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# Teachers' Pedagogical Resistance To Prescribed Curriculum

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**TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL RESISTANCE TO PRESCRIBED CURRICULUM**

by

**DARYA OWENS**

**DISSERTATION**

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

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2017

MAJOR: SPECIAL EDUCATION

Approved By:

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Dr. Susan Gabel, Advisor

Date

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## **DEDICATION**

*I dedicate this project to all past, present and future students. I attribute my tenacity to my family, advisors and professors. Lastly, I dedicate my life and career to doing what I truly love;*

*I would like to acknowledge my career mentors and coworkers who have always believed in me. I would like to acknowledge my pastor and family for supporting and praying for me. I would also like to acknowledge my university and university staff for always supporting me through this journey.*

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# **TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL RESPONSES 1**

## **CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION**

This study examines teachers' pedagogical responses to their implementation of prescribed literacy curriculum as well as implementation their own pedagogical practices. Discussion in this chapter is organized in the following sections: (1) introduction, (2) statement of problem, (3) research questions, (4) definitions, (5) significance of the study, and (6) limitations of the study. There is a lot of criticism of teachers who rely upon their own pedagogical practices instead of complete implementation of prescribed literacy curriculum. Complete implementation of prescribed literacy curriculum is a followed procedure that is mandated of teachers; thus, the researcher's definition of prescribed literacy curriculum is not expected to align with teachers' definition of prescribed literacy curriculum. Also because some have argued that teachers resist prescribed literacy curriculum by reporting how teachers individualize their pedagogical practices in favor of their own praxis research, results in this study are reflective of teachers' interactions with both general and special education students. In fact, teachers are reporting that they use prescribed literacy curriculum; however, they are modifying prescribed literacy curriculum to fit their pedagogical preferences that are grounded in their professional knowledge of teaching and learning for both general and special education students that are included in their classrooms.

Prescribed literacy curriculum often does not address difficulties situated within teachers' instructional contexts of their classroom. Perceived instructional contexts are more closely encountered and acknowledged by teachers, as they demonstrate their own pedagogical practices when addressing academic content. According to Ernest, et al. (2011), instructional context also relates to both social skills and academic methods that teachers demonstrate during literacy instruction. Based upon teachers' pedagogical preferences, they use visual, tactile and auditory stimuli to demonstrate their professional knowledge of students' needs and interest and academic

## TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL RESPONSES 2

content. On the other hand, prescribed literacy curriculum materials are sequenced instruction based on short-term research-based assessment instruments for low-performing both general and special education students; which is the definition this study is working from (Ernest, et al., 2011).

Concurrently, Maskiewicz and Winters (2012) conclude that teachers' pedagogical preferences about the importance of literacy instruction are grounded in a teacher's ability to strengthen students' skills using integrated professional knowledge from a teacher's praxis and prescribed literacy curriculum. According to Ernest, et al. (2011), teachers have identified students as marginalized learners who are force fed literacy instruction based upon prescribed literacy curriculum and teachers decided to base instruction upon their own pedagogical practices. Ernest, et al. (2011) states, "soon after being asked to vary how children in her urban school district classroom were assessed, a different measurement of success in the teachers' classroom was noted in her journal" (p. 196). Thus, teachers are expected to follow prescribed literacy curriculum but they often favor pedagogical practices that involve equitable instructional context for marginalized students that build students' literacy skills and social capital (Ernest, et al., 2011).

Lindwall and Ekstrom (2012) report that prescribed literacy curriculum, which is often associated with sequenced explicit instruction, can reduce knowledge transfer because students need contextualized representation of academic content. Lindwall and Ekstrom (2012) contend that the reasoning behind this theory draws from students' use of prior knowledge to construct meaning when applying new information. Thus, teachers choose to implement methods of prescribed literacy curriculum combined with their own pedagogical practices. Teachers therefore report combining prescribed literacy methods and their pedagogical practices because teachers are relying on data that are indicative of student's cognitive processing, teacher praxis and students' social participation (Lindwall & Ekstrom, 2012).

## TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL RESPONSES 3

A problem begins to persist when research reports that there are gaps between teachers' professional development training and what teachers actually implement in their classrooms. Therefore, research rests in saying that teachers' praxis is inappropriate for student learning because they are implementing their own pedagogical practices opposed to complete implementation of prescribed literacy curriculum. Maskiewicz and Winters (2012) reported that teachers' implementation of their own pedagogical practices integrated with prescribed literacy curriculum methods results in "less sophisticated" literacy instruction and moves further to suggest that this is why students are failing in the area of literacy (p. 459).

However, current research concludes that it is important to understand teachers' active roles in supporting student's literacy success because prescribed literacy curriculum is deemed to be the most appropriate method toward student literacy success (Kaiser, et al., 2009). Kaiser, Rosenfield and Gravois (2009) assert that students' literacy success is a perception and satisfaction of skill development as recognized by both teacher and student. Therefore, Kaiser, et al. (2009) suggest that in order to reach the goal of students' literacy success, teachers must follow prescribed literacy curriculum, completely. Kaiser et al. (2009), like Maskiewicz and Winters (2012), agree that learning is a social process but teachers' pedagogical practices integrated with methods of prescribed literacy curriculum are not appropriate for student's literacy success. Kaiser et al. (2009) report that students' academic achievement receives a higher success rate when student success data is relative to test performance rather than based upon teachers pedagogical practices thought to be most appropriate for instructional context associated with classroom teaching and learning experiences.

## **TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL RESPONSES 4**

### **Statement of Problem**

Teachers have been expected to follow complete implementation of prescribed literacy curriculum in order to validate research that student's academic achievement receives a higher success rate when student success data are correlated with prescribed curriculum and test performance. Furthermore Gersten, et al. (2000) state that marginalized students or students with learning difficulties need teachers that attend to some aspects of professional development training as it demonstrates a teachers' abilities to transform instructional practices to match students' needs. Historically, more and more marginalized students and or students with special needs are being serviced within general education classrooms. Thus, it follows that all teachers are teachers of both general and special education students and therefore teachers should be knowledgeable of pedagogical practices for both general and special education students.

Teachers are not only expected to follow complete implementation of prescribed literacy curriculum training but teachers are also evaluated by their administrator on how they implement prescribed curriculum. As a result, some teachers lack the confidence to report how they are actually implementing specifically, prescribed literacy curriculum (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006). For instance, Achinstein and Ogawa (2006) reported from their study the negative impact of policy mandates on elementary first year teacher's resistance to professional development training. These researchers proved that all teachers' praxis become an afterthought when planning instruction based upon complete implementation of prescribed literacy curriculum (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006). Furthermore, teachers initially report that prescribed literacy curriculum training informs their praxis or pedagogical practices and evidence teaching and learning through prescribed learning curriculum, standardized test scores and their teacher evaluation. However, teachers at first will identify with complete implementation of professional development training to avoid

## TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL RESPONSES 5

reports of poor test scores and a teacher evaluation that portrays them as ineffective (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006).

Case in point: research on teachers' evaluations reveals that highly effective teachers change the way academic content and social learning is perceived and amplified during instruction by modifying prescribed literacy curriculum (Lyon & Weiser, 2009). Furthermore, Lyon and Weiser (2009) argue that in order for teachers to be effective, they must not approach teaching and learning methods for literacy as a "one size fits all" (p. 476). Lyon and Weiser (2009) pose the suggestion that research has not addressed; they suggest that if teachers are to be effective they must modify prescribed literacy curriculum and integrate them with their pedagogical practices. In fact, Lyon and Weiser (2009) called pedagogical practices that are modified by teachers as a more refined way of getting to specific literacy skills for marginalized students.

Maskiewicz and Winters (2012) and Lyon and Weiser (2009) studied an urban elementary school teacher resistance strategy toward prescribed literacy curriculum as the manner in which teachers prefer their own pedagogical practices before prescribed literacy curriculum. For example, Maskiewicz and Winters (2012) and Lyon and Weiser (2009) found that urban elementary teachers' praxis gave evidence of student motivation and academic engagement in the form of effective academic assessment and student success. Additionally, Brouwer (2012) reported that teachers utilize their own pedagogical practices to facilitate teaching and learning that is both motivational and engaging.

However, a dichotomy occurs in this discussion because researchers are discovering that in order to be effective, teachers must be seen as ineffective when they do not implement prescribe literacy curriculum completely. Lyon and Weiser (2009) ask the question that other researchers ask when noting that teachers' use of their own pedagogical practices are "less sophisticated;" the

## TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL RESPONSES 6

question is whether teachers know how to "apply instruction of highly specific components essential to reading development to improve the reading skills of both typical and struggling readers" (Maskiewicz and Winters, 2012, pp. 459, 477). Likewise, research revealed within the review of literature insists that teachers do not possess professional knowledge to implement and improve literacy skills of typical and struggling readers; which would be both general and special education students, therefore teachers are ineffective in implementing prescribed literacy curriculum completely (Jennings & DaMatta, 2009). As a result, teachers are told what to teach and how to teach and then evaluated on these directives (Jennings & DaMatta, 2009).

Therefore, although as an afterthought teachers reveal that they eventually resist prescribed literacy curriculum as indicated in their actions of modifying methods of prescribed literacy curriculum based upon their own pedagogical practices. Furthermore, teachers eventually report modifying prescribed literacy curriculum because they are relying on data that they view through the lens of their own pedagogical preferences, student's cognitive processing and student's social participation (Jennings & DaMatta, 2009). Prescribed literacy curriculum training and what teachers actually implement in their classrooms become inconsistent, creating learning gaps, because teachers resist the demands of what to teach and how to teach. Concurrently Jennings and DaMatta (2009) report that eventually teachers challenge or resist complete implementation of prescribed literacy curriculum because teachers want their praxis recognized as actionable to increase test scores and students' academic performance.

The review of literature recites researchers Jennings and DaMatta's (2009) notion that preferred pedagogical practices are relative to new and innovative approaches garnered from teachers' pedagogical preferences. Thus, teachers resist complete implementation of prescribed literacy curriculum and challenge the status quo of teachers' evaluations by implementing their

## **TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL RESPONSES 7**

preferred pedagogical practices that are applicable with student's cognitive processing, teacher praxis and students' social participation. Gersten et al. (2000) speak about innovative approaches of teachers who resist prescribed literacy curriculum. Gersten et al. (2000) say that teachers who resist prescribed literacy curriculum help to build students cognitive skills by matching students' needs and interest during teaching and learning. Furthermore, Gersten et al. (2000) suggest students cognitive processing according to brain research is correlated to instructional context of teaching and learning based upon teachers modified methods of prescribed literacy curriculum in order to match students' needs and interests.

The review of literature also reveals that professional learning communities and teachers alike view integrating methods of prescribed literacy curriculum and teachers' praxis as compatible and beneficial for all students. For instance, Rahmawati, et al. (2015) reports that teachers' pedagogical practices improve teaching and learning because they are dependent upon teacher's perspectives and actions. Currently, the mode of prescribed literacy curriculum administration attributes academic success of students to following complete implementation of training, high stakes testing and prescribed curriculum materials. High stakes testing, which is also currently correlated to teacher evaluations, encourages complete implementation of prescribe literacy curriculum. However, the review of literature reveals that high stakes testing is contradictory to teachers' praxis, instructional context and students' social participation. Likewise, Lumpe, et al. (2012) report that professional development training, which disseminates prescribed learning curriculum, is "woefully inadequate" when prescribed learning methods lack evidence of unified concepts such as student's cognitive processing, teacher praxis and students social participation (p. 154).

Thus, teachers' pedagogical practices integrated with prescribed literacy curriculum according to Schneider and Plasman (2011) implies that teachers develop autonomy over teaching and



## **TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL RESPONSES 8**

learning. Schneider and Plasman (2011) also state that teachers are forerunners of the education of all students based upon teachers' praxis, which provide equitable teaching and learning opportunities for all students. Equitable learning environments increase students' social capital, which is relative to their academic engagement and cognitive processing (Jennings & DaMatta, 2009 and Schneider & Plasman, 2011). Thus, considering teachers' pedagogical preferences and what effectively achieves students' literacy success, there needs to be an analysis of teachers' praxis and teachers' use of integrated methods of prescribed literacy curriculum in relation to teacher resistance.

Because literacy is a part of our daily lives, it would be problematic if students could not connect to others and understand the means by which they interact. By and large, literacy instruction is a process of learning that allows connection to others and has garnered much attention within all school districts. Social learning theorists and the like have offered reflection on how students learn and how teachers should relate literacy strategies to social learning theories. However, a problem persists because teachers are told what to teach and expected to teach prescribed literacy curriculum based on research that suggest teachers lack professional knowledge of instructional methods for building literacy skills. Therefore, teachers resist because they believe that the problem lays within the development of high stakes testing and learning outcomes based upon prescribed learning curricular assessments that lack consideration of students' cognitive processing, teacher praxis and students' social participation (Lyon & Weiser, 2009).

Crocco and Costigan (2007) discussed narrowing curriculum and pedagogy in the age of teachers' accountability and evaluation. In other words, in order to identify teachers who are accountable as well as highly effective Crocco and Costigan (2007) suggest identifying teachers who are completely implementing either prescribed literacy curriculum or their own pedagogical

## TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL RESPONSES 9

practices. Crocco and Costigan (2007) suggestion rightly defines praxis as a demonstration of pedagogical practices that will either drive a teacher to leave the career or become resilient in matching the needs and interest of all students. The teacher who becomes resilient resists complete implementation of prescribed literacy curriculum according to Crocco and Costigan (2007) and integrates their own pedagogical practices that identifies with methods of prescribed literacy curriculum. In essence, teachers who are resilient resist full implementation of prescribed literacy curriculum and implement their own pedagogical practices according to a blended form of prescribed literacy curriculum methods and their praxis. Crocco and Costigan (2007) posit that teachers who resist take this risk because they believe they are addressing student's needs and interests to build student's social capital and cultural identity.

There is little evidence that teacher resistance is relative to their praxis of integrating prescribed literacy curriculum and their own pedagogical practices. Research identifies, however, many instances where teachers are ineffective because they are not completely following prescribed literacy curriculum training. A possible explanation for teachers not following through with prescribed literacy curriculum training is that they are resisting prescribed literacy curriculum. Research highlights instances where teachers' pedagogical practices are rooted in instructional context of teaching and learning experiences (Jennings & Da Matta, 2009; Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006). Jennings and Da Matta (2009) cite that teachers are educational reformers that possess professional knowledge as demonstrated by their pedagogical practices as well as their ability to "imagine pedagogical possibilities" using multiple resources (p. 217). Achinstein and Ogawa (2006) contend that teachers are effective because teachers take autonomy over teaching and learning to guide instruction even if it conflicts with policies and mandates. Therefore, this study identifies the problem that teachers feel bullied into fully implementing prescribed literacy

## **TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL RESPONSES 10**

curriculum at the expenses of their own praxis and its impact on student learning, thus creating various forms of teacher resistance.

### **Research Questions**

The purpose of this study will be to examine various forms of teacher resistance in order to identify what causes integrated methods of prescribed literacy curriculum and teachers' praxis. This objective is needed because it informs teachers, curriculum developers, professional development facilitators, students, administrators and policy makers that teacher resistance impacts culturally responsive teaching. The degree that teacher's pedagogical preferences guide their pedagogical practices reflects upon student's social capital, academic assessments, and teacher's professional knowledge. Four questions guide this study. In seeking to better understand teachers' responses to prescribed literacy curriculum and identification of teachers' praxis in regards to resistance in one elementary school where professional development is required and professional development training is integrated into the schools' instructional calendar; these questions were developed:

1. What forms of resistance to the prescribed literacy curriculum do teachers at this elementary school use?
2. Why do teachers use resistance?
3. What do teachers say are the implications of their resistance?
4. What are teachers' pedagogical choices in relation to resistance?

### **Definitions**

The following operational definitions will be used to assist with interpreting the content of this paper:

## TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL RESPONSES 11

Agency: is defined as the authority achieved when affectively educating students based upon their needs and interests as well as commanding one's own implementation of pedagogical practices that are culturally responsive and appropriate for the teaching and learning of all students.

Autonomy: is defined in relation to teacher resistance as what teachers learn from professional development models and experiences in order to implement parts of prescribed professional development models that match the needs and interest of their students. Autonomy is also teachers' demonstrated ownership of their professional knowledge when implementing partial or whole models of professional development. Thus, autonomy is a component of culturally responsive teaching. Reeve and Jang (2006) define autonomy as promoting student's social capital because they are a part of the social learning process.

Cognitive processing: Li, et al. (2012) defined and investigated cognitive processing as when a student's prior knowledge is connected to new learning content. Thus, opportunities for teaching and learning according to teacher praxis are based upon cognitive processing as defined as teacher praxis helping students apply strategies and their knowledge.

Critical theory: Giroux (1983) defined and investigated critical theory in light reflection and reasoning. Giroux (1983) defines critical theory as theory that justifies potential power of a concept or person in order to demonstrate an insight as well as a critique that is at first "opposite" ideals and thoughts but then it becomes affirmative of a practice, concept or mode of action (12).

Culturally responsive teaching is defined by Ruble and Robson (2007) as teaching and learning that increases the likelihood and implementation of modified instructional practices in accordance to teachers' praxis and the matching of student's needs and interest.

Cultural pedagogy: Zembylas (2005) defines cultural pedagogy as teachers' emotions witnessed by engagement in what teachers believe in.

## TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL RESPONSES 12

Equitable opportunities of learning: Bostrom and Lassen (2006) define equitable opportunities of learning as teacher's evaluation of appropriate strategies according to their praxis, rather than curriculum developer's materials and professional development models.

Individualized instruction: are pedagogical practices by educators to increase students' social capital intentionally to create culturally responsive learning environments that meet the needs and interest of all learners. Methods can encompass both implicit and explicit strategy toward developing students learning skills. Most often educator's modification are their preferred pedagogical practices in resistance to explicit traditional practices and prescribed learning curriculum.

Instructional context as defined by Ruble and Robson (2007) is where teachers have modified pedagogical practices according to students' needs and interest. The context of learning is developed as task in the classroom based upon culturally responsive teaching, developed from teacher's pedagogical preferences. Additionally, instructional context is in accordance to increasing skills and learning, which can be situated within many environmental variations.

Intentional learning is defined as pedagogy and curriculum, based upon research that conceptualizes teacher's praxis. However, a dynamic, more of a dichotomy is introduced when learning becomes intentional based upon a teachers' resistance.

Literacy: Li et al. (2012) defines literacy as interaction that takes place to introduce new types of text that is both flexible and sustainable for a repertoire of skills. Thus, the focus upon literacy is defined as an ability to read and write also encompassing how teachers observe students making connections during teaching and learning.

Marginalized students: policy makers, professional development facilitators and curriculum developers have come to define marginalized students as students who learn from inexperienced

## TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL RESPONSES 13

teachers, with materials for "low-order learning" (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006; Bushnell, 2003 and Crocco & Costigan, 2007).

Modifier: Rahmawati et al. (2015) defines a modifier as an agent that is heavily dependent upon to transform interpersonal behavior and pedagogical practice.

Motivation is observed and defined as collaboration between teachers and students to match the needs and expectations of teaching and learning.

Pedagogical preferences: is defined as teachers' preferences as they are perceived as "holding, using, and producing knowledge and personal practical knowledge" that impacts the instructional context of teaching and learning (Craig, 2006, p. 261), Gersten, et al. (2000) defines pedagogical preferences in favor of prescribed learning curriculum as curriculum that represent high levels of sustained use stemmed from administrative mandate, user commitment and practice mastery.

Praxis: Crocco and Costigan (2007) defines praxis as a demonstration of pedagogical practices that will either drive a teacher to leave the career or become resilient and resist complete implementation of prescribed literacy curriculum. According to Crocco and Costigan (2007) teachers integrate their own pedagogical practices that identifies with methods of prescribed literacy curriculum thereby demonstrating their praxis. Crocco and Costigan (2007) posit that teachers who resist take this risk because they believe they are addressing student's needs and interest to build student's social capital and cultural identity by way of their praxis. Craig (2006) defines praxis as professional knowledge demonstrated by pedagogical practices "conceived as holding, using, and producing knowledge and personal practical knowledge" (p. 261). Furthermore, Jennings and Da Matta (2009) cite Paulo Freire definition of praxis as, "a teacher's ability to recognize and value their use of professional knowledge to promote students' social capital" (p. 217).

## **TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL RESPONSES 14**

Prescribed literacy curriculum: is defined and associated with short-term instruction that are summative and more apt to methods of professional development models. As intended prescribed learning curriculum materials are explicit sequenced instruction to be more effective according to short-term research-based assessment instruments for low-performing marginalized students (Ernest, et al., 2011, p. 196).

Professional development training models: is defined by Borko (2004) as teacher's participation with materials and in training models characterized as increasing teacher participation in the practice of teaching, and through this participation, teachers become more knowledgeable in and about teaching.

Professional knowledge: Craig (2006) defines professional knowledge as pedagogical preferences demonstrated "when teachers are conceived as holding, using, and producing knowledge and personal practical knowledge becomes their way of reconstructing the past and the intentions of the future" (p. 261). Scribner (2005) defines professional knowledge as the agent or authority of change and an amplifier of instructional context of teaching and learning experiences. Furthermore, Anderson, et al. (2015) defines implicit professional knowledge as when teachers help "students to reclaim the political space that silences their voices by filling in the missing element- student knowledge" (p. 185). Thereby professional knowledge is demonstrated by pedagogical preferences exhibiting an affect upon student knowledge by way of teacher praxis.

Professional Learning Communities: Jennings and Da Matta (2009) define professional learning communities as, "educators convening with community members to interrogate the present system of schooling and recreate it in ways that honored more voices, redistributed authority, and effectively address the needs of all children" (p. 215).

## **TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL RESPONSES 15**

Student social capital is defined as an attribute that increases student's transfer of knowledge and construction of new meanings. Therefore, relevant teaching and learning promote expression of prior knowledge; which in turn, helps students to apply new knowledge, build social capital and construct meaning.

Teaching and learning is defined by this study as interpersonal and intrapersonal perspectives not held by curriculum developers and professional development facilitators. Teaching and learning are defined as a demonstration of innovative practices and evolving and progressive social interaction of willing participants. Rahmawati, et al. (2015) defines teaching and learning as a form of teachers' resistance in order to "improve their pedagogical practices as well as their students learning" (pp. 393-94). In turn, teaching and learning promotes teachers' praxis as teachers become more reflective and improve their pedagogical practices.

Teacher resistance is defined as when teachers develop counter pedagogy that resist prescribed learning curriculum that are most often introduced through professional development models or textbook materials. Jennings and Da Matta (2009) defines teacher resistance as an actionable perspective that has implications and "practices rooted in resistance to oppression and recognizing that their work has evolved as their craft" (p. 226).

Unified concepts are defined as any concept that symbolizes a culturally responsive teaching and learning that increases the likelihood and implementation of individualized instructional practices in accordance to matching student's needs and interest.

### **Significance of the Study**

Teacher resistance brings about transformation of literacy instruction through teachers pedagogical practices. Research identifies common learning gaps associated with teacher's failure to fully implement prescribed literacy curriculum; however, despite monitoring and evaluations



## TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL RESPONSES 16

teachers' praxis have proven to benefit student's academic success. Teacher's pedagogical preferences are perceived as their beliefs in how to increase student achievement while implementing their pedagogical practices recognized as matching student's needs and interest. Therefore, Achinstein and Ogawa (2006) stress the need for research that links teacher's agency and authority to teachers' pedagogical practices and resistance.

Unified concepts such as pedagogical practices, intentional learning, students' social capital and autonomy attribute to teaching and learning and demonstrate teachers' pedagogical preferences. Both general and special education students adhere to implementation of pedagogical practices that promote expression of their prior knowledge and application of constructed meanings within equitable learning environments. Students express prior knowledge within instructional context of teaching and learning and Crocco and Costigan (2007) state that teachers, in turn, are witnessed as implementing integrated methods of their praxis and prescribed learning curriculum that are innovative and beneficial to students' academic success.

It is important to gain a clear and detail picture of how teachers' forms of resistance play a role in increasing students' academic success based upon integrated methods of prescribed literacy curriculum and teachers' praxis. Gaining insight into how and to what degree forms of teachers' resistance is reflective of prescribed literacy curriculum combined with teachers' praxis is under investigation. Additionally, understanding the different forms of teacher resistance plays a role in encouraging policy makers and professional development facilitators to rely upon teachers' input towards pedagogical practices. Case in point: teachers have formed professional learning communities in which they share their professional knowledge as demonstrated by pedagogical preferences in order to increase student's academic achievement (Scribner, 2005). Scribner (2005) suggests that teachers find more support from PLC's than research and prescribed literacy

## TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL RESPONSES 17

curriculum training. Whether research and data from this study can validate Scribner (2005) suggestion is not known as of yet, but Scribner (2005) makes a good point that teachers' effectiveness can be observed in their pedagogical practices that address challenges of the classroom based upon teaching and learning experiences.

Scribner (2005) argues that teachers are effective in meeting the needs and interests of students because they use and rely upon multiple resources to "build knowledge and skills" (p. 307). Thus, understanding the problem involved in this study also includes recognizing and understanding the concept of professional knowledge that correlates to teachers' praxis. Professional knowledge is the agent or authority of change and an amplifier of instructional context of teaching and learning experiences (Scribner, 2005). Teachers' professional knowledge as demonstrated by their pedagogical preferences gives teachers the agency and authority to become more and more effective in the education of all students. The problem is the expectation of complete implementation of prescribed literacy curriculum at the expense of teacher praxis and its impact on student learning; which creates various forms of teacher resistance.

Thus, questions to be researched are best characterized by examining teacher praxis, teachers' pedagogical preferences and investigation of teachers' pedagogical practices to resist prescribed literacy curriculum. Consequently, both a quantitative and qualitative study will be conducted to pose the following questions: 1. What forms of resistance to the prescribed literacy curriculum do teachers at this elementary school use? It is hypothesized that teachers' resistance takes on many forms as teachers try to match the varying needs and interest of all students. Thus, students learning at varying levels cause teachers to modify prescribed literacy curriculum in order to provide teaching and learning opportunities for all students. 2. Why do teachers use resistance? It is hypothesized that teachers use resistance because prescribed literacy curriculum does not match

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instructional context of teaching and learning. Teachers rely upon their praxis in order to match student's needs and interest based upon knowing the instructional context of teaching and learning experiences. Prescribed literacy curriculum is just that; it is prescribed and does not take notice of what is happening daily within each teachers' classroom. 3. What do teachers say are the implications of their resistance? It is hypothesized that teachers have a pedagogical preference in how teaching and learning can increase student literacy success. Teachers have an agency and authority that commands their implementation of pedagogical practices that is appropriate for teaching and learning of all students. 4. What are teachers' pedagogical choices in relation to resistance? It is hypothesized that because teachers have taken ownership of resisting prescribed literacy curriculum, teachers are creating new and innovative applications of prescribed literacy curriculum by combining prescribed literacy curriculum methods with their own pedagogical practices.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study was designed to collect data through survey research and interviews in one elementary school located within a Midwest state. It was assumed by the researcher that the participants would answer all questions truthfully and accurately. It was assumed that although prescribed literacy curriculum and professional standards call for implementation of professional development training, there would be variability in the ways that teacher's approach teaching and learning. Thus, limitations lay in understanding the full extent that teachers resist what is prescribed as the professional standard for literacy instruction. Research has been purposefully selected to include both general and special education students' reaction to prescribed literacy instruction and teachers resistance to prescribed literacy instruction. Thus, there are limitations to

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what degree prescribed literacy methods of instruction can either benefit or hinder students' academic success when literacy instruction is the primary learning content investigated.

The underpinnings of teacher resistance could also limit what a teacher is willing to express within their school building or even at an offsite location. Therefore, not only does encouragement of prescribed literacy curriculum undermine pedagogical practices of teachers, it may also serve to suppress teachers' critiques of professional development training. In fact, the review of literature revealed that first year teachers chose to leave the teaching profession because of oppressive techniques of some school systems (Stroh & Martin, 2015). On the other hand, some teachers remained in the teaching profession if they were able to teach in suburban schools and have more autonomy over instruction (Bushnell, 2003) Teachers have proven that their pedagogical preferences are relative to student achievement and this study does not encourage teachers to be limited in speaking about their perspectives.

It is also recognized that another area of limitation in terms of the characteristics of each participant is they are all white female teachers from a suburban district in a Midwest state. There is a consideration that teachers who choose to resist have already decided the way that students learn best. The research has suggested that teachers are experts and have an authority or agency toward teaching and learning (Jennings & Da Matta, 2009). Thus, teachers have an underlying trait or ability to adequately reflect on teaching and learning and compare it to prescribed literacy curriculum. Also, there was an unequal gender distribution in this study. The school has all white female teachers and the review of literature revealed that women were viewed as more submissive and able to be oppressed when they were told how to teach students (Jennings & Da Matta, 2009). However, there is also a possibility that women are more expressive of their reflections and their responses maybe more contextualized. Therefore, although a limitation, the women surveyed and

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interviewed may offer a more comprehensive expression of the underpinnings of teacher resistance.

Although over four fifths of the participants identified as White, there is a possibility that their reflections did not represent the depth and breadth of ethnic/racial identities of the student population as well as other teachers of other districts. Furthermore, the survey and interview participation process posed limitations because the principal of the school sent the survey out to encourage completion but teachers may have felt their responses were not totally confidential. The survey was taken online through a secured link that was not connected to an account of the school principal, but participants may have felt uncomfortable. The researcher asked all questions both survey and interview under the knowledge of research and good will that responses would be based on participant's best knowledge.

### CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Theoretical Framework

Most of the teaching and learning models of the past few years state in varying degrees the process of teaching and learning for both general and special education students. The research and models address all students under categories that are associated with prescribed learning curriculum as well as specifically, literacy. In doing so, research and models describing the process of teaching and learning specifically literacy impose prescribed literacy curriculum because of the pedagogical preferences of curriculum makers and administrators of policy. Thus, these efforts create learning gaps demonstrated within the process of teaching and learning by way of differential pedagogical practices.

Crocco and Costigan (2007) reports of the negative effects of learning gaps and also efforts to close those gaps by the use of differential pedagogical practices. Crocco and Costigan (2007) report that “professional discretion over curriculum” cause preferences that differ and somewhat “overlook the complexities of school reform” (p. 514). Thus, mandated curriculum tells teachers how to teach, curriculum makers provide prescribed learning curriculum and educators contend that their work is “deprofessionalized” and “depersonalized” during the process of teaching and learning (Crocco & Costigan, 2007, p. 521). Therefore, the theoretical framework underpinning this research is critical theory. Critical theory is defined by Giroux (1983) as theory that justifies potential power of a concept or person in order to demonstrate its insight as well as critique that is at first “opposite” ideals and thoughts but then it becomes affirmative of a practice, concept or mode of action (12).

Furthermore, a fundamental concept in critical theory is praxis. Giroux (1983) reports that teachers’ pedagogical practices are methods that address students’ needs and interest by way of

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“shaping educational theory and practice” (12) Therefore, praxis is defined by Crocco and Costigan (2007) as teachers' demonstrations of pedagogical practices that drive them to leave the profession or become resilient and resist complete implementation of prescribed curriculum. Giroux (1983) would refer to their definition as characteristics of teachers that depend upon their professional knowledge in order to demonstrate their power of critique and reflection; which equates the actions in their pedagogical practices. Giroux (1983) states, “most authoritative modes of classroom discipline and controls are fleeting images of freedom and it is within this aspect of knowledge that radical pedagogy is developed” (p. 258).

