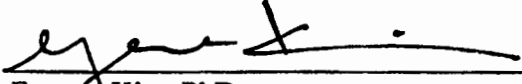


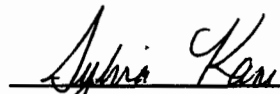
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This dissertation, THE IMPACT OF TEACHER EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY ON INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES AND LITERACY OUTCOMES IN STUDENT WRITING, was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in the School of Education, Concordia University Irvine.



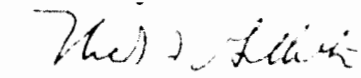
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THE IMPACT OF TEACHER EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY  
ON INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES  
FOR LITERACY AND STUDENT WRITING

by

Nina Glassen

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of  
Requirements for the  
Degree of  
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School of Education  
Concordia University Irvine

## ABSTRACT

This study in a large suburban school district in Southern California explored the factors that influence instructional strategies related to evidence-based student writing outcomes. Guided by evidence related to such factors as teacher demographics, teacher educational philosophy, professional development and teacher perception of student writing outcomes, the researcher utilized a mixed-method research design to explore the association between such factors to inform instructional practices that aim to improve student outcomes for literacy development. Using multiple methods of data collection — surveys, and in-depth interviews, the researcher discussed the findings to recommend instructional practices that promote optimal student learning outcomes defined by the necessary skills to succeed in college, career, and beyond. The researcher discussed the importance of considering teacher educational philosophy, as well as implications for implementing instructional practices linked to teacher educational philosophy.

The overall findings of this study presented emerging themes to inspire future research. The study highlighted the importance of instructional practices that involve teacher scaffolding techniques such as, outlines, chunking, teacher modeling, and gradual release of responsibility; the importance of structure as an essential element of strong disciplinary literacy in writing with a general emphasis on literacy across history and English teacher participants. In addition, the evidence revealed the importance of practice in order to show improvement in academic writing. The larger theme of exposure to Cooperative Student Conversations and Individual Student Inquiry strategies over time leads to improved student writing outcomes. Additionally, the interviewed teachers believe that successful teachers reflect upon their practice, continually learn from their mistakes, and are actively engaged in their own learning through collaboration with colleagues.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Historical literacy is the ability to “read history texts critically, to write thoughtfully, and to engage in meaningful discussions about the past” (Downey & Long, 2015, p. 8). The American Council of Trustees and Alumni, an educational non-profit organization, reported a serious decline in historical literacy across elite colleges and universities, with 81% of seniors receiving the equivalent of a D or F on standardized high school-level history exams (Neal, Martin & Moses, 2000). The United States is presently afflicted with a great poverty of the mind, which is a historical illiteracy that destabilizes our relations with other nations, undermines our fundamental economic strength, and threatens our basic freedoms and way of life. We wage wars that are bereft of historical cause and effect thinking, implement domestic economic policies that ignore basic market principles that have been seen in cyclical repetition over the past centuries, and hear political speeches that espouse personal attacks and soundbites over carefully researched and thought-out propositions. These are the makings of a nation in decline.

Many states across the nation have struggled with how to address the educational paradigm shifts that have been ushered in with the broadly adopted Common Core State Standards in 2010. According to the *California History Framework* published in 2017, the importance of disciplinary understanding extends beyond the memorization of facts, dates and names. Classroom practices engage historical understandings so that “students understand that today’s events are tomorrow’s history, and that they can shape both” (California Department of Education, 2017, p.554). The need to investigate instructional practices that contribute to improved student learning is central to this research study. Core instructional practices and inquiry-based literacy instruction have become popular areas of focus since the implementation of the Common Core State Standards in various states since 2010. This

research study focuses on a large suburban school district in Southern California that aims to reveal the relationship between teacher educational philosophy and the use of instructional strategies. The lack of research in this area reflects the broader need for mixed-methods research studies that identify instructional practices that are effective at enabling students to learn content at a deeper cognitive level.

Furthermore, the research study is part of a timely effort focusing on the impact of teacher professional learning and teacher attitudes, beliefs and values as related to improved student learning. By using qualitative and quantitative research methods, this study capitalizes on Fang's (2012) recent literature review that "calls for a shift from teaching generic strategy instruction to teaching discipline-specific language and literacy practices" (as cited in Berson et al., 2017, p. 415). Additionally, this study investigates professional teacher learning as a vehicle for exploring disciplinary literacy practices in a collaborative setting with individuals who share collective commitments toward identified student learning outcomes. The researcher examined the impact of such attitudes and professional trainings on the identified problem of student evidence-based analysis skill.

### **Statement of the Problem**

According to Alexander (2013), "Policy analysis is a method of inquiry, a process by which we make the world a better place" (p. 5). The implementation of the Common Core State Standards has been a complicated process with many differing opinions about the necessary methods for building proficiency in the Standards throughout the K-12 statewide educational system. The Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA) has been the preferred system used throughout California's schools. Raising the proficiency levels in the English Language Arts section of assessment has proven to be a difficult task. Lacking the essential literacy skills,

students struggle with the ability to express themselves proficiently in the core subject areas of English, history, math, and science. This adverse social condition is a cause for concern within the district. Too few graduating students have acquired the necessary skills to meet the literacy demands of college and career readiness. When “defining the problem, educational leaders focus attention on the social condition that must be changed to improve society” (Alexander, 2013, p. 42). Academic literacy is an essential skill needed for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and an adverse social condition arises when individuals are unable to communicate effectively. This policy problem is public, consequential and complicated because it is dominated by uncertainty with the goals to be pursued. The lack of literacy skills amongst graduating seniors is a problem that can and should be resolved using such public funds.

Originally adopted in 2010, the *California Common Core State Standards*, significantly impacted the educational paradigm by ushering in a new emphasis on building the capacities of the literate individual in K-12 education. The backbone of the document contains grade-specific standards in reading, writing, listening, and speaking that span across grade levels with an explicit emphasis on college and career readiness. The Standards outline what it means to be a literate individual in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Specifically, history students must “become adept at gathering information, evaluating sources, and citing material accurately, reporting findings from their research and analysis of sources in a clear and cogent manner” (*Common Core State Standards*, 2010, p. 85). Employing strategies to develop the student’s ability to effectively interpret, analyze and articulate effective arguments is central to this research study.

The inability to communicate effectively impacts the entire society. Californians cannot compete for jobs on the global market when other states and nations outpace them. Michael Cohen, President of the non-profit educational organization Achieve.org stated, “Employers and

college instructors are affirming what recent graduates themselves have told us; the expectations of high schools do not line up with the expectations of postsecondary education and the working world” (Cohen, 2015, para.2). Low expectations and the lack of emphasis on literacy skills contribute to the lack of preparedness of California’s students. Furthermore, employers rated only 41.6% of recent college graduates oral and written communication skills proficient on a job outlook survey conducted by the National Association of College and Employers. The presence of low expectations in secondary schools and the lack of communication skills necessary for successful career employment contribute to the need for comprehensive literacy instruction that aims to prepare students for the rigorous demands of college and career life.

The problem is further complicated by the fact that students graduate from secondary schools lacking the basic literacy skills necessary to succeed in college. According to a report from Policy Analysis for California Education (2012), “In California, twenty-three percent of first-time freshmen at California State University need remediation in English” (Friedmann, 2012, p. 1). In addition, college remediation courses create a financial burden for students and universities are negatively impacted. Furthermore, it becomes a cause for public concern when “many high school graduates arrive at college campuses unprepared for college-level work” (Friedmann, 2012, p. 1).

Several key factors have led to the lack of college and career readiness for graduating seniors. Within the context of a large, suburban public-school district, there is a lack of knowledge of the Common Core State Standards with regards to how the standards are stair-stepped throughout the grade levels. Prior to the adoption of the Common Core State Standards, the California legislature passed The Omnibus Bill (SB 1209) which eliminated the professional growth requirement for credential renewal (Brown, 2011). Few districts allocate substantial



resources to support teachers to develop curriculum aligned to newly adopted standards and frameworks. As a result, teachers lack the curriculum, knowledge, and skills necessary to implement the Standards with fidelity at each grade level. Furthermore, there is a lack of vertical articulation between the grade levels when it comes to agreeing on exactly what students should know and be able to do at the various grade levels. In California in 2016, “About 49 percent of students met grade-level achievement standards in English Language Arts” (Ugo & Hill, 2017, p. 3). According to the criteria set forth by the Common Core State Standards, most students in California are not proficient, as determined by the Smarter Balanced Assessment. In 2017, 51.4% of California students scored “standards not met” or “standards nearly met” on the Smarter Balanced Assessment for English Language Arts (CAASP, 2019). This further evidence is a cause for public concern. In addition to difficulties with the implementation of the Standards, textbooks and curriculum resources dating back to the late nineties have created further problems with implementation of the Standards.

The introduction of the ELA/ELD Framework, the Next Generation Science Standards and the History Framework in 2016 have further complicated the implementation of the Standards. All three guiding documents reiterate the paradigm shift toward a greater emphasis on disciplinary literacy in the core content areas of English, science, and history. The persistent achievement gap is the final key factor affecting the lack of literacy skills for graduating seniors. The data reflects the fact that socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroups continue to underperform when it comes to proficiency in reading and writing. Students with a higher socioeconomic status continue to succeed and those that struggle do not get the help they deserve with the implementation of intervention programs for support. Reardon (2013) noted significant gaps between low-income and higher-income students using such measures as college

completion rates and civic engagement. In addition, he provided evidence for the myriad of socioeconomic trends that have contributed to the widening achievement gap while offering specific recommendations for closing the gap. This growing cause for public concern demands necessary actions achieved through a comprehensive policy that addresses the above conditions (Brookhart, 2003).

When it comes to the lack of literacy skills among graduating seniors, it would benefit all concerned if steps were taken immediately to address this serious problem. According to Alexander (2013), “Part of transforming the condition into a policy problem is to describe the consequences to society if the condition remains as is” (p. 53). The achievement gap continues to grow in California and will continue to widen further without policy intervention. The persisting conditions of lack of college and career readiness, university remediation in English level courses with a growing financial burden on both college students and universities will be insurmountable. Students will continue to score below proficient on the Smarter Balanced Assessment, and National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores will continue to be below the national average if the policy problem is not addressed. Several key stakeholders have a significant impact on what specific actions should be taken to solve the policy problem (Alexander, 2013). The primary groups involved are the graduating seniors, the colleges and universities, potential employers and district teachers and administrators.

### **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of the explanatory, mixed methods research study is to understand how teacher educational philosophies influence instructional strategy decisions for secondary English language arts and history teachers. Recent educational research has identified effective instructional practices to inform teacher education and professional learning (Fogo, 2014). At

this stage in the research, the variables will be generally defined as demographic data, teacher educational philosophy, perceived importance of student writing outcomes, hours of professional development, and instructional strategies. The study aims to explore instructional strategies that support literacy-related outcomes for student learning (Berson, Berson, Dennis, & Powell, 2017). The ability to write using evidence to support a thesis or claim is a fundamental skill for college and career readiness (Harris, Graham, Friedlander, & Laud, 2013). A second purpose of the study is to examine the correlation between demographic factors, teacher perceptions about student writing outcomes, hours of professional learning and the frequency of instructional strategy use. The study aims to inform educational scholarship surrounding the factors that contribute to improved instructional practices to promote improved learning outcomes for students. Thirdly, the study aims to determine if teacher educational philosophy influences instructional strategy use in the classroom. Knowledge of teacher philosophies can potentially empower educators to solve educational challenges related to student achievement (Tan, 2006).

### **Research Questions**

1. How does teacher educational philosophy impact the use of instructional strategies for history and English Language Arts teachers?
2. How do teacher instructional strategies impact literacy-related outcomes on student writing?

## **Theoretical Framework**

The origins of Cognitive Schema Theory begin with the early works of Immanuel Kant. The term *schema* permeated the philosophical teachings of Immanuel Kant and guided research for early psychologists with a modern focus in the cognitive sciences (Marshall, 1995). The Gestalt movement in psychology focused on organization provided by the mind, which led to the cognitive revolution where humans are active processors of information. Schema theory emerges and leans toward mind-centeredness approach to human learning. The mind frames perceptions and experiences, actively integrating with sensory information from the environment. (Russ-Eft, 2004). Educators emerge as active processors of information within the context of a learning environment.

Educational psychology in the 1970s and early 1980s proposed that thinking and learning take place within working memory where prior knowledge schemas are activated in response to environmental output, providing context for interpreting experience and assimilating new knowledge. Namely, three schemas are presented: memory objects, mental models, and cognitive fields giving way to early theorists on cognitive learning (Derry, 1996).

Piaget's theory (1936) offered stages of cognitive development, which became the starting point for all other intellectual theories. Vygotsky (1962) offered a theory of cognitive development in the context of language learning in children. He was concerned with the structure and growth of knowledge and noted the differences between children and adults.

Bruner's Constructivist Theory (1966) ebbs closer to the basis for the theoretical framework needed for the study. He believed that learning is an active process where learners create new concepts based upon their current and past knowledge. The learner actively selects and transforms information, constructs hypotheses, and makes decisions, while relying on a

cognitive structure to guide the process. Schema and mental models become cognitive structures that provide meaning and organization to experiences and allow the individual to extend beyond the given information (Takaya, 2008). Key implications emerge for the exploration of literacy-based decisions originating from educational theories or professional learning experiences.

Frederic Bartlett authored *Memory* (1932) and is known as the founder of schema theory. Building on Bartlett's ideas, Brewer and Nakamura (1984) argued that "the hypothesis that schemas are complex unconscious knowledge structures is one of Bartlett's major contributions" (p. 121). The notion of how old knowledge interacting with new knowledge with respect to perception applies to educational theory. For example, a teacher's "old knowledge" is part of an "unconscious knowledge structure" that interacts with the new knowledge of literacy strategies and professional learning opportunities. Educational theory schema is illustrated when the "cognitive schemas consist of unconscious relations and processes" (Iran-Nejad & Winsler, 2000, p. 20). While mostly applied in psychology and philosophy, teacher education and instructional pedagogy can be linked to schema theory in this way. Schemata is the representation of complex knowledge and how old knowledge influences new knowledge (Anderson, 1977).

Russ-Eft (2004) presented certain characteristics of schemas: (1) They have variables; (2) They can be embedded in each other; (3) They represent knowledge at various levels of abstraction; (4) They represent knowledge rather than definition; (5) They are active processors; and (6) They are recognition devices, determining goodness of fit of the incoming information. Such schemas help to organize disparate bits of information into a meaningful system or network (Anderson, 1990; Rumelhart, 1980; Rumelhart & Ortony, 1977). The system or network is represented by the teacher's instructional practices and literacy-based decisions. The

individual's background knowledge influences the processing of incoming information (Russ-Eft, 2004). The emphasis is on the way knowledge is acquired, processed and cerebrally organized.

In the case of applications of educational theory, the essential elements of a schema offer that an individual can memorize and use a schema unconsciously. Once a schema is developed, it tends to be stable over a long period of time as related to a teacher's educational theory. The human mind uses schemata to organize, retrieve, and encode chunks of important information. Schemata are accumulated over time and through different experiences. Background knowledge and prior knowledge are important factors connecting a teacher's educational theory to the long-standing schemas that influence instructional strategy approaches and literacy decisions in the classroom.

Schema theory has been applied to reading models for comprehension and the educational practices that support it with respect to various approaches (Hacker, 1980). The Language Experience Approach, comprehension strategies, content outlines after reading, and building background strategies, like SQ3R offered practical applications of classroom practice for schema theory linking educational theory to literacy-based decisions.

Conceptual developments demonstrated the operating principles of schema theory when current trends in schema research involved propositional analysis, mental models, and dual coding (Bigenho, 1999). Anderson (1985) discussed how schemata interact with incoming information to construct "organized knowledge of the world." Schemata provides critical scaffolding to assimilate text material.

Modern accounts of schema theory discuss the context of brain-based theory of learning and remembering related to bio-functional cognition (Iran-Nejad & Winsler, 2000). Schema

theory as a learning theory can be applied to situations where the mind frames perceptions and experiences, reacting to sensory environment (Russ-Eft, 2004). The learning process organizes bits of information into a meaningful system or network where background knowledge influences the processing of information. The cognitive process favors a match between knowledge and the working memory. Information is chunked together and activated through problem-solving scenarios and stored in the procedural memory. The process is responsive to additional information and the changes that take place in the learning environment (Anderson, 1990).

Marshall (1995) noted that students develop schemas about the subject matter whether instruction takes a schema-based approach or not. According to Marshall (1995), learners search for structure and relationships. The question focuses on the nature of the schemas that are developed because of the cognitive process. The development of schemas becomes important, as the foundation for the instructional design related to literacy-based strategies. A key attribute of schema theory, related to instruction, is that schemas organize knowledge stored in memory. They provide the essential scaffolding and serve as supports for future instruction and learning.

Schema theory as it relates to literacy studies builds off the early works of Vygotsky (1926) and Piaget's (1952) early studies on cognition (McVee, Dunsmore, & Gavelek, 2005). Schema Theory is a major force in the development of reading models for reading comprehension by exploring how individuals generate and transfer knowledge, such as teacher educational theory to literacy strategies. Liu (2015) studied the role of schema theory in reading comprehension noting that those with appropriate schema could process text coherently and logically. Immanuel Kant (1963) developed the idea that new information can have meaning only when it is related to what someone already knows. Furthermore, schema is a knowledge

structure where objects, ideas, or phenomenon make sense of existing structures to make meaningful discourse for certain occasions. When applied to educational theory, a teacher's existing "knowledge structures" enable them to select literacy strategies that connect to existing schemas.

Busselle (2017) framed schemas as mental models in cognitive structures that we create as we interact with our physical and social environments to retrieve from memory and use to interpret the people, objects, and events we experience directly. This can be applied to processing new information, namely literacy strategies to clarify that schema are made of many cognitive structures (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). When applied as a theoretical framework, it relates to a teacher's educational theory, which is made up of many ideas related to purpose, procedures, ideological dispositions, outlooks, viewpoints on the purpose of educational system at large. Such mental models comprise knowledge about how objects or processes function. For example, a teacher's classroom instructional practices might be framed by a perennialist educational theory (Medin, Ross, & Markman, 2018). A perennialist philosophy of education believes in student acquisition of knowledge that is timeless and universal. For example, a perennialist teacher prefers teaching classical works of literature that include unchangeable universal themes (Kozikoğlu & Uygun, 2018).

Applying schema theory to educational theories as a basis for literacy-based pedagogical decisions on behalf of teachers begins with a teacher's framed perceptions and experiences as one who must choose literacy strategies for instructional purposes. It is an active process of integrating the information into one's teaching environment (BADA & Olusegun, 2015). This research study applies schema theory as a theoretical framework that incorporates cognitive learning theory to interpret factors that impact teacher instructional decisions.



The framework serves as the foundation for the teacher's educational theory as old knowledge that impacts the core literacy practices or new knowledge of the teacher. Furthermore, the framework explores whether the nature, duration and commitment to the professional learning or old knowledge impacts the core literacy practices or student outcomes. The professional development and educational theories of the teachers serves as the social and organizational content and training context for the theoretical framework (Russ-Eft, 2004). The input phase involves the background knowledge related to educational theory and professional learning opportunities provided to teachers. Schema is drawn upon when trainees are active processors of new knowledge in the form of literacy strategies, which emerge because of paradigm shifts that have emerged from the CCSS. The transfer phase is reflected in the frequency of use of literacy strategies in classrooms.

### **Significance of the Study**

The importance of this study is vital to the overall knowledge base of the relationship between teacher educational philosophy and effective instructional strategies. Future work on disciplinary literacy needs to explore the literate processes and practices in Humanities to identify pathways to build teacher capacity and collaboration (Berson et al., 2017). The results of this study may be utilized to develop instructional resources to support the development of cognitive literacy skills for improved student achievement in writing. The identified instructional practices and teacher collaboration routines can be shared with preservice teachers and induction participants to enhance pedagogical practices for practical instruction. The practical knowledge resulting from this research study will contribute to the “tidal shift from focusing on discrete, decontextualized functional reading skills to disciplinary-specific approaches” (Berson et al., 2017, p. 414). Furthermore, the results of this research study should

be used to enhance current and future efforts toward educational policies that support literacy initiatives in secondary public education. Several specific policy actions should support the development of cross-disciplinary literacy institutes and assessment consortiums focused on improved learning outcomes for all students.

### **Definition of Terms**

*Achievement gap:* the persistent disparity in academic performance or educational attainment between different groups of students, such as white students and minorities (Great Schools Partnership, 2013).

*Common Core State Standards:* The CCSS is a set of academic standards that identify the skills that students should be able to demonstrate at the end of each grade level. The CCSS determine the skill-based expectations for Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010).

*DBQ:* The Document-Based Question is an authentic assessment originating from The DBQ Project where primary source documents are utilized to answer a compelling historical question. For the means of this study, the DBQ refers to the district-wide writing assessment used in grades six through eleven (The DBQ Project, 2018).

*Disciplinary literacy:* The ability to read, write, listen, speak, and think critically in a way that is meaningful within the context of a content area, such as history (CCSS, 2010).

*Evidence-based historical writing:* Argumentative or expository writing using primary source historical documents such as speeches, journals, legal documents, photographs, charts, and graphs (CCSS, 2010).

### **Limitations**

Limitations were present in this research study. The scope of this research extended to two K-8 schools, 10 middle schools, 1 alternative high school, and 6 comprehensive high schools within a large, suburban school district in Southern California. The results of the study may not be generalizable to other school districts in California or other states throughout the country. Also, the study utilized data from middle and high school ELA and history classrooms, which limited the content focus to ELA and history.

While both ELA and history teachers utilized various sources for expository or argumentative writing, the two disciplines contained different modes of knowledge construction for writing. The research conclusions and recommendations for future research may have limited generalizability to both content areas due to literacy differences surrounding written expression.

The teachers participating in the research included individuals who teach ELA and history classes throughout the school district and therefore, the respondent pool was limited. A more extensive sample, including various content area teachers from various grade levels and subjects, may have provided additional more in-depth intuitive findings regarding the purpose of the research study.

### **Delimitations**

The delimitations used by the researcher in this study were determined by the desire to understand the instructional strategies that are most impactful when it comes to student achievement. The scope of the research study was narrowed because the researcher had access to secondary ELA and history teachers in a single school district in Southern California. Additional schools outside of the school district would have provided a broader perspective of

instructional practices and literacy-based decisions in Southern California. Due to the accessibility of classrooms within a single school district, the broader intra-district view was not possible.

### **Summary**

This chapter introduced the study by defining the context for the qualitative and quantitative research methods utilized to gain a better understanding of effective instructional practices and literacy-based decisions that lead to improved student learning. The problem statement and purpose aim to build an argument for the need for research studies regarding supporting literate students who are college and career ready. The research questions outline the focus of the study which is to investigate instructional practices, teacher professional collaboration and the attitudes, beliefs, and values that impact student learning. The history of the theoretical framework evolving into social constructivism frames the understandings of this study. The definition of terms, the limitations, and the delimitations are identified to foster an accurate interpretation of the research results.

## CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter articulates the need for further research in the field of educational philosophy related to the student literacy gap, teacher effectiveness, and teacher educational philosophy and theories. The researcher highlights the need for more research related to literacy-based decisions made by teachers in American secondary public schools. Theories related to educational philosophy and professional development directly impact the instructional decisions, which have an impact upon the development of written literacy skills within the United States educational system. Understanding the factors impacting the development of written literacy skills within the United States educational system is of paramount importance.

There is a great deal of evidence to support the need for advanced literacy instruction in the United States. According to The Nation's Report Card from 2011, 24% of 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders scored proficient on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, indicating the there is a need for improvement in writing proficiency throughout the United States. Nineteen percent of 15-year-old students within the United States scored at a two proficiency or lower or below proficient and one in ten United States 15-year-olds or 10%, scored at proficiency levels 5 and above in reading literacy in 2015 (Kastberg et al., 2016). Furthermore, the United States' performance in reading instruction for international comparison showed evidence for the need for increased literacy instruction. Using the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), a system of international assessments that compares outcomes of learning across countries, the United States underperformed in reading literacy when compared to countries in Asia, Europe, Australia, and Canada (Kastberg, 2016).

The highly fragmented K-12 educational system and the University of California and

California State University system explored how local partnerships can help to strengthen alignment and standards and expectations across post-secondary sectors and accelerate progress (Friedmann, 2012). Partnerships between post-secondary institutions and public school districts can play an important role in increasing the number of California students who leave high school ready for college-level courses. For example, the CSU-Sacramento, Sierra College and Placer Unified School District introduced activities such as collaboratively designed courses, the development and delivery of professional development, and better alignment and articulation of assessment and placement policies across all levels of the learning organization (Friedmann, 2012). Public school districts provide one segment that links the institutional framework strengthening expectations for writing proficiency across secondary and post-secondary institutions to accelerate progress throughout the system (Friedmann, 2012). The emphasis upon the progression of literacy from secondary education through the post-secondary transition highlights the need for a carefully articulated continuum of skills and capacities that are needed for college and career readiness.

The National Association of Colleges and Employers examined the differing perceptions between college graduates and employers. There was a difference when it came to proficiency rating related to oral and written communications skills. One study reported that 41.6% of employers rated recent graduates as proficient in the use of such skills. The employers and graduating seniors differed significantly when it came to rating proficiency in competencies such as oral and written communications, as students considered themselves much more proficient than did employers (NACE, 2018). This suggests the need for improved literacy instruction to prepare students for the expectations of early career development after college and beyond. The adoption of the Common Core State Standards was a response to the

demands of college and career experts who drew attention to the significant gap in advanced literacy skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

A brief history of the development of the Common Core State Standards serves to provide the rationale for the nationwide effort to address the student literacy gaps that existed throughout the United States in the early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The state-led effort to develop the standards began in 2009 by a coalition of state leaders, including state governors and commissioners from the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). The state school chiefs and governors acknowledged the need for real-world learning goals to ensure that all graduating students would be prepared for college, career, and life (Common Core State Standards, 2010).

