that students write to sources, teachers will likely need professional development in how to develop meaningful writing assignments for each of the types of writing; how to use exemplar texts, rubrics, and modeling; and how to assess

writing (Liebling & Meltzer, 2011) as well as how to teach students to write about text in response to reading (International Reading Association Common Core State Standards Committee, 2012).

Another area where professional development might be needed is in the area of speaking and listening as students are required to collaborate and communicate more with the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts (National Governors Association (NGA) Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), 2010b) than in most previous state standards (Liebling & Meltzer, 2011). The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts require students to evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric as well as use digital media and visual displays to present knowledge and ideas (NGA & CCSSO, 2010b).

Professional Learning in West Virginia

Effective professional development is a process (Blair & Seo, 2007). Knowing they are charged by state law to establish annual professional development goals to ensure high quality teaching (WVDE, 2011-2012), the West Virginia Board of Education begins with the vision that students will live productive lives upon graduating from high school because they meet or exceed state, national, and international curriculum standards; thus, students are college and career ready (WVDE, n.d.). From the vision and strategic goals, as well as a review of district professional development plans, the West Virginia Board of Education creates professional development goals to support educational staff in developing the knowledge, skills, and understandings necessary for student growth and achievement. A comprehensive professional development plan can help improve the competencies of participants by maintaining and expanding their skill set (Snyder & Sanders, 1978). In 2003 the West Virginia Department of

Education published and disseminated a guide to school level professional development because they wanted schools and districts to help all stakeholders translate professional learning to instructional practices that improve student achievement. The guide suggests that professional development be data-driven, standards-based, and job-embedded.

The guide to school level professional development suggests beginning with a needs assessment that includes student achievement data, demographic data, program data, and perception data to determine what teachers need to enable all students to meet and exceed the content standards and objectives thus improving student achievement (WVDE, 2003). The results of the needs assessment, which include data from several sources, are used to develop school goals and identify students' needs and teachers' needs. The results of a needs assessment also help determine whether professional development is the appropriate solution to a problem (Cekada, 2011).

If professional development is the appropriate solution, a plan that addresses the needs of the system and the needs of the individuals within the system is developed (WVDE, 2003). Professional development opportunities must not only address the needs of the district as a whole, but also address the needs of the individuals within the district; therefore, the professional development plan must be flexible enough to offer differentiated opportunities as needed by the individual educators within the district.

Using the results of a needs assessment to inform professional development curriculum increases the likelihood that the professional development is beneficial to the participant in more ways than providing a break from the routine of the day or boosting morale. To ensure that participants benefit from professional development, a comprehensive professional development plan also includes an evaluation component used to determine whether the program is meeting

both short term and long term goals (Snyder & Sanders, 1978). After the professional development plan is implemented, it must be monitored and evaluated in terms of how student learning and achievement are affected. Reflective feedback from ongoing monitoring throughout the implementation of the professional development plan informs teachers when adjustments might be necessary to attain the expected results. Summative evaluation of the professional development plan assesses the changes that occur in student learning and achievement as a result of the implementation of the professional development plan because the purpose of professional development is to increase student learning by improving the instructional behavior of teachers (WVDE, 2003).

During the summer of 2005, the National Staff Development Council, commissioned by the West Virginia State Legislature, conducted a study of the state of professional learning in West Virginia with recommendations to help advance student achievement because “a state can have a significant impact on the quality of the professional development of its educators” (National Staff Development Council, 2005, p. 11). Although this study was commissioned after West Virginia joined the Partnership for 21st Century Skills and revised its content standards and objectives to require more critical thinking and problem solving, the recommendations are still applicable today.

In the strands of the study (NSDC, 2005) addressing content standards and context standards, teachers noted a need for focused, sustained job-embedded, team-based professional development that models the instructional methods teachers are expected to use and deepens understanding of the content teachers are expected to teach. In the strand addressing process standards, it was suggested that teachers must be involved in analyzing the student learning data and designing their own professional development. The report suggested beginning with a needs

assessment to identify student needs in relation to the new content standards and objectives as well as teacher content and pedagogical needs related to preparing and supporting students in the acquisition of the new content standards and objectives. After examining documents, interviewing focus groups, and analyzing the results of the NSDC Assessment Inventory, the report detailed five recommendations: make student learning needs the focus of professional development; increase the effectiveness of professional development; reinvent the state governance structure and systemic plan for the professional development of educators; create a professional standards-based system for the continuum of educator preparation, licensure, re-licensure, and development; and allocate resources for state priorities.

The 2007-2008 master plan for professional development in West Virginia focused on 21st century skills for teaching and learning and the 21st Century Content Standards and Objectives for each content area (WVDE, 2011-2012). Building on that plan, the 2009-2010 master plan for professional development focused on higher order thinking skills, reflective practice, and continuous school improvement. The 2010-2011 master plan added focus on increased targets for student achievement and new professional standards for teachers and administrators with an emphasis on using school-based collaborative teams to facilitate professional growth and development. The professional development goals for the 2011-2012 master professional development plan included having the knowledge, skills, and understandings to deliver standards-based instruction that exhibits an understanding of the Common Core State Standards with specific attention to writing, text complexity, literacy, numeracy, technology, and science.

In 2010, West Virginia commissioned the Education Efficiency Audit of West Virginia's Primary and Secondary Education System to identify issues and provide recommendations. In

May, 2011, Public Works and MGT of America were retained to conduct this review. One of the ancillary services recommendations included reorganizing professional development for educators. Although West Virginia has many components of a successful professional development system in place, 16 recommendations, organized within four categories, were made to help West Virginia move to a more effective system of professional development (Public Works LLC, 2012).

The first category of recommendations in the report addressed leadership and strategy (Public Works LLC, 2012). The recommendations were to establish clear state-level leadership on professional development, to consolidate the advisory functions related to professional development, to streamline the professional development advisory and policymaking structure, and to refine and use the master professional development plan as a strategic planning tool that articulates how the goals outlined in the master plan will be accomplished.

In response to the recommendations outlined in the *Education Efficiency Audit of West Virginia's Primary and Secondary Education System* (Public Works LLC, 2012), the West Virginia Board of Education identified the policies or codes that needed revision and suggested appointing a WVBOE Professional Development Advisory Committee to assist in streamlining the advisory and policymaking structure (WVDE, 2012). The Board agreed with having a single entity charged with overseeing professional development and suggested they be the state-level leader for professional development. The Board also supported the role of RESAs in leading professional development.

The second category of recommendations in the report addressed delivery and evaluation (Public Works LLC, 2012). The recommendations were to determine the best, most consistent, and most cost-efficient professional development delivery system; to minimize duplication; to

refine evaluation tools to determine the effects of professional development; to provide funding for RESAs to become centers for teacher quality and professional development; to establish standards for high-quality professional development; and to use student achievement data to assess the effectiveness of professional development.

In response to the delivery and evaluation recommendations, the Board proposed appointing a study group to assess the professional development needs assessments and determine the most effective delivery model and recommended acquiring external expertise on creating the most cost-effective delivery system (WVDE, 2012). To avoid duplication of services, the Board outlined a possible model defining responsibilities of each agency and suggested an online statewide professional development registration site. The Board also suggested formally communicating the role and capabilities of RESAs to the districts. The Board charged the WVDE Office of Research to evaluate the effect of all professional development on student achievement. The Board also suggested that individual RESAs become centers of excellence in a particular area of expertise. The Board charged the WVBOE Professional Development Advisory Council to develop a plan to create high-quality professional development that would affect student achievement.

The third category of recommendations in the report addressed teacher mentoring (Public Works LLC, 2012). The recommendations were to modify statutory language on teacher mentoring, to clarify training expectations for mentors, to review WVDE policies and allow flexibility in how schools use state teacher mentoring funds, and to evaluate ways to establish best practices as well as improve compliance with laws and policies governing teacher mentoring across the state.

In response to the teacher mentoring recommendations, the Board adopted guidelines to allow more flexibility in how schools use state teacher mentoring funds and how they design systems to support professional growth (WVDE, 2012). Although restrictive language regarding mentoring was eliminated from the state code, the Board recommended continual review and evaluation of the teacher mentoring program. The Board supported revising the state code to allow counties to provide customized training for their mentors. The Board also called upon districts to share best practices and recommend practices that should be standardized statewide.

The fourth category of recommendations in the report addressed funding (Public Works LLC, 2012). The recommendations were to allocate spending to priorities based on the state professional development goals and to maximize funding by pursuing all available grant opportunities. In response to the recommendations regarding funding, the Board agreed that funding decisions should be made according to the statewide professional development goals (WVDE, 2012). To focus efforts on pursuing grant opportunities, the Board created a manager of grant procurement position in the Office of Research.

Summary

The discussion of national standards began in 1983 with the publication of *A Nation at Risk* (Foster, 2004) and continues to evolve to this day with the Common Core State Standards Initiative (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010b). The discussion of standards-based instruction began in West Virginia in 1997 (WVDE, 2002) and continues to evolve to this day with the implementation of the Next Generation Content Standards and Objectives for English Language Arts in West Virginia Schools, which are based on the Common Core State Standards scheduled for statewide implementation during the 2014-2015 school year (WVDE, 2011).

After analyzing student achievement data from ACT, ACT Plan, ACT Explore, and the National Assessment of Educational Progress, it is evident that West Virginia students are not graduating from high school ready to meet the college and career readiness standards in English or reading (ACT, 2012b and National Center for Education Statistics, 2011). Therefore, it is imperative that West Virginia invest in the professional learning of its teachers to improve the learning of students so they will be college and career ready upon graduation from high school (NSDC, 2005). It is important for teachers to remember they are not in this effort alone (Perry, 2011). There are providers at the school, district, regional, and state level working to support them as they implement the Next Generation Content Standards and Objectives.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

This mixed-methods study used both qualitative and quantitative methods to determine how prepared students are to learn and teachers are to teach the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts in grades six through twelve. This chapter is organized into the following sections: research design, population and sample, instrumentation, instrument reliability and validation, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures, and limitations.

Research Design

This study used a mixed-methods design, gathering both quantitative and qualitative data through self-reporting survey methods with both closed and open-ended questions. A mixed-methods research design captures the best of both worlds so the information gathered using the qualitative approach can expand on the information gathered using the quantitative approach (Creswell, 2014). When used together, quantitative and qualitative research methods provide a more complete picture and complement each other (Creswell, Fetters, & Ivankova, 2004) while offsetting the weaknesses in quantitative and qualitative research designs when used alone (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007).

Population and Sample

The population for this study was West Virginia English Language Arts public school teachers employed in grades six through twelve during the fall semester of the 2013-2014 school year. A database of teachers was created with the assistance of English Language Arts contacts in each school district in West Virginia. In an attempt to obtain an accurate picture of the perceptions of teachers, the entire population compiled through that assistance was used in the study. From a list of 1,327 teachers, those for whom email addresses could not be obtained due

to changes in employment or name changes were eliminated, leaving 1,304 potential participants. From this group, 28 had previously opted out of surveys from SurveyMonkey and two others indicated having zero years of teaching experience in English Language Arts. Exclusion of these teachers narrowed the population to 1,274 potential respondents.

Instrumentation

This mixed-methods study gathered both quantitative and qualitative data through the use of a researcher-developed self-reporting survey, *College and Career Readiness Standards for English: How Prepared Are Students and Teachers*, based on the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts (see Appendix A). The first part of the survey gathered demographic and attribute information, including years of experience, sex, certification, programmatic level, Regional Education Service Agency (RESA), and preferred mode(s) of professional development. The second part of the survey gathered quantitative data using Likert scale items. A scale from 1 to 7 where 1= Not at All Prepared and 7= Fully Prepared, indicated teachers' perceptions of how prepared students are to learn the competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts and the extent teachers' perceived themselves to be prepared to teach students these same competencies. Qualitative data was gathered concurrently through the use of two open-ended questions designed to identify effective instructional strategies used to prepare students to learn the English Language Arts competencies and professional development topics which teachers need to teach the same competences.

Instrument Reliability and Validation

Before data obtained from an instrument can be used to make inferences, the instrument must be reliable and valid (Litwin, 2003). According to Fink (2003), "A reliable survey

instrument is consistent; a valid one is accurate” (p. 47) in that it measures what it claims to measure. By gathering data using closed questions, such as those in the second part of the survey, the responses have an increased chance of being more reliable (Fink, 2003). To establish face validity, a panel of experts reviewed the survey (Litwin, 2003) to see if the questions posed and the language used appeared to be appropriate (Fink, 2003). Cronbach’s Alpha was used as an internal consistency estimate of the reliability of the survey instrument.

The panel of experts (see Appendix B) included former and current English Language Arts teachers and members of the West Virginia Department of Education who were chosen for their work with the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards. This group read the survey and provided feedback regarding the survey’s objectives and the nature of the questions to ensure questions and directions were worded precisely and assessed the competencies the survey was intended to measure (Fink, 2003). The panel of experts ensured the survey included everything it should as well as excluded everything it should (Litwin, 2003). Panel participants were interviewed following the administration of the survey. Responses to questions about validity (see Appendix C) from the panel of experts were used to establish content validity and revise the survey before it was administered.

Cronbach’s Alpha was used to assess the internal consistency of the survey, *College and Career Readiness Standards for English: How Prepared Are Students and Teachers*. Specifically, internal consistency data was established for Part B of the survey which assessed teachers’ perceptions of student readiness to learn the standards (see Table 10) and teachers’ perceptions of their preparedness to teach the standards (see Table 11).

The alpha coefficients for questions within each strand related to teachers’ perceptions of student preparedness were all above the desired benchmark of .70 or higher, including (from low

to high): Student Speaking and Listening (.864), Student Writing (.880), Student Language (.883), and Student Reading (.900). The alpha coefficient across all 20 student related items was .952, which indicates a high level of internal consistency for the scale with this sample.

Table 10. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient for Instrument Reliability: Teachers' Perceptions of Student Preparedness

Categories	Internal Consistency Scale Statistics			Alpha Coefficient
	N Scale Items	M	SD	
Student Reading Strand	6	22.82	6.53	.900
Student Writing Strand	6	14.49	4.58	.880
Student Speaking/Listening Strand	4	14.58	4.42	.864
Student Language Strand	4	19.54	6.62	.883
Student Total	20	71.55	19.47	.952

The alpha coefficients for questions within each strand related to teachers' perceptions of their own preparedness were also all above the desired benchmark of .70 or higher, including (from low to high): Teacher Reading (.893), Teacher Speaking/Listening (.900), Teacher Writing (.904), and Teacher Language (.914). The alpha coefficient across all 20 teacher related items was .957, which indicates a high level of internal consistency for the scale with this sample.

Table 11. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient for Instrument Reliability: Teachers' Perceptions of Student Preparedness

Categories	Internal Consistency Scale Statistics			Alpha Coefficient
	N Scale Items	M	SD	
Teacher Reading Strand	6	36.64	4.74	.893
Teacher Writing Strand	6	37.29	4.85	.904
Teacher Speaking/Listening Strand	4	24.23	3.59	.900
Teacher Language Strand	4	25.71	2.93	.914
Teacher Total	20	173.91	14.28	.957

Data Collection Procedures

Approval to collect data using the survey was obtained from the Marshall University Institutional Review Board (IRB) (see Appendix D). Once approved, data collection took place

through an online electronic survey site, SurveyMonkey. Self-administered surveys can benefit immensely from advancements in technology because of the feasibility of conducting email or web-based surveys (Dillman, 2007). Email has become the means of communication in most workplaces (Dillman, 2009).

An electronic mail message containing a link to the survey (see Appendix E) was sent to teachers alerting them to the opportunity to participate in the study. The first step was an attempt to motivate potential respondents to respond (Dillman, 2007). To increase the likelihood that respondents would reply, this message described the study and its purpose, the survey, how and why the individual was selected, reasons the individual should participate, how important responses are to the research, and how to access and complete the survey (Bourque & Fielder, 2003).