Considering pedagogical preferences in favor of prescribed curriculum; it brings to light reasons for teacher resistance. This critical framework on teacher resistance indicates teachers' frustrations with prescribed curriculum as the preferred pedagogical practice (Crocco & Costigan, 2007). Pedagogical practices in favor of prescribed curriculum are associated with teachers who have been traditionally trained through universities and professional development opportunities to follow prescribed methods for teaching. However, these same teachers have been “pressured to follow scripted and narrow curriculum rigidly and have become less able to forge a satisfying practice” (Crocco & Costigan, 2007, p. 527). In fact, such pressure and prescribed curriculum has been proven in research as justification for the sake of “emphasizing high stakes testing” (Crocco & Costigan, 2007, p. 527).

Furthermore, pressures of mandated and prescribed learning curriculum perpetuate the complexities of school reform. It is within this critical focus that teachers redefine pedagogical practices they acquire during professional development opportunities, university educational training and through the systematic pressures of prescribed curriculum. Therefore, teachers' eventual result is a deliberate action to specifically resist prescribed literacy curriculum and

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achieve outcomes that are most aligned with meeting the needs of all students. This study is grounded in the critical belief that there are differential pedagogical preferences as well as practices that cause teacher resistance to prescribed literacy curriculum. Because student needs and interest are not being met by pedagogical practices in favor of prescribed literacy curriculum, teachers are forced to resist prescribed literacy curriculum in order to provide equitable opportunities of learning for students.

Pedagogical preferences in favor of teacher praxis have been around since the 1980's and have since devised efforts to sustain effective pedagogical practices (Gersten, et al., 2000). However, where professional development offered solutions to learning gaps teachers rarely attended to "outside expertise" because it "required changes outside of teachers' instructional practices" (Gersten, et al., 2000, p. 446-47). So, teachers resist prescribed literacy curriculum because prescribed literacy curriculum represents "one path to high levels of sustained use stemmed from administrative mandate, strong user commitment and practice mastery" (Gersten, et al., 2000, p. 448). Pedagogical preferences are defined by Gersten, et al., (2000) as prescribed learning curriculum that represent high levels of sustained use stemmed from administrative mandate, user commitment and practice mastery. Teachers' praxis is developed in correlation to resistance in response to these mandates that are associated with prescribed literacy curriculum.

Teachers who resist and favor their own pedagogical practices recognize instructional context as a fluid and innovative atmosphere for demonstrating their professional knowledge of teaching and learning. Pedagogical preferences in favor of prescribed learning curriculum do not recognize teachers' professional knowledge as demonstrated by teachers' pedagogical practices. There is a difference, therefore teachers ready themselves for mandates and resist prescribed learning curriculum as they demonstrate pedagogical practices also known as their praxis. In a critical sense,



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it seems that teacher resistance is defined as when teachers develop counter pedagogical practices that resist prescribed learning curriculum that are most often introduced through professional development models or textbook materials. Therefore, Jennings and Da Matta (2009) defines teacher resistance as an actionable perspective that has implications and "practices rooted in resistance to oppression and recognizing that their work has evolved as their craft" (p. 226).

Research contend that teachers should follow prescribe literacy curriculum and that teachers require professional development in order to demonstrate pedagogical practices in favor of prescribed literacy curriculum (Kaiser, et al., 2009). Professional development is empirically supported "although the relationship between teachers' satisfaction and their use of new strategies was not significant when generalizing strategies teachers are very specific about how they took what they learned and applied it to similar needs in different students" (Kaiser, et al., 2009, p. 444). "One teacher learned that choosing specific areas rather than broad ones proved effective in supporting struggling students" (Kaiser, et al., 2009, p.453). Eventually pedagogical practices related to prescribed literacy curriculum reports gaps for all learners because of "uniform application of one strategy based on skill or concept deficit" and the teacher is the blame (Ernest, et al., 2011, p.192).

Teachers develop praxis when resisting prescribed literacy curriculum because teachers obtain and modify pedagogical practices over time, although they are resisting prescribed learning curriculum. If it has not become clear as of yet, how teachers resist, Achinstein and Ogawa (2006) says "teacher resistance reveals the tension between organizational control and professional autonomy" (p. 32). Achinstein and Ogawa (2006) reports that blaming teachers does not close learning gaps or raise achievement but present pedagogical preferences "one version where teachers are highly qualified reflective practitioners and the other where they are implementers of

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mandated programs” (p. 56). Teachers need to make decisions and have the power to influence teaching and learning according to their praxis-it promotes their autonomy. Thus, a form of teacher resistance is demonstrated by counter pedagogy; which are teachers use of their own pedagogical practices. Furthermore, in doing so, teachers expose organizational control that tries to dampen their autonomy.

In order to expose organizational control teachers, rely on their praxis as defined by Craig (2006), a professional knowledge demonstrated by pedagogical practices "conceived as holding, using, and producing knowledge and personal practical knowledge" (p. 261). Teachers want to continually develop their praxis and gain autonomy over teaching and learning. Gaining autonomy is another form of teacher resistance because teachers' autonomy is threatened by “inappropriate and externally constructed surveillance that interferes with that autonomy as it perpetuates teachers subordinate status restricts their pedagogical choices and dampens their intellectual freedom” (Bushnell, 2003, p. 253). Teachers may feel this is just a part of working within bureaucracy and it is a reality of teaching so they do not always report their actual implementation of their pedagogical practices. Case in point: Jennings and Da Matta (2009) focused on women teachers with an innovation known as professional learning communities in which they found power in resistance while discussing privately their counter pedagogy to prescribed curriculum. However, this “centralization and externalization of power only began in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and is finding its current manifestation in the narrowly defined accountability and standards movement” (Bushnell, 2003 p. 252).

Choppin (2011) discuss teaching and learning within instructional context as “applying professional vision to systematic inquiry in their own classrooms” (p. 335). Thus, teachers' praxis goes beyond following prescribed curriculum and developing professional learning communities

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to demonstrate their pedagogical preferences. Resistance is about enacting yourself and your situation and this power develops social capital for students. So “teachers who resist transform curriculum materials as they design instruction this is their power, their agency.” Zembylas (2005) reports that teacher praxis in efforts of resistance is “the center of exploring the role of emotion and identity in teaching” (p. 936). Where there is power there is resistance, power and resistance define teacher praxis and their agency (Zembylas, 2005). A teacher’s professional responsibility as it relates to their professional knowledge as demonstrated by their pedagogical preferences is to promote students’ social capital via teachers’ praxis.

Teacher who take responsibility for students’ social capital are instituting culturally responsive teaching defined as teaching and learning that increases the likelihood and implementation of instructional practices in accordance to teachers’ praxis and the matching of student’s needs and interest. Instructional practices are pedagogical practices according to teachers’ praxis. Pedagogical practices that have been developed through resistance to prescribed curriculum result in cultural pedagogy defined by Zembylas (2005), as teachers’ emotions witnessed by engagement in what teachers believe in. Thus, pedagogical choices of specific pedagogical practices become a form of resistance as teaching and learning is subjected to differential pedagogical preferences. Furthermore, because teachers want more autonomy over teaching and learning due to their prevailing belief in what is needed to match the needs of all students there is power in resistance.

Greenleaf (2009) contends however that learning gaps persist because of “failures in the system to provide much more than a cookie-cutter instructional response that often does not address youth literacy that leaves our schools with poor readers” (p. 11). Thus, teaching and learning is defined by this study as interpersonal and intrapersonal perspectives not held by curriculum developers and professional development facilitators. It is with a critical stance that the process of teaching

and learning is also defined as teaching and learning demonstrated as innovative practices involving progressive social interaction of willing participants. Rahmawati, et al., (2015) defines teaching and learning as teacher's resistance to "improve their pedagogical practices as well as their students learning" (pp. 393-94). In turn, teaching and learning promotes teachers' praxis as teachers become more reflective and improve their pedagogical practices. Teaching and learning becomes the catalyst for differential pedagogical preferences in favor of teachers' praxis. In turn, teachers' pedagogical practices help close learning gaps upon a pedagogical platform based upon differential perspectives, ideologies, professional development methods, curriculum materials and modified instructional practices. As there is power in resistance, which gives autonomy and agency, professional knowledge as demonstrated by teachers' praxis is grounds for pedagogical practices that favor integrating prescribed literacy curriculum with teachers preferred pedagogical practices.

### **Review of Literature**

The purpose of the current study is to examine teacher resistance as a response to prescribed literacy curriculum in an effort to meet the needs of students using teachers preferred pedagogical practices. Pertinent terms to the study are needed to outline the context of this study, as teachers' pedagogical practices are perceived differently in relation to research that will be discussed. Teachers' pedagogical preferences are defined and demonstrated by teacher resistance to professional development training during school years when academic assessments are dependent upon teachers completely following the prescribed methods that were introduced during professional development training. Furthermore, current professional development opportunities encourage teachers' pedagogical practices in relation to both special education and general education students' needs and interest (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006).

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Teachers are expected to interact with both general education and special education materials. In turn, professional development training has become more grounded in matching the needs of student's due to teacher's knowledge, participation and sharing of contextual experiences in their classroom (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006). Concurrently, professional development models grounded in meeting the needs of all students warrant support from professional learning communities; however, this involves teachers who favor their praxis over prescribed literacy curriculum (Jennings & Da Matta, 2009) Case in point: Jennings and Da Matta (2009) define professional learning communities as, "educators convening with community members to interrogate the present system of schooling and recreate it in ways that honored more voices, redistributed authority, and effectively addressed the needs of all children" (p. 215).

### **Teachers' Pedagogical Preferences**

Teacher's pedagogical preferences are important to understand when observing their pedagogical practices. Teachers' pedagogical preferences are aligned with their praxis and defined as their pedagogical beliefs and commitment to educating all students (Crocco & Costigan, 2007). Both one and the same as pedagogical preferences, teachers' pedagogical preferences are also defined as teachers' perspectives perceived as "holding, using, and producing knowledge and personal practical knowledge" that impacts the instructional context of teaching and learning (Craig, 2006, p. 261). Crocco and Costigan (2007) suggest that teacher beliefs of both new and veteran teachers are expressed when teachers seek out learning communities to strengthen their instructional practices, thereby focusing on students' needs. However, teachers also build confidence in their pedagogical practices when convening with colleagues in professional learning communities and this helps create equitable academic opportunities for all students. Furthermore Gersten, Chard and Baker (2000) suggest that research based instructional practices and

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professional learning communities help to match the needs and interest of students. Thus, teacher resistance is defined as when teachers develop counter pedagogy that resist prescribed curriculum that are most often introduced through professional development training (Jennings & Da Matta, 2009).

### **What Form Does Teacher Resistance Take On?**

Considering student needs and skills, teachers' pedagogical practices have implications of supporting student's literacy skills. However new methods and policies are expected of teachers within districts, schools and classrooms (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006). Achinstein and Ogawa (2006) explain "these policies provide guidance to teachers in low-capital districts, which tend to employ high numbers of under qualified and inexperienced teachers" (p. 31). In response, teachers' implement their own pedagogical practices opposed to prescribed literacy curriculum according to Jennings and DaMatta (2009). Jennings and Da Matta (2009) defines teacher resistance as an actionable perspective that has implications and "practices rooted in resistance to oppression and recognizing that their work has evolved as their craft" (p. 226). For example, Achinstein and Ogawa (2006) cited that teachers create a resistance "tone that constrains reflective critique and marginalized dissent of their profession" (p.31).

Achinstein and Ogawa (2006) concur that, "Teachers' resistance is rooted in this professional principle" and that policy makers, professional development facilitators and curriculum developers have assumed that teachers cannot develop pedagogical preferences and effective pedagogical practices if they are not following prescribed curriculum (p.31). On the contrary, professional development models become a discouragement to teachers and they resist prescribed curriculum based on their knowledge about what are effective pedagogical practices (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006). Prescribed learning curriculum is ineffective for marginalized students and because

## **TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL RESPONSES 30**

prescribed curriculum mandates the way to teach marginalized students, there is an assumed level of teachers' professional skills according to Bushnell (2003). Additionally, Bushnell (2003) mentioned that qualified teachers were more willing to work in the suburbs than low performing schools with predominantly low-performing students because suburban schools reportedly supported teachers' pedagogical preferences.

Therefore, Crocco and Costigan (2007) denotes that qualified new teachers were almost expected to leave the teaching profession within their first year of teaching when working in low performing schools. In addition, policy makers, professional development facilitators and curriculum developers have come to define marginalized students as students who learn from inexperienced teachers, with materials for "low-order learning" (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006; Bushnell, 2003 and Crocco & Costigan, 2007). Therefore, research suggests that marginalized students only benefit from prescribed learning curriculum that is defined as strategies introduced in textbooks and at professional development training (Gersten, et. al., 2000). Furthermore, prescribed learning curriculum is defined and associated with short-term instructions that are summative and more apt to methods of professional development models. As intended prescribed learning curriculum materials are explicit sequenced instruction to be more effective according to short-term research-based assessment instruments for low-performing marginalized students (Ernest, et al., 2011, p. 196). However, teachers value their pedagogical preferences by resisting specifically, prescribed literacy curriculum.

### **Professional Development Models**

Professional development models define the roles and support of schools, districts and teachers in the field of education. Thereby, professional development trainings are tracked, recorded and studied to provide feedback to policy makers, administration, curriculum developers and

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educators. Thus, when teachers resist prescribed literacy curriculum it involves understanding what impact teachers have upon pedagogical practices. Assuming teachers' pedagogical preferences and pedagogical practices change the way academic content and social learning is amplified during instruction, professional development models if not resisted by teachers should be followed by teachers to increase academic achievement.

However, Gersten, et al. (2000) states, "all innovations (new approaches) requires changes outside of teacher's pedagogical practices" (p.447). Achinstein and Ogawa (2006) argue that these innovations are seen as a need to develop teacher's praxis (p.31). Jennings and Da Matta (2009) cite Paulo Freire definition of teacher praxis as, "a teacher's ability to recognize and value their use of professional knowledge to promote students' social capital" (p. 217). However, policy makers, professional development facilitators and curriculum developers cite within research that they do not believe that teachers should be left to use their own professional knowledge during academic instruction (Jennings & Da Matta, 2009). Therefore, professional development has been promoted as a guarantee to raise student achievement—at least the achievement of low-performing students in underperforming schools and districts.

Teachers, therefore, resist prescribed curriculum as their resolve to use their praxis to match students' needs and build students' social capital. Furthermore, Achinstein and Ogawa (2006) in definition of students' social capital, declare social capital as a students' complex and reflective response to teachers' praxis, agency and authority while participating in communities of teaching and learning. Therefore, rather new approaches, innovative or traditional instructional practices the use of professional development models are seeking to legitimize assumptions that devalue teachers' professional knowledge and expertise (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006).



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Devaluing teachers' professional knowledge and expertise is considered as "shrinking space" according to Crocco and Costigan (2007) and is associated with professional development models (p. 520). For example, an elementary teacher in an urban school district noted that monitoring and evaluations of teachers to find evidence of prescribed learning curriculum is synonymous with "shrinking space" (Crocco & Costigan, 2007). The elementary school teacher reports, "I am treated as if I do not know how best to attend to the needs of my students" (Crocco & Costigan, 2007, p.520). Mentoring teachers toward pedagogical practices that are outside instructional context of their classrooms and favorable to prescribed curriculum is against teachers' praxis, is ineffective (Bushnell, 2003). However, in the interest of prescribed learning curriculum, not teachers' praxis or classroom context; professional development facilitators, policy makers and curriculum developers seek to make standards and curriculum "teacher proof" (Bushnell, 2003, p. 260).

Jennings and Da Matta (2009) research studied teacher resistance at one urban elementary school, resulting in reports that there is a strain and disconnect from the contextual reality of the classroom when teachers attend to prescribed learning curriculum. Case in point: one teacher stated according to Jennings and Da Matta (2009) that it took several years before they were able to develop their praxis or pedagogical practices. Achinstein and Ogawa (2006) reported that "teachers felt out of step with the districts expectations: because what students learn the most from a teacher is who is an individual" (p. 41). In other words, teachers help students develop their cultural identity and build social capital, through pedagogical practices based upon instructional context of the classroom and teachers' praxis (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006) Crocco and Costigan (2007) reported teacher resistance as, "a few new teachers towing the line, for fear of retribution or support of some features of the prescribed curriculum, whereas others spoke out about subverting requirements" (p. 529).

## **TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL RESPONSES 33**

Bushnell (2003) stated that teachers adhered to some methods of prescribed learning curriculum in turn "focusing on the students and not disrupting the system" (p. 266). However, another teacher in Crocco and Costigan (2007) study admits enrolling in a masters teaching program to support her need to transform teaching and learning in her classroom. Therefore, according to Jennings and Da Matta (2009) urban elementary school teachers, best service students by helping them transfer knowledge rather than just giving students knowledge or skills. As a result, teacher resistance takes on many forms that is implicated in teachers' choices of pedagogical practices, demonstration of their pedagogical preferences and encouragement by the constraints and mandates to develop affective teacher praxis integrated with prescribed curriculum.

### **Professional Learning Communities: Expertise**

Teacher's response to their students transfer of knowledge contend to observe similarities in methods of prescribed literacy curriculum due to high stakes testing. Therefore, professional learning communities (PLC) prepare teachers to devise strategies for their students and themselves (Crocco & Costigan, 2007). All leveled teachers elementary, middle and high school develop pedagogical practices that posit a particular relevance to matching student's needs and interest when sharing in professional learning communities. However, research-based practices drawn from professional development training suggest that teachers' pedagogical practices are not acceptable and teachers need to transform their thinking and pedagogical practices to mirror prescribed learning curriculum (Crocco & Costigan, 2007). For instance, prescribed literacy curriculum as discussed in professional learning communities promotes teacher autonomy, but not complete implementation of prescribed literacy methods (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006; Crocco & Costigan, 2007 and Jennings & DaMatta, 2009). Furthermore, Bushnell (2003) cites a middle school teacher, in a high-ranking school, who acknowledges her students' struggle in reading. She

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states, "because of the schools ranking, this teacher could make their own decisions about curriculum and pedagogy for each class and student" (p. 262).

Teachers' praxis and knowledge of instructional context of the classroom allow for equitable learning opportunities of literacy instruction. Therefore, teaching is culturally responsive because teachers' praxis often considers literacy as a factor for connecting effective pedagogical practices (Jennings & Da Matta, 2009). In other words, Jennings and Da Matta (2009) reports that professional development models seemingly support teachers of all grade levels "construction of counter-pedagogies" (p. 225). However, teaching and learning based upon teachers' transformative pedagogical practices or praxis did not focus only on learning content but building student social capital and encouraging professional learning communities (Jennings & Da Matta, 2009). Therefore, teachers resist prescribed literacy curriculum in order to create learning environments that impact students learning based on teachers' praxis.

Achinstein and Ogawa (2006) cited an urban elementary school district teacher of varying skilled level students, who modified her instruction to increase students' phonetic skills. Achinstein and Ogawa (2006) state "her resistance was based on professional principles, which emphasized individuality, creativity, high expectations, and community building" (p. 39). Concurrently, according to Gersten et al., (2000) marginalized students or students with learning difficulties need teachers that attend to some methods of prescribed literacy curriculum as it demonstrates a teachers' ability to transform pedagogical practices to match students' needs (p. 447). Furthermore, throughout this chapter and subsequent chapters the words "all students" will be utilized instead of referring to students as typical or marginalized. The distinctions that may be drawn are whether a student is a general or special education student in most instances.

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Therefore, professional development can prepare teachers to transform their pedagogical practices in order to promote teaching and learning and discussions within professional learning communities. On the other hand, teachers who are just graduating from universities may deem professional development as supportive resource over professional learning communities. In another instance, research has demonstrated that new teachers feel they have no one to turn to because of various prescribed methods of curriculum that most tenure teachers are modifying (Jennings & Da Matta, 2009). Achinstein and Ogawa (2006) also reported from their study the negative impact of policy mandates on elementary first year teacher's resistance to prescribed literacy curriculum and how two teachers sought professional learning communities outside their school building.

### **Intentional Learning and Teacher Praxis**

Teacher resistance has many forms; still, the primary motive to resist remains that teachers feel bullied into complete implementation of prescribed literacy curriculum at the expenses of their own praxis and its impact on student learning. Crocco and Costigan (2007) contends that "developing innovative professional discretion should be the long-term goal of teacher development and curriculum policy "instead of devaluing teachers and decreasing their autonomy" (p. 530). Teachers resist gaining autonomy over teaching and learning, by integrating methods of prescribed literacy curriculum that are meaningful to their own praxis and all students' social capital. Therefore, autonomy is defined in relation to teacher resistance as what teachers learn from professional development training; in order to integrate methods of prescribed literacy curriculum with their pedagogical practices that match the needs and interest of all students. Autonomy is critical in demonstrating ownership of professional knowledge as demonstrated by teachers' pedagogical preferences while implementing integrated prescribed literacy curriculum methods

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and pedagogical practices (Crocco & Costigan, 2007). As a result, Jennings and Da Matta (2009) reports that all grade level teachers learn to modify instruction and become "a professional leader who share these methods with her colleagues," while taking a stance of resistance (p. 224).

Thus, teachers' pedagogical practices give credence to intentional learning, which is correlated to teacher resistance. Intentional learning is a form of resistance as teachers demonstrate their pedagogical preferences in order to intentionally gain autonomy over teaching and learning as demonstrated by their pedagogical choices. Intentional learning is defined as theory that drives pedagogy and curriculum, based upon research that conceptualizes teacher's praxis (Crocco & Costigan, 2007; Jennings & Da Matta, 2009). However, a dynamic, more of a dichotomy is introduced when learning becomes intentional based upon a teachers' resistance. For example, thinking of a first year teacher use of professional development training research suggests that professional development training would impress upon the teacher to separate students' needs from acquired skills. In correlation, policy makers fear is that "a knowing in practice becomes increasingly tacit and spontaneous and a practitioner (teacher) may miss important opportunities to think about what they are doing" (Bushnell, 2003, p. 269). In turn, new teachers resist because they become "constrained by their current knowledge and beliefs," which leads back to teachers' pedagogical practices and professional knowledge as demonstrated by their pedagogical preferences (Gersten et. al., 2000, p. 450).

Research has shown that teachers at all grade levels realize this dichotomy; teachers resist because teachers chose to implement intentional pedagogical practices based upon their praxis. In short, Rahmawati et al. (2015) reports that teaching and learning improves pedagogical practices because it is dependent upon teacher's perspectives and actions. Bushnell (2003) reports that policy makers contend, "thinking requires the ability and opportunity to take a critical stance and

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distance from what one is doing” (p. 269). Therefore, it may seem as though teachers are resisting a mandate to implement prescribed learning curriculum that will increase student performance but instead teachers are demonstrating their praxis to increase student social capital as well as student achievement. For instance, Gersten, et al. (2000) reports from researchers Fuchs and Fuchs (1998) that teachers are not abandoning their post but teacher’s pedagogical practices or praxis needs to accommodate students’ needs and interests along with promoting student’s social capital (p. 450).

Researchers who investigate professional learning communities have observed teachers who do not follow through with complete implementation of prescribed literacy curriculum (Gersten, et al., 2000) In fact, Gersten, et al. (2000) reported that professional learning communities are “more authentic than traditional professional development. For example, if a teacher has an idea for a new pedagogical approach, he or she turns to professional learning communities to get feedback, suggestions, recommendations or resources” (p. 452). Gersten, et al. (2000) also contends that this is a teacher’s survival technique within the classroom; which warrants professional learning communities. Interesting enough, however, Gersten, et al. (2000) reports new approaches receive attention “rather than the weight of evidence supporting effectiveness;” which is relative to teacher’s praxis (p. 452).

Furthermore, Gersten, et al. (2000) contends that highly qualified teachers are teachers who have a “stronger sense to move toward mastery instructional practices” (p. 452). As mentioned earlier, one teacher enrolled in a master’s level course in order to better service students. Teachers’ praxis are pedagogical practices forged out of resistance and they are relative to all students both general education and special education. Therefore, as Ernest, et al. (2011) states “research has shown; teachers who believed they have the skills and ability to influence student learning and behavior regardless of external factors are more likely to modify and adapt instruction” (p. 192).

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Teachers' pedagogical practices do not decrease students' social capital but they are intentional and create instructional context that meets the needs and interest of all learners.

### **Modified Instruction: Academic Gains**

Researchers Ernest, et al. (2011) noted an interesting finding that teacher's modifications to pedagogical practices indicated teachers' satisfaction with short-term gains. However, short-term gains are more summative in nature and more apt to prescribed learning curriculum approaches associated with professional development training. As intended, professional development training and curriculum materials have sequenced instruction to be more effective by implementing short-term research-based assessment instruments for low-performing students (Ernest, et al., 2011, p. 196). However, teachers' pedagogical practices integrated with prescribed curriculum are also implemented to better serve all students. Therefore, Ernest, et al. (2011) reports, "soon after being asked to vary how children in her urban school district classroom were assessed, a different measurement of success in the teacher's classroom was noted in her journal" (p. 196). The teacher wrote about matching the needs and interest of a student thereby increasing their achievement and social capital. The teacher noted that her male student gained confidence by witnessing an increase in his literacy skills, which also impacted other academic areas and his social capital. This urban elementary school teacher took ownership of her praxis and provided similar pedagogical practices to other students over time (Ernest, et al., 2011).

Ernest, et al. (2011) later reported that teachers involved in professional learning communities, increased effective pedagogical practices, intentional learning experiences and modified instructional practices as both short-term and long-term outcomes indicative of student achievement. Classroom effectiveness and learning environments that are shrouded in teachers' praxis or pedagogical practices increase students' social capital and motivation (Bushnell, 2003).

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Motivation is noted in efforts that are observed and defined as collaboration between teachers and students to match the needs and expectations of teaching and learning. Therefore, there are implications that teachers expect all students to learn when implementing modified instructional practices. However, there are also implications that students are motivated to learn more of the learning content when prescribed literacy curriculum is combined with teachers' pedagogical practices (Ernest, et al., 2011). Moreover, students' social capital is defined as an attribute that increases student's transfer of knowledge and construction of new meanings (Lindwall & Ekstrom, 2012).

Therefore, relevant teaching and learning promotes expression of prior knowledge, which, in turn, helps students apply new knowledge, build social capital and construct meaning (Lindwall & Ekstrom, 2012). Furthermore, Lindwall and Ekstrom (2012) suggest that explicit instruction can reduce knowledge transfer because students need contextualized representation of learning content. Lindwall and Ekstrom (2012) contend that the reasoning behind this theory draws from prior knowledge involving knowledge transfer when students construct meaning and apply new information. Lindwall and Ekstrom (2012) investigated an urban high school district teacher who implied that their student's skills rest solely upon making connections and transferring knowledge. In fact, researchers Lindwall and Ekstrom (2012) reported, that high school students are given resources for deciding whether they should "attend to new information or not" (p. 33). Likewise, students "build appropriate subsequent actions at a particular place" during the learning activity" (Lindwall & Ekstrom, 2012, p. 33).

### **Learning as Social Interactions**

Researchers Lindwall and Ekstrom (2012) reasoned that teachers guide students to constructing meaning so students learn for themselves within a social context. Lindwall and



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Ekstrom (2012) mentioned that learning by doing is associated with prior knowledge and is an effective social approach. Student's use of prior knowledge also implies their application and ability to transfer knowledge. One high school student is mentioned by Lindwall and Ekstrom (2012) as not claiming, "he does exactly what the teacher says, but that he thinks that he does the same" (p. 44). The teacher in this study realizes that this is a student application and assessment of their ability to transfer knowledge. Case in point: researchers Lindwall and Ekstrom (2012) note this teacher' pedagogical practices as encouraging the student to assess "what he is doing, has done, or is attempting to do" (p.46). The student is constructing meaning, transferring knowledge and applying skills in order to complete the task. Thus, teachers collaborate with students to build their social capital and demonstrate their cognitive processes.

Additionally, Li et al. (2012) defined and investigated cognitive processing as when a student's prior knowledge is connected to new learning content. The researchers investigated both general and special education students specifically, elementary students with autism who were struggling readers. Li et al. (2012) found that the neural brain networks of students with autism have a resting state if students are not given opportunity to construct meaning and apply new skills. Although the neural networks in the brains of individuals with autism are connected and organized differently than general education students, "they can develop adequate reading skills" (Li, et al., 2012, p. 398) Li et al. (2012) reported that the determining factors of identifying reading skills were student's exposure to learning content. Also, Li et al. (2012) noticed if students with autism were taught reading in earlier grades, then their brain reorganization was no different than that of typically developing peers. However, if there was a resting state; meaning no reading skills taught during earlier grades, when young adults with autism were tested their reading skill levels were lower (Li, et al., 2012, p.405). The implications

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of this research afford special education student more specifically students with autism an opportunity to learn reading content earlier than suggested by prescribed literacy curriculum.

Moreover, prescribed literacy curriculum that promises to increase reading skills evidenced by assessments scores are suggesting that some students are able and some students are not able (Li, et al., 2012). Furthermore, professional development training suggests that teachers should instruct students that are able and become more creative with students who are perceived as not able (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006) Case in point: Achinstein and Ogawa (2006) investigated a male teacher who believes in resisting professional development training, by valuing his professional knowledge and participating in professional learning communities. This male teacher of an urban middle school district departed from prescribed literacy curriculum and relied on his professional knowledge as demonstrated by his pedagogical practices to support students' literacy skills. The teacher spoke to mentors and professional learning communities in order to develop pedagogical practices that afforded opportunities of learning based upon his students learning needs (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006). This teacher's pedagogical preferences and pedagogical practices increased students' academic performance void of the concern for student's abilities (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006).

Merely skilled students may be a concern of curriculum developers and professional development facilitators because their concern is with student's abilities. However, teachers of all educational levels in Browder et al. (2006) study contend "educators limit future opportunities if they make an a priori assumption not to teach reading to some students because of the nature or severity of disability" (p.393). The more social opportunities to learn based upon a student needs and interest the more the brain reorganizes and strengthens cognitive processing (Li, et. al.,

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2012). Thus, researchers Bostrom and Lassen (2006) suggest "teaching as the foundation for many educational processes" (p. 178).

Therefore, teacher resistance of prescribed literacy curriculum in favor of their praxis is a pedagogical platform that should be investigated. Cognitive processing and brain research also needs to be considered by professional development facilitators who prescribe learning curriculum to fit a style of learning for a style of student because each student has a different learning style. Thus, opportunities for teaching and learning according to teacher praxis is based upon cognitive processing as defined as teacher praxis helping students apply learning strategies. In this manner, teacher resistance takes on the form of providing pedagogical practices that are socially equitable opportunities for learning while resisting complete implementation of prescribed literacy curriculum (Bostrom & Lassen, 2006).