The student literacy gap between California's English Learners, economically and socioeconomically disadvantaged students, and students of higher socioeconomic segments persists throughout not only the state, but throughout the nation. The literacy demands impact high-needs students where they continue to fall further and further behind in terms of growth in proficiency. For example, most districts in California experienced growth in standardized test scores over the past two years with persistent low levels of achievement for high-needs students. The results indicated an especially troubling narrative where disadvantaged students are falling even farther behind (Ugo & Hill, 2017). If the achievement gap for economically disadvantaged students is not closed, students will continue to be denied access to opportunities for achieve success in college and career. The well-articulated emphasis on literacy instruction that aims for improved outcomes for all students is the focus of this research study.

The literature presented in this review is specifically relevant to the student literacy, teacher effectiveness, and educational philosophies. There are several key variables that are

central to this investigation. The professional background and experience of the teachers factor into their literacy-based decisions, which directly impact student outcomes on evidence-based writing assessments. The educational philosophy of the teachers is another key variable that impacts the literacy-based decisions of teachers. The core literacy practices of teachers and the emphasis on disciplinary literacy practices influence student writing outcomes on evidence-based writing assessments, both on a local level as well as on standardized tests, such as the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP).

The scope and organization of the review represents the literature pertinent education philosophy and theory, teacher professional development, disciplinary literacy practices, and writing assessment. Specifically, Chapter 2 is organized into three sections: (a) Student Literacy Gap (b) Teacher Effectiveness and, (c) Educational Philosophies and Theories. The chapter is completed with a discussion of the themes which are central to the focus of the research study.

### **Student Literacy Gap**

The persistent achievement gap within the educational system of the United States is the result of many causal factors. Ever-changing policies and programs coupled with the complexity of budgets and financial barriers created tremendous challenges for school reform. As writing achievement scores for American students continue to lag behind most industrialized nations, educational researchers aimed to identify the root causes of differences in student achievement across multiple measures. Student background and demographic considerations such as socioeconomic status, ethnicity, language, and parental education level have been well documented as having an impact on student achievement. In addition, research studies on teacher effectiveness has examined the extent that the educator engaged in



disciplinary literacy and used core teaching practices. Furthermore, training and professional development of both preservice and in-service teachers has indicated a relationship to student achievement. Various forms of assessment research has documented the measurement of achievement gaps on written assessments.

### **The Education System**

Underachievement is a persistent problem in American education. There is evidence found in many areas of the education system. Well documented research associated with the achievement gap highlighted significant problems with the system (Lee, 2016). The following factors pointed to an educational system in crisis: the gap between IQ and achievement, the gap between school funding and student achievement gain, the gap between predicted student achievement gains and actual student achievement gains, and the gap between the United States and other nations (Lee, 2016).

Increasing school funding and mandated standardized testing failed at closing the achievement gaps (Lee, 2016). The foundation for attempts to create racial equity began in the 1960s and 1970s when specific social policies targeted minorities. Competency testing, desegregation, the War on Poverty, and affirmative action aimed to improve the achievement of racial minorities using strategic educational policies (Lee, 2016).

In the 1980s, educational policies introduced standards-based educational reform and an accountability system based on assessment-driven reforms. Costly initiatives, such as class size reduction and teacher quality improvement only led to modest improvements in student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2006). The failed No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) policy left a negative perception of national level educational policy as a solution to narrow the achievement gap (Lee & Wu, 2017).

## **Student Background and Demographics**

The American students' underachievement is caused by inadequate and inequitable educational opportunities that are pervasive throughout the system. The research is well documented that students from higher income families have higher test scores than students from low income families (Chmielewski & Reardon, 2016).

Countries with less differentiated education systems and more standardized curriculum have smaller income achievement gaps. Researchers concluded that the achievement gap relates to income inequality, segregation, and features of the educational system, such as differentiated courses and curriculum. In addition, socioeconomic attainment and social mobility correlate with parental income levels suggesting that educational policies may offset such effects (Chmielewski & Reardon, 2016).

Economic inequality expanded in the past three decades and exceeds racial inequality related to educational outcomes (Reardon, 2013). Researchers discovered that income inequality is a predictor of student achievement and that educational success is increasingly essential for economic success. Furthermore, family income is strongly correlated to the ability to provide educational resources to students.

Good, Masewicz, and Vogel (2010) identified the barriers to academic achievement for English language learners. They reported communication gaps, culture clashes, poorly articulated English learner plans, lack of teacher knowledge of various cultures, language acquisition, and English learner strategies as the significant factors that inhibited student achievement.

Additional researchers explored related factors impacting student achievement. Meissel, Meyer, Yao, and Rubie-Davies (2017) examined the alignment of standardized achievement

results with teacher judgments and discovered that marginalized students received lower judgments. The significant findings suggested that robust moderation of teacher judgments are necessary within the school setting and professional development may assist teachers in making fair and consistent judgments.

In addition to teacher factors impacting student achievement, parental factors also contribute to student performance within the educational system. One study suggested that parental involvement has a strong positive effect on student achievement relative to other school resources (Houtenville & Conway, 2008). Many educational stakeholders recognized parental involvement as a significant part of educational reforms and initiatives that aim to improve student achievement. Researchers synthesized the results of nine meta-analyses that investigated parental impact across the studies (Wilder, 2014). Results from the meta-analyses indicated a positive relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement (Wilder, 2014).

### **Assessment**

One aim of the research study is to explore the relationship between teacher educational philosophy and student learning outcomes on written assessments. Furthermore, the literacy-based decisions of the teacher impacts student outcomes on evidence-based writing assessments. The paradigm shifts have occurred with the adoption of the Common Core State Standards ushered in the widespread belief in the shared responsibility to teach literacy in the content areas. The Common Core State Standards introduction stated, “The Standards insist that instruction in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language be a shared responsibility within the school” (CCSS, 2010, p.3). The Grade 6–12 standards are divided into two sections: one for English Language Arts and the other for history, science, and technical subjects. This division reflects the important role of ELA teachers in developing students’ literacy skills, while at the same time

recognizing that teachers of other subjects must have a role in this development as well (CCSS, 2010). Part of the motivation behind the interdisciplinary approach to literacy promulgated by the Standards is the extensive research establishing the need for college and career ready students to be proficient in reading complex informational text independently in a variety of content areas (CCSS, 2010).

Within the literature, research studies have validated the emphasis on writing assessments to evaluate student proficiency of interdisciplinary learning since the CCSS were implemented. Various researchers have addressed the shifts in instruction since the new Standards and engaged in a discussion of instructional strategies to teach writing. Sundeen (2015) indicated that the purpose of the research was to explore writing instruction to determine how it is assigned and assessed and what and how often students write. Additionally, Sundeen (2015) explored strategies for struggling writers, and the study investigated how teacher preparation programs embedded instructional practices for writing. Researchers provided a discussion of the opportunities that are available concerning the improvement of secondary writing instruction in the wake of the Common Core State Standards (Sundeen, 2015).

**Large scale assessments.** The history of large-scale assessments throughout the United States is largely related to the need for educational reform when it comes to the preparation for college admission. Recent research has traced the significance of assessment in English departments and writing programs throughout the United States (Huot et al., 2010). The fundamental purpose of the development of large-scale assessments was to meet the demands of the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB). By emphasizing the reliability and validity of such large-scale assessments, researchers validated the use of writing assessment to prepare students for rigorous college admissions process (Huot et al., 2010).

Building on this foundation, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) indicated that one-fourth of students in Grades 8-12 perform at the proficient level in writing according to the 2011 results (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). The pervasive underperformance of American students on large-scale assessments continues to provide evidence for the need for educational reforms related to literacy achievement.

Research was conducted on the connection between rigorous collaborative, learner-centered, inquiry-based experiences and achievement on state-mandated tests. There was a positive correlational relationship between instruction that was intellectually challenging and how well students achieved on high-stakes, state-mandated tests (Saye & SSIRC, 2013). Recent research has demonstrated that higher levels of authentic instruction were associated with higher student achievement, and students in classes containing moderate levels of authentic pedagogy had significantly higher success rates of success on state-mandated tests than their school averages (Parker et al., 2013; Saye & SSIRC, 2013).

Building on this foundation, Wilcox and Jeffery (2014) explored specific instructional practices that led to improvement on adolescent writing assessment achievement in ELA, social studies, science, and math. In response to the fact that many adolescents in United States schools do not achieve basic proficiency in writing, the new Standards provided expectations for higher standards for disciplinary writing. The research findings reported that teachers who used evidence-based practices: teacher collaboration, rubrics, writing to learn with elements of the writing process, such as prewriting, planning and drafting were more successful in preparing students for large-scale assessments (Wilcox & Jeffery, 2014).

**Project Based Learning and authentic assessments.** The development of project based learning and authentic, real-world assessments have been featured in response to an ever-

changing system of academic accountability. Galavan and Kottler (2009) examined the belief that social studies students should have a role in designing assignments, assessments and rubrics to give them voice and choice over their own learning. It was believed that if they have ownership over their learning, they will apply the knowledge to their lives, making the learning process more meaningful and productive (Galavan & Kottler, 2009).

In a study conducted by Sendziuk (2010), social studies students were given the opportunity to self-assess their written work by utilizing a rubric to award themselves a grade. They tended to more clearly understand the assessment criteria. Student self-assessment contributed to improvements in writing, which led to increased motivation to read and receive feedback. The results validated the impact of greater student success, which was correlated to students being involved with the assessment criteria. Essay scores improved overall when students understood the assessment criteria and as a result, they had a better understanding of what was required of them (Sendziuk, 2010).

The recent shifts in assessments in the United States have attempted to meet the demands of college, career, and life. Conley (2015) recommended a system using multiple measures to assess deeper content understanding and mastery of the Standards. Supported by a movement toward performance assessments, project-based learning and metacognitive self-assessment, teachers must be exposed to professional learning, curriculum and resources to successfully meet the demands (Conley, 2015). Unfortunately, there has been a lack of definitive research on classroom-based assessments in social studies (Torrez & Claunch-Lebsack, 2014).

Building on a thin base of assessment research, a subsequent study supported the creation of locally developed performance tasks (LDPT) with data discussions and embedded teacher professional learning (Abbott & Wren, 2016). According to the study, educators accepted the

notion that a performance assessment is a meaningful tool for assessing higher-order thinking skills and data-driven instructional planning has the potential to optimize student achievement. Additionally, the LDPTs within the study were designed to measure critical thinking, problem solving, and written communication skills. Abbot and Wren's results indicated that teachers were more engaged in the data discussions within the professional learning communities. Additional support was provided to educators who examined student work samples. The study validated the use of instructional strategies that reinforced proficiency in the skills assessed by the district's LDPT.

The prevalence of peer assessment within the recent literature has indicated a trend toward using student-centered assessment systems that incorporated the learner into the process of improving academic achievement. Schunn, Godley, and DeMartino (2019) validated the use of peer review as a method to improve student academic writing with a study that investigated the reliability and validity of peer assessment in high school AP English classes. It was determined that student-created rubrics were more valid than the classroom teachers' and equally as valid as the rubrics provided by AP scorers (Schunn, Godley, & DeMartino, 2016).

**Historical writing.** The examination of historical argumentative writing within the literature have revealed patterns related to the nature and quality of evidence-based assessments. De La Paz et al. (2012) examined how students composed historical arguments and the strategies they employed to develop such arguments. De La Paz et al.'s findings suggested that better writers cited more evidence than weaker writers and this factor was predictive of the overall quality of the writing. In addition, more skilled writers used fact-based strategies with evidence from the documents to develop their writing, as well as using contextualization and corroboration when examining the evidence (De La Paz et al., 2012).

**Historical argumentation.** Constructive learning experiences that involved historical writing and argumentation began with the analysis of primary source documents. This skill is essential to teaching and learning in social studies classrooms. Spoeher and Spoeher (1994) explored the analysis of primary sources and determined that students used their background knowledge and critical thinking skills to analyze and interpret historical documents. The results indicated that the process is challenging for students and successful document-based question outcomes would occur when certain skills were employed during document analysis (Spoeher & Spoeher, 1994). The teacher must accurately model the process of document analysis with the use of relevant background knowledge development to facilitate the effective teaching of document analysis to students (Dutt-Doner et al., 2007). Dutt-Doner et al. (2007) informed the selection of core literacy practices utilized for the survey with the current study because the researcher recognized the crucial role of document analysis as central to the development of evidence-based historical writing.

Historical reasoning strategies played a central role in the development of written literacy instruction in secondary classrooms. According to De La Paz and Felton (2010), to compose argumentative essays within the era of the Common Core State Standards, students benefited from a pre-writing strategy for composing arguments related to an historical event. Instructional scaffolds positively impacted the length, historical accuracy, and elaboration of the student essays (De La Paz & Felton, 2010). Building on this foundation, the researcher designed the current research study to examine relevant scaffolds and core literacy practices to determine their impact upon student outcomes on evidence-based historical writing.

Classroom teachers contribute to student achievement outcomes on writing assessments. According to Correnti et al. (2012), teachers created opportunities for students to develop



analytic, text-based writing skills. Data was gathered using written assignments, daily logs and surveys to measure student progress on response-to-text assessments (Correnti et al., 2012). The findings suggested a positive relationship between the student opportunities to develop such skills and their achievement on assessments reflecting the importance of developing measures of learning to achieve optimal student outcomes on evidence-based writing assessments. Correnti et al. (2012) discovered that providing students with a general knowledge of the writing process and explicitly teaching analytical writing skills leads to positive academic outcomes on written assessments.

Defining the qualities of a good historical essay as a pathway for improved adolescent literacy skills involves the integration of reading and writing in the content areas. Monte-Sano (2012) researched argumentative historical writing to explore content and build students' writing and historical reasoning skills. Specifically, Monte-Sano (2012) used four document-based writing tasks to study the influence of task structures on historical writing and reasoning. She defined the historical qualities of each adolescent's argumentative writing and explored the connections between content and writing in the research study. Using an assessment rubric, the results indicated that students were able to recognize historical perspectives when the writing tasks asked them to engage in sourcing, corroboration, and causal analysis (Monte-Sano, 2012).

Prior research by Monte-Sano (2008) focused on the role of teacher instruction in student writing outcomes. Qualitative data suggested that not all opportunities to read, write, and think historically are equal. Key instructional practices were necessary for improvement of evidence-based writing achievement. The following skills improved student writing: developing student interpretations of historical evidence, supporting reading comprehension of historical texts, implementing direct instruction, as well as guided and independent practice (Monte-Sano, 2008).

Building upon the literature review of secondary instructional practices for writing, subsequent research indicated a lack of emphasis on writing composition that required analysis, interpretation, and argumentation. Graham and Perin (2007) determined writing to be an essential tool for learning content material. Within the context of the Common Core State Standards on the national level, there has been a renewed importance placed on effective writing instruction (Graham & Perin, 2007). Investigative questions were addressed regarding how often students write, the influences of standardized testing, and the amount of teacher preparation that is needed to meet the requirements set forth by the Standards (Sundeen, 2015).

Recent scholarship regarding historical literacy has recommended an instructional framework for teachers and students to use when crafting arguments. Downey and Long (2015) outlined a framework that involved the management of prior knowledge, the analysis of evidence and a discussion of the importance of metacognition to synthesize the learning at the end of a unit (Downey & Long, 2015). Further research focused on the construction of historical arguments that involved developing questions with the specific use of analyzing sources as evidence. Monte-Sano (2016) pointed out that there are varying degrees of historical argumentation. Stronger historical arguments contained historical thinking that utilized credible sources and evidence within the specific historical context. Teachers support such efforts with their instructional practices to promote historical argumentation and student growth regarding such efforts (Monte-Sano, 2016). The use of scaffolding tools such as templates, outlines, graphic organizers, and sentence starters can improve argumentative historical writing (Newell et al., 2011).

Since the Common Core State Standards implementation, secondary English-Language Arts teachers have adapted their content to prepare to teach historical literacy skills. Bickford

(2017) examined how inexperienced teachers used text-based assessments that incorporated the use of primary source documents to examine student efficacy related to historical literacy. The teachers created and implemented a history-based curriculum and the researcher noted their specific curricular decisions and examined how they integrated historical literacy and historical thinking to develop text-based arguments (Bickford, 2017).

Nokes and De La Paz (2018) conducted the most comprehensive literature review regarding writing and argumentation in history education. Their research provided insights into the writing process and highlighted significant connections between reading and writing to develop content learning in the history classroom. There are several recommended instructional strategies to improve student's historical writing abilities (Nokes & De La Paz, 2018).

Scaffolded literacy practices and numerous text-based strategies for the analysis of primary source documents can improve the writing skills of secondary history students. The factors that contribute to the teacher's selection of such literacy strategies is central to this research study. The current research focused on these implications and provided a foundation for future research on evidence-based historical writing.

***Formative assessments in history.*** The use of formative assessments in history offers students a challenge to the traditional fact-based, multiple-choice assessments that have traditionally been used to assess historical knowledge. The traditional assessments do not prepare students to analyze primary source documents, cite evidence to support historical arguments, or consider an author's perspective. With the paradigm shift toward assessment systems that utilized the literacy standards within the Common Core, curriculum, tools and resources have been created to meet the ambitious demands laid out by the new Standards. One alternative that exists to address the formative assessment need within the discipline of history is

the document-based question (DBQ). The DBQ offered an alternative method to assess historical thinking with one example offered by Stanford's History Education Group (SHEG). Called the Historical Assessment of Thinking Skills (HATS), the formative analysis tools use primary source documents with the incorporation of historical analysis skills within the assessments. The HATS offer an alternative assessment and offer a simple rubric with exemplar writing samples and free resources (Wineburg, Smith, & Breakstone, 2012).

Building upon the work of the Stanford Education Group, additional opportunities have existed to meet the demands of the Common Core related to formative assessments in history classrooms. Ateh and Wyngowski (2015) highlighted the importance of the use of formative assessments in history and social studies classes in a logical sequence to support greater student learning. It was suggested that teachers should engage content with literacy instruction, as well as collaborating with literacy teachers to meet the rigorous demands of the Common Core State Standards. (Ateh & Wyngowski, 2015). The types of instructional activities using formative and summative assessments often require history teachers to have a deep knowledge of disciplinary literacy that is associated more with ELA teachers because of their teacher training. The existence of opportunities between history and English Language Arts must be capitalized upon to successfully integrate evidence-based writing assessments that improve student outcomes.

***Use of rubrics.*** Within the research literature that investigated the use of scoring rubrics for performance assessments, 75 studies were examined to determine the benefits (Jonsson & Svingby, 2007). Scoring rubrics were analyzed to measure student achievement and it was concluded that the most successful rubrics were analytic, topic-specific with model exemplars and rater training. The results of the Jonsson and Svingby (2007) study indicated that performance assessments can be enhanced using rubrics, which led to greater student

achievement. Rubrics promoted greater learning and improved instruction when expectations and criteria were specified, coupled with student self-assessment and teacher feedback (Jonsson & Svingby, 2007).

Additional studies investigated whether rubrics were valid and reliable for assessing student writing. Subsequent research studies found that raters were greatly influenced by the mechanical qualities of writing, even when using a rubric. The results of the study revealed that using rubrics for scoring student writing does not improve the reliability or validity of the assessment if the raters are not knowledgeable about how to apply the rubrics. Raters must be trained on how to effectively use rubrics effectively (Rezaei & Lovorn, 2010).

Research on the effective use of rubrics together with the use of evidence-based practices such as peer collaboration, prewriting, planning, and drafting provided evidence for promising instructional practices for CCSS writing. The researcher found that teachers who were provided with guidance on techniques for scaffolding writing were able to develop more engaged, motivated, and independent writers (Wilcox, Jeffery, & Gardner-Bixler, 2016).

Building on the foundation of research related to the use of rubrics to assess argumentative writing, Bauer (2016) designed a study that assessed cross-curricular literacy expectations. Using process-oriented rubrics to assess argumentative writing and to guide classroom instruction, the adoption of the Common Core State Standards led to an increased emphasis on literacy achievement across content areas. Assessment practices that improved student learning were implemented in the study to encourage more complex writing expectations. The study suggested using a process-oriented rubric tool to assess argumentative student writing effectively using the results to inform the teacher's instructional practice and improve student learning (Bauer, 2016). Providing clear expectations for using rubrics as

instructional tools rather than purely for evaluation purposes aided in the improvement of student learning outcomes (Sundeen, 2015).

***Document-based questions.*** The DBQ Project ® is a curriculum process that involves a structured, six steps method for analyzing inquiry-based historical questions. Teachers in the study utilized the steps at varying degrees to teach historical literacy skills. The six steps to the DBQ process are: building background, analyzing primary source documents, using analytical categories to answer investigative, inquiry-based historical questions, and drafting an evidence-based argumentative essay (DBQ Project Method, nd).

Research studies examined the DBQ Project ® to determine whether a DBQ qualified as an authentic task on the New York State Global History and Geography exam and the authors argued that the DBQ units are a step toward authenticity, but the DBQ essays are not genuinely an authentic historical task. In addition, the authors noted that when compared to traditional multiple-choice assessments, the DBQ Project ® essays are an improved measure of historical literacy, but they are not entirely authentic in terms of replicating the work of historians (Grant et al., 2004).

**English Language Arts writing.** The importance of writing practices in English Language Arts supported the connection between teacher educational philosophy and the instructional practices. The types of practices that are effective at teaching the content in English classes blend reading and writing processes. Effective strategies provided a foundation for student writing assessments in English. Tompkins (1998) suggested three instructional approaches: literature focus units, reading and writing workshops, and theme cycles. The Tompkins research demonstrated the importance of both reading and writing strategies to support closing the student literacy gap.

Building on this foundation, teaching students to write improved their comprehension skills and reading fluency which supported the long-standing empirical evidence about the power of writing to facilitate reading (Graham & Herbert, 2011; Graham et al., 2018). Literacy-based instructional decisions related to writing instruction in the English classroom are paramount to the actions that must be taken to narrow the student literacy gap.

According to Zumbrunn and Krause (2012), identified several significant themes of effective writing instruction: (1) Teachers must realize the impact of their own writing beliefs, experiences, and instructional practices; (2) Writing instruction encourages student motivation and engagement; (3) Writing instruction must be clear, intentional and flexible, (4) Writing instruction must occur every day; and (5) Writing instruction should consist of a scaffolded collaboration between teachers and students (Zumbrunn & Krause, 2012). The researcher aims to address the first theme with the research study to identify the educational philosophy and beliefs that impact the literacy-based instructional decisions related to writing assessment.

Within the literature on beliefs and attitudes about writing instruction, research findings have revealed that preservice teachers who received a writing instruction course, understood the importance of writing instruction and the self-efficacy associated with teaching writing. Furthermore, preservice teachers who were exposed to writing instruction, perceived the importance of receiving tools for instruction (Hall, 2016). The research findings suggested that teacher beliefs and attitudes are impacted by preservice teacher education, calling attention to the need for writing instruction programs within teacher education programs.

Building on this foundation, Sharp (2016) suggested that preservice teachers and practicing teachers of writing must be educated with a knowledge base of historical research and models that describe the fundamental processes involved during writing instruction.

English Language Arts teachers benefitted from programs that explicitly teach the writing process to preservice and practicing teachers (Sharp, 2016).

According to Nicholas (2017), a cohesive reading a writing template supported reading and writing instruction in secondary English classrooms. The template demonstrated how to integrate reading and writing instructional practices for preservice and practicing teachers (Nicholas, 2017). There are a multitude of factors related to reading and writing instruction and the connection between the two domains of language is clearly supported by the literature (Doubet & Southall, 2018).

To support the narrowing of the student literacy gap, Beschorner and Hall (2018) suggested creating a classroom environment to support writing informational texts using specific tools. The positive outcomes of writing informationally reveal opportunities for students to engage with domain-specific knowledge and use academic vocabulary. The researchers emphasized the importance of teacher reflection to improve informational writing instruction (Beschorner & Hall, 2018). Furthermore, instructional models for support with the writing process drawn from reading structures affirmed the connection between the two domains.

Current researchers supported the importance of writing as an essential skill and outcome for academic and professional success. A policy challenge is indicated by current research that suggested the literacy gap had not been sufficiently addressed. These studies contribute to the fact that the Common Core State Standards' Initiative has not sufficiently addressed the need for a comprehensive focus on writing instruction (Philippakos & Fitzpatrick, 2018). Despite the efforts of the policy, there needs to be further research studies to address the connections between teacher educational philosophy, instructional strategies, and student writing outcomes.



## **Teacher Effectiveness**

Since the inception of the Common Core State Standards, few studies have identified teacher effectiveness as a causal factor for the achievement gap. Educational studies are needed to identify contributing factors related to the degree to which teachers employ disciplinary literacy strategies and core literacy practices.

### **Teacher Attributes**

Various studies linked the personal qualities of teachers to academic student achievement. Several studies link the pedagogical and content knowledge demonstrated by teachers to student achievement in various academic subjects (Kosir & Tement, 2013). Furthermore, the organizational and instructional planning skills of teachers are considered factors impacting student achievement. Finally, teacher-student relationships, stemming from a learning environment that is conducive to learning, have a significant impact upon student outcomes for learning.

### **Pedagogical and Content Knowledge**

Within the literature on the study of teacher preparation which focused on pedagogical and content knowledge, the quantitative analyses indicated that there is strong correlation to student achievement in reading and mathematics course preparation (Darling-Hammond, 2000). In addition, there are multiple factors involved with the investigation of teacher attributes. Teachers who possess strong general ability, solid grasp of subject matter, and knowledge of effective methods for teaching that subject matter, including the knowledge acquired in teacher preparation programs about how to instruct, motivate, manage and assess diverse students—have the greatest potential to increase student learning and achievement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009).

Subsequent research validated previous studies and focused on a teacher's formal pedagogical preparation as a pathway to positively impact student achievement (Santagata & Yeh, 2015). Relevant research has demonstrated that teachers' general knowledge is relevant to understanding quality teaching and its impact on student learning outcomes. The better the content and pedagogical knowledge of teachers, the higher student achievement. Pedagogical preparation involved possessing professional knowledge such as, verbal ability, preparation, certification and experience (Guerriero, 2017).

Researchers utilized evidence from past studies and identified three types of professional knowledge: content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge. A research-based framework was developed based on the synthesis of the literature on teacher effectiveness. Factors such as instructional planning, instructional delivery, assessment, learning environment, and professionalism contribute to positive learning environments (Stronge, 2018).