Initial data collection occurred during a four-week window from February 12, 2014 to March 12, 2014. It was essential to try to contact potential respondents multiple times (Dillman, 2007). Three or four follow-up mailings or reminders tend to increase response rates (Bourque & Fielder, 2003), minimize response bias, and reduce error (Fink, 2003). Minimally, follow-up correspondence should occur ten days after the initial contact (Bourque & Fielder, 2003). Therefore, two weeks after receiving the initial electronic message containing a link to the survey, non-respondents received a second email reminder stating the importance of participation and encouraging a response if they had not already done so (see Appendix F). Three weeks after the initial electronic message, participants who had not yet responded were sent another electronic mail message requesting their participation (see Appendix G). Finally, non-respondents were sent a final electronic mail message two days before the deadline for submission of the survey (see Appendix H). If survey return rates were not sufficient, copies of

the survey would have been mailed to non-respondents using school addresses and follow up telephone calls would have been used in a final attempt to elicit participation.

Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis for the quantitative survey results was conducted using IBM SPSS version 22. The following statistical analyses were used to answer each research question.

1. For research questions one and two, descriptive statistics, such as mean, mode, and standard deviation, were used to summarize the findings by individual competency, strand (reading, writing, speaking/listening, language), and total. In addition to descriptive statistics, a one-sample t-test was used to compare the sample mean to the expected mean from a hypothetical normal distribution.
2. For research question three, the data obtained to answer research questions one and two were compared using an independent samples t-test to determine differences, if any, in terms of each strand.
3. For research questions four and five, independent samples t-tests and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) tests were used to ascertain differences in strands (reading, writing, speaking/listening, language) based on selected demographic and attribute variables. Appropriate post-hoc analysis was performed as needed.
4. For research questions six and seven, qualitative data were sorted, coded, organized, and analyzed for emergent themes. Data were described and summarized as well as compared and used to make predictions (Fink, 2003) as to which instructional strategies have been most effective.

Limitations

Limitations include that this study required teachers to self-report and some participants might have responded in a way that they felt was expected as part of their job requirements while others might have chosen not to respond to the survey at all. The validity of the study was dependent upon teachers' reflective responses to truly report their perceptions. These perceptions, by their nature, were subjective and prone to influence from a variety of sources, not the least of which might have been some teachers' positive or negative feelings about adoption of the Next Generation Content Standards and Objectives for English Language Arts for West Virginia Schools, which are based on the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts.

Summary

Survey questions and data collection procedures were carefully designed in an attempt to obtain an accurate picture of teachers' perceptions of how prepared students are to learn the competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts and their perceptions of the extent to which teachers are prepared to teach students the competencies outlined by the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts. This study should provide greater understanding to those responsible for teaching the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts and those responsible for designing professional development opportunities for teachers charged with teaching the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to examine the perceptions of West Virginia teachers who taught English Language Arts in grades six through twelve during the 2013-2014 school year in terms of how prepared students are to learn the college and career readiness competencies for English Language Arts and how prepared teachers are to teach those same competencies. Findings presented in this chapter are organized into the following sections: population and sample, respondent demographics and attributes, major findings for each of the seven research questions investigated, and a summary.

The perceptions of West Virginia English Language Arts teachers in grades six through twelve were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative data obtained using the researcher designed survey, *College and Career Readiness Standards for English: How Prepared Are Students and Teachers* (see Appendix A), which consisted of three parts: Part A, Part B, and Part C. Part A consisted of six questions that served to identify the demographic and attribute variables. Part B consisted of four questions including 20 prompts based on the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts. The questions served to identify teachers' perceptions of how prepared students are to learn the competencies outlined and how prepared teachers are to teach those same competencies using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1=Not at All Prepared to 7=Fully Prepared. Question Seven focused on six reading competencies. Question Eight focused on six writing competencies. Question Nine focused on four speaking/listening competencies. Question Ten focused on four language competencies. Part C consisted of two open-ended questions designed to elicit qualitative comments about what instructional strategies teachers have found most effective in helping prepare students to learn the English Language Arts competencies outlined in Part B of the survey and what professional

development needs teachers have related to effectively teaching the English Language Arts competencies outlined in Part B.

Population and Sample

Of the 1,274 surveys distributed by email to West Virginia English Language Arts teachers in grades six through twelve during the 2013-2014 school year, a total of 424 responses were received, providing a return rate of 33% for a 99% confidence level with a 5.11% margin of error according to the random-sample calculator at <http://www.custominsight.com>. Of the 424 respondents, 69% also responded to the qualitative questions with 294 sharing instructional strategies and 292 indicating professional development needs.

Respondent Demographics and Attributes

Part A of the survey included five demographic and attribute questions. The data requested in the first five questions included years of experience teaching English Language Arts, sex, certification, programmatic level, and region. Data are presented in Table 12.

Table 12. Demographic and Attribute Variables

Characteristic	n	f	%
Teaching Experience (Years)	420		
1 – 5		135	31.99
6 – 10		123	29.15
11 – 15		61	14.45
16 – 20		29	6.87
21 – 25		27	6.40
26 – 30		15	3.55
>30		30	7.11
Sex	416		
Male		39	9.38
Female		377	90.63
Specific Certification in English or Language Arts	419		
Yes		366	87.35
No		53	12.65
Level Teaching the Majority of Your Day	415		
Middle/Junior High		186	44.82
High School		229	55.18
Regional Education Service Agency (RESA)	415		
RESA 1		46	11.08
RESA 2		47	11.33
RESA 3		64	15.42
RESA 4		47	11.33
RESA 5		39	9.40
RESA 6		47	11.33
RESA 7		74	17.83
RESA 8		51	12.29

N = 424

Participants' years of teaching experience were distributed over eight categories. Due to the limited number of teachers selecting the categories of 11-15 years, 16-20 years, 21-25 years, 26-30 years, and more than 30 years, for the purpose of data analysis these categories were collapsed into one group of 11 or more years of experience. Including the current year, 32% (n=135) indicated 1-5 years of experience, 29% (n=123) indicated 6-10 years of experience, and 38% (n=162) indicated 11 or more years of experience. The distribution of respondents by sex

included 9% (n=39) male and 91% (n=377) female. Related to certification in English or Language Arts, 87% (n=366) of respondents held this certification and 13% (n=53) did not. When asked to identify programmatic level, 45% (n=186) of respondents indicated teaching at the middle school/junior high level while 55% (n=229) spent most of the day teaching at the high school programmatic level. Respondents in the population were spread across the state's eight Regional Education Service Agencies as follows: 11% in RESA 1 (n=46), 11% in RESA 2 (n=47), 15% in RESA 3 (n=64), 11% in RESA 4 (n=47), 9% in RESA 5 (n=39), 11% in RESA 6 (n=47), 18% in RESA 7 (n=74), and 12% in RESA 8 (n=51).

Major Findings

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS version 22. Frequencies, means, modes, and one-sample t-tests were used for all Likert scale items. Independent samples t-tests and the one-way ANOVA were used to compare distributions across groups concerning participants' perceptions and participants' demographic and attribute variables. Tukey's HSD was the post-hoc test used to determine which groups were different from other groups when a significant ANOVA was indicated.

Research Question 1: How Prepared are Students

To answer Research Question 1, "How prepared are students to learn the competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts as perceived by West Virginia English Language Arts teachers in grades six through twelve?", participants responded to 20 competencies using a seven-point Likert scale in which 1 = "Not At All Prepared" and 7 = "Fully Prepared." Descriptive statistics are reported for each of the 20 competencies, for each of four strands (reading, writing, speaking/listening, language), and as a total. Results from one sample t-tests are also reported for each competency, strand, and total in

order to compare the means from the sample with the expected mean ($M = 4.0$) from a hypothetical normal distribution to see if there are significant differences.

Mean, mode, and t-test results related to teachers' perceptions of student preparedness to learn the 20 competencies are outlined in Table 13. Mean scores for individual student competencies ranged from 2.96 to 4.86 and revealed three levels of response. There were two competencies with mean student preparedness scores less than 3.0. In ascending order these included: comprehend complex informational text ($M = 2.96$, $SD = 1.37$) and conduct research projects ($M = 2.99$, $SD = 1.43$). Fifteen competencies revealed mean student preparedness scores between 3.0 and 4.0. In ascending order these included: comprehend complex literary text ($M = 3.08$, $SD = 1.39$), write arguments ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 1.39$), analyze word choice and text structure ($M = 3.23$, $SD = 1.30$), cite specific textual evidence ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 1.38$), employ effective speaking skills ($M = 3.27$, $SD = 1.28$), make effective choices for meaning and style ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 1.22$), integrate knowledge and ideas ($M = 3.41$, $SD = 1.41$), participate in conversations ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 1.39$), employ effective listening skills ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 1.35$), write for a range of purposes ($M = 3.56$, $SD = 1.27$), use a range of words and phrases ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 1.24$), read closely ($M = 3.59$, $SD = 1.24$), write informative/explanatory text ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 1.37$), demonstrate command of standard English ($M = 3.77$, $SD = 1.36$), and understand figures of speech ($M = 3.87$, $SD = 1.33$). Three competencies had mean student preparedness scores above 4.0. In ascending order these included: use visuals to present key ideas and knowledge ($M = 4.25$, $SD = 1.41$), use technology to facilitate the writing process ($M = 4.57$, $SD = 1.45$), and write narratives ($M = 4.86$, $SD = 1.35$).

When compared to the expected mean score ($M = 4.0$) from a hypothetical normal distribution, one-sample t-test results indicated a statistically significant difference for 19 of the

20 competencies ($p < .05$). There was no significant difference for understanding figurative language when compared to the expected mean from a hypothetical normal distribution. Actual means were lower than the expected means in 17 of 20 cases.

Table 13. Level of Student Preparedness by Competency

Competencies	n	M	Mode	SD	t	Sig.*
1. Read closely to analyze key ideas and details.	377	3.59	3.00	1.24	-6.443	.000
2. Cite specific textual evidence to support conclusions.	378	3.25	3.00	1.38	-10.525	.000
3. Analyze word choice and text structure.	378	3.23	3.00	1.30	-11.507	.000
4. Integrate knowledge and ideas presented in diverse media.	377	3.41	3.00	1.41	-8.148	.000
5. Comprehend complex literary text.	377	3.08	3.00	1.39	-12.758	.000
6. Comprehend complex informational text.	378	2.96	2.00 4.00	1.37	-14.746	.000
7. Write arguments.	376	3.12	3.00	1.39	-12.332	.000
8. Write informative/explanatory text.	374	3.76	4.00	1.37	-3.391	.001
9. Write narratives.	373	4.86	5.00	1.35	12.341	.000
10. Use technology to facilitate the writing process.	375	4.57	5.00	1.45	7.633	.000
11. Conduct research projects.	376	2.99	2.00	1.43	-13.667	.000
12. Write for a range of purposes.	376	3.55	3.00	1.27	-6.913	.000
13. Participate in conversations and collaborations to evaluate a speaker's presentation.	374	3.40	4.00	1.39	-7.082	.000
14. Use visual displays to present knowledge and ideas.	376	4.25	4.00	1.41	3.476	.001
15. Employ effective speaking skills for a range of purposes.	376	3.27	3.00	1.28	-11.085	.000
16. Employ effective listening skills for a range of purposes.	376	3.49	3.00	1.35	-7.353	.000
17. Demonstrate command of Standard English.	380	3.77	4.00	1.36	-3.291	.001
18. Make effective choices for meaning and style.	380	3.37	3.00	1.22	-10.133	.000
19. Understand figures of speech.	380	3.87	4.00	1.33	-1.858	.064
20. Use a range of words and phrases.	380	3.57	4.00	1.24	-6.765	.000

N = 424; * $p < .05$ compared to an expected mean of 4.0 in a hypothetical normal distribution

Mean, mode, and one sample t-test results related to teachers' perceptions of student preparedness to learn across the four strands are outlined in Table 14. Total scores for each strand were calculated by identifying the mean score of participants' responses for all competencies within a strand. When responses were analyzed based on strands, student preparedness level means ranged from 3.25 to 3.81. From lowest to highest, the mean scores for each strand were reading (M = 3.25, SD = 1.36), speaking/listening (M= 3.62, SD = 1.41), language (M = 3.65, SD = 1.30), and writing (M = 3.81, SD = 1.54). When each sample strand mean was compared to the expected mean (4.0) from a hypothetical normal distribution, one-sample t-test results indicated the differences in each of the strand means was lower and statistically significant at $p < .001$.

Table 14. Level of Student Preparedness by Strand

Strands	M	Mode	SD	t	Sig.*
Reading	3.25	3.00	1.36	-26.020	.000
Writing	3.81	4.00	1.54	-5.964	.000
Speaking/Listening	3.62	4.00	1.41	-10.320	.000
Language	3.65	4.00	1.30	-10.641	.000

N = 424; * $p < .001$ compared to an expected mean of 4.0 in a hypothetical normal distribution

Mean, mode, and t-test results related to teachers' perceptions of student preparedness to learn as a total are outlined in Table 15. The total score was calculated by identifying the mean score of participants' responses for all competencies. The total level of student preparedness mean score (M = 3.57, SD = 1.43) was also compared to the expected mean (M = 4.0) from a hypothetical normal distribution. One-sample t-test results ($t = -25.956$) revealed that the difference in the two means was statistically significant at $p < .001$.

Table 15. Level of Student Preparedness as a Total

Total	M	Mode	SD	t	Sig.*
Student Preparedness	3.57	4.00	1.43	-25.956	.000

N = 424; * $p < .001$ compared to an expected mean of 4.0 in a hypothetical normal distribution

Research Question 2: How Prepared are Teachers

To answer Research Question 2, “How prepared are teachers to teach the competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts as perceived by West Virginia English Language Arts teachers in grades six through twelve?”, participants responded to 20 competencies using a seven-point Likert scale in which 1 = “Not At All Prepared” and 7 = “Fully Prepared.” Descriptive statistics are reported for each of the 20 competencies, for each of four strands (reading, writing, speaking/listening, language), and as a total. Results from one sample t-tests are also reported for each competency, strand, and total in order to compare the means from the sample with the expected mean ($M = 4.0$) from a hypothetical normal distribution to see if there are significant differences.

Mean, mode, and t-test results related to teachers’ perceptions of teacher preparedness to teach the competencies are outlined in Table 16. Mean scores for individual teacher competencies ranged from 5.80 to 6.53 and revealed three levels of response. There were two competencies with mean teacher preparedness scores less than 6.0. In ascending order these included: integrate knowledge and ideas ($M = 5.80$, $SD = 1.13$) and participate in conversations and collaborations ($M = 5.94$, $SD = 1.08$). Seventeen competencies revealed mean teacher preparedness scores between 6.0 and 6.5. In ascending order these included: employ effective listening skills ($M = 6.04$, $SD = 1.02$), write arguments ($M = 6.05$, $SD = 1.14$), comprehend complex informational text ($M = 6.07$, $SD = 1.00$), employ effective speaking skills ($M = 6.08$, $SD = 1.00$), analyze word choice and text structure ($M = 6.08$, $SD = 0.98$), conduct research ($M = 6.15$, $SD = 1.02$), use technology to facilitate the writing process ($M = 6.16$, $SD = 1.03$), read closely ($M = 6.18$, $SD = 0.89$), use visual displays ($M = 6.18$, $SD = 0.97$), write for a range of purposes ($M = 6.21$, $SD = 0.94$), comprehend complex literary text ($M = 6.21$, $SD = 0.91$), make

effective choices for meaning and style (M = 6.25, SD = 0.92), write informative/explanatory text (M = 6.29, SD = 0.92), cite specific textual evidence (M = 6.30, SD = 0.97), write narratives (M = 6.45, SD = 0.82), demonstrate command of standard English (M = 6.47, SD = 0.80), and use a range of words and phrases (M = 6.47, SD = 0.79). One competency had a mean teacher preparedness score above 6.5 – understand figures of speech (M = 6.53, SD = 0.77).

When compared to the expected mean score (M = 4.0) from a hypothetical normal distribution, one-sample t-test results indicated statistically significant differences in sample mean scores for all competencies at $p < .001$. Actual means were significantly higher than the expected mean in all cases.