### **Equitable Opportunities for Learning**

"More specifically, with a better understanding of the conditions of learning and more precise knowledge of how choices of strategies affect learning, teachers' praxis is expanded" (Bostrom & Lassen, 2006, p. 179). Therefore, resisting prescribed literacy curriculum because teachers' pedagogical practices are more equitable affords students opportunity to build their knowledge and skills. However, teachers' perception of this benefit is thwarted as they are constrained by teacher evaluations and expectations to completely implement prescribed literacy curriculum. Bostrom and Lassen (2006) define equitable opportunities of learning as teacher's knowledge of appropriate pedagogical practices according to their praxis rather than teacher evaluations and prescribed literacy curriculum.

Moreover, Bostrom and Lassen (2006) inserts that teachers gain autonomy by reflecting upon pedagogical practices that is most preferred over prescribed literacy curriculum. Thus, teachers are

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concerned that they are being bullied into following prescribed literacy curriculum when they are implementing an integration of prescribed literacy curriculum methods and their pedagogical practices. Research has demonstrated that teachers are seen as having the knowledge and pedagogical preferences to modify instructional practices that build student's social capital (Bostrom & Lassen, 2006; Bushnell, 2003; Crocco & Costigan, 2007; and Jennings & Da Matta, 2009). Furthermore, "teaching based on the learners preferred learning styles" helps the learner construct meaning and transfer knowledge (Bostrom & Lassen, 2006, p. 184).

Equitable opportunities for learning according to Bushnell (2003) suggest that all grade level "teachers are constructing their own spaces of practice within systems of surveillance and even oppression; enacting a level of reflective practice" (p. 270). Also, the support and collaboration received in professional learning communities have been reported by Bushnell (2003) to help teachers make discoveries that they do not hold to themselves but share in professional learning communities. It has been reported that most teacher discoveries are modified instructional practices that represent their praxis in response to resisted professional development training and prescribed literacy curriculum. Teachers have witnessed the novelty in teaching and learning that helps students to become connected instead of disconnected to their learning (Bostrom & Lassen, 2006).

Concurrently, Garrett and Riley (2016) mentioned that teacher resistance has come from realizing that student learning is data driven, under the guise of professional development training. Moreover, because research reports that new approaches and prescribed learning curriculum are data driven and more rigorous it is supposedly "culturally responsive" (Garrett & Riley, 2016, p. 34). However, Garrett and Riley (2016) cite an elementary general education teacher in an urban school district that held to her perspectives and pedagogical practices. "Dawn used the space

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offered within teacher inquiry communities to problematize and disrupt mainstream perceptions of students and schooling” (Garrett & Riley, 2016, p.34). This teacher realized, as McCaslin (2009) suggests, that teachers’ praxis and motivational efforts builds students’ social capital. Furthermore, suggested in this teachers' response are implications that learning is not culturally responsive just because it is rigorous. Therefore, this teacher in Garrett and Riley (2016) study utilized professional learning communities and shared pedagogical practices in order to match the needs of her students, which more appropriately symbolized culturally responsive teaching.

Strom and Martin (2015) shed light upon a first year teacher development of their pedagogical practices, keeping in mind that implementation of pedagogical practices or teacher praxis is a form of resistance. Their study suggested that this first year teacher experienced conflicts of interest but was supported by professional learning communities because they helped develop pedagogical practices that promoted equitable opportunities of learning. Strom and Martin (2015) cite this urban high school teacher as having knowledge of professional development training and choosing to "normalize his teaching" to demonstrate how "teaching should look like and how classrooms should function” (p.13). The result as Strom and Martin (2015) explained was that most teachers including first year teachers in general "must disrupt their own mental scripts of teaching” (p.13). Furthermore, these researchers suggest that the responsibility of teachers is to come to understand the needs and interests of students based upon teacher praxis and classroom effectiveness (Strom & Martin, 2015). Thus, the development of this teachers’ praxis is important in understanding the demonstration of teacher resistance when examining equitable opportunities for learning.

Although Strom and Martin (2015) contend that universities help first year teachers to gain solid pedagogical practices, they also mention that teachers need to use their current practices in the field. Strom and Martin (2015) report that pedagogical practices are referring to teacher praxis,

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not prescribed methods of teaching that are witnessed in professional development training. In fact, Strom and Martin (2015) later report that pre-service learning (professional development training) does not promote pedagogical practices within the first year of teaching. "Rather, multiple enabling and constraining factors influence the pedagogical decision-making and enactment of teaching practices" (Strom & Martin, 2015, p. 17). Therefore, it is probable that first year teachers may eventually conform to the status quo, be released of their services or resist professional development training by forming their own pedagogical practices (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006; Bushnell, 2003; Crocco & Costigan, 2007; and Strom & Martin, 2015).

### **Social Capital in Contextual Learning Environments**

Strom and Martin (2015) mentioned student social capital as an expendable because prescribed learning curriculum is believed to shape first year teacher's pedagogical practices. Thus, Strom and Martin (2015) rest in stating that because learning environments are complex, first year teachers may struggle to develop their pedagogical practices or praxis. It is not as important to professional development facilitators that teachers develop their own pedagogical practices because it "breaks from the status quo" (Strom & Martin, 2015, p.17). Therefore, professional learning communities become increasingly important in supporting all teachers as they are developing their praxis; which leads to autonomy over teaching and learning.

Fisher and Rogan (2012) strike up a conversation that teachers should resist professional development training because instead of becoming a professional resource; professional development creates professional learning communities that better serve students as well as teachers. Fisher and Rogan (2012) support this notion because teachers will still receive support but it will be in relation to their praxis and research. Furthermore, contextual factors within the classroom are more closely encountered and acknowledged by teachers as their own pedagogical

practices address academic content. Thus, according to Fisher and Rogan (2012) "the problems that researchers elected to solve and their expert solutions does not match the everyday concerns of K-12 practitioners" (p. 125). Fisher and Rogan's (2012) research is reminding professional development facilitators that the classroom has instructional context that facilitates teaching and learning and appropriately addresses the needs of students.

Professional development seemingly adds credence to prescribed literacy curriculum because learning content has also become separate from students' needs and interests. However, needs and interest of students based upon instructional context of the classroom correlates to learning as well as students' social capital. In witness of this dichotomy Avargil et al. (2012) contend that "teachers are no longer the expert, and some of teachers' knowledge has to be built through self-generated questions and discussions with students" (p. 215). Avargil et al. (2012), however, revised reports to mention that teachers use their professional knowledge as demonstrated by teachers' pedagogical preferences and assessment knowledge gained from curriculum materials to "develop and design new assignments" (p. 219). Therefore, teacher resistance is observed as teacher praxis and their professional knowledge, demonstrated by pedagogical practices combined with prescribed learning methods to assess students as well as build their social capital.

Borko (2004) denotes teachers' praxis and professional knowledge as an agency that opposes traditional methods of teaching and learning. Borko (2004) contends that student engagement in the teaching and learning process is best supported by collaboration and pedagogical practices that match their needs and interest. Teacher's participation in professional development training is characterized as a "process of increasing participation in the practice of teaching, and through this participation, a process of becoming knowledgeable in and about teaching" (Borko, 2004, p. 4). However, research-based practices drawn from professional development training also suggest

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that teachers' pedagogical practices are not acceptable and teachers need to transform their thinking and pedagogical practices to mirror prescribed learning curriculum.

Thus, teachers resist professional development training according to Choppin (2011) because they associate professional development training, as a disconnect when they are constantly modifying instruction associated with prescribed learning curriculum in order to match students' needs. Furthermore, Choppin (2011) mentions that curriculum developers rarely include data that is informative of the time it takes to modify pedagogical practices for students. Therefore, teacher praxis by way of their professional knowledge, demonstrates their time and commitment. In concluding Choppin (2011) argues that curriculum developers seek to understand teacher adaptations because it suggests relationships in teaching and learning, student motivation and pedagogical practices. In turn, there is indication that teachers are demonstrating integration of prescribed learning curriculum and their pedagogical practices (Choppin, 2011).

### **Teaching and Learning a Teachers' Praxis**

Therefore, teaching and learning is a social process and teacher praxis is the practice associated with professional expertise. Teachers become an expert in their field and take responsibility for implementing instruction as a social process. Borko's (2004) study contends to focus on professional development that used urban elementary school teachers as a unit of analysis in order to indicate how teaching and learning becomes a "slow and uncertain process" when following prescribed learning curriculum (p. 6). Therefore, teachers are found to "attend differently to resources and curriculum materials, depending upon their beliefs about prescribed learning curriculum materials and professional development training" (Choppin, 2011, p. 333). Additionally, Borko (2004) suggests that professional development that fosters professional



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learning communities can “help teachers deepen their knowledge and transform their teaching” while building students’ social capital (p. 4).

Therefore, teacher’s praxis or pedagogical practices motivate students to think about learning content and construct meaning. Students who are motivated by teachers’ pedagogical practices demonstrate their social capital. Lyon and Weiser (2009) report “lack of motivation to read has a correlation with reading achievement, but it is ineffective instruction that dooms children to a lifetime of reading failure” (p. 476). Therefore, some researchers hold the understanding that teachers do not cause reading failures nor does teacher’s pedagogical practices (Li et al., 2011; and Maskiewicz & Winters, 2012). Professional development facilitators and curriculum developers who surveillance and evaluate teachers make it seem that teachers’ pedagogical practices are the cause of students reading failure and unsuccessful academic progress. In contrast, however Maskiewicz and Winters (2012) contend that “teachers are often charged with introducing and enforcing productive scientific, social and intellectual practices of the classroom” (p. 429).

Maskiewicz and Winters (2012) also speak to collaborative and social participation of students that demonstrate how students transfer knowledge and build their social capital in response to teacher praxis. Thus, student academic performance does not indicate failure but response to teachers’ pedagogical practices during teaching and learning. Furthermore, teachers garner from professional development training and prescribed curriculum methods strategies that can be combined with their pedagogical practices in order to impact students’ academic performance (Maskiewicz & Winters, 2012) Additionally, Lyon and Weiser (2009) studied professional development training models and proposed “skilled teachers know that struggling readers require explicit and systematic instruction to experience improvement in their reading abilities” (p. 426). Furthermore, researchers have stated that teachers are innovators as well as experts to the craft of

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teaching and learning. Therefore, researchers are also noting that in order for teachers to be innovators and experts to the craft of teaching; teachers are in need of support through professional development training and professional learning communities (Maskiewicz & Winters, 2012).

Maskiewicz and Winters (2012) explain that urban elementary school teacher's use prescribed learning curriculum and explicit practices because researchers viewed these pedagogical practices as "essential roles of the teacher and/or the curriculum" (p. 431). Teachers then feel the urgency to resist some methods of traditional and normalized instructional practices; otherwise known as prescribed learning curriculum by implementing their own pedagogical practices that promote collaboration, social participation and student's social capital (Maskiewicz & Winters, 2012) Case in point: according to Maskiewicz and Winters (2012), students "cling to unproductive habits" and the norms "instituted by teachers or structured curricula that do not necessarily promote engagement" (p. 432). However, transfer of knowledge is a social process that would not occur without teacher praxis and the motivation involved in teaching and learning collaboration. Therefore, teachers attempt to make sense of professional development training and prescribed literacy curriculum by combining these methods with their own pedagogical practices or praxis (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006; Bostrom & Lassen, 2006; Bushnell, 2003; Crocco & Costigan, 2007 and Maskiewicz & Winters, 2012).

On the other hand, Lyon and Weiser (2009) cite, that "teachers who perceive that they possess expertise are less likely to seek out new information relevant to reading development and instruction" (p. 477). However, teachers resist prescribed literacy curriculum by demonstrating teaching and learning according to teacher praxis involving a social collaborative processes, modifications and adaptations (Maskiewicz & Winters, 2012). Additionally, teaching and learning that is socially collaborative also indicates professional expertise that is garnered from teachers'

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pedagogical practices, prescribed learning curriculum, professional development training and pedagogical preferences (Maskiewicz & Winters, 2012 and Lyon & Weiser, 2009). Thus, Maskiewicz and Winters (2012) and Lyon and Weiser's (2009) study on urban elementary school teachers' resistance in order to promote student engagement show that there was evidence that teacher praxis or pedagogical practices engaged students as well as promoted effective teaching and learning by integrating methods of prescribed literacy curriculum with their own pedagogical practices.

Brouwer (2012) studied urban elementary and middle school teacher's pedagogical practices and teacher autonomy in order to report how teachers seek out new information and pedagogical practices that are indicative of their attendance at professional development training as well as application of prescribed learning curriculum. Brouwer (2012) reports that "educators will utilize methods that will facilitate autonomous motivational orientations" (p. 192). In other words, teachers will implement modified instructional practices that help student transfer knowledge and construct meaning based upon teacher's praxis, professional development training and integrated methods of prescribed learning curriculum. Professional development training facilitators and curriculum developers may lack knowledge of how teacher's pedagogical preferences and contextual experiences in the classroom demonstrate a combination of teacher praxis and methods of prescribed learning curriculum but there is no denial of teacher's implementation of pedagogical practices. Therefore, Cooper, Levin and Campbell (2009) contend that teachers are ignored as experts and "particular intervention overrides teachers' professional knowledge and judgment" (p. 161). Thus, it is consistent that teachers feel bullied into complete implementation of prescribed literacy curriculum opposed to implementation of integrated teacher praxis and prescribed literacy curriculum.

### Unified Concept Witnessed by Teacher Resistance

There are unified concepts to be noticed when speaking of teacher praxis, student needs and social capital. Unified concepts are developed when teachers' understanding of teaching and learning becomes culturally responsive, increasing student social capital and engaging student's participation; thereby addressing student's needs and interest. Therefore, unified concepts are defined as any concept that symbolizes teaching and learning that has increased the likelihood and implementation of pedagogical practices in accordance to matching student's needs and interest. Furthermore, culturally responsive teaching is defined by Ruble and Robson (2007) as teaching and learning that increases the likelihood and implementation of modified instructional practices in accordance to teachers' praxis and the matching of student's needs and interest.

In the likelihood of acknowledging reading failure due to modified instructional practices, Skinner (2010) found that success depends upon motivation. Motivation promotes knowledge transfer and is an indicator of culturally responsive teaching (Skinner, 2010). Furthermore, "learning is brought about by experience, and all experiences requires time" (Skinner, 2010, p. 171). Because of Skinners' (2010) research, motivation is a unified concept that is paired with social participation, teacher praxis, autonomy and so on. The reason being is that these concepts, although not exhaustive, have been mentioned previously in relationship to matching student's needs and teacher resistance.

Lyon and Weiser (2009) studied both general and special education teachers of varying grade levels response to assessments. Lyon and Weiser (2009) mentioned teacher's professional knowledge; however faint, as a catalyst for both special education and general education students reading performance. These researchers contend "it is hard to imagine widespread improvement in the preparation of reading teachers when examinations designed to measure essential content

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and pedagogical competencies assess content and competencies that are not in line with current research” (Lyon & Weiser, 2009, p. 478). Therefore, teachers resist prescribed literacy curriculum and the associated assessments in order to create culturally responsive teaching that demonstrate their professional knowledge as well as their pedagogical preferences to appropriately meet the needs of all students (Skinner, 2010).

Because there continues to be a problem in implementing professional development training and prescribed literacy curriculum unified concepts in teaching and learning helps to focus upon a quality of teaching and learning that is an active agent for students’ transfer of knowledge, motivation and engagement. Scribner (2005) notice "teachers' learning is a complex activity and a difficult phenomenon to isolate and study” (p. 296). In turn, Burns and Turner (2009) reports over time teachers have been pressured to assess and implement prescribed literacy curriculum (p. 126). Thus, Scribner (2005) state, "in spite of these challenges of learning, teachers do learn, their students learn, and challenges of pedagogical practices are often resolved, leading to improved learning environments” (p. 296).

In conclusion, unified concepts found within this discussion of teacher resistance are demonstrative of teachers’ pedagogical practice that does not fully align with professional development training but with some methods of prescribed literacy curriculum. Furthermore, teaching and learning in the classroom is a pedagogical practice that is held by experts of the classroom not the materials. The experts are the teachers who listen, understand, reasons and think according to their praxis and professional knowledge (Scribner, 2005). Scribner (2005) summarizes that teachers seek out knowledge and collaborate within professional learning communities. As a result, Scribner (2005) contends “teachers are in a continual state of transforming knowledge to make that knowledge relevant to the classroom context” (p. 307).

### Student Achievement and Performance

Teachers' pedagogical preferences are intentional in engaging students as students construct meaning that is reorganized by their brain and applied to what they are thinking and learning. Brain reorganization is relative to the social learning process that is implemented by teachers. Thus, brain reorganization is important because social participation in relation to culturally responsive teaching is demonstrated by teachers' praxis impacting student achievement and social capital (Brouwer, 2012). Therefore, teachers are not concerned with ability but how students thinking impact their achievement. Case in point: Schilbach, et al. (2008) states that it is when students attend to learning content that they make connections (p. 459). Making sense of learning and attending to thinking about content is essential to student achievement and teachers' pedagogical practices or praxis (Skinner, 2010).

On the other hand, professional development training focuses upon student achievement as well. Kaiser, Rosenfield and Gravois (2009) proposed that professional development training should be a mandate because it relates to student achievement. However, professional development training and prescribed literacy curriculum have caused teachers to resist because in short, there is a lack of evidence relating to current brain research and social learning which is associated with instructional context, teacher praxis and cognitive processing. Consider that student achievement correlates with students monitoring their learning; students' social capital is a unified concept that would also be representative of students monitoring their learning and teachers implementing modified pedagogical practices (Kaiser, et al., 2009).

On the other hand, Ruble and Robson (2007) not believing totally that motivation is indicative of engagement, believes that "engagement is essential for understanding what leads to learning" (p. 1458). Therefore, Chirkov (2003) explains that instructional context associated with

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engagement, builds cognitive skills and demonstrates student's motivation. Accordingly, Chirkov (2003) suggest that students realize their "authentic interests or integrated values and desires" (p. 98). Moreover, when discussing student achievement and performance Holifield, et al. (2010) suggests that students thinking about their thinking leads to autonomy and "characteristics of competence and independence" (p. 231). Therefore, these researchers suggest that students will transfer knowledge and build their social capital when teachers implement modified pedagogical practices (Chirkov, 2003; Holifield, et al. 2010; and Kaiser et al., 2009).

Social participation is also witnessed by researchers and helps students "feels initiative to stand behind what he or she does" (Chirkov, 2003, p. 98; and Holifield, et al., 2010, p. 231). Thus, student's academic success and performance is based upon teacher's implementation of their own pedagogical practices. Furthermore, teachers understand that students are not blank slates but their brain makes sense of teaching and learning. Current research and teachers have mentioned that student's activation of prior knowledge helps to transfer knowledge and build autonomy (Chirkov, 2003). Thus, Schilbach et al. (2008) posits that social participation is motivation that increases engagement and student autonomy, whereas Chirkov (2003) contends "autonomy is a basic need and sentiment evident in all humans" (p. 107).

Therefore, students who are autonomous and engaged hold on to strategies that professional development facilitators and curriculum developers deem as "unproductive" (Maskiewicz & Winters, 2012, p. 432). However, teachers resist professional development training and follow through with their own pedagogical practices that does not "dictate, the intellectual and social space" of their students (Scribner, 2005, p. 303). In turn, all students develop an identity that welcomes their academic success and students know the differences of unproductive verses productive pedagogical practices.

### **Autonomy and Instructional Context**

Research has proven that learning is intentional in relation to teacher praxis, engagement, autonomy and both general and special education students (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006; Bostrom & Lassen, 2006; Bushnell, 2003; Chirkov, 2003; Crocco & Costigan, 2007; Maskiewicz & Winters, 2012; Schilbach, et al., 2008; and Scribner, 2005). Teachers implement pedagogical practices that are based upon the context of their classroom and student's needs. Thus, a learning environment that is intentional is also engaging. Ruble and Robson (2007) concur because they found that "children with autism showed a relative strength of compliant engagement during large group instruction" (p. 1463). Therefore, instructional context as defined by Ruble and Robson (2007) is where teachers have modified pedagogical practices according to students' needs and interest. Furthermore, teachers' praxis promotes transfer of knowledge as teachers fill critical gaps in understanding how instruction should be designed in order to represent equitable opportunities of learning and assessment of students (Schneider & Plasman, 2011).

Lumpe, et al. (2012) and Schneider and Plasman (2011) studied elementary and middle urban school classroom environments and they explain that teachers are impacting learning environments based upon integrating prescribed learning curriculum with their pedagogical practices. Schneider and Plasman (2011) suggest that teachers' pedagogical modification lead to improvement because "learning progress is a trajectory of development rather than a series of discrete events" (p. 532). As a result, teachers demonstrate resistance to professional development as Lumpe, et al. (2012) reports because professional development is a "woefully inadequate" due to prescribed learning curriculum lacking evidence of unified concepts (p.154). Schneider and Plasman (2011), in turn, report that teacher's professional knowledge should be used to "develop a new curriculum, because



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some shifts were witnessed in teachers' pedagogical preferences after attending professional development training" (p. 544).

Instructional context is shaped by teacher autonomy as pedagogical practices are guided by student's needs and contextual factors of the classroom. In fact, teachers in Schneider and Plasman (2011) study as well as other researchers mentioned within Schneider and Plasman (2011) study, state that "new approaches are additions to traditional practices" (p. 544). Furthermore, Schneider and Plasman (2011) admit teachers modify traditional practices in resistance to professional development training and integrate their own pedagogical practices with methods of prescribed literacy curriculum in order to appropriately address student needs and the instructional context of their classroom. Therefore, Schneider and Plasman (2011) imply that teachers develop autonomy over teaching and learning as they resist professional development training and prescribed literacy curriculum. Whereas professional development models are created to demonstrate expectation of teacher participation in accordance to what professional development facilitators say will increase student achievement by way of prescribed curriculum. Thus, professional development training and prescribed literacy curriculum most often focus upon teaching teachers how to teach (Moats, 2014).

Moats (2014) states "the nature of student's difficulties at his/her point of progress on the continuum of reading development is what can increase student achievement" (p.77). That is not to say that teachers concerned with student achievement ultimately will focus upon ability. However, what Moats (2014) reveals is that teacher resistance in accordance to their praxis, and opposed to prescribed literacy curriculum demonstrates instructional context that impacts all students' reading achievement. For instance, Moats (2014) studied teacher expertise and what elementary teachers of general and special education students know about matching students'

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needs and interest. Moats (2014) research centers upon aspects of modified pedagogical practices and more importantly the context to which pedagogical practices are most effective.

As a result, student thinking in relation to reading is important to Moats (2014) perspective of modified pedagogical practices as well as teacher praxis. Moats (2014) study observed teachers as implementing modified pedagogical practices that is both engaging and motivating so that students transfer knowledge. In fact, Moats (2014) cited that the barriers to student thinking are the policies and reforms that hold intentions to help teachers learn how to teach instead of promoting student's academic achievement. Thus, prescribed literacy curriculum that is expected of teachers exposed students to reading components that were ineffective because these programs were found to lack modified pedagogical practices and the learning context that would introduce students to skills they had not acquired (Moats, 2014).

Research has recently suggested that special education students are only required to acquire lower leveled skills from presumably unqualified teachers (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006; Bushnell, 2003 and Crocco & Costigan, 2007). Furthermore, Moats (2014) states,

"not only do the most often-used textbooks in reading fail to explain the essential components of research-based instruction, but also outright misinformation about the findings of research on reading acquisition" (p. 81).

Teachers, therefore, resist full implementation of prescribed literacy curriculum and combine their praxis with methods of prescribed literacy curriculum in order to match the needs of all students (Moats, 2014).

Teaching and learning is defined by evidence of teacher resistance; also, it is a demonstration of teachers not reporting that they are modifying and then integrating methods of prescribed literacy curriculum with their pedagogical practices. In an instance, Reddy and Morris (2004)

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found that even fourteen month old children are willing learners as they correct others misunderstandings of their communications in order to address their needs. Teachers believe teaching and learning is a meaningful pattern of information that comes about within a context that is subject to adaptive and modified instruction. Thus, although teachers are trained and monitored to do otherwise, they provide pedagogical practices that they believe are most effective (Morris, 2004). Teachers resist prescribed literacy curriculum because meaningful patterns of learning do not dictate prescribed learning curriculum but "behavioral strategies for obtaining behavioral goals" (Reddy & Morris, 2004, p. 652).

Case in point: learning is a social and behavioral action that teachers feel the need to have manifest willingly by students that understand their thinking (Reddy & Morris, 2004). Previous research has proven that in order to complete learning as action students must activate their prior knowledge (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006; Bostrom & Lassen, 2006; Bushnell, 2003; and Crocco & Costigan, 2007). Prescribed literacy curriculum is sequenced instruction that causes students to struggle with activating their prior knowledge because the primary goal is completing a given task (Craig, 2006) Teachers who resist prescribed literacy curriculum demonstrate to students that their prior knowledge is relevant; therefore, students' adherence to modified pedagogical practices is a way of expressing their prior knowledge and it builds their autonomy (Craig, 2006). In concluding, teachers guide students to monitor their learning and do not force instruction by combining methods of prescribed literacy curriculum and their own pedagogical practices.

### **Teachers as Forerunners**

Craig (2006) states that "classrooms are too complex an affair to be viewed or talked about from one single perspective" (p. 259). Craig (2006) acknowledges teachers as forerunners and possessors of professional knowledge able to develop appropriate curriculum for students. Craig

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(2006) defines professional knowledge as "when teachers are conceived as holding, using, and producing knowledge, as their personal practical knowledge becomes their way of reconstructing the past and the intentions of the future" (p. 261). Moreover, teachers' professional knowledge as demonstrated by their pedagogical preferences stress their understanding of student's transfer of knowledge by demonstrating teaching and learning as a social process, which indicates teacher praxis.

Learning as a social process causes students to use various actions and dialogues to communicate their comprehension; which is a component of prescribed literacy curriculum. Holifield, et al. (2010) suggest that students' comprehension skills indicate a student is monitoring their learning. However, teachers understand students' comprehension skills within the context of classroom learning to be indicative of student's use of prior knowledge and construction of meaning (Reddy & Morris, 2004). Monitoring learning increases student's use of language and transfer of knowledge as well as building comprehension skills (Holifield, 2010). Therefore, teachers implement integrated methods of prescribed literacy curriculum with adaptations and modification of pedagogical practices to ensure students self-monitor during the teaching and learning process (Craig, 2006) As a result, teacher resistance of prescribed literacy curriculum has implications that teachers are teaching reading and language skills that engage students' transfer of knowledge, construction of meaning and prior knowledge.

Learners of all ages have conceptual knowledge that is self-regulated. Furthermore, research has proven that learning is considered to be behavioral as well as a social choice (Holifield, 2010). Teachers are facilitators of materials that provide teaching and learning for students to choose whether they want to learn the content or not. Therefore, professional development facilitators and curriculum developers suggest for example a prescribed literacy curriculum that teaches reading

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in sequenced sections so that teaching and learning is more predictable (Catts, et al., 2006). For example, Catts et al. (2006) investigated typical readers and students with poor comprehension and their skills of transferring knowledge (p. 284). Comprehension, explicit questioning and inference were task involved in investigating reading curriculum. These researchers found that students demonstrated poor comprehension scores when transferring knowledge in accordance to explicit questioning but their inference skills were higher (Catts, et al., 2006). Catts, et al. (2006) reported that the students were considered low performing readers but they could dialogue about their inferences. Furthermore, Catts, et al. (2006) explained that students were attending to learned content when engaged and chose to dialogue about what they inferred. Students were thinking about their thinking, in order to make inferences although Catts, et al. (2006) later reports that lack of comprehension could be due to poor working memory.

Teachers have not been given many opportunities to discuss achievement of both general and special education students and their reading skills. For instance, Kliewer, et al. (2006) concur “restricted literacy among people with disabilities has become institutionalized as presumably natural manifestation or defects thought to objectively exist well beyond the reach of social, cultural, or historical consideration” (p. 164). Interestingly enough, Kliewer, et al. (2006) explains that if and when students with disabilities are taught reading it should be in parts; limited to learning alphabets and survival sight words. However, students are thinkers; brain research has helped educators to understand this (Reddy & Morris, 2004). Furthermore, students are problem solvers seeking challenges that will help transfer knowledge after activation of their prior knowledge (Craig, 2006). More specific, having opportunities to increase literacy and reading encourages students to think about their thinking (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006; Bostrom & Lassen, 2006; Bushnell, 2003; and Crocco & Costigan, 2007).

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Teachers are continuously rethinking pedagogical practices in order to modify instruction for all students. Thus, Kliewer et al. (2006) research lacks knowledge of teachers redesigning instruction for all students. Case in point: Kliewer et al. (2006) cites that “professionals widely subscribe to the notion that individuals with disabilities as organically unable to grow as a citizen and so divert the labeled person into programs absent of expectations of literacy” (p. 177). However, teachers who resist prescribed literacy curriculum are not of this agency, these teachers realize that students need can be met by integrating similar methods of prescribed literacy curriculum with teacher praxis.

### **Respect for Teachers' Agency**

Bushnell (2003) contends that teaching is a low status profession that both men and women find hard to overcome. Bushnell (2003) writes:

Teachers' lack of career motivation limits their interest in restructuring the educational system to gain more decision-making autonomy. Acting more out of a desire to nurture children than to advance their own careers, many female teachers may not have developed the skills necessary to resist prevailing power structures (p. 267).

However, opinions of how teachers interact with all students and what teachers are doing to educate all students has rarely become the topic for policy makers. Teachers continue to care about changing the context of their classroom. Teachers modify instructional practices to help students activate prior knowledge, construct meaning and think about their thinking. Therefore, it follows that teachers' resistance engages a discussion about how low-performing schools are assumingly employing inexperienced teachers yet students are experiencing academic gains (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006; Bushnell, 2003 and Crocco & Costigan, 2007).

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Furthermore, teacher resistance should also cause conversation about appropriate curriculum for all students based upon students' needs and interests. As a reference, teachers' resistance provides discussion of how teachers' pedagogical preferences are connected to professional learning communities and modified pedagogical practices. However, more investigation is needed because teachers feel bullied into completely implementing prescribed literacy curriculum and they are not consistently reporting how they implement methods of prescribed literacy curriculum combined with their own pedagogical practices (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006; Bushnell, 2003 and Crocco & Costigan, 2007). Therefore, research continues to cite instances where both general and special education students are not matched to effective pedagogical practices (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006; Bushnell, 2003 and Crocco & Costigan, 2007). Bumiller (2008) cited research about student with autism and "strategies for their empowerment" (p. 979). Bumiller (2008) states the need of "adopting a framework of antinormalization that works explicitly in opposition to normalization practices" (p. 979). The framework suggested by Bumiller (2008) not only includes teacher resistance but student's transfer of knowledge and teachers' pedagogical practices (p. 979).

St. Clair, et al. (2010) mentioned a correlation to previous cited research that "reading ability develops nonlinearly, exhibiting more rapid growth in childhood" (p. 110). Danforth and Naraian (2015) mention teacher resistance by offering a framework for contextual and pedagogically inclusive practices. Danforth and Naraian (2015) suggest that special education students should be educated along with all other students based upon their needs and interest-not ability. Danforth and Naraian (2015) cites that special education, prescribed learning curriculum, policies and professional development training have been a "strategic cover for traditional and deficit based practices" (p. 71).

