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Literacy Strategies Successfully Implemented by Secondary Social Studies Teachers

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine which literacy strategies were used by secondary social studies teachers who were identified by their principals as having strong literacy integration skills. In addition, teachers' beliefs and purposes for utilizing said literacy strategies were examined. It was hypothesized that participants would incorporate literacy strategies into their instruction, and would utilize explicit vocabulary instructional methods and graphic organizers most frequently. Using a mixed-methods approach, data were collected from five participants through three 50-minute behavioral observations apiece, followed by a 45-minute focus group discussion. Results indicated that these participants overwhelmingly utilized literacy strategies regularly (92% of the 150 observed intervals). Those most frequently used were the comprehension instruction methods of Question Answering and Collaborative Learning and Discussion, and the vocabulary instruction methods of Capacity Methods and Implicit Instruction. Five themes emerged during the focus group discussion: emerging beliefs about literacy, student ability, motivating and engaging students, literacy instruction methods and strategies, and challenges with implementing content area literacy. Implications of the findings and recommendations for future research is discussed, including the possible relationship between background experiences and the implementation of literacy strategies, particularly in the ways content area teachers' beliefs about student ability and motivation around literacy may be impacted.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Background of the Problem

In this era of high-stakes testing and assessment, accountability measures seem to govern which content is considered most important for teaching and learning. As Jones and Thomas (2006) stated, "assessment drives instruction" (p. 64). Currently, high-stakes assessments focus on reading, writing, and math, at the expense of other content areas in schools (Applebee, 2013; Coleman, 2011; Jones & Thomas, 2006).

Increased pressure for students to earn proficient scores on reading assessments has increased the pressure on schools for more literacy instruction (Ippolito, Steele, & Samson, 2008). As a result, literacy blocks in elementary schools have expanded. However, research shows that due to elementary teachers' preference toward narrative literary styles the focus in these expanded blocks is on fiction, literature, and narrative writing, thus excluding informational texts and cutting time from content area classes (Alvermann, 2002; Biancarosa & Snow, 2006; Coleman, 2011; Duke, 2000; Pressley, Rankin, & Yokoi, 1996). As a result, Coleman (2011) reported that the base of knowledge students need for success in upper grades and the strategies and skills necessary for reading informational texts, and writing in response to them, are not being built in lower grades. Consequently, adolescents are not developing the literacy skills necessary to keep pace with the increasing literacy demands they face beyond elementary school (Alvermann, 2002; Coleman, 2011; Ness, 2007).

Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts. The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English Language Arts (ELA) represent an integrated model of literacy, with reading, writing, speaking, and listening incorporated throughout all standards (Applebee, 2013). Developed in 2010 by the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (Applebee, 2013; Shanahan, 2013), the CCSS were intended to address the lack of standardization of learning standards among the states and to ensure that all students are prepared for college and career by the time they graduate from high school. According to Applebee (2013), "The CCSS offers a strong and well-intentioned vision of the knowledge and skills needed by a college- and career-ready high school graduate" (p. 25).

The standards are clear and show a logical sequence through the grades, having been back-mapped, grade-by-grade to a foundation in kindergarten (Applebee, 2013; Coleman, 2011). The CCSS in ELA contain higher expectations for reading, writing, speaking, and listening, implemented from the beginning of students' school experience (Mahurt, 2013). Text complexity builds in depth and grows from year to year so students are ready for college level texts by the end of high school (Coleman, 2011). "The Common Core's goal is to move students into more complex texts earlier in their schooling to significantly improve the text levels they can read by the time they enter college or begin a career" (Goatley, 2012, p. 18). Further, the CCSS have interwoven elements of problem solving, collaboration, communication, and critical-thinking within (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2014).

With the implementation of the CCSS in ELA, many middle and high school content area teachers are facing pressure to incorporate literacy strategies into their social studies, science, arts, and technical classes. The CCSS expects the amount of informational text students read to increase as they progress through the grades, with 50% fiction and 50% informational texts at 4th grade, 45% fiction and 55% informational at 8th grade, and 30% fiction and 70% informational at 12th grade. The expectation is that these reading opportunities will be integrated into all content areas across each grade, not solely in ELA class (National Governors Association, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). While comprehension skills taught in English class are useful, students need literacy skills specific to each discipline to understand content area texts (Snow & Moje, 2010). Schoenbach, Greenleaf, and Hale (2010) explained that the new CCSS for grades six and above expect teachers to use their expertise in their content areas to support literacy learning. The secondary standards are divided into two sections to reflect the importance of the shared responsibility of all teachers within the school to support students' literacy development. One section is specific to the standards for English language arts, while the other is devoted to the content areas of history/social studies, science, and technical subjects (National Governors Association, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). "This means that the responsibility of preparing students to read, write, talk, and think critically about complex texts and across such texts is no longer just the English teacher's job" (Schoenbach et al., 2010, p. 39).

Content area literacy. For the purpose of this study, content area literacy is defined as using reading, writing, communicating, thinking, and reasoning skills to

acquire new knowledge in a given discipline (McKenna & Robinson, 1990; Misulis, 2009). Learning from texts occurs in all content areas; thus, literacy instruction has a place in all content areas (Neufeld, 2005). Further, Heller and Greenleaf (2007) believe literacy skills should be developed throughout the K-12 curriculum. Instructional tools, such as comprehension, vocabulary, study strategies, and writing are areas of literacy that can be incorporated into secondary content classes to promote student learning (Misulis, 2009). Unfortunately, for many reasons, literacy activities are challenging and limited in many secondary classes (Fisher & Ivey, 2005).

Teacher resistance to content literacy. Many studies have shown teachers' resistance to incorporating literacy strategies into their content area classes (Cantrell, Burns, & Callaway, 2009; Hall, 2005; Nourie & Lenski, 1998; Zipperer et al., 2002). Snow (2010) reported a prevailing assumption that by 3rd grade, students have successfully mastered the literacy strategies they will need in upper grades. Consequently, many secondary content area teachers assume students come to class having already learned the literacy skills they need for comprehension of course text materials (Zipperer et al., 2002). Many teachers who do recognize the need to integrate literacy strategies into their classes feel pressure to cover their own course content in a limited amount of time (Cantrell et al., 2009; Ness, 2007). In addition, teachers report a gap between what they learned in college and the content reading strategies they actually use (Spor & Schneider, 1999). Though teachers tend to be skeptical of one-size-fits-all and quick-fix programs (Alvermann, 2002), Spor and Schneider (1999) discovered that different reading strategies are not widely known nor used by many teachers.

Some content teachers believe there is a disconnect between their curriculum approaches and pedagogy, and the teaching of literacy strategies. Often, content area instruction is teacher-centered, in contrast to the more student-centered approach of literacy instruction (Cantrell et al., 2009). Social studies classes, for instance, are often driven by content, while a typical literacy class is driven by skills and strategies (Jones & Thomas, 2006). In addition, teachers report that while they recognize the value in teaching content literacy strategies, they do not possess the knowledge nor skills like those of their more qualified English and language arts colleagues. This leaves many teachers feeling ill-equipped, particularly when working with struggling readers (Cantrell et al., 2009; Hall, 2005; Zipperer et al., 2002).

Challenging texts. As students enter middle and high school, the demand increases for adolescents to be able to comprehend and think critically about multiple forms of text in order to be successful in content area classes (Alvermann, 2002). Despite the increased focus on literacy development at the elementary level, adolescents continue to struggle reading grade level texts (National Institute for Literacy, 2007). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2013), reading scale scores for 4th graders increased slightly (5 points) over the last 21 years, though have remained unchanged over the last 6, on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP); the reading scale scores of 8th grade students increased by 8 points over the last 21 years on the NAEP. While this seems to be a positive increase, the same 2013 NAEP reading report card shows that 64% of 8th graders and 65% of 4th graders are still reading below proficiency levels.

In fact, even students who have shown satisfactory progress with literacy skills through 3rd grade begin to struggle with the demands of content area reading in 4th grade (Allington, 2002). According to Biancarosa and Snow (2006), 70% of students from 4th – 12th grades require reading remediation. Textbooks used in secondary classes contain complex vocabulary specific to each discipline, making them challenging even for those students reading at grade level (Allington, 2002; Ness, 2007). Further, there is often a mismatch between the challenge level of the text and the reading level of the student (Allington, 2002).