Table 16. Level of Teacher Preparedness by Competency

Competencies	n	M	Mode	SD	t	Sig.*
1. Read closely to analyze key ideas and details.	378	6.18	7.00	.89	47.529	.000
2. Cite specific textual evidence to support conclusions.	377	6.30	7.00	.97	46.234	.000
3. Analyze word choice and text structure.	376	6.08	7.00	.98	41.187	.000
4. Integrate knowledge and ideas presented in diverse media.	374	5.80	7.00	1.13	30.678	.000
5. Comprehend complex literary text.	377	6.21	7.00	.91	46.900	.000
6. Comprehend complex informational text.	377	6.07	7.00	1.00	40.274	.000
7. Write arguments.	374	6.05	7.00	1.14	34.790	.000
8. Write informative/ explanatory text.	375	6.29	7.00	.92	48.007	.000
9. Write narratives.	375	6.45	7.00	.82	58.000	.000
10. Use technology to facilitate the writing process.	374	6.16	7.00	1.03	40.530	.000
11. Conduct research projects.	375	6.15	7.00	1.02	41.017	.000
12. Write for a range of purposes.	375	6.21	7.00	.94	45.520	.000
13. Participate in conversations and collaborations to evaluate a speaker's presentation.	376	5.94	7.00	1.08	34.641	.000
14. Use visual displays to present knowledge and ideas.	376	6.18	7.00	.97	43.420	.000
15. Employ effective speaking skills	375	6.08	7.00	1.01	39.981	.000

Competencies	n	M	Mode	SD	t	Sig.*
for a range of purposes.						
16. Employ effective listening skills	375	6.04	7.00	1.02	38.765	.000
for a range of purposes.						
17. Demonstrate command of Standard English.	380	6.47	7.00	.80	60.390	.000
18. Make effective choices for meaning and style.	380	6.25	7.00	.92	47.474	.000
19. Understand figures of speech.	380	6.53	7.00	.77	64.240	.000
20. Use a range of words and phrases.	379	6.47	7.00	.79	60.598	.000

N = 424; *p<.001 compared to an expected mean of 4.0 in a hypothetical normal distribution

Mean, mode, and t-test results related to teachers' perceptions of teacher preparedness to teach across the four strands are outlined in Table 17. Total scores for each strand were calculated by identifying the mean score of participants' responses for all competencies within a strand. When responses were analyzed based on strands, teacher preparedness level means ranged from 6.06 to 6.43. From lowest to highest, the mean scores for each strand were speaking/listening (M = 6.06, SD = 1.02), reading (M= 6.11, SD = 1.00), writing (M = 6.22, SD = 0.99), and language (M = 6.43, SD = 0.83). When each sample strand mean was compared to the expected mean (4.0) from a hypothetical normal distribution, one-sample t-test results indicated the differences in each of the strand means was higher and statistically significant at p<.001.

Table 17. Level of Teacher Preparedness by Strand

Strands	M	Mode	SD	t	Sig.*
Reading	6.11	7.00	1.00	100.64	.000
Writing	6.22	7.00	.99	106.26	.000
Speaking/Listening	6.06	7.00	1.02	77.89	.000
Language	6.43	7.00	.83	114.24	.000

N = 424; *p<.001 compared to an expected mean of 4.0 in a hypothetical normal distribution

Mean, mode, and t-test results related to teachers' perceptions of teacher preparedness to teach as a total are outlined in Table 18. The total score was calculated by identifying the mean score of participants' responses for all competencies. The total level of teacher preparedness

mean score ($M = 6.20$, $SD = 0.98$) was compared to the expected mean ($M = 4.0$) from a hypothetical normal distribution. One-sample t-test results ($t = 194.989$) revealed that the difference in the two means was statistically significant at $p < .001$.

Table 18. Level of Teacher Preparedness as a Total

Total	M	Mode	SD	t	Sig.*
Teacher Preparedness	6.20	7.00	.98	194.99	.000

$N = 424$; * $p < .001$ compared to an expected mean of 4.0 in a hypothetical normal distribution

Research Question 3: Differences between Student and Teacher Preparedness

To answer Research Question 3, “What differences, if any, exist between student preparedness to learn the competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts and teacher preparedness to teach these same competencies as perceived by West Virginia English Language Arts teachers in grades six through twelve?”, participants’ responses to 20 competencies related to student preparedness and 20 competencies related to teacher preparedness were grouped into the four strands and compared based on responses to a seven-point Likert scale in which 1 = “Not At All Prepared” and 7 = “Fully Prepared.” Total scores for each strand were calculated by identifying the mean score of participants’ responses for all competencies within a strand. An independent samples t-test was used to compare teachers’ perceptions of student preparedness with teachers’ perceptions of their own preparedness.

Mean and independent samples t-test results comparing student preparedness strands to teacher preparedness strands are outlined in Table 19. When responses were analyzed based on strand, student preparedness means ranged from 3.25 to 3.81, including: reading ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 1.36$), speaking/listening ($M = 3.62$, $SD = 1.41$), language ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 1.30$), and writing ($M = 3.81$, $SD = 1.54$). Teacher preparedness means ranged from 6.06 to 6.43, including: speaking/listening ($M = 6.06$, $SD = 1.02$), reading ($M = 6.11$, $SD = 1.00$), writing ($M = 6.22$, $SD = 1.00$), and language ($M = 6.43$, $SD = 1.00$).

= 0.99), and language (M = 6.43, SD = 0.83). The results of the independent samples t-test revealed significant differences for each student preparedness strand when compared to each teacher preparedness strand at $p < .001$.

Table 19. Level of Student Preparedness and Level of Teacher Preparedness by Strand

Strands	Students		Teachers		t	Sig.*
	M	SD	M	SD		
Reading	3.25	1.36	6.11	1.00	-80.347	.000
Writing	3.81	1.54	6.22	.99	-62.449	.000
Speaking/Listening	3.63	1.41	6.06	1.02	-54.184	.000
Language	3.65	1.30	6.43	.83	-70.403	.000

* $p < .001$

Research Question 4: Student Preparedness and Demographic Variables

To answer Research Question 4, “What differences, if any, exist among selected demographic and attribute variables in terms of how prepared students are to learn the competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts?”, participants responded to 20 competencies, later grouped into four strands, using a seven-point Likert scale in which 1 = “Not At All Prepared” and 7 = “Fully Prepared.” An independent samples t-test was used to determine differences, if any, between the responses of two groups. A one-way ANOVA was used to compare the overall difference of more than two groups. Tukey’s HSD was the post-hoc test used to determine which groups were different from other groups when a significant ANOVA was indicated.

Descriptive statistics for males versus females along with results of significance testing related to student preparedness are reported in Table 20. Mean scores of male perceptions of student preparedness in each of the four strands included: reading (M = 3.08), speaking/listening (M = 3.42), language (M = 3.43), and writing (M = 3.82). Mean scores of female perceptions of student preparedness in each of the four strands included: reading (M = 3.27), speaking/listening (M = 3.65), language (M = 3.67), and writing (M = 3.81).

An independent samples t-test ($p < .05$) revealed a significant difference between the ratings of males and females when considering their perceptions of student preparedness in the language strand ($p = .044$) and total student preparedness ($p = .011$). Females ($M = 3.67$) perceived students to be more prepared to learn competencies related to the language strand than their male ($M = 3.43$) counterparts. Females ($M = 3.56$) also perceived students more prepared to learn the competencies overall than their male ($M = 3.44$) colleagues.

Table 20. Level of Student Preparedness by Strand: Male vs. Female

Strands	Males (n = 39)		Females (n = 377)		t	Sig. (2-tailed)*
	M	SD	M	SD		
Reading	3.08	1.33	3.27	1.37	-1.956	.051
Writing	3.82	1.46	3.81	1.55	.125	.900
Speaking/Listening	3.42	1.38	3.65	1.41	-1.763	.078
Language	3.43	1.24	3.67	1.30	-2.015	.044*
Total Preparedness	3.44	1.39	3.56	1.44	-2.540	.011*

* $p < .05$

Descriptive statistics for certified English/Language Arts teachers versus those without English/Language Arts certification along with results of significance testing related to student preparedness are reported in Table 21. Teachers holding certification to teach English/Language Arts perceived student preparedness in each of the four strands as: reading ($M = 3.31$), speaking/listening ($M = 3.65$), language ($M = 3.66$), and writing ($M = 3.88$). Teachers not certified to teach English/Language Arts perceived student preparedness in each of the four strands as: reading ($M = 2.84$), writing ($M = 3.26$), speaking/listening ($M = 3.42$), and language ($M = 3.56$).

An independent samples t-test ($p < .05$) revealed a significant difference between the ratings of teachers holding specific certification to teach English/Language Arts and teachers not holding specific certification to teach English/Language Arts when considering their perceptions of student preparedness in the reading strand ($p = .000$), the writing strand ($p = .000$), the

speaking/listening strand ($p = .040$) and total preparedness ($p = .000$). Teachers holding specific certification to teach English/Language Arts perceived students to be more prepared than their counterparts who did not hold specific certification to teach English/Language Arts.

Table 21. Level of Student Preparedness by Strand: ELA Certified vs. Non-ELA Certified

Strands	ELA Certified (n = 366)		Non-ELA Certified (n = 53)		t	Sig. (2-tailed)
	M	SD	M	SD		
Reading	3.31	1.37	2.84	1.25	5.319	.000*
Writing	3.88	1.51	3.26	1.65	6.313	.000*
Speaking/Listening Language	3.65	1.38	3.42	1.56	2.056	.040*
	3.66	1.29	3.56	1.36	.988	.323
Total Preparedness	3.62	1.42	3.22	1.49	7.730	.000*

* $p < .05$

Descriptive statistics for middle school/junior high teachers versus high school teachers along with results of significance testing related to student preparedness are reported in Table 22. Teachers who teach the majority of their day in middle school/junior high perceived student preparedness in each of the four strands as: reading ($M = 3.18$), speaking/listening ($M = 3.45$), language ($M = 3.52$), and writing ($M = 3.61$). Teachers who teach the majority of their day in high school perceived student preparedness in each of the four strands, as: reading ($M = 3.34$), language ($M = 3.77$), speaking/listening ($M = 3.81$), and writing ($M = 4.00$).

An independent samples t-test ($p < .05$) revealed a significant difference between the ratings of teachers who teach the majority of their day in middle school/junior high and those who teach the majority of their day in high school when considering their perceptions of student preparedness in all strands: reading ($p = .007$), writing ($p = .000$), speaking/listening ($p = .000$), language ($p = .000$), and total preparedness ($p = .000$). Teachers who teach the majority of the day in high school perceived students to be more prepared than their counterparts who teach the majority of their day in middle school/junior high.

Table 22. Level of Student Preparedness by Strand: Middle School/Junior High vs. High School

Strands	Middle School/ Junior High (n = 186)		High School (n = 229)		t	Sig. (2-tailed)
	M	SD	M	SD		
Reading	3.18	1.35	3.34	1.36	-2.715	.007*
Writing	3.61	1.56	4.00	1.49	-5.914	.000*
Speaking/Listening	3.45	1.41	3.81	1.36	-5.038	.000*
Language	3.52	1.26	3.77	1.30	-3.754	.000*
Total Preparedness	3.43	1.42	3.72	1.41	-8.606	.000*

* $p < .05$

Descriptive statistics and significance testing results based on years of teaching experience are reported in Table 23. Teachers with 1-5 years teaching experience in English/Language Arts perceived student preparedness in each of the four strands as: reading ($M = 3.23$), speaking/listening ($M = 3.59$), language ($M = 3.66$), and writing ($M = 3.86$). Teachers with 6-10 years teaching experience in English/Language Arts perceived student preparedness in each of the four strands as: reading ($M = 3.37$), speaking/listening ($M = 3.74$), language ($M = 3.84$), and writing ($M = 3.88$). Teachers with more than 11 years teaching English/Language Arts perceived student preparedness in each of the four strands as: reading ($M = 3.18$), language ($M = 3.49$), speaking/listening ($M = 3.59$), and writing ($M = 3.70$).

A one-way ANOVA ($p < .05$) revealed significant differences between groups when considering teachers' perceptions of student preparedness in the reading strand ($p = .018$) the language strand ($p = .000$), and total preparedness ($p = .000$). Tukey's HSD was used to determine the nature of the differences between years of experience (see Table 23). Teachers with 6-10 years of experiences perceived students to be significantly more prepared in reading and language than their counterparts with 11 or more years of experience.

Table 23. Level of Student Preparedness and Significance by Strand: Years Experience

Strands	1-5 (n = 135)		6-10 (n = 123)		11+ (n = 162)		Sig. Between Groups	Years of Experience		Sig.*
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD				
Reading	3.23	1.40	3.37	1.31	3.18	1.30	.018*	6-10	11+	.016
Writing	3.86	1.55	3.88	1.59	3.70	1.49	.045			
Speaking/Listening	3.59	1.41	3.74	1.43	3.59	1.38	.093			
Language	3.66	1.41	3.84	1.30	3.49	1.19	.000*	6-10	11+	.000
Total Preparedness	3.57	1.47	3.69	1.46	3.47	1.37	.000*	1-5	6-10	.017*
								1-5	11+	.033*
								6-10	11+	.000*

*p < .05

Descriptive statistics and significance testing results based on Regional Education

Service Agency 1-8 are reported in Table 24. Teachers who teach in RESA 1 perceived student preparedness in each of the four strands as: reading (M = 3.00), speaking/listening (M = 3.21), language (M = 3.62), and writing (M = 3.68). Teachers who teach in RESA 2 perceived student preparedness in each of the four strands as: reading (M = 3.16), speaking/listening (M = 3.55), language (M = 3.72), and writing (M = 3.89). Teachers who teach in RESA 3 perceived student preparedness in each of the four strands, as: reading (M = 3.35), language (M = 3.55), speaking/listening (M = 3.66), and writing (M = 3.94). Teachers who teach in RESA 4 perceived student preparedness in each of the four strands as: reading (M = 3.00), language (M = 3.33), writing (M = 3.38), and speaking/listening (M = 3.43). Teachers who teach in RESA 5 perceived student preparedness in each of the four strands as: reading (M = 3.38), speaking/listening (M = 3.63), language (M = 3.72), and writing (M = 3.90). Teachers who teach in RESA 6 perceived student preparedness in each of the four strands as: reading (M = 3.39), speaking/listening (M = 3.73), writing (M = 3.76), and language (M = 3.83). Teachers who teach in RESA 7 perceived student preparedness in each of the four strands as: reading (M = 3.43), language (M = 3.81), speaking/listening (M = 3.85), and writing (M = 4.01). Teachers who teach in RESA 8 perceived

student preparedness in each of the four strands as: reading (M = 3.39), language (M = 3.64), speaking/listening (M = 3.83), and writing (M = 3.86).

Table 24. Level of Student Preparedness and Significance by Strand: RESA 1-8

RESA	Reading			Writing			Speaking/Listening			Language		
	Sig. Between Groups											
	.000*			.000*			.000*			.005*		
n	M	SD										
1	246	3.00	1.53	244	3.68	1.64	160	3.21	1.42	164	3.62	1.42
2	258	3.16	1.36	263	3.89	1.52	172	3.55	1.50	176	3.72	1.35
3	340	3.35	1.29	336	3.94	1.47	227	3.66	1.40	228	3.55	1.29
4	264	3.00	1.20	263	3.38	1.45	176	3.43	1.40	176	3.33	1.08
5	216	3.38	1.34	216	3.90	1.52	144	3.63	1.26	144	3.72	1.23
6	234	3.39	1.39	228	3.76	1.66	156	3.73	1.45	156	3.83	1.24
7	383	3.43	1.34	388	4.01	1.47	256	3.85	1.37	260	3.81	1.36
8	306	3.39	1.36	294	3.86	1.56	199	3.83	1.37	204	3.63	1.30

*p<.05

A one-way ANOVA ($p < .05$) revealed significant differences between groups when considering teachers' perceptions of student preparedness in all strands: reading ($p = .000$), writing ($p = .000$), speaking/listening ($p = .000$), language ($p = .005$), and total preparedness ($p = .000$). Tukey's HSD was used to determine the nature of the differences between RESAs (see Table 25).