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Teachers gain respect for their agency as they continue to strengthen their pedagogy and advocate for all students by resisting prescribed literacy curriculum. However, Zascavage and Keefe (2004) found that there are barriers to teacher's developing pedagogical practices that address literacy. Zascavage and Keefe (2004) state that "some educational theorist advocate for standards that will provide an empirical base by which to gauge attainment of literacy and govern instructional practices" (p. 224). Zascavage and Keefe (2004) are speaking of historical frameworks that provide measures of ability based upon traditional curriculum standards that force learning content. Moreover, Zascavage and Keefe (2004) found that funding was reduced in order to ensure these frameworks would be successful. Zascavage and Keefe (2004) stated that, "funds for equipment and programming for literacy must be justified by need and potential, and the student is seen as having little need or potential" (p. 232). Yet teachers continue to forge ahead with creating "opportunities that are conducive to literacy involving social interaction in a label free, literacy rich environment" (Zascavage & Keefe, 2004, p. 228).

Teachers resist what is part of prescribed literacy curriculum and is rightly called, "readiness mindset and prerequisites of reading" and excite a contextual learning atmosphere that is equitable (Zascavage & Keefe, 2004, p. 229). Zascavage and Keefe (2004) offered an example where parents became involved and teachers gain experiences in other disciplinary areas. This experience increased teacher agency as they learn of new ways to resist prescribed literacy curriculum and meet students' needs and interest (Zascavage & Keefe, 2004) Teachers are supporting their pedagogical preferences by building student social capital and "retaining a critical awareness of resistance to historical and social patterns of social injustice" (Danforth & Naraian, 2015, p. 73). Teachers' pedagogical preferences replace a naïve perception that smart people will ensure the educational future of all students (Danforth & Naraian, 2015). Therefore, teachers resist prescribed



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literacy curriculum; and although not always reported; teachers implement a combination of prescribed literacy curriculum along with their praxis (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006; Bostrom & Lassen, 2006; Bushnell, 2003; Crocco & Costigan, 2007 and Maskiewicz & Winters, 2012).

Swanson, et al. (2012) cites teacher's collaboration and excitement to work with all students in smaller and intensive work groups. Additionally, St. Clair, et al. (2010) studies revealed students with autism and student with specific language impairments represented "strong associations between phonological memory and reading accuracy" (p. 127). St. Clair, et al. (2010) mentioned that without increased exposure, "corresponding levels of understanding may create a sense of disconnection with the communication aspects of reading" (p.127). That is not to say that reading content was taught according to the readiness mindset but it provides evidence that opportunities of reading were available to all students which helps to build knowledge that can be transferred to other skills (Zascavage & Keefe, 2004, p. 229).

Assessment is a measure that many within the field of education lean toward when determining students' needs and skills. However, the manner in which students come to understand their thinking should be noticed in order to follow-up with student assessment (Zascavage & Keefe, 2004). According to Danforth and Naraian (2015), "teachers cannot merely draw on an array of universal understanding and skills. They equally need to contextualize their strategies to address specific contexts and situations" (80-1). Additionally, Danforth and Naraian (2015) are enlisting pedagogical practices of teachers documented in research that has been discussed previously. For instance, the shrinking space that other educators have spoken of becomes the teacher's springboard to create and take ownership of their praxis (Crocco & Costigan, 2007). In conclusion, Danforth and Naraian (2015) are suggesting that teacher's use assessment to arrive at clarity of how to become a part of the culture of teaching and learning.

### Cultural Pedagogy

Zembylas (2005) speaks to the discursive practices of teacher resistance as a development of their pedagogical preferences, power and agency. In fact, Zembylas (2005) calls teachers' agency, "emotions" (p. 936). Zembylas (2005) defines cultural pedagogy as teachers' emotions witnessed by engagement in what teachers believe in (p. 938). The effects of teachers' emotions in reaction to prescribed literacy curriculum constraints deems it necessary to resist prescribed literacy curriculum (Zembylas, 2005). Zembylas (2005) based his assertion on Pintrich et al. (1993) notions of student autonomy and motivation for reading. Zembylas (2005) cites Pintrich's, et al. (1993) belief that students' learning and transfer of knowledge is enabled by equitable opportunities for learning accomplished by teacher resistance (p. 96). Teaching and learning are historically viewed as a social process that occurs when individuals decide to involve themselves in culturally responsive teaching. Teachers resist prescribed literacy curriculum because their pedagogical preferences represent a cultural pedagogy that they believe will match the needs of all students (Zembylas, 2005).

Equitable opportunities of learning and resistance to prescribed literacy curriculum have been discussed because teachers understand classroom context builds student's social capital. Addleman, et al. (2014) mentions teacher resistance as a way to strengthen teacher's pedagogical practices and build professional knowledge. Addleman, et al. (2014) cites an urban elementary school teacher who laments, "I am questioning my own thinking and attempting to sort out what is really needful. Do students need computers and books and high expectations set by teachers?" (p. 195). The teachers in Addleman, et al. (2014) study felt the constraints of prescribed literacy curriculum and resisted a "one-size-fits-all curriculum" with content organized around big ideas (p. 195). Professional development training and prescribed literacy curriculum has been

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characterized as the big ideas of learning that most often lend to an empirical base assessment instrument (Addleman, et al., 2014). However, teachers have come to know that they are affecting student learning and so teachers are reflective upon the context of learning to assess students' learning needs more appropriately (Addleman, et al., 2014).

Chubbuck and Zembylas (2008) highlight cultural pedagogy as "improving life opportunities" and building student's social capital (p. 274). Chubbuck and Zembylas (2008) found that teachers' pedagogical preferences help to develop a more socially just learning and school culture they can believe in. Essentially, teacher resistance seeks to build a repertoire with students through teaching and learning which validates cultural pedagogy and students' knowledge and skills. Furthermore, teaching and learning is indicative of teachers establishing relationships between the learning content, the student and teacher praxis. Therefore, teacher resistance is demonstrated as teachers integrate methods of prescribed literacy curriculum and teacher praxis to amplify instruction that adheres to the instructional context within their classroom.

Boardman, et al. (2005) studied varying grade level teachers in varying area districts and reported that teachers were told by professional development facilitators that prescribed learning curriculum materials were effective and "researched based" but then replaced the programs some years later. Boardman, et al. (2005) reports that teachers then participated in communities of learning to impact the "creation of implemented techniques so that research can be changed into practice around the attitudes, beliefs and contextual factors" of their classroom (p. 169). Just as mentioned before, teacher's implementations and adaptations in their classroom does involve professional development, assessment and prescribed learning curriculum. Furthermore, Boardman, et al. (2005) is speaking of how teachers resist prescribed learning curriculum and

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combine methods of specifically prescribed literacy curriculum with their own pedagogical practices (Boardman, et al., 2005).

Additionally, Ernest, et al. (2011) reported a study on one urban school teacher of varying grade levels who attempted prescribed literacy curriculum and associated assessment instruments then changed to use her own assessment strategy. Boardman, et al. (2005) mentions that professional development training involves a forum or professional learning communities that have been discussed previously. Thus, the teacher in Ernest, et al. (2011) study reportedly used professional teaching communities to build her pedagogical practices for assessment. Even first year teachers who seem to be influenced by the constraints of professional development training conjoin to the perspective of professional learning communities. Ponte, et al. (2004) recited clearly that teaching and learning is of "professional knowledge consisting of practical wisdom, insight and understanding which enables teachers to achieve educational and moral objectives in practice" (p. 572). Adaptations enacted by teachers to build student social capital is purposeful or intentional, part of cultural pedagogy and part of a teachers "developmental praxis and professional responsibility" (Ponte, et al., 2004, p. 573).

It is possible that policy makers, curriculum developers and professional development facilitators do not want teachers to bare such an enormous responsibility. Research has stated that teachers are inexperienced, underemployed and placed with a higher percentage of low-performing students (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006; Bushnell, 2003 and Crocco & Costigan, 2007). Thus, the questions that policy makers, curriculum developers and professional development facilitators might ask teachers are why resist; ask for help-you need it! Teachers need to resist, because Ponte, et al. (2004) states it this way; teachers are "gearing themselves to gaining insight into their current

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practice and the actual situation in which they are working" when they resist prescribed literacy curriculum (580-81).

### **Teachers as Reflective Facilitators**

Teachers are reflective facilitators focused on charging the contextual atmosphere of the learning environment. Teachers have not however, always shaped the research behind pedagogical practice because most often teachers are not reporting how they actually implement modified pedagogical practices. Moreover, the fact remains that students have been and continue to learn from teachers who have resisted prescribed literacy curriculum. For example, although literacy curriculum provided by professional development training has been proven insufficient and contrived of remedial task; both general and special education students demonstrate some academic gains (Greenleaf & Hinchman, 2009). Phelps and Schilling (2004) concur that fluent reading is hindered by explicit professional development training models for reading because readers need fluent strategies that match their reading skills.

Greenleaf and Hitchman (2009) give a direct quote from Hall (2009), stating "it is critical of students to embrace literacy, engage as readers, and improve academic performance. To do such work, teachers must get to know young people's current literacy-related identity construction" (p. 6). Concurrently, teachers develop their praxis through the approach Greenleaf and Hitchman (2009) mention and facilitate teaching and learning based upon classroom context and modified pedagogical practices according to the needs and interest of their students. Greenleaf and Hitchman (2009) mention a struggling reading student who created their own reading challenges. The student enjoyed and comprehended internet news that had been a reading challenge for him in the past. Greenleaf and Hitchman (2009) explains that his teachers stated that if they, "asked Terrance, they would find that he brings a wealth of literacy practices and knowledge, as well as some charmingly

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idiosyncratic interests and motivations, to his reading” (p. 8). Therefore, Greenleaf and Hitchman (2009) cite that teachers in this study reserved the responsibility to base teaching and learning on the context of their classroom (p. 8).

Boardman, et al. (2005) sentiment is teachers of students with special needs attribute their responsibility of teaching and learning to the development of their own pedagogical practices. In Boardman, et al. (2005) study an urban middle school teacher of students with learning disabilities remarked that their principal gave free reign and teachers became more committed to developing their praxis. However, according to Boardman, et al. (2005) most teachers resisted professional development training and prescribed literacy curriculum although they had free reign because training and prescribed literacy curriculum strategies were not relevant to the context of their classroom. Furthermore, Boardman, et al. (2005) report "some teachers had become so frustrated with workshops that did not match their students' needs that they had chosen to opt out of staff development all together” (p. 174).

Thus, some research supports teacher's resistance with instances of teachers integrating methods of prescribed literacy curriculum with teachers' praxis (Greenleaf & Hitchman, 2009; Phelps & Schilling, 2004; and Ponte, et al., 2004). Furthermore, Greenleaf and Hitchman (2009) stated in concluding their research that teacher praxis promotes students' social capital and learning efforts in order to help students recognize their learning potential. Although acquisition of knowledge can be received outside of contextual learning environments, student needs are met more effectively during the social learning process and when teachers have combined methods of prescribed literacy curriculum and teacher praxis (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006; Bostrom & Lassen, 2006; Bushnell, 2003; Crocco & Costigan, 2007; Greenleaf & Hitchman, 2009; Maskiewicz & Winters, 2012; Phelps & Schilling, 2004; and Ponte, et al., 2004).

### Teaching and Learning

Teaching and learning are significant to teacher resistance according to Rahmawati, et al. (2015), who defines teachers' resistance has the potential to "improve pedagogical practices as well as students learning" (pp. 393-94). Rahmawati, et al. (2015) states, "educational change heavily depends on teachers' thinking and actions because teachers play a significant role" in teaching and learning (p. 394) Furthermore, all students build their social capital based upon realizing that they have obtained more knowledge (Rahmawati, et al., 2015). Concurrently, Goldenberg (2013) admits the complexity of teacher resistance associated with students obtaining knowledge. Goldenberg (2013) urges teachers to publicly stress the need of student's social capital by "empowering instruction that is community driven and allows students to be self-expressive" (p. 127).

Much of the research on teacher resistance concludes that not only do teachers resist but also, they do not report how they actually implement pedagogical practices. Thus, the context of learning is defined as a task in the classroom based upon culturally responsive teaching, which is developed from teachers' praxis and pedagogical preferences (Greenleaf & Hitchman, 2009). Teachers' pedagogical preferences adjust to build students' social capital and cultural identity (Rahmawati, et al., 2015). But teachers feel they are bullied into fully implementing prescribed literacy curriculum and this places a strain upon culturally responsive teaching (Greenleaf & Hitchman, 2009). Thus, teachers are expected to follow full implementation of prescribed literacy curriculum in order to validate research that student's academic achievement receives a higher success rate when student success data is correlated with prescribed learning curriculum and test performance (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006; Bushnell, 2003 and Crocco & Costigan, 2007).

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Teachers are frustrated with a system that envisions teaching and learning as a product. This review of literature has mentioned teachers as submissive or able to be dismissed if they are resistant to constraints held by policy makers, curriculum developers and professional development facilitators (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006; Bushnell, 2003 and Crocco & Costigan, 2007). Teaching and learning are of a teachers' professional knowledge as demonstrated by teachers; pedagogical preferences, developed while modifying pedagogical practices (Rahmawati, et al., 2015). Kose and Lim (2011) suggest that the correlation of teaching and learning represents not only social justice but also teaching and learning in a diverse manner. Kose and Lim (2011) studied academic improvement of low-income urban elementary students and proposed that teacher resistance in this current educational age can "diminish deficit thinking" (p. 200). Kose and Lim (2011) proposed this notion because teachers thinking and beliefs build students' social capital and provide clarity to the "complex needs of students who differ by race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, language, ability or socioeconomic status" (p. 200).

Teachers understand the context of teaching and learning and have adapted and modified pedagogical practices that does not fit a one-size fits all option, but an all can learn perspective. In other words, teachers have resisted prescribed literacy curriculum and developed a praxis that is molded from observance of students. Because teachers are being led by students' needs and working in concurrence with their needs teachers have developed pedagogical practices. Teachers' observation acknowledges student and teacher engagement as well as autonomy because they work together-it is culturally responsive as well as the essence of cultural pedagogy (Rahmawati, et al., 2015 and Zembylas, 2005). Rahmawati, et al. (2015) mentioned earlier that teachers are thinkers; believing and "reflecting on their interpersonal behavior based on feedback from students" (p. 397).



### Teachers' Professional Knowledge

Kose and Lim (2011) contend "most traditional programs were largely ineffective in increasing teachers' diversity, competence and skills" (p. 204). Therefore, Anderson, et al. (2015) defines professional knowledge as when teachers help "students to reclaim the political space that silences their voices by filling in the missing element- student knowledge" (p. 185). For example, first year teachers inspire students because their pedagogical preferences become synthesized by their professional knowledge shared about their students in professional learning communities (Anderson, et al., 2015) Burke and Adler (2013) concur as teachers' professional knowledge demonstrates understanding of the context of teaching and learning that impacts student's academic achievement through modified pedagogical practices. Avargil, et al. (2012) speaks to unified concepts of teaching and learning that are implicit and void of traditional instructional approaches. Avargil, et al. (2012) suggest that all students are connected to learning when it is a social process where both general education and special education students can dialogue and activate their prior knowledge.

Finally, research has proven that teachers develop their praxis based upon resistance and taking responsibility for their pedagogical practices (Greenleaf & Hitchman, 2009; Phelps & Schilling, 2004; and Ponte et al., 2004). Furthermore, students express prior knowledge, build skills and transfer their knowledge when engaged (Reeve & Jang, 2006). For instance, when Reeve and Jang (2006) defined autonomy as promoting student's social capital they also suggest that students should have equitable learning opportunities to build skills and transfer knowledge. In concluding, indications of teacher resistance that leads to teachers not reporting how they actually implement prescribed literacy curriculum begs the question of why teachers are combining methods of prescribed literacy curriculum and their own pedagogical practices.

### CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

This study was a preliminary examination of teachers' resistance in response to the lack of matching students' needs and interests, devaluing of teachers' professional knowledge, prescribed literacy curriculum and professional development training model's misrepresentation of instructional context and participation within classrooms. The objective of the study was to recognize the different forms of resistance teachers demonstrate in order to take responsibility of their own pedagogical practices as it helps develop students' literacy skills. Furthermore, this objective is needed because it informs teachers, curriculum developers, professional development facilitators, students, administrators and policy makers that resistance forms taken by teachers are beneficial in impacting culturally responsive teaching. The degree that teachers' pedagogical preferences guide their modified pedagogical practices reflects upon student's social capital, academic assessments, teacher's professional knowledge and literacy instruction. Four questions guided this study. In seeking to better understand teachers' preferences and praxis regarding their resistance in one elementary school where professional development training is built into the schools' instructional calendar; these questions were developed:

1. What forms of resistance to the prescribed literacy curriculum do teachers at this elementary school use?
2. Why do teachers use resistance?
3. What do teachers say are the implications of their resistance?
4. What are teachers' pedagogical choices in relation to resistance?

In order to fully address the research questions, both quantitative and qualitative methods were utilized. Lincoln and Guba provide methods that encompass the importance of teacher's preferences and reasonableness in pedagogical practices. Additionally, the rationale for using both

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quantitative and qualitative is based on Capra's (1982) systems paradigm models that symbolize social participation as the interconnections of teaching and learning. Moreover Capra's (1982) systems paradigms validates that paradigms are ever changing and taking forms based on social interactions between people and their contextual environments. Concurrently, Giroux (1983) adds credence to understanding valid paradigms from a critical perspective.

### **Research Methodology**

Quantitative data were gathered through a survey instrument created by the investigator. The review of literature revealed that there was evidence linking teachers' praxis to resistance. Thus, a survey created by a teacher who is also the investigator lead to discoveries on teachers' forms of resistance. In essence, the purposes of the survey were to gather data on teachers' pedagogical practices in response to prescribed literacy curriculum and the implications of their pedagogical practices. The quantitative data informed the qualitative data, which served to add detail about interconnections of teaching and learning relative to prescribed literacy lessons and teachers' praxis. Both quantitative and qualitative data also served to detail frequency with which teachers favor their praxis over prescribed literacy curriculum; which verified their resistance. The investigator believes that both interviewing and surveying provided the link to teachers' pedagogical preferences.

Thus, the survey was the first phase in which the survey instrument reflected reviewed research on teacher resistance and prescribed literacy curriculum. The investigator who attended over thirty professional development trainings over a course of three years developed the survey based upon previous experiences. The investigator who is also both a general education and special education teacher is also a facilitator of literacy curriculum materials. Thus, the questions developed were to

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target factors that influence teacher resistance after attending professional development training that focused upon prescribed literacy curriculum.

It is important to mention that the survey instrument was based upon questions arising in the research but developed within a free online survey site called Survey Monkey. The survey instrument was designed to gather information about the forms of teachers' resistance by highlighting the choices that teachers made after attending professional development training that focused on prescribed literacy curriculum. While the survey items are applicable to literacy instruction, there were questions on the survey that address culturally responsive teaching and social participation. Furthermore, although it could be argued that all elementary teachers are literacy teachers, out of 21 teachers at the research site, two teachers did not participate because they only taught social studies and science. Therefore, only 19 teachers were available to take the survey. Participants were informed in writing of the voluntary nature of participation and were assured of their anonymity.

There was not an initial survey to gather teachers' background information, the principal of the school provided demographic information such as gender of teachers, grades and subjects taught, professional development procedures and requirements, context of classrooms for both general and special education teacher, the type of literacy program the school provides, the use of professional learning communities and the characteristics of the current literacy program that have been in implementation for the last four years. However, the survey did ask additional demographic information that related to teachers' professional knowledge, pedagogical practices and unified concepts within this study. The survey questions offered responses on a Likert scale of four choices in order to demonstrate teachers' conceptualizations of prescribed literacy curriculum. Before the survey was created, the investigator added a fourth research question of

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what are teachers' pedagogical choices in relation to resistance. This question was added because the review of literature suggests that teacher's pedagogical beliefs cause them to become more reflective in order to modify instruction in relation to students' academic literacy skills. However, any questions that were not completely answered during the survey were addressed using the qualitative method of interviewing.

Survey questions, explored teachers' pedagogical preferences and questioned forms of resistance in use within this elementary school; which was substantiated in research as well as demonstrated by what teachers mentioned when interviewed. For example, first year teacher's response to professional development training prompt their awareness of how professional learning communities support the development of their praxis, thereby their modified pedagogical practices (Strom & Martin, 2015). Thus, the significance of the survey was determined by questioning prompts that identified pedagogical practices of teachers in relation to their pedagogical preferences and the prescribed literacy curriculum in use at the one elementary school in a suburban district. Additionally, data collected was reviewed for common responses. Therefore, the responses that had the highest response rate became raw numbers that determined both confidence responses and targeted research questions. However, there was no benchmarking of data so responses were not tracked over years. The sample size was small therefore, responses were analyzed on average. Meaning responses were summed up and divided by the total number of responses.

Once the survey was developed and the investigator understood how the data are collected, the survey was sent to the school principal at Teacher Elementary. The school principal had access to teachers of literacy curriculum and he sent an email including the survey link that introduces the investigator, provides informed consent and link to the survey. Although written in the informed

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consent, the survey introduction informed participants of their confidentiality, voluntary participation and/or withdraw and the purpose of the study. Once a respondent completed a survey, Survey Monkey sent data to a secured server.

The principal investigator using a password has exclusive access to this particular survey within Survey Monkeys' secured server. The principal investigator is the only one who knows the password and only accessed the secured server to retrieve data. Data retrieval once a respondent completed a survey generated no identifiable information. The respondents were given a number in order of when they completed the survey. For example, if teacher "x" completed the survey third, the number assigned to teacher "x" was "3" Only the numbers assigned to respondents and pseudonyms were used in the publication of data results. Survey monkey allowed the principal investigator to customize a thank you after the survey was completed. Within the customized thank you, the principal investigator asked respondents if they would be willing to volunteer for interviewing. If the respondents agreed to interviewing, they were contacted by the principal investigator via email only and they were given a pseudonym to protect their identity. Although they were communicating via email their email addresses were deleted along with all communications after the interview date, time and location was provided. The respondent was only contacted by email and referred to as interviewee one, interviewee two and so on.

### **Research Design**

The survey questions generated a list of categories from confidence responses. This list was reviewed carefully and multiple times to determine overlap and relevancy, after online tallying provided by Survey Monkey. Each participant's answer was listed in a category that provided structure for supporting responses, creating emergent themes and to define boundaries that guided qualitative interview questions. Quality was checked in terms of specificity of responses in the

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way that Survey Monkey applies correlations. This is important because the online survey used correlation to gather the highest responses and to address targeted goals for each research questions.

Thus, the defined measures of the survey garnered teachers' pedagogical preferences in order to demonstrate responses correlating resistance to prescribed literacy curriculum. Furthermore, teachers' pedagogical preferences demonstrated their praxis as a form of pedagogical practices guided by their professional knowledge that underlined their decision to resist prescribed literacy curriculum. The set of questions for the online survey are listed below and in the appendix: Questions two through four addressed teachers' pedagogical preferences and prescribed literacy curriculum. These questions also were developed to address the research question of: 1. What forms of resistance to the prescribed literacy curriculum do teachers at this elementary school use? 2. Literacy curriculum instruction as prescribed by professional development training is well coordinated across grade levels and students' learning styles; 3. Professional development training in the last year has sustained a coherent focus that you have applied in the classroom; and 4. I often perform prescribed literacy curriculum instruction according to plan but realize that plans need to be changed.

The questions were analyzed to understand teachers' pedagogical preferences as they relate to prescribed literacy curriculum after they have attended professional development training. Teachers' responses revealed that they either did or did not follow the plan of prescribed literacy curriculum, thereby indicating resistance to prescribed literacy curriculum.

Questions five through seven were designed to address program coherence within professional development models. Program coherence addresses prescribed literacy curriculum and also teachers' pedagogical practices, which drive their praxis. Thus, questions five through seven

## TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL RESPONSES 79

addressed research question what forms of resistance to the prescribed literacy curriculum do teachers at this elementary school use? This question was addressed in questions two through four but in a different context that was correlated to qualitative data when interviews were conducted. Therefore, question 5 asked: There is enough research on literacy curriculum as demonstrated at professional development training to identify desired results of student literacy. Question 6 asked: The current prescribed literacy curriculum as demonstrated at professional development training helps teachers to feel responsible for developing student's literacy. Question 7 asked: The current prescribed literacy curriculum as demonstrated at professional development training helps teachers develop pedagogical practices responsible for developing students' literacy skills. The need to have two parts that address the same research question was strongly suggested within the review of literature when different forms of teacher resistance were recognized. Therefore, implementation of prescribed literacy curriculum and identification of students' literacy skills is another context different from the first three survey questions.

Questions eight through ten typically addressed what teachers did in response to prescribed literacy curriculum. In other words, the questions looked at addressing if teachers followed prescribed literacy methods or if they followed their own pedagogical practices. The questions searched within what teachers strongly addressed and effectively communicated to inform the researcher of any modifications the teacher applied to pedagogical practices. The targeted research question to be addressed was: what are teachers' pedagogical choices in relation to resistance? Thus, choices would indicate resistance because the teacher was demonstrating favor of their own pedagogical practices of teaching and learning rather than what was expected from professional development training. Therefore, the questions asked were 8. Teaching and learning methods and curriculum materials from professional development training are expected to become a daily part



## TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL RESPONSES 80

of literacy instruction; 9. You often use teaching and learning methods and curriculum materials from professional development training as expected during daily literacy instruction; 10. Your professional knowledge for literacy instruction reflects strategies gained in professional learning communities (PLC's). The aforementioned survey questions guided research questions for qualitative purposes.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) provide methods that encompass the importance of teacher's beliefs and reasonableness in pedagogical practices. Therefore, the rationale for using both quantitative and qualitative methods is based on Capra's (1982) systems paradigm models that encourage social participation and the interconnections of teaching and learning. The rationale of using Capra's (1982) systems paradigms is because paradigms are ever changing and taking forms based on social interactions between people and their contextual environments. Teacher resistance takes on many forms based upon reviewed literature. Furthermore, interviews are a naturalistic inquiry process as well as a qualitative approach that can be accomplished by discussing viewpoints with participants. The principles of an interview are that the interviewee has the knowledge, is part of the situation and thereby is inseparable from the instructional context under investigation. Therefore, the research questions' goal is also to give voice to why teacher's resist and what are the implications of their resistance. Keeping in mind interviews are not simply to gather data but to hear the voice of the person who can attribute to the implications of the overarching purpose of this study.

The second phase of this study involved interviewing individuals who taught literacy curriculum and had completed the survey. Keeping in mind, although the investigator is a teacher, the investigator took full responsibility in being an active listener. No conclusions were drawn beforehand as the interviewee perspectives and statements reflected their personal thoughts and

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not the thoughts of the interviewer. Although prejudices or prejudgments are conditions of circumstances of time, the place and the experiences of each interview conducted was objectified with a recording device to guarantee integrity. The verbatim data was transferred into categories using textual conventions that had been set by quantitative methods. Moreover, the categories created by quantitative methods were also utilized for qualitative purposes.

Participants were contacted after they voluntarily provided their email in reference to be interviewed. Participants designated the date, time and place of the interview. Before starting the interview, participants were informed orally as well as provided ample opportunity to read the informed consent for interviewing. The participants were asked if they understood the voluntary nature of their participation and were assured of their anonymity. Participants were reminded of their pseudonym as interviewee one, interviewee two and so on before audio recording began and they were only referred to by pseudonyms during and after interviewing. Participants were given an overview of the purpose of the study, completion time and reminded that their consent is voluntary.

Two to four interviews lasting approximately 35 minutes in length were audio recorded and transcribed using pseudonyms for each participant. There was no identifiable information used other than pseudonyms. All recordings were destroyed after the final defense and saved on a transcribed hardcopy with pseudonym names only. Only pseudonyms were used in this study.

While there were no direct anticipated benefits for participants in this study, participants were given the opportunity to discuss why they resist in relation to their teaching experiences and pedagogical preferences based on their daily expectations of implementing prescribed literacy curriculum. However, this study benefits future teachers and educational districts by bringing attention to supports and obstacles involved with literacy instructions of both general and special

## **TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL RESPONSES 82**

education students. Therefore, the overarching purpose of this study was to demonstrate teacher resistance that worked to develop means to voice gaps between prescribed literacy curriculum and teachers' pedagogical practices in order to demonstrate how teachers have found ways to integrate both methods and politicized education within their classrooms.

The general questions that guided the qualitative portion of this study were: why do teachers resist and what do teachers say are the implications of their resistance. Another frame of reference through interviews was to hear how teachers constructed their experiences to include discussions on why they resist and what are their choices of pedagogical practices. The attitudes conveyed during interviews helped to discern the importance of categories associated between quantitative and qualitative methods. Thus, responses to semi-structured survey questions and open-ended interview questions corresponded to correlations that were found within the data. The investigator who is also a teacher, did not participate in answering the survey or the interview questions and did not conclude any responses to be in agreement to their beliefs. The interview questions are provided in the appendix of this study.

### **Population and Sample**

The interview questions were designed to correlate with categories of quantitative methods as well as regarded expressions found in the research relative to teachers' professional knowledge and pedagogical preferences. Thus, the focus upon literacy as defined as an ability to read and write is also encompassing how teachers observed students making connections during teaching and learning in order to help student build their literacy skills. The research revealed that teachers' observance during teaching and learning was an indication of motivations and autonomy over the social learning process (Brouwer, 2012, p. 192). Thereby, teachers interviewed were asked to reflect upon how they helped students to expand their knowledge and skills using prescribed

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literacy methods and/or teachers modified pedagogical practices. This investigation was conducted at an elementary school located in a small suburban city in the Midwest region of the United States. The school, Teacher Elementary (a pseudonym), is a public school that has a population of 502 pre-kindergarten through fifth grade students who are economically, ethnically, and linguistically diverse. The population is approximately 71% White, 14% Black, 8% Hispanic, and 4% Asian. Over 50% of the school's students qualify for free or reduced lunch, which qualifies the school for federal, Title I status. There are two pre-kindergarten teachers and 19 kindergartens through fifth grade teachers. Both the school and district embrace a vision of consistent professional development with a goal of preparing its students for academic success.

The research site was chosen for several reasons. First, an elementary school was chosen because the review of literature revealed that most professional development training recommends prescribed literacy curriculum for elementary school teachers. Therefore, conducting research at an elementary school seems more likely to yield useful data about teacher resistance to prescribed literacy curriculum. In addition, the school was chosen because of the socioeconomic status and diversity of its student body. Noting that diversity in this manner not only means differences in skin color but also differences in learning styles. The student populations of 502 prekindergarten to fifth grade students, services over 90% of the students categorized as special needs are taught wholly within general education classrooms. Although this may signify a small number of students with special needs, there is no criteria or specific classes for students within special needs; all students are included within the diverse population inside of general education classrooms.

Furthermore, the district in which the research site is located, has a long history of dedication to professional development integration for all learning styles. The principal of Teacher Elementary says that professional development is incorporated in the teachers' instructional

## **TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL RESPONSES 84**

calendar and it is mandatory attendance. The reasoning according to administration and the district's policy makers is that the lack of professional development would not fully translate prescribed literacy curriculum methods. Since the district requires each teacher to complete professional development training per evaluation monitoring, the research site offers over 10 hours of professional development training per semester.