### **Organizational and Instructional Planning**

The organizational and instructional planning characteristics of teachers have been the focus of various studies that found that traits like adaptability and flexibility are also important to teacher effectiveness (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). Teachers who carefully augment classroom instructional time using their expertise, experience positive student outcomes. Teacher expertise is defined as their instructional and classroom management techniques. Researchers discovered that student achievement increased in classrooms where instructional time is maximized (Stronge, Ward, & Granti, 2011). Building on this foundation, the amount of time students spent engaged in learning experiences is positively connected to student learning. Learning experiences are defined as sustained student engagement in learning

activities, as well as motivational factors that increase time on task behavior (Gettinger & Walter, 2012). In addition, subsequent research studies concluded that good teachers provide adequate instructional planning and research-supported instructional strategies rather than only using textbooks (Stronge, Grant, & Xu, 2017). Furthermore, improved student achievement was documented when experienced teachers demonstrated better planning skills with clearly organized materials that follows a hierarchical structure (Kini & Podolsky, 2016).

### **Teacher-Student Relationships**

Allen et al. (2013) indicated that teacher-student relationships predicted gains in student achievement. The study revealed that the quality of teacher-student interactions predicted student performance on end-of-year standardized achievement tests. Furthermore, classrooms characterized by a positive emotional climate, with sensitivity to adolescent needs and perspectives, use of diverse and engaging instructional learning formats, and a focus on analysis and problem solving were associated with higher levels of student achievement (Allen et al., 2013). Building on this foundation, subsequent researchers concluded that teachers must be spontaneous and possess the ability to improvise in the classroom as an artist creates a work of art (Stronge, 2018). These types of practices contributed to a positive learning environment that enabled teachers to focus on the pedagogical practices and content knowledge that created the optimal environment for academic growth.

The student literacy gap and the lack of progress on evidence-based writing assessments contribute to complex challenges in education today. The fragmented educational system presents many barriers to learning: failed state and federal policies and budget shortfalls reflect the lack of prioritization of public education related to continuous school improvement (Friedmann, 2017). When examining teacher effectiveness through the lens of

disciplinary literacy, core literacy practices, and professional learning expanded the conditions that impact student learning and achievement. Lastly, teacher attributes contributed to the success or failure of students depending on the amount of pedagogical and content knowledge that they possess. The organization and instructional planning qualities of teachers significantly impacted student outcomes, as well as the teacher-student relationships and the ability of the teacher to act flexibly to meet the needs of diverse learners. Well researched scholarship documented the individual attributes of teachers as essential for student success. This finding inspired a deeper analysis of the philosophies and theories that teachers adhered to and the impact they have on the instructional decisions related to literacy related outcomes. This study is informed by previous research and aimed to explore the relationship between a teacher's educational philosophy and instructional decisions that impact student learning outcomes.

### **Instructional Models and Approaches**

Since the onset of the Common Core State Standards in 2010, the discipline of history and English Language Arts education have had a shared emphasis on adopting instructional models to promote literacy education.

**Disciplinary literacy.** Disciplinary literacy and a teacher's decision to use such practices impacts student outcomes on evidence-based writing assessments, especially in history classes. In the current study, the researcher examined the core literacy practices utilized by secondary teachers in a large suburban school district in Southern California. The increasing emphasis on the incorporation of instructional strategies to meet the literacy demands of the Common Core State Standards has had a significant impact upon the pedagogical choices made by teachers in the classroom. To inform the design and implementation of the study, the researcher examined

the literature on literacy instruction within the history educational landscape. The researcher investigated the disciplinary literacy-based approach to educational instruction. By exploring the educational philosophy and amount and nature of professional learning experiences related to the teacher's knowledge, the researcher attempted to identify factors that influenced the instructional decisions.

**Advanced literacy instruction.** The birth and advancement of advanced literacy instruction in the United States flourished in response to the scholarship largely created in the late 2000s. Coining the phrase “disciplinary literacy,” Timothy and Cynthia Shanahan sought to draw attention to the advanced literacy instruction needed in content areas classes such as math, science, and social studies. They argued that this type of advanced literacy instruction should be the focus of middle school and secondary instruction. Their scholarly work focused on distinguishing the difference between foundational, intermediate, and advanced literacy instruction. Researchers argued that disciplinary experts in math, chemistry, and history read their respective texts differently. The diverse literacy demands of the individual disciplines require unique comprehension and thinking skills that are unique to the specific demands of the content area (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008; Monte-Sano, 2010). Consistent with the findings of other research studies, it was determined that certain comprehension strategies are most appropriate for specific reading tasks. It was consistently reported that there are diverse ways in which students prepared for the reading, writing, and thinking required by advanced disciplinary-specific coursework (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008).

As calls for advanced adolescent literacy gain momentum, the demands of each discipline became more evident to teachers. In the field of history, calls for a greater emphasis on literacy instruction have impacted teachers in a significant way. As the attention shifts toward the

pedagogical demands of literacy instruction in history-social studies, a framework for historical writing must be considered. Teachers make literacy-based decisions within their classroom instruction in the form of instructional strategies, which impact the assessment outcomes of students when they are exposed to evidence-based writing assessments. Attention must be put onto the demands of the discipline of history to develop advanced literacy skills in students that will best prepare them for the demands of historical writing in the secondary setting and for college and career readiness.

One historical skill that relates to a student's ability to write cohesive arguments is their ability to read and analyze primary source documents. Within the literature on the study of document-based questions and historical writing, researchers analyzed student responses to DBQs to determine the essential characteristics of historical writing. The research revealed that successful students were able to use evidence and integrate content knowledge to develop advanced literacy skills (Monte-Sano, 2010).

Building on the research foundation of the development of advanced literacy skills using primary source documents, subsequent research studies examined the cognitive tools and scaffolding supports used to develop historical thinking and writing skills of students to help disciplinary literacy. Specifically, the study examined the degree to which students used the instructional supports to develop historical literacy and highlighted the complexity of teaching students the necessary instructional supports for the development of thinking and writing in history (Girard & Harris, 2012). The literacy-based instructional decisions of teachers impact the student's ability to closely examine sources to develop written historical arguments.

According to Wineburg and McGrew (2017), the development of historical literacy involved the ability to evaluate material online to determine the credibility of sources. With the

high degree of misinformation available from online internet sources and the prevalence of fake news in modern society, the ability to analyze sources for their credibility is more important than ever. With the increase of digital information online, students must be taught the skills of evaluation to determine the validity of sources found online. A research study was conducted with historians, college students and fact checkers who evaluated live websites and performed internet searches online. The results showed the fact checkers quickly and easily identified the credibility of the sources by opening new tabs to investigate sources. This research offered useful insights gleaned from the fact checkers' practices with common approaches to teach the credibility of sources (Wineburg & McGrew, 2017). This research supported the current research study by drawing attention to the relevance of historical literacy in the modern age. Students must learn the advanced literacy skills to develop intelligent, cogent arguments to support written content knowledge proficiency.

**Inquiry-based approaches.** Research studies related to teaching and learning history showed gaps between the identified work of historians and the instructional practices of teachers in the classroom (Ravi, 2009). The researchers concluded that there are a variety of strategies and approaches that history teachers engage with as they instruct students, but there is not a single inquiry-based approach that all teachers ascribe to when delivering content to students. On the other hand, historians adhere to core principles which frame the larger narrative of human historical investigation over time (Ravi, 2009). Furthermore, students must be able to acquire skills beyond rote memorization of historical facts. They must use historical inquiry using evidence, learning to interpret historical documents, compare them, and learn how to use evidence to support historical arguments. Ravi (2009) described three principles for the study of history: knowledge and thinking are interrelated, learning is a process of apprenticeship, and

teachers are the mentors of apprentices. Contributing to the foundation of this research study, it was determined that students learn by engaging in ongoing, historical inquiries using primary source documents. The third principle of the study of history emphasized that teachers act as mentors to apprentices in the process of historical inquiry (Ravi, 2009). To inform the design and implementation of the study, the research validated the use of various instructional approaches to teach historical concepts and habits of historical thinking using scaffolded activities. Consistent with the research in this area, the researcher examined the literacy-based instructional practices that led to greatest student outcomes when it came to evidence-based writing.

*The Wiley Handbook of Social Studies Research* (2017) provided current research on the state of social studies education. Many recent developments in the field highlighted emerging trends and recent efforts to encourage disciplined inquiry in social studies classrooms. Such recent scholarship played an essential role in informing this research study. It is essential to encourage an educated citizenry that is competent to function in a democratic society. Saye (2017) found that supportive classroom environments encouraged the process of disciplined inquiry in social studies classrooms. Saye (2017) posited, “feature elements that cognitive science research suggests are critical to the development of expertise: an emphasis on meaningful questions, prominent roles for collaboration and discourse, and hard and soft scaffolding to support student appropriation of disciplinary tools and practices.” The findings inspired the researcher to design the investigation into instructional strategies that led to the greatest amount of disciplined inquiry in secondary classrooms. The researcher designed the study to include Individual Student Inquiry and Cooperative Student Conversations as instructional strategies informed by current social science research. Additionally, the researcher



examined the role of teacher educational philosophy and its impact upon such instructional approaches related to literacy-related student outcomes.

**Literacy interventions.** According to the scholarly research, De La Paz et al. (2014) examined the effects of a disciplinary reading and writing curriculum and the impact of teacher professional development. The study informed the design and implementation of the current research study that attempted to model a similar instructional approach by examining student writing outcomes based on the literacy-based decisions of teachers. The study researched the impact the intervention had on student learning and discovered that teachers who exhibited fidelity to the intervention brought about positive results for student learning (De La Paz et al., 2014). Significant and meaningful student achievement growth was reported in student's abilities to craft historical written arguments. Echoing the emphasis on disciplinary literacy with the onset of the Common Core State Standards, the study emphasized successful outcomes related to the student's ability to craft historical arguments (De La Paz et al., 2014).

Subsequent research studies utilized an eighteen-day history intervention with diverse learners to research the impact of a scaffolded instructional approach to integrate reading, writing, and argumentation skills and content learning to improve student writing outcomes. The researchers reported a moderate to large effect on student writing outcomes when teachers implemented the intervention with high fidelity (De La Paz et al., 2017). The findings informed the current research study where student writing outcomes related to literacy-based instructional decisions supported historical understanding of primary and secondary sources.

**Core literacy practices.** Van Drie and Van Boxel (2008) conducted an extensive review of empirical literature on the importance of historical thinking and reasoning skills to promote learning. They proposed using six components: asking historical questions, using sources,

contextualization, argumentation, using substantive concepts, and using meta-concepts.

Historical reasoning skills in the context of history learning and education emphasized the activity of students and the fact that students not only acquire knowledge of the past, but also use this knowledge for interpreting information from the past and the present (Van Drie & Van Boxel, 2008). Historical learning informed this research study because the six components are enveloped in the DBQ process and core literacy practices are investigated to contribute to the findings of the overall investigation.

The literacy-based decisions made by teachers about types of texts revealed a lack of literacy instruction within classrooms across the United States (Nokes, 2010). Furthermore, history teachers are faced with literacy-related decisions about text selection and how to teach them to students. Their literacy-related decisions reflected their limited knowledge of historical investigation, inquiry and the purpose of social science education in general. Nokes (2010) kept records about the activities and instruction associated with the various text types. Frequency counts were tallied and compared across teachers and an analysis was conducted to assess the way different texts were used. The results indicated that teachers relied heavily on textbooks and general literacy instruction, such as worksheets and vocabulary training. In addition, disciplinary literacy instruction did not occur, even when teachers used primary source materials. In the study, primary sources were used primarily to illustrate points the teacher made during direct instruction. Teachers rarely provided varied text activities for their students. The results revealed a lack of integration of historical process instruction in the researched classrooms (Nokes, 2010). As illustrated by the example, the shift toward greater literacy demands within the domain of history provide opportunities for future social science research focused on the specific instructional strategies needed to facilitate improved student learning outcomes.

A conceptual framework is an essential element for teaching instructional activities using primary sources. Since the current research study integrated the use of primary source historical documents, the literature regarding the conceptual framework informed the parameters of the study. Relevant research indicated an emphasis on the importance of professional development for teachers on how to access and integrate primary source documents into history lessons. Six primary source-based instructional practices linked to Bloom's (1956) taxonomy created the foundation for the conceptual framework (Ensminger & Fry, 2012).

Building on the foundation of the literacy-based instructional practices to support the use of primary source documents and improved academic content area literacy, subsequent researchers offer a set of cross-discipline language skills developed throughout adolescence and play a role in student academic success. There are four approaches—cognitive, sociocultural, linguistic and critical—with a unique set of instructional practices to support their development. The cognitive approach involves explicit teaching of cognitive strategies. The sociocultural approach is based on the use of students' current knowledge and cultural practices as a connection to develop content area literacy. The linguistic approach emphasizes decoding skills, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehending text structure and grammar as the pathway to content area literacy. Lastly, the critical approach is a subjective method to view all text from the perspective of the viewer (Fang, 2012).

Additional research on the core literacy practices involving historical thinking skills involved strategies that incorporated discussing big ideas and essential inquiry-based questions. Researchers demonstrated that students benefited from primary source analysis using whole group and partner discussions. Specific instructional strategies, such as initiating discussions

among students either in whole group, cooperative learning groups, or even pairs can be used to promote historical thinking (Viator, 2012).

Fogo's (2014) recent education literature and research focused on creating a list of effective core practices for teaching history with the intent to inform teacher education and professional development. The introduction and exploration of social studies teaching practices has largely been ignored within the research literature. To inform the design and implementation of this research study, a Delphi panel surveyed 26 history teaching experts to identify a set of core practices that aimed to inform the teaching practice in secondary education (Fogo, 2014). These types of practices were examined in this research study to determine if there is a relationship between the educational philosophy and professional learning background of the teachers. Fogo (2014) presented teaching practices for historical inquiry such as, using historical questions, adapting historical sources, and employing historical evidence, which are all relevant instructional practices involved with the DBQ process. The employment of such practices directly connected to the assessment of student outcomes in the research study, thereby validating the use of such core literacy practices.

Subsequent research studies examined the impact of the use of literacy practices with primary source documents using two tools (IREAD and H2W) as part of a middle school intervention. IREAD involves using a mnemonic device to guide students' reading and annotations. H2W is a text structure tool used to guide student planning and organization (Monte-Sano, De La Paz, & Felton, 2014). The examination of disciplinary literacy focused on the attainment of content knowledge and determined that the teachers who used the tools with fidelity, experienced greater success. Several key considerations framed the findings of the study that informed the current research study. Teachers who properly utilized materials and

adapted the curriculum to match the literacy goals of the classroom tended to experience greater student outcomes. In addition, the teacher's knowledge of the discipline and their ability to adapt the curriculum to meet the unique needs of the class greatly impacted the success of the intervention. It was suggested that teachers utilize tools for teaching disciplinary literacy as an important step to help students successfully navigate the literacy agenda set forth by the Common Core State Standards (Monte-Sano, De La Paz, & Felton, 2014).

**Instructional interventions.** The review of the literature on instructional interventions that promoted the attainment of historical content knowledge and historical literacy while supporting teacher professional development and learning provided the context for this current research. Instructional interventions supported by the Teaching History Grant investigated the effects of professional development on student responses to document-based questions (DBQs) in secondary classrooms. The study compared teachers who received more than 30 networking hours and focused on writing arguments and teaching activities to develop historical thinking and writing. The research supported the finding that there needs to be more access to specific strategies to teach primary source documents and emphasized the importance of team planning for DBQ teaching. The ongoing professional development led to an increase in student performance along with the teachers of the successful students experiencing growth in content knowledge with a broader understanding of how to teach primary source documents (De La Paz et al., 2011).

A second historical instructional intervention involved resources from the nonprofit international educational and professional development organization, *Facing History and Ourselves*. The multifaceted core outcome research study, a randomized controlled experiment, investigated the causal impacts of a *Facing History and Ourselves* professional development

intervention on high school teachers' sense of professional efficacy, satisfaction, and growth of their students' engagement and learning (Barr, 2010; Killion, 2014).

Subsequent research examined the impact of the *Facing History and Ourselves* instructional intervention on student learning. The study examined the impact of the professional development intervention in two areas: (a) teacher self-efficacy, burnout, and professional engagement and satisfaction; and (b) the academic, civic, social, and ethical competencies of 9th and 10th Grade students in the teachers' classes. It was reported that students demonstrated stronger skills for analyzing evidence, agency, and cause and effect on a historical understanding performance measure after participating in the intervention. These findings from the randomized experimental design research study provided important empirical evidence for specific approaches to professional learning that engaged teachers in developing civic and academic capacities that are essential to both participation in a democracy and success in college and career (Barr et al., 2015).

Additional research related to historical interventions was conducted by Stanford University. Researchers studied an intervention on historical literacy in an urban school district in northern California using the *Reading Like A Historian* curriculum created at Stanford University. The research study built upon Sam Wineburg's scholarship related to the development of historical thinking using primary source documents. The focus of the research was the use of the document-based questions as a structure using multiple texts to measure historical thinking, transfer of historical thinking to contemporary issues and mastery of factual knowledge, as well as growth in reading comprehension (Reisman, 2012a).

Models of historical intervention with supported teacher professional learning for the development of essential literacy skills and improved student achievement offered the researcher

evidence of successful examples to inform the current research study. In all these studies, common themes emerged related to the conditions necessary for the attainment of historical literacy skills. To inform the design and implementation of the study, the research built upon the themes that emerged from subsequent successful investigations regarding professional development. The professional development opportunities that involved networking hours centered on literacy strategies, such as primary source analysis, experienced more success and transferred to classroom instructional practice. In addition, the emphasis on the development of historical reading and writing skills coupled with strategies to support student engagement and learning created optimal conditions for the promotion of the continuous improvement of the teachers' instructional practices. The current study is informed by subsequent research that validated the parameters of the research study which involved the exploration of professional development hours, instructional strategies, and teacher educational philosophy.

**Models of delivery.** Successful professional development models varied according to the delivery of the information. Researchers noted that adolescent students benefited academically when history teachers structured their classroom around the investigation of open-ended questions, the analysis of historical evidence, and the construction of historical arguments. Very specific professional development structures promote sustainable professional learning outcomes for teachers which in turn, improved student learning. According to researchers, the learning activity must be subject-specific, learning-focused, and involve teacher collaboration. This optimal format provided participants with opportunities to practice, discuss, and rethink newly acquired teaching practices in an environment that is intellectually enriching (Meuwissen, 2017).

**Inquiry-based professional learning.** Professional learning models evolved to meet

the demands of the Common Core State Standards due to the emphasis placed upon 21<sup>st</sup> century literacy skills. The inquiry model of professional learning places the teacher in the center of investigative questions involving disciplinary literacy as a source for improvement of student learning. One approach involved students constructing information into meaningful patterns using the inquiry model, rather than fact-based instruction. Various inquiry approaches to teaching and learning promoted sustained, discipline-specific professional development, which can lead to improved quality of history education. Researchers used scaffolding techniques to teach higher order thinking skills, thereby modeling the inquiries within the professional learning model that are emulated by students within the context of history education. Transferring this research knowledge base to the classroom involved the effective modeling of activities with the higher order thinking embedded in these activities (Neumann, 2012).

Neumann (2012) indicated that a recent survey reported the lack of social studies research examining the connection between professional development and the impact on student learning over time. Future researchers will benefit from working with inquiry-based history instruction to analyze how that discipline-specific work impacts student learning. Potential curriculum models can be replicated to offer comprehensive, rigorous history education to secondary students throughout the country.

Additional models reinforce the effectiveness of inquiry-based professional learning. A case study examined the role of teacher leaders in inquiry-based professional learning communities that emerged with the adoption of the Common Core State Standards. Professional learning communities continue to be a popular choice for teachers who are looking to align their instructional practice to the Common Core State Standards. The researchers highlighted the importance of the development of disciplinary literacy regarding college and workplace success



(Charner-Laird et al., 2016). The Charner-Laird et al. (2016) study investigated the experiences of facilitators who were represented as a group of teacher leaders focusing on inquiry into disciplinary literacy at the high school level. Emphasis was placed on the examination of the practices that the teacher leaders made to maintain the focus of the professional learning within the professional learning community and how the participants experienced their leadership. The findings from the study illuminated the fact that the teacher leaders created structures and routines for the PLCs to work productively and that their collaboration and facilitation was fundamental to the success of the inquiry, which led to greater participant professional learning and growth. A key element of PLCs is the inclusion of teacher leaders in the process of designing the parameters of the professional learning initiative.

Charner-Laird et al. (2016) explored how teacher leaders exhibited leadership through the PLC structure and how teacher-centered inquiry can be a valuable source of deeper learning. The researchers suggested that the generation of knowledge can be created by a group of teachers working together. They aimed to understand how teacher leaders used cycles of inquiry to utilize new knowledge within their PLCs to develop new ways of teaching disciplinary literacy. This study highlighted the crucial role that teacher leaders played while attempting new approaches to professional learning. Additionally, it illustrated the benefits when teacher leaders are empowered to decide the direction of the PLC initiative as they seek to be intentional about fostering cultural change within schools.

Another inquiry-based model of professional learning tied to disciplinary literacy was project-based inquiry (PBI). Within the realm of knowledge construction, the PBI illustrated yet another attempt to address project-based inquiry. The model proposed to help teachers create a

pathway for deeper learning within the discipline. Students use inquiry to explore claims and evidence for deeper learning using an instructional model (Spires, Kerkhoff, & Graham, 2016).

Spires, Kerkhoff, and Graham (2016) related disciplinary literacy to PBI with strategic intention so that teachers guided students to learn the disciplinary content, processes, and skills that expert historians utilize to create knowledge. As a result, students have opportunities to construct new knowledge by employing the content knowledge and disciplinary literacy practices used by historians. Spires et al. (2016) presented the following practices: asking compelling questions, analyzing sources, synthesizing claims, evaluating information, and sharing information. The model utilized specific methods within the discipline to develop a deeper understanding of the rich context for more in-depth learning for students and teachers. Professional learning models that consist of the discussed characteristics promote effective literacy-based instructional decisions that impact student outcomes positively and encourage greater disciplinary literacy skills amongst secondary students.

**Data-driven practices.** Instructional improvement within the context of secondary education revealed the existence of data-driven practices to improve instructional practice. Consistent with the findings of other research studies, the researcher examined teacher and organizational practices related to all types of assessments and how data can be used to improve instruction. Several key factors are important when it comes to instructional improvement: school leadership, support for use of data, capacity building practices, norms for adult learning and collaboration and examining teacher, as well as organizational practices. The researchers recognized the complexity of investigating the necessary adult behaviors that are required to effectively gather valid formative assessment data regarding student progress (Young & Kim, 2010).

Building on this foundation, additional studies examined ways to create a data-informed district using the information to create instructional decisions. The researchers suggested three ways to use data for educational improvement: establishing common understandings, professional learning for using data, and computer data systems (Wayman, Jimerson, & Cho, 2012).

Subsequent research focused on assessment literacy with eight school districts that received professional learning to improve student learning and teaching. Successful outcomes were associated with three-year plans that included: support, teacher collaboration, shared expertise, technology, and data collection. The study revealed that team time and collaboration, like coaching, common planning time, and teaching of self-assessment of daily learning, led to increased student achievement with embedded structures for continuous (Dillon et al., 2015).

Within the literature on data-driven practices, recent scholarship was interested in the use of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Research studies examined an improvement initiative using Rick Dufour's PLC Model of implementation in a middle school context. Teachers participated in professional collaboration using data collection surveys. The use of effective PLC practices like collaboration and data-driven practices created common understandings between teachers and eventually led to improved student achievement data. (Lippy & Zamora, 2012). Subsequent research studied teacher perceptions about professional development related to demonstrations, in-services, graduate coursework and professional learning communities to determine which one was most successful to transfer theory to practice. Graduate coursework was determined to be most effective and the findings supported ongoing delivery of materials versus one shot workshops (Mundy, Howe, &

Kupczynski, 2015). Ongoing, data-driven practices support the collaborative teacher work experienced by participants in this research study.

Collaborative teacher practices are supported by structured supports for continuous improvement. Consistent with the findings of other researchers, additional research revealed the importance of consistency for data-driven outcomes in the examined studies. Specific instructional supports included learning walks, collaborative classroom visits, and instructional rounds (Anderson et al., 2014). The current research study included the examination of teachers who participated in similar data-driven practices to support continuous instructional improvement across secondary schools.

Teacher metacognitive practices and self-assessment of instructional practices with subsequent constructive feedback to students provided essential elements for continuous instructional improvement, which is central to this research study. John Hattie's third book *Visible Learning and the Science of How We Learn* (2013) included research on explicit student-centered approaches that emphasized constructive feedback to students and explored the factors that influence learning and highlighted the importance of positive teacher-student relationships (Stephenson, 2014). Intentional, strategic, job-embedded professional learning that addresses the data-driven practices, instructional supports and student-centered approaches is central to this research study, which investigated their impact on student learning outcomes.

**Student-centered instructional strategies.** History and English Language Arts teachers employ a variety of learner-centered instructional practices. Constructivist theory supports such instructional practices by suggesting that humans construct knowledge and make meaning from their experiences. In alignment with the current research study, teachers need to reflect on their

instructional practice in order to apply the student-centered practices (BADA & Olusegun, 2015).

***Cooperative Student Conversations.*** There are several instructional strategies that involve groups of students actively participating in conversations. Some examples of Cooperative Student Conversations are think/pair/share, Socratic Seminar and debates.

The Socratic Seminar is a form of structured discourse about ideas that encourage moral discussions and free inquiry where students relate activities to their own experiences. The cooperative student strategy balances two purposes: cultivation of common values and the celebration of free inquiry. (Tredway, 1995; Moeller & Moeller, 2011)

Subsequent research supported cooperative peer interaction using well-planned learning activities where students developed into self-reliant citizens using the educational philosophy of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Cooperative learning activities foster student independent thinking and support an educational environment where students can think on their own and challenge those in power (Williamson & Null, 2008).

Research has revealed evidence for strong increases in the amount of time students were talking and an increase in student text comprehension when classroom discussion approaches were used (Murphy et al., 2009). Furthermore, student achievement gains were reported with an effect size of .82 for classroom discussions (Hattie, 2017).