Nonetheless, textbooks are the dominant resource for most required content information in secondary classes (Myers & Savage, 2005; Spor & Schneider, 1999). In fact, Zipperer et al. (2002) reported that in high school, reading is limited to course text materials. Reading tends to be assigned as homework for completion outside of class (Allington, 2002; Zipperer et al., 2002) and comprehension of the material is assessed, despite very little instruction around how to understand the text (Ness, 2007).

In order to internalize content area learning, adolescents need instruction of complex literacy skills specific to the discipline texts and requirements in middle and high school (National Institute for Literacy, 2007; Snow & Moje, 2010). Snow and Moje (2010) point out, in opposition to the widespread assumption about reading instruction, learning to read should not end after 3rd grade. Rather, adolescents need to learn specific and more complex skills and strategies in order to deeply comprehend content area material (Snow & Moje, 2010). However, Ness revealed in a 2007 study that teacher-led instruction dominates secondary science and social studies classrooms with only 3% of

time devoted to helping students understand assigned texts. Only those students who have developed the necessary literacy skills to accurately read and comprehend assigned texts have the opportunity to succeed. "The consequence is that reading and writing proficiency are critical determinants of students' overall success in school" (Ippolito et al., 2008, p. 2).

    Secondary social studies classes. Different content areas require different literacy strategies. Heller and Greenleaf (2007) state, "All teachers, in every discipline, have reasons to emphasize certain kinds of reading and writing over others, depending on the nature of the specific content and skills they want their students to learn" (p. 11). Simply assigning the reading is not enough to help students develop the strategies they need to understand challenging texts (Neufeld, 2005). According to VanSledright (2004), reading in social studies is different from the kinds of reading done in other disciplines, despite some overlapping characteristics. As such, secondary social studies teachers play a vital role in developing students' abilities to utilize literacy strategies for understanding course content through these challenging texts.

> It is obvious that students' success in social studies programs hinges on their ability to read and comprehend the material in the textbook. Thus, one of the most effective ways to improve social studies achievement is to help students learn from the textbook (Myers & Savage, 2005, p. 18).

    Reading, writing, listening, and speaking activities take place across all disciplines. Thus, literacy instruction has a place in all content areas. As they move through the upper grades and into college, students are faced with increasing academic

literacy demands. Though they may have had targeted literacy instruction in elementary grades, students in middle and high school continue to need support in accessing information from their challenging content area texts. In a subject such as social studies, where much of the content is conveyed through the textbook, it is incumbent upon secondary social studies teachers to actively and explicitly teach students strategies for accessing that information. Unfortunately, despite added pressures for increasing students' literacy abilities from the mandates of NCLB and the implementation of the CCSS in ELA, some content area teachers remain resistant to the idea of incorporating literacy strategies into their instruction.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to determine which literacy strategies are used by secondary social studies teachers who have been identified by their principals as having strong literacy integration skills. In addition, this study examined these teachers' beliefs and purposes for utilizing said literacy strategies.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses driving this study were as follows:

1. It was hypothesized that secondary social studies teachers, recognized by their principals as possessing strong literacy integration skills, would incorporate literacy instructional methods into their instruction.

2. It was hypothesized that secondary social studies teachers, recognized by their principals as possessing strong literacy integration skills, more frequently

would utilize explicit vocabulary instruction than other literacy instructional methods.

3. It was hypothesized that secondary social studies teachers, recognized by their principals as possessing strong literacy integration skills, more frequently would utilize graphic organizers than other literacy instructional methods (excluding vocabulary instruction).

Research Questions

The qualitative central question for this research was: What are the favored literacy strategies of social studies teachers identified by their principals as possessing strong literacy integration skills? The following sub-questions will be investigated:

1. What are the beliefs about content literacy instruction of social studies teachers identified by their principals as possessing strong literacy integration skills?

2. What are the purposes social studies teachers, identified by their principals as possessing strong literacy integration skills, describe for implementing the strategies they choose?

Significance of the Research

Recent research indicates that adolescents need more explicit instruction with literacy strategies specific to reading the kinds of challenging texts they will encounter as they move from elementary to middle and high school. Further, with the demands of NCLB and ELA CCSS, secondary teachers are facing more pressure to incorporate literacy strategies into their content classes. Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons,

research also shows that many content teachers remain resistant to this. The findings of this study have the potential to address the need for further adolescent literacy instruction, as well as the issue of content teacher resistance in all disciplines.

This study sought to identify the literacy strategies secondary social studies teachers are already implementing successfully. Identification of specific literacy strategies that work well for delivering social studies content makes the selection of literacy strategies less overwhelming for teachers who may feel uncomfortable selecting them on their own. Further, recommendation of these literacy strategies by content area colleagues, rather than literacy specialists or English teachers, may raise the trust and comfort levels of resistant teachers, making them more likely to try implementation on their own.

More social studies teachers successfully implementing literacy strategies will impact more students taking those courses. Incorporation of these strategies will allow students access to text materials that could be too challenging without the support of literacy strategies. In addition, social studies teachers regularly implementing literacy strategies would alleviate some of the pressure English language arts and reading teachers face in meeting the demands of the ELA CCSS.

Finally, and possibly most significantly, this study could be replicated in other content areas such as science, health, and math, to identify the literacy strategies that work best for delivering content in those disciplines. Literacy strategies explicitly taught in context through each content area would affect nearly all adolescents taking courses in middle and high school, giving them the strategies necessary to access challenging texts

in all disciplines.

Definition of Key Terms

      Content area literacy strategies. General strategies that can be applied to almost any subject matter text (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012).

      Content area literacy. Using reading, writing, communicating, thinking and reasoning skills to acquire new knowledge in a given discipline (McKenna & Robinson, 1990; Misulis, 2009).

      Disciplinary literacy strategies. Specific techniques and skills an expert might use to interact with text from a specific discipline (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012).

      Literacy strategies. Plans for engaging with text through reading, writing, and communicating for the purpose of comprehension.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

This chapter reviews the current literature pertinent to the following research questions: What are the beliefs about content literacy instruction of social studies teachers identified by their principals as possessing strong literacy integration skills? What are the purposes social studies teachers, identified by their principals as possessing strong literacy integration skills, describe for implementing the strategies they choose?

Adolescent Literacy Needs

The International Reading Association (2012) defines adolescent literacy as the "ability to read, write, understand and interpret, and discuss multiple texts across multiple contexts" (p. 2). Typically, middle and high school students are considered adolescents, but challenges associated with literacy can begin as early as 3rd or 4th grade (Jacobs, 2008). Though secondary literacy skills have been shown to be more complex than primary and elementary skills, until recently, most effort for literacy instruction and improvement has focused on early literacy, neglecting comprehension instruction, content area reading, and reading for learning (Alvermann, 2002; Biancarosa & Snow, 2006; Lesley, 2004; Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw, & Rycik, 1999).

To this end, in 1999, the Commission on Adolescent Literacy developed the International Reading Association's (IRA) first position statement on adolescent literacy as a guide for supporting adolescent literacy development (Moore et al., 1999). Within this pioneering document, Moore et al. (1999) called for adolescent literacy to be addressed directly and effectively, developing specific principles describing what

adolescents deserve. They suggested literacy instruction beyond the early grades is a necessity.

Since Moore et al.'s original position statement in 1999, there has been growth in the area of adolescent literacy. As a result, IRA's original adolescent literacy position statement was revised in 2012 to reflect current policy and pedagogy surrounding adolescent literacy (International Reading Association, 2012). This was a collaborative effort between the IRA's 2008 – 2011 Adolescent Literacy Committees and the Adolescent Literacy Task Force of 2011 – 2012. The principle of literacy revised from the original document that is of particular importance for this dissertation is position 1, "Adolescents deserve content area teachers who provide instruction in the multiple literacy strategies needed to meet the demands of the specific discipline" (International Reading Association, 2012, p. 2).

Despite this recent emphasis on adolescent literacy, students in 4th – 12th grades continue to struggle reading at grade level (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006). This suggests that adolescents need literacy instruction specific to their developmental needs and the rigorous academic demands of middle and high school (National Institute for Literacy, 2007). Further, Alvermann (2002) suggested adolescents need background knowledge and a variety of strategies in order to comprehend and think critically about the kinds of texts they will encounter.