This analysis revealed that teachers in RESA 1 perceived student preparedness in reading significantly different from teachers in RESAs 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8 with teachers in RESA 1 rating student preparedness in reading significantly lower. Teachers in RESA 1 perceived student preparedness in speaking/listening significantly different from teachers in RESAs 3, 6, 7, and 8 with teachers in RESA 1 rating student preparedness in speaking/listening significantly lower. Teachers in RESA 2 perceived student preparedness in writing significantly different from teachers in RESA 4 with teachers in RESA 2 rating student preparedness in writing significantly higher. Teachers in RESA 3 perceived student preparedness in reading significantly different from teachers in RESA 4 with teachers in RESA 3 rating student preparedness in reading

significantly higher. Teachers in RESA 3 perceived student preparedness in writing significantly different from teachers in RESA 4 with teachers in RESA 3 rating student preparedness in writing significantly higher. Teachers in RESA 4 perceived student preparedness in reading significantly different from teachers in RESAs 5, 6, 7, and 8 with teachers in RESA 4 rating student preparedness in reading significantly lower. Teachers in RESA 4 perceived student preparedness in writing significantly different from teachers in RESAs 5, 7, and 8 with teachers in RESA 4 rating student preparedness in writing significantly lower. Teachers in RESA 4 perceived student preparedness in speaking/listening significantly different from teachers in RESA 7 with teachers in RESA 4 rating student preparedness in speaking/listening significantly lower. Teachers in RESA 4 perceived student preparedness in language significantly different from teachers in RESAs 6 and 7 with teachers in RESA 4 rating student preparedness in language significantly lower.

Table 25. Post-hoc Analysis: RESA 1-8

Strands	RESA	RESA	Mean Difference	Sig*	
Reading	1	3	-.37733*	.019	
		5	-.40402*	.029	
		6	-.41755*	.016	
		7	-.45520*	.001	
		8	-.41328*	.008	
	3	4	.38703*	.011	
		4	5	-.41372*	.019
			6	-.42725*	.010
			7	-.46490*	.000
			8	-.42298*	.005
Writing	2	4	.51711*	.003	
	3	4	.56703*	.000	
	4	5	-.52635*	.005	
		7	-.63131*	.000	
		8	-.48412*	.005	
Speaking/Listening	1	3	-.44829*	.040	
		6	-.51827*	.022	
		7	-.63906*	.000	
		8	-.62167*	.001	
	4	7	-.42543*	.040	
Language	4	6	-.50379*	.010	
		7	-.47815*	.004	
	Total	1	3	-.26924*	.001
5			-.29299*	.001	
6			-.29644*	.001	
7			-.40339*	.000	
8			-.30582*	.000	
2		4	.31707*	.000	
		7	-.19380*	.040	
3		4	.37672*	.000	
		4	5	-.40047*	.000
			6	-.40393*	.000
			7	-.51087*	.000
		8	-.41330*	.000	

*p<.05

Research Question 5: Teacher Preparedness and Demographic Variables

To answer Research Question 5, “What differences, if any, exist among selected demographic and attribute variables in terms of how prepared teachers are to teach the competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English

Language Arts?”, participants responded to 20 competencies, later grouped into four strands, using a seven-point Likert scale in which 1 = “Not At All Prepared” and 7 = “Fully Prepared.” An independent samples t-test was used to determine differences, if any, between the responses of two groups. A one-way ANOVA was used to compare the overall difference of more than two groups.

Descriptive statistics for males versus females along with results from significance testing related to teacher preparedness are reported in Table 26. Mean scores of male perceptions of teacher preparedness in each of the four strands included: speaking/listening (M = 6.05), reading (M = 6.23), writing (M = 6.45), and language (M = 6.52). Mean scores of female perceptions of teacher preparedness in each of the four strands included: speaking/listening (M = 6.06), reading (M = 6.10), writing (M = 6.20), and language (M = 6.42).

An independent samples t-test ($p < .05$) revealed a significant difference between the ratings of males and females when considering their perceptions of teacher preparedness in the writing strand ($p = .000$) and total preparedness ($p = .001$). Males (M = 6.45) perceived themselves to be more prepared to teach related to the writing strand than their female (M = 6.20) counterparts. Males (M = 6.52) also perceived their total preparedness higher than females (M = 6.19).

Table 26. Level of Teacher Preparedness by Strand: Male vs. Female

Strands	Males (n = 39)		Females (n = 377)		t	Sig. (2-tailed)*
	M	SD	M	SD		
Reading	6.23	.97	6.10	.99	1.734	.083
Writing	6.45	.76	6.20	1.00	3.498	.000*
Speaking/Listening	6.05	1.14	6.06	1.01	-.174	.862
Language	6.52	.74	6.42	.83	1.213	.225
Total Preparedness	6.32	.92	6.19	.012	3.273	.001*

* $p < .05$

Descriptive statistics for certified English/Language Arts teachers versus those without English/Language Arts certification along with results of significance testing related to teacher preparedness are reported in Table 27. Teachers holding certification to teach English/Language Arts perceived teacher preparedness in each of the four strands as: speaking/listening (M = 6.06), reading (M = 6.14), language (M = 6.46), and writing (M = 6.28). Teachers not certified to teach English/Language Arts perceived teacher preparedness in each of the four strands as: writing (M = 5.79), reading (M = 5.86), speaking/listening (M = 6.02), and language (M = 6.23).

An independent samples t-test ($p < .05$) revealed a significant difference between the ratings of teachers holding certification to teach English/Language Arts and teachers not holding specific certification to teach English/Language Arts when considering their perceptions of teacher preparedness in reading ($p = .000$), writing ($p = .000$), language ($p = .001$), and total preparedness ($p = .000$). Teachers holding specific certification to teach English/Language Arts perceived themselves to be more prepared to teach the competencies related to the reading, writing, language strands and total preparedness than their counterparts who did not hold specific certification to teach English/Language Arts.

Table 27. Level of Teacher Preparedness by Strand: ELA Certified vs. Non-ELA Certified

Strands	ELA Certified (n = 366)		Non-ELA Certified (n = 53)		t	Sig. (2-tailed)
	M	SD	M	SD		
Reading	6.14	1.01	5.86	.87	4.313	.000*
Writing	6.28	.95	5.79	1.18	7.631	.000*
Speaking/Listening	6.06	1.03	6.02	.95	.582	.561
Language	6.46	.82	6.23	.86	3.476	.001*
Total Preparedness	6.23	.012	5.94	.03	8.186	.000*

P<.05

Descriptive statistics for middle school/junior high teachers versus high school teachers along with results of significance testing related to teacher preparedness are reported in Table 28. Teachers who teach the majority of their day in middle school/junior high perceived teacher

preparedness in each of the four strands as: speaking/listening (M = 5.90), reading (M = 5.93), writing (M = 6.01), and language (M = 6.26). Teachers who teach the majority of their day in high school perceived teacher preparedness in each of the four strands as: speaking/listening (M = 6.18), reading (M = 6.25), writing (M = 6.39), and language (M = 6.57).

An independent samples t-test ($p < .05$) revealed a significant difference between the ratings of teachers who teach the majority of their day in middle school/junior high and those who teach the majority of their day in high school when considering their perceptions of teacher preparedness in all strands: reading ($p = .000$), writing ($p = .000$), speaking/listening ($p = .000$), and language ($p = .000$) and in total preparedness ($p = .000$). Teachers who teach the majority of the day in high school perceived themselves to be more prepared to teach the competencies related to each strand and total preparedness than their counterparts who teach the majority of their day in middle school/junior high.

Table 28. Level of Teacher Preparedness by Strand: Middle School/Junior High vs. High School

Strands	Middle School Junior High (n = 186)		High School (n = 229)		t	Sig. (2-tailed)
	M	SD	M	SD		
Reading	5.93	1.05	6.25	.92	-7.699	.000*
Writing	6.01	1.12	6.39	.83	-9.219	.000*
Speaking/Listening	5.90	1.09	6.18	.95	-5.279	.000*
Language	6.26	.96	6.57	.67	-7.287	.000*
Total Preparedness	6.01	1.07	6.34	.87	-14.638	.000*

* $p < .05$

Descriptive statistics and significance testing results based on years of teaching experience are reported in Table 29. Teachers with 1-5 years teaching experience in English/Language Arts perceived teacher preparedness in each of the four strands as: reading (M = 6.02), speaking/listening (M = 6.02), writing (M = 6.22), and language (M = 6.28). Teachers with 6-10 years teaching experience in English/Language Arts perceived teacher preparedness in

each of the four strands as: speaking/listening ($M = 6.15$), reading ($M = 6.18$), writing ($M = 6.35$), and language ($M = 6.53$). Teachers with more than 11 years teaching English/Language Arts perceived teacher preparedness in each of the four strands as: speaking/listening ($M = 6.02$), reading ($M = 6.12$), writing ($M = 6.12$), and language ($M = 6.47$).

A one-way ANOVA ($p < .05$) revealed significant differences between groups when considering their perceptions of teacher preparedness in the reading strand ($p = .009$), writing strand ($p = .000$), language strand ($p = .000$), and total preparedness. Tukey's HSD was used to determine the nature of the differences between years of experience (see Table 29). Teachers with 1-5 years of experience perceived themselves to be significantly less prepared to teach competencies related to the reading, writing, and language strands than their counterparts who have 6-10 years of experience. Teachers with 1-5 years of experience perceived their total preparedness to be significantly less than teachers with 6-10 years of experience. Teachers with 1-5 years of experience also perceived themselves to be significantly less prepared to teach competencies related to the reading and language strands than their counterparts with 11 or more years of experience. Teachers with 6-10 years of experience perceived themselves to be significantly more prepared to teach writing and total preparedness than their counterparts with more experience.

Table 29. Level of Teacher Preparedness and Significance: Years Experience

Strands	1-5 (n = 135)		6-10 (n = 123)		11+ (n = 162)		Sig. Between Groups	Years of Experience		Sig.*
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD				
Reading	6.02	.98	6.18	.93	6.12	1.06	.009*	1-5	6-10	.008
Writing	6.22	.91	6.35	.91	6.12	1.10	.000*	1-5	6-10	.049
								6-10	11+	.000
Speaking/Listening	6.02	1.02	6.15	.95	6.02	1.08	.089			
Language	6.28	.86	6.52	.73	6.47	.86	.000*	1-5	6-10	.000
								1-5	11+	.001
Total Preparedness	6.12	.95	6.29	.90	6.17	1.05	.000*	1-5	6-10	.000
								6-10	11+	.000

*p<.05

Descriptive statistics and significance testing results based on Regional Education

Service Agency 1-8 are reported in Table 30. Teachers who teach in RESA 1 perceived teacher preparedness in each of the four strands as: speaking/listening (M = 5.99), reading (M = 6.04), writing (M = 6.13), and language (M = 6.43). Teachers who teach in RESA 2 perceived teacher preparedness in each of the four strands as: reading (M = 5.92), speaking/listening (M = 5.95), writing (M = 6.10), and language (M = 6.25). Teachers who teach in RESA 3 perceived teacher preparedness in each of the four strands as: reading (M = 6.15), speaking/listening (M = 6.17), writing (M = 6.33), and language (M = 6.40). Teachers who teach in RESA 4 perceived teacher preparedness in each of the four strands as: speaking/listening (M = 5.85), writing (M = 5.91), reading (M = 5.99), and language (M = 6.17). Teachers who teach in RESA 5 perceived teacher preparedness in each of the four strands as: speaking/listening (M = 5.98), reading (M = 6.05), writing (M = 6.12), and language (M = 6.37). Teachers who teach in RESA 6 perceived teacher preparedness in each of the four strands as: speaking/listening (M = 6.25), reading (M = 6.30), writing (M = 6.31), and language (M = 6.63). Teachers who teach in RESA 7 perceived teacher preparedness in each of the four strands as: speaking/listening (M = 6.03), reading (M = 6.14), writing (M = 6.35), and language (M = 6.51). Teachers who teach in RESA 8 perceived teacher

preparedness in each of the four strands as: reading (M = 6.14), speaking/listening (M = 6.17), writing (M = 6.35), and language (M = 6.59).

Table 30. Level of Teacher Preparedness and Significance by Strand: RESA 1-8

RESA	Reading			Writing			Speaking/Listening			Language		
	Sig. Between Groups											
	.000*			.000*			.004*			.000*		
n	M	SD										
1	245	6.04	.95	246	6.13	.99	160	5.99	1.03	164	6.43	.74
2	258	5.92	1.15	257	6.10	1.10	172	5.95	1.24	176	6.25	1.01
3	338	6.15	.90	335	6.33	.83	228	6.17	.89	228	6.40	.77
4	263	5.99	1.02	264	5.91	1.08	175	5.85	.97	176	6.17	.92
5	215	6.05	1.00	216	6.12	1.00	144	5.98	1.07	144	6.37	.90
6	233	6.30	.84	228	6.31	.99	155	6.25	.91	156	6.63	.59
7	383	6.14	1.00	390	6.35	.93	256	6.03	1.02	259	6.51	.78
8	306	6.24	1.04	294	6.35	.98	200	6.17	1.03	204	6.59	.79

*p<.05

A one-way ANOVA ($p < .05$) revealed significant differences between groups when considering teachers' perceptions of student preparedness in all strands: reading ($p = .000$), writing ($p = .000$), speaking/listening ($p = .004$), and language ($p = .000$) and in total preparedness ($p = .000$). Tukey's HSD was used to determine the nature of the differences between RESAs (see Table 31).

This analysis revealed that teachers in RESA 1 perceived teacher preparedness in reading significantly different from teachers in RESAs 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8 with teachers in RESA 1 rating teacher preparedness in reading significantly lower. Teachers in RESA 1 perceived teacher preparedness in speaking/listening significantly different from teachers in RESAs 3, 6, 7, and 8 with teachers in RESA 1 rating teacher preparedness in speaking/listening significantly lower. Teachers in RESA 2 perceived teacher preparedness in writing significantly different from teachers in RESA 4 with teachers in RESA 2 rating teacher preparedness in writing significantly higher. Teachers in RESA 3 perceived teacher preparedness in reading and writing significantly different from teachers in RESA 4 with teachers in RESA 3 rating teacher preparedness in

reading and writing significantly higher. Teachers in RESA 4 perceived teacher preparedness in reading significantly different from teachers in RESAs 5, 6, 7, and 8 with teachers in RESA 4 rating teacher preparedness in reading significantly lower. Teachers in RESA 4 perceived teacher preparedness in writing significantly different from teachers in RESAs 5, 7, and 8 with teachers in RESA 4 rating teacher preparedness in writing significantly lower. Teachers in RESA 4 perceived teacher preparedness in speaking/listening significantly different from teachers in RESA 7 with teachers in RESA 4 rating teacher preparedness in speaking/listening significantly lower. Teachers in RESA 4 perceived teacher preparedness in language significantly different from teachers in RESAs 6 and 7 with teachers in RESA 4 rating teacher preparedness in language significantly lower.

Table 31. Post-hoc Analysis: RESA 1-8

Strands	RESA	RESA	Mean Difference	Sig*	
Reading	1	3	-.37733*	.019	
		5	-.40402*	.029	
		6	-.41755*	.016	
		7	-.45520*	.001	
		8	-.41328*	.008	
	3	4	.38703*	.011	
	4	5	-.41372*	.019	
		6	-.42725*	.010	
		7	-.46490*	.000	
		8	-.42298*	.005	
Writing		2	4	.51711*	.003
	3	4	.56703*	.000	
	4	5	-.52635*	.005	
		7	-.63131*	.000	
		8	-.48412*	.005	
Speaking/Listening	1	3	-.44829*	.040	
		6	-.51827*	.022	
		7	-.63906*	.000	
		8	-.62167*	.001	
	4	7	-.42543*	.040	
Language	4	6	-.50379*	.010	
		7	-.47815*	.004	
		Total Preparedness	1	4	.16485*
6	-.21886*			.000	
8	-.18904*			.001	
2	3			-.20997*	.000
2	6		-.30885*	.000	
	7		-.20832*	.000	
	8		-.27902*	.000	
	3		4	.284838*	.000
3	4		6	-.38371*	.000
			7	-.28318*	.000
		8	-.35389*	.000	
		5	6	-.23790*	.000
4	7	-.13738*	.049		
	8	-.20808*	.000		

*p<.05

Research Question 6: Effective Instructional Strategies

To answer Research Question 6, respondents were asked, “What instructional strategies do teachers identify as most effective in helping prepare students to learn the competencies

outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts?”