***Individual Student Inquiry.*** A second student-centered instructional practice encourages students to ask and investigate questions or find and evaluate evidence. Examples of individual student inquiries are document-based questions, students answering text-based questions, and the annotation of sources.

The inquiry design model of learning involves inquiry-based approaches to teaching where student questioning skills are encouraged (Thacker et al., 2018; The DBQ Project, 2019).

When students are encouraged to ask probing questions and investigate challenging problems, student achievement gains were reported with an effect size of .4 for inquiry-based teaching (Hattie, 2017).

***Role Plays or Simulations.*** Student-centered learning activities, such as role plays or simulations, engage students in learning tasks that prepare them to experience real-world connections. English Language Arts students and history students experience reader's theatre or skits to understand the experiences of characters from a novel or historical figure in the context of a specific time period in history.

Such approaches are considered authentic learning strategies because they enable students to develop content knowledge that transfer to real-world practice to improve student learning (Herrington et al., 2014). Another authentic learning model is called Project Based Learning (Hovey & Ferguson, 2014).

***Student Presentations.*** Learner-centered instructional strategies involve students presenting information to demonstrate proficiency with the content knowledge or skills being taught in the class. For example, Student Presentations can involve the delivery of information through multi-media presentation using technology. Standard five of the California Common Core State Standards for Speaking and Listening in Grades 6-12 states, "Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest" ((*Common Core State Standards*, 2010)).

**Teacher-centered instructional strategies.** In addition to student-centered instructional strategies, history and English Language Arts teacher utilize strategies that emphasize teacher-centered actions. Scholarly research on perennialism and essentialism educational philosophies supported teacher-centered instructional practices.

***Direct Content Instruction.*** The traditional teacher-centered method of teaching involves the direct delivery of content material to students. Examples of Direct Content Instruction are lectures, videos, and teacher read aloud of text material.

The current educational system in the United States is based on the industrial model of education where schools are assembly lines and classrooms are dominated by teacher directed lectures (Roberson, 2014). Hattie (2017) reported a student achievement effect size of .6 for direct instruction.

***Direct Skill Instruction.*** English Language Arts classrooms emphasize the development of literacy skills and the Common Core State Standards emphasize the importance of literacy instruction as a shared responsibility. History and English Language Arts teachers explicitly teach skills or processes through demonstrations or modeling when they engage in Direct Skill Instruction.

Effective writing instruction involves the teacher providing explicit modeling. During Direct Skill Instruction, teachers provide specific, explicit, and flexible instructional modeling (Regan & Berkeley, 2012). Hattie (2017) reported a student achievement effect size of .57 for explicit instruction.

***Comprehension Checks.*** English Language Arts and history teachers make frequent use of comprehension checks using a variety of instructional strategies. As a teacher-centered approach, the educator engages students with checks for understanding of the content. Examples

of comprehension checks are whole class question and answer sessions, quizzes, and homework review. In addition, teachers utilize comprehension checks when they review concepts for a quiz or test (Imig & Imig, 2006). Also called formative assessments, there is evidence that comprehension checks can enhance student learning if implemented well (Ateh & Wyngowski, 2015).

***Individualized Instruction.*** In an individualized learning environment, teachers work one on one with students to meet their unique learning needs. For example, English Language Arts and history teacher's conference, tutor, and provide individual feedback to students. Sharp (2016) emphasized that writing is a developmental process that must be flexible by accounting for the differences in the demands of the writer. Individualized Instructional strategies support students with the flexible supports they need to be successful writers. Hattie (2017) reported a student achievement effect size of .23 for Individualized Instruction.

### **Educational Philosophies and Theories**

English Language Arts teachers and history teachers adhere to specific educational philosophies and theories that impact the instructional decisions that they make in the classroom. Knight (1998) claimed that the task of educational philosophy is to bring educators in contact with larger questions about the meaning and purpose of education. Understanding one's educational philosophy guides teachers to form an internally consistent point of view and a program that relates to the larger world context. The lack of research related to teacher educational philosophy and the instructional decisions they make in the classroom is the central investigation of this research study.

### **Factors Influencing Educational Philosophy**

There are a variety of factors that influence the educational philosophy of preservice



teachers. Research studies suggested that preservice teachers who identify with perennialism and essentialism philosophies mostly adopt traditional approaches, whereas beginning teachers who adopt progressivism and re-constructionism philosophies mostly use constructivist learning approaches, like progressivism and reconstructionism (Sahan & Terzi, 2015). As accountability standards increased in the United States, essentialist philosophies dominated teacher education programs. As a backlash to such movements, humanistic teacher education was incorporated into teacher educational programs as a response to the political climate of the time (Sage, Adcock & Dixon, 2012).

Building on the foundation of humanistic teacher education, additional research identified six emerging themes from teaching philosophies: engage students in learning, maintain student interest, get to know students, assess student knowledge, set high expectations for students and participate in professional development (Carraway & Burris, 2017).

As a result of recent educational research, it was determined that the educational philosophies that teachers mostly adopt are existentialism, progressivism, reconstructionism, perennialism and essentialism. In addition, they primarily adopt student-centered curriculum design approaches that are subject-specific (Kozikoğlu & Uygun, 2018).

*Teacher education and professional learning.* The researcher is interested in studying the relationship between the amount of professional learning experienced by a teacher and the literacy-based decisions they employ in the classrooms. Preservice and in-service teachers comprise two categories of educators that receive professional development related to the pedagogical practices that impact student outcomes. Preservice teachers experience limited exposure to discipline-specific literacy strategies prior to their employment through teacher education programs. Furthermore, secondary reading instruction with the decreased focus on

generic literacy strategies to discipline- specific language and literacy practices presents new challenges for secondary teacher preparation programs (Fang, 2014). There is an emphasis on the skills and capacities of literacy across content areas and credential programs vary in the level of employment of the necessary strategies to develop such skills. This section discusses the literature on teacher education and professional learning.

Building on previous scholarly research, subsequent studies explored approaches to teacher education based in progressivism, the foundation for a deeper inquiry into the organization and development of teacher education programs (Webber & Miller, 2016).

*Approaches to literacy preparation in preservice programs.* Within the literature on approaches for literacy preparation within teacher education programs, there is consensus that preservice teachers do not receive the appropriate preparation when it comes to the skills necessary to meet the demands of the Common Core State Standards. There is a paucity of studies regarding classroom teaching, their impact on student learning, and the relationship between teacher education and professional development. Recent researchers argued for a more explicit approach to teaching historical literacy where methods should be embedded in the curriculum (Bain, 2012). Advocates for improvement in teacher education curriculum argued that teacher practice should be the core of teacher education programs, instead of beliefs and knowledge (Ball & Forzani, 2009). Preservice teacher preparation in discipline-specific writing can positively influence the quality of writing instruction (Grisham & Wolsey, 2011). Additional relevant studies drew attention to the need for research on social studies teacher education regarding effective teaching practices arguing that the “pedagogical content knowledge,” should emphasize the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to prepare social studies teachers and to prevent future marginalization of the discipline (Crocco &

Livingston, 2017).

Building upon the foundation of literacy preparation for pre-service teachers, additional case studies of novice teachers offered differing interpretations of various methods for teaching historical writing. The results revealed that differing school contexts and disciplinary understandings influenced how teachers approach writing instruction. The research highlights the need for integrating disciplinary literacy skills with general literacy education using practical historical writing instruction within teacher preservice education programs (Monte-Sano & De La Paz, 2012). This finding inspired the current research study which examined in-service teacher professional learning related to the paradigm shifts in both professional learning and the literacy shifts introduced by the Common Core State Standards in 2010.

*Explicit approaches.* The preparation of preservice teachers is central to the work of some teacher preparation programs that aimed to use “disciplinary literacy” to create connections and enhance preservice teachers’ capacity to use reading and writing to teach history to a range of learners across diverse contexts. Bain’s (2012) research study argued for a more explicit approach to teaching historical literacy within undergraduate teacher education programs in history and the social sciences using methods embedded in the curriculum. The researchers argued that disciplinary literacy should be central to the work of teacher preparation since the adoption of the Common Core State Standards (Bain, 2012).

Researchers affiliated with The American Historical Association (AHA) and the National Council for History Education (NCHE) were interested in the fact that, in the state of California, there has been a decline of discipline-specific training for pre-service history teachers. They provided evidence that pre-service teachers with more procedural knowledge and discipline-specific preparation in history do better in student teaching than candidates without the

disciplinary-focus in their undergraduate education. The essay argued for the importance of teacher preparation programs as a vehicle to teach candidates the knowledge that is required to think and to teach historically to improve secondary history education (Kiern & Luhr, 2012).

*Effective professional development.* Research has demonstrated that there are core features of professional learning that make some programs more effective by fostering new types of teacher knowledge to improve the quality of the profession. Such core features can influence the educational philosophy and mindset of teacher candidates. The core features of effective professional development are: content focus, active learning, coherence, 20 hours or more of collective participation, and job embedded professional learning (Smith, 2010). Studies validated the effectiveness of learning through experience, learning from reflection, and learning mediated by context which contributed to effective teacher professional learning. With increased teacher knowledge and skills, attitudes and philosophical beliefs are altered leading to a change in instructional practice. Improved student learning resulted when these conditions existed (Webster-Wright, 2009). In addition, changing teacher practice resulted from long-term, multisession activities that involved using artifacts of learning, like student essays and videos demonstrating long-term collective efforts to increase student learning and improve student achievement (Ball & Cohen, 1999).

*Impact of educational philosophy.* A teacher's educational philosophy has a significant impact upon the literacy-based decisions in the classroom and has an impact upon student outcomes on evidence-based writing assessments. As will be explored in the next section, Tan (2006) offers five central educational philosophies that impact teaching and learning. There is a need for more scholarly research related to the link between teacher beliefs and teaching and learning (Northcote, 2009). Various studies have researched prospective teachers' educational

beliefs and their ideas about critical pedagogy. Using an “Education Belief Scale” survey model to examine correlations between five theories below and critical pedagogy, the researchers determined if prospective teacher’s educational beliefs correlated with their views of the purpose of schools and the educational system. The results revealed that subjects agreed with educational beliefs within certain philosophical perspectives such as Perennialism, Progressivism, Reconstructionism and Existentialism (Kaya & Kaya, 2017). A brief summary of the main philosophical and theoretical perspectives is presented in the section below.

### **Perennialism Theory**

Perennialism theory originated in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century with advocates such as early supporter Robert Maynard Hutchins (1936) and Mortimer Adler (1982) and Allan Bloom (1987) as latter-day proponents who proposed that the aim of education is to focus on helping students know and internalize ideas that are enduring and universal. Furthermore, the role of schools is to train an educationally elite group. Teachers of perennialism are liberally educated, knowledgeable, with a teaching emphasis based in the great works of Western civilization (Tan, 2006). The theory focused on the unchanging principles of education and enduring truths. According to Perennialism, the nature of humanity never changes, and it is predictably stable and therefore, models of education should be constant (Kaya & Kaya, 2017). The educational paradigm supported the idea that a liberal education grounded in the classics is the most favorable environment for students.

The philosophy of perennialism emphasized that important works transcend time, also known as “culturally conservative,” because it does not challenge stereotypes, including multiculturalism, or advocacy for the use of technology. The goal is to teach students how to think rationally and critically. Classrooms are well-organized and well-disciplined. Education

is intended to guide students toward an appreciation of great works of literature. In addition, skills are developed in a sequential manner. The curriculum limits expression of individuality and flexibility about student interests. The overarching application of knowledge is preferred in perennialism (Lynch, 2016).

### **Essentialism Theory**

The essential tenets of essentialism theory began with the idea that education is meant to preserve society, not change it. The most influential advocate of essentialism was William C. Bagley who presented at the American Association of School Administrators in 1938 and urged educators to be vigilant about sticking to the core curriculum. The influence of James D. Koerner (1959), H.S. Rickover (1959), Paul Cooperman (1978), and TheodoreSizer (1985) contributed to the model of education used in public schools throughout the United States today. Essentialism supported the idea that common knowledge must be delivered to students in a systematic, disciplined way. Furthermore, the function of schools was to emphasize great works of art, literature and music (Tan, 2006). Essentialists favored a subject-centered curriculum and focused on a sequential curriculum to promote a foundational understanding of the historical context related to today. Core knowledge is emphasized in reading, writing, math, science, history, foreign language, and technology. Essentialism involved instructional practices including lecturing, memorization, repetition, practice, and assessment (Lynch, 2016).

According to Tan (2006), essentialist teachers are experts in their content area, and they are a model of intellectual pursuit and good moral character. They emphasize discipline and order in their classroom. In addition, they are prepared to teach the curriculum in a coherent manner and emphasized important facts to learn. They set high academic standards using discipline as a guiding value of education and students are assessed through a variety of

competency tests.

While both essentialists and perennialists believe in wisdom, there is a difference between the two theories. Perennialists believed that the purpose of education is to absorb ideas, while the essentialist highlights the mastery of facts and skills with a teacher who is a moral and a disciplinary role model (Tan, 2006).

Recent research identified the predominance of essentialist philosophy in education where the teacher-centered classroom transfers bits of “essential” knowledge to students. Furthermore, the predominance of the high stakes testing mentality has dominated educational policy decisions (Roberson, 2014).

### **Progressivism Theory**

Progressivism theory originated out of the need to address the challenges facing the United States during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Tan, 2006). Proponents of progressivist theory are Charles S. Peirce, William James, and John Dewey. From the 1920s to the 1950s, Dewey argued school should improve the life of citizens through experiencing democracy and freedom in schools. According to Dewey, books are tools, but not the authority because education should focus on the whole child with active participation and the belief that learning is derived from questions, which is a uniquely American ideal for an educational system. The emphasis is on the development of the democratic system where students work together in groups to share ideas and resolve conflicts through conversations and guidance from the teacher (Tan, 2006). Problem-solving skills are emphasized in progressive theory. Education is dependent on the knowledge and values of the people living within the society and there is no one set of universal knowledge and values, which are dependent on human experience (Tan, 2006).

Progressivism emphasized the unique role of schools as social agencies to prepare students to interact with an environment that is constantly changing (Tan, 2006). Within the school context, students learn through active experimentation. Furthermore, they learn by doing and curriculum is derived from what students are interested in doing. The progressive teacher acts as resource and facilitator of knowledge to guide students through problem-solving, hands on learning, and creative artistic expression (Tan, 2006). The learner makes meaning through their experience in the world and the context they are in. The major emphasis in progressivist theory is on how a student comes to know something. (Cohen, 1999).

Building upon the ideas of previous research, subsequent studies demonstrated how the principles underpinning progressive education emerged repeatedly as successful educational practices that prepare students for future life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Little, 2013). Subsequently, a staff self-study of progressive education chronicled a shared journey of reflection upon the practices of a school committed to this model of teaching and learning (Barone et al., 2014).

### **Reconstructionism**

The reconstructionism movement originated from a group of reformists who were dissatisfied with the progressive movement in education (Tan, 2006). George S. Counts and Theodore Brameld both advocates for reconstructivist theory argued that the purpose of school is to create a new social order and to equip students with the skills to solve global problems. According to reconstructionist theory, the main task of education is to reshape society. The educational system exists to create a peaceful and happy civilization to make the world a better place to live. Additionally, schools exist as social agencies rather than academic institutions. Social questions are central to creating a better society and a worldwide democracy. Students are empowered to solve social problems. Multicultural education is favored to get the sense of



the larger context and identity (Tan, 2006).

Reconstructionist teachers nurture students who are interested in global issues and who are interested in changing society. The teachers are social activists with humanitarian interests. They focus their students on action projects that challenge controversial topics and they seek to be involved in community actions (Stern & Riley, 2002; Tan, 2006; Kanu & Obianasor, 2016).

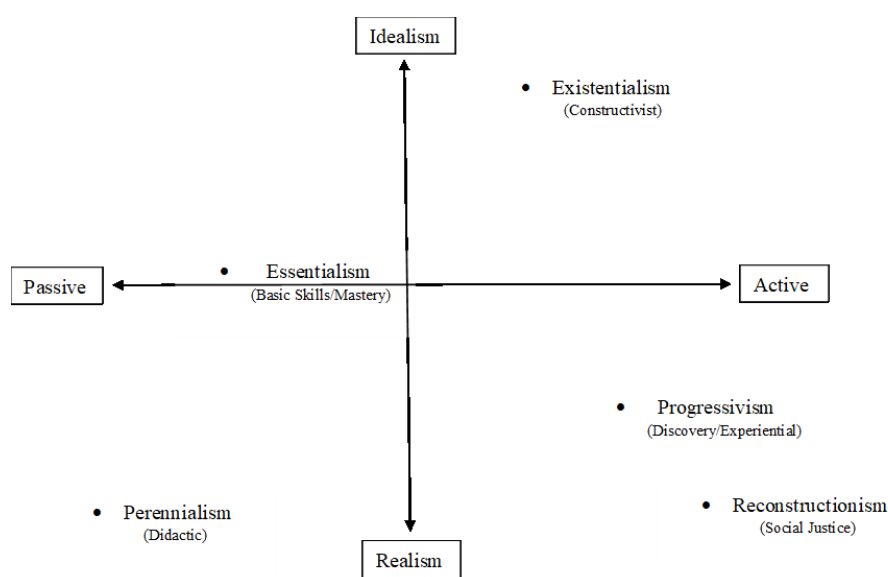
### **Existentialism**

Existentialism is rooted in critical theory, which originated in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Europe with the works of Soren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche who wrote the book *The Antichrist* and coined the phrase “God is dead.” Advocates strongly rejected the traditional, essentialist approaches in favor of self-paced, self-directed learning with a strong respect for individualism. Existentialists believe there is no universal human nature and instead, individuals are responsible for determining truth. Additionally, each person has free will and curriculum in the classroom exists to benefit students, so they can appreciate themselves as unique individuals. Furthermore, advocates of the belief system reject the existence of objective truths.

The existentialist teacher’s role is to help students define their own self by exposing them to a variety of pathways; emphasizing that education is for the whole person and not just the mind. The humanities are an avenue for an existentialist education emphasizing the unleashing of each student’s creativity and self-discovery. Student learning is self-paced and self-directed, which typically is not an option within public schools throughout the country.

There is a relationship between a teacher’s educational philosophy and the instructional strategies that they chose to employ in the classroom. Through the lens of schema theory, teachers subconsciously make instructional decisions rooted in their belief system which is influenced by intrinsic qualities that they possess as a teacher. Educational philosophy,

intrinsic qualities such as degrees of artistry, communication skills, and organizational skills, are significant factors relating to whether they are effective at guiding students. As seen in Figure 1, educational theory attributes are associated with certain philosophical orientations and learning styles.



*Figure 1.* Educational Theories Attributes Related to Philosophical Orientations and Learning Styles (Kim & Glassen, 2018).

### Summary

The development of instructional strategies has been informed by the adoption and implementation of the Common Core State Standards in 2010. Building upon the shifts in literacy instruction that have occurred in the United States, secondary educational practices have changed to meet the demands of college and career readiness. Several factors influence the implementation of instructional practices by teachers in secondary classrooms. Teachers are influenced by educational theories and professional development opportunities, which have an impact on their literacy-based instructional decisions. Student outcomes on evidence-based writing assessments are supported by the review of literature which draws attention to the need

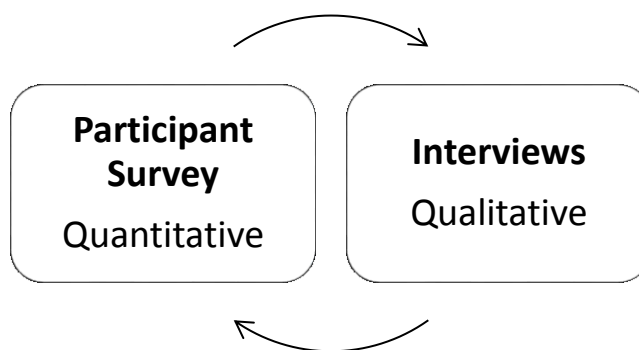
for more relevant studies to examine the factors that contribute to the alleviation of the achievement gap and improved literacy achievement in the United States. This research study aimed to strengthen the implementation of such efforts to improve literacy education.

### CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The fundamental objective of the author was to test the research questions (see below) related to the impact of a teacher's educational philosophy and beliefs about student writing outcomes on the use of instructional strategies. The mixed-methods methodology used to investigate the defined research questions is presented in this chapter. The chapter is organized into eight sections: (a) research design, (b) research hypothesis, (c) selection of participants, (d) instrumentation, (e) data collection, (f) ethical considerations, (g) data analysis, and (h) summary.

#### **Research Design**

The mixed-methods, explanatory approach provided the researcher with opportunities for the triangulation of data and reduced the probability of bias of a specific method (Maxwell, 2013). Furthermore, a more complete result emerged when both methods were utilized in a *triangulation design* (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In addition to the quantitative survey instrument, the researcher employed qualitative data collection techniques using participant in-depth interviews as multi-method strategies for the *triangulation* of data to increase the credibility of the findings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). As seen in Figure 2, the researcher employed the use of quantitative surveys and qualitative in-depth interviews to provide mixed-method data sources. As a result, the design broadened the researcher's understanding of the impact of the variables on teacher instructional strategy use and literacy-related outcomes in student writing.



*Figure 2. Mixed Method Data Sources*

Through this study, the research aimed to answer the two questions regarding teacher instructional decisions. Question one: How does teacher educational philosophy impact the use of instructional strategies for history and English Language Arts teachers? Question two: How do teacher instructional strategies impact literacy-based outcomes on student writing?

### **Research Hypotheses**

To address the research questions identified in this study, three hypotheses were created. The review of the literature and theoretical framework supported the following research hypotheses:

1. Student-centered instructional strategies (Appendix A, Part III: #1-4) are used more frequently with teachers who identify with the educational philosophies of progressivism, reconstructionism, and existentialism.
2. Teacher-centered instructional strategies (Appendix A, Part III: #5-8) are used more frequently with teachers who identify with the educational philosophies of perennialism and essentialism.

3. Student writing outcomes are positively impacted by teacher use of the following instructional strategies: Cooperative Student Conversations, Individual Student Inquiry, Direct Skill Instruction, and Individualized Instruction.

### **Selection of Participants**

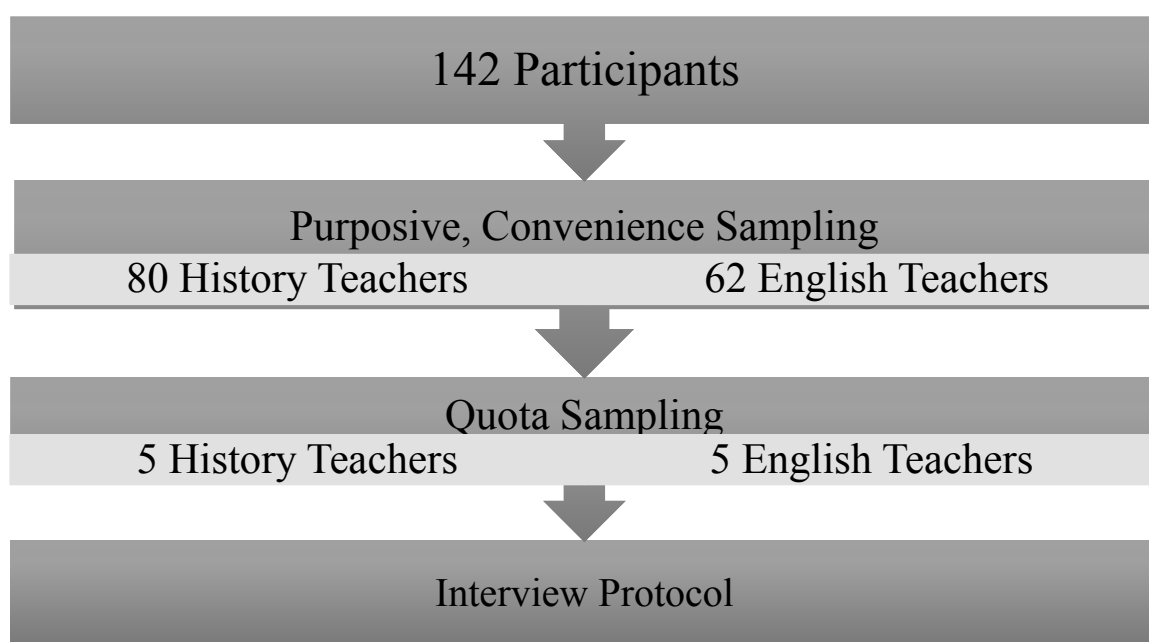
Four hundred and thirty-eight history and English language arts teachers from one identified suburban school district located in Southern California were invited to participate in the research study. The school district is the second largest in Orange County, California and is the 8<sup>th</sup> largest district in the state. The selected school district encompasses two hundred miles in seven cities and an unincorporated area of Orange County. The district is home to over 49,000 students and employs approximately 2,164 teachers. Approximately 57% of students are White and 26% Hispanic with a graduation rate over 97%.

The researcher obtained permission from Concordia University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The participants were from 10 intermediate schools (Grades 6-8), two K-8 schools, six high schools (Grades nine through twelve), and one alternative high school (Grades 9-12). The participant self-identified racial categories were: 86.62% White, 8.45% Latino/Hispanic, 2.82% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 2.11% Other/Multiple.

In this study, two sampling structures were used to select the participants. The researcher adhered to purposive convenience sampling to identify the participants for the study. Purposive sampling is utilized when settings, people, and activities are selected because they provide data that is specifically relevant to the research questions (Maxwell, 2013). The sample was convenient for the researcher because of the guaranteed access to participants who provided maximum value related to the goals of the research inquiry. A criterion-based purposive sampling method applied to the study. The criterion for participants was they were

(a) history or English language arts teachers in Grades 6-12, and (b) had been employed in the identified school district at least one year. In total, 142 teachers agreed to participate in the research study.

Quota sampling was utilized for the interview protocol when one ELA teacher and one history teacher were identified for each of the five educational theories. Ten open-ended, semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather a deep understanding and certainty related to the findings, interpretations, and conclusions.



*Figure 3.* Selection of Participants (Glassen, 2018).

The target population of this study was secondary teachers (6-12) that teach history and English language arts classes in California. This population included teachers from the single identified public-school district in Southern California. The following is a breakdown of the target population of each group: 89 females, 53 males, 80 history teachers, and 62 English Language Arts teachers. The population had an average of 18.3 years of teaching experience.