Content Area Classes

The abilities to read well and write in response are critical to success in school (Ippolito et al., 2008). Unfortunately, many secondary schools do not provide reading

instruction for all students (Moore et al., 1999). The explicit reading instruction that is available is typically for remediation. Consequently, it is the International Reading Association's (2012) recommendation that comprehension and study strategies be implemented across the curriculum.

Though direct instruction of content through literacy strategies can lead to opportunities for deepening the understanding of course content, many teachers simply do not realize they could be incorporating these skills in their content classes (McKenna & Robinson, 1990). Many researchers have found that very little time in secondary classes is spent teaching students literacy strategies (Durkin, 1978; Fisher & Ivey, 2005; Heller & Greenleaf, 2007; Ness, 2007; Ness, 2009; Zipperer et al., 2002).

In her pivotal observational study spanning 24 reading and social studies classes in 13 different schools in Illinois, Durkin (1978) found that, surprisingly, almost no reading instruction was seen in middle and upper elementary reading classes. Any comprehension instruction that was observed was spent asking students to recall information through questioning. Nearly all of class time observed was spent on assignment completion and assessment. Even more startling was that no observed time in social studies classes was spent on improving students' comprehension of the textbooks most prevalently used for delivery of course content; rather, the entire 2,775 minutes of observed time was spent covering social studies content and mastering facts (Durkin, 1978).

In a similar mixed-methods study of the literacy practices and beliefs of secondary science and social studies teachers, comprehension instruction took place just

82 minutes, or 3%, of the total 2400 observed minutes of class time (Ness, 2009). Of the 600 minutes observed in middle school social studies classes, only 60 minutes were spent actively teaching reading comprehension strategies. No reading comprehension instruction occurred in the 600 observed minutes of high school social studies. Though the 8 participants in this study claimed they understood the importance of promoting literacy in their classes, only some actually incorporated it into their instruction (Ness, 2009).

Spor and Schneider (1999) found that teachers reported feeling confident in their knowledge of the course material, but specific literacy strategies were not widely known nor used in content classes. Typically, teacher-led instruction tends to dominate secondary content classrooms (Ness, 2007), with reading assigned as homework. Thus, very little class time is spent reading and learning literacy strategies (Allington, 2002; Zipperer et al., 2002). This becomes a serious issue for students who have not yet developed appropriate literacy strategies for reading content texts. With no explicit instruction, these students are doomed to practice and strengthen ineffective literacy strategies and behaviors (U.S. Department of Education National Institute of Education Center for the Study of Reading, 1983).

Academic literacy demands. Many researchers have indicated that both academic and literacy demands increase as students move from grade to grade (International Reading Association, 2012; Moje, 2007; Moore et al., 1999; Ness, 2007; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). "After elementary years, not only do reading assignments become longer and more full of content; they also become increasingly varied in their

style, vocabulary, text structure, purpose, and intended audience" (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007, p. 7). Throughout elementary grades, a great emphasis is put on math and literacy, but there is a distinct shift to a focus on content in middle and high school (Moore et al., 1999). As students move through the grades, they encounter new content, and new expectations for the ways to read and write about this content (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007). Further, content texts tend to be complex and stray from the narrative structure with which students are most familiar (Fisher & Frey, 2013; National Institute for Literacy, 2007).

Challenging texts. At the secondary level, reading is limited to content text materials (Zipperer et al., 2002). In two separate studies, Spor and Schneider (1999) and Ulusoy and Dedeoglu (2011) found that teachers identified textbooks and informational texts as their most used resources. Unfortunately, these texts can be too challenging for adolescent readers for a variety of reasons (Allington, 2002; Brozo & Hargis, 2003; Fisher & Ivey, 2005; Herber, 1978; Lesley, 2004; Moje, 2008; National Institute for Literacy, 2007). Shanahan and Shanahan (2008) explained, content texts are rarely taught, further compounding adolescent readers' struggles with content material.

Often, secondary textbooks are full of discipline-specific, complex vocabulary (Key, Bradley, & Bradley, 2010). In addition, textbooks can be dry, uninteresting, and not engaging (Brozo & Hargis, 2003; Fisher & Ivey, 2005). Often, as experts in their field, content teachers select texts that are important to the discipline but are virtually inaccessible to students (Moje, 2007). As a result, it can be a challenge to motivate students to read and engage with content texts (Brozo & Flynt, 2008).

Further, teachers often do not expect their students to complete the assigned readings and students recognize this expectation (Hooley, Tysseling, & Ray, 2013). Though they continue to assign textbook reading as homework, teachers tend to allow students to rely on them for the content information, rather than the texts (Alvermann, 2002). For example, Brozo and Hargis (2003), in their study of a high school's efforts to make reading more responsive to all students, stated that class texts were either too hard or not challenging enough to be interesting or engaging for all students. As a result, one high school teacher respondent concluded many teachers "teach to the middle" (p. 14).

In order to better support students' understanding of content through challenging texts, Alvermann (2002) and many others recommend teachers incorporate literacy strategy instruction into their content area classes (Allington, 2002; Brozo & Flynt, 2008; Fisher & Ivey, 2005; Heller & Greenleaf, 2007; Herber, 1978; International Reading Association, 2012; Kamil, Borman, Dole, Kral, Salinger, & Torgesen, 2008; McKenna & Robinson, 1990; Misulis, 2009; Moje, 2008; Snow & Moje, 2010). Adolescents, particularly those who struggle with content area reading, need effective, targeted literacy instruction embedded within the curriculum (Alvermann, 2002). The IRA (2012) supports this position by suggesting all adolescents should be provided with help using strategies within the content areas to gain better understandings of the texts. Further, adolescents need support in knowing which strategies to use with different types of texts (International Reading Association, 2012).

Content Area Literacy

A pioneer in the field of content area literacy, Herber (1978) stated, "regular curriculum materials—basic and supplementary texts—can be vehicles for reading instruction in each content area when teachers show the students how to successfully read the required materials" (p. 8). Content area literacy is different from content knowledge (Myers & Savage, 2005). It includes all communication skills such as reading, writing, speaking and listening, as well as thinking and reasoning (Lester, 2000; Misulis, 2009).

The goal is to help students use literacy strategies to learn and understand content, not to simply use strategies (Kamil et al., 2008). Strategies should be taught with content texts for the purpose of learning and internalizing content information (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007; Herber, 1978; Misulis, 2009; Moje, 2008; Snow & Moje, 2010). Herber (1978) called this functional reading instruction, and described it as teaching students the skills they need to understand a piece of text in context, as they read it, for the purpose of understanding the information rather than learning the skill. McKenna and Robinson (1990) reported that literacy activities complement content instruction by helping students broaden their perspectives. Further, students use such activities as discussion, reading, and writing from multiple perspectives to construct knowledge (Alvermann, 2002; Fisher & Ivey, 2005). Literacy skills used in conjunction with content produce the greatest learning (McKenna & Robinson, 1990; Misulis, 2009).

Snow and Moje (2010) reported that the most successful efforts in content literacy incorporate literacy skills into all content areas. Adolescents are expected to use print and non-print resources across disciplines (International Reading Association, 2012). Vocabulary and comprehension skills are used across all grade levels and disciplines

(Misulis, 2009). It is clear that reading and writing are access skills to all content areas (Fisher & Ivey, 2005). Further, Brozo and Flynt (2008) reported that students need experiences with challenging texts, but also need time and help developing skills to understand them.

Teacher resistance to content literacy. Teachers, in many studies, acknowledge the importance of content area literacy (Cantrell et al., 2009; Hall, 2005; Misulis, 2009; Ulusoy & Dedeoglu, 2011), though many reported resistance for a variety of reasons (Jacobs, 2008; Lesley, 2004; Lester, 2000). Implementing literacy instruction can be challenging and some teachers are simply not prepared (Snow & Moje, 2010). Some teachers believed all of their instruction time should be spent delivering content and they may not see the relevance of incorporating literacy strategies. Fear of students' reading abilities and their own misunderstandings of what it means to utilize literacy strategies are also common reasons for teacher resistance to content area literacy.