Prior to conducting this research, I taught for 23 years in an urban school district. The experience has been rewarding because it increased my interest in wanting to know more about teacher resistance to prescribed literacy curriculum. It also provided me with a professional knowledge of the procedures of evaluation monitoring and professional development training. This insider knowledge allowed me to assess the research gathered within the literature review and compile questions for both quantitative and qualitative purposes. However, I realized that my relationship to the teaching profession was bounded by a system that helped my personal teaching perspectives, so pseudonyms and audio recordings protect the integrity of each interview.

Participants for the Qualitative phase of this study were three elementary literacy teachers from Teacher Elementary, grades second to fifth. Each female teacher constituted a perspective of how they planned and carry out prescribed literacy curriculum. Participants were selected using a nonrandom but particularly appropriate method for qualitative research studies. Meaning the participants had to be teachers in a school district from elementary schools who required professional development training. Teachers were asked within the thank you note of the online survey to contact the researcher via email if they were willing to be interviewed.

Participants were contacted after they voluntarily provided their email in reference to be interviewed. Participants designated the date, time and place of the interview. Before starting the interview, participants were informed orally as well as provided ample opportunity to read the

## **TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL RESPONSES 85**

informed consent for interviewing. The participants were asked if they understood the voluntary nature of their participation and were assured of their anonymity. Participants are assigned pseudonyms before audio recording begins and they are only referred to by pseudonyms during and after interviewing. Participants are given an overview of the purpose of the study, completion time and reminded that their consent is voluntary.

According to Yin (2003), interview participants are able to provide in-depth information in response to interview questions. Also, because teachers in grades second to fifth at Teacher Elementary are not departmentalized, all of their responses toward prescribed literacy curriculum were easily sorted into categories created from the survey data. Also, there were no varying degrees of when literacy curriculum would be taught because frequency was either what was prescribed or according to teachers' pedagogical practices. Therefore, after obtaining informed consent for participation in the gathering of qualitative data, data were collected through interviews.

### **Instrumentation**

Each participant was interviewed in at least 2 to 4 in-depth, semi-structured interviews, which lasted approximately 35 minutes. However, subsequent interviews were for following-up and clarifying responses, therefore, some interview participants were not needed for subsequent interviews. Interviews, however, were approximately 35 minutes in length and semi-structured focusing on eliciting a detailed description of teachers' pedagogical preferences regarding why they resist prescribed literacy curriculum and what they say are the implications of their resistance. There was no acquaintance with staff, as it could have affected their responses and limit details because they may have assumed I had prior knowledge of professional development training. Therefore, it is my belief that I protected the dangers of researchers' bias and elicited details from teachers based only on carefully planned interview questions. One interview was conducted prior

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to the end of first semester because this was the time that historically most district administered high stakes testing. Although high stakes testing has since been moved to the spring, the review of literature revealed that prescribed literacy curriculum correspond to high stakes testing (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006; Bushnell, 2003 and Crocco & Costigan, 2007). Additionally, pacing charts and prescribed curriculum guides are prepared to tell teachers how, when and what to teach according to high stakes testing (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006; Bushnell, 2003 and Crocco & Costigan, 2007).

Subsequent interviews were conducted specifically to cover the months after teachers completed four hours of professional development training as well as a follow-up to first interviews. Although questions were not predetermined due to those questions being regarded as following up of first interview questions, this approach provided a foundation of common questions across interviews. During the second interview participants had some degree of control in guiding the discussion. According to Capra (1982), this approach is successful because second interviews demonstrated social participation and the interconnections of teaching and learning. Each interview participant chose the date, time and place of each interview. Interviews were audio recorded to provide an accurate and verifiable record of data. The interview protocol for all interviews was the same and can be found in Appendix C.

The interview questions for the first interview are listed below: 1. In what types of professional development have you participated (names, dates, locations)? 2. How have your teaching practices been influenced by professional development experience? 3. In what ways have you followed guidelines presented in professional development? 4. In what ways have you not followed professional development guidelines? 5. What can you tell me about professional learning communities? What is your opinion of them? 6. What can you tell me about prescribed literacy

curriculum? What is your opinion about it? 7. What can you tell me about ways to modify instruction? What is your opinion about it?

### **Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics were used to organize, summarize and display numerical data found in the results section of this study. Employing analytic induction method of data analysis that surveys closed ended questions helped to create categories. The survey was first used to facilitate purposeful categories that informed qualitative data. Because this study was exploratory in its approach, responses to each question on the survey were examined for emerging categories. Audio recorded and transcribed interviews helped unique patterns to be identified from correlations produced from survey data. The written description of teachers' responses helped to clarify patterns and categories.

The process of analytic induction involving significant commonalities and differences were listed and a search was completed to see if any patterns emerged. In this manner, each identified category was contextualized for meaning through each description and data explanation. Although the primary source of qualitative data was interviews these data needed to be treated in this way to correlate to quantitative data categories. This approach allowed data collection and analysis to be an ongoing process in which each informed the other. As a result, emerging categories were connected by comparing incidents and categories from one data source; the survey to those from another source; the interviews. This enabled me to gain the deep understanding needed to address each research question, using critical theory as well as reviewed literature.

### **Trustworthiness**

Approaching the study in an exploratory and naturalistic way provided trustworthiness using Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability.



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Transferability and conformability were discussed in the previous sections relating the categories of quantitative data to qualitative data. In summary, written description of teachers' responses helped to confirm patterns and established categories. Written descriptions were read to ensure that data were not overlooked and then compared to qualitative data to diminish potential bias. The process of analytic induction involving significant commonalities and differences was listed and a search was completed to see if any patterns emerged for transferability purposes. In this manner, each identified category was clarified and contextualized for meaning through each description and data explanation.

Although the primary source of qualitative data was interviews these data needed to be treated in this way to correlate to quantitative data categories. This approach allowed data collection and analysis to be an ongoing process in which each informs the other; hence, transferability and conformability. Lincoln and Guba's (1985) naturalistic paradigm is carried out in an inquiry manner that proves credibility, so that findings are constructed from real-life situations. This is so because questions asked allowed for transferability of findings to specific times, places and context. Although humans can make errors and insights may cause some clouded conclusions, instability is a phenomenon that is induced during analytic induction to help in laying out correlations. However, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), it is another way to increase validity and aid in dependability because categories are identified, clarified and contextualized. Therefore, participant's responses are within context that provides a description of the targeted research goals- in this case, indication of teacher resistance.

Corroboration between researchers and participants is involved in member checking. Member checking is an important way to increase validity and trustworthiness of interpretations and category elements. Thus, all participants were given the opportunity to review their transcripts

before publication to check for agreements in descriptions, meaning of experiences and interpretations. Furthermore, when the investigator reads transcripts, revealed research can be corroborated between the participant and the review of literature and critical theory. However, there may not always be agreement on interpretations and in the final analysis the investigator take responsibility for the truths of their work. Therefore, interpretations derived from participants produce the data so the investigators' views or biases are never a part of any correlations. In other words, the findings are developed from the data and based on categorized themes that resonate across interpretations and explanations of only the participants.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The ethical considerations taken into account were the relationship between the investigator and the research participants to ensure that all participant information remained confidential. Also, the investigator did not know any of the participants, although we belong to the same career profession. Only those associated with the study had access to the information that was collected. No compensation was offered before, during or after the study. Pseudonyms were used to ensure anonymity of the participants. All data were stored securely and password protected. In order to facilitate participant's willingness to openly respond, participants agreed to informed consent, participants were reminded that all their responses are confidential and protect by pseudonyms and they could withdraw at any time.

There is always the risk of researcher subjectivity influencing data analysis. I, as both an educator and investigator, have an interest in the subject under investigation, which may constitute bias. To reduce the influence of personal bias and subjectivity, I engaged in constant reflection, and data analysis. Unknown additional context can present a hindrance when investigating pedagogical preferences but the research associated with created questions anticipated

underpinnings of possible hindrances. Therefore, participants were free to express their thoughts without being hindered due to previously described research literature. Teachers spoke freely to describe what they felt was important to the question being asked. There were no preconceived notions of what should have been said.

### **Limitations**

Hindrances, although not foreseen, can also become limitations. The underpinnings of teacher resistance could also limit what a teacher is willing to express within their school building or even at an offsite location. Therefore, not only does expectation of complete implementation of prescribed literacy curriculum undermine reflections of teachers, it also serves to suppress teachers' critiques of professional development training. In fact, the review of literature revealed that first year teachers chose to leave the teaching profession because of oppressive techniques of some school systems (Stroh & Martin, 2015). On the other hand, some teachers remained in the teaching profession if they were able to teach in suburban schools and have more autonomy over instruction (Bushnell, 2003).

It is also recognized that another area of limitations in terms of the characteristics of the participants is they are all teachers. There is a consideration that teachers who choose to resist have already decided the way that students learn best. The research has suggested that teachers are experts and have an authority or agency toward teaching and learning (Jennings & Da Matta, 2009). Thus, teachers have an underlying trait or ability to adequately reflect on teaching and learning and compare it to professional development training. Also, there was an unequal gender distribution in this study. The school has all female teachers and the review of literature revealed that women were viewed as more submissive and they felt oppressed when they were told how to teach students (Jennings & Da Matta, 2009). However, there is also a possibility that women are

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more responsive to reflection and their responses are more contextualized. Therefore, although a limitation, the women surveyed and interviewed offered comprehensive expressions of the underpinnings of teacher resistance.

Although over four-fifths of the participants identified as White, there is a possibility that their reflections did not represent the depth and breadth of ethnic/racial identities of the student population, which would indicate a limitation. Furthermore, another limitation was that each survey was taken online through a link that was not connected to an account of the school principal but participants may have felt uncomfortable. Additionally, the interviews were conducted after respondents gave their email thus, creating another limitation if interview participants were not completely comfortable with their voluntary consent. Therefore, it was expected that more surveys would be completed than interviews. The investigator assumed that all participants of the interview process would feel comfortable not knowing that the principal investigator was a teacher. Therefore, there are limits associated when the study's principal investigator created and asked all questions, both survey and interview although under the knowledge of reviewed research and good will.

### **Summary**

The findings of this research will not be underutilized because it is connected to teachers and schools. The teacher's responses are based upon their needs because it reflects their pedagogical preferences. Teachers acknowledged their professional knowledge as demonstrated by their pedagogical preferences as well as an extension of their pedagogical practices that regards teaching and learning as a social process. The social process of teaching and learning is important because although the research investigator separated herself from the study, teachers did not feel isolated from the information being shared. In other words, within the research teachers revealed that they

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opened up about their feelings of being treated like they did not have the skills to instruct prescribed literacy curriculum. Therefore, teachers feel bullied when they are told what and how to teach in order to force-feed prescribed literacy curriculum. Within the literature it is revealed that teachers recognize an imbalance of power that is under the guise of student academic achievement. From a critical stance, the mask has to come off if teacher pedagogical practices are to increase expectations, which will help build students' literacy skills.

The research on teacher resistance was scarce to uncover but the review of literature revealed that this was the “dehumanizing pedagogy” that causes teachers to resist prescribed literacy curriculum (Jennings & Da Matta, 2009, p. 224). Teachers proposed realistic pedagogical practices when they resist prescribed literacy curriculum. I conducted this study because teacher resistance is believed to be a more effective action that causes teachers to favor their praxis over prescribed literacy curriculum. Furthermore, reflections of teachers who resist demonstrate underlying systematic dynamics to improve students' literacy skills and support professional development training methods by integrating methods of prescribed literacy curriculum with teachers' pedagogical practices. Thereby, the study benefits future teachers and educational districts by bringing attention to the supports and obstacles involved with prescribed literacy curriculum for both general and special education students. Therefore, results will discuss the overarching purpose of this study that worked to develop means to voice gaps between prescribed literacy curriculum and teachers' pedagogical practices in order to demonstrate how teachers have found ways to integrate both methods.

**CHAPTER 4 ANALYSIS OF RESULTS**

**Data Collection Procedures**

The purpose of this mixed methods cross comparative study was to examine the instances of teacher resistance to the prescribed literacy curriculum at an elementary school in a suburban school district. This study investigated teachers' preferences toward their own praxis rather than following through with specific training, mandates and prescribed literacy curriculum. This study has evidence that there is a lack in reporting how teachers demonstrate resistance to the prescribed literacy curriculum; which will allow readers to examine beyond research and minimize any bias suggestive within research methods. Thus, the intentions of this study are to demonstrate quantitative results from a survey, which draws out cross comparative themes to qualitative data. All survey data was recorded in Microsoft Excel (Microsoft, 2013b). Survey variables were converted by counting individual Likert scale responses, which correlates to numerical indicators that are represented by percentages then displayed on both a bar graph and pie graph. A pie graph was used because the Likert scale has four categories that are strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree and this presentation provides clarity to the research. Also presented in this chapter are qualitative results from interviews, which represent analysis of teachers' response to the prescribed literacy curriculum at an elementary school in a suburban school district. All data was manually checked to identify any errors and to validate accuracy for further analysis.

**Survey Analysis**

The survey required approximately 8 to 10 minutes to complete. Thus, when looking at research question one which states what forms of resistance to the prescribed literacy curriculum do teachers at this elementary school use survey questions two through four are examined. Survey question one gathered demographic information that will be used during this discussion. This is so

because examining years of service and hours of professional development training is important to understanding resistance and implications of resistance. Also, both quantitative and qualitative data will help validate and substantiate findings when corroborated with reviewed literature, which mentioned veteran teachers, and new teachers' actions toward prescribed programs and teacher evaluations. Therefore, survey questions two through four were examined to provide confirmation that teachers are strategic in resisting prescribed literacy curriculum.

As the theoretical framework implies that critical theory is a decision to perform one way but strategically accomplish a different agenda according to that one person's perspective (Giroux, 1983). More specifically Giroux (1983) defines critical theory as theory that justifies potential power of a concept or person in order to demonstrate an insight as well as a critique that is at first "opposite" ideals and thoughts but then it becomes affirmative of a practice, concept or mode of action (p. 260). The survey was created to demonstrate teachers' agreement that they follow the prescribed literacy curriculum because at first their preference is to follow mandates and prescribed literacy curriculum for various reasons but their actions within their classroom become "opposite" (Giroux, 1983, pp. 260). Resistance is a political and critical stance because whenever the power of choice is associated with the actions that demonstrate decisions of what one is knowingly saying they agree to do but they perform the opposite—it is resistance.

Therefore, survey questions two through four addresses the forms of resistance to the prescribed literacy curriculum because each question ask if the prescribed literacy curriculum is coordinated, coherent and focused on student learning styles and therefore followed as expected by teachers. The following tables (Tables 1 & 1a) summarized responses of all survey participants. The data presented in Table 1 provide quantitative analysis that draws the researcher to survey question four, which ask specifically how often teachers perform prescribed literacy curriculum

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instruction according to plan but realize that plans need to be changed; which demonstrates their resistance. The survey response entries were tallied for each time the respondents answered each question with disagree or in agreement. Because based on critical theory, rather the respondents agreed or disagree, the action of changing, adding to or modifying the lesson is opposite of following prescribed literacy curriculum as expected and planned.

Furthermore, it has not become clear as of yet, how teachers resist, Achinstein and Ogawa (2006) says “teacher resistance reveals the tension between organizational control and professional autonomy” (p. 32). Achinstein and Ogawa (2006) reports that blaming teachers does not close learning gaps or raise achievement but present pedagogical preferences “one version where teachers are highly qualified reflective practitioners and the other where they are implementers of mandated programs” (p. 56). Thus, a form of teacher resistance is demonstrated by counter pedagogy as demonstrated by lesson modifications; which are teachers’ uses of their own pedagogical practices and aligned to critical theory. Moreover, in doing so, teachers expose organizational control that tries to dampen their autonomy, which could be part of teachers’ politicizing strategy.

Hence the first theme emerging from teachers’ survey responses is entitled: pedagogical preferences realized during adherence to script. Research question one helped develop this theme along with measuring how many times teachers either agreed or disagreed that they followed the prescribed literacy curriculum as expected. The findings display that fourteen out of eighteen teachers agreed that literacy curriculum instruction as prescribed by professional development training is well coordinated across grade levels and students learning styles; which equates to 78% of teachers agreeing, with the remaining 22% of teachers disagreeing. The third survey question asked if professional development training in the last year has sustained a coherent focus that you



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have applied in the classroom. Again, more than half of teachers agreed equating to fifteen out of eighteen or 83%. The percentage may have increased slightly because the questions in essence ask teachers if they use prescribed literacy curriculum and training in their classroom.

**Figure 1: Program Coherence and Teachers' Responses Toward Literacy Curriculum**

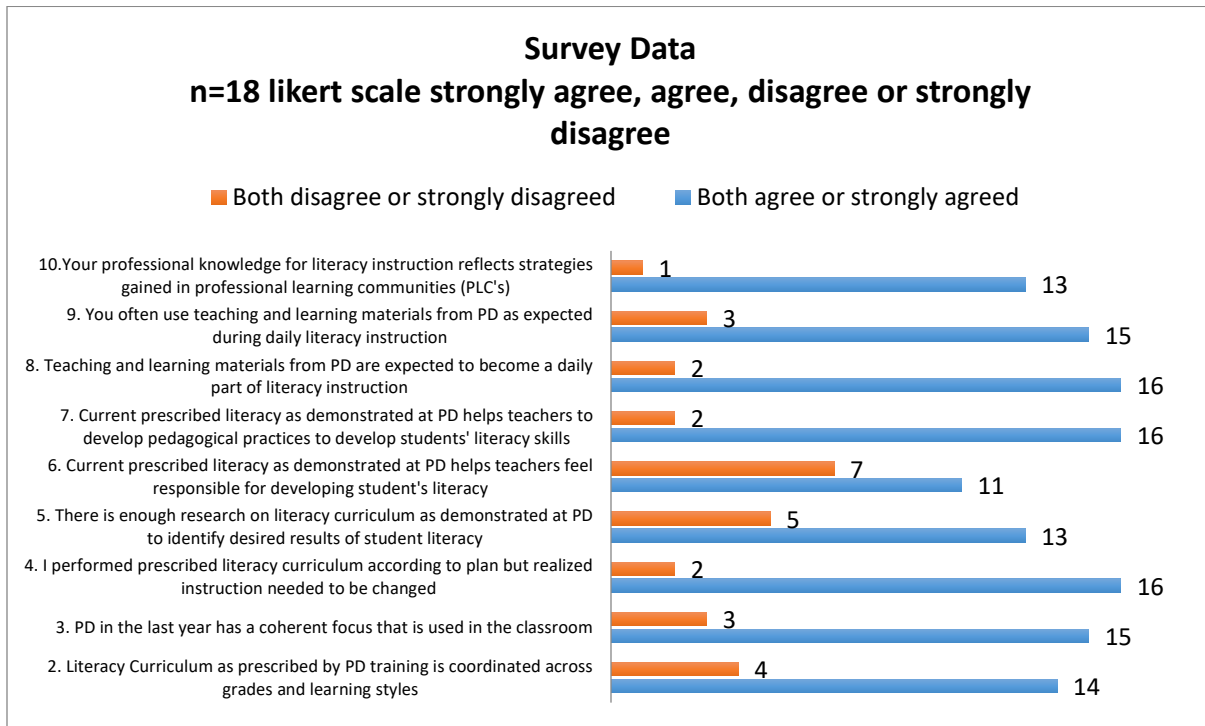
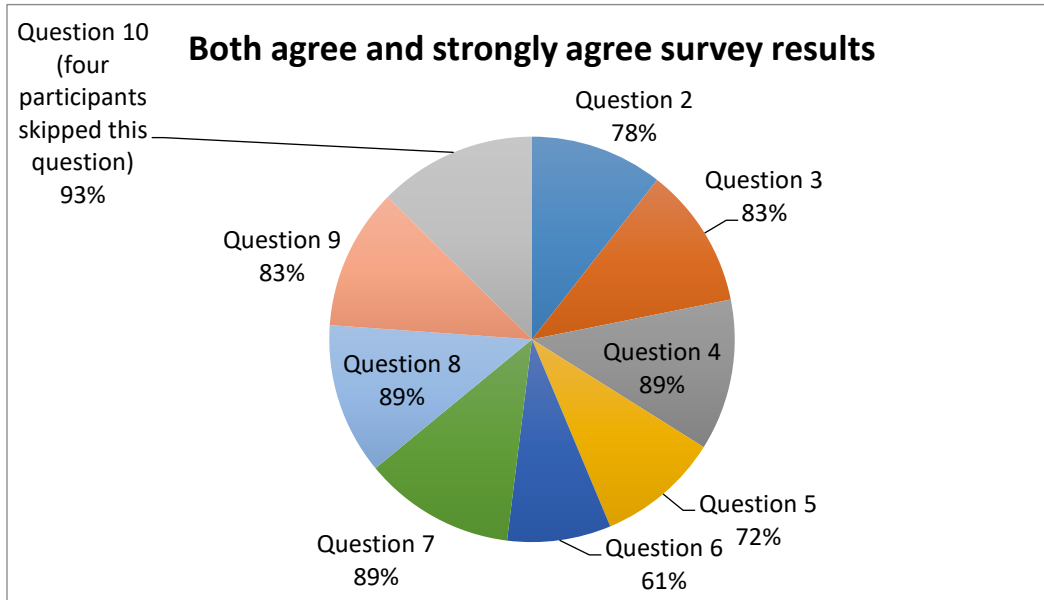


Figure 1a: Teacher Attitudes Toward Literacy Curriculum



Teachers' training can without assumption be training from the most current year as well as professional knowledge gained from institutional training. Research has shown that pedagogical practices in favor of prescribed literacy curriculum are associated with teachers who have been traditionally trained through universities and professional development opportunities to follow prescribed methods for teaching. However, these same teachers have been "pressured to follow scripted and narrow curriculum rigidly and have become less able to forge a satisfying practice" (Crocco & Costigan, 2007, p. 527). Therefore, based on the results thus far teachers are both agreeing and disagreeing that they follow the prescribed literacy curriculum and that there is a focus on different pedagogical practices being applied within their classroom. Moreover, keeping in mind Crocco & Costigan (2007) insertion that teachers are trying to "forge a satisfying practice" a second theme emerged from the survey results (p. 527).

Teachers' agreement is strategic in teachers gain respect for their agency as they continue to strengthen their pedagogy and advocate for all students by resisting prescribed literacy curriculum.

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Zascavage and Keefe (2004) found that there are barriers to teacher's developing pedagogical practices that address literacy. So, results are showing that a majority of teachers are stating they follow the prescribed literacy curriculum. Zascavage and Keefe (2004) state that "some educational theorists advocate for standards that will provide an empirical base by which to gauge attainment of literacy and govern instructional practices" (p.224). Zascavage and Keefe (2004) are speaking of historical frameworks that provide measures of ability based upon traditional curriculum standards that force learning content. Therefore, it seems that following the prescribed literacy curriculum is more favorable for teachers and students. However, Zascavage and Keefe (2004) found that funding was reduced in order to ensure these frameworks would be successful. Concurrently, Danforth and Naraian (2015) cites that special education prescribes learning curriculum, policies and professional development training that have been a "strategic cover for traditional and deficit based practices" (p. 71).

Thus, the second theme entitled: perspectives revealed which may lead to non-adherence, acknowledges mandates and teachers admitting that they follow the prescribed literacy curriculum but also waver between expected students' test performance and students' test performance in relation to teachers' expected implementation of prescribed literacy curriculum. Therefore, enlisting critical theory as the undergirding premise to teachers acknowledging their resistance to the prescribed literacy curriculum at the one elementary school in a suburban district, survey question four was examined closer because the percentage of teachers agreement to question four confirms that teachers often perform prescribed literacy curriculum instruction according to plan but realize that plans need to be changed resulted in sixteen out of eighteen teachers agreeing. The researcher realizes that the survey sample is small but there was an increase by 6% from the percentage of teacher who agreed they sustained a coherent focus on pedagogical practices applied

## **TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL RESPONSES 99**

within their classroom to teachers agreeing that they followed or performed prescribed literacy curriculum according to plans and expectation but then changed those plans.

Research question one spoke of what forms of resistance may exist and as stated above a form of resistance is teacher's modifying prescribed literacy curriculum and applying a different pedagogical practice within their own classrooms. It is important to note that it is applied within their own classrooms because each teacher may not have the same identical pedagogical practice but it has been proven by 89% of respondents to survey question four that their preferred pedagogical practice is not to follow the complete implementation of the mandated prescribed literacy curriculum. Furthermore, the second theme suggested that if teachers' pedagogical preferences lead to resistance, questions five through seven may indicate why teachers resist; which is this study's second research question.

### **Survey Analysis Addressing Research Question Two**

Research question two asks why do teachers use resistance and this question follows perspectives that are revealed in the survey as teachers agree that they are responsible for and expected to develop students' literacy skills using the prescribed literacy curriculum although they modify the prescribed literacy curriculum. Again, rather the teacher agrees or disagrees that they are responsible for and expected to develop students' literacy skills, when addressing the research question, why do teachers use resistance it is the difference of their action that validates the evidence because it is demonstrative of teachers' counter pedagogy. For example, if a teacher agrees or disagrees to survey question six which states that the prescribed literacy curriculum as demonstrated at professional development training helps teachers to feel responsible for developing students' literacy and they follow the prescribed literacy curriculum but they are modifying, changing or adding to the lesson in any way that is a form of resistance. Thus, it is

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indeed to demonstrate counter pedagogy to the prescribed literacy curriculum and to politicize education within their classroom in order to feel more responsible for students' literacy skills.

Therefore, when tallying responses from questions five through seven in reference to theme two and in order to address research question two: why do teachers use resistance, the researcher looked for disagreement or agreement to whether or not teachers felt students' expected test performance results or teachers' classroom materials helped them feel responsible for teaching and learning within their classroom as it relates to student's literacy skills. More specifically, this analysis was sought because Maskiewicz and Winters (2012) concluded that teachers' pedagogical preferences demonstrate their responsibility toward developing students' literacy and teacher's ability to strengthen students' skills using integrated professional knowledge from a teacher's praxis and prescribed literacy curriculum. The findings displayed that on average between survey questions five through six, 75% of teachers agreed that students' expected test performance results and/or teachers' classroom materials associated with the prescribed literacy curriculum helped teachers feel responsible for developing students' literacy skills.

The average percentage is lower than the percentage for teachers who followed the prescribed literacy curriculum with thirteen out of eighteen teachers agreeing to survey question five that there is enough research on literacy curriculum demonstrated at professional development training to identify desired results of student literacy, equating to 72%. Also, teachers who followed the prescribed literacy curriculum admitted by 61% that eleven out of eighteen teachers agreed to survey question six that the current prescribed literacy curriculum as demonstrated at professional development training helps teachers to feel responsible for developing student literacy. The percentages dropped although teachers are following the prescribed literacy curriculum. However, knowing that the curriculum is prescribed and teachers followed the plans of the prescribed literacy

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curriculum but make some modification validates that there is a lack of reporting how teachers actually implement the prescribed literacy curriculum within their classrooms. Furthermore 61% gives evidence that suggest teachers are implementing more than just the prescribed literacy curriculum as planned in order to identify with students expected test performance results as well as to feel more responsible for students developing literacy skills. Especially when teachers cannot as strongly as before admit that they feel responsible for developing students' literacy skills. Moreover, this tension addresses why teacher use resistance.

Case in point: question seven on the survey asked participants if the current prescribed literacy curriculum as demonstrated at professional development training helps teachers develop pedagogical practices responsible for developing students' literacy skills. The question does not specifically ask if teachers develop pedagogical practices of their own from professional development training and the current prescribed literacy curriculum classroom materials but there is certainly a discrepancy when the percentages decrease in relation to concern over students' expected test performance and teachers feeling responsible for developing students literacy skills in comparison to teachers now agreeing that 89% of them believe that training and the prescribed literacy curriculum classroom materials helps teachers develop pedagogical practices responsible for developing students' literacy skills.

Not only does evidence in survey question seven speak to another form of teacher resistance the first being teachers modifying prescribed literacy curriculum when teachers agree or disagree that they follow the prescribed literacy curriculum and plans but this evidence uncovers another form of resistance which is teachers resist prescribed literacy curriculum by developing their own pedagogical practices within their classroom in order to feel responsible for developing students literacy skills. The percentage is unmistakable and higher than survey questions five and six which

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suggest that when using the prescribed literacy curriculum as planned not only did teachers need to modify plans they also preferred using pedagogical practices that they had developed which is defined as their praxis. This evidence also speaks to why teachers use resistance, which is to adjust the long standing educational system that dictates student's educational plans and teachers are strategically gaining responsibility for students' literacy skills through the use of their own pedagogical practices as developed when using professional development training and prescribed literacy curriculum classroom materials.

### **Suspected Relationship of Survey Analysis and Discussion of Themes**

Moreover, teachers' pedagogical practices integrated with prescribed literacy curriculum according to Schneider and Plasman (2011) implies that teachers develop some level of autonomy over teaching and learning. This study draws upon suspected relationships for all four research questions in that teachers' resistance takes on many forms as teachers try to match the varying needs and interest of all students. Thus, students learning at varying levels cause teachers to modify prescribed literacy curriculum in order to provide teaching and learning opportunities for all students. Furthermore, there is a suspected relationship that teachers use resistance because prescribed literacy curriculum does not match instructional context of teaching and learning in order to cause teachers to feel responsible for developing students' literacy skills. Therefore, teachers rely upon their praxis in order to match student's needs and interest based upon knowing the instructional context of teaching and learning experiences within their classrooms.

Qualitative data is also used in drawing upon suspected relationships because teachers admitted they followed the prescribed literacy curriculum at this elementary school in a suburban school district but during their interviews they mentioned more than once that their administrator expected them to modify the prescribed literacy lessons. Could it be that expectations from their

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administrators not only caused teachers to develop resistance to the prescribed literacy curriculum, but also caused teachers to develop distrust in complete implementation of the prescribed literacy curriculum because it did not make them feel responsible for developing students' literacy skills? Therefore, the third theme that emerged from survey responses correlates to research questions three and four as well as qualitative data drawn from interviews. Teachers have pedagogical preference in how teaching and learning can increase student literacy success. Teachers have an agency and authority that commands their implementation of pedagogical practices that is appropriate for teaching and learning of all students. Therefore, when analyzing what are teachers' pedagogical choices in relation to resistance, there is a suspected relationship that teachers who take ownership of resisting a prescribed literacy curriculum are creating new and innovative applications of prescribed literacy curriculum by combining prescribed literacy curriculum methods with their own pedagogical practices. See Table 1, next page:



**Table 1: Teachers' Pedagogical Practices of Resistance**

<p><b>Third Theme:</b></p>	<p><b>Reflections of pedagogical practices indicative of resistance: Intentional modifications and actions suggesting teachers' praxis indicative of resistance and implementations of lessons using their own teaching practices and prescribed literacy curriculum.</b></p>
<p><b>Research Question 3: What do teachers say are the implications of their resistance?</b></p>	<p>Participant #17 stated in the first interview: "I followed guidelines but I finished earlier than the scripted lessons and felt that there could be more added to the lesson to help struggling students"</p> <p>Participant #18 stated in the first interview: "I followed components of the scripted lesson but used inquiry and discussion as we moved through the lesson because students needed more time and it was an intervention that a teacher implements so that students are successful"</p> <p>Participant #11 stated in the second interview: "I probably didn't follow the guidelines to perfection, but I pin pointed intervention by beginning with the end in mind, using academic vocabulary first"</p>
<p><b>Research Question 4: What are teachers' pedagogical</b></p>	<p>Participant #17 stated in the second interview: "I help students stay on a level playing field and on track when I am systematically giving them learning foundations that build skills they are lacking using my modifications and the prescribed curriculum"</p> <p>Participant #18 stated in the second interview: "I help students understand cueing because they needed more cueing to understand vocabulary from prescribed literacy lessons, I demonstrated data that the students were</p>

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<b>choices in relation to resistance?</b>	learning from my modified materials and procedures of cueing for vocabulary”
	Participant #11 stated in the second interview: “Other students struggle from scripted lessons because there are gaps that needed to be filled. In those instance teachers are allowed to make adaptations to allow students to learn from literacy lessons”

According to Ernest, et al. (2011), teachers feeling responsible for student literacy are based upon their own pedagogical practices. As witnessed above, the perspective of feeling responsible for teaching and learning within the classroom is important because the evidence says that’s why teachers resist. Teachers see the need to modify lessons and teachers resist because they understand those modifications are related to their preferred pedagogical practices in order to help students develop literacy skills. In turn teachers are building their autonomy over developing students’ literacy skills. An implication according to critical theory is that their actions are strategic in politicizing education within their classroom. Thus, if teachers agree or disagree that they often use teaching methods and curriculum materials from training as expected and on a daily basis but they have already reported that they also realize that modifications are needed then this is a form of resistance and also why teachers resist. This also guides the third theme and research questions three and four because implication of teacher resistance cannot totally be accounted for by survey questions.