This comprised the target population of 142 participants.

### **Instrumentation**

The instruments used in this mixed-methods research study consisted of a participant survey and teacher interview protocol. See Appendices. The various data collection methods provided valuable quantitative and qualitative data and insights that were central to the analysis of the research inquiry.

The instrument used by the researcher included an online survey titled *Participant Survey* that was emailed to secondary history teachers and English language arts teachers. A Google Form was used to collect data from the respondents. The quantitative instrument consisted of a five-part survey. The first section of the survey included 11 questions about each participant's demographic information and educational background. The researcher chose to use an online survey as the primary instrument for data collection because it is the most effective method for "both response rate and reaching a high number of participants" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 241). Most of the participants were blind to the researcher, unless they were selected for interviews based on the survey results. The survey is in Appendix A.

Section two was comprised of a Likert-style survey that measured the educational philosophy of the participants. The scale was selected for the survey to accurately assess the beliefs and opinions of the participants (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Tan, Wong, Chua, J.S.M. and Kang (2006) presented the educational philosophies that were utilized for the survey. The researcher developed the educational theory categories based upon the general philosophical systems that encompass teacher beliefs about teaching and learning. Four indicators measured the beliefs of the participants with thirty statements that aligned with each



educational philosophy or theory. There were six statements for each educational philosophy or theory. Teachers were asked to rate their agreement with each statement based on the pre-identified Likert-scale: strong agreement (+2), mild agreement (+1), mild disagreement (-1), strong disagreement (-2).

Section three of the survey stated teacher-centered and learner-centered instructional strategies. There are specific instructional strategies that positively impact student achievement (Hattie, 2016). Eight instructional strategies were listed with answer options from 1-5. Participants were instructed to reflect upon a class taught in the past week (Monday-Friday). Participants were instructed to enter the number of times each strategy was utilized in their classroom in the past week (Monday-Friday) to measure frequency. The student-centered instructional practices were Cooperative Student Conversations, individual student inquiry, Role Plays and Simulations, and Student Presentations. The teacher-centered instructional practices were Direct Content Instruction, Direct Skill Instruction, Comprehension Checks, and Individualized Instruction. The measurement scales selected by the researcher aimed to capture interval data so that there was a constant unit of comparison yielding descriptive statistics for data analysis (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Section four of the survey included two Likert-style questions that measured teacher efficacy related to student writing outcomes. The prompt asked the extent that the participant agreed with two statements related to student writing. The first sentence stated, "On average, my students are excellent writers." The second sentence stated, "Over the course of a year, students show tremendous improvement in their writing." Participants were asked to agree with the statements based on the following Likert-scale: *Strongly Agree* (5), *Agree* (4), *Neutral* (3), *Disagree* (2), and *Strongly Disagree* (1).

Section five of the survey included three professional development actions. Participants were instructed to enter the number of hours of participation in district, school site, and after-school professional development. For question one, participants recorded the total number of hours of district professional development release days. For question two, participants recorded the total number of hours of school site professional development release days. For question three, participants recorded the total number of hours of after-school professional development. The complete survey is in Appendix A.

A single qualitative method was utilized to gain a better understanding of the complexity of the factors related to teacher educational philosophy and instructional strategy use (Maxwell, 2013). The researcher collected qualitative data from the participants using an interview protocol. The interview protocol is one of the main tools for collecting qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Ten teacher participants were identified based on the quantitative survey data. The eight instructional strategies from the participant survey were listed in the first column. The researcher took detailed, written notes specifically regarding evidence that indicated the educational philosophy and beliefs of each participant. The survey information was validated using interviews with the participants and by soliciting feedback from them after the observation. The complete interview protocol is in Appendix B.

For the qualitative section, interviews were conducted after the participants were identified from the second section of the five-part survey. The interview questions were open-ended, general, and focused on understanding the essential inquiry of the research study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Ten participants were asked to take part in the interviews. Two perennialist teachers, two essentialist teachers, two progressivist teachers, two reconstructionist teachers, and two existentialist teachers were identified using quota

sampling, one for each content area. The researcher identified the participants using the results from the initial survey. The researcher intentionally selected both history and English Language Arts teachers. The data collection strategies went through ongoing focusing and revision to provide better data to answer the research questions and to address validity concerns (Maxwell, 2013). The complete interview protocol is in Appendix B.

The semi-structured interview protocol consisted of four prompts or questions related to the results of the participant survey: (1) Your primary educational philosophy has been identified as \_\_\_\_\_. Tell me more about this. How do you think your educational philosophy impacts your instruction? (2) Your preferred instructional strategies were \_\_\_\_\_. Tell me more about this. The researcher included optional probing questions such as: (1) Describe one of your classes today. (2) What instructional practices did you engage in today? (3) Tell me about the content you were teaching when you used the instructional strategy? (4) Why did you use this strategy?

The researcher designed the interview questions to document the deeper analysis of why specific instructional strategies were chosen. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), the flexible nature of the interview format allows for a higher response rate as the researcher can adapt the questions because of the direct interaction with participants. The researcher asked additional follow-up questions as the interview progressed based on participants' responses. Details regarding motivations, perceived causal factors, and reasons for instructional decisions were documented using the interview protocol with the five identified participants. The complete interview protocol is in Appendix B.

In addition, participants were instructed to bring scored writing samples to the in-depth interview. Three to five samples were randomly selected by the participant and the researcher

asked the following questions (Monte-Sano et al., 2014): (1) What do you notice about the student writing? (2) What are the strengths and weaknesses that you notice in the student essay? (3) Discuss instructional strategies reflected in the writing. (4) What instructional strategies did you use to teach student writing and why? (5) Describe your experience evaluating student work. (6) What is your overall opinion about the process of scoring student work? (7) What was the instruction leading up to your writing assignment? Additional questions related to the instructional practices and educational philosophy of the participants were used in order to generate themes and possible causal factors related to instructional decisions. The additional questions were: (1) Tell me the characteristics of a successful student, (2) What defines a successful teacher?

### **Validity and Reliability**

The researcher used a pilot survey with 10 participants. A statistical analysis was conducted to test the quantitative questionnaire survey for feedback related to the clarity of the questions and the amount of time necessary to complete the survey. The survey was created using Google Forms on the Concordia University, Irvine cloud-based server. The link to the survey was sent to the participants using the researcher's Concordia University Gmail account. To enhance the reliability of the survey instrument, the researcher conducted a statistical analysis of the data and adhered to the following criteria: (1) only the researcher administered the survey, (2) all participants received the same directions within the same time frame, and (3) all the information in the survey adhered to the same standard and condition for data collection. To further enhance the statistical power of the research study, the researcher used a large sample size of 300 participants to decrease the likelihood of random error (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

In order to improve the validity of the quantitative design, the researcher used Cronbach's alpha to determine the internal consistency of question 13 and questions 1-25 on Part II regarding educational philosophy on the Teacher Online Survey. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), "the alpha is the most common type of reliability reported in educational research" (p. 182). Due to the small sample size of the pilot study, the value for the Cronbach's alpha was zero for all items. For the comprehensive research study, the researcher will report the Cronbach's alpha for scaled items on the Participant Survey.

After the pilot study was conducted, suggestions for improvement were recorded in the final question of the Google Form. The feedback and responses were analyzed to determine if the data collected matched the intended objectives of the research study. A carefully designed pilot study was used to test the potentiality of "methods and explore their implications" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 66). The researcher revised the survey questionnaire based upon the participant feedback to provide greater clarity and focus to the initial quantitative inquiry.

The construct validity of the study involved the inferred conclusions that the researcher made regarding educational philosophy questions stated in part two of the Participant Survey. After conducting the pilot study, the researcher recognized the validity threats that were present in the instrumentation. To limit the *mono-method bias* which refers to a single measurement of variables, the researcher incorporated multiple measures to validate the results using the quantitative instrument. By using in-depth interviews to measure the variables, the validity threats are reduced (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

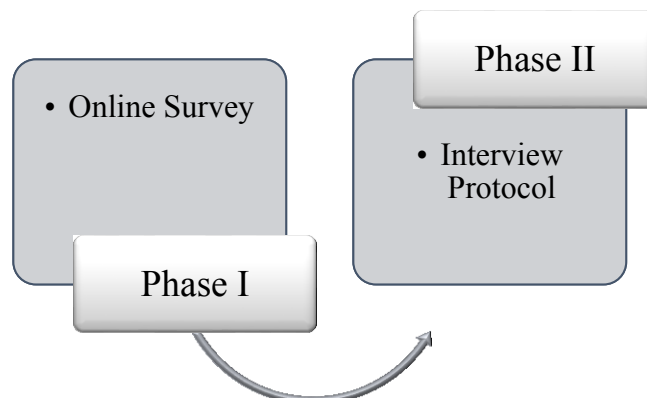
To further enhance the validity of the qualitative research methods, the researcher used multimethod strategies to permit the *triangulation* of data across the research inquiry. The researcher used interviews to yield additional insights about the instructional topics. Also, the

researcher used member checking and participant review to confirm the content of probing questions and verify the accuracy of collected information (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

### **Data Collection**

The study was conducted using multiple sources of documentation: surveys and interviews. The qualitative methods helped the researcher analyze the teacher theories and philosophies that impact literacy-based instructional decisions. The interview protocol afforded the researcher the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the motivations behind instructional decisions that impact student writing outcomes.

Before data collection began, written consent from the school district office was granted to conduct the study. The researcher completed the “Application to Conduct Educational Research” from the school district and received district level approval prior to conducting the study. The researcher obtained permission to conduct the study from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) which outlined the guidelines for conducting ethical research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Two separate phases of data collection were included as part of this study.



*Figure 4.* Phases of Data Collection.

### **Phase one**

The first phase of data collection included the administration of an online survey questionnaire that included five sections: teacher information, educational philosophy, student writing outcomes and instructional strategies, and professional development. History and English language arts teachers were identified using the district-wide Aeries database. Teachers were contacted by email and invited to participate in the research study. Gaining access to the individuals who participated in the research study involved providing electronic consent forms for the sampling of human subjects (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Informed consent items were added to the beginning of the online survey questionnaire that was administered electronically. Teachers were given an unlimited amount of time to answer the survey. Through the first phase of data collection, emerging themes were identified, and additional ideas and attitudes were considered so that they could be incorporated into Phase II.

The researcher utilized the data from phase one to develop the process or action related to Phase II (Creswell & Poth, 2018). After analyzing the participant beliefs about educational philosophy, student writing outcomes, instructional strategies, and professional development,

the researcher developed theoretical categories associating teacher philosophy with specific instructional practices.

### **Phase two**

The second phase of data collection included an interview protocol used with the participants who were identified from Phase I. Participants were shown a written summary of the results from Phase I and asked to discuss their ideas. In addition, participants were also encouraged to add pertinent information that had not been included in the data from Phase I.

The discussion of student work occurred after the interview protocol. Participants brought scored student writing samples as evidence related to student literacy-related writing outcomes. Participants described student writing samples as the researcher asked probing questions related to the student essays. Question three of the interview protocol encouraged participants to examine student work to address the following topics: strengths and weaknesses, instructional strategies, opinions about scoring student work, and the instructions prior to the writing assignment (See Appendix B). The researcher connected themes associated with the literacy-related outcomes to form conclusions related to the research questions.

After the interviews were conducted, the researcher used NVivo word analyzing software to transcribe the audio recordings and wrote an *interview elaboration* of each session to document self-reflections and elaborations of each experience. This process served to establish quality control and to validate the data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Member checking occurred after each interview by allowing the participants the opportunity to review their responses to check for accuracy and to validate the research data.

During all phases of data collection, the participants' identities and confidentiality were protected. The researcher masked the participant names using employee identification numbers



to avoid the inclusion of identifiable information in the data analysis files (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

### **Ethical Considerations**

The researcher applied for review to Concordia University, Irvine's Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct this research study. The researcher submitted consent forms which included all information required as part of the protection of human subjects' criteria such as (a) preservation of confidentiality, and (b) permission is voluntary and they can withdraw or end the interview at any time. The participants were referred to by their employee identification number in the online survey questionnaire and the interviews. All hard copies of data were stored in a locked file cabinets and electronic files were stored on a password protected laptop computer. The researcher was the only person who had access to the audio files and transcription notes.

The researcher was employed by the school district where the study took place. The researcher worked at the district office in the curriculum and instruction department of the school district. The participants were colleagues of the researcher.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis for the research involved descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the participants' educational philosophies related to instructional strategies. The researcher ran a multiple linear regression analysis using information from Phase I of the study. Demographic variables such as age, ethnicity, years of experience teaching, and educational background were controlled to isolate variables for the analysis. Additional regression analysis was utilized to identify causal factors related to instructional strategy decisions impacted by the participants' educational philosophies and literacy-related student writing outcomes.

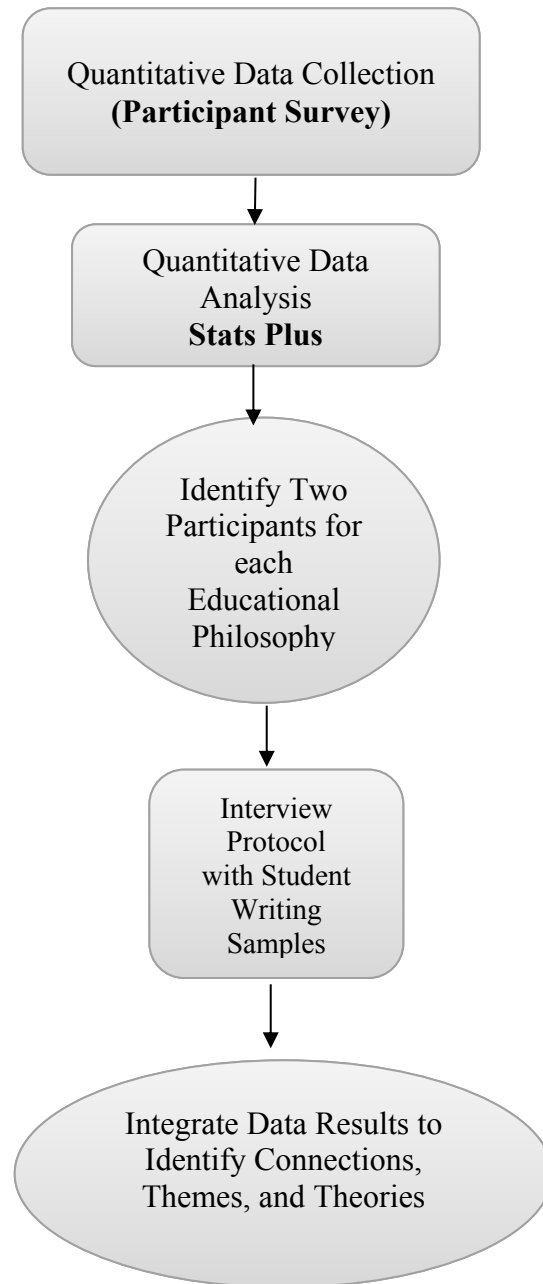
For the first research question, the dependent variable was instructional strategies and the independent variables were: participant's educational philosophy, background, beliefs about student writing outcomes, and the amount of time spent in professional development activities.

For the second research question, the dependent variable was literacy-related student writing outcomes and the independent variable was instructional strategies. The researcher used descriptive analysis of teacher comments during the interview protocol using open coding and memoing to identify themes and patterns relevant to the central investigation. Data was collected during the second semester of the 2018-2019 school year. Analysis of data was completed during the summer of 2019.

Since the researcher was studying at her place of employment, multiple strategies of validation were employed to ensure the accuracy and insightfulness of the account (Creswell & Poth, 2018). These two methodologies will be discussed separately.

Data was analyzed with statistical tests using Stats Plus software. Tests of statistical analysis were performed to determine the relationship between educational philosophies, instructional strategies, beliefs about student writing outcomes, as well as teacher professional learning. Descriptive statistics and tables were used to display the results. A table showing the demographic breakdown of the sample was obtained from the Stats Plus program. An item analysis indicated the mean responses for the following categories: educational philosophy statements, highest educational philosophy, and instructional strategy use. Multiple linear regression analysis tables displayed the correlation coefficients and p-values for the following variables: educational philosophy vs. instructional strategies, and instructional strategies vs. student writing outcomes.

During Phase II, open-ended responses were collected using the interview protocol. The researcher employed a summative approach of data analysis by counting and comparing participant responses (Concordia University, nd). Interviews were compared to each other to identify similarities, differences, and common themes. Categories were formed, coded, and triangulated for both the open-ended response data and the observation data. The themes were identified based on the research questions and the themes were compared to each other for deeper analysis. Additionally, themes from the data were compared to the existing literature on educational theory, disciplinary literacy, instructional strategies, and teacher effectiveness and training. The researcher followed *The Data Analysis Spiral* to organize, classify, and visually represent the data to formulate an account of the findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018).



*Figure 5.* Process of Data Analysis.

### **Summary**

This chapter discussed the mixed methods used in the research study to examine the impact teacher educational philosophy and beliefs about student writing have upon their use of instructional strategies. The researcher utilized a mixed-methods approach to “gain a greater depth of understanding rather than simply greater breadth or confirmation of the results of a single method” (Maxwell, 2013, p. 104). Using multiple quantitative and qualitative methods, the goal of the researcher was to understand the relationship between educational philosophy and instructional decisions that impact student learning outcomes. The research hypothesis was addressed using a two-phase data collection process that targeted 438 secondary history and English language arts teachers in Southern California. A Likert scale online survey questionnaire was distributed to history and English language arts teachers using a purposive, convenience sample design. The mixed method correlational design utilized varied instrumentation tools: surveys and interview protocols. After the researcher conducted the two phases of the research study, data was analyzed using quantitative and qualitative research methods. Data was collected and analyzed during the 2018-2019 school year.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The intent of this research study was to investigate the influence of teacher educational philosophy on the use of instructional strategies in English and history classrooms. In addition, the study explored the impact of instructional strategies on teacher beliefs about literacy-related outcomes on student writing. The purpose of the study was achieved by analyzing the participant responses using a quantitative online survey questionnaire and qualitative interviews based on quota sampling for each educational philosophy. This study utilized descriptive statistics, as well as quantitative and qualitative procedures in a mixed-methods research design. The primary focus of the study is quantitative in nature; however, qualitative data in the form of participants' responses and quotes from ten in-depth interviews are included in this chapter and serve as additional evidence to support the quantitative results. This chapter presents results to the following research questions:

1. How does teacher educational philosophy impact the use of instructional strategies for history and English Language Arts teachers?
2. How do teacher instructional strategies impact literacy-related outcomes on student writing?

The research tools for investigating the two research questions were an online survey questionnaire and in-depth participant interviews. The results of the data analysis are presented within this chapter: (a) quantitative results, (b) qualitative results, (c) limitations and delimitations, (d) summary.

### **Quantitative Results**

In total, 142 survey questionnaires were included in the data analysis. The surveys were completed by history and English language arts teachers in a secondary educational classroom

setting. The study took place over a seven-week period at the end of the second semester during the 2018-2019 school year. Most of the respondents were female (89 out of 142, or 63%) with fewer males participating in the study (53 out of 142, or 37%). The largest group to participate in the study were between ages 41-50 (59 out of 142, or 42%). Overall, the largest group of teachers reported an ethnicity of White (123 out of 142, or 87%). Latino/Hispanic participants made up the next largest category of respondents (12 out of 142, or 8%). Respondents who marked “other” or more than one ethnicity were included in the “Other/Multiple” category. Single subject social science credentialed teachers made up the largest group of respondents (61 out of 142, or 43%) and single subject English teachers made up the next largest group (49 out of 142, or 35%). For numbers of years of teaching, the mean was 18.3 years with a standard deviation of 7.9. High school English teachers comprised the largest number of respondents (61 out of 142, or 43%) with middle school social science teachers making up the next largest group (42 out of 142, or 30%). High school history teachers were the next largest group (38 out of 142, or 27%). For highest degree attained, the largest number of respondents have a master’s degree (118 out of 142, or 83%) and 3 participants (2% overall) indicated that they have a Ph.D. or Ed.D. (see Table 1).

Table 1. Demographic Data of Teacher Participants

Demographic		Count	%
Gender	Female	89	62.68%
	Male	53	37.32%
Age	25-30	7	4.9%
	31-40	32	22.5%
	41-50	59	41.5%
	51-60	41	28.9%
	61+	3	2.1%
Ethnicity	White	123	86.62%
	Latino/Hispanic	12	8.45%
	Asian/Pacific Islander	4	2.82%
	Other/Multiple	3	2.11%
Teaching Credential	Multiple Subject	9	6.34%
	Other/Multiple Credentials	23	16.20%
	Single Subject English	49	34.51%
	Single Subject Social Science	61	42.96%
Years Teaching	0-5	8	5.63%
	5-10	13	9.15%
	10-15	28	19.72%
	15-20	26	18.31%
	20-25	31	21.83%
	35-30	21	14.79%
	30-35	15	10.56%
Subjects	High School ELA	61	42.96%
	High School History	38	26.76%
	Middle School ELA	1	0.70%
	Middle School Social Studies	42	29.58%
Highest Degree	B.A.	21	14.79%
	M.A./M.S.	118	83.10%
	Ph.D./Ed.D.	3	2.11%



### Educational Philosophy Categories

The 30 items were totaled using the numerical point value to create an overall educational philosophy score for each participant (see Table 2). Overall, the largest group of respondents indicated the educational philosophy of progressivism (51 out of 142, or 36%). The next largest group was comprised of the “Multiple Philosophies” group (31 of 142, or 22%). The third largest group identified with essentialism (22 out of 142, or 15%). Existentialism comprised a smaller number of respondents (17 out of 142, or 12%). Reconstructionism comprised a similar number of respondents (16 out of 142, or 11%). The smallest educational philosophy group was perennialism (4 out of 142, or 3%). Educational philosophy scores were calculated and when the highest scores were the same, respondents were assigned to the “Multiple Philosophies” category (e.g., “Perennialism-Essentialism”) (see Table 2). Only single educational philosophy categories were utilized to conduct the statistical analysis using instructional strategy categories to answer research question one. Multiple philosophy categories were not included in the statistical analysis.

Table 2. Highest Educational Philosophy Frequencies

	Count	%
Essentialism	22	15.49%
Existentialism	17	11.97%
Perennialism	4	2.82%
Progressivism	51	35.92%
Reconstructionism	16	11.27%
Multiple Philosophies	31	21.83%

### **Professional Development Hours**

The researcher used a Pearson correlation test to investigate the relationship between professional development hours and the frequency of weekly instructional strategy use. Part five of the quantitative survey prompted participants to reflect upon the number of professional development hours they received over the past two school years. Participants were asked to record the total number of district professional development hours, the total number of school site professional development hours, and the total number of after-school professional development hours with one full day equaling six hours.

The researcher reported a relationship between after-school professional development hours and Direct Content Instruction. There was a weak, negative correlation between the two variables,  $r(140) = -.17, p < .05$ . Additionally, the researcher reported a relationship between the total number of professional development hours and Direct Content Instruction. There was a weak, negative correlation between the two variables,  $r(140) = -.20, p < .05$ . The total number of professional development hours were calculated by adding the following numbers together: total number of district professional hours, total number of school site hours, and total number of after-school hours.

### **Research Question One**

This study attempted to answer the following question: How does teacher educational philosophy impact the use of instructional strategies for history and English Language Arts teachers? To address the first research question one, descriptive statistics from the results of Part One, "Teacher Information," were utilized as control variables in the analysis. The survey's second section, "Teacher Educational Philosophy," prompted respondents to indicate their level of agreement with 30 statements (see Table 2). The respondents' possible answer choices were

as follows: *Strong Agreement* (2), *Mild Agreement* (1), *Mild Disagreement* (-1), *Strong Disagreement* (-2). All items were positively phrased to elicit a valid response from the participants. The mean ratings and standard deviations for each educational philosophy statement are presented below in Table 3. Mean scores for the 30 items range between -1.51 and 1.89 depending on the specific educational philosophy statement.