Two hundred ninety-four participants provided written responses to this question. Responses were analyzed for emergent themes which were organized into the following categories: writing, reading, Gradual Release of Responsibility, project-based learning, speaking/listening, language, and technology.

Strategies for teaching writing were mentioned most often, with respondents identifying graphic organizers, writing exemplars, and the writing process as the instructional strategies they found most helpful in preparing students to learn the competencies. One respondent said, “The most effective strategy is to have students complete writing assignments using the writing process. They submit their writing at each step and receive feedback from the instructor.”

Reading related strategies were also commonly mentioned with respondents listing close reading and annotation of complex literary and informational texts as the instructional strategies they found most helpful in preparing students to learn the competencies outlined. Several respondents also mentioned the benefits of using Kelly Gallagher’s Article of the Week and Sustained Silent Reading. One respondent noted, “It has been helpful having a firm understanding of a close read and teaching those steps to my students. While teaching my students to analyze texts more closely, I have also embraced using informational texts as much as literary texts. It has been helpful knowing that this shift is making my students more critical thinkers and observers of texts.”

The Gradual Release of Responsibility for Learning also emerged as a theme with respondents noting direct instruction, modeling, demonstrations, collaborative guided practice with a partner and in small groups, and independent practice. “Modeling, small group or partner

practice, and then independent practice (which may or may not lead to re-teach), are the strategies I have found to be most effective,” said one respondent.

Project-Based Learning (PBL) was mentioned as respondents listed PBL as a way to integrate reading, writing, speaking/listening, and language standards with other content areas. One teacher noted, “Using PBLs or project-based learning has been effective in preparing students to meet these RLA competencies. Many standards can be included in one project.”

Participants also identified strategies related to Speaking/Listening. Collaborative class discussions, Socratic seminars, multimedia presentations, and debates were mentioned as beneficial instructional strategies in helping students learn the related competencies. “My students participate in a variety of projects that culminate in a multimedia presentation. I model Standard English in the classroom and expect my students to use it during all public speaking,” noted one respondent.

Language related instructional strategies such as vocabulary workshop and word study were identified as beneficial in helping students learn the competencies. Other strategies listed included grammar instruction embedded and applied in writing, grammar lessons, Daily Oral Language exercises, weekly edits, Kelly Gallagher’s Sentence of the Week, games, and skill and drill exercises. One respondent said, “Instructional strategies I use to help students meet the language arts competencies are vocabulary workshop, journaling/writer’s response, and weekly edit in conjunction with our studies of informational and literary texts and grammar/writing.”

Technology related strategies were also represented with respondents citing specific programs that enable computer assisted instruction as well as interactive white board lessons, webinars, and webquests. One respondent noted, “I feel like writing workshops integrating

technology are the most effective instructional strategies for helping students meet all of the competencies listed in Part B.”

A small number of respondents also identified specific resources that they felt were more effective in helping students learn the competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts. “Instructional strategies that I found most effective include Study Island, Soliday System, and Kansas Writing,” said one respondent. In addition to the resources cited by the teacher quoted, other resources included: WV Writes, Teach 21, Edmodo, Learn Zillion, Read 180, Scholastic Scope, TechSteps, Prezi, <http://www.izzit.org> , <http://www.newsela.com>, and 6+1 Traits Writing.

Research Question 7: Professional Development Needs

To answer Research Question 7, respondents were asked, “What professional development topics do teachers identify as most needed in helping prepare them to teach students the competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts?” Two hundred ninety-two participants provided written responses to this question. Responses were analyzed for emergent themes resulting in the following categories: technology, writing, ideas/instructional strategies, materials/resources, speaking/listening, language, the standards themselves, reading, and project-based learning.

Technology related topics were mentioned most often with respondents listing apps, websites, online resources, and programs related to English Language Arts, specifically writing, research, and speaking, as the professional development topics they found most needed in preparing teachers to teach the competencies. Respondents also noted the need for professional development on technology tools, such as interactive whiteboards, responders, iPads, Google Applications, electronic portfolios, and digital research papers while others noted the need for

professional development on addressing the competencies with limited technological resources. One respondent noted, “My professional development needs are not related to teaching the English Language Arts competencies, but in using some of the new technology like whiteboards and responders.”

Writing related topics, especially informative, research, and argumentative writing in all content areas, were also commonly requested. Respondents expressed the need for professional development on writing workshop, the writing process, integrating grammar and style instruction, addressing student deficiencies, using online writing tools, and teaching the elements of writing, such as hooks and thesis. “I feel that I would benefit from classes that would help me assist my students in becoming better writers especially with informative and argumentative writing,” said one respondent.

Creative, engaging research-based, content-specific, grade-appropriate ideas and instructional strategies were requested. Respondents also noted that strategies, assignments, and authentic assessments aligned with the Smarter Balanced Assessments, especially those for writing were needed. One respondent said, “More specific strategies that will enhance student performance on the Smarter Balanced Assessment would be beneficial.”

Respondents also noted the need to find and review materials and resources. One respondent noted, “Finding materials to teach the skills is needed as our textbooks are not current with Common Core.”

Speaking/Listening related topics were mentioned. Respondents noted professional development was needed on teaching speaking and listening, debate, and how to encourage shy students to speak in front of their peers. “I would like to have more PD on higher-level strategies for teaching speaking/listening standards,” noted one respondent.

Language related needs included teaching grammar in the context of reading and writing as an area of needed professional development. In addition to noting grammar, respondents also noted that professional development in the teaching of vocabulary and mechanics was needed. “I need more grammar study – teaching grammar was never a priority until recently – unfortunately because of this I didn’t learn how to teach grammar in college,” admitted one respondent.

More detailed information on the competencies themselves was also noted with respondents listing the need for professional development on the specific changes in the standards and how to address them so teachers fully understood the standards. Professional development was also needed on implementation, instructional practices, and application of the standards. One respondent said, “I need instruction on the SPECIFIC changes that come with Next Gen Standards and how to address them.”

Reading related topics included the need for professional development on using literary text, informational text, and seminal United States documents, especially with struggling students who enter their classrooms unprepared for grade-level instruction. “I would like to learn new strategies to assist struggling readers and special education students,” noted one respondent.

Project-Based Learning was cited as a needed topic of professional development. One respondent said, “I need to know how to teach PBLs more effectively.”

A small number of respondents cited the need for anything and everything related to teaching the competencies. This theme varied in strength but was present in some responses, perhaps indicating that a few teachers feel unprepared to teach the competencies. One respondent noted, “I do not feel prepared at all. I need additional training to instruct and prepare students.”

Ancillary Findings

Part A of the survey included a question that asked respondents' to identify their preferred mode(s) of professional development from a list of nine options. Data from 418 respondents are presented in Table 32.

Table 32. Preferred Mode(s) of Professional Development

Modes	n	f*	%
	418		
Conferences, seminars, institutes, classes located in your county	246		59
Individual reading of print materials	202		48
Conferences, seminars, institutes, classes located throughout the state or nation	191		46
Conferences, seminars, institutes, classes located in your region or RESA	175		42
Job-embedded study groups, professional learning communities	150		36
Online classes, webinars, podcasts, streaming videos, DVDs	146		35
Individual reading of electronic books and digital publications	133		32
Peer observations, coaching, mentoring at your school	113		27
Videos of actual classroom interactions	104		25

*Duplicated Count

All modes of professional development were represented in the sample with 59% (n=246) indicating they preferred professional development opportunities in their own counties, 48% (n=202) preferred individual reading of print materials, 46% (n=191) preferred conferences, seminars, institutes, or classes at locations throughout the state or nation, 42% (n=175) preferred conferences, seminars, institutes, or classes located in their region or RESA, 36% (n=150) preferred job-embedded study groups or professional learning communities, 35% (n=146) preferred online classes, webinars, podcasts, streaming videos, or DVDs, 32% (n=133) preferred individual reading and research of electronic books and digital publications, 27% (n=113) preferred peer observations, coaching, or mentoring at their schools, and 25% (n=104) preferred videos of actual classroom interactions.

Some respondents also noted their preferred mode(s) of delivery for professional development in written comments. The most noted mode of professional development was the opportunity to observe others in their own building teaching the standards. Respondents also wanted opportunities to share what they are reading and learning from conferences and seminars with their peers and opportunities to collaborate with building level colleagues in job-embedded professional development based in their content-specific department as well as including colleagues from other content areas. Respondents also wanted a more communicative local education agency, copies of materials aligned to the standards, and more class time as well as more time for common planning and reflection. Teachers also noted the need for time to work with the standards in a hands-on setting as both grade level teams and vertical teams, so they could discuss skills students need and collaborate in planning units of instruction responsive to those needs.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this chapter was to present data gathered from a study examining how prepared students are to learn the competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts and how prepared teachers are to teach those same competencies as perceived by West Virginia English Language Arts teachers in grades six through twelve.

Teachers' perceptions of student preparedness mean scores for individual student competencies ranged from 2.96 to 4.86, strand means ranged from 3.25 to 3.81, and the total mean equaled 3.57. Average responses below the midpoint of 4.0 were closer to "Not At All Prepared" than "Fully Prepared", including 17 of 20 competencies, all four strands, and the total.

Teacher's perceptions of teacher preparedness mean scores for individual teacher competencies ranged from 5.80 to 6.53, strand means ranged from 6.06 to 6.43, and the total mean equaled 6.20. Average responses above the midpoint of 4.0 were closer to "Fully Prepared" than "Not At All Prepared" related to all competencies, strands, and the total.

Using an independent samples t-test, teachers' perceptions of students compared to teachers' perceptions of teachers were found to be significantly different for each of the four strands. Teachers' perceptions of student preparedness to learn the competencies were closer to "Not At All Prepared". When responses were analyzed based on strand, student preparedness means ranged from 3.25 to 3.81. Teachers' perceptions of teacher preparedness to teach the competencies were closer to "Fully Prepared". Teacher preparedness means ranged from 6.06 to 6.43.

When the strands for teachers' perceptions of students were analyzed based on demographic and attribute variables significant differences were found for respondents' sex, certification, programmatic level, years of experience, and RESA. Females perceived students to be significantly more prepared to learn related to the language strand than their male counterparts. Teachers holding specific certification to teach English/Language Arts perceived students to be significantly more prepared to learn the competencies related to the reading, writing, and speaking/listening strands. Teachers who teach the majority of their day at the high school level perceived students to be more prepared to learn the competencies related to all four strands. Significant differences based on years of experienced included that teachers with 6-10 years perceived students to be significantly more prepared to learn the competencies in the reading and language strands than those with 11 or more years. There were also significant differences in all strands among teachers who teach in different RESAs.

When the strands for teachers' perceptions of teachers were analyzed based on demographic and attribute variables significant differences were found for respondents' sex, certification, programmatic level, years of experience, and RESA. Males perceive themselves to be significantly more prepared to teach competencies within the writing strand. Teachers holding specific certification to teach English/Language Arts perceived themselves to be significantly more prepared to teach the reading, writing, and language strands. Teachers who teach the majority of their day at the high school level perceived themselves to be significantly more prepared to teach all strands. Significant differences based on years of experience included that teachers with 6-10 years of experience perceived themselves to be significantly more prepared to teach the competencies with significant differences in the reading strand between the groups with 1-5 and 6-10 years of experience, in the writing strand between the groups with 6-10 years of experience and each of the other two groups, and the language strand between the groups with 1-5 years of experience and each of the other two groups. There were also significant differences in all strands among teachers who teach in different RESAs.

When asked to identify effective instructional strategies used to prepare students to learn the competencies, teachers pointed most often to strategies for writing with other strategies related to reading, Gradual Release of Responsibility, project-based learning, speaking/listening, language, and technology mentioned next. A small number of respondents also identified specific resources that were more effective in helping students learn the competencies.

When asked to identify professional development topics teachers need to help them teach those same competencies, technology was most often identified as a need with other topics related to writing, ideas/instructional strategies, materials/resources, speaking/listening, language, the standards themselves, reading, and project-based learning noted next. A small

number of respondents indicated the need for anything and everything related to teaching the competencies.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter presents the summary and discussion of research regarding teachers' perceptions of students' preparedness to learn and teachers' preparedness to teach the College and Career Anchor Standards for English Language Arts. Implications and recommendations for further study derived from the findings of the *College and Career Readiness Standards for English: How Prepared Are Students and Teachers* survey are also presented.

Summary of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of West Virginia teachers who taught English Language Arts in grades six through twelve during the 2013-2014 school year in terms of how prepared students are to learn the college and career readiness competencies for English Language Arts and how prepared teachers are to teach those same competencies. Students are not entering high school with the college and career readiness needed to be on target for college and career upon graduation from high school. In addition, the knowledge and skills needed for college and career readiness are not usually defined in state standards (ACT, 2007). Developing teachers' capacity to implement new standards in ways that support the intended student competencies will require instructional changes in classrooms that are likely to occur only if there are sustained professional development opportunities focused on the needs of teachers and students (Marrongelle, Sztajn, & Smith, 2013). An in-depth review of the literature supported the importance of teachers being prepared to teach the standards. Professional development responsive to teachers' perceived needs is promising for increasing instruction and improving student skills (Reed, 2009).

Summary of Population

Of the 1,274 links to the survey distributed to West Virginia English Language Arts teachers in grades six through twelve during the 2013-2014 school year, a total of 424 survey responses were received, providing an overall return rate of 33%. Most of the respondents were females (91%) with specific certification to teach English Language Arts (87%). Respondents were fairly evenly split based on programmatic level (45% middle school/junior high and 55% high school), years of teaching experience (32% 1-5 years, 29% 6-10 years, 38% 11 or more years), and Regional Education Service Agency (11% RESA 1, 11% RESA 2, 15% RESA 3, 11% RESA 4, 9% RESA 5, 11% RESA 6, 18% RESA 7, and 12% RESA 8). Respondents also indicated their preferred mode(s) of professional development with the top five answers including: opportunities in their own counties (59%), individual reading of print materials (48%), conferences, seminars, institutes, or classes at locations throughout the state or nation (46%), conferences, seminars, institutes, or classes located in their region or RESA (42%), and job-embedded study groups or professional learning communities (36%).

Conclusions, Discussion and Related Literature

According to the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers (2010a), “the standards were created to ensure that all students graduate from high school with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in college, career, and life, regardless of where they live” (p. 1). The *College and Career Readiness Standards for English: How Prepared Are Students and Teachers* survey used the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts as the basis for asking West Virginia English Language Arts teachers in grades six through twelve their perceptions of how prepared students are to learn the competencies outlined in the standards and how prepared they are to

teach those same competencies. Analysis of the results reveals both similarities and differences in the perceptions of teachers with different demographic and attribute variables. Conclusions related to each research question follow along with discussion of related literature.

Research Question 1: How Prepared are Students

Research question one asks, “How prepared are students to learn the competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts as perceived by West Virginia English Language Arts teachers in grades six through twelve?” Teachers’ perceptions of student preparedness to learn the competencies were closer to “Not at All.”

Based on a seven-point scale, teachers’ perceptions of student preparedness mean scores for individual student competencies ranged from 2.96 to 4.86, strand means ranged from 3.25 to 3.81, and the total mean equaled 3.57. Average responses below the midpoint of 4.0 were closer to “Not At All Prepared” than “Fully Prepared”, including 17 of 20 competencies, all four strands, and the total. On the low end of the scale, two competencies had mean student preparedness scores less than 3.0: comprehend complex informational text (2.96) and conduct research projects (2.99). At the high end of the scale, three competencies had mean student preparedness scores greater than 4.0: use visual displays to present information and knowledge (4.25), use technology to facilitate the writing process (4.57), and write narratives (4.86).

The review of literature did not specifically address teachers’ overall perceptions of student preparedness. However, results from tools used to assess students’ academic readiness for college indicate that too many West Virginia students and students across the nation do not meet the benchmarks for college and career readiness in English and Reading (ACT, 2012a & 2012b).