Efficacy and knowledge. Some teachers avoid incorporating literacy into their content classes because they lack training and knowledge of specific strategies (International Reading Association, 2012; Kamil et al., 2008; Lester, 2000; Ness, 2009; Ulusoy & Dedeoglu, 2011). Moje (2007) stated teachers might not be aware of the specific kinds of literacy strategies that are important for their discipline. Those teachers who possess little experience with content area literacy often question their ability to teach the strategies effectively (Barry, 2002; Fisher & Ivey, 2005; Hall, 2005; Heller & Greenleaf, 2007; Zipperer et al., 2002). In addition, studies have shown that strategies are not widely known by content teachers (Spor & Schneider, 1999; Spor & Schneider,

2001; Ulusoy & Dedeoglu, 2011). Spor and Schneider (2001) found of those teachers who were familiar with literacy strategies, less than half actually use them. There is a clear gap between what teachers report as their knowledge of literacy strategies and their actual implementation of strategies (Spor & Schneider, 1999; Spor & Schneider, 2001).

Cantrell et al. (2009) found that teachers reported discomfort with implementing new strategies. The more positive experiences teachers had with a strategy, the more comfortable teachers felt in implementing it again. Any negative experiences with a strategy led to resistance in further implementation (Cantrell et al., 2009). In a similar study, Fisher and Frey (2008) found that teachers needed to feel efficacy with a strategy for it to be used and perceived as effective. If a teacher is not familiar with a strategy, it will likely not become a regular part of classroom practice (Spor & Schneider, 2001).

Content relevance. Often, secondary teachers do not understand what it means to incorporate literacy strategies into their content classes. Ness (2009) found that teachers reported being uncertain of what it means to teach reading comprehension. Some teachers may view content literacy as a stand-alone set of strategies for reading a text, rather than as a way to engage and support students' learning of the content through the use of strategies (Kamil et al., 2008; Moje, 2008). In addition, secondary teachers can have false assumptions about what teaching reading at the secondary level should entail, believing all reading instruction focuses on emerging literacy skills such as phonics and decoding (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007; Herber, 1978; Zipperer et al., 2002).

Further, some teachers do not see the connection between literacy skills and their course materials (Fisher & Ivey, 2005; Lester, 2000; O'Brien, Stewart, & Moje, 1995).

Ness (2007; 2009) found that science and social studies teachers in her study believed instruction time was best spent delivering content, but not through literacy strategies. Similarly, Cantrell et al. (2009) found that teachers felt their role was to build students' content knowledge rather than teach reading through content learning.

Responsibility and priority. Through her review of 19 studies between 1970 – 2003, Hall (2005) discovered an emerging theme that content area teachers believed they cannot or should not teach reading; that it is the responsibility of others. Similarly, other researchers reported that high school teachers believed themselves to be experts in their fields and feel that teaching students to read and write was the responsibility of English, language arts, or reading experts (Kamil et al., 2008; Moje, 2008; Moore et al., 1999).

Lester (2000) stated that often, content teachers see literacy instruction as low priority and unnecessary. Further, many secondary teachers assume that reading instruction was or should be successfully completed in elementary school (Herber, 1978; Snow & Moje, 2010; Ulusoy & Dedeoglu, 2011). Zipperer et al. (2002) found that high school teachers in particular assumed that students come to their classes having already mastered the necessary literacy skills. Many of those teachers who recognized that students are lacking these skills viewed teaching content literacy as something extra, in addition to teaching their content, rather than an option for supporting content learning (Lester, 2000; Misulis, 2009; O'Brien et al., 1995).

School structures and time. Content area classes are typically teacher focused, while literacy instruction is typically student focused. Studies have found that some teachers feel uncomfortable giving up their sense of control with a more student centered

approach to delivering content (Barry, 2002; Cantrell et al., 2009). Further, content classrooms tend to be set up for the types of activities associated with that particular discipline (e.g. a science lab), which may not be conducive for literacy learning (Moje, 2008).

A common finding among research studies is that teachers believed incorporating literacy strategies into their content classes to be too time consuming (Barry, 2002; Ness, 2007; Ness, 2009; Ulusoy & Dedeoglu, 2011). It is widely reported that many teachers feel they need all of their instruction time for delivering content (Cantrell et al., 2009; Heller & Greenleaf, 2007; Herber, 1978; Kamil et al., 2008; McConachie, Resnick, Ravi, Bill, Blintz, & Taylor, 2006; Misulis, 2009; Moje, 2008; O'Brien et al., 1995; Ulusoy & Dedeoglu, 2011).

Student ability. Further compounding teachers' resistance is the ability levels of the students. Some teachers feel ill-equipped to work with struggling readers (Cantrell et al., 2009; Heller & Greenleaf, 2007; Lesley, 2004). Often, teachers choose not to incorporate literacy strategies into their content classes for fear that the students who struggle will not have the ability to fully participate (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007; Herber, 1978; McKenna & Robinson, 1990).

Despite the many reasons researchers have identified for content area teacher resistance to literacy strategies, other studies revealed the promise of successful content area literacy integration. According to Loranger (1999), it is possible for content teachers to successfully and fully incorporate a variety of literacy strategies into their daily instruction. Spor and Schneider (1999; 2001) and Nourie and Lenski (1998) found that

most teachers were receptive to learning content literacy strategies. Moreover, Cantrell et al. (2009) posited most teachers understood they should be incorporating content literacy strategies, even though some expressed reluctance.

Successful implementation of content literacy strategies. Contrary to what some studies have found, other researchers and studies show that secondary teachers acknowledged the importance of content area literacy (Cantrell et al., 2009; Hall, 2005; Misulis, 2009; Ulusoy & Dedeoglu, 2011). Cantrell, et al. (2009) found that many teachers believed they should be engaging students in a variety of literacy activities. Additional findings in this study suggested that though they were resistant at first, teachers believed implementing literacy strategies were ultimately worthwhile (Cantrell, 2009). Ulusoy and Dedeoglu (2011) found teachers in their study believed students should be helped to develop reading habits in all courses. Further, Nourie and Lenski (1998) found that pre-service secondary teachers showed favorable attitudes toward teaching reading strategies in content areas and most believed that this responsibility should not be solely that of English teachers. Mallette, Henk, Waggoner, and DeLaney, (2005) surveyed 90 middle school teachers from schools with Blue Ribbon Designation for high academic achievement performance. Across all grade levels and subject areas, teacher responses indicated they placed a high value on teaching literacy in all subjects. Of all respondents, 80% indicated they considered literacy a major part of their teaching responsibilities and another 8% considered it a part, though not major (Mallette et al., 2005).

Moreover, numerous studies have shown that it is possible for secondary teachers to successfully integrate literacy strategies into their content classes (Binkley, Keiser, & Strahan, 2011; Fisher, 2001; Heller & Greenleaf, 2007; Loranger, 1999). In Binkley et al.'s (2011) multiple case studies, the findings depicted teachers were able to integrate literacy strategies successfully to support student content learning. In addition, Fisher (2001) reported in his study of a low performing urban high school in San Diego, implementation of a school-wide literacy strategy initiative and on-going teacher professional development led to increases in students' state achievement test scores in reading and student improvement on grade level equivalent assessments. The specific literacy strategies preferred by those secondary teachers who successfully implemented them differed by content area (Fisher & Frey, 2008). However, studies indicated that literacy strategies related to comprehension and vocabulary were identified as those content area teachers believed to be most important (Cantrell et al., 2009; Fisher & Frey, 2008; Ness, 2009; Ulusoy & Dedeoglu, 2011). As Spor and Schneider (1999) stated,

> The question becomes not whether teachers see the need to learn strategies but how reading educators can efficiently deliver knowledge about strategies and provide a support system to bridge the gap between knowing and using the strategies to enhance learning in the K-12 classroom. (p. 227)

Content specific literacy strategies. The further a student gets in school, the more specialized and sophisticated the literacy processes become (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). Each content area has a different way of sharing information and using literacy skills (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007; Ippolito et al., 2008; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008).