Table 3. Respondent Educational Philosophy Statements

	Mean	SD
<b>Perennialism</b>		
The focus of knowledge is to emphasize ideas that have endured through time.	0.92	1.01
The role of schools is to educate the intellectually elite.	-1.51	0.97
Education should aim to help students know ideas that are universal.	1.42	0.85
Teachers should aim to hold high academic standards.	1.74	0.70
The curriculum should focus on the classics with emphasis on the great works of literature, music, and art from Western civilization.	0.32	1.17
Teachers should emphasize truths which are timeless in the subject matter.	1.01	1.04
<b>Essentialism</b>		
Students should respect authority to be members of a civilized society.	1.20	0.92
Teachers should be experts in their subject matter.	1.58	0.71
The purpose of education is the mastery of facts and skills.	-0.09	1.22
Teachers should act as examples of moral character for students.	1.64	0.65
Schools should promote rigorous academic standards with a high value placed on student mastery of core subjects.	1.29	0.83
The purpose of schools is to teach cultural values to students.	0.76	0.92
<b>Progressivism</b>		
The purpose of education is to prepare students for active participation in a democratic society.	1.80	0.54
Teachers should guide students to solve problems through a student-centered learning environment.	1.44	0.82
Schools should help students acquire problem-solving skills.	1.89	0.42
Teachers should be social activists who promote humanitarian action projects for students.	0.18	1.33
Teachers should be facilitators who guide students to solve problems through collaborative projects.	1.42	0.84
Knowledge and values are dependent on human experiences.	1.26	0.94
<b>Reconstructionism</b>		
Teachers should focus on humanitarian concerns.	0.70	1.10
Schools should be social agencies for societal change rather than academic institutions.	-0.57	1.23
Students should be involved in controversial issues where they invite experts into the classroom to raise awareness about a global problem.	1.13	1.00
Schools should promote multicultural education so that students seek a broader sense of identity.	1.63	0.73
Teachers should plan the curriculum based on student interests rather than the great works of literature.	-0.28	1.16
Students must be aware of global problems such as poverty, warfare, famine, and terrorism.	1.59	0.61
<b>Existentialism</b>		
The humanities are essential to help students unleash their creativity.	1.40	0.76
The teacher's role in education is to help students understand themselves as unique individuals.	1.11	1.02
Teachers should help students define themselves by creating a learning environment where students can choose their way.	0.44	1.15
Student learning should be self-paced.	-0.09	1.17
Education should develop the whole person, not just the mind.	1.75	0.52
The humanities are important for the development of student self-expression.	1.43	0.80

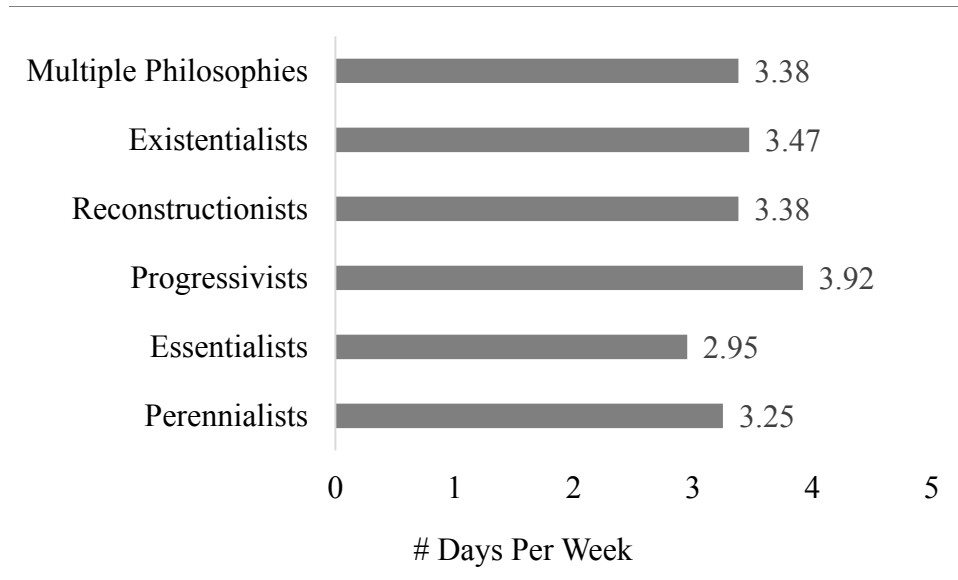
**Instructional Strategies.** Part three of the online survey questionnaire included questions related to weekly instructional strategy use. The survey stated, “How many days in the past week (Monday-Friday) were the following instructional strategies implemented in your classroom?” The following eight instructional strategies were listed in part three: Cooperative Student Conversations, Individual Student Inquiry, Role Plays and Simulations, Student Presentations, Direct Content Instruction, Direct Skill Instruction, Comprehension Checks, and Individualized Instruction. Cooperative Student Conversations, Individual Student Inquiry, Role Plays and Simulations, and Student Presentations were categorized as student-centered instructional strategies. Direct Content Instruction, Direct Skill Instruction, Comprehension Checks, and Individualized Instruction were categorized as teacher-centered instructional strategies. Participants’ responses were recorded for the eight items. Mean scores in the instructional strategy section ranged from 1.04 for Role Plays and Simulations to 3.65 for Comprehension Checks. Along with Comprehension Checks, Cooperative Student Conversations and Individual Student Inquiry had mean responses in the three-days-a-week range. Conversely, Role Plays and Simulations and Student Presentations both had mean responses under 2 days a week. The range in standard deviations (1.19 – 2.46) confirms the range of differences in responses for the instructional strategy items as indicated in Table 4.

Table 4. Mean Survey Responses, Instructional Strategies (N=142)

Strategy	Mean	SD
Cooperative Student Conversations	3.51	1.34
Individual Student Inquiry	3.36	1.36
Role Plays and Simulations	1.04	1.19
Student Presentations	1.54	1.39
Direct Content Instruction	2.95	1.54
Direct Skill Instruction	2.75	1.49
Comprehension Checks	3.65	1.50
Individualized Instruction	2.46	2.46

The researcher aimed to examine the relationship between teacher educational philosophy and the frequency of instructional strategy use. A Pearson  $r$  correlation test revealed a relationship between progressivism and Cooperative Student Conversations,  $r(140) = .25$ ,  $p < .05$ .

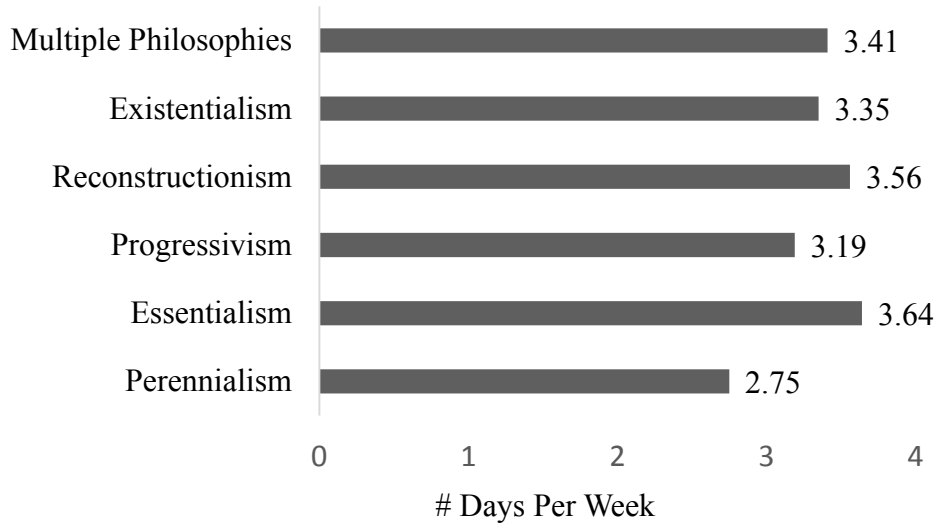
As illustrated in Figure 6, participants reported the number of days a week (Monday-Friday) that they used Cooperative Student Conversations with a mean rating of 3.92 for Progressivists, 3.47 for Existentialists, 3.38 for Multiple Philosophies, 3.38 for Reconstructionists, 3.25 for Perennialists, and 2.95 for Essentialists. The maximum mean rating was 5.



*Figure 6.* Mean of number of the days in a week (Monday-Friday) teachers implemented Cooperative Student Conversations by Educational Philosophy. N=142

In addition to Cooperative Student Conversations, a Pearson correlation test revealed a relationship between Progressivism and the use of Individual Student Inquiry instructional strategies,  $r(140) = .17, p < .05$ .

As illustrated in Figure 7, participants reported the number of days a week (Monday-Friday) that they used Individual Student Inquiry with a mean rating of 3.64 for Essentialists, 3.56 for Reconstructionists, 3.41 for Multiple Philosophies, 3.35 for Existentialists, 3.19 for Progressivists, and 2.75 for Perennialists. The maximum mean rating was 5.

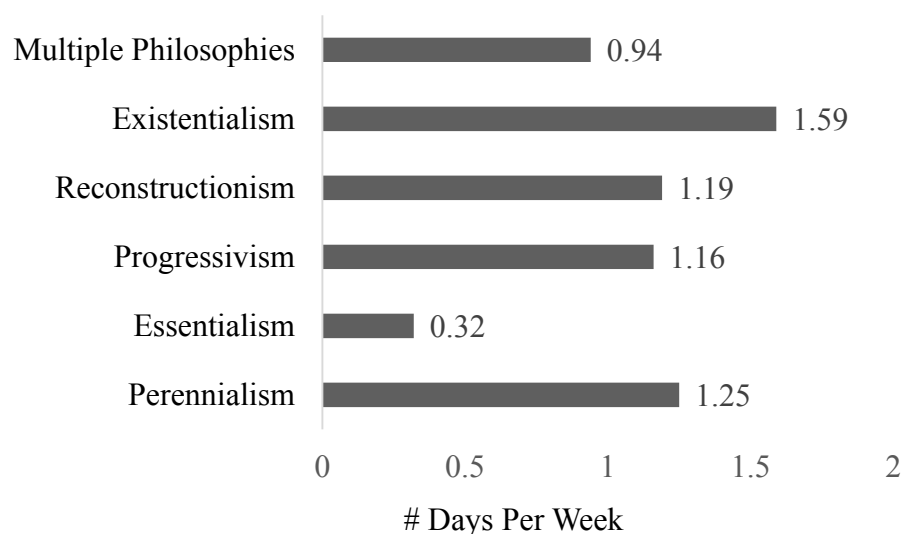


*Figure 7.* Mean of number of the days in a week (Monday-Friday) teachers implemented Individual Student Inquiry by Educational Philosophy. N=142

Another Pearson correlation test revealed a relationship between Reconstructionism and the frequent use of Role Plays and Simulations,  $r(140) = .22, p < .05$ .

As illustrated in Figure 8, participants reported the number of days a week (Monday-Friday) that they used Role Plays and Simulations with a mean rating of .94 for Multiple Philosophies, 1.59 for Existentialists, 1.19 for Reconstructionists, 1.16 for Progressivists, .32 for Essentialists, and 1.25 for Perennialists. The maximum mean rating was 5.





*Figure 8.* Mean of number of the days in a week (Monday-Friday) teachers implemented Role Plays and Simulations by Educational Philosophy. N=142

In addition to Reconstructionism, a Pearson correlation test revealed a relationship between Existentialism related to the frequent use of Role Plays and Simulations,  $r(140) = .17$ ,  $p < .05$ .

The researcher conducted ANOVAs using teacher demographic data to compare means between groups and within groups for instructional strategy use. No significant data was reported. In order to determine the differences between educational philosophy groups, separate one-way ANOVAs (group variable) were conducted by each instructional strategy. Of the eight identified instructional strategies in the research study, statistically significant results were reported for Cooperative Student Conversations and Role Plays and Simulations. Between group and within group statistics, as well as means and standard deviations are reported in Table 5.

Table 5. One-Way ANOVA Analysis for Philosophy and Cooperative Student Conversations

*One-Way ANOVA Analysis for Educational Philosophy and Cooperative Student Conversations (n=110)*

Group	df	SS	MS	F	Sig.
Essentialists vs. Progressivists					
Between Groups	4	15.80	3.95	2.51	0.05
Within Groups	105	165.38	1.58		
Total	109	181.17			

The analysis identified the effect of educational philosophy as significant on Cooperative Student Conversations,  $F(4,105) = 2.51, p = .05$ . To determine which of the educational philosophy groups were significantly different from each other regarding instructional strategy use, post hoc analysis using the Fisher LSD criterion for significance were conducted. The analysis indicated that across all participants the average weekly use of Cooperative Student Conversations was significantly lower for essentialists ( $M = 2.95, SD = 1.25$ ) than for progressivists ( $M = 3.92, SD = 1.18$ ). The results are displayed in Table 6.

Additional significant results are reported for the effect of educational philosophy on the weekly use of Role Plays and Simulations. The analysis identified the effect of educational philosophy as significant on Role Plays and Simulations,  $F(4,105) = 3.13, p = .02$ . To determine which of the educational philosophy groups were significantly different from each other regarding instructional strategy use, post hoc analysis using the Fisher LSD criterion for significance were conducted. The analysis indicated that across all participants, the average weekly use of Role Plays and Simulations was significantly lower for essentialists ( $M = .31, SD = .48$ ) than for existentialists ( $M = 1.59, SD = 1.37$ ). The results are reported in Table 6.

Additionally, the analysis identified the effect of educational philosophy as significant on

the use of Role Plays and Simulations,  $F(4, 105) = 3.13, p = .01$ . Post hoc analysis using Fisher LSD criterion identified significant results regarding educational philosophy groups. The analysis indicated the average use of Role Plays and Simulations was significantly higher for progressivists ( $M = 1.16, SD = 1.35$ ) than for Essentialists ( $M = .31, SD = .48$ ). The results are displayed in Table 6.

Table 6. One-Way ANOVA Analysis for Educational Philosophy and Role Plays and Simulations

Group	df	SS	MS	F	Sig.
Essentialists vs. Existentialists					
Between Groups	4	17.73	4.43	3.13	0.02
Within Groups	105	148.82	1.42		
Total	109	166.55			
Essentialists vs. Progressivists					0.01
Between Groups	4	17.73	4.43	3.13	
Within Groups	105	148.82	1.42		
Total	109	166.55			

## Research Question Two

The second research question was: How do teacher instructional strategies impact literacy-related outcomes on student writing? To address research question two, detailed descriptive statistics were collected from the results of “Part Five: Student Writing Outcomes” using the quantitative online survey questionnaire. Respondents addressed each statement by answering, “To what extent do you agree with the following statements?” Participants indicated *Strongly Agree* (5), *Agree* (4), *Neutral* (3), *Disagree* (2), and *Strongly Disagree* (1).

For Student Writing Outcomes 1 (SWO 1) the sentence stated, “On average, my students are excellent writers.” For Student Writing Outcomes 2 (SWO 2), the sentence stated, “Over the course of a year, my students show tremendous improvement in their writing.” The researcher

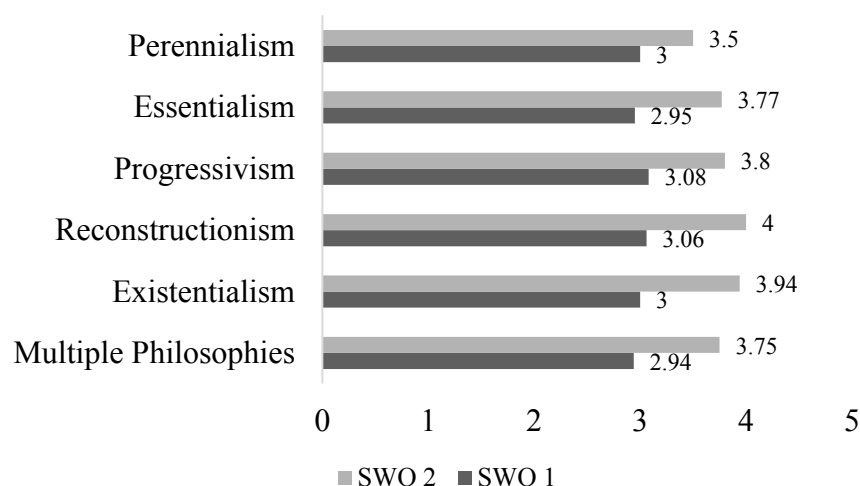
sought to investigate the respondents' beliefs about student writing outcomes over the course of a single school year (2018-2019).

**Literacy Related Outcomes.** Part four of the quantitative online survey questionnaire included two statements related to student writing outcomes. Participants agreed with the following statements: (1) "On average, my students are excellent writers", and (2) "Over the course of a year, my students show tremendous improvement in their writing." Participants were asked to agree with the statements based on the following Likert-scale: *Strongly Agree* (5), *Agree* (4), *Neutral* (3), *Disagree* (2), and *Strongly Disagree* (1). The first statement reflected participant beliefs about student writing outcomes.

The researcher aimed to investigate the relationship between instructional strategies and the two statements about student writing outcomes. There was a significant, positive relationship between the use of the strategy Cooperative Student Conversations and the first student writing outcomes statement, "On average, my students are excellent writers." The two variables were weakly correlated,  $r(140) = .24, p < .05$ . See Figure 9.

For the second statement, "Over the course of a year, my students show tremendous improvement in their writing," the researcher conducted a Pearson  $r$  correlation test to determine the frequency of Cooperative Student Conversations. As seen in Figure 9, the two variables shared a weak positive correlation,  $r(140) = .24, p < .05$ .

In addition, a Pearson correlation test revealed a relationship between the second statement and the use of Individual Student Inquiry strategies,  $r(140) = .31, p < .05$ . See Figure 9.



*Figure 9.* Mean rating for Student Writing Outcomes Statement 1 and Student Writing Outcomes Statement 2 by Educational Philosophy. N=142

### Qualitative Results

The interview protocol included five open-ended questions designed to validate the participant responses from the online survey questionnaire. As a complement to the quantitative analysis, the researcher sought to provide further evidence of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Quota sampling was utilized to identify one English Language Arts teacher and one history teacher for each educational philosophy. In-depth interviews with ten participants addressed the following research topics: educational philosophy, instructional strategies, literacy outcomes on student writing, and the characteristics of successful students and teachers. The researcher recorded each participant interview using Voice Memo, a Smartphone voice-recording app. The researcher transcribed each participant interview using NVivo word analyzing software. Although the interview questions remained consistent, participants responded differently based on their beliefs and educational experiences.

The evidence illustrated that the preferred instructional strategies aligned to the quantitative responses on the quantitative survey questionnaire. Preferred instructional strategies

consisted of strategies that were used four or five times per week in a typical class. For the teachers' interviewed, ten out of ten teachers (100%) preferred Individual Student Inquiry, eight out of ten teachers preferred Comprehension Checks (80%), seven out of ten teachers preferred Cooperative Student Conversations (70%), four out of ten teachers preferred Individualized Instruction (40%), three out of ten teachers preferred Direct Skill Instruction (30%), one out of ten teachers preferred Direct Content Instruction (10%). None of the interviewed participants preferred Role Plays, Simulations, or Student Presentations.

The researcher aimed to describe how each educational philosophy exhibits itself in teaching and learning. The qualitative analysis for interview question 1 involved examining the interview transcripts for each teacher participant. The first question stated, "Your primary educational philosophy is identified as ... Tell me more about this." The sub-question stated, "How do you think your educational philosophy impacts your instruction?" Participants were given a visual description of each educational philosophy with their identified philosophy highlighted (See Appendix C). The participants' responses to the first question served as corroboration evidence for the quantitative data in section two which included educational philosophy statements (see Table 2). The second question stated, "Your preferred instructional strategies are identified as ... Tell me more about this." Additional probing questions sought to encourage the participant to describe the instructional practices used in their class on the day of the interview. Furthermore, the researcher asked the teacher to explain why they selected the specific instructional strategies (See Appendix D).

The third interview question prompted participants to look at three to five student writing samples that they were instructed to bring to the interview. The researcher prompted the participants to look at the student writing samples and respond to additional sub-questions. The

participants were asked a series of probing questions related to literacy-based outcomes in student writing. The first sub-question question was, “What did you notice about the student writing?” The second sub-question was, “What are the strengths and weaknesses that you notice in the student essay?” The third prompt was, “Describe your experience evaluating student work.” The fourth sub-question was, “What is your overall opinion about the process of scoring student work?” The fifth sub-question was, “What were the instructions leading up to your writing assignment?” The researcher viewed the transcribed interviews and sought to identify instructional strategies, reveal motivations for scoring student writing, and elicit opinions related to the process of evaluating student work (Monte-Sano et al., 2014) (See Appendix B).

Question four was an open-ended prompt that revealed common themes about how teachers view student success: “Tell me the characteristics of a successful student.” Similarly, Question five was also open-ended but revealed common themes about the educational philosophies of the teachers: “What defines a successful teacher?” Because question four and five were open-ended, the qualitative analysis for these questions required close examination of the interview transcripts for each participant. The results are described in the following section.

### **Perennialism**

One English teacher and one history teacher were identified as perennialists and each was asked to discuss how the educational philosophy impacts their instruction. One Perennialist English teacher discussed the importance of teaching “timeless themes” when she stated, “So no matter where you go, people are people. And it’s the idea that we all have connections together.” The participant expressed the perennialist belief that teachers should emphasize truths which are timeless in the subject matter (Tan, 2006). Additionally, a Perennialist history teacher expressed the importance of having a “larger conversation about big ideas and really focusing a deeper

understanding of big ideas as opposed to focusing on the minutiae.” The participant emphasized the perennial belief that teaching should perpetuate ideas that are enduring through time.

When referring to the second interview question regarding instructional strategies, one Perennialist history teacher identified Individual Student Inquiry as a preferred instructional strategy on the quantitative survey questionnaire. Her interview response validated her selection when she claimed, “I love the DBQs because students aren’t getting the right answer, but they’re having to explore on their own in lots of different ways to evaluate sources.” The Perennialist history teacher offered additional evidence for Individual Student Inquiry when she stated, “They’re looking at different sources and discussing those sources. They have a mix of primary source documents and secondary sources.” The teacher responses offer additional evidence for the validity of the quantitative instrument related to the selection of preferred instructional strategies.

The perennialist teachers answered the third interview question by addressing student writing. The Perennialist history teacher mentioned the importance of analysis, grammar, and spelling as essential elements of effective writing instruction. Furthermore, she discussed the strengths and weaknesses in student essays. She suggested the main weakness of student writing is their inability to effectively analyze primary source documents. The central strength in student writing is the student’s ability to cite evidence. Providing additional evidence, one Perennialist history teacher attributed Individual Student Inquiry to improved writing achievement when she shared, “Following the DBQ process of looking at analytical categories and categorizing documents” provided her with the opportunity to successfully teach academic writing.

The Perennialist English teacher emphasized strengths and weaknesses in student writing. For example, she stated, “They really struggle with introductory paragraph, how to introduce



quotes smoothly, and how to incorporate background information.” Similar to history, she mentioned that students know how to identify evidence. Linking her instructional strategies to strengths in student writing, the Perennialist English teacher shared that throughout the year, she taught “all kinds of strategies this year, like the post-it note strategy.” The teacher went on to describe the strategy as a method of explicit teaching to support commentary and analysis in writing.

When asked about the experience of evaluating student work, the Perennialist English teacher emphasized the importance of knowing as much about a student’s background as possible in order to be able to assess their individual growth in writing achievement. The history teacher described the process of creating rubrics as an important step toward helping to accurately evaluate student work. Her overall opinion about the process of scoring student work was positive because she knows exactly what she is looking for when she reads student writing, attributing this her participation in literacy related professional development opportunities. Like the Perennialist history teacher, the Perennialist English teacher expressed positive comments related to the use of rubrics. The Perennialist English teacher claimed, “I like the new rubric... I think it’s fantastic.”

When asked to describe the characteristics of a successful student, the Perennialist English teacher and the Perennialist history teacher shared the common belief that students should be active in their own learning. For example, the Perennialist history teacher referenced a current student in her class and stated, “He’s engaged. He approaches everything with that level of engagement.” The Perennialist English teacher shared common beliefs about learning and claimed, “I would say that they are able to take on the challenge and they can see that as a positive piece, instead of negative.”

When asked to describe the characteristics of a successful teacher, the Perennialist English teacher and the Perennialist history teacher shared the common belief that teachers should be engaged in their own learning. The Perennialist English teacher reiterated the beliefs of the history teacher when she stated, “It’s someone that can, engage them in their own learning and get them excited about it and see that, if I engage them, I can become better and I can overcome my [weaknesses].” According to the Perennialist history teacher, an important characteristic of a successful teacher is knowing “where the students are in your own classroom at the time.” In the same way a teacher is active in the learning of students, they must be active in their own development as a professional.

### **Essentialism**

One English teacher and one history teacher were identified as essentialists and each was asked to discuss how the educational philosophy impacts their instruction. The researcher sought to align the respondent interview transcripts with the central beliefs of the educational philosophy to identify and validate the relationship between the two variables. An essentialist believes the purpose of schools is to teach cultural values. The Essentialist history teacher stated, “I think that it’s really important to understand as a social science teacher, that to make those connections that we’re just not here in the United States, that we play a role in the how we interact with other countries around the world and the people of those countries in their beliefs.” The Essentialist history teacher continued, “I think the purpose of school is to teach cultural values.” Both the Essentialist history teacher and the Essentialist English teacher preferred the student-centered instructional strategy of Individual Student Inquiry where students ask and investigate questions or find and evaluate evidence. Document Based Questions (DBQs), answering text-based questions and annotations are examples of Individual Student Inquiry

strategies.

The quantitative data revealed a negative correlation coefficient ( $R = -.12$ ) for Individualized Instruction. The Essentialist history teacher and the English Language Arts teacher preferred instructional strategies that emphasize Individual Student Inquiry. The Essentialist English teacher said, “I do think that there can be a tremendous opportunity for student conversation.” The Essentialist English teacher stated that her daily lesson involved assigning students to groups to examine textual evidence from the novel while students ask questions in the margins. Next, she described how students were instructed to compare notes in a small group discussion. The Essentialist English teacher validates the quantitative statistical data by illustrating her preference for Individual Student Inquiry:

I love students to be able to ask questions because I think that when we ask questions in life, then we can often come to some interesting answers. And I think when other students ask questions, that can cause their wheels to be turning and thinking through. While I don't see Socratic Seminars listed, I do think that they can provide tremendous opportunities for student conversation... I think annotation creates that for them to have to see and question in the margin, not as highlights because it seems important, but why is it there? It's not just for the sake of annotating in and of itself, but I want them to ask why. I want them to be, like, why did you mark that?

In addition, the Essentialist English teacher expressed an aversion to Individualized Instruction when she commented, “I don't have enough time to work one on one with students on portfolios.” In addition, she stated that she did not have time to give comments to students or provide feedback on their writing.

Furthermore, an essentialist believes that students should respect authority to be members

of a civilized society (Tan, 2006). In the in-depth interview, the Essentialist history teacher emphasized, “to be a productive member of society, you have to understand the rules and the laws that govern the nation and the purposes of those laws and rules and the fact that we’re an ever-changing society.” An essentialist is likely to employ strategies that emphasize the mastery of facts and skills, while featuring the teacher as an expert in their subject matter (Tan, 2006). The Essentialist history teacher stated, “I have the kids sitting at big tables, because I want them to be able to have conversations about what they are learning, especially with social science and in the DBQ, some of the language is higher level and not every student is at that level.” The teacher continued with additional evidence for the selection of the Individual Student Inquiry instructional strategy, “I love to do Socratic Seminars and I don’t always do the full seminar... they come up with Socratic questions and they discuss in their small table groups.” The qualitative analysis revealed extensive evidence supporting the use of Individual Student Inquiry, as opposed to Individualized Instruction where the teacher works one on one with students (Tan, 2006). The significant negative correlation coefficient ( $R=-.12$ ) result from the quantitative survey questionnaire was validated by the interview protocol results with the essentialist participants, thereby reducing mono-method bias within the research study. Thus, the qualitative data validated the quantitative analysis.