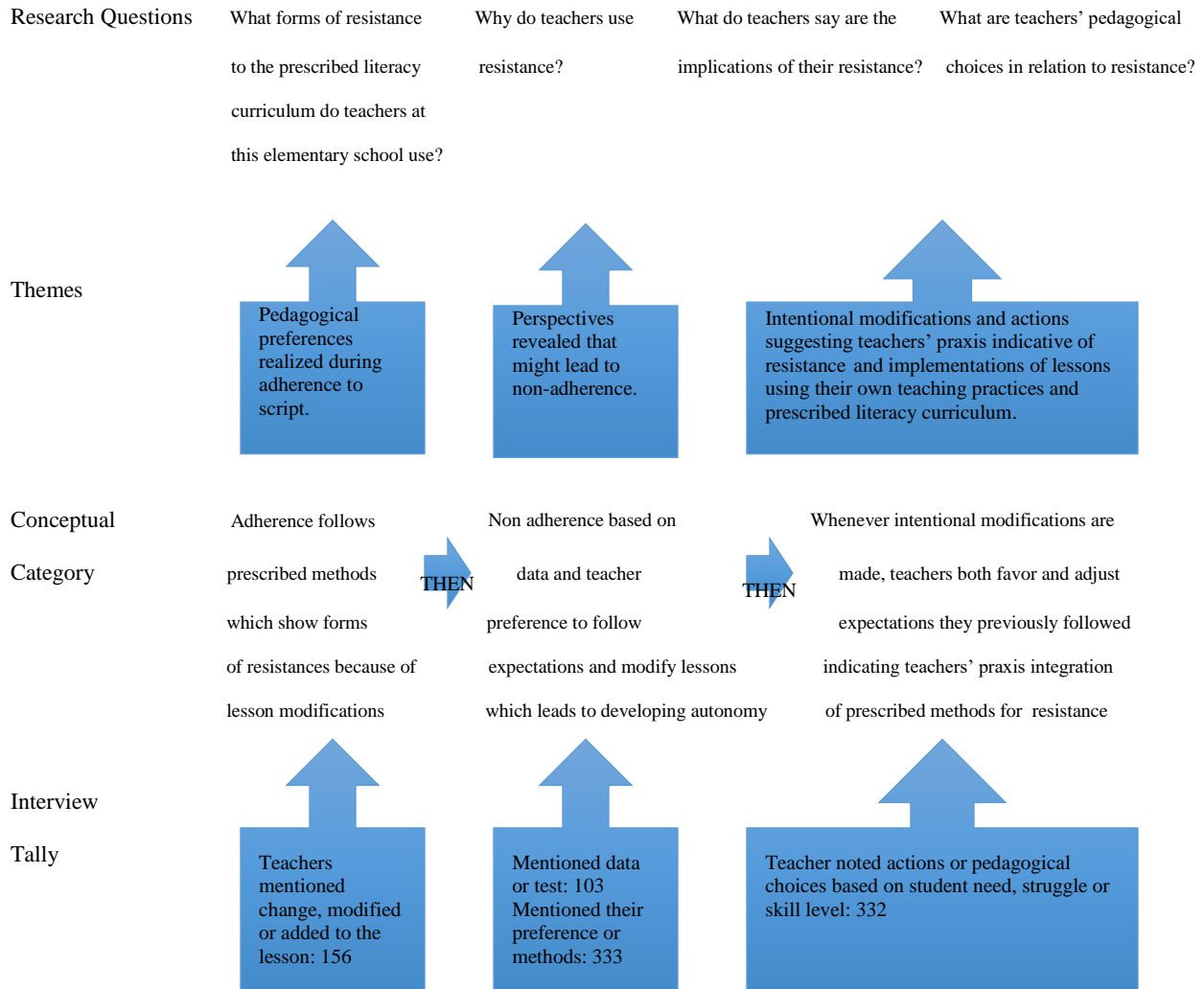
Therefore, what teachers say will account for further implication of their resistance as transcribed during interviews. This will also indicate evidence of what are teachers’ implication of their resistance; which is research question three and what are teachers’ pedagogical choices in

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relation to resistance; which is research question four. Interviews are guided by the third theme, which is entitled: reflections of pedagogical practices indicative of resistance therefore interviews are cross-categorized with survey responses. Moreover, the third theme indicates reflections and resistance because teachers have followed the prescribed literacy curriculum and made the choice to modify lessons using not only the prescribed literacy curriculum but also their preferred pedagogical practices, which is their praxis.

Therefore, the third theme also corresponds to the third flow chart arrow included on this research study cross category and relative themes matrix, entitled: Intentional modifications and actions suggesting teachers' praxis indicative of resistance and implementations of lessons using their own teaching practices and prescribed literacy curriculum. The chart above mentions relative themes, research questions three and four and participants' responses in correlation to their reflections, implications of resistance by following the prescribed literacy guidelines but then making modifications and also participants' pedagogical choices in order to help students develop literacy skills. The implication is that teachers take this action to politicize education within their classroom. See Table 2, next page:

**Table 2: Cross Category and Themes Relative to Interviews**



**Reflections of Pedagogical Practices**

Teachers have come to feel responsible for students' literacy skills while developing their praxis within controlled academic environments. However, teachers have strategically adjusted these controlled academic environments to serve students, which imply a strategy of politicizing education within their classrooms. The long standing educational systems which were believed to promote education for the sake of preparing students for service jobs and consumerism are adjustable in classrooms where teachers promote student's social capital instead. For instance,

culturally responsive teaching and learning is defined by Ruble and Robson (2007) as teaching and learning that increases the likelihood and implementation of modified instructional practices in accordance to teachers' praxis and the matching of student's needs and interest. The strategy of politicizing education within teachers' classroom is not new but it is seemingly becoming prevalent within this study as teachers resist prescribed literacy curriculum.

Therefore, the analysis within this chapter has also sought to demonstrate why there is a lack of reporting how teachers implement pedagogical practices within their classrooms and what they say are their implications of resistance. Furthermore, although teachers' choices and actions to implementing the prescribed literacy curriculum are indicative of resistance and of teachers becoming comfortable in their strategy of favoring their own pedagogical practices over prescribed literacy curriculum, specific modifications to the prescribed literacy curriculum are not always reported. Blasé and Blasé (1999) contend that the theory of resistance in educational reform mentions that teachers are intellectuals despite "fault finding" and "well-established scripts" (p. 351). Thus, the critical theory that undergirds this study leads the researcher to suggest that specific implementations within the daily practices performed by teachers may cause them to be less confident in reporting their modifications due to mandates, and teacher evaluations.

Therefore, resisting prescribed literacy curriculum because teachers' pedagogical practices are more equitable affords students opportunity to build their knowledge and skills, which is their social capital. However, teachers' perception of this benefit is thwarted as they are constrained by teacher evaluations and expectations to completely implement prescribed literacy curriculum. It was found that although teachers were expected to modify the prescribed literacy curriculum it did not mean they were released from full implementation of the prescribed literacy curriculum. The principal researcher summarizes, that all three interview participants stated in more ways than one,

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that they either read from the manual or followed the guidelines of the prescribed literacy curriculum but then modified the lesson afterwards. For instance, participant 18 stated, "No, but I follow the guidelines up to the point that a good teacher sees the need to adjust the lesson and allow students more time with the lesson." Participant 17 stated, "I follow the daily prescribed lesson plan. Some of it is scripted, so I adhere to that but I use other supplements that are not part of the scripted lessons." Participant 11 stated, "Because the prescribed method says that if you teach them this way, they can learn this way, so, I normally make adaptations to get students going in the right direction." Thus, teachers are concerned that they are being bullied into following prescribed literacy curriculum when they are implementing an integration of prescribed literacy curriculum methods and their pedagogical practices. Case in point: participant 11 says, "In instances where I am using prescribed methods and my normal modifications together, I have the sense that students are experiencing learning just the same as other students in the class therefore I am confident in the methods I use." Participant 17 says, "My modifications and the use of prescribed literacy curriculum gets kids on track. I follow what is asked or suggested but I systematically mixed the foundation of skills being learned to build literacy skills for all students." Participant 18 was very passionate in stating, "I demonstrate my modifications to the lessons in connection to data and prescribed literacy curriculum and it is an integration of both methods. Students are learning what they should from the lesson because I understand expectations and I lead students using prescribed literacy curriculum and my level of competency for building students' literacy skills."

Research has demonstrated that teachers are seen as having the knowledge and pedagogical preferences to modify instructional practices that build student's social capital. However, teachers are more willing to modify lessons in favor of their praxis and the building of students' social

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capital because they are using the prescribed literacy curriculum and professional development training in an adaptable way in order to develop students' literacy skills, in some instance when their administrator expected these actions. As a result, some teachers lack the confidence to report how they are actually implementing specifically, prescribed literacy curriculum (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006). For instance, Achinstein and Ogawa (2006) reported from their study the negative impact of policy mandates on elementary first year teacher's resistance to professional development training. As a result, these researchers proved that all teachers' praxis become an afterthought when planning instruction based upon complete implementation of prescribed literacy curriculum (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006).

Based on the results of this study, however, teachers initially reported within the survey, that prescribed literacy curriculum training informs their praxis or pedagogical practices and evidence teaching and learning through prescribed learning curriculum, standardized test scores and their teacher evaluation. Because this evidence is referenced to both surveys and interviews, the researchers have created a descriptive table to list unified concepts such as prescribed literacy curriculum training and teachers mentioning their training informs their pedagogical practices; which in turn provides data that is used to plan instruction that contributes to standardized test scores and favorable teacher evaluation. See Table 3, next page:

**Table 3: Unified Concepts in Literacy Curriculum Development**

<b>UNIFIED CONCEPTS</b>	Prescribed literacy curriculum training informs teachers' pedagogical practices	Teachers mention planned instruction contributing to test scores and favorable teacher evaluation
<b>PARTICIPANT 17 SAYS</b>	"I go through the training and I do not like following the script, so I stop reading directly from the manual, I develop my own practices"	"In addition to scripted lessons, I plan lessons from pretest and posttest to increase students' skills for all test, and I am evaluated as favorable when my administrator observes me"
<b>PARTICIPANT 11 SAYS</b>	"I attend training and it doesn't fit. I try to make it work by developing modifications that leads back to following the prescribed guidelines but I have developed my own pedagogy"	"I go beyond prescribed guidelines using my own pedagogy, which teaches the concept and standards for all test. I can see that it is successful it has strengthened student's academics, thereby test scores and my teacher evaluation conveys the same.
<b>PARTICIPANT 18 SAYS</b>	"I have demonstrated confidence in my training but in my	"No two students are the same so data is used to understand lessons that will help each student. I use



	<p>opinion all lessons need to be differentiated. I provide differentiated lessons using training and experiences tailored to help all students”</p>	<p>data to plan lessons that improve students’ vocabulary skills; which is assessed on standardized test. My connection with data and successful lessons helps not only my evaluation but student outcomes”</p>
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Teachers at first will identify with complete implementation of professional development training to avoid reports of poor test scores and a teacher evaluation that portrays them as ineffective (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006). However, research on teachers' evaluations reveals that highly effective teachers change the way academic content and social learning is perceived and amplified during instruction by modifying instructional practices (Lyon & Weiser, 2009). Lyon and Weiser (2009) argue that in order for teachers to be effective, they must not approach teaching and learning methods for literacy as a “one size fits all” (p. 476). Lyon and Weiser (2009) pose the suggestion that this research addresses; they suggest that if teachers are to be effective per students test scores and teacher evaluations, they must modify prescribed literacy curriculum and integrate them with their pedagogical practices. In fact, Lyon and Weiser (2009) called pedagogical practices that are modified by teachers as a more refined way of getting to specific literacy skills for all students.

Case in point: the survey continues to ask participants if they followed the prescribed literacy curriculum as expected and the results are consistent with results from survey questions two through four. Concurrently, survey questions eight through ten have percentages that are over 82% as questions two through four had an average of 83%. This strong percentage is an implication not

of what teachers say but that the third theme of teachers' reflections of pedagogical practices is indicative of resistance and this theme is rightly entitled. Therefore, teachers' reflections and what they say are implications of their resistance relates to pedagogical preferences and prescribed literacy curriculum. For example, Achinstein and Ogawa (2006) investigated a male teacher who believes in resisting professional development training, by valuing his professional knowledge and participating in professional learning communities. This male teacher of an urban middle school district departed from prescribed literacy curriculum and relied on his professional knowledge as demonstrated by his pedagogical practices to support students' literacy skills (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006).

### **What Teachers Say Will Close Learning Gaps and Their Choices of Pedagogical Practices**

The researcher designed the survey tool to investigate teacher preferences to gain evidence of teacher's favor of their praxis while admitting adherence to prescribed literacy curriculum. The survey also addressed teachers' praxis integrated with prescribed literacy curriculum as demonstrated by pedagogical practices that differ from the prescribed literacy curriculum. It is reported that although as an afterthought teachers reveal that they eventually resist prescribed literacy curriculum as indicated in their actions of modifying methods of prescribed literacy curriculum in order to implement their own pedagogical practices (Jennings & DaMatta, 2009) (See Table 3 above). Prescribed literacy curriculum training and what teachers actually implement in their classrooms became inconsistent, creating learning gaps, because teachers resist the demands of what to teach and how to teach. Concurrently Jennings and DaMatta (2009) report that eventually teachers challenge or resist complete implementation of prescribed literacy curriculum because teachers want their praxis recognized as actionable to increase test scores and students' academic performance.

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Three of the eighteen survey participants were interviewed in order to hear what teachers say are the implications of their resistance as well as reflections of their pedagogical practices. Three of these teachers are white females at an elementary school in a suburban school district and have completed over twelve hours of professional development. These participants all hold master degrees in elementary education and they agreed to participate in several interviews averaging 49 minutes in length with each interview range of 39.2 minutes to 51.7 minutes. Each interview on average asked five questions that were transcribed into Microsoft Word file (Microsoft, 2013b) in which sampling codes were used thereafter. Prior to collecting any qualitative data, participants were surveyed and given opportunity to agree to interviews. When participants responded that they would like to be interviewed it was transmitted through a secure server that provided the principal investigator the survey participant responding number in accordance with their survey responses. For example, if survey participant five responded within the survey that they would be willing to be interviewed the principal investigator assigned that survey participant the anonymous identifier of participant five. Furthermore, participant five was there after provided a consent form for interviewing each time an interview was conducted.

According to the survey tool, modifications, changes or additions to the prescribed literacy curriculum was a form of resistance. Therefore, when reviewing the transcripts more than twice a highlighter was used to mark each instance the interviewee mentioned changed, modified or added to the lesson. Furthermore changing, adding to or modifying the prescribed literacy curriculum is teachers' implications that their pedagogical preferences are favored over expected prescribed literacy curriculum plans in order to meet students' needs. Craig (2006) acknowledges that teachers' preferences are what they perceive as "holding, using, and producing knowledge and personal practical knowledge" which when implementing instructional content may warrant

instructional modification (p. 261). Thus, interview questions were directed toward understanding not only pedagogical preferences but their differences in implementing what was prescribed and scripted versus what teachers actually implemented. Hence data results for the survey have to be compared across research questions and themes in an analysis of qualitative data.

Qualitative data is also needed to hear from teachers on how they actually adhere to or did not adhere to complete implementation of professional development training and prescribed literacy curriculum. Coding sections of the interview transcript would also provide connections between what teachers said and critical theory, researched literature and quantitative data sources. Furthermore, qualitative data would also indicate how teachers implemented prescribed literacy curriculum to feel responsible for students' literacy skills and what are the implications of their resistance. Thus, when interview questions were developed the overall objective is also correlated to the third research question, which ask: what do teachers say are the implications of their resistance. Interview questions were also developed to ask teachers to express how they actually implement professional development training and prescribed literacy curriculum to also address the forth research question that ask what are teachers' pedagogical choices in relation to resistance.

Addressing what teachers say are implications of their resistance can be demonstrated not only in what they say but also in their actions which is supported by critical theory and how teachers demonstrate some level of autonomy and responsibility for student literacy skills. Therefore, if teachers stated that their pedagogical preferences were to adhere or not adhere to the prescribed literacy curriculum it is an indication of their form of resistance to the prescribed literacy curriculum at this elementary school in a suburban school district. A strong representative response to the first interview question three, with each participant providing valuable information of their pedagogical preferences and was coded. Coding was noted across each participant indicating their

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ways in which they admitted they used, changed or applied “other supplements” (Interview participant 17) Continuing within this first interview, interview participant 11 stated that “sometimes it would slip out, things that were not part of the script.”

Interview participant 17 is mentioned first because when collecting quantitative data this participant disagreed to survey question four that they often performed prescribed literacy curriculum instruction according to plan but realized that plans needed to be changed. However, according to the critical framework of this study and reviewed literature provided, rather a participant agreed or disagreed to this question there is still an indication of a form of resistance if that teacher also made modification to lessons as a result of their pedagogical preferences. Therefore, it is interesting that four weeks after taking the survey, participant 17 not only admitted that they modified the prescribed literacy curriculum by adding other supplements they also stated they used “more time to get students understanding” the lesson. This finding is in agreement with theme two in which teachers favored their own pedagogical preferences in order to feel responsible for students’ literacy skills. Also theme one in reference to survey responses and according to a cross category matrix created by the researcher helps readers to visualize that if a teacher mentions modifications and adheres to prescribed literacy methods their pedagogical preferences answers research question one which addresses what forms of resistance to the prescribed literacy curriculum do teachers at this elementary school use. Furthermore, intentional modification and actions drawn from survey themes suggests teachers’ praxis indicates resistance and implications of teacher resistance.

Thus, when interviewing participants data was collected to compare against survey questions one through four in order to understand what teachers indicate as the forms of resistance to the prescribed literacy curriculum. The data was collected by highlighting within the transcript each

time the interviewee mentioned change, modified or added to the lesson as a way to demonstrate that they followed the prescribed literacy curriculum but later modified the lesson. The principal researcher summarizes that on many occasions including within this studies survey, teachers mentioned they changed, modified or added to the lesson after they agreed that they followed prescribed literacy curriculum. Case in point: participant 11 states again that she “needs to cover all the variables so that leads her to fill in gaps within each literacy lesson.” Participant 17 states, “I try to follow the prescribed lesson but I most often will adjust at the point of the lesson where students are struggling with phonics. I will build vocabulary first using my own pedagogical practices and then follow the method of the prescribed literacy curriculum.” Implications of their resistance is validated by Craig (2006) research indicating that teacher resistance to the prescribed literacy curriculum has implications that teachers are teaching reading and language skills that engage students transfer of knowledge, construction of meaning and prior knowledge. Therefore, based upon these teachers’ responses in interviews relating to modifications and the table provided; teachers implement integrated methods of prescribed literacy curriculum with adaptations and modification of pedagogical practices to ensure students self-monitor during the teaching and learning process; which is developing their literacy skills (Craig, 2006).

When looking at the cross category and themes matrix the arrows form a flow that are interrelated starting from the bottom interview tallies up to the recorded research questions (See Table 3). The middle section of the flow chart displays conceptual categories that are also correlated to critical theory, researched literature and quantitative and qualitative data sources. The flow chart is representative of critical theory because it represents a quote given by Giroux (1983) on “dialectical thinking” (p.259). Giroux (1983) contends that teachers implement “radical pedagogy” strategically because they hold a perspective that involved not only developing their

praxis but a politicized method of building students' academic skills (p.259). Case in point: whenever a teacher interviewee mentioned modification and data or testing, their preferred teaching practices were also in concurrence with following the prescribed literacy curriculum (See Table 3). Furthermore, teachers indicated their growth in pedagogical practices was a choice that was representative of how they conducted lesson within their classrooms. Therefore, there is an implication that is validated by researcher Gersten, et al. (2000) report from researchers Fuchs and Fuchs (1998) that teachers are not abandoning their post but teacher's pedagogical practices or praxis needs to accommodate students' needs and interests along with promoting students' social capital (p. 450).

In order to accomplish these objective teachers do not follow through with complete implementation of prescribed literacy curriculum. Gersten, et al. (2000) also contends that this is a teacher's survival technique within the classroom; which warrants professional learning communities. Interesting enough, however, Gersten, et al. (2000) also reports new pedagogical approaches receive attention "rather than the weight of evidence supporting effectiveness"; which is relative to teacher's praxis (p. 452). Thus, this speaks to teachers wanting their praxis to be recognized as actionable to increase test scores and students' academic performance; which is also an implication of teachers' resistance. Not only can this be witnessed in previous tables be in what teachers said in their interviews. Interview participant 11 stated that they

begin with the end in mind to strengthen student's academics so they use data and modified lessons when evaluated by their administrator on the effectiveness of their teaching strategies whether those strategies are exclusively prescribed literacy curriculum or not.

Interview participant 18 stated that they

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understand expectations as they have completed over fifteen hours of professional development a year but modification are a choice of the teacher and administration does not prevent this action from taking place but almost expect teachers to do what is needed to connect the data with successful lessons and outcomes of goals and objectives.

Interview participant 17 is a respondent that disagreed that they made modification on their survey response but later during interviews admitted that they added "other supplements" as well as adjusted the lesson so that student could "get understanding" from the lessons.

As teachers justify their actions, it is a means of wanting their actions to be justified by student outcomes. Thereby, interview participant 17 also agrees with her coworkers that "teachers are expected to produce results based on the prescribed literacy program that they are trained on but are evaluated on lessons they have modified and been observed and evaluated as effective by their administrator." Furthermore, interview participant 17 suggests that their administrator does not recognize their teaching strategies as "harmful to the way students recall or process information because the students are engaged in the lesson." Could it also be because administration at some school's concern over test scores has prompted those individuals to expect teachers to modify the prescribed literacy curriculum in order to address students' literacy skills as well as to cause students to have favorable test performance?

Therefore, in follow-up interviews, participants are answering with more clarity and forthrightness that within the first few questions of follow-up interviews, their modifications were implications that they made their own pedagogical choices. For example, in the second follow-up interview participant 18 answered the question what is a teaching practice that you used or developed from using data, drawn from the use of prescribed literacy curriculum. This question correlated to their first interview because participant 18 stated that the prescribed literacy



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curriculum is based on gathering data through pre- and post-testing in order to prepare students for future testing. Therefore, interview participant 18 restated that they “used a modification to the prescribed literacy curriculum,” that they called it, “chunking” Interview participant 18’s answers demonstrates their implication that they want their pedagogical practices to be recognized as actionable to increase test scores and students’ academic performance.

Interview participant 18 responses to this interview question also answers research question four which asked to hear from teachers about their pedagogical choices in relation to resistance. Participant 18 pedagogical choices after admitting that they follow the prescribed literacy curriculum but later change plans was to provide students with their use of a strategy called “chunking.” Participant 17 stated from their first interview that their modification was “additional materials” which added “more time” to build students literacy skills. Participant 11 stated from their first interview that modification was “adaptations to allow the student to understand the experiences of everyone else” in order to build students’ academic vocabulary. In these aforementioned examples, each interviewee has admitted they followed the prescribed literacy curriculum but they are also listing how they did not follow the prescribed literacy curriculum as planned, which is a form of resistance.

What teachers are saying is that they resist the prescribed literacy curriculum by implementing modifications to the prescribed literacy curriculum and each time there is a modification, teacher’s feel responsible for developing students’ literacy because they implemented pedagogical practices that are teacher initiated modifications. Furthermore, in every instance when the interview participants mentioned their choice to modify the lesson they were also indicating their own strategies or methods, which they also said was a choice they made to help students develop their literacy skills. To be more exact coding for the third research question involved highlighting within

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the transcript each time a teacher mentioned such as participant 17, "I followed my method," or participant 11, "I used the strategy of" or participant 18, who stated "my teaching experience has lead me to implement this strategy to help student's literacy skills."

Gersten, et al. (2000) contends that highly qualified teachers are teachers who have a "stronger sense to move toward mastery instructional practices" (p. 452) Thus, teachers' pedagogical practices integrated with prescribed literacy curriculum according to Schneider and Plasman (2011) implies that teachers develop some autonomy over teaching and learning. Teachers in this study are demonstrating modified instruction as a combination of prescribed literacy lessons and their choice of their own pedagogical practices. In turn, they are developing some autonomy over teaching and learning. This is also an implication of teacher resistances especially when considering that they are politicizing education within their particular classroom. In another example teachers' praxis are pedagogical practices forged out of resistance and they are relative to all students both general education and special education. As interview participants continued to say that they modified lessons to teach students using other strategies and methods teachers were also saying how their classrooms changed. Participant 17 stated "prescribed literacy curriculum is, breaking down into parts that are not always the key to learning, so I aligned what was being asked of the students to what I believe students' level of understanding is." This participant goes on to say that prescribed literacy curriculum is taught methodically but "all kids learn in different ways so I have used my own instincts in teaching in alternate ways and I get my alternate ways from past teaching experiences."

Participant 18 mentions choices of a similar nature when she stated that

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it is not meant for the teacher to stop the lesson because I am not following a script, it is meant for me to plan and implement the lesson based on what I know will happen if a particular student struggles.

These teachers are indicating that they are changing their classroom environment and gaining some autonomy over teaching and learning because modifications to the prescribed literacy lessons are what is actually doing within their classroom. These teachers are also mentioning how they are adjusting the course of the lesson for all students within their classroom in order to feel more responsible for students' literacy skills; which in turn build students' social capital. Not only is this evidenced by reviewed literature, social capital is defined in chapter one to include students building and applying new knowledge. Participant 11 concurs, "In instances where I am using prescribed methods and my normal modifications together, I have the sense that students are experiencing learning just the same as other students in the class." Participant 17 states, "My modifications and the use of prescribed literacy curriculum gets kids on track. I follow what is asked or suggested for me to do. But I systematically mixed the foundation of skills being learned to build literacy skills for all students." Participant 18 was very passionate in stating, "I demonstrate my modification in connection to data and prescribed literacy curriculum and it is an integration of both methods. Students are learning what they should from the lesson because I understand expectations and I lead students using prescribed literacy curriculum and my level of competency for building students' literacy skills." Participant 11 mentioned that these adjustments and choices are part of their "human element" Participant 11 explained that the "human element" was modifications that provided "some form of intervention based on my own pedagogy." The interviewee was very passionate in explaining they, "as closely as possible in kind of a two-prong

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approach, follow through the prescribed literacy lesson and use differentiated methods to reach struggling students.”

There are indications of what teachers say are the implications of their resistance because it starts with an agreement or disagreement that teachers follow the prescribed literacy curriculum. Therefore, teachers' definitions of what they are mandated to follow and/or what teachers define prescribed literacy curriculum to involve is important in understanding both the implication of their resistance and teachers' choices in relation to resistance. Therefore, in follow-up interviews participant 18 indicated that their definition of prescribed literacy curriculum “is a program that addresses planned learning starting with phonemic awareness.” This respondent mentions multiple instance of modifying prescribed literacy curriculum as planned and states that they “predict and facilitate learning based on students needing to attack the lesson in a way that the teacher is following what is needed but also modifying the way that the lesson is perceived.” Therefore, a cross theme analysis may better display teachers' resistance as it relates to modifications and choices of pedagogical practices. Table 5 below explains emerging themes and the relationship of teachers' sustained focus to implement prescribed literacy curriculum combined with their own pedagogical practices; which becomes reflective of in fact an indication of teacher resistance. The researcher draws upon not only emerging themes but also quantitative and qualitative results.