Shanahan and Shanahan (2008) stated that literacy strategies are specific to each discipline. There are differences in the ways disciplines use literacy and differences in the types of texts used to convey content information (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). Heller and Greenleaf (2007) believed "all teachers, in every discipline, have reasons to emphasize certain kinds of reading and writing over others, depending on the nature of the specific content and skills they want their students to learn" (p. 11). As such, students need advanced literacy skills specific to the content areas (Moje, 2007; International Reading Association, 2012; Lesley, 2004; National Institute for Literacy, 2007). Moreover, students need to understand how to approach different texts in different contexts and content areas (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008; Snow & Moje, 2010). They need practice with the kinds of thinking, reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills that are specific to each discipline (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006; Moje, 2007).

Thus, it is important for content area teachers to understand which literacy practices are most meaningful for working with content in their discipline and embed those strategies into their coursework (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006; Moje, 2007). Heller and Greenleaf (2007) state

"as a matter of basic professional preparation, all teachers should know not only how to integrate comprehension strategies into their ongoing instruction to help students access the academic content, but they should also understand what is distinct about reading and writing in their own discipline, and how to ake those rules, conventions, and skills apparent to students." (p. 22)

Not only is it possible to engage students in literacy strategies that both enhance and support learning of the content and learning of literacy, it is vital to student success (Moje, 2007).

Disciplinary literacy. Recently, a new way of thinking about content area literacy has come to light. The terms *disciplinary literacy* and *content area literacy* are often mistakenly used synonymously, though they are different (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012). Content area literacy strategies are general strategies that can be applied to almost any subject matter text. Disciplinary literacy emphasizes the techniques and skills an expert from within the discipline might use to interact with text from that discipline (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012). Different disciplines and experts within them approach literacy differently (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). Shanahan and Shanahan (2012) further stated, disciplinary literacy strategies focus on the nature of the discipline. They enable students to engage with text and the knowledge gained from reading it similar to the ways experts immersed in the field would. For example, using specific disciplinary strategies, students would read and interact with a history text the way a historian might. Both content area literacy and disciplinary literacy require the content teacher to explicitly teach why the strategies should be used, how the strategies should be used, and when they should be used with their subject matter texts specifically (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012). This dissertation focuses on the general content area literacy strategies from which students can choose when reading a variety of content texts, rather than the very specific techniques for reading and writing found within the concept of disciplinary literacy.

Secondary social studies classes. With current high-stakes assessments focusing on reading, writing, and math, other content areas such as the arts, health, physical education, and social studies, tend to become marginalized in schools (Applebee, 2013; Coleman, 2011; Jones & Thomas, 2006). As a result, teachers in these threatened content areas need to develop ways to preserve what is meaningful within their subjects (Jones & Thomas, 2006). A typical social studies class is driven by content, while a typical literacy class is driven by skills and strategies. Moreover, content area instruction tends to be teacher-centered, in contrast to the more student-centered approach of literacy instruction (Cantrell et al., 2009). Jones and Thomas (2006) suggested finding ways to integrate social studies and literacy skills so that instruction in both content areas supports and enhances the other.

Like literacy, learning from social studies spans all grades through college (Myers & Savage, 2005). Similar to other content areas, most of the required social studies information is found in textbooks and those tend to be the dominant resource used in secondary classrooms (Myers & Savage, 2005; Ulusoy & Dedeoglu, 2011). The reading in social studies is different from the kinds of reading done in other disciplines. There is heavy emphasis on the credibility of the author of a given piece of text, as well as on document analysis of primary and secondary text sources (Girard & Harris, 2013; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). Further, the CCSS Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6-12 expect adolescents to analyze, evaluate and differentiate between primary and secondary sources (National Governors Association, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). To fully comprehend social studies material, students

must make connections between and among different sources. They must make inferences and develop their own interpretations rather than rely on the text to supply all of the meaning (VanSledright, 2004). Myers and Savage (2005) suggested students need to be motivated and engaged in relevant reading and allowed to interact socially around social studies texts.

It is obvious that students' success in social studies programs hinges on their ability to read and comprehend the material in the textbook. Thus, one of the most effective ways to improve social studies achievement is to help students learn from the textbook. (p. 18)

Similarly, Key et al. (2010) recommended bringing in many types of texts to keep students engaged and to cover all aspects of history. McCall (2006) studied four exemplary instructors of 4th grade social studies to determine how their content was being supported through literacy strategies. Through observation and interviews, it was found that teachers were using fiction and nonfiction trade books and newspapers to teach reading strategies, incorporating writing and oral presentation activities for synthesizing learning, encouraging students to think critically, and providing opportunities for active student involvement with the content (McCall, 2006).

In a study of 8th grade social studies teachers, Vaughn et al. (2013) studied the impact of implementing a specific content literacy structure on student achievement in reading and content learning. The treatment students outperformed the control students on all measures, including content knowledge, content reading comprehension, and standardized reading comprehension. These findings are "promising and providing initial

support for the assumption that reading comprehension instruction in the content areas can be designed and delivered by classroom teachers in ways that enhance both content learning and reading for understanding" (Vaughn et al., 2013, p. 90).

Comprehension

Comprehension is a thinking process. The purpose of comprehension instruction is to help students understand challenging texts (Neufeld, 2005). Comprehension depends on background knowledge, word-level processes (such as phonics and fluency), and utilizing specific strategies for understanding (Herber, 1978; Neufeld, 2005). Good readers use a variety of strategies before, during, and after reading to make meaning from a piece of text (Neufeld, 2005). What a reader brings to the text, in addition to the ideas within the text are important parts of comprehension (Herber, 1978; Newfeld, 2005). In content classes, students should use literacy experiences to help deepen their conceptual knowledge by linking their new learning to personal background knowledge, real-world issues and relevant life experiences (Fisher & Ivey; Herber, 1978; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000a).

National Reading Panel Report. The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) (2000a) established the National Reading Panel (NRP) in 1997 as the result of a Congressional request to analyze and assess the base of research available on effective approaches to teaching children to read. Through their meta-analyses of hundreds of research studies, chosen using a rigorous set of methodological standards, the NRP identified vocabulary instruction and comprehension instruction as vital themes that emerged from within the broad topic of successful reading

comprehension instruction. Based on these findings, the NRP determined that specific

comprehension strategies showed positive impact on standardized reading comprehension

tests (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000a).

Comprehension strategy instruction. According to Biancarosa and Snow

(2006) comprehension strategy instruction should be direct and explicit. It is most

effective if delivered in the context where it will be used, using the content materials to

teach the strategies (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006; Neufeld, 2005). Strategy use must be

developed in students to facilitate deeper learning. This requires more than simply

practicing the strategies (Fisher & Ivey, 2005; National Institute of Child Health and

Human Development, 2000a; Neufeld, 2005). Students should be taught the strategies

they need to use to understand different texts in various contexts (Kamil et al., 2008).

Thus, strategy choice must be purposeful and selected based on the need, content and

context of the text being read (Barry, 2002; Newfeld, 2005; Snow & Moje, 2010). The

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (2000a) reported a teacher's

ability to help students use comprehension strategies was linked to students' success.

Researchers have identified a variety of strategies and instructional methods that

have shown to improve students' comprehension of text. For the purposes of this

dissertation, eight of the most common having shown the greatest potential for improving

students' comprehension have been chosen.

1. Accessing background knowledge, during which students identify and build

   upon what they already know and have experienced (Dymock & Nicholson,

2010; Fisher, Frey, & Lapp, 2012; Recht & Leslie, 1988; Spires & Donley, 1998; Stevens, 1980).

2. Collaborative learning and discussion, during which students work together with the text to support their comprehension of the material (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006; Brozo & Flynt, 2008; Fielding & Pearson, 1994; Frey & Fisher, 2013; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000b).

3. Imagery, during which students create mental images of the text (De Koning & Van, 2013; Dymock & Nicholson, 2010; Gambrell, 1987; Gambrell & Bales, 1986; Pressley, Johnson, Symons, McGoldrick, & Kurita, 1989; Rasinski, 1985).

4. Graphic and semantic organizers are used by students to support comprehension by showing the relationships between ideas within texts, through writing or drawing (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000b; Pressley et al., 1989).

5. Text structure is learned through identifying the structure of a piece of text based on who, what, when, where, and why questions, as well as indicators of cause and effect, problem and solution, compare and contrast, description, and sequence of events (Dymock & Nicholson, 2010; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000b; Pressley et al.,1989; Taylor & Beach, 1984).