One Essentialist history teacher indicated that her preferred instructional strategies were Cooperative Student Conversations, Individual Student Inquiry, and Comprehension Checks. The interview responses provided additional evidence for her preferences, as well as offering additional insights and descriptive details related to her instructional practices. The Essentialist history teacher stated, “I have the kids sitting at big tables because I want them to be able to have conversations about what they’re learning, especially in social science in the DBQ.” She

emphasized the benefit of having conversations to promote higher level thinking along with supporting the use of Socratic Seminar questioning with discussions in small table groups. Furthermore, she emphasized the use of DBQs as a common assessment used at the school district level. Based on the data, Comprehension Checks were utilized using “common formative assessments or exit tickets.”

One Essentialist history teacher noticed a great improvement in student writing and commented on the causal reasons. She commented, “So I have noticed that it [student writing] has greatly improved in the last year, year and a half. And I think it’s attributed to two or three different things. One thing these students have been getting DBQs for several years now.” The teacher commented extensively about the use of DBQs as the process that enabled students to “cite evidence to support a claim,” providing further evidence for the use of Individual Student Inquiry as an instructional practice to support writing improvement. The Essentialist English teacher expressed a different opinion related to student writing. Over the course of the year, she noticed “that many of [the students] do not have the skills they need to write an argument partly because they don’t know how to elaborate on quotations.” Furthermore, the Essentialist English teacher commented on specific strengths in student writing. For example, she shared that students know how to organize three body paragraphs and cite evidence, but they are unable to elaborate or make connections with textual evidence.

When asked about the experience evaluating student work, the Essentialist history teacher said:

Our department works really well in terms of strategies. Like even though we each teach something differently. We always come together and calibrate essays. We’ve had opportunities as the district to calibrate essays with other teachers at other schools. It’s

kind of to see if we're all on the same page and I would say nine times out of 10 we usually are. And if we're not, we have a conversation... and we can kind of work through it and ultimately agree on, you know, the calibration.

The Essentialist English teacher expressed an alternative point of view regarding the experience of evaluating student work. She expressed the fact the scoring of essays takes a lot of time when she spends a significant amount of time writing comments about the student work.

When asked to describe the characteristics of a successful student, the Essentialist history teacher, the essentialists English teacher and history teacher believe that students should be active in their own learning and willing to get help to be successful as a student. Both teachers discussed the importance of being an active participant by being “willing to get help” or “having goals that are measurable.”

When asked to describe the characteristics of a successful teacher, the essentialists English teacher and history teacher believe that successful teachers should be organized and prepared. The Essentialist English teacher stated, “A successful teacher is humble, combines kindness with care and has order or organization in her classroom.” The Essentialist history teacher thinks that “being reflective makes you a better teacher... and to be prepared.”

### **Progressivism**

One English teacher and one history teacher were identified as progressivists, and each was asked to discuss how the educational philosophy impacts their instruction. The researcher sought to align the respondent interview transcripts with the central beliefs of the educational philosophy to identify and validate the relationship between the two variables. A progressivist believes schools should help students acquire problem-solving skills (Tan, 2006). One Progressivist English teacher stated, “If I have one goal, it is to teach a student to think for

themselves and to think for themselves will translate into problem solving.” Furthermore, progressivist philosophy emphasizes that the purpose of education is to prepare students for active participation in a democratic society (Tan, 2006). One Progressivist English teacher stated, “I want them to make informed decisions when they go to vote, when they look at candidates, when they think about what it is that they believe in, what they want to fight for, if it’s global warming, if it’s another topic that they are well informed.” Progressivists believe that knowledge and values are dependent on human experiences and teachers should plan the curriculum based on student interests rather than the great works of literature (Tan, 2006). One progressivist emphasized the connection between the life experiences of students and the literature that they read in class. The Progressivist English teacher referred to the life lessons in literature when he stated, “It’s a lot about trying to figure out who you are and what you believe in. And how you want to navigate yourself.” Progressivists believe that teachers should guide students to solve problems through a student-centered learning environment and they should be facilitators who guide students to solve problems through collaborative projects (Tan, 2006). One Progressivist history teacher’s response validated the quantitative statistical data when she stated:

I always think about collaborative work with students, student-centered, the students are actively participating in the acquisition of their knowledge and the acquisition of skills. I think about those two as sort of equally balanced, like what kind of skills are going to be learning and will they be able to sort of problem solve and figure think out either as a collective group or on their own.

The quantitative data revealed a significant positive correlation coefficient ( $R = .19$ ) for Cooperative Student Conversations where groups of students actively participate in

conversations. Examples of cooperative student conversation strategies are pair share, Socratic Seminars, and debates. Both Progressivist English teachers and the Progressivist history teachers preferred Cooperative Student Conversations. One Progressivist history teacher's response validated the significant statistical data when she stated, "It looks different every day in the way we do it, but I'm definitely giving the students chances to talk to each other and then share out in a conversation." One Progressivist English teacher reinforced the use of Cooperative Student Conversations when he stated:

I try to speak as little as possible. And put it more on them... whether it's working in groups or working with a partner. I ask the question and they discuss with the people around them. It's on them in the sense of thinking for themselves and doing their own problem solving.

The teacher continued to emphasize the importance of cooperation in the classroom when he claimed that students have multiple opportunities to speak to each other about the subject matter. The Progressivist history teacher stated, "We sit in groups all the time, every day. We do a lot of pair share. I try to do a mix of Socratic Seminars where we're all sitting in a group and I do probably about four or five debates a year." The Progressivist English teacher reinforced the value of a collaborative learning culture when he shared information that he tells his students. He establishes the classroom learning environment when he stated, "There's a high probability that if I run my classroom correctly, you're going to learn as much from each other as you're going to learn from me." The Progressivist history teacher concurred, "If I don't give some of these kids time to talk things out with partners, then I know it's going to bubble over and we're going to have problems with talking. So, I always try to mix it up and have different ways for them to access the information." Thus, the significant quantitative results linking Cooperative



Student Conversations to progressivism are validated by the qualitative responses from both English and history participants.

The preferred instructional strategies of the Progressivist history teacher were: Cooperative Student Conversations, Individual Student Inquiry, and Comprehension Checks. In the interview responses, the Progressivist history teacher strongly emphasized the importance of a student-centered learning environment when she claimed, “I’m definitely giving the students chances to talk to each other and then share out in a conversation.” For Individual Student Inquiry, she reinforced her support for the importance of finding and evaluating evidence when she declared, “I love the DBQs... And to me you cannot get better at text based questions, annotating skills, understanding how to summarize large pieces of text... unless you do it.” In addition, she emphasized the importance of Comprehension Checks as she discussed the progression of learning throughout the school year. The Progressivist history teacher outlined her progression of teaching, “First semester it’s sort of like we do an activity and then check it and then we do another activity and check it.”

When asked to look at the student writing, the Progressivist history teacher stated:

I really believe that the strategies that I’m using throughout the year and my belief in the way that I’m doing my practice and my belief in that you have to do more of these strategies to get better at them. Again, this year has proven, I mean the data doesn’t lie. I have an increase in achievement and an increase in scores... I have English learners... and the difference between where students started at the beginning of the year to where they are now is unbelievable.

The teacher described the details related to writing improvement over the course of the year with specific connections to the use of documents. The teacher concluded the answer stating, “I’m

really just seeing the positive results.” The Progressivist English teacher noted that the students do not perform to the level that they are capable of. About the final written product, the teacher stated, “It’s not what they are potentially able to do.”

When addressing the strengths in student writing, the Progressivist history teacher stated, “They’re able to use multiple pieces of evidence to argue and it makes sense that it really proves their argument. They’re able to use evidence.” She attributed the tremendous growth in student writing performance in her classroom to the use of strategies that support Individual Student Inquiry. Another Progressivist English teacher highlighted the use of Individual Student Inquiry when he explained the instructional strategy, he utilizes to teach analytical writing. He stated, “It’s about how to analyze, which is the essence of our annotations... you are analyzing, even when you are making an argument, you’re still analyzing information to make that argument.”

The Progressivist English teacher shared that “overall students definitely write better when they care about what they’re writing about, if they have some sort of interest or buy-in.” Additionally, the Progressivist English teacher shared weaknesses in the student writing associated with the student’s inability to “tell, instead of show” what the author is trying to say in the textual analysis.

When asked about instructional strategies used to teach writing, the history teacher models how to use documents in front of students. She claimed, “Sometimes we have time to do a full class kind of thrash out talk... we have 10-15 minutes where people can hear each other.” The Progressivist history teacher continued describing strategies related to student writing when she stated:

I’ve seen a big improvement because I was noticing some things that I’m doing with my AP students is that they’re talking about the document, when they’re talking about the

document, then they're talking about how that sort of proves what they were arguing and then they're adding a little bit more commentary so they're extending out their thoughts. The Progressivist English teacher shared the structures used to teach writing, such as an outline on the board. He connected the outline stated on the board to the process of annotating the text as an integral part of analyzing information to construct arguments. The teacher continued to expand upon his ideas about teaching writing with in-depth comments regarding literary devices, process writing, and textual analysis.

The Progressivist history teacher identified weaknesses in student writing when she expressed, "We are still writing thesis statements, but they are still kind of basic." She noted that there is room for improvement.

When asked to describe the experience evaluating student work, the Progressivist history teacher stated that she liked the process. During the interviews, she shared, "It's on stuff like this [student writing] where I really think you see student growth and sometimes where you really see the personality, or you see the student. And so, I really like it." In addition, the Progressivist English teacher shared the first step to grading essays is to consider what to look for by sharing, "Let's say fundamentally, holistically, do they prove points? And do they prove the points well?" The teacher engages in lengthy details regarding identifying if the student demonstrates an understanding of the structure of the essay with the ability to write a topic sentence, identify evidence, and then explain how the evidence proves the point.

When asked to describe the instructions leading up to the writing assignment, the Progressivist history teacher discussed the qualities of the scoring rubric. The teacher identifies the qualities of good thesis statements using the rubric and reminds the students to make sure they are using two pieces of evidence. The Progressivist English teacher shared how they teach

the formulaic process of writing to students. Using an analogy of a house, the Progressivist English teacher stated, “Here’s the house and it’s just a plain house... And to break the formula, we’re going to add a fence, we’re going to add a pool, we’re going to add some bushes. It’s still a house, but it’s totally different than the house we once knew.” The teacher illustrated the basic foundations of teaching writing with additional details, revealing the complexities of advanced writing instruction once the fundamentals are understood by students.

When asked to describe the characteristics of a successful student, the Progressivist English teacher and history teacher believe that successful students are interested in learning and try in the classroom to show improvement. The Progressivist English teacher shared that a successful student “buys-in” to the learning process each day they are in the classroom. They show improvement and they try to work hard daily. The Progressivist history teacher mentioned that the students “really want to know more about something... they’re really trying to make connections and really think about things that have come before in the past.”

When asked to describe the characteristics of a successful teacher, the progressivists English teacher and history teacher believe that successful teachers build relationships with students by fostering a personal connection and engage their content with new ways of teaching. The Progressivist English teacher shared, “To be a successful teacher, they have to make that human, personal connection. If you don’t have a human personal connection, the kids not going to want to learn anything.” In addition, the Progressivist history teacher emphasized the importance of professional development as the source for learning and growing as an educator. They described a successful teacher as, “Somebody who’s not afraid to change... somebody who’s open to change and to new ideas and [who’s] open to constructive criticism...”

## **Reconstructionism**

One English teacher and one history teacher were identified as reconstructionists and each was asked to discuss how the educational philosophy impacts their instruction. The Reconstructionist history teacher discussed the importance of “looking at the big picture.” He finds the rubric to be a useful tool for examining student work from a holistic point of view. The Reconstructionist history teacher suggested the importance of student writing progress as a source for positive reinforcement in student learning. When asked to explain how reconstructionism affected her instructional practice, the English teacher stated:

I think that I am more willing to bring in a variety of sources for students to be exposed to. Not just what is comfortable for them. I kind of want them to be challenged in a lot of ways, not just about their beliefs or their philosophies, but who they see, themselves in regards to their peers. And I always say that to them, there’s not a right answer.

When asked to describe instructional strategies, the Reconstructionist history teacher preferred Individual Student Inquiry where “students are asking and investigating using their own questions, they’re engaged with the task they’re trying to understand from where they’re at.” The teacher continued to elaborate on the idea when he stated, “And then Comprehension Checks is just the more I ask them questions and more, I understand where they’re at and then I can help them.”

One Reconstructionist English teacher selected Individual Student Inquiry and Comprehension Checks as her preferred instructional strategies. She emphasized that students find and evaluate evidence in the classroom on a regular basis “to support their claims with evidence.” The reconstructionist elaborated on the topic of student inquiry to reinforce the importance of Comprehension Checks to assess learning. She stated, “I want kids to try and then

I always give them credit for trying and then they always have the opportunity to go back and make any corrections that they need to make so that the point of the homework is to be reinforcing skills.”

When examining student writing samples, the Reconstructionist history teacher noticed that students are trying “to expand the importance of whatever point they’re trying to make. They’ve picked some evidence to support their claim.” The Reconstructionist English teacher noticed that students “are still writing like they text. There is not a lot of attention to detail when it comes to spelling, capitalization and punctuation, even though they have spell check in Google docs.” The teacher continued to elaborate about the fact that students’ complete assignments to get them done without taking the time to proofread assignments.

When addressing the strengths and weaknesses in student writing, the Reconstructionist history teacher shared that students “understand the structure pretty well.” The teacher shared that the students are able to learn the structure well and eventually they become comfortable with “switching it around because then it’s all there.” The Reconstructionist history teacher shared the weaknesses in student writing as the student’s inability to think on their own. The Reconstructionist English teacher shared a similar strength in that students know how to complete a paragraph frame or outline consistently. He shared, “So the first think they do is they find their evidence and then they do their analysis and then they write the claim to match.” When addressing writing weaknesses, the Reconstructionist English teacher shared that students had “a harder time explaining why” evidence is connected to the claim.

When asked to discuss the experience evaluating student work, the Reconstructionist history teacher shared that the process was frustrating until he started using rubrics. By using rubrics, the teacher reduced the amount of time it took to score essays. He shared, “Now I have a

process for orientation so that I don't try to do everything at once and I myself either and they're getting the feedback." In addition, the Reconstructionist English teacher shared the common belief in using rubrics to evaluate student writing adding, "I think my philosophy of scoring writing is probably a little bit different than other people's because I'm not focusing as much on grammar and mechanics as I am on getting them to have the bigger picture." Using a more holistic approach, the teacher shared the process of having "a lot of checkpoints so that students are being held accountable." She added, "If they're doing all the steps in the process, then hopefully the end result is that they're going to do well on the rubric score because they've included all of the pieces that they need."

When asked to describe the characteristics of a successful student, the Reconstructionist history teacher stated, "A student that is just really eager to learn and that means they want to learn from their strengths and they want to learn from their weaknesses...And then having a positive attitude is really critical... And a little grit and willingness to not give up." The Reconstructionist English teacher described the characteristics of a successful student as organized individuals who are actively engaged in learning while taking academic risks in a safe environment.

When asked to describe the characteristics of a successful teacher, the Reconstructionist English teacher and the history teacher believe successful teachers reflect upon their teaching practice, constantly change lessons to improve their practice, and work with colleagues to determine what is best for students. The Reconstructionist English teacher reinforced the importance of reflection when she stated, "I think that the process of being reflective and never being okay with the status quo is super important. I think the most successful teachers are the ones that are constantly trying new things, collaborating with colleagues, and ultimately doing

what's best for kids.” The Reconstructionist history teacher reiterated similar ideas when they stated, “Always trying to look at your own practice and trying to make it better and finding a way that will reach the kids, so they understand it better.”

### **Existentialism**

One English teacher and one history teacher were identified as existentialists and each was asked to discuss how the educational philosophy impacts their instruction. The Existentialist history teacher discussed the importance of being mindful of the different levels of student learners in the classroom. She stated, “My role as a teacher is to help students understand themselves as unique individuals... I feel like I'm there to facilitate and help them guide and learn on their own way.” The Existentialist English teacher responded with a similar emphasis and stated, “My ideal classroom and my ideal learning environment is one in which students are able to receive material, discuss the material with others, and they're able to relate what they've learned, not just to me, but to their peers.” He explained the idea of restructuring the school day toward a more student-centered learning environment. He stated, “I would have one on one conferences with students and ask them about either material or their writing.”

One Existentialist history teacher offered evidence for the Individual Student Inquiry when she shared the steps of the DBQ process in her classroom. She described the process of examining historical evidence and described the specific instructional practices reflected in the writing. She shared, “We annotate similarities on one side, differences on the other, and we look through each document and we list the similarities, we list the differences.” Thus, the qualitative data validated the quantitative analysis.

One Existentialist English teacher's preferred instructional strategies were: Cooperative Student Conversations, Individual Student Inquiry, and Comprehension Checks. Expanding on



his use of Cooperative Student Conversations he stated, “The Socratic Seminars are really central to my instruction. And, one of the nice things that I’ve been able to do with Socratic Seminars is to incorporate multiple types of texts and multiple types of media into the analysis.” To foster Individual Student Inquiry, the Existentialist English teacher discussed how he encourages students to generate their own questions to conduct a text-based discussion. He offered evidence for the instructional strategy for Comprehension Checks by describing the checks for understanding that are currently being used in his classroom. The Existentialist English teacher stated:

This year I’ve come up with different ways to check for understanding. On my board there’s some notecards and on one side it says, ‘I understand where we’re going. I get it.’ The other side is a red card and it says, ‘I’m not really sure. I could use some more instruction.’ So, what I’ve done with students is I’ve used it at the end of the lesson or in the middle of the lesson, whenever I need to check to see where they are. I’ll hand them out and say, ‘Okay, hold it up...’ It gives me an immediate read of where they are in the lesson.

The quantitative data was validated by the existentialist teacher’s interview responses related to his instructional strategy use.

When asked to discuss the experience evaluating student work, the Existentialist history teacher noticed a big range in proficiency levels of the students. She noticed that “they’re really good at citing evidence and they’re strong in being able to come up with transitional phrases and write down their claims and come up with evidence to back their claim.” She continued on to describe the weakness in student writing is the ability of students to write arguments. The Existentialist history teacher discussed scoring student work by describing the process as “very

valuable.” In contrast, the Existentialist English teacher emphasized the amount of time necessary to score student work. When asked about scoring student work, he stated, “It just takes a lot of time to do.”

When asked to describe the characteristics of a successful student, the Reconstructionist English teacher and the history teacher believe successful student take risks in the classroom and learn from their mistakes without giving up. The Reconstructionist English teacher commented on how she provided “kids the opportunity to take risks academically without it being high stakes because they know it’s not going to significantly impact their grade.” The Reconstructionist history teacher shared a similar belief about successful student who is, “eager to learn and that means they want to learn from their strengths, and they want to learn from their weaknesses.”

When asked to describe the characteristics of a successful teacher, the Existentialist English teacher and the history teacher believe that successful students are not afraid to ask questions. The Existentialist English teacher reinforced the idea that successful students are “comfortable asking questions, discussing topics with peers, and is willing to practice and not be afraid of failing and not be afraid of doing it right the first time...” The Existentialist history teacher mentioned the importance of being a self-starter, a good note-taker, and being very organized. The teacher added, “There going to make sure that if they don’t understand and they’re going to get clarification.”

The Existentialist English teacher and the history teacher believe that successful teachers are reflected in the successes of students. Both teachers specifically mentioned pedagogical details that contributed to successful teachers. The Existentialist English teacher commented, “A [successful teacher] makes the objectives clear to students... checks for understanding with

student regularly...closing lessons.” The Existentialist history teacher added that “the successful teacher is going to be reflected in the student...[they] scaffolded, taught the skills, and kind of got the student ready to be able to do what they’re supposed to do by themselves. So, they prepared them to be an independent learner.”

### **Emerging Themes**

Recurring themes emerged from the in-depth teacher interviews. The researcher identified the following themes from the qualitative interviews:

1. Teacher preference for instructional practices that involve teacher scaffolding techniques such as, outlines, chunking, teacher modeling, and gradual release of responsibility.
2. Teacher preference for structure as an essential element of strong disciplinary literacy in writing.
3. A general emphasis on the value of literacy across history and English teacher participants.
4. Teacher emphasis on the importance of guided practice to show improvement in academic writing. The larger theme of exposure to the DBQ process over time leads to improved writing performance. This is validated by Individual Student Inquiry instructional strategies utilized in the classroom.
5. Eight out of ten (80%) of the interviewed teachers discussed reflective practice when asked the fifth interview question: “What defines a successful teacher?” The interviewed teachers believe that successful teachers reflect upon their practice, continually learn from their mistakes, and are actively engaged in their own learning through collaboration with colleagues.

## **Limitations and Delimitations**

The research study did not include classroom observations. Due to the timing of the study and the schedule of the participants, the research aimed to collect accurate data using the interview protocol in conjunction with the quantitative survey questionnaire. It was determined that the participants would be comfortable using an interview protocol that involved the research and participant in a setting with five open-ended interview questions. Information from the interview protocol was used to validate responses from the online survey questionnaire, and therefore, classroom observations were not necessary for the scope of the research study.

Along with delimitations, the researcher identified limitations in the research. Quantitative survey questionnaires were only distributed within one Southern California suburban school district. Only secondary history and English Language Arts teachers were chosen to participate. In addition, the researcher was not able to conduct classroom observations of the identified teachers selected for the individual interviews.

## **Summary**

This chapter reported the results of the quantitative and qualitative procedures of this research study. Descriptive statistics were reported for the demographic variables along with teacher educational background information using frequencies and mean scores for instructional strategy use. Multiple linear regression statistical analysis was performed to measure the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Significant relationships between educational philosophies, instructional strategies, and literacy outcomes in student writing were identified and reported. Additionally, the results of open-ended questions from the interview protocol were utilized in the analysis of educational philosophy beliefs to provide additional evidence for the instructional decisions made by the participants in the research study. The

summary of significant results is displayed in Table 7.

Table 7. Significant Relationship Between Educational Philosophies, Instructional Strategies, and Student Writing Outcomes.

Educational Philosophy	Instructional Strategy	Description	Student Writing Outcomes
Progressivism $r = .25^*$	Cooperative Student Conversations	Groups of students actively participate in conversations. Examples: Pair Share, Socratic Seminars, Debates	Participants believed that students are excellent writers Pearson's $r = .24^*$  Participants believed student writing improved Pearson's $r = .24^*$
Progressivism $r = .17^*$	Individual Student Inquiry	Students ask and investigate questions or find and evaluate evidence. Examples: DBQs, Answering Text-Based Questions, Annotation	Participants believed student writing improved Pearson's $r = .31^*$
Reconstructionism $r = .22^*$  Existentialism $r = .17^*$	Role Plays or Simulations	Learning tasks that prepare students to experience real-world connections. Examples: Reader's Theatre, Skits	
Note. N= 142. $*p < .05$			

## CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of the explanatory, mixed methods research study was to understand how teacher educational philosophies influence instructional strategy decisions for secondary English language arts and history teachers. In addition, the study investigated student outcomes associated with teacher-centered and student-centered instructional strategies in a large, suburban school district in Southern California. The research focused on five educational philosophies: perennialism, essentialism, progressivism, reconstructionism, and existentialism. Eight instructional strategy categories were identified, and participants recorded their frequency of use for each strategy. The researcher investigated the identified variables to understand their relationship to student writing outcomes. This chapter is organized into six sections: (a) summary of the study, (b) discussion of the findings, (c) implications for practice, (d) recommendations for future research, (e) conclusions, (f) summary.

### **Summary of the Study**

The following research questions guided the design of this study:

1. How does teacher educational philosophy impact the use of instructional strategies for history and English Language Arts teachers?
2. How do teacher instructional strategies impact literacy-related outcomes on student writing?

A total of 438 English Language Arts and history teachers were invited to participate in an online survey questionnaire. The survey questionnaire contained questions related to teacher demographic information, educational philosophy, instructional strategies, professional development hours, and beliefs about student writing outcomes. After the survey data was collected, 10 teachers were invited to participate in in-depth interviews based on their survey

responses. The researcher followed a mixed-methods explanatory design using a two-phase process for data collection and analysis. A total of 142 teachers participated in the research study.

Tan (2006) informed the design of the research study by providing educational philosophy statements used in the quantitative survey. The researcher sought to investigate the impact of teacher educational philosophy to empower educators to solve educational challenges related to student achievement (Tan, 2006). Participants answered questions related to educational philosophy and the frequency of instructional strategy use, as well as answering in-depth questions to validate the quantitative data. The interview protocol offered the researcher additional data regarding instructional strategy use, literacy outcomes in student writing, and the characteristics of a successful student and teacher. Through the research and analysis, the researcher identified relationships between the independent and dependent variables to draw conclusions about literacy related outcomes in student writing for improved student achievement. Using two open-ended questions about the teachers' perceptions of student writing abilities and their improvement over a year, the researcher aimed to draw significant conclusions.

### **Discussion of the Findings**

Previous researchers (Hovey & Ferguson, 2014; Kanu & Obiansasor, 2016; Roberson & Woody; Williamson & Null, 2008) studied extensively the relationship between educational philosophy and instructional strategies. The goal of the researcher was to identify educational philosophies and instructional practices to support positive outcomes in student writing in history and English Language Arts classes. The researcher attempted to address the gap in the existing scholarly research related to effective instructional practices aligned to teacher educational philosophy. This section discusses the implications of the findings for each research question.

### **Research Question One**

The first research question asked, “How does teacher educational philosophy impact the use of instructional strategies for history and English Language Arts teachers?” The researcher presented the hypothesis that perennialists and essentialists utilize teacher-centered instructional strategies and progressivists, reconstructionists, and existentialists utilize student-centered instructional strategies. For perennialists and essentialists the hypothesis was not proven using the quantitative analysis. Based on the statistical analysis that was performed, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

The study revealed a significant relationship between the educational philosophies of reconstructionism, existentialism and the use of role plays and simulations. The student-centered instructional practice involves realistic learning tasks that prepare students to experience real-world connections. Similar to the research of Stern and Riley (2002) the data analysis revealed a connection between reconstructionism and learning models that involve authentic learning.

The findings resulting from research question one indicated statistically significant results. Progressivists utilized Cooperative Student Conversations more frequently than essentialists. Essentialists engaged in less frequent student centered instructional strategies when compared to progressivists and existentialists. Perennialists comprised only a small number of the participants (4 of 110 or 3%), so no significant result was discovered.