Table 4: Quantitative and Qualitative Themes

	<p><b><u>Quantitative</u> Theme 1: Pedagogical Preferences realized during adherence to script.</b></p> <p><b><u>Quantitative</u> Theme 2: Perspectives revealed that might lead to non-adherence.</b></p>	<p><b><u>Qualitative</u> Theme 3: Intentional modifications and actions suggesting teachers' praxis indicative of resistance and implements of lessons using their own teaching practices and prescribed literacy</b></p>
<p><b>Research Question 1: What forms of resistance to the prescribed literacy curriculum do teachers at this elementary school use?</b></p>	<p>61% give evidence that suggests teachers are implementing more than just the prescribed literacy curriculum as planned in order to identify with students' expected test performance results as well as to feel more responsible for students' developing literacy skills.</p>	<p>Participant 11 says, "You are left to build or strengthen their learning foundation at their level so I modify lessons with the use of prescribed materials so that students can pass the tests."</p> <p>Participant 17 says, "I look for cues and I modify parts of the prescribed literacy lesson to fit my pedagogy and to help students in all their academic needs."</p> <p>"Participant 18 says, "Modifications are a choice of the teacher and administration to connect my modifications with prescribed lessons, goals and objectives builds autonomy in the classroom."</p>
<p><b>Research Question 2: Why do teachers use resistance?</b></p>	<p>Case in point: question seven on the survey asked participants if the current prescribed literacy curriculum as demonstrated at professional development training helps teachers develop pedagogical practices responsible for developing students' literacy skills. There is certainly a discrepancy when the percentages</p>	<p>Participant 17 says, "I go through the training and I do not like following the script, so I stop reading directly from the manual, I develop my own practices to increase students' skills for all tests."</p> <p>Participant 11 says, "I attend training and it doesn't fit. I make it work by developing modifications that lead back</p>

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	<p>decrease in relation to concerns over students' expected test performance and teachers feeling responsible for developing students' literacy skills in comparison to teachers now agreeing that 89% of them believe that training and the prescribed literacy curriculum classroom materials helps teachers develop pedagogical practices responsible for developing students' literacy skills.</p>	<p>to following the prescribed guidelines but I have developed my own pedagogy. It has strengthened students' academics, thereby test scores."</p> <p>Participant 18 says, "I have demonstrated confidence in my training but in my opinion all lessons need to be differentiated. I provide differentiated lessons using training and experiences tailored to help all students. I plan lessons that improve students' vocabulary skills; which are assessed on standardized tests."</p>
<p><b>Research Questions 3 &amp; 4:</b>  <b># 3 asks:</b>  <b>What do teachers say are the implication of their resistance?</b>  <b># 4 asks:</b>  <b>What are teachers' pedagogical choices in relation to resistance?</b></p>	<p>Not only does evidence in survey question seven, to teachers now agreeing that 89% of them believe that training and the prescribed literacy curriculum classroom materials help teachers develop pedagogical practices responsible for developing students' literacy skills. The evidence also uncovered another form of resistance which is that teachers resist students' literacy skills. There is certainly a discrepancy when the percentages decreased in relation to concerns over students' expected test performance and teachers feeling responsible for prescribed literacy curriculum by developing their own pedagogical practices within their classrooms in order to feel responsible for developing students' literacy</p>	<p>Participant 18 says, "I have demonstrated confidence in my training but in my opinion all lessons need to be differentiated. I provide differentiated lessons using training and experiences tailored to help all students. I plan lessons that improve students' vocabulary skills; which are assessed on standardized tests. I modified lessons because it was definitely needed, because I present the lesson in a way that students would perceive awareness of learning. Because some students have just stopped in the midst of a lesson because they were stomped. I used my own way of guided reading to help them realize they can tackle the concept."</p> <p>Participant 11 says, "I attend training and it doesn't fit. I</p>

	<p>skills. The percentage is unmistakable and higher than survey questions five and six participants if the current prescribed literacy curriculum as demonstrated at professional development training helps teachers develop (equating to 72% and 61%) which suggests as an implication that when using the prescribed literacy curriculum as planned. Not only did teachers need to modify plans, but they also preferred using their own pedagogical practices that they had developed because it defines their praxis.</p>	<p>make it work by developing modifications that lead back to following the prescribed guidelines but I have developed my own pedagogy. It has strengthened students' academics, thereby test scores. I used secondary sources such as YouTube and help develop students' literacy skills using various computer software. I noticed that students were thinking more using technology and they were able to give me examples of words like advocacy.”</p> <p>Participant 17 says, “I go through the training and I do not like following the script, so I stop reading directly from the manual, I develop my own practices to increase students' skills for all tests. I am evaluated on achieving the objective of the lesson so I have shared with other teachers my general practice approach to making modifications to prescribed literacy curriculum and accompanying that approach with my way of using word families to build students' phonics skills.”</p>
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The researcher also created a graph to demonstrate a cross themes analysis for both qualitative and quantitative data and compared theme one to responses from the first interview. In order to compare data across categories the number of agree and strongly agree responses for each theme on average was calculated in Microsoft Excel (2013b) and compared against the number of

disagree or strongly disagree averages. The researcher analysis resulted in 83% of participants either agreeing or strongly agreeing and 17% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. Then comparing to interview responses, the interview transcript for participant 11 noted a definition of prescribed literacy curriculum as “daily exercise for students and teachers provided by the district in the form of materials, books and manuals and associated test documents.” As a result, the cross themes analysis of qualitative and quantitative data revealed perspectives that following the forms of materials, books and associated test documents may lead to non-adherence by 83%. Because this 83% represented teachers who said they were following the prescribed literacy curriculum books, manuals and associated test documents but they later realized those plans needed to be changed (See Table 4, p. 125).

#### **Teachers' Praxis Recognized As Actionable**

Furthermore, when teachers did not say exactly how they resisted the prescribed literacy curriculum but they implemented modified pedagogical practices it follows that what they said reveals some perspectives of resistance. Therefore, when examining cross theme analysis for theme two, which is perspectives revealed that may lead to non-adherence, results show that 74% of teachers both agreed or strongly agreed to survey questions five through seven. However, 26% were in disagreement that their perspectives revealed some form of non-adherence to the prescribed literacy curriculum. It is evident that implications of teacher resistance are more prevalent in the 26% of individuals disagreeing that their perspectives may NOT lead to non-adherence to the prescribed literacy curriculum than of individuals who agreed that their perspectives may lead to non-adherences to the prescribed literacy curriculum.

The researcher concludes this because Ernest, et al. (2011) reports that “research has shown; teachers who believed they have the skills and ability to influence student learning and behavior



## TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL RESPONSES 128

regardless of external factors are more likely to modify and adapt instruction” (p. 192). Some teachers will still report they are following the prescribed literacy curriculum but not completely because they make modification. Rather they agree or disagree represents forms of resistance, why they resist, teachers’ implications of resistance and their choices of pedagogical practices. Therefore 74% of teachers agreeing that their perspectives may lead to non-adherence to the prescribed literacy curriculum are also valid when 26% of these teachers disagree that their perspective may not lead to not adhering to the prescribed literacy curriculum when teachers have made modifications.

More to this reasoning can be concluded because there were 89% of teachers who had already admitted that they modify prescribed literacy lessons based upon survey responses. Therefore, and moreover this evidence suggests that there is a lack of evidence demonstrating how teachers are actually implementing lessons. If teachers are strategically adjusting the long standing educational system and politicizing education within their classroom by favoring their own praxis it follows that cross themes analysis of quantitative and qualitative data is strongly suggesting teacher resistance. Furthermore, it can be validated that teachers want their praxis recognized as actionable to increase test scores and students’ academic performance. Interview participants demonstrated how they are responsible and expected to develop students’ literacy skills using the prescribed literacy curriculum although they modify prescribed literacy curriculum. Thus, rather the teacher agrees or disagrees that they are responsible for developing student literacy skills and are expected to develop student’s literacy skills, when answering what forms of resistance do teachers use and why do teachers use resistance it is the differences in their actions that validates this evidence. Teachers’ actions and what they think about their actions have been recorded in previous tables and correlated to reviewed literature.

Because teachers want their praxis to be acknowledged as actionable in increasing student's literacy skills, teachers' pedagogical practices do not decrease students' social capital but their pedagogical practices are intentional, which creates instructional context that meets the needs and interest of all learners. Therefore, the cross themes analysis was followed up with two graphs, implications of resistance and intentional modifications leading to praxis. These graphs will be discussed within chapter five of this study but are mentioned here to indicate that further qualitative data as represented by interviews may provide evidence to how teachers are actually implementing prescribed literacy curriculum and modifications to prescribed literacy curriculum. Furthermore, the graphs can add clarity of implications for future research.

**Figure 2: Implications of Resistance**

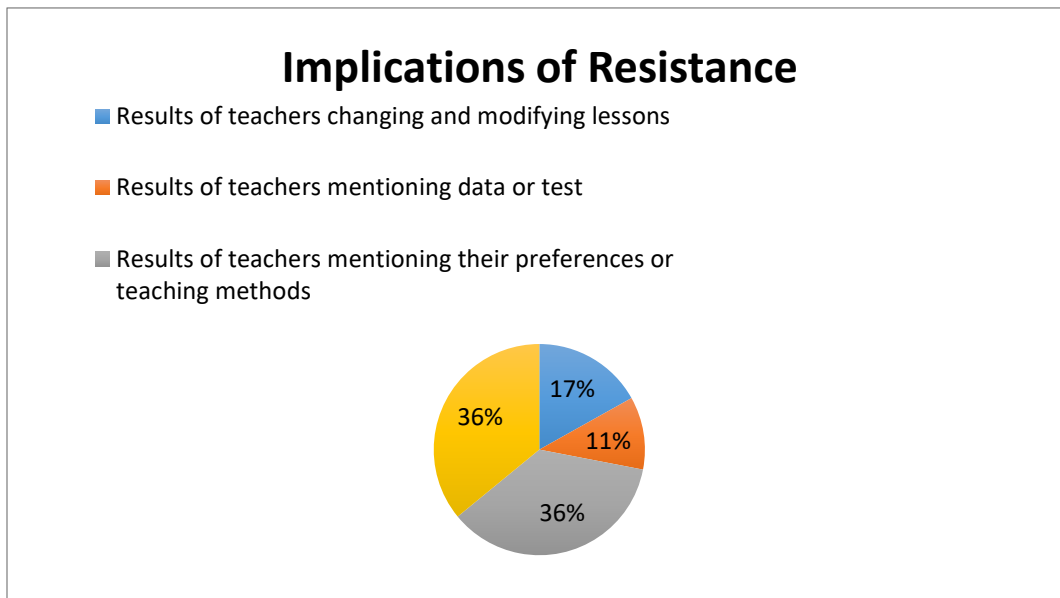
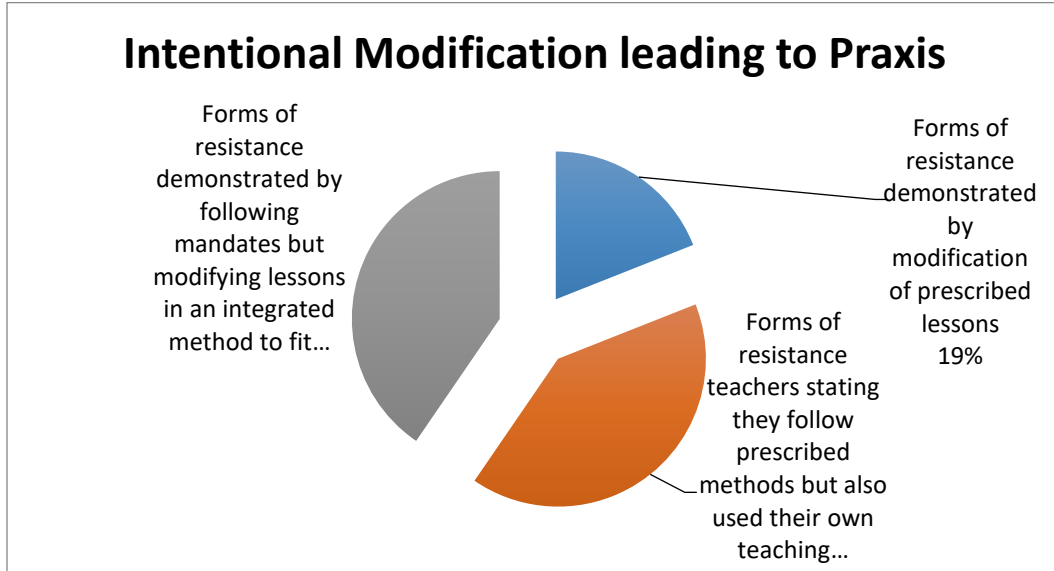
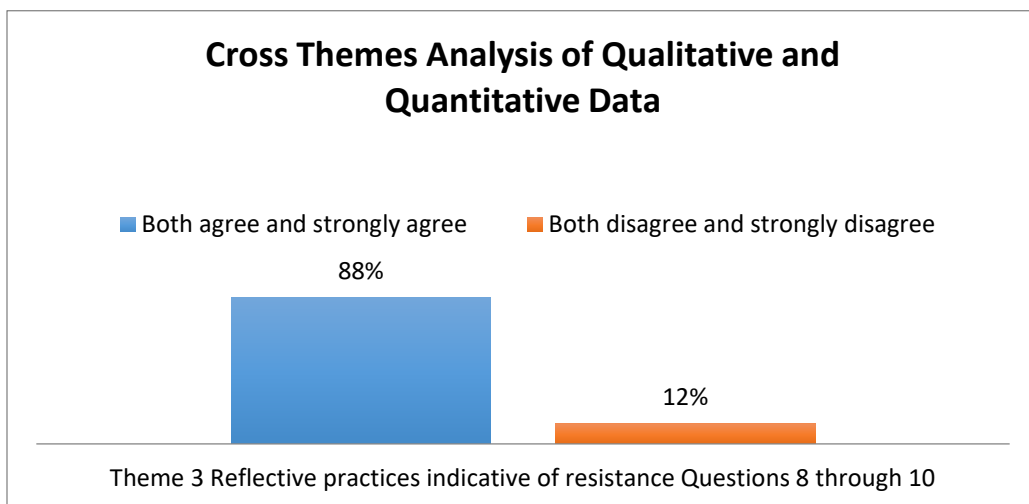
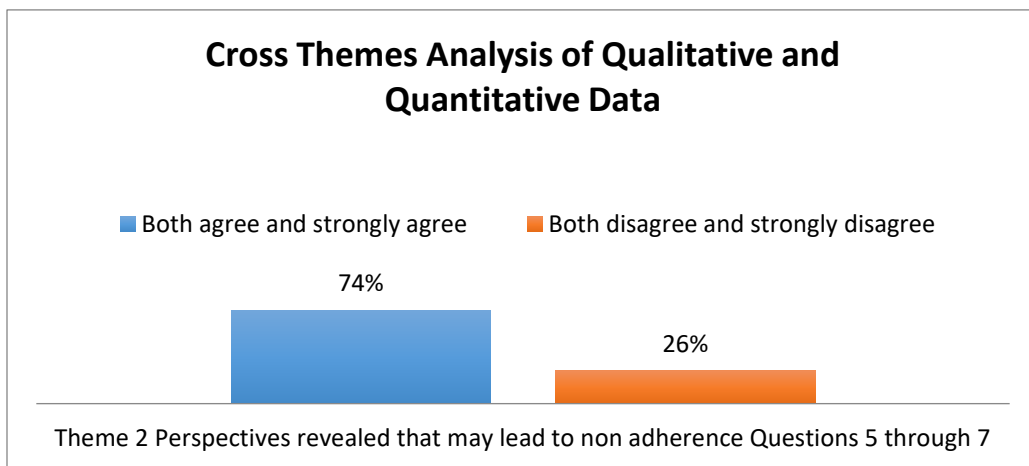
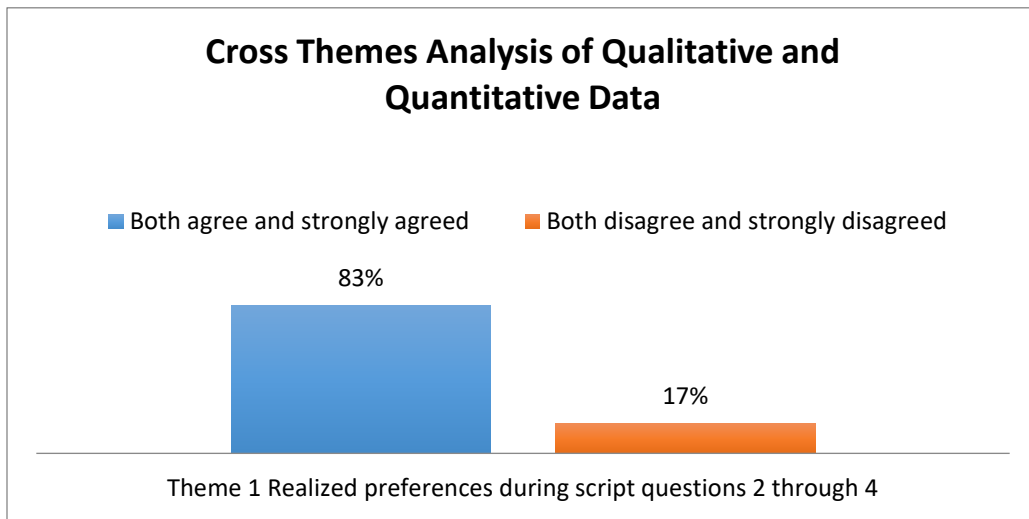


Figure 3: Intentional Modification Leading to Praxis



The cross themes analysis of qualitative and quantitative data according to Figure 4 also displays results of 88% of teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing and 12% both disagreeing or in strong disagreement that there exists some indication of teacher resistance (See Figure 4, next page). As it results, this evidence suggest that teachers are implementing more than just the prescribed literacy curriculum as planned in order to identify with students expected test performance results as well as to feel more responsible for students developing literacy skills. The questions related to theme three and survey questions eight through ten does not specifically ask if teachers develop pedagogical practices of their own from professional development training and the current prescribed literacy curriculum classroom materials but there is certainly a discrepancy when the percentages decrease then increase indicating what teachers demonstrate, say and believe.

Figure 4: Cross Themes Analysis of Qualitative and Quantitative Data



In comparison to cross themes analysis of qualitative and quantitative data, the cross category and themes matrix provided a flow chart that tallied each time a teacher mentioned change, modified or adding to the lesson which also admits the teacher followed the prescribed literacy curriculum but provided evidence that modification was a form of resistance (See Table 3). The matrix listed one-hundred and fifty-six times teachers mentioned modifications which would lead to research question two of why to teachers use resistance. The researchers make this conclusion because teachers' modifications are a form of resistance demonstrated in not adhering to the complete implementation of the prescribed literacy curriculum at the one elementary school in a suburban district. Furthermore, teachers' modifications were in relation to data results from task that assesses students' literacy skills and or students' test performance. Therefore, although survey percentages from theme two decreased, 74% of teachers agreed that their perspectives may lead to non-adherence to the prescribed literacy curriculum and 26% of these teachers disagree that their perspective may not lead to not adhering to the prescribed literacy curriculum. Meaning that 89% of teachers who had already admitted that they modify prescribed literacy lessons were suggesting that there is a lack of evidence demonstrating how they actually implement lessons to become more responsible for student's literacy skills, and results from test performance.

Case in point: during interviews teachers mentioned data or test performance one hundred and three times. Participant 18 stated that

while following the guidelines my disagreement with the prescribed program coherence comes into play because the program may think that it has predicted where students will be based on the testing but I use data so that the secondary approach I use expands to both struggling students and students that understand the context as well as the concept.

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Participant 18 mentioned their preference to take a secondary approach that is a modification to following the prescribed literacy curriculum guidelines. When participant 18 was interviewed they mentioned "I prefer to modify lessons in order to become more responsible for data or test performances in relation to student's literacy skills." This teacher validated their preferences according to the cross category theme matrix; which demonstrated, three hundred and thirty-three times across interviews, teachers preferred to modify lessons to help build students literacy skills.

Using the cross category and themes matrix this data extends to why teachers use resistance, what are their pedagogical choices and what do teachers say are their implications of their resistance. The data is correlated to survey questions four and seven which reports that 89% of teachers modify lessons and use the current prescribed literacy curriculum and professional development training to develop their own pedagogical practices responsible for developing students' literacy skills. If teachers are strategically adjusting the long standing educational system and politicizing education within their classroom by favoring their own praxis or pedagogical practices, it follows that cross themes analysis of quantitative and qualitative data strongly suggest teacher resistance. Thus, the matrix created by the researcher also takes into account how many times teachers' actions or choices were based upon student's needs or their skill level.

Crocco and Costigan (2007) posit that teachers who resist take this risk because they believe they are addressing student's needs and interest to build student's social capital and cultural identity. The study results within this chapter have drawn conclusions from critical theory, reviewed literature and participant survey and interviews that teachers' modifications to the prescribed literacy curriculum is a form of resistance which leads to why teachers resist in order to become more responsible for student's literacy skills and to have their praxis recognized as actionable in the results associated to student's literacy skills and testing data. Therefore, it

## TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL RESPONSES 134

becomes that teachers' preferences to politicize education within their classroom are intentional modifications that are indicative of teachers using their own teaching practices and the prescribed literacy curriculum.

The percentages of 74% of teachers agreeing that their perspectives may lead to non-adherence to the prescribed literacy curriculum and 26% of these teachers disagreeing that their perspective may not lead to not adhering to the prescribed literacy curriculum is also noted within the cross category theme matrix as an implication of teacher resistance and what are teachers' pedagogical choices in relation to resistance. Although there is little evidence that teacher resistance is relative to their praxis of integrating prescribed literacy curriculum and their own pedagogical practices, research highlights instances where teachers' pedagogical practices are rooted in instructional context of teaching and learning experiences (Jennings & Da Matta, 2009; Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006). Jennings and Da Matta (2009) cite that teachers are educational reformers that possess professional knowledge as demonstrated by their pedagogical practices as well as their ability to "imagine pedagogical possibilities" using multiple resources (p. 217).

Achinstein and Ogawa (2006) contend that teachers are effective because teachers take autonomy over teaching and learning to guide instruction even if it conflicts with policies and mandates. The degree that teacher's pedagogical preferences guide their pedagogical practices reflects upon student's social capital, academic assessments, and teacher's professional knowledge. The researcher cross category theme matrix demonstrates that teachers mentioned three-hundred and thirty-two times that their preference and choices to base modifications upon students' needs and or skill level was intentional and in some instances expected. The matrix flows upward to represent that teachers mentioning their preference and choices are intentional in favoring and adjusting expectations they had previously followed indicating teachers' praxis

integrated with prescribed literacy methods, which is a form of resistance. Therefore, this study identifies the problem that teachers feel bullied into fully implementing prescribed literacy curriculum at the expenses of their own praxis and its impact on student learning, thus creating various forms of teacher resistance.



**CHAPTER 5 IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

In this study, eighteen current elementary teachers were surveyed and three of these teachers were interviewed to learn of their pedagogical preferences to the prescribed literacy curriculum at one elementary school in a midwestern suburban district. Various questions demonstrate that results are not confusing, plans that are being followed by teachers are the prescribed literacy curriculum plans yet teachers are overwhelming stating that they realized the prescribed literacy curriculum plans needed to be changed. Therefore, after interviews were recorded, transcribed, cross-categorized and referenced with analysis from surveys to identify emergent themes, results revealed that due to teachers' prescribed literacy lesson modifications, teachers were favoring different pedagogical practices. Giroux (1989) calls this radical pedagogy because teachers are finding ways to politicize education within their classrooms.

Therefore, it is implied that teacher resistance is revealed when teachers integrate the prescribed literacy curriculum with their own pedagogical practices. It was mentioned in chapter four that the researcher had discovered that teachers were saying that their administrator expected them to modify prescribed literacy lessons. Therefore, in doing so it is revealed that teachers modified prescribed literacy lessons and integrated those lessons with their own pedagogical practices. The researcher also mentioned that teachers were not reporting how they were actually integrating the prescribed literacy lessons with their own pedagogical practices; in other words, teachers were not specific in what their pedagogical practices are. Maskiewicz and Winters (2012) reported that teacher's implementation of their own pedagogical practices integrated with prescribed literacy curriculum methods results in "less sophisticated" literacy instruction and moves further to suggest that this is why students are failing in the area of literacy (p. 459).

Interview participants expressed their understanding of Maskiewicz and Winters (2012) statement as they gave their definition of prescribed literacy curriculum. This study is situated in contextual dynamics of one elementary school in a suburban school district from which results can be applied and implemented in each teacher's classrooms. Thus, the researcher found that there is also an implication that teachers are integrating prescribed literacy curriculum with their own pedagogical practices because they are aware of what to teach because it is relative to their particular student population. However according to curriculum developers and observers of pedagogical practices if there is not a complete implementation of the prescribed literacy curriculum training, what teachers actually implement in their classrooms become inconsistent, creating learning gaps (Jennings & Da Matta, 1999).

As a result, it is implied that teachers are not concerned about the sophisticated nature of the prescribed literacy curriculum due to teacher resistance and teacher's use of the prescribed literacy curriculum integrated with their own pedagogical practices. Furthermore, it is revealed that there is no need to report how teachers are actually implementing these practices. However, future research is needed to focus upon prescribed literacy lessons modifications and teachers use of their own pedagogical practices in order to support teachers' professional knowledge. Pedagogical practices that are supported could encourage teachers to share more openly their experiences, praxis and perspectives toward increasing all students' literacy skills relative to test performances and curriculum materials.

### **Implications of Modifications**

This is important because all three interview participants demonstrated different preferences in their modifications and in their understanding that they are expected to make modifications to the prescribed literacy curriculum in order to become responsible for developing student's literacy

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skills. Interview participant 11 is a woman who has completed sixteen years of teaching service and twelve hours of professional development. Her responses reflected that she is left to “fill in the blanks and gaps” and “go beyond and make adaptations to the followed prescribed guidelines.” Interview participant 18 is a woman who has completed nineteen years of teaching service and fourteen hours of professional development. Her responses reflected that she used smaller task and more time to “adjust to lessons that meet the different needs of students.” This teacher later explains that through her training she is advised that pedagogical practices requiring students to use inquiry and discussion strategies required more time throughout the lesson. Interview participant 17 is a woman who has completed twenty years of service and fourteen hours of professional development. Her responses demonstrated that “other supplements,” which equates to modifications, were from her years of teaching experiences and strategies she had gained over the years. The interview participant explained that in “addition to scripted lessons” she “makes modifications to help students that struggle.”

Future research concerning teachers' professional knowledge would address teachers' preferences and pedagogical practices. Because it is revealed that these teachers are expressing understanding that students need more than a prescribed literacy curriculum and it is based upon their additions to the prescribed literacy curriculum. Furthermore, it is noted that each teacher responses were concerning being responsible for student's literacy skills. Their understanding is not just for struggling students but also for students that understood but needed a little more time with the prescribed literacy lesson. Thus, as it is mentioned in the reviewed literature teachers use of their praxis combined with the prescribed literacy curriculum is for all students not just general education students or those students labeled to receive special education services. Moreover, Crocco and Costigan (2007) contends that "developing innovative professional discretion should

be the long-term goal of teacher development and curriculum policy "instead of devaluing teachers and decreasing their autonomy" (p. 530).

Thus, considering teachers' pedagogical preferences and what effectively achieves students' literacy success, there needs to be an analysis of teachers' praxis and teachers' use of integrated methods of prescribed literacy curriculum in relation to teacher resistance. It is implied that future research would provide an analysis of counter pedagogies that cause adjustments to educational systems that have been long standing but are now politicizing education within teachers' classroom. Survey questions five through seven were examined in chapter four in order to discuss the theme revealing that teachers have perspectives and pedagogical practices, which lead to resistance. There are implications in teachers' practices, which are observed by administrators because administrators expect teachers to make modifications to the prescribed literacy curriculum. Thus, it is revealed that teachers are knowledgeable of what to teach and how to teach. Therefore, it follows that future research would provide an analysis of counter pedagogies that Giroux (1989) calls radical pedagogy because teachers are finding ways to politicize education within their classrooms.

### **Confidence in Praxis**

The teachers in this study were expected to make modifications to the prescribed literacy lessons because they spoke with confidence that their teacher evaluations as well as student's literacy development had resulted in favorable results. It stands then that teachers' pedagogical practices should be recognized as more than "less sophisticated" but formable practices that help them become responsible for developing students' literacy skills. In turn, this study provides evidence that teachers' pedagogical practices help close learning gaps upon a pedagogical platform based upon differential perspectives, ideologies, professional development methods, curriculum

materials and modified prescribed literacy practices. As there is power in resistance, which gives autonomy and agency, professional knowledge as demonstrated by teachers' praxis implicates grounds for pedagogical practices that favor integrating prescribed literacy curriculum with teachers' preferred pedagogical practices.

This, however, presents further questions for future research relating to professional development training. Instead of teacher resistance creating learning gaps and inconsistencies in the prescribed literacy curriculum, could there exist perpetuated learning gaps in prescribed literacy curriculum and inconsistencies in professional development training. When investigating forms of resistance to the prescribed literacy curriculum it was hypothesized that teachers' resistance takes on many forms as teachers try to match the varying needs and interest of all students. Thus, student learning at varying levels causes teachers to modify prescribed literacy curriculum in order to provide teaching and learning opportunities for all students. Furthermore, there was an investigation of why do teachers use resistance, it was hypothesized that teachers use resistance because prescribed literacy curriculum does not match instructional context of teaching and learning within individual teacher's classrooms. However, the results lead to implications that teachers are relying upon their own praxis in order to match students' needs and interests.

“One teacher learned that choosing specific areas rather than broad ones proved effective in supporting struggling students (Kaiser, et al., 2009, p.453). However, pedagogical practices related to prescribed literacy curriculum reports gaps for all learners because of “uniform application of one strategy based on skill or concept deficit” (Ernest, et al., 2011, p.192). Therefore, the researcher interviewed teachers and they admitted that they noticed inconsistencies and wanted to close learning gaps. For example, interview participant 11 stated they used “data to guide instruction and helped students understand the concept of the lesson.” Interview participant 18

explained that they could predict moments when the prescribed literacy lesson would fail to provide understanding to students so this teacher “used a fine toothed comb to learning and laid learning brick by brick.” Interview participant 17 also had predictions when the prescribed literacy lesson would need adjustments to “build skills in a general practice way.” The teacher explained that general practice was an element that the prescribed literacy curriculum lacks because within the provided prescribed literacy materials and according to professional development training students needed strategies such as word families. But she notes that students need strategies according to her pedagogical practices that provide clarification of how word families work and how they are most useful.

The review of literature reveals that high stakes testing to demonstrate students test performance in relation to prescribed literacy curriculum is contradictory to teachers' praxis, instructional context and students' social participation. Likewise, Lumpe, et al. (2012) reports that professional development training; which disseminates prescribed learning curriculum, is a “woefully inadequate” when prescribed learning methods lack evidence of unified concepts such as student cognitive processing, teacher praxis and student social participation (p. 154). Schneider and Plasman (2011) also state that teachers are forerunners of the education of all students based upon teachers' praxis, which provide equitable teaching and learning opportunities for all students. This demonstrates equitable learning environments, which is relative to students' social participation, academic engagement and cognitive processing (Jennings & DaMatta, 2009 and Schneider & Plasman, 2011).

### **Developing Students' Literacy with Modified Pedagogical Practices**

The results are clearer when examining survey question four and survey question seven more closely in that teachers modified lessons according to survey question four and survey question

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seven which also says that 89% of teachers gained knowledge from training and prescribe literacy curriculum classroom materials as they modified these lessons. It follows then that what teachers are actually implementing within their classroom is representative of sixteen out of eighteen teachers agreeing that they develop pedagogical practices from an integration of their praxis and prescribed literacy materials, which helps them become more responsible for developing students' literacy skills. Even more interview participants concur in their responses as they all summarize that modifications are needed in order to develop students' literacy skills. Therefore, future research into professional development training that support teachers' praxis is needed.

Maskiewicz and Winters (2012) and Lyon and Weiser (2009) studied an urban elementary school teacher resistance strategy toward prescribed literacy curriculum as the manner in which teachers prefer their own pedagogical practices before prescribed literacy curriculum. For example, Maskiewicz and Winters (2012) and Lyon and Weiser (2009) found that urban elementary teachers' praxis gave evidence of student motivation and academic engagement in the form of effective academic assessment and student success. Additionally, Brouwer (2012) reported that teachers utilize their own pedagogical practices to facilitate teaching and learning that is both motivational and engaging. However, because teachers feel the need to resist prescribed literacy curriculum in a form that is almost masked in the very prescribed literacy program that they agree to implement as expected there are implications of what Giroux (1983) calls "radical pedagogy" (259).

It seems that there is adequate preparation from universities and professional development training because teachers are able to develop their own praxis within classrooms where literacy is prescribed for student learning. However, policies perpetuating systematic pressures do not recognize teachers' professional knowledge in developing students' literacy skills. Pedagogical

preferences in favor of teacher praxis have been around since the 1980's and have since devised efforts to sustain effective pedagogical practices (Gersten, et al., 2000). However, where professional development offered solutions to learning gaps teachers rarely attended to “outside expertise” because it “required changes outside of teachers’ instructional practices” (Gersten, et al., 2000, p. 446-47). So, teachers resist prescribed literacy curriculum because prescribed literacy curriculum represents “one path to high levels of sustained use stemmed from administrative mandate, strong user commitment and practice mastery” (Gersten, et al., 2000, p. 448).