6. Question answering, during which students answer questions posed by the teacher about a specific piece of text and are given feedback on their answers

(Bugg & McDaniel, 2012; Dymock & Nicholson, 2010; Misulis, 2009; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000b; Pressley et al., 1989).

7. Question generating, during which students ask themselves about the text using who, what, when, where, why, and how questions (Bugg & McDaniel, 2012; Dole, Duffy, Roehler, & Pearson, 1991; Dymock & Nocholson, 2010; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000b; Pressley et al., 1989).

8. Summarization, during which the reader uses the main or most important ideas within a text that relate to one another and writes them into a shorter, coherent whole (Dole et al., 1991; Dymock & Nicholson, 2010; Gambrell, 1987; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000b; Pressley et al., 1989).

Vocabulary instruction. Reading vocabulary is a vital piece of the comprehension process (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000b). A strong vocabulary supports both comprehension and communication skills (National Institute for Literacy, 2007). Vocabulary, like other literacy activities, should be learned in context with content materials (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000a). Optimal vocabulary learning requires a variety of instruction methods, including repetition and multiple exposures in different contexts (Kamil et al., 2007; National Institute for Literacy, 2007; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000a, 2000b). Kamil et al. (2008) recommended

teachers devote a portion of content class to vocabulary instruction, which includes direct instruction of terms as well as strategies for students to learn vocabulary independently.

Five instruction methods for teaching vocabulary have been identified as having a positive impact on students' comprehension.

1. Explicit vocabulary instruction, during which students are given the vocabulary words and definitions or other characteristics of the words to be learned.

2. Implicit vocabulary instruction, during which students are given opportunities to read widely or are exposed to the words, but not explicitly, taught the words nor their meanings.

3. Multimedia methods include exposing students to words through a variety of formats such as graphic or physical representations of the words or through hypertext.

4. Capacity methods include multiple opportunities for students to practice vocabulary so that their meanings become automatic when seen in a piece of text.

5. Association Methods, during which students make connections between known and unknown words. (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000b, p. 4-3)

Explicit comprehension instruction. Explicit comprehension instruction is a method of teaching strategies that differs from the traditional direct instruction model. During explicit comprehension instruction, both the teacher and student are responsible

for successful completion and implementation of strategies in varying degrees. When a strategy is first introduced, the teacher has total control over strategy implementation. Following a variety of opportunities to use and practice the strategy, control is slowly given up to the student, who ultimately has complete control over using the strategy independently (Pearson & Dole, 1987; U.S. Department of Education National Institute of Education Center for the Study of Reading, 1983).

Duke and Pearson (2002) developed a model for explicit comprehension instruction, which has been further supported and recommended by many leaders in the field of literacy. The first step in this model is teacher introduction of the strategy. During this portion of comprehension strategy instruction, the teacher describes the strategy, explains why it is useful, and gives examples of when it is appropriate to use (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Kamil et al., 2008; National Institute for Literacy, 2007; Neufeld, 2005; Pearson & Dole, 1987).

The second step in explicit comprehension instruction is teacher modeling. Teacher modeling includes showing students how to use the strategy through thinking-alouds. During a think-aloud, teachers share their thinking processes for creating meaning from a text using the target strategy (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006; Duke & Pearson, 2002; Key et al., 2010; Myers & Savage, 2005; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000b; National Institute for Literacy, 2007; Neufeld, 2005; Pearson & Dole, 1987; U.S. Department of Education National Institute of Education Center for the Study of Reading, 1983).

The third step is described as guided practice. During guided practice, students have the opportunity to practice strategies with immediate teacher feedback and support. At this point, teachers begin to slowly release the responsibility for task completion to the students (Biancarosa, & Snow, 2006; Duke & Pearson, 2002; Kamil et al., 2008; Myers & Savage, 2005; National Institute for Literacy, 2007; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000b; Neufeld, 2005; Pearson, & Dole, 1987; U.S. Department of Education National Institute of Education Center for the Study of Reading, 1983).

The forth step further releases responsibility to the students, expecting they can implement the strategies independently. During independent practice, students continue to practice using the strategies on their own, with very little guidance from the teacher (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Myers & Savage, 2005; National Institute for Literacy, 2007; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000b; Neufeld, 2005; Pearson, & Dole, 1987; U.S. Department of Education National Institute of Education Center for the Study of Reading, 1983).

Finally, the last step in explicit comprehension instruction is student application. Once students have been guided through using the strategies with gradually decreasing support from the teacher, they are ready to transfer their knowledge about the strategies to new situations and successfully apply them to a variety of appropriate tasks and texts (Duke & Pearson, 2002; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000b; Neufeld, 2005; Pearson, & Dole, 1987).

Conclusion

Despite the recent focus on adolescent literacy, too many students continue to struggle trying to keep pace with the increasing literacy demands as they move through the grades. Research suggests that incorporating literacy strategy instruction into the content areas will help students meet the challenges associated with the more rigorous middle and high school content expectations. Though teachers can initially be resistant to the idea of incorporating literacy strategies into their secondary content area classes, research suggests that it can be done successfully. Through the explicit comprehension instruction model, teachers are able to gradually release responsibility for student implementation of comprehension and vocabulary strategies so that eventually, students can transfer these strategies to other contexts and content areas. As a result, it is possible to address the high-stakes accountability measures of No Child Left Behind and newly released Common Core State Standards in all classes and across all disciplines, taking some of the pressure off of English and reading teachers and supporting the idea that all teachers are teachers of reading.

Chapter III

Method

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to determine which literacy strategies are being used by secondary social studies teachers who have been identified by their principals as having strong literacy integration skills. In addition, this study examined these teachers' beliefs and purposes for utilizing said literacy strategies. The hypotheses driving this study were as follows:

1. It was hypothesized that secondary social studies teachers, recognized by their principals as possessing strong literacy integration skills, would incorporate literacy instructional methods into their instruction.

2. It was hypothesized that secondary social studies teachers, recognized by their principals as possessing strong literacy integration skills, more frequently would utilize explicit vocabulary instruction than other literacy instructional methods.

3. It was hypothesized that secondary social studies teachers, recognized by their principals as possessing strong literacy integration skills, more frequently would utilize graphic organizers than other literacy instructional methods (excluding vocabulary instruction).

Additionally, the qualitative central question for this research was: What are the favored literacy strategies of social studies teachers identified by their principals as possessing strong literacy integration skills? The following sub-questions were investigated:

1. What are the beliefs about content literacy instruction of social studies teachers identified by their principals as possessing strong literacy integration skills?

2. What are the purposes social studies teachers identified by their principals as possessing strong literacy integration skills describe for implementing the strategies they choose?

Subjects

The participants in this study were comprised of 5 social studies teachers in grades 6 – 10 who successfully implement literacy strategies into their classroom instruction. They were responsible for varying curriculum within the social studies discipline, including Minnesota studies, U.S. history, global studies, and government, at both regular and advanced levels. Data collection took place in 2 middle schools and 1 high school in a large, suburban district of approximately 10,000 students in central Minnesota as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

School Demographics

	Middle School 1	Middle School 2	High School
Attendance Boundary Area	Central	West	East
Grades Served	6-8	6-8	9-12
Student Population	755	869	1535
White	59%	70%	41%
Black	19%	13%	24%
Hispanic	10%	7%	22%
Asian	10%	11%	11%
Am. Indian	2%	-	2%
Sp. Ed.	16%	14%	15%
ESL	6%	3%	9%
F/R Lunch	39%	24%	55%

Measures

The principals of the middle and high schools detailed above were asked to identify social studies teachers in their schools who successfully incorporate literacy strategies into their content classes using a checklist (see Appendix A) based on the International Reading Association's Standards for Middle and High School Content Classroom Teachers (International Reading Association, 2010). Because the focus of this study was to identify strategy instruction, four literacy behaviors selected to represent the three elements from Standard 2, Curriculum and Instruction, were assessed. These focus on teachers' use of "instructional approaches, materials, and an integrated, comprehensive, balanced curriculum to support student learning in reading and writing" (Curriculum and Instruction, 2010, para. 1). Specifically, principals were asked to identify the secondary social studies teachers who met the following criteria:

1. Evaluates the curriculum to ensure that instructional goals and objectives meet the reading and writing demands of the content areas.

2. Selects and implements content area reading and writing instructional approaches based on evidence-based rationale, student needs, and purposes for instruction.