The findings related to limited proficiency in the areas of working with complex texts and conducting research align with existing studies. ACT (2006) concluded that text complexity was the biggest difference in students who reach the college and career readiness benchmark for reading and those who do not. Specifically, students below the college and career readiness benchmark answer only a slightly higher number of questions about text complexity than the level suggested by chance. Therefore, states need to provide teachers with strong guidance, support, and professional development to strengthen reading instruction that incorporates complex texts (ACT, 2006). While the complexity level of texts encountered in postsecondary education have remained the same or increased, the complexity of texts used in K-12 education has declined during the last 50 years (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010b). Teachers will likely need professional development to help students learn to read increasingly complex texts (Liebling & Meltzer, 2011). The International Reading Association's Common Core State Standards Committee (2012) concurs that teachers will need professional development to help them provide the necessary instructional scaffolding for students to handle the increasing demands of text complexity.

Although the ACT does not have test items that match the Common Core State Standards for the Research to Build and Present Knowledge cluster (ACT, 2010a), the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (2012) claims students will analyze, integrate, and present information. Employers also cite reading comprehension and written communication as very important, yet it is the top deficiency in new hires (National Endowment for the Arts, 2007). Results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) also indicate a decline in those skills (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009). Findings from the quantitative section of the

survey align with findings from the qualitative responses to the question addressing professional development needs which concluded that writing, especially informative, research, and argumentative, was a topic where teachers wanted more professional development.

Looking at the competencies on the high end of the scale, although teachers' perceptions of student preparedness to write narratives was higher than other competencies in this study, according to ACT (2010a), only 39% met or exceeded the standards for text types and purposes as well as range of writing. However, 51% percent met or exceeded the standards for production and distribution of writing (ACT, 2010a), which is the cluster containing the competency to use technology to facilitate the writing process. The ACT does not have test items that match the Common Core State Standards for the Speaking/Listening strand, which contains the competency to use visual displays to present information and knowledge (ACT, 2010a).

Research Question 2: How Prepared are Teachers

Research question two asks, "How prepared are teachers to teach students the competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts as perceived by West Virginia English Language Arts teachers in grades six through twelve?" The majority of teachers felt "Fully Prepared" to teach the competencies at this early stage of implementation.

Based on a seven-point scale, teachers' perceptions of teacher preparedness mean scores for individual teacher competencies ranged from 5.80 to 6.53, strand means ranged from 6.06 to 6.43, and the total mean equaled 6.20. Average responses above the midpoint of 4.0 were closer to "Fully Prepared" than "Not At All Prepared" related to all competencies, strands, and the total. On the low end of the scale, two competencies had mean teacher preparedness scores less than 6.0: integrate knowledge and ideas (5.80) and participate in conversations and collaborations

(5.94). At the high end of the scale, three competencies had mean scores that would round up to 6.50: demonstrate command of Standard English (6.47), use a range of words and phrases (6.47), and understand figures of speech (6.53).

Looking closer at results at the low end of the scale, the findings of this study align with existing studies which concluded that professional development might be needed in the area of speaking and listening as students are required to collaborate and communicate more with the Common Core State Standards (National Governors Association for Best Practices & Council for Chief State School Officers, 2010b) than in most previous state standards (Liebling & Meltzer, 2011).

Teachers' perceptions of teacher preparedness to teach students to demonstrate command of Standard English, use of a range of words and phrases, and understand figures of speech were the highest rated competencies in this study. According to ACT, (2010a) 53% of students met or exceeded the standards for the conventions of Standard English, but only 35% met or exceeded the standards for the vocabulary cluster in which using a range of words and phrases and understanding figures of speech are a part.

Teachers' perceptions of teacher preparedness to teach the competencies were closer to "Fully Prepared." However, Crawford (2012) notes that although teachers may feel confident in their knowledge of the standards, as they study the standards more, they may become more aware of their lack of knowledge and more willing to admit that they need to learn more.

Research Question 3: Differences between Student and Teacher Preparedness

Research question three asks, "What differences, if any, exist between student preparedness to learn the competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts and teacher preparedness to teach these same competencies

as perceived by West Virginia English Language Arts teachers in grades six through twelve?” Teachers’ perceptions of student preparedness to learn the competencies and teacher preparedness to teach the competencies were significantly different ($p < .05$) with teachers perceiving themselves as better prepared to teach the strands than students were to learn the strands.

These findings align with existing studies which concluded teachers need to understand their content area deeply to address the learning needs of their students (Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy, 2010), but according to Starnes (2011), “understanding what children need to learn doesn’t ensure that we know how to help them learn it” (p. 72).

Research Question 4: Student Preparedness and Demographic Variables

Research question four asks, “What differences, if any, exist among selected demographic and attribute variables in terms of how prepared students are to learn the competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts?” Results indicated significant differences within each demographic and attribute variable: sex, certification, programmatic level, years of experience, and RESA.

Significant differences ($p < .05$) based on sex were found in teachers’ perceptions of student preparedness in the language strand with females perceiving students better prepared to learn the competencies in the language strand. Further analysis showed that both males and females perceived student preparedness of the four strands in the same order from low to high as reading, speaking/listening, language, and writing. However, the number of males was low compared to the number of females thus making it difficult to generalize these results.

Results showed that there was a significant difference ($p < .05$) for the reading, writing, and speaking/listening strands when comparing responses from teachers with specific

certification to teach English Language Arts and teachers without specific certification. Teachers holding specific certification in English Language Arts perceived that students entering their classrooms were more prepared to learn the competencies while teachers without specific certification perceived their students to be less prepared to learn the competencies. According to the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (2012), informative and argumentative writing prompts will require students to read and locate evidence to support their claims. Students will also be required to use speaking and listening skills for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Results showed that there was a significant difference ($p < .05$) for the reading, writing, speaking/listening, and language strands when comparing responses from teachers who teach the majority of their day at the middle school/junior high level (with means ranging from 3.18 to 3.61) versus the high school level (with means ranging from 3.34 to 4.00). Teachers who spend the majority of their day teaching high school felt students entering their classrooms were significantly more prepared to learn the competencies in each strand; however, average responses for both groups were still at or below the midpoint making them closer to “Not At All Prepared” than “Fully Prepared”. The review of literature found that the grade-specific standards are a cumulative progression toward college and career readiness (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010b); therefore, high school teachers should perceive students entering their classrooms as more prepared to learn the competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts because their students are closer to college and career than students in middle school.

The number of years of experience was collapsed into three groups: teachers with 1-5 years, 6-10 years, and 11 or more years. Results showed that teachers with 6-10 years perceived

students to be significantly ($p < .05$) more prepared to learn the competencies in the reading and language strands than teachers with 11 or more years of experience did.

A significant difference ($p < .05$) was found for the reading, writing, speaking/listening, and language strands indicating teachers within the RESAs differed from each other in perceptions of how prepared students entering their classrooms are to learn the competencies. Teachers in RESAs 1 and 4 perceived student preparedness in the reading, writing, speaking/listening, and language strands lower than other RESAs. RESA 3 rated student preparedness in the language strand lower than RESA 1 but higher than RESA 4.

Research Question 5: Teacher Preparedness and Demographic Variables

Research question five asks, “What differences, if any, exist among selected demographic and attribute variables in terms of how prepared teachers are to teach the competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts?” Results indicated significant differences within each demographic and attribute variable: sex, certification, programmatic level, years of experience, and RESA.

Significant differences ($p < .05$) based on sex were found in teachers’ perceptions of teacher preparedness in the writing strand with males perceiving themselves as better prepared to teach writing than females. Further analysis showed that both males and females perceived teacher preparedness of the four strands in the same order from low to high as speaking/listening, reading, language, and writing. However, the number of males was low compared to the number of females thus making it difficult to generalize these results.

Results showed that there was a significant difference ($p < .05$) for the reading, writing, and language strands when comparing responses from teachers with specific certification in English Language Arts and teachers without specific certification. Teachers holding specific

certification in English Language Arts perceived themselves as more prepared to teach students the competencies than those teachers who identified themselves as not holding specific certification. The findings in this study align with the findings in existing studies which concluded all students benefit from teachers who are prepared (ACT, 2004) and qualified to teach the more rigorous college and career readiness standards effectively (ACT & The Education Trust, 2005). Teachers who are certified to teach English/Language Arts should feel more prepared to teach the competencies than their counterparts who do not have certification specific to English/Language Arts.

Results showed that there was a significant difference ($p < .05$) for the reading, writing, speaking/listening, and language strands when comparing responses based on programmatic level. Although both groups of teachers rated their preparedness to teach the strands in the same order from lowest to highest: speaking/listening, reading, writing, and language, teachers who identified themselves as spending the majority of their day teaching high school felt they were more prepared to teach the competencies than those teaching middle school/junior high school.

Results showed that there were significant differences ($p < .05$) for the reading, writing and language strands based on years of experience. Teachers with 1-5 years of experience felt they were less prepared to teach the reading, writing, and language strands than those with 6-10 years and less prepared to teach the language than those with 11 or more years. Teachers with 6-10 years of experience indicated greater teacher preparedness to teach the writing stand than did teachers with 11 or more years. These findings align with existing studies which concluded student achievement is hindered when teachers are not qualified or experienced enough to teach the standards well (ACT, 2007).

A significant difference ($p < .05$) was found for the reading, writing, speaking/listening, and language strands indicating teachers within the RESAs differed from each other in perceptions of how prepared teachers are to teach the competencies. Professional development must be focused if teachers are to learn to implement the expected changes meaningfully and effectively (Cooter & Perkins, 2011).

Research Question 6: Effective Instructional Strategies

Research question six asks, “What instructional strategies do teachers identify as most effective in helping prepare students to learn the competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts?” Writing related strategies were reported most frequently followed by strategies within the following categories: reading, gradual release of responsibility, project-based learning, speaking/listening, language, and technology.

Although the review of literature for this study did not identify which instructional strategies are most effective in helping prepare students to learn the competencies, existing studies concluded that teachers are more likely to change their practices in ways intended by standards when they have professional development about the standards and their implications (Spillane, 2004). Professional learning communities allow teachers to engage in study and reflection that can help them try new instructional strategies (Perry, 2011) and be innovative (Rothman, 2011) because “they can learn from each other, support one another, and hold each other accountable” (Mizell, 2010, p. 14).

Research Question 7: Professional Development Needs

Research question seven asks, “What professional development topics do teachers identify as most needed in helping prepare them to teach students the competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts?” Professional

development needs most often focused on technology related topics followed by writing, content-specific and grade-appropriate ideas and instructional strategies, finding materials and resources, speaking/listening, language, the standards themselves, reading, and project-based learning.

Although the review of literature for this study did not identify specific topics needed for teacher professional development, cited studies did conclude that it is imperative that teachers are prepared as they begin to teach the rigorous standards (Blackburn, 2011). Teachers need professional development on the standards to successfully meet the challenge of increased rigor if implementation is to be successful (Marrongelle, Sztajn, & Smith, 2013). Perry (2011) concurred that teachers need to study the standards and carefully notice what exists in the standards and what teachers are asking students to do before they will be able to implement the standards as part of their instructional practices.

To ensure that money is invested wisely, decisions must be made about what professional development is provided to enhance teachers' knowledge and skills, to improve teaching practices, and to increase student learning (Heck, Weiss, & Pasley, 2011). Professional development must be focused (Cooter & Perkins, 2011). Professional development responsive to teachers' perceived needs is promising for increasing instruction and improving student skills (Reed, 2009). Teachers want to choose what they need to learn in order to teach better (Long, 2011). Training on unnecessary topics leads to participants who become frustrated and question the credibility of the organization providing the professional development (Blair & Seo, 2007).

Ancillary Findings

Ancillary findings in this study were primarily concerned with respondents' preferred mode(s) of professional development. In response to the qualitative question about professional

development, some respondents noted preferred modes of delivery for professional development while others noted the need for time.

The most noted mode of professional development was the opportunity to observe others in their own building teaching the standards. Respondents also wanted opportunities to share what they are reading and learning from conferences and seminars with their peers and opportunities to collaborate with building level colleagues in job-embedded professional development based in their content-specific department as well as including colleagues from other content areas.

These findings align with existing studies which concluded professional development that relies on various modes of engagement for teachers and administrators should be sustained and community-based (NCTE, 2008) where communities of teachers collaborate with each other to improve their teaching skills (Dierking & Fox, 2013). According to Mizell (2011), professional learning experiences should be deep, sustained job-embedded professional development where educators meet in small teams to develop their knowledge, skills, and understanding.

Professional development should be data-driven, standards-based, and job-embedded (WVDE, 2003) with RESAs leading professional development (WVDE, 2012). Teachers need to understand their content area deeply to address the learning needs of their students (Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy, 2010). According to an online poll conducted by the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, the majority of respondents preferred professional development opportunities where participants could interact with others (Harris, 2012).

Teachers also wanted more class time as well as more time for common planning and reflection to work with the standards in a hands-on setting as both grade level teams and vertical

teams. These findings align with existing studies which concluded teachers must have time to familiarize themselves with the standards and to put them into practice (Crawford, 2012). Perry (2011) concluded, “planning and teaching are collaborative processes strengthened with the support of colleagues” (p. 84).

Implications for Action

Since the release of the College and Career Readiness Standards for English Language Arts in 2010 and the adoption of those standards in many states, the College and Career Readiness Standards have been implemented in many classrooms across the nation. The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of West Virginia teachers who taught English Language Arts in grades six through twelve during the 2013-2014 school year in terms of how prepared students are to learn the college and career readiness competencies and how prepared teachers are to teach those same competencies. The findings of this study should contribute to the developing knowledge base for implementation of the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts.

This study provides valuable information to guide decision making of West Virginia policymakers, state higher educational institutions, providers of professional development, administrators, teachers, and parents. With the impending standardized testing of the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards slated to roll out during the 2014-2015 school year, the Common Core State Standards Initiative has come under fire. This fact makes it imperative that the aforementioned stakeholders interested in implementation of the College and Career Readiness Standards for English Language Arts consider the following implications of this study:

1. The majority of respondents in this study believe students entering their classrooms are below the midpoint between “Not At All Prepared” and “Fully Prepared” to learn the competencies outlined in these standards. These teachers need to help identify why students are not prepared and design a plan of action to address the disconnect between student preparedness and teacher preparedness.
2. The majority of respondents in this study believe they are “fully prepared” to teach the competencies outlined in these standards. These teachers need to be identified as teacher leaders who can provide professional development to others and share the instructional strategies they have found to be most beneficial in helping students learn these competencies.
3. Although the majority of teachers indicated they were prepared to teach students the competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts as indicated by the Likert scale, teachers suggested many professional development needs related to teaching the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts in their responses to the open-ended question addressing this issue. These identified topics need to be targeted when designing professional development for teachers. Because this study identified the greatest needs in terms of different demographic and attribute variables, targeted professional development can be designed to meet the needs of teachers within a given demographic.
4. Teachers also identified their preferred mode(s) for participating in professional development and need training aligned to the preferred modes such as conferences, seminars, institutes, or classes in their own counties, throughout the state and nation, and

throughout their Regional Education Service Agencies that incorporate individual reading of print material.

5. Teachers also identified time as a need, specifically requesting time to learn the competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts and time to plan how they will teach those same competencies. Teachers could be allocated time during professional development sessions and common team planning to discuss skills students need and collaborate in planning units of instruction responsive to those needs.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study provides insight into the perceptions of West Virginia English Language Arts teachers in grades six through twelve regarding the level at which students are prepared to learn competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts and the level at which teachers are prepared to teach those same competencies.

Recommendations for further research include:

1. Structured interviews with teachers would allow future researchers to collect more in-depth information and gain a greater understanding of teachers' perceptions of student and teacher preparedness.
2. Combining administration of the *College and Career Readiness Standards for English Language Arts: How Prepared Are Students and Teachers* survey with visits by outside observers would provide greater understanding of teachers' perceptions and serve to triangulate the data.
3. Comparing test results from the Smarted Balanced Assessment with results of teachers' perceptions of student preparedness from this study could be used for triangulation.