The statistical analysis revealed there to be a relationship between progressivism and Cooperative Student Conversations. Progressivists (36% of participants) were more likely to group students cooperatively to engage actively in conversations. The participants were likely to utilize strategies such as pair share, Socratic Seminars, and debates. The qualitative analysis validated the quantitative results. One Progressivist history teacher shared:



I always think about collaborative work that is student centered where the students are actively participating in the acquisition of their knowledge and the acquisition of skills. I think about those two as equally balanced because it's not just about content, but it's what kind of skills are they going to be learning and will they be able to problem solve and figure things out either as a collective group or on their own? That's how I always start when we learn about this event or this content. That's the way I always approach it. So, it definitely drives my planning.

Additionally, progressivism was positively correlated to Individual Student Inquiry. The statistical analysis revealed that progressivists frequently promote a student-centered learning environment where students ask and investigate questions or evaluate evidence using strategies such as, DBQs, text-based questions, or annotation. As evidenced by the literature, the results suggest support for progressivism as a student-centered philosophy which has the ability to sustain learning that is rich, substantial, and meaningful (Roberson & Woody, 2012).

### **Research Question Two**

The second research question asked, “How do teacher instructional strategies impact literacy-related outcomes on student writing?” Using the quantitative survey questions and interviews, the researcher discovered a significant relationship between Cooperative Student Conversations and Individual Student Inquiry. The researcher presented the hypothesis that student writing outcomes are positively impacted by teacher use of the following instructional strategies: Individual Student Inquiry, Role Plays and Simulations, and Direct Skill Instruction. For the statistical analysis of Role Plays and Simulations, and Direct Skill Instruction, the null hypothesis was not rejected. However, Individual Student Inquiry was positively correlated with student writing outcomes. Participants favor inquiry-based approaches where students ask and

investigate questions and find and evaluate evidence using source documents. Additionally, participants believed student writing improved over a year suggesting the use of such approaches supports improved literacy-related outcomes for students. Current research supports the relationship between the student-centered inquiry-based approach because when students are encouraged to ask probing questions and investigate challenging problems, student achievement gains were reported with an effect size of 0.4 for inquiry-based teaching (Hattie, 2017).

In addition, Cooperative Student Conversations were associated with positive student writing outcomes. Comments by participants evidenced the perception that students are excellent writers and that over the course of the year, students showed improvement in writing. Relevant research validated the finding when teacher professional development fostered teachers' writing proficiency and in turn, improved students' writing achievements when they viewed themselves as writing teachers. Subsequently, their students' attitudes towards writing improved after ten weeks of research-based professional development (Bifuh-Ambe, 2013). One Progressivist history teacher validated the statistically significant results when she stated:

I really believe that the strategies that I'm using throughout the year and my belief in the way that I'm doing my practice and my belief in that you have to do more of these to get better at them. Again, this year has proven, I mean the data doesn't lie. I have an increase in achievement and increase in scores and I even pulled out, I have English learners and I have a feeling also that I'm a little bit concerned about their academic level even in their native language. And the difference between where a student started at the beginning of the year to where they are now is unbelievable.

The review of literature supports the results of this research study because the researcher discovered a relationship between specific instructional practices and improved student writing

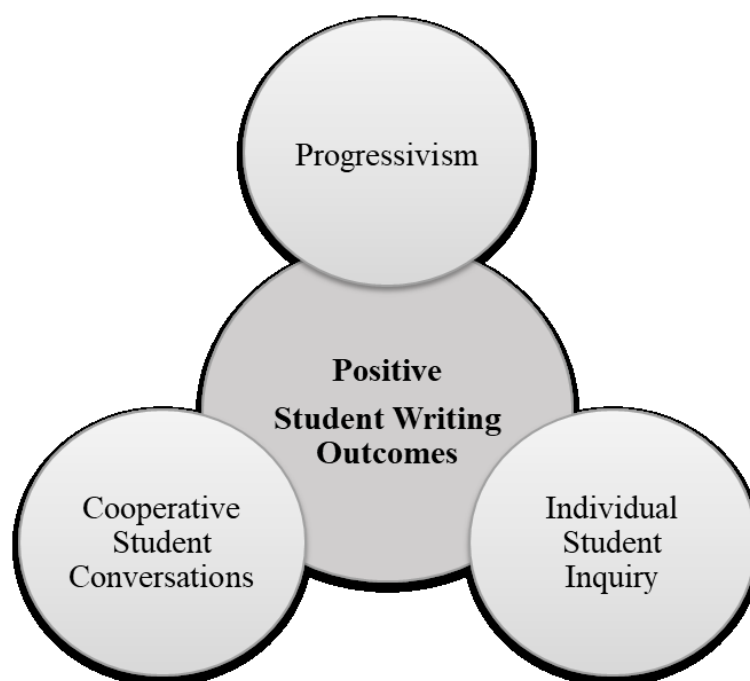
outcomes. In particular, the use of Cooperative Student Conversations reported student achievement gains with an effect size of .82 (Hattie, 2017). Prior research revealed evidence for strong increases in the amount of time students were talking and an increase in student text comprehension when classroom discussion approaches were used (Murphy et al., 2009).

### **Implications for Practice**

Academic literacy is an essential skill needed for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In an effort to address the need for scholarly research on effective instructional practices, this research study attempted to investigate specific factors to promote improved student literacy. The researcher identified several implications for practice that contribute to the overall knowledge base about the relationship between teacher educational philosophy and effective instructional strategies. The researcher recommends further work on disciplinary literacy processes and practices to identify pathways to build teacher capacity and collaboration (Berson et al., 2017).

The results of this study may be utilized to develop instructional resources to support the development of instructional practices related to Collaborative Student Conversations and Individual Student Inquiry for improved student achievement in writing. (See Figure 8). Supported by previous educational research, cooperative student strategies balance two purposes: the cultivation of common values and the celebration of free inquiry (Tredway, 1995; Moeller & Moeller, 2011). In addition, cooperative learning activities foster student independent thinking and support an educational environment where students can think on their own and challenge those in power (Williamson & Null, 2008). Blending the articulation between educational philosophy and instructional strategies, this study will be useful to educators and district leaders

as they recommend effective instructional practices to support improved learning outcomes for academic literacy.



*Figure 10.* Identified Relationship Between Educational Philosophy and Student-Centered Instructional Strategies That Promote Positive Writing Outcomes. (Glassen, 2019)

As policymakers attempt to address the achievement gap in public education, renewed support for a progressivist agenda must be realized. In order to fully prepare students for a rapidly changing future, Little (2013) outlines how the principles underpinning progressive education emerge over and over again as operative and successful educational practice, and how 21st century reformers may benefit from turning attention to other principles of progressive education. Key elements of the progressivist agenda in the 21<sup>st</sup> century involve the inclusion of the following pedagogical practices: Project Based Learning (PBL), critical thinking, cooperative learning, individualized instruction, self-direction and independence, global awareness, and using technology as a learning tool. The implications and findings of this study support the

development of approaches based in progressivism as the foundation for a deeper inquiry into the organization and development of teacher education programs (Webber & Miller, 2016).

Additionally, the two identified instructional practices can be shared with preservice teachers and induction participants to enhance pedagogical practices for practical application. In order to influence the educational policies that impact teacher education, this study will also be shared with university credential programs. The practical knowledge resulting from the results of the research study can potentially support positive school improvement toward improved literacy related outcomes and continued progress toward college, career, and community readiness for students.

### **Addressing the Emerging Themes**

Based on the quantitative and qualitative findings from this research study, the researcher addressed emerging themes to suggest specific instructional and professional practices that improve literacy outcomes for educators.

#### **Scaffolding techniques**

One important finding suggested instructional practices for writing that involve teacher scaffolding techniques such as, pre-writing outlines, explicit teacher modeling, and the gradual release of responsibility instructional model. Supported by the literature, the use of scaffolding tools such as templates, outlines, graphic organizers, and sentence starters can improve argumentative historical writing (Newell et al., 2011). Furthermore, additional research studies indicated that instructional scaffolds positively impacted the length, historical accuracy, and elaboration of the student essays (De La Paz & Felton, 2010).

**Disciplinary literacy**

In the present study, qualitative data from in-depth interviews revealed a general emphasis on literacy across history and English teacher participants. The introduction of the Common Core State Standards in 2010, defined the important role of English Language Arts teachers in developing students' literacy skills, while at the same time recognizing that teachers of other subjects must have a role in this development as well (CCSS, 2010). The literature review supported the importance of equipping teachers with the tools necessary to successfully address the disciplinary literacy agenda (Monte-Sano, De La Paz, & Felton, 2014). The research highlights the need for integrating disciplinary literacy skills with general literacy education using practical historical writing instruction within teacher preservice education programs (Monte-Sano & De La Paz, 2012).

**The importance of practice**

For both English and history teacher participants, the data analysis revealed the importance of practicing writing in the classroom as an iterative process. Comments by participants evidenced the repeated exposure to the DBQ process leads to improved writing performance. The statistical analysis was validated by Individual Student Inquiry instructional strategies such as DBQs, answering text-based questions, and annotation of sources.

The researcher recommends instructional practices supported by the literature review. There are certain instructional practices that are necessary for improvement of evidence-based writing achievement. The following skills should become an integral part of educational practice in the classroom: developing student interpretations of historical evidence and supporting reading comprehension of historical texts (Monte-Sano, 2008).

## **Teacher reflection**

Similar to the research of BADA & Olusegun (2015), teachers need to reflect on their instructional practice in order to apply student-centered practices. In the current research study, eight out of ten (80%) of the interviewed teachers discussed reflective practice when asked the fifth interview question: *What defines a successful teacher?* The qualitative data from the interviewed teachers revealed the belief that successful teachers reflect upon their instructional practice, continually learn from their mistakes, and are actively engaged in their own learning through collaboration with colleagues.

## **Recommendations for Further Research**

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher has three suggestions for future research involving educational philosophy and instructional strategies to support improvement in student writing outcomes.

Throughout the research process, the goal of the researcher was to answer two questions. Question one: How does teacher educational philosophy impact the use of instructional strategies for history and English Language Arts teachers? The findings of the study helped to identify progressivism, reconstructionism, and existentialism as educational philosophies associated with specific instructional strategies. Building upon the statistically significant data, the researcher recommends further research related to specific strategies associated with teacher beliefs and philosophies. Furthermore, research should focus on how such beliefs impact instructional practices across various disciplines.

Question two: How do teacher instructional strategies impact literacy-related outcomes on student writing? The answer to this question was harder to identify due the lack of significant quantitative data to support student writing achievement. Additional achievement data is

necessary to adequately support the answer to the second research question. Based on the participant responses, Cooperative Student Conversations and Individual Student Inquiry were both instructional strategies that supported positive student writing outcomes. To provide additional clarity regarding educational philosophy and instructional strategy use related to literacy related outcomes in student writing, it is recommended that future research focus on three areas:

- the development of instructional models for pre-service and in-service teachers
- the examination of writing assessment data to support student literacy development
- the expansion of the current research study to additional core content areas.

The first research recommendation involves further research investigating Cooperative Student Conversations, Individual Student Inquiry, and Student achievement data and literacy related outcomes in student writing. The result of this study indicated specific student-centered instructional strategies to promote literacy related outcomes in student writing. The researcher recommends future research to identify the specific strategies to develop a model for improved student learning on evidence-based writing assessments, such as DBQs. In addition, future research should focus on preservice and in-service professional learning that provides teachers with the resources to develop instructional practices that support student-centered learning environments. Additionally, there should be studies that investigate the most effective instructional models to support teacher professional growth related to literacy related outcomes for student learning. Future research is necessary to support progress toward identifying best practices and fostering a culture of professional collaboration to promote 21<sup>st</sup> century literacy partnerships within learning organizations.



The second research recommendation involves the examination of writing assessment data to support student literacy development. The author of this study originally intended to use student achievement data related to evidence-based writing assessment in English Language Arts and history classrooms. The researcher changed the focus of the study to accommodate the limitations regarding access to student writing scores. The researcher acknowledges the opportunity for continued research regarding educational philosophy, literacy related outcomes in student writing, and achievement data on standardized writing assessments. In addition, further exploration of opportunities for strategic, job-embedded professional learning related to disciplinary literacy across the disciplines should be considered. Further examination of the effect of instructional strategies on literacy outcomes in student writing is also recommended.

The scope of the research did not include quantitative assessment data. The researcher recommends the inclusion of writing assessment data to evaluate the effectiveness of specific instructional practices for disciplinary literacy development. Furthermore, additional research needs to be conducted to examine specific literacy-related instructional strategies to study the impact of such strategies on student achievement scores on Common Core State Standard performance tasks and district level evidence-based writing assessments. Additionally, the researcher provides recommendations that future studies include the triangulation of data sources that involve standardized test scores and locally created writing assessments, such as DBQs. The examination of quantitative assessment data will provide additional validation for the effective approaches to address the persistent achievement gap in California and nationwide.

The final research recommendation involves the expansion of the current research study across several school districts and to additional core content areas. The researcher recommends replicating this educational study on a larger scale by increasing the sample size. This can be

achieved by including additional content area teachers, such as science, math, and elective teachers. In addition, research needs to be conducted to examine the possible impact of cross-disciplinary strategies for improved student writing. The demands of the Common Core Standards can be met with additional research studies on disciplinary literacy, which will provide the rationale for the nationwide effort to address the student literacy gaps that existed throughout the United States in the early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Conclusions**

This study was undertaken to address the literacy demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Barack Obama, the 44<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, stated, ““Literacy is the most basic currency of the knowledge economy.” Lacking the essential literacy skills, students struggle with the ability to express themselves proficiently in the core subject areas of English, history, math, and science. This adverse social condition is a cause for concern within the district, in California, and nationwide. Too few graduating students have acquired the necessary skills to meet the literacy demands of college and career readiness.

The current research confirmed the importance of the need for additional research regarding instructional practices that lead to improvements in student learning across content areas. With a specific emphasis on English Language Arts teachers and history teachers, the study sought to investigate strategies to develop the student’s ability to effectively interpret, analyze and articulate effective text-based arguments. The quantitative analysis revealed significant results for Cooperative Student Conversations and Individual Student Inquiry. Furthermore, the qualitative analysis validated the relationship between the stated strategies and positive outcomes for student writing. Future quantitative research is needed to legitimize the relationship between the variables related to improved student writing achievement and overall

academic literacy.

Core instructional practices and inquiry-based literacy instruction have become popular areas of focus since the implementation of the Common Core State Standards in various states since 2010. The research study focused on a large suburban school district in Southern California and aimed to reveal the relationship between teacher educational philosophy and the use of instructional strategies. The mixed-methods research studies identified instructional practices that will effectively enable students to learn content at a deeper cognitive level.

### **Summary**

The chapter presented the summary and discussion of the results of the research study. Both research questions were discussed using both quantitative and qualitative analyses. The implications for practice were discussed, and recommendations for future research were presented. A conclusion stated final thoughts regarding the study.

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from this study revealed that teachers in the majority of schools were using evidence based practices such as peer collaboration, prewriting/planning/drafting, using rubrics, and writing to learn.olar/17

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## Appendix A

### Participant Survey

You are invited to participate in a web-based online survey. This is a research study being conducted by Nina Glassen, a doctoral candidate at Concordia University Irvine. It should take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. The purpose of this research study is to understand how teacher educational philosophy and beliefs about student writing influence the use of instructional strategies for history and English Language Arts teachers.

**PARTICIPATION:** Your participation in this survey is voluntary. You may refuse to take part in the research or exit the survey at any time without penalty. You are free to decline to answer any question you do not wish to answer for any reason.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:** The participants in this study are given confidentiality. Individual participant information will be kept confidential. Employee identification numbers will be collected, but only used if a follow-up interview is required. All documents and data pertinent to this study will be maintained in the researcher's laptop, which is password protected, as well as in a locked file cabinet that only the researcher will have access to for a period of one year.

**DURATION:** The study will take place over an eight-week period beginning March 15<sup>th</sup> and ending April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019. The Google Form Survey will be available for 4 weeks. The survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete and the classroom observation will last approximately 30 minutes. The interview will take 20-30 minutes. Each measure will be conducted at times that are convenient for the participant.

**RISKS:** There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life. The researcher will provide participants with confidential surveys. Survey information and identifying information such as names, school site, or email address from the survey participants will be kept confidential.

**BENEFITS:** You will receive no direct benefits from participating in this research study. However, by participating in this study, participants will help expand the body of research on this topic.

**CONTACT:** If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact Nina Glassen via email at [nina.glassen@eagles.cui.edu](mailto:nina.glassen@eagles.cui.edu)

**ELECTRONIC CONSENT:** Please select your choice below. Clicking on the "Agree" button indicates that you have read the above information, you voluntarily agree to participate, and you are 18 years of age or older.

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree

**Part I: Teacher Information**

What is your employee identification number? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your ethnicity?

- ☐ White
- ☐ Latino or Hispanic
- ☐ African American
- ☐ Native American or American Indian
- ☐ Asian/Pacific Islander

Select your teaching credential.

- ☐ Single Subject Social Science
- ☐ Single Subject English
- ☐ Multiple Subject

Years of teaching experience: \_\_\_\_\_

What subjects do you currently teach?

- ☐ Middle School Social Studies
- ☐ Middle School English Language Arts
- ☐ High School History
- ☐ High School English Language Arts

What is the highest degree you attained?

- ☐ B.A.
- ☐ M.A.
- ☐ Ph.D./Ed.D.

At which university did you earn your bachelor's degree? \_\_\_\_\_

At which university did you earn your teaching credential? \_\_\_\_\_

**Part II: Teacher Educational Philosophy**

Source: Tan, Charlene (2006). Philosophical perspectives on education. In Tan, C., Wong, B., Chua, J.S.M. & Kang, T. (Eds.), *Critical Perspectives on Education: An Introduction*. Singapore: Prentice Hall.

Indicate your level of agreement with each statement.

+2= Strong Agreement, +1= Mild Agreement, -1= Mild Disagreement, -2 = Strong Disagreement

1. The focus of knowledge is to emphasize ideas that have endured through time.
2. The purpose of schools is to teach cultural values to students.

3. Schools should help students acquire problem-solving skills.
4. The purpose of education is to prepare students for active participation in a democratic society.
5. Students should respect authority to be members of a civilized society.
6. The curriculum should focus on the classics with emphasis on the great works of literature, music, and art from Western civilization.
7. Teachers should be experts in their subject matter.
8. Students should be involved in controversial issues where they invite experts into the classroom to raise awareness about a global problem.
9. Schools should promote multicultural education so that students seek a broader sense of identity.
10. Education should aim to help students know ideas that are universal.
11. The role of schools is to educate the intellectually elite.
12. The teacher's role in education is to help students understand themselves as unique individuals.
13. The humanities are essential to help students unleash their creativity.
14. The purpose of education is the mastery of facts and skills.
15. Teachers should be social activists who promote humanitarian action projects for students.
16. Schools should promote rigorous academic standards with a high value placed on student mastery of core subjects.
17. Schools should be social agencies for societal change rather than academic institutions.
18. Students must be aware of global problems such as poverty, warfare, famine, and terrorism.
19. Education should develop the whole person, not just the mind.
20. Knowledge and values are dependent on human experiences.
21. Student learning should be self-paced.
22. Teachers should plan the curriculum based on student interests rather than the great works of literature.
23. Teachers should aim to hold high academic standards.
24. Teachers should guide students to solve problems through a student-centered learning environment.
25. Teachers should help students define themselves by creating a learning environment where students can choose their way.
26. Teachers should emphasize truths which are timeless in the subject matter.
27. Teachers should be facilitators who guide students to solve problems through collaborative projects.
28. Teachers should act as examples of moral character for students.
29. Teachers should focus on humanitarian concerns.
30. The humanities are important for the development of student self-expression.

### Part III: Instructional Strategies

How many days in the past week (Monday-Friday) were the following instructional strategies implemented in your classroom? (1-5)

1. Cooperative Student Conversations: Groups of students actively participate in conversations. Ex: Pair Share, Socratic Seminars, Debates
2. Individual Student Inquiry: Students ask and investigate questions or find and evaluate evidence. Ex: DBQs, Answering Text-Based Questions, Annotation
3. Role Plays or Simulations: Learning tasks that prepare students to experience real-world connections. Ex: Reader's Theatre, Skits
4. Student Presentations: Students present information to demonstrate proficiency with content knowledge or skills. Ex: Multimedia Presentations using Technology
5. Direct Content Instruction: Method of teaching using the direct delivery of content material to students. Ex: Lectures, Videos, Read Aloud
6. Direct Skill Instruction: The teacher explicitly teaches a skill or process. Ex: Demonstrations, Modeling
7. Comprehension Checks: The teacher engages students with checks for understanding of the content. Ex: Question and Answer, Quizzes, Homework Review
8. Individualized Instruction: Teacher works one on one with students. Ex: Conferencing, Tutoring, Individual Feedback

### Part IV: Student Writing Outcomes

To what extent do you AGREE with the following statements?

Strongly Agree= 5, Agree=4, Neutral=3, Disagree=2, Strongly Disagree=1

1. On average, my students are excellent writers.
2. Over the course of a year, my students show tremendous improvement in their writing.

### Part V: Teacher Professional Development

Consider the professional development that you received over the past 2 school years. Write the TOTAL NUMBER OF HOURS of training for each of the professional development options below. (1 day = 6 hours)

\_\_\_ Total # of hours of DISTRICT Professional Development Release Days

\_\_\_ Total # of hours of SCHOOL SITE Professional Development Release Days

\_\_\_ Total # of hours of AFTER-SCHOOL Professional Development

## Appendix B

### Interview Protocol

Time of interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Position of interviewee:

Researcher says: “The purpose of this interview is to gain deeper insights into the educational philosophy, instructional strategies and literacy-related outcomes on student writing.”

Researcher shows a visual of 8 instructional strategies with definitions and examples from survey.

Questions:

1. Your primary educational philosophy is identified as \_\_\_\_\_ (add survey data). Tell me more about this.
  - How do you think your educational philosophy impacts your instruction?
2. Your preferred instructional strategies are identified as \_\_\_\_\_ (add participant survey data). Tell me more about this.
  - Describe one of your classes today. What instructional practices did you engage in today?
  - Tell me about the content you were teaching when you used the instructional strategy.
  - Why did you use this strategy?
3. While looking at 3-5 student writing samples, answer each of the following questions: (Monte-Sano et al., 2014):
  - What do you notice about the student writing?
  - What are the strengths and weaknesses that you notice in the student essay?
    - Discuss instructional strategies reflected in the writing.
    - What instructional strategies did you use to teach student writing and why?
  - Describe your experience evaluating student work.
  - What is your overall opinion about the process of scoring student work?
  - What were the instructions leading up to your writing assignment?
4. Tell me the characteristics of a successful student.
5. What defines a successful teacher?

## Appendix C

**Educational Philosophy Statements**

<b>Perennialism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The focus of knowledge is to emphasize ideas that have endured through time.</li> <li>• The curriculum should focus on the classics with emphasis on the great works of literature, music, and art from Western civilization.</li> <li>• Education should aim to help students know ideas that are universal.</li> <li>• The role of schools is to educate the intellectually elite.</li> <li>• Teachers should aim to hold high academic standards.</li> <li>• Teachers should emphasize truths which are timeless in the subject matter.</li> </ul>
<b>Essentialism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of schools is to teach cultural values to students.</li> <li>• Students should respect authority to be members of a civilized society.</li> <li>• Teachers should be experts in their subject matter</li> <li>• The purpose of education is the mastery of facts and skills.</li> <li>• Schools should promote rigorous academic standards with a high value placed on student mastery of core subjects.</li> <li>• Teachers should act as examples of moral character for students.</li> </ul>
<b>Progressivism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools should help students acquire problem-solving skills.</li> <li>• The purpose of education is to prepare students for active participation in a democratic society.</li> <li>• Knowledge and values are dependent on human experiences.</li> <li>• Teachers should plan the curriculum based on student interests rather than the great works of literature.</li> <li>• Teachers should guide students to solve problems through a student-centered learning environment.</li> <li>• Teachers should be facilitators who guide students to solve problems through collaborative projects.</li> </ul>
<b>Reconstructionism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students should be involved in controversial issues where they invite experts into the classroom to raise awareness about a global problem.</li> <li>• Schools should promote multicultural education so that students seek a broader sense of identity.</li> <li>• Teachers should be social activists who promote humanitarian action projects for students.</li> <li>• Schools should be social agencies for societal change rather than academic institutions.</li> <li>• Students must be aware of global problems such as poverty, warfare, famine, and terrorism.</li> <li>• Teachers should focus on humanitarian concerns.</li> </ul>
<b>Existentialism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teacher's role in education is to help students understand themselves as unique individuals.</li> <li>• The humanities are essential to help students unleash their creativity.</li> <li>• Teachers should help students define themselves by creating a learning environment where students can choose their way.</li> <li>• Student learning should be self-paced.</li> <li>• The humanities are important for the development of student self-expression.</li> <li>• Education should develop the whole person, not just the mind.</li> </ul>

Source: Tan, Charlene (2006). Philosophical perspectives on education. In Tan, C., Wong, B., Chua, J.S.M. & Kang, T. (Eds.), Critical Perspectives on Education: An Introduction. Singapore: Prentice Hall.

## Appendix D

**Instructional Strategies**

<b>Instructional Strategy</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Cooperative Student Conversations	Groups of students actively participate in conversations.	Pair Share, Socratic Seminars, Debates
Individual Student Inquiry	Students ask and investigate questions or find and evaluate evidence.	DBQs, Answering Text-Based Questions, Annotation
Role Plays or Simulations	Learning tasks that prepare students to experience real-world connections.	Reader's Theatre, Skits
Student Presentations	Students present information to demonstrate proficiency with content knowledge or skills.	Multimedia Presentations using Technology
Direct Content Instruction	Method of teaching using the direct delivery of content material to students.	Lectures, Videos, Read Alouds
Direct Skill Instruction	The teacher explicitly teaches a skill or process.	Demonstrations, Modeling
Comprehension Checks	The teacher engages students with checks for understanding of the content.	Question and Answer, Quizzes, Homework Review
Individualized Instruction	Teacher works one on one with students.	Conferencing, Tutoring, Individual Feedback



## Appendix E

## National Institutes of Health (NIH) Certificate