3. Implements and evaluates content area instruction in each of the following areas: vocabulary meaning, comprehension, writing, motivation, and critical thinking.

4. Guided by evidence-based rationale, selects and uses quality traditional print, digital, and online resources.

Principals delivered two letters to the identified social studies teachers, one inviting them to participate in the study (Appendix B) and one providing an opportunity for informed consent (Appendix C). Five participants were selected so that there was a cross representation of both middle and high school teachers. Participants may have been aware of the researcher's former position as a reading teacher and literacy leader in the district.

Procedure for Data Collection

An explanatory sequential mixed method (Creswell, 2014) was used to collect data in two phases. Phase 1 was quantitative and Phase 2 was qualitative. Quantitative data from Phase 1 was analyzed to determine which literacy strategies were used and the frequency with which they were used across all participants as well as disaggregated by individual teachers**.** Qualitative data from Phase 2 was coded for themes emerging in participant beliefs about content literacy and their purposes for selecting they strategies they implement.

Phase 1: Behavioral observations. Participants were observed while delivering social studies instruction over a three-month period during fall of 2014. Each participant was observed during three class periods of 50 minutes each, or for a 50-minute duration of a longer 100-minute block class. These observations were planned in advance and took place on different days of the week, at different times of the day, and during different portions of the 100-minute block period to account for differences in daily classroom procedures and weekly routines. During these observations, literacy use was behaviorally coded, using partial-interval recording, each time a different vocabulary

and/or comprehension instructional method was implemented. For each category a tally was recorded showing whether a literacy method occurred during each of 5-minute intervals over the course of the 50-minute observation period (see Appendix D). In addition, detailed field notes were recorded during each observation to better capture the events taking place in the classroom around the literacy instruction methods occurring.

A coding system modified from Durkin (1978) and Ness (2009), as shown in Table 2, was used. When literacy strategies and/or instruction methods were not being implemented, the code of NL was used. The vocabulary instruction methods codes were based upon the NRP's five vocabulary instruction methods, identified through their meta-analysis of research studies as most effective in improving comprehension. The codes relating to specific comprehension strategies and instructional methods were based upon multiple studies done by many researchers on effective approaches for improving student comprehension.

Vocabulary Instruction Methods

1. Explicit vocabulary instruction (VI-EI): students are given the vocabulary words and definitions or other characteristics of the words to be learned.

2. Implicit vocabulary instruction (VI-II): students are given opportunities to read widely or are exposed to the words, but not explicitly, taught the words nor their meanings.

3. Multimedia methods (VI-MM): students are exposed to words through a variety of formats such as graphic or physical representations of the words or through hypertext.

4. Capacity methods (VI-CM): students are provided multiple opportunities to practice vocabulary so that their meanings become automatic when seen in a piece of text.

5. Association Methods (VI-AM): students make connections between known and unknown words. (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000b, p. 4-3)

Comprehension Instruction Methods

1. Accessing background knowledge (CI-BK): students identify and build upon what they already know and have experienced (Dymock & Nicholson, 2010; Fisher et al., 2012; Recht & Leslie, 1988; Spires & Donley, 1998; Stevens, 1980).

2. Collaborative learning and discussion (CI-CL): students work together with the text to support their comprehension of the material (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006; Brozo & Flynt, 2008; Fielding & Pearson, 1994; Frey & Fisher, 2013; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000b).

3. Imagery (CI-I): students create mental images of the text (De Koning & Van, 2013; Dymock & Nicholson, 2010; Gambrell, 1987; Gambrell & Bales, 1986; Pressley et al., 1989; Rasinski, 1985).

4. Graphic and semantic organizers (CI-GO): used by students to support comprehension by showing the relationships between ideas within texts, through writing or drawing (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000b; Pressley et al., 1989).

5. Text structure (CI-TS): identifying the structure of a piece of text based on who, what, when, where, and why questions, as well as indicators of cause and effect, problem and solution, compare and contrast, description, and sequence of events (Dymock & Nicholson, 2010; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000b; Pressley et al., 1989; Taylor & Beach, 1984).

6. Question answering (CI-QA): students answer questions posed by the teacher about a specific piece of text and are given feedback on their answers (Bugg & McDaniel, 2012; Dymock & Nicholson, 2010; Misulis, 2009; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000b; Pressley et al., 1989).

7. Question generating (CI-QG): students ask themselves about the text using who, what, when, where, why, and how questions (Bugg & McDaniel, 2012; Dole et al., 1991; Dymock & Nocholson, 2010; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000b; Pressley et al., 1989).

8. Summarization (CI-S): students use the main or most important ideas within a text that relate to one another and writes them into a shorter, coherent whole (Dole et al., 1991; Dymock & Nicholson, 2010; Gambrell, 1987; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000b; Pressley et al., 1989).

9. Multiple-strategy use (CI-MS): students combine two or more to interact with the text (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000b).

Table 2

Literacy Strategy and Instruction Methods Codes

Category	Code
Non-Literacy	NL
Vocabulary Instruction Methods	
Explicit Instruction	VI-EI
Implicit Instruction	VI-II
Multimedia Methods	VI-MM
Capacity Methods	VI-CM
Association Methods	VI-AM
Comprehension Instruction Methods	
Accessing Background Knowledge	CI-BK
Collaborative Learning and Discussion	CI-CL
Imagery	CI-I
Graphic and Semantic Organizers	CI-GO
Text Structure	CI-TS
Question Answering	CI-QA
Question Generation	CI-QG
Summarization	CI-S
Multiple Strategies	CI-MS

A strategy was considered utilized if it fell within any of the phases of Duke and Pearson's (2002) Model of Comprehension Instruction:

- Introduction of the strategy, during which the teacher explains the strategy including what it is, why it is useful, and when it should be used.

- Modeling of the strategy, during which the teacher thinks aloud while implementing the strategy, showing the students how to use it and sharing the thinking processes taking place while making meaning from the text.

- Guided practice with the strategy, during which the teacher gradually releases responsibility for implementation of the strategy to the student through support and feedback.

- Independent practice of the strategy, during which the students practice using the strategy on their own.

- Application of the strategy, during which the students use the strategy completely on their own, transferring their strategy use to a new piece of text.

Phase 2: Focus group discussion. Following the quantitative phase of this study, a focus group was conducted with participants to determine their beliefs about and purposes for literacy strategy integration in their content area classes. During the 45-minute, open-ended focus group discussion, participants were asked about their beliefs about literacy instruction and their favored literacy strategies.

Procedure for Data Analysis

Quantitative data from Phase 1 was analyzed to determine which literacy strategies were used and the frequency with which they were used across all participants as well as disaggregated by individual teachers**.** Qualitative data from Phase 2 was coded for themes emerging in participant beliefs about content literacy and their purposes for selecting they strategies they implement.

Chapter IV

Results

The purpose of this study was to determine which literacy strategies are being used by secondary social studies teachers identified for having strong literacy integration skills as well as these teachers' beliefs about and purposes for incorporating literacy instruction methods into their courses.

Demographic Characteristics

Five secondary social studies teachers identified for their strong literacy integration skills were selected to participate in this study. Teachers of grades 6 – 10 were represented, as well as those teaching varying content within the social studies discipline. Courses taught include Advanced Placement (AP) World History, global studies, Minnesota studies, and U.S. Government (see Table 3).

Table 3

Participants

	Grade Level	Subject Area	Years Teaching Social Studies	Years Teaching in the District	Gender	Race
Participant 1	10	Advanced Placement (AP) World History	19	19	M	White
Participant 2	8	Global Studies	14	14	F	White
Participant 3	6	Minnesota Studies	20	15	F	White
Participant 4	6	Minnesota Studies	4	9	F	White
Participant 5	9	U.S. Government	4	5	F	White

The average number of years teaching social studies for these participants was 13.20

(range: 4-20 years). The average number of years in the school district was 11.4 (range:

4-19). One participant was male and all were White.

Phase 1: Behavioral Observations

During phase 1 of this study, participants were each observed 3 times between

October and December of 2014 to determine which of the previously identified literacy

strategies and instruction methods they implemented. Each 50-minute observation was

organized into ten 5-minute intervals, for a total of 30 intervals across all 3 observations.