4. Repeating this study after the Smarter Balanced Assessment is administered to students would be beneficial to see if teachers' perceptions of student and teacher preparedness change.
5. Replication of this study in other states or nationwide would be beneficial for comparison purposes and would aid in generalizing findings to other populations.
6. Replication of this study with teachers who teach other content areas, such as history, social studies, science, and technical subjects would be beneficial to identify the perceptions of those teachers in terms of student preparedness to learn the competencies and teacher preparedness to teach those same competencies because the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards are also for literacy in those subject areas.
7. Replication of this study with teachers who teach English Language Arts in kindergarten through fifth grades would be beneficial to identify the perceptions of elementary teachers in terms of student preparedness to learn the competencies and teacher preparedness to teach those same competencies. By addressing the needs of elementary teachers, the needs of secondary teacher could possibly change.
8. Given the role administrators play as instructional leaders, a study of principals' perceptions of how prepared students are to learn the competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts and principals' perceptions of how prepared teachers are to teach those same competencies could provide beneficial information.
9. Because the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts define what students are to know and be able to do, focus on students' perceptions of how

prepared they are to learn those competencies and how prepared they feel their teachers are to teach those same competencies could provide beneficial information.

10. Because there is a disconnect between teacher preparedness to teach the competencies and student preparedness to learn those same competencies, focus on why this disconnect is present as well as the factors affecting the disconnect could provide beneficial information in closing the disconnect.
11. Significant differences found among demographic and attribute variables might warrant further examination.
12. To build a body of evidence in best instructional practices for teaching the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts, more research is needed.
13. The effect of professional development requested by teachers and how it correlates with preparing students to learn the competencies might warrant additional study.
14. Because time was a major constraint identified by participants, studies on use of time, time management techniques, and collaborative planning are recommended.

REFERENCES

- Achieve, Inc. (2010, August). *On the road to implementation: Achieving the promise of the common core state standards*. Retrieved from <http://www.achieve.org/files/FINAL-CCSSImplementationGuide.pdf>
- ACT, Inc. (2004). *Crisis at the core: Preparing all students for college and work*. Iowa City, IA: ACT, Inc. Retrieved from http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/crisis_report.pdf
- ACT, Inc. & The Education Trust (2005). *On course for success: A close look at selected high school courses that prepare all students for college*. Retrieved from http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/success_report.pdf
- ACT, Inc. (2006). *Reading between the lines: What the ACT reveals about college readiness in reading*. Iowa City, IA: ACT, Inc. Retrieved from http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/reading_report.pdf
- ACT, Inc. (2007). *Rigor at risk: Reaffirming quality in the high school core curriculum*. Iowa City, IA: ACT, Inc. Retrieved from http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/rigor_report.pdf
- ACT, Inc. (2008). *The forgotten middle: Ensuring that all students are on target for college and career readiness before high school*. Iowa City, IA: ACT, Inc. Retrieved from <http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/ForgottenMiddle.pdf>
- ACT, Inc. (2010a). *A first look at the common core and college and career readiness*. Iowa City, IA: ACT, Inc. Retrieved from <http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/FirstLook.pdf>

- ACT, Inc. (2010b). *Mind the gaps: How college readiness narrows achievement gaps in college success*. Iowa City, IA: ACT, Inc. Retrieved from <http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/MindTheGaps.pdf>
- ACT, Inc. (2012a). *The condition of college & career readiness 2012 national*. Iowa City, IA: ACT, Inc. Retrieved from <http://media.act.org/documents/CCCR12-NationalReadinessRpt.pdf>
- ACT, Inc. (2012b). *The condition of college & career readiness 2012 West Virginia*. Iowa City, IA: ACT, Inc. Retrieved from <http://www.act.org/newsroom/data/2012/states/pdf/WestVirginia.pdf>
- ACT, Inc. (2013). *ACT national curriculum survey 2012: Policy implications on preparing for higher standards*. Iowa City, IA: ACT, Inc. Retrieved from <http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/NCS-PolicySummary2012.pdf>
- Applebee, A., & Langer, J. (2009, May). What is happening in the teaching of writing. *English Journal*, 98(5), 18-28. Retrieved from <http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Resources/Journals/EJ/0985-may09/EJ0985Extra.pdf>
- Berman, I., & Biancarosa, G. (2005). *Reading to achieve: A governor's guide to adolescent literacy*. Washington, DC: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices. Retrieved from <http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/0510GOVGUIDELITERACY.PDF;jsessionid=DA7E63063BF27DC5FBB6C2EADE089970>
- Blackburn, B. (2011). *Common core state standards...Only the beginning*. Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.

- Blair, E., & Seo, D. (2007). Safety training: Making the connection to high performance. *Professional Safety*, 52(10), 42-48. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.marshall.edu:2536/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=5579f66a-da0b-40f3-b422-f2403abb58a4%40sessionmgr15&vid=15&hid=28>
- Bomer, R., & Maloch, B. (2011, September). Relating policy to research and practice: The Common Core Standards. *Language Arts*, 89(1), 38-43.
- Bourque, L., & Fielder, E. (2003). *How to conduct self-administered and mail surveys (2nd edition)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy. (2010). *Time to act: An agenda for advancing adolescent literacy for college and career success*. New York: Carnegie Corporation of New York. Retrieved from http://carnegie.org/fileadmin/Media/Publications/PDF/tta_Main.pdf
- Cekada, T. (2011). Need training? *Professional Safety*, 56(12), 28-34. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.marshall.edu:2536/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=5579f66a-da0b-40f3-b422-f2403abb58a4%40sessionmgr15&vid=15&hid=28>
- Chavez, A. (2007, November). Classroom videos in professional development. *School Science and Mathematics*, 107(7), 269-270. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.marshall.edu:2536/ehost/detail?sid=b26851dd-1094-442a-8d3d-b1bad49f5e6d%40sessionmgr114&vid=3&hid=107>
- Cooter, J. B., & Perkins, J. (2011, May). Much done, much yet to do. *Reading Teacher*, 64(8), 563-566. doi:10.1598/RT.64.8.1.
- Crawford, J. (2012). *Aligning your curriculum to the common core state standards*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

- Creswell, J. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* Fourth Edition. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Creswell, J., Fetters, M., & Ivankova, N. (2004, January/February). Designing a mixed methods study in primary care. *Annals of Family Medicine*, 2(1), 7-12. doi:10.1370/afm.104.
- Creswell, J., & Plano-Clark, V. (2007). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Dierking, R., & Fox, R. (2013, March) "Changing the way I teach": Building teacher knowledge, confidence, and autonomy. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 64(2), 129-144. DOI: 10.1177/0022487112462893
- Dillman, D. (2007). *Mail and internet surveys: The tailored design method* (Second edition). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Dillman, D., Smyth, J., & Christian, L. (2009). *Internet, mail, and mixed-mode surveys: The tailored design method*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Education Week. (2012, April 25). Milestones in the movement toward common standards. A supplement to the April 25 issue of *Education Week*, 31(29), S10-S11. Retrieved from http://www.edweek.org/media/ew/specialreports/1/cc/Education_Week_CommonStandards.pdf
- Fink, A. (2003). *The survey handbook* (2nd edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Foster, W. (2004). The decline of the local: A challenge to educational leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 40(2), 176-191. DOI: 10.1177/0013161X03260360
- Garet, M. S., Wayne, A. J., Stancavage, F., Taylor, J., Eaton, M., Walters, K., & Doolittle, F. (2011). *Middle school mathematics professional development impact study: Findings after the second year of implementation* (NCEE 2011-4024). Washington, DC: National

- Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20114024/pdf/20114024.pdf>
- Garrett, B. V. (2009). Standards will close gap. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 91(1), 16. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.marshall.edu:2536/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=21&sid=ee9698b1-5a76-4935-a1c3-e7394c0623f3%40sessionmgr10&hid=22>
- Gewertz, C. (2012, April 25). Success of standards depends on translation for classroom. A supplement to the April 25 issue of *Education Week*, 31(29), S6-S9. Retrieved from http://www.edweek.org/media/ew/specialreports/1/cc/Education_Week_CommonStandards.pdf
- Harris, K. (2012, October 19). *ED pulse poll results: What's your preferred method of PD*. Alexandria, VA: Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development. Retrieved from <http://inservice.ascd.org/research-2/ed-pulse-poll-results-whats-your-preferred-method-of-pd/>
- Heck, D., Weiss, I., & Pasley, J. (2011). *A priority research agenda for understanding the influence of the common core state standards for mathematics*. Chapel Hill, NC: Horizon Research. Retrieved from http://www.horizon-research.com/reports/2011/CCSSMresearchagenda/research_agenda.pdf
- International Reading Association Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Committee. (2012). *Literacy implementation guidance for the ELA Common Core State Standards* [White paper]. Retrieved from http://www.reading.org/Libraries/association-documents/ira_ccss_guidelines.pdf

- Jago, C. (2011). *With rigor for all: Meeting common core standards for reading literature*.
Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Kendall, J. (2011). *Understanding common core state standards*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD and
Denver, CO: McREL.
- Liebling, C., & Meltzer, J. (2011, November). *Making a difference in student achievement using
the common core state standards for English language arts: What school and district
leaders need to know*. Portsmouth, NH: PCG Education. Retrieved from
[http://educore.ascd.org/Resource/Download/get.ashx?guid=ed0aa7b7-f309-43eb-9db0-
40997294d392](http://educore.ascd.org/Resource/Download/get.ashx?guid=ed0aa7b7-f309-43eb-9db0-40997294d392)
- Litwin, M. (2003). *How to assess and interpret survey psychometrics* (2nd edition). Thousand
Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Long, R. (2011, December/2012, January). Professional development and education policy:
Understanding the current disconnect. *Reading Today*, 29(3), 29-30.
- Marrongelle, K., Sztajn, P., & Smith, M. (2013, May). Scaling up professional development in
an era of common state standards. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 64(3), 202-211.
Retrieved from DOI: 10.1177/0022487112473838
- Mizell, H. (2010). *Why professional development matters*. Oxford, OH: Learning Forward.
Retrieved from http://www.learningforward.org/advancing/Why_PD_Matters_Web.pdf
- Mizell, H. (2011, June 26). *Improving schools requires a new vision for professional learning*.
Dallas: Learning Forward. Retrieved from
[http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/learning_forwards_pd_watch/2011/06/test_4.html?cmp=
ENL-TU-VIEWS2](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/learning_forwards_pd_watch/2011/06/test_4.html?cmp=ENL-TU-VIEWS2)

National Center for Education Statistics. (2007). *The nation's report card writing 2007: National assessment of educational progress at grades 8 and 12 national, state, and trial urban district results*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/main2007/2008468.pdf>

National Center for Education Statistics. (2009). *National assessment for educational progress*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/stt2009/2010460WV8.pdf>

National Center for Education Statistics. (2011). *NAEP state profiles*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/states/>

National Council of Teachers of English. (2008). *Principles of professional development*. NCTE Position Statement. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

National Endowment for the Arts. (2007). *To read or not to read: A question of national consequence*. Research Division Report 47. Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Arts. Retrieved from <http://www.nea.gov/research/toread.pdf>

National Commission on Writing. (2003, April). *The neglected "R": The need for a writing revolution*. College Entrance Examination Board. Retrieved from http://www.collegeboard.com/prod_downloads/writingcom/neglectedr.pdf

National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers. (2010a). *Common core state standards: About the standards*. Washington, D.C.: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers. Retrieved from <http://www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards>

National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers. (2010b). *Common core state standards for English language arts and literacy in*

- history/social studies, science, and other technical subjects. Washington, D.C.: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers. Retrieved from <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy>.
- National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers. (2010c). *Common core state standards: Mission statement*. Washington, D.C.: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers. Retrieved from <http://www.corestandards.org/>
- National Staff Development Council. (2005, September). *A study of professional development for public school educators in West Virginia*. Retrieved from <http://wvde.state.wv.us/boe/documents/NSDC%202005%20Study%20WV%20Professional%20Development.pdf>
- NGA & ACT, Inc. (2008). *NGA/ACT pilot project: Increasing course rigor – Final report*. Retrieved from http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/increasing_rigor.pdf
- Perry, T. (2011). Supporting students in a time of core standards: English language arts grades 6-8. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Public Works LLC. (2012, January). *Education efficiency audit of West Virginia's public primary and secondary education system*. Retrieved from <http://www.governor.wv.gov/initiatives/satf/documents/wvde%20report%20final.pdf>
- Reed, D. K. (2009). A synthesis of professional development on the implementation of literacy strategies for middle school content area teachers. *Research in Middle Level Education Online*, 32(10), 1-12. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.marshall.edu:2536/ehost/detail?vid=26&sid=ee9698b1-5a76-4935-a1c3->

[e7394c0623f3%40sessionmgr10&hid=22&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZW9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=aph&AN=52250348](http://ezproxy.marshall.edu:2536/ehost/detail?vid=28&sid=ee9698b1-5a76-4935-a1c3-e7394c0623f3%40sessionmgr10&hid=22&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZW9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=aph&AN=52250348)

Rothman, R. (2011). *Something in common: The common core standards and the next chapter in American education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Sanacore, J. (1996). Supporting language arts innovations that endure. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 40(1), 58. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.marshall.edu:2536/ehost/detail?vid=28&sid=ee9698b1-5a76-4935-a1c3-e7394c0623f3%40sessionmgr10&hid=22&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZW9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=aph&AN=9711250070>

Scholastic & the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. (2012). *Primary sources: 2012 America's teachers on the teaching profession*. New York, NY: Scholastic. Retrieved from http://www.scholastic.com/primarysources/pdfs/Gates2012_full.pdf

Sewell, W. (2008, March). Entrenched pedagogy: A history of stasis in the English language arts curriculum in United States secondary school. *Changing English*, (15)7, 87-100. Retrieved from DOI:10.1080/13586840701825345

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. (2012, January 6). *Content specifications for the summative assessment of the common core state standards for English language arts and literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects*. Retrieved from <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/ELA-Literacy-Content-Specifications.pdf>

Snyder, C. & Sanders, N. (1978, July). Continuing education and staff development: Needs assessment, comprehensive program planning, and evaluation. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*. 4(3), 144-150. Retrieved from

<http://ezproxy.marshall.edu:2536/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=eb4ec474-f269-4443-b92a-4f2e3eef11c%40sessionmgr10&vid=13&hid=28>

Spillane, J. (2004). *Standards deviation: How schools misunderstand education policy*.

Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Starnes, B. (2011). Change, sputnik, and fast food. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 92(7), 72-73. Retrieved

from <http://ezproxy.marshall.edu:2536/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=17dd6e61-f7a5-44fe-9d41-0451b51f76ed%40sessionmgr110&vid=4&hid=112>

Walker, D. A., Downey, P. M., & Sorensen, C. K. (2008). E-learning modules for teacher

development: Project REAL. *Techtrends: Linking Research & Practice to Improve*

Learning, 52(5), 59-62. doi:10.1007/s11528-008-0198-x

Wessling, S. (2011). Supporting students in a time of core standards: English language arts

grades 9-12. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

West Virginia Department of Education. (2000, February 10). Board votes to approve school

closures, places policies on public comment. Retrieved from

<http://wvde.state.wv.us/news/121/>

West Virginia Department of Education. (2000, May 11). Minutes of West Virginia board of

education. Retrieved from <http://wvde.state.wv.us/boe->

[minutes/2000/wvdeminutes051100.html](http://wvde.state.wv.us/boe-minutes/2000/wvdeminutes051100.html)

West Virginia Department of Education. (2001, October 11). Board of education places key

instructional policy on public comment. Retrieved from

<http://wvde.state.wv.us/news/368/>

- West Virginia Department of Education. (2002, November 20). WV department of education seeking comments on refined curriculum. Retrieved from <http://wvde.state.wv.us/news/530/>
- West Virginia Department of Education. (2003). *School level professional development guide*. Charleston, WV: West Virginia Department of Education.
- West Virginia Department of Education. (2006, June 13). West Virginia curriculum aligns with 21st century skills. Retrieved from <http://wvde.state.wv.us/news/1213/>
- West Virginia Department of Education. (2008, August 29). West Virginia students reaching national goals. Retrieved from <http://wvde.state.wv.us/news/1726/>
- West Virginia Department of Education. (2009). 21st century reading and English language arts content standards and objectives for West Virginia schools. Retrieved from http://wvde.state.wv.us/policies/p2520.1A_co.pdf
- West Virginia Department of Education. (2011). Next generation content standards and objectives for English language arts in West Virginia schools. Retrieved from http://wvde.state.wv.us/policies/p2520.1A_co.pdf
- West Virginia Department of Education. (2011-2012). West Virginia board of education master plan for statewide professional staff development 2011-2012. Retrieved from <http://wvde.state.wv.us/boe/documents/2011-2012%20WV%20Statewide%20Plan%20for%20Professional%20Development.pdf>
- West Virginia Department of Education. (2012, November 26). From audit to action: Students first version 3. Retrieved from <http://static.k12.wv.us/tt/2012/audit-response-2012-12-18-v3.pdf>

West Virginia Department of Education. (2013, May). State of West Virginia ESEA flexibility request: window 3. Retrieved from

http://wvde.state.wv.us/esea/esea_full_waiver_request.pdf

West Virginia Department of Education. (n.d.). West Virginia board of education mission and goals. Retrieved from <http://wvde.state.wv.us/boardgoals/>

Wimberly, G., & Noeth, R. (2005). *College readiness begins in middle school: ACT policy report*. Iowa City, IA: ACT, Inc. Retrieved from

<http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/CollegeReadiness.pdf>

APPENDICES

Appendix A: College and Career Readiness Standards for English: How Prepared Are Students and Teachers

College and Career Readiness Standards for English: How Prepared are

Part A

Please provide the following information.