### **Teacher Reflections and Pedagogical Choices**

What is implied is that resistance as demonstrated by teachers is the choice to modify, the choice to politicize education within teachers’ classroom, the choice to favor teacher praxis over complete implementation of the prescribed literacy curriculum and the choice to be intentional in providing specific practices in order to become more responsible in developing student’s literacy skills. Interesting enough the researcher realized that although modification to the prescribed literacy curriculum and being more responsible for students’ literacy skills and assessment performance was prominent in identifying forms of teacher resistance and why teacher used resistance; implications of why teachers use resistance and their pedagogical choices were the strongest results when examining cross category and themes (See Figures 2 and 3, next page):



Figure 2: Implications of Resistance

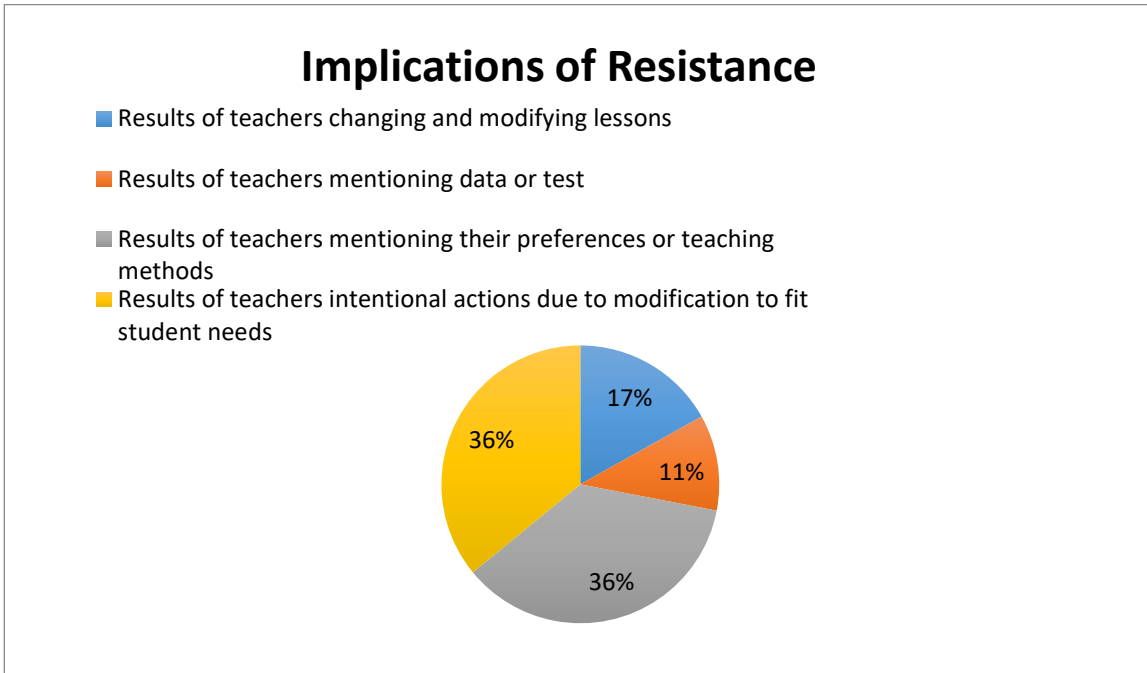
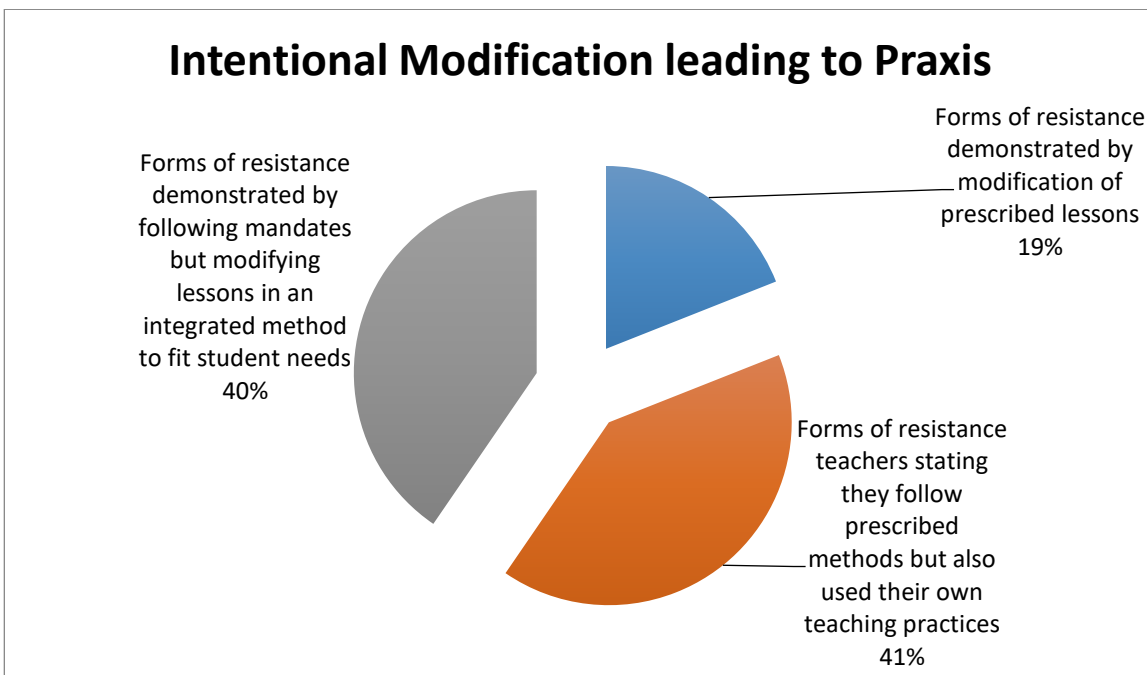


Figure 3: Intentional Modification Leading to Praxis



The teachers' answers implicating resistances were both 36% for what teachers say were their preferences or teaching methods and for what are teachers' intentional actions due to modifications

## TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL RESPONSES 145

to meet students' needs. Teachers mentioned that they changed or modified prescribed lessons on a lesser scale equating to 17% and teacher mentioned data or test performance at 11%. These results indicate that teachers favor their choices and it is implied and relative to data that their choices involve modifications. The differences in percentages can be explained as teachers have become more comfortable in their choices therefore their preferences were seen as more of an intentional modification than simple changing and adjustments of prescribed literacy lessons. Therefore, the researcher created another graph, which takes into account teachers' form of resistance by initiating modifications but for varying reasons of using their praxis integrated with the prescribed literacy curriculum. The graph displays that there is a form of resistance indicated by modifications but relative to meeting students' needs. There is also an implication that this form of resistance is an integrated approach of teacher praxis and prescribed literacy curriculum. This discovery equated to 40% while teacher modifications as a completion of a daily lesson without an integrated approach was 19%. Concurrently the graph displays that teachers' form of resistance through modifications to provide lessons more contextualized for meeting students understanding was 41%.

Teachers' praxis is developed in correlation to resistance in response to mandates that are associated with prescribed literacy curriculum. Thus, it is implied that teachers' observations and or evaluations by administrators should result in some recognition of teachers' effort to modify the prescribed literacy curriculum in order to provide literacy instruction that meets the needs of all students. In return if this was to happen it would further validate that teachers who demonstrate resistance and favor their own pedagogical practices recognize instructional context as fluid and innovative. This would also demonstrate teachers' professional knowledge, which also validates their responsibility for developing students' literacy skills through integrated methods of their

preferred pedagogical practices and the prescribed literacy curriculum. However, as it stands pedagogical preferences in favor of prescribed literacy curriculum do not recognize teachers' professional knowledge as demonstrated by teachers' pedagogical practices. Therefore, teachers ready themselves for mandates and resist prescribed literacy curriculum as they demonstrate pedagogical practices also known as their praxis integrated with the prescribed literacy curriculum.

In a critical sense teacher resistance is defined as when teachers develop counter pedagogical practices that resist prescribed learning curriculum that are most often introduced through professional development training or textbook materials. Therefore, Jennings and Da Matta (2009) defines teacher resistance as an actionable perspective that has implications and "practices rooted in resistance to oppression and recognizing that their work has evolved as their craft" (p. 226). Future research is needed in order to suggest policies that would recognize teachers "craft" as active professional knowledge within the classrooms that develops students' literacy skills and is supported by curriculum developers, policy makers and school district administrators. Future research may warrant that there is an importance in literacy curriculum consistency across schools and grade levels because interview participants in this study concur, "what is needed is connected to data that has resulted from successful lessons and the outcomes of goals and objectives" Interview participant 18 stated this as she discussed certain modifications used to assure that "students' academic success is based on her training, the prescribed materials and her educational background"

### **Importance of Politicizing Education Within Classrooms**

Furthermore, it is implied that through professional development training and demonstration of teachers' development of their praxis, that the context of teachers' classrooms is greatly enhanced. Therefore, Ponte, et al. (2004) recited clearly that "professional knowledge consist of

practical wisdom, insight and understanding which enables teachers to achieve educational and moral objectives in practice” (p. 572). Adaptations enacted by teachers that build student social capital is purposeful or intentional, part of cultural pedagogy and part of a teachers "developmental praxis and professional responsibility” (Ponte, et al., 2004, p. 573). Thus, Greenleaf and Hitchman (2009) give a direct quote from Hall (2009), stating, “It is critical of students to embrace literacy, engage as readers, and improve academic performance. To do such work, teachers must get to know young people's current literacy-related identity construction” (p. 6). Concurrently, teachers develop their praxis through the approach Greenleaf and Hitchman (2009) mentioned, as they facilitate teaching and learning based upon classroom context and modified pedagogical practices according to the needs and interest of their students. Future research is needed in understanding this dichotomy as teaching and learning that is critical to students “literacy-related identity construction” but also involved in teacher resistance implies demonstration of education politicized within teachers’ classrooms (Greenleaf & Hitchman, 2009, p. 6).

I concluded this section stating what I discovered while reflecting upon the literature, results and an example from Greenleaf and Hitchman (2009) who mentioned a struggling reading student who created their own reading challenges. This example speaks to the consistency across school district and grade levels because their example speaks to students taking ownership of their own learning based upon teachers’ resistance. The student in Greenleaf and Hitchman (2009) study enjoyed and comprehended internet news that had been a reading challenge for him in the past. Greenleaf and Hitchman (2009) explains that his teachers stated that if they, “asked Terrance, they would find that he brings a wealth of literacy practices and knowledge, as well as some charmingly idiosyncratic interests and motivations, to his reading” (p. 8).

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Therefore, Greenleaf and Hitchman (2009) cite that teachers in this study reserved the responsibility to base teaching and learning on the context of their classroom (p. 8). Their student, although previously recognized as a struggling student demonstrated success with literacy based upon his teachers' preferred pedagogical practices. The teachers in this current study created equitable learning opportunities for all students as well, for example, interview participant 18 stated they "modified the way that literacy lesson material was perceived." Interview participant 11 stated that they "used secondary approaches to help student understand the context for understanding and comprehension of literacy lessons." Interview participant 17 stated that they "stopped reading directly from the manual and allowed students to build skills using alternate ways and a little more time."

Therefore, I found teachers' responses were based upon their need to demonstrate their pedagogical preferences. Teachers acknowledged their pedagogical preferences by demonstrating professional knowledge drawn from their own praxis. Furthermore, although teachers felt bullied into force-feeding prescribed literacy curriculum; they welcomed encouragement to modify lessons. Not only did teachers welcome lesson modifications, teachers were determined to modify lessons in order to develop and increase all students' literacy skills. Within the literature it is revealed that teachers recognize an imbalance of power that is under the guise of student academic achievement. Thus, from a critical stance, the mask has to come off if teachers' pedagogical practices are to increase student expectations, which will help build students' literacy skills. As a result, I discovered that teachers are using resistance to demonstrate methods of increasing student expectations using an integrated approach of their own teaching practices and lesson modifications combined with the prescribed literacy curriculum mandates.

In conclusion, the research on teacher resistance was scarce to uncover but the review of literature revealed that this was the “dehumanizing pedagogy” that causes teachers to resist prescribed literacy curriculum (Jennings & Da Matta, 2009, p. 224). Teachers proposed realistic pedagogical practices when they resist prescribed literacy curriculum. I conducted this study because teacher resistance is believed to be a more effective action that causes teachers to favor their praxis over prescribed literacy curriculum. Furthermore, reflections of teachers who resist demonstrate underlying systematic dynamics to improve students’ literacy skills and support professional development training methods by integrating methods of prescribed literacy curriculum with teachers’ pedagogical practices. Thereby, the study benefits future teachers and educational districts by bringing attention to the supports and obstacles involved with prescribed literacy curriculum for both general and special education students. Therefore, results have discussed the overarching purpose of this study that worked to develop means to voice gaps between prescribed literacy curriculum and teachers’ pedagogical practices in order to demonstrate how teachers have found ways to integrate both methods.

A limitation to this study is seen in the small sample size. Although there were eighteen surveys it was noticed by the researcher that more surveys would have provide more quantitative data. Also of those surveyed if there were more to survey it may have been possible to have more interviewed as only three survey participants agreed to be interviewed. The researcher made the mistake of only completing the study at one elementary school in a suburban district that employed twenty-one teachers instead of having several schools to compare results across suburban and urban school districts. The participants were white women and they were all elementary school teachers. The researcher did not gather information from grade levels above fifth grade. In

## TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL RESPONSES 150

reflection, it is possible that men may have answered differently than women and higher grade levels may have held difference perspectives for prescribed literacy curriculum.

The emergent themes of this study demonstrated differences in pedagogical practices so that all interviews helped readers learn of teachers' preferences and beliefs surrounding student literacy. The responses of the participants address their reflections to pedagogical practices that was reviewed comparatively to their survey responses and identified modifications that helped teachers to feel responsible for developing students' literacy skills. Within the reviewed literature it was mentioned that teachers make modification to adjust the learning context of their classroom in order to fit students' needs, which indicates teacher resistance. The recognizable connection to teachers' resistance and modification to the prescribed literacy curriculum has lead the researcher to recognize that there is no need to report how teachers are implementing instruction because teachers are using a combination of their praxis and prescribed literacy curriculum.

Therefore, this study identified the problem that teachers felt bullied into fully implementing prescribed literacy curriculum at the expenses of their own praxis and its impact on developing student literacy skills, thus creating various forms of teacher resistance. The critical stance identified is that teachers politicize education within their classroom through a context relative to students' specific needs to develop literacy skills. Giroux (1983) states that teacher resistance helps to "identify how ideologies become constituted and they can then identify and reconstruct social practices and processes that break rather than continue existing forms of social and psychological domination" (p. 258). Thus, it is essential to complete future research because as researcher Kincheloe (2004) notes from researchers Elmore (1997) and Schubert (1998)

Those who make educational policy almost never engage in classroom practice. These policy makers, especially in the recent standards reforms, have in many cases completely disregarded

the expertise and concerns of classroom teachers and imposed the most specific modes of instructional practice on them. This type of imposition is unacceptable. Teachers in a democratic society have to play a role in the formulation of professional practices, educating the public, and educational policymaking (p. 52).



APPENDIX A

**SURVEY TOOL: PEDAGOGICAL PREFERENCES AND PRESCRIBED LITERACY CURRICULUM**

**To what extent do you disagree or agree with the following:**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Agree      Strongly Agree



1. What is your educational background, indicate bachelors, masters or beyond and does it include ten hours of professional development to date?
2. Literacy curriculum instruction as prescribed by professional development training is well coordinated across grade levels and students' learning styles.
3. Professional development training in the last year has sustained a coherent focus that you have applied in the classroom.
4. I often perform prescribed literacy curriculum instruction according to plan but realize that plans need to be changed.

**PROGRAM COHERENCE WITHIN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MANDATES**

**To what extent do you disagree or agree with the following:**

5. There is enough research on literacy curriculum as demonstrated at professional development training to identify desired results of student literacy.
6. The current prescribed literacy curriculum as demonstrated at professional development training helps teachers to feel responsible for developing student's literacy.
7. The current prescribed literacy curriculum as demonstrated at professional development training helps teachers to develop pedagogical practices responsible for developing students' literacy skills.

**TEACHER ACTION AND RESPONSE**

**To what extent do you disagree or agree with the following:**

8. Teaching and learning methods and curriculum materials from professional development training are expected to become a daily part of literacy instruction.
9. You often use teaching and learning methods and curriculum materials from professional development training as expected during daily literacy instruction.
10. Your professional knowledge for literacy instruction reflects strategies gained in professional learning communities (PLC's).

**APPENDIX B**

**INFORMED CONSENT**

**Letter of Information for Surveys**

The research to understand teachers' response to prescribed literacy curriculum and what do teachers say are their pedagogical practices as it relates to professional development and prescribed literacy curriculum.

**Introduction**

My name is Darya Owens and I am a Ph. D. student at the College of Education at Wayne State University. I am currently conducting an investigation of teacher responses to prescribed literacy curriculum. I would like to invite you to participate in this research.

**Purpose of the study**

The aims of this study are to elicit teachers' viewpoint per their perspectives to identify why teachers resist prescribed literacy instruction. The information provided by teachers will also implicate what they say are the forms and reasoning underpinning teacher resistance.

**If you agree to participate**

To participate in this study, the principal of your school would have sent you this email link. The email link introduces the principal investigator and the purpose of the survey. If you are reading this, you consent by clicking the link below, which contains the survey. The survey is voluntary and the results are not reported back to your principal but secured within a secure server with no identifiable information connecting to the respondent. The online survey is open the second week in December 2016 for four days and again the third week of December 2016 for three days.

**Confidentiality**

## **TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL RESPONSES 155**

The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and neither your name nor information, which could identify you, will be used in any publication or presentation of the project results. All information collected for the project will be kept confidential. The completion of the survey was password protected. The published finding will only include numbers associated to the order in which the respondent completed the survey, i.e. if you completed the survey as the ninth person; your number is nine to continue protection and confidentiality. After five years, the paper copies of this research finding will be shredded and electronic data will be destroyed in a manner that maintains the confidentiality of the research findings.

### **Risk & Voluntary Participation**

There are no risks involved in participating in this study. Your participation is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any question or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on you.

### **Questions**

If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant you may contact the chair of the Institution Review Board, Wayne State University at 313-577-1628. If you are unable to contact the research staff, or if you want to talk to someone other than the research staff, you may call the Wayne State Research Subject Advocate at 313-577-1628 to discuss problems, obtain information, or offer input.

**APPENDIX C**

**INFORMED CONSENT**

**Letter of Information for both First and Subsequent Interviews**

The research to understand teachers' response to prescribed literacy curriculum and what do teachers say are their pedagogical practices as it relates to professional development and prescribed literacy curriculum.

**Introduction**

My name is Darya Owens and I am a Ph. D. student at the College of Education at Wayne State University. I am currently conducting an investigation of teacher responses to professional development and prescribed literacy curriculum. I would like to invite you to participate in this research.

**Purpose of the study**

The aims of this study are to elicit teachers' viewpoint per their perspectives to identify why teachers resist prescribed literacy instruction. The information provided by teachers will also implicate what they say are the forms and reasoning underpinning teacher resistance.

**If you agree to participate**

To participate in this study, you would have already completed a survey. The online survey was open the second week in December 2016 for four days and again the third week of December 2016 for three days. The interview that you voluntarily agree to participate in will be at a time and place of your convenience. If I am reading this you have agree to be interviewed but you can withdraw at anytime. Interviews, in which subsequent follow-up interviews, will last approximately 35 minutes in length, may be conducted. The interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed using pseudonyms for each participant. There will be no identifiable information used other than the

pseudonyms. All recordings will be destroyed after the final defense and saved on a transcribed hardcopy with pseudonym names only. Only pseudonyms will be used in the study.

**Confidentiality**

The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and neither your name nor information, which could identify you, will be used in any publication or presentation of the project results. All information collected for the project will be kept confidential. The completions of the survey are password protected and the interview will be audio recorded and transcribed using only pseudonyms. You will have knowledge of transcribed interview materials that contain pseudonyms only. The published finding will only include pseudonyms to continue protection and confidentiality. After five years, the paper copies of this research finding will be shredded and electronic data will be destroyed in a manner that maintains the confidentiality of the research findings.

**Risk & Voluntary Participation**

There are no risks involved in participating in this study. Your participation is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any question or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on you.

**Questions**

If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant you may contact the chair of the Institution Review Board, Wayne State University at 313-577-1628. If you are unable to contact the research staff, or if you want to talk to someone other than the research staff, you may call the Wayne State Research Subject Advocate at 313-577-1628 to discuss problems, obtain information, or offer input.

APPENDIX D

FIRST INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. In what types of professional development have you participated? (names, dates, locations)
2. How have your teaching practices been influenced by professional development experience?
3. In what ways have you followed guidelines presented in professional development?
4. In what ways have you not followed professional development guidelines?
5. What can you tell me about professional learning communities? What is your opinion of them?
6. What can you tell me about prescribed literacy curriculum? What is your opinion about it?
7. What can you tell me about ways to modify instruction? What is your opinion about it?

**Table 5: Themes Categorized from Teacher Survey Questions/Responses**

Survey Questions/ Themes	Emerging Patterns of Responses <i>(Representative of teachers' confident responses)</i>
<p>Questions 1 through 4</p> <p><b>Theme 1</b></p> <p>Pedagogical preferences realized during adherence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance of coordination to training in classrooms</li> <li>• Improved knowledge from professional development</li> <li>• Growth based upon pedagogical choice within their classroom</li> <li>• Actions based on program coherence and pedagogical choices that may lead to lesson modification</li> </ul>
<p>Questions 5, 6 &amp; 7</p> <p><b>Theme 2</b></p> <p>Perspectives revealed which may lead to non-adherence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers acknowledge expectations and mandates</li> <li>• Teachers waver between data and expected mandates</li> <li>• Teachers gaining autonomy over their lessons and practices</li> <li>• Teaching and learning becomes a mix of agreement or</li> </ul>
<p>Questions 9 through 10</p> <p><b>Theme 3</b></p> <p>Reflections of pedagogical practices indicative of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following through with specific pedagogical choices</li> <li>• Choice to initiate modifications while agreeing or disagreeing that prescribed methods were followed</li> <li>• Choice to follow prescribed script and modify as needed while</li> </ul>

**Table 2: Cross Category and Themes Relative to Interviews**









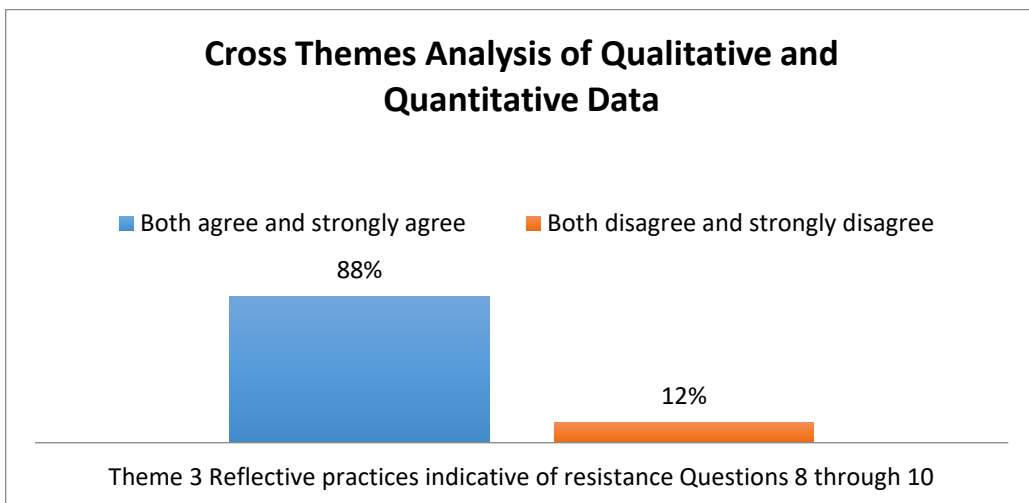
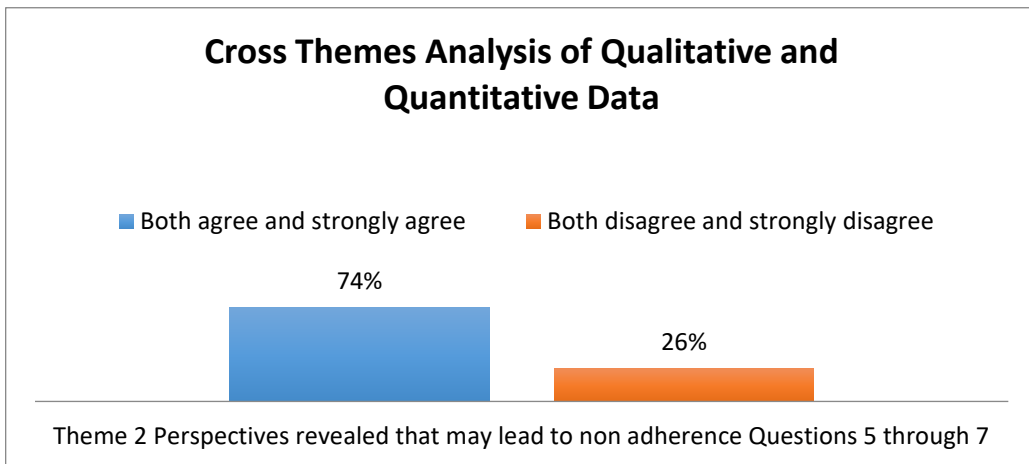
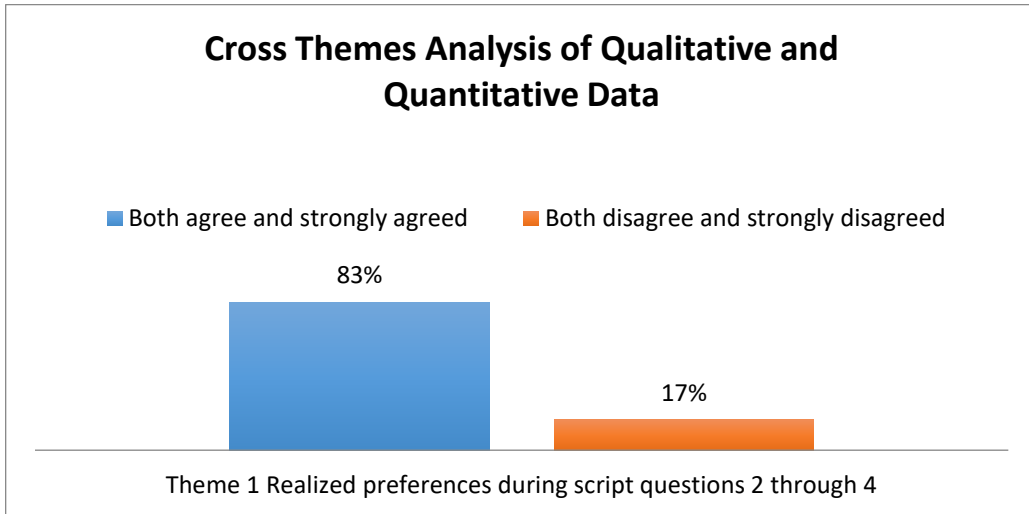
Research Questions	What forms of resistance to the prescribed literacy curriculum do teachers at this elementary school use?	Why do teachers use resistance?	What do teachers say are the implication of their resistance?	What are teachers' pedagogical choices in relation to resistance?
Themes	 Pedagogical preferences realized during adherence to script	 Perspectives revealed that might lead to non-adherence	 Intentional modifications and actions suggesting teachers' praxis indicative of resistance and implementations of lessons using their own teaching practices and prescribed literacy curriculum.	
Conceptual Category	Adherence follows prescribed methods which show forms of resistances because of lesson modifications	 Non adherence based on data and teacher preference to follow expectations and modify lessons which leads to developing autonomy	 Whenever intentional modifications are made, teachers both favor and adjust expectations they previously followed indicating teachers' praxis integration prescribed methods which of resistance	
Interview Tally	 Teachers mentioned change, modified or added to the lesson: 156	 Mentioned data or test: 103 Mentioned their preference or methods: 333	 Teacher noted actions or pedagogical choices based on student need, struggle or skill level: 332	



Figure 4: Cross Themes Analysis of Qualitative and Quantitative Data



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**ABSTRACT**

**TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL RESISTANCE TO PRESCRIBED CURRICULUM**

by

**DARYA OWENS**

**December 2017**

**Advisor:** Dr. Susan Gabel

**Major:** Special Education

**Degree:** Doctor of Philosophy

Research indicates that teachers feel intimidated into fully implementing prescribed literacy curriculum at the expense of their own praxis which may indeed be effective in boosting student literacy achievement. This perceived intimidation may serve to compromise students' literacy outcomes. The objective of the study was to recognize the different forms of resistance teachers demonstrate in order to take responsibility of their own pedagogical practices as it helps develop students' literacy skills. This paper analyzes teachers' praxis and use of integrated methods of prescribed literacy curriculum in relation to teacher resistance. It answers four key questions: 1) What forms of resistance to the prescribed literacy curriculum do teachers at this elementary school use? 2) Why do teachers use resistance? 3) What do teachers say are the implications of their resistance? 4) What are teachers' pedagogical choices in relation to resistance?

The study gathered qualitative and quantitative data in order to detail the frequency with which teachers favor their praxis over prescribed literacy curriculum, and to address concepts such as culturally responsive teaching and social participation. The limitations inherent in the research are the lack of diversity among the 18 respondents interviewed (all of them white female teachers from

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a northeastern U.S. suburban school); and the possibility that respondents might be less than candid in their responses due to concerns about anonymity.

Most of the teachers reported that they felt teachers resist prescribed literacy curriculum by developing their own pedagogical practices within their classroom in order to feel responsible for developing students' literacy skills. At the same time, participants reported that they tended to completely follow prescribed literacy curriculum consistent with their professional development training. Teachers have strategically adjusted controlled academic environments to serve students, which implies a strategy of politicizing education within their classrooms. The long standing educational systems which were believed to promote education for the sake of preparing students for service jobs and consumerism are adjustable in classrooms where teachers promote students' social capital instead.

**AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT**

I am a proud product of the Detroit Public School (DPS) system with a 27-year history of helping students with special needs reach their full potential. The bulk of my work has been within DPS, and I now work at The Hawthorn Center where my educational journey continues. I say “educational journey” intentionally, because for me teaching is a two-way street where education, wisdom and knowledge are given as well as received between teacher and student.

I began my formal post-high school education at Wayne State University and have remained at this institution through my dissertation. I began with a Bachelor of Science in Accounting and began work as a bookkeeper, supplementing my income by substitute teaching business and marketing courses at Cass Technical High School in Detroit. That sparked a love for teaching, and I returned to Wayne State to pursue a teaching certificate.

I have found that incorporating the creative arts has had a profound impact on the success of my students, many of whom have been characterized as “difficult to teach” because of emotional and/or physical impairments. I have used music and dance liberally in my instruction, and have found that it facilitates a lifelong love of learning and joy in the students that more traditional methods find it hard to elicit. Even my students who are limited in their ambulatory ability strain to move whatever body parts they can in order to participate in more artistic expressions and celebrations of learning. I want to ensure that teachers have the instructional and training materials they need to effectively teach students, and at the same time the freedom and autonomy to use those materials in creative ways based on their experience as well as their students’ individual needs.

Teaching students is a dance, and I love the music. And so, I implore all aspiring teachers, general and special education alike, to teach your music!