1. Including this year, how many years teaching experience do you have teaching English Language Arts?

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <input type="radio"/> 0 | <input type="radio"/> 16-20 |
| <input type="radio"/> 1-5 | <input type="radio"/> 21-25 |
| <input type="radio"/> 6-10 | <input type="radio"/> 26-30 |
| <input type="radio"/> 11-15 | <input type="radio"/> More than thirty |

College and Career Readiness Standards for English: How Prepared are

Part A

Please provide the following information.

2. What is your sex?

- Male Female

3. Do you hold specific certification in English or Language Arts?

- Yes No

4. At what level do you teach the majority of your day?

- Middle School/Junior High High School

5. In which Regional Education Service Agency (RESA) do you teach?

- RESA 1 (McDowell, Mercer, Monroe, Raleigh, Summers, Wyoming)
 RESA 2 (Cabell, Lincoln, Logan, Mason, Mingo, Wayne)
 RESA 3 (Boone, Clay, Kanawha, Putnam)
 RESA 4 (Baxton, Fayette, Greenbrier, Nicholas, Pocahontas, Webster)
 RESA 5 (Calhoun, Jackson, Pleasants, Ritchie, Roane, Tyler, Wirt, Wood)
 RESA 6 (Brooke, Hancock, Marshall, Ohio, Wetzel)
 RESA 7 (Barbour, Doddridge, Gilmer, Harrison, Lewis, Marion, Monongalia, Preston, Randolph, Taylor, Tucker, Upshur)
 RESA 8 (Berkeley, Grant, Hampshire, Hardy, Jefferson, Mineral, Morgan, Pendleton)

6. Which mode(s) of professional development do you prefer? (Please check all that apply.)

- Individual reading of print materials, such as books, magazines, newsletters
 Individual reading and research of electronic books and digital publications
 Job-embedded study groups, professional learning communities
 Peer observations, coaching, mentoring at your school
 Conferences, seminars, institutes, classes located in your county
 Conferences, seminars, institutes, classes located in your region or Regional Education Service Agency (RESA)
 Conferences, seminars, institutes, classes at locations throughout the state or nation
 Online classes, webinars, podcasts, streaming videos, DVDs
 Videos of actual classroom interactions

College and Career Readiness Standards for English: How Prepared are

Part B

Using a scale from 1 to 7 where 1 = NOT AT ALL PREPARED and 7 = FULLY PREPARED, please rate each of the statements in terms of the extent to which STUDENTS entering your classroom are prepared to learn each competency and the extent to which YOU are prepared to teach each competency.

7. Following is a list of READING competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts.

	To what extent are STUDENTS entering your classroom prepared to learn the following competency?	To what extent are YOU prepared to teach the following competency?
Read closely to analyze key ideas and details.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Cite specific textual evidence to support conclusions.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Analyze word choice and text structure.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Integrate knowledge and ideas presented in diverse media.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Comprehend complex literary text.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Comprehend complex informational text.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

8. Following is a list of WRITING competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts.

	To what extent are STUDENTS entering your classroom prepared to learn the following competency?	To what extent are YOU prepared to teach the following competency?
Write arguments.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Write informative/explanatory text.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Write narratives.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Use technology to facilitate the writing process.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Conduct research projects.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Write for a range of purposes.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

College and Career Readiness Standards for English: How Prepared are

9. Following is a list of **SPEAKING/LISTENING** competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts.

	To what extent are STUDENTS entering your classroom prepared to learn the following competency?	To what extent are YOU prepared to teach the following competency?
Participate in conversations and collaborations to evaluate a speaker's presentation.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Use visual displays to present knowledge and ideas.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Employ effective speaking skills for a range of purposes.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Employ effective listening skills for a range of purposes.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

10. Following is a list of **LANGUAGE** competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts.

	To what extent are STUDENTS entering your classroom prepared to learn the following competency?	To what extent are YOU prepared to teach the following competency?
Demonstrate command of standard English.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Make effective choices for meaning and style.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Understand figures of speech.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Use a range of words and phrases.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

College and Career Readiness Standards for English: How Prepared are

Part C

Please respond to the following questions.

11. What instructional strategies have you found most effective in helping prepare students to meet the English language arts competencies outlined in Part B of the survey?

12. What are your professional development needs related to effectively teaching the English language arts competencies outlined in Part B of the survey?

Appendix B: Panel of Experts

PANEL OF EXPERTS

Beth Butler, Reading/English Language Arts Interventionist and former middle school English teacher

Jonathan Pollock, RESA 6 Coordinator of Curriculum and Instruction and former high school English teacher

Alma Simpson, Retired Coordinator of Instructional Materials at West Virginia Department of Education and former middle school English teacher

Anita Stephenson, Assistant Principal at Clay County Middle School and former high school English teacher

Nada Waddell, Assistant Principal at Clay County High School and former middle school reading teacher and librarian

Denise White, Retired Coordinator of Professional Development at West Virginia Department of Education and former middle school reading teacher

Joyce White, Retired middle school and high school English Teacher

Carla Williamson, Retired Executive Director of the Office of Curriculum and Instruction at West Virginia Department of Education and former high school English teacher

Appendix C: Content Validity Questions

CONTENT VALIDITY QUESTIONS

1. Are there typographical errors or misspelled words in the survey?
2. Is the type size big enough to read easily?
3. Are instructions clearly written?
4. Do item numbers make sense?
5. Is the vocabulary appropriate for the respondents?
6. Are questions easy to understand?
7. Do respondents know how to indicate responses?
8. Are the response choices mutually exclusive?
9. Are the response choices exhaustive?
10. Is the survey too long?
11. Are the styles of the items too monotonous?
12. Does the survey format flow well?
13. Are the items appropriate for the respondents?
14. Are the items sensitive to possible cultural barriers?
15. Is the survey in the best language for the respondents?
16. Do respondents understand what to do once they have completed the survey?
17. Do respondents understand when to complete the survey?
18. Can respondents use the commands required of the computer-delivered survey?
19. Do respondents know how to change their responses in the computer-delivered survey?
20. Do the respondents have any suggestions regarding the addition or deletion of questions, clarification of instructions, or improvements in the survey format?

(Fink, 2003; Litwin, 2003)

Appendix D: IRB Approval



Office of Research Integrity
Institutional Review Board
401 11th St., Suite 1300
Huntington, WV 25701

FWA 00002704

IRB1 #00002205
IRB2 #00003206

February 11, 2014

Lisa Heaton, Ph.D.
Graduate School of Education and Professional Development

RE: IRBNet ID# 537171-1

At: Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral)

Dear Dr. Heaton:

Protocol Title: [537171-1] College and Career Readiness Standards for English: How Prepared are Students and Teachers

Expiration Date: February 11, 2015

Site Location: MU

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 February 11, 2015. 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 Mary Ann Triplett.

If you have any questions, please contact the Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral) Coordinator Bruce Day, ThD, CIP at 304-696-4303 or day50@marshall.edu. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

	Marshall University IRB	
	Approved on:	2/11/14
	Expires on:	2/11/15
	Study number:	537171

Dear Teacher,

You are invited to participate in a doctoral research project entitled *College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English: Preparedness of Students and Teachers as Perceived by West Virginia English Language Arts Teachers in Grades Six through Twelve* of West designed to examine your perceptions of the extent to which your students are prepared to learn the student competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts and the extent to which you are prepared to teach each competency. This study is being conducted by Dr. Lisa A. Heaton and Mary Ann Triplett from Marshall University and has been approved by the Marshall University Institutional Review Board (IRB). This research is being conducted as part of the dissertation requirement for Mary Ann Triplett. Your opinions are very important to the success of this study.

This survey comprised of twelve questions will take you approximately five minutes to complete. Your replies are anonymous, so do not type your name anywhere on the form. There are no known risks involved with this study. Participation is completely voluntary, and there will be no penalty or loss of benefits if you choose to not participate in this research study or to withdraw. If you choose not to participate, you may delete this email. You may choose not to answer any question by leaving it blank. Once you complete the survey, you can delete your browsing history for added security. Completing the online survey indicates your consent for use of the responses you supply and confirms that you teach English. If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you may contact me at 304 587 2343 or Dr. Lisa Heaton at 304 746 2026.

If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Marshall University Office of Research Integrity at 304 696 4303.

By completing this survey, you are also confirming that you are 20 years of age or older. Please print this page for your records.

If you choose to participate in the study, you will find the survey at _____. If the above link does not work, please copy and paste it in your browser. If you have other technical problems with the survey, please contact me.

Please respond to all questions as honestly and accurately as possible by ____ so a valid representation of secondary English teachers in West Virginia is presented.

Thank you in advance for your timely participation in this research study.

Sincerely,
Mary Ann Triplett

Appendix E: Initial Contact

To: [Email]

From: "matriple@access.k12.wv.us via surveymonkey.com"

Subject: College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for ELA

Body: Dear Teacher,

You are invited to participate in a doctoral research project entitled College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English: Preparedness of Students and Teachers as Perceived by West Virginia English Language Arts Teachers in Grades Six through Twelve of West designed to examine your perceptions of the extent to which your students are prepared to learn the student competencies outlined in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts and the extent to which you are prepared to teach each competency. This study is being conducted by Dr. Lisa A. Heaton and Mary Ann Triplett from Marshall University and has been approved by the Marshall University Institutional Review Board (IRB). This research is being conducted as part of the dissertation requirement for Mary Ann Triplett. Your opinions are very important to the success of this study.

This survey comprised of twelve questions will take you approximately five minutes to complete. Your replies are anonymous, so do not type your name anywhere on the form. There are no known risks involved with this study. Participation is completely voluntary, and there will be no penalty or loss of benefits if you choose to not participate in this research study or to withdraw. If you choose not to participate, you may delete this email. You may choose not to answer any question by leaving it blank. Once you complete the survey, you can delete your browsing history for added security. Completing the online survey indicates your consent for us of the responses you supply and confirms that you teach English. If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you may contact me at 304 587 2343 or Dr. Lisa Heaton at 304 746 2026.

If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Marshall University Office of Research Integrity at 304 696 4303.

By completing this survey, you are also confirming that you are 20 years of age or older.

Please print this page for your records.

If you choose to participate in the study, you will find the survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx> . If the above link

does not work, please copy and paste it in your browser. If you have other technical problems with the survey, please contact me.

Please respond to all questions as honestly and accurately as possible by March 14, 2014 so a valid representation of secondary English teachers in West Virginia is presented.

Thank you in advance for your timely participation in this research study.

Sincerely,
Mary Ann Triplett

Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails from us, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx>

Appendix F: Two Weeks After Survey Link Was Emailed

To: [Email]

From: "matriple@access.k12.wv.us via surveymonkey.com"

Subject: College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for ELA

Body: Dear Teacher,

Two weeks ago a link to a survey, College and Career Readiness Standards for English: How Prepared are Students and Teachers, was emailed to you.

If you have already completed and returned the survey, please accept my sincere thanks. If not, please respond by March 14, 2014, so a valid representation of secondary English teachers in West Virginia is presented. I am grateful for your help because I recognize how busy you are, but when people like you share your experiences and opinions, we can advance English Language Arts instruction for our students and influence professional development opportunities for ourselves.

Please go to the following website to complete this survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx> .

If the above link does not work, please copy and paste it in your browser. If you have other technical problems with the survey or concerns about this research, please contact me at matriplett79@gmail.com or 304 587 2343.

Again, thank you in advance for taking the time to participate in this research study.

Sincerely,
Mary Ann Triplett

Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails from us, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx>

Appendix G: Three Weeks After Survey Link Was Emailed

To: [Email]
From: "matriple@access.k12.wv.us via surveymonkey.com"
Subject: College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for ELA
Body: Dear Teacher,

Approximately three weeks ago, a link to a survey, College and Career Readiness Standards for English: How Prepared are Students and Teachers, was emailed to you.

If you have already completed and returned the survey, please accept my sincere thanks. If not, please respond by March 14, 2014, so a valid representation of secondary English teachers in West Virginia is presented. I am grateful for your help because I recognize how busy you are, but when people like you share your experiences and opinions, we can advance English Language Arts instruction for our students and influence professional development opportunities for ourselves.

Please go to the following website to complete this survey:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx>

If the above link does not work, please copy and paste it in your browser. If you have other technical problems with the survey or concerns about this research, please contact me at matriplett79@gmail.com or 304 587 2343.

Again, thank you in advance for taking the time to participate in this research study.

Sincerely,
Mary Ann Triplett

Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails from us, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx>

Appendix H: Two Days Before Survey is Due

To: [Email]

From: "matriple@access.k12.wv.us via surveymonkey.com"

Subject: College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for ELA

Body: Dear Teacher,

Approximately four weeks ago, a link to a survey, College and Career Readiness Standards for English: How Prepared are Students and Teachers, was emailed to you. Unfortunately, I have yet to receive your electronic survey. I am very anxious to include your responses in my research so a valid representation of secondary English teachers in West Virginia is presented.

Please click on the following URL to complete this survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx>

If the above link does not work, please copy and paste it in your browser.

Again, thank you in advance for taking the time to respond to this survey by the end of today.

Sincerely,
Mary Ann Triplett

Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails from Survey Monkey, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx>

Appendix I: Author's Curriculum Vitae

**CURRICULUM VITAE
MARY ANN TRIPLET**

EDUCATION

Marshall University

Doctor of Education in Curriculum and Instruction, 2014
Education Specialist in Curriculum and Instruction, 2012
Master of Arts in Reading, 1985

Concord University

Advanced Credential in Teacher Leadership for Student Learning, 2013

Salem International University

Certification in Educational Leadership, 2006

Glenville State College

Bachelor of Arts in Elementary/Early Childhood Education, 1981

CERTIFICATION

- State of West Virginia, Elementary Teacher, 1 - 6, Permanent
- State of West Virginia, Early Education, N - K, Permanent
- State of West Virginia, Advanced Credential, Teacher Leadership – Student Learning, PreK – Adult, Expires 2018
- National Board Certification, English 5 - 9, Expires 2023
- State of West Virginia, Reading Specialist, PreK – Adult, Permanent
- State of West Virginia, Principal, PreK – Adult, Permanent
- State of West Virginia, Supervisor General Instruction, PreK – Adult, Permanent
- State of West Virginia, Superintendent, PreK – Adult, Permanent

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2006-Present Curriculum Facilitator, Clay County Schools, Clay, West Virginia

1982-2007 Teacher, Clay County Schools, Clay, West Virginia

HONORS AND RECOGNITION

2012 National Board Certification renewed in Early Adolescent English Language Arts

2003 National Board Certification in Early Adolescent English Language Arts

1988 Clay County Teacher of the Year