This resulted in a total of 750 minutes of observations, broken into 150 total 5-minute

intervals. All 5 participants implemented a variety of different literacy comprehension

and vocabulary instruction methods as shown in Table 4 and Figure 1. During 150

observed intervals, 138 (92%) were spent implementing literacy instruction methods

(mean = 27.60 of 30 observed intervals for each participant).

Table 4

Number of 5-Minute Intervals Each Participant Was Observed Using Literacy Instruction Methods

	Participant					Total	Mean	SD	%
	1	2	3	4	5				
NL	2	3	5	1	1	12	2.40	1.67	8.00
VI EI	7	8	0	1	13	29	5.80	5.36	19.33
VI II	3	14	6	3	8	34	6.80	4.55	22.67
VI MM	5	12	1	1	3	22	4.40	4.56	14.67
VI CM	0	8	3	17	8	36	7.20	6.46	24.00
VI AM	8	1	0	0	5	14	2.80	3.56	9.33
Any vocab	10	27	10	20	24	91	18.20	7.89	60.67
CI BK	15	0	2	7	9	33	6.60	5.94	22.00
CI CL	10	4	9	13	3	39	7.80	4.21	26.00
CI I	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
CI GO	0	0	0	10	5	15	3.00	4.47	10.00
CI TS	0	0	4	0	11	15	3.00	4.80	10.00
CI QA	12	7	11	15	14	59	11.80	3.11	39.33
CI QG	3	0	2	0	2	7	1.40	1.34	4.67
CI S	0	2	11	0	6	19	3.80	4.71	12.67
CI MS	12	3	12	14	16	57	11.40	4.98	38.00
Any comp	19	10	23	28	23	103	20.60	6.73	68.67
Any method	28	27	25	29	29	138	27.60	1.67	92.00
%	93.33	90.00	83.33	96.67	96.67	92.00	-	-	-

NL = Non-Literacy, VI EI = Vocabulary Instruction Explicit Instruction, VI II = Vocabulary Instruction Implicit Instruction, VI MM = Vocabulary Instruction Multimedia Methods, VI CM = Vocabulary Capacity Methods, VI AM = Vocabulary Instruction Association Methods, Any vocab = use of any vocabulary instruction method, CI BK = Comprehension Instruction Background Knowledge, CI CL = Comprehension Instruction Collaborative Learning and Discussion, CI I = Comprehension Instruction Imagery, CI GO = Comprehension Instruction Graphic and Semantic Organizers, CI TS = Comprehension Instruction Text Structure, CI QA = Comprehension Instruction Question Answering, CI QG = Comprehension Instruction Question Generation, CI S = Comprehension Instruction Summarization, CI MS = Comprehension Instruction Multiple Strategies, Any comp = use of any comprehension instruction method, Any method = use of any comprehension or vocabulary literacy instruction method.

Comprehension instruction methods were used during a total of 103 intervals (mean = 20.60 for each participant, 68.67% of 150 intervals). The comprehension instruction methods of Question Answering and Collaborative Learning and Discussion were used by all participants and were observed being implemented most frequently at 59

total intervals (mean = 11.80 for each participant, comprising 39.33% of 150 intervals)

and 39 intervals (mean = 7.80 for each participant, comprising 26.00% of 150 intervals)

respectively. All participants combined two or more comprehension instruction methods

during 57 intervals (mean = 11.40 for each participant, comprising 38.00% of 150

intervals). Used least frequently by all participants were the comprehension instruction

methods of Imagery and Question Generating, observed during 0 intervals (mean = 0, 0%

of 150 intervals) and 7 intervals (mean = 1.40 for each participant, comprising 4.67% of

150 intervals) respectively.
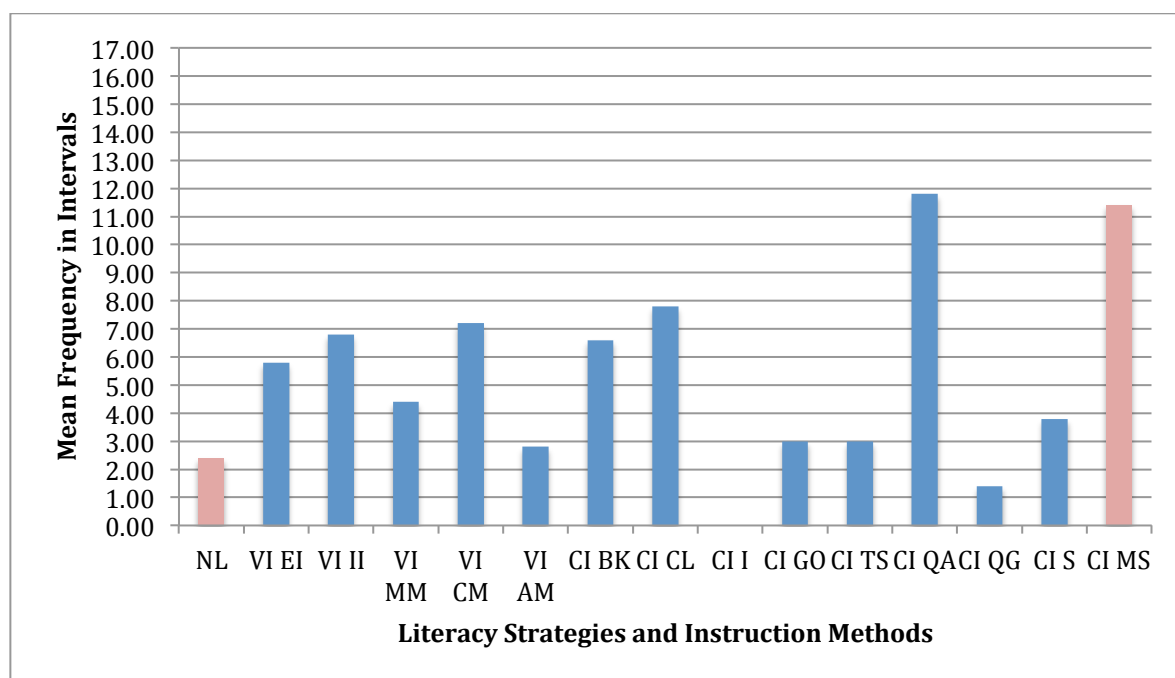
Figure 1. Mean literacy instruction method use of all participants. NL = Non-Literacy, VI EI = Vocabulary Instruction Explicit Instruction, VI II = Vocabulary Instruction Implicit Instruction, VI MM = Vocabulary Instruction Multimedia Methods, VI CM = Vocabulary Capacity Methods, VI AM = Vocabulary Instruction Association Methods, CI BK = Comprehension Instruction Background Knowledge, CI CL = Comprehension Instruction Collaborative Learning and Discussion, CI I = Comprehension Instruction Imagery, CI GO = Comprehension Instruction Graphic and Semantic Organizers, CI TS = Comprehension Instruction Text Structure, CI QA = Comprehension Instruction Question Answering, CI QG = Comprehension Instruction Question Generation, CI S = Comprehension Instruction Summarization, CI MS = Comprehension Instruction Multiple Strategies.

Vocabulary instruction methods were used during 91 intervals (mean = 18.20, 60.67% of 150 intervals). All participants implemented the vocabulary instruction method of Implicit Instruction, observed 34 intervals (mean = 6.80 for each participant, comprising 22.67% of 150 intervals). Capacity vocabulary methods were observed most frequently during 36 intervals (mean = 7.20 for each participant, comprising 24% of 150 intervals), though Participant 1 did not use this method at all. The least observed vocabulary instruction method was Association Methods, observed during 14 intervals (mean = 2.80 for each participant, comprising 9.33% of 150 intervals). Though time spent actually reading text was not behaviorally coded during these observations, it is important to note that students were given time to read a piece of text during at least one observation of every participant's class; for some participants students read for a portion of all 3 observations.

Participant 1. Participant 1 is a high school social studies teacher who teaches Advanced Placement (AP) United States Government and co-teaches two sections of AP World History/Honors World Literature with another teacher during 100-minute block classes. All observations of Participant 1 were done during his teaching of AP World History. Each 50-minute observation took place at different starting times during the block so that the beginning, middle and end portions of the 100-minute class could be observed. A summary of Participant 1's use of literacy instruction methods appears in Figure 2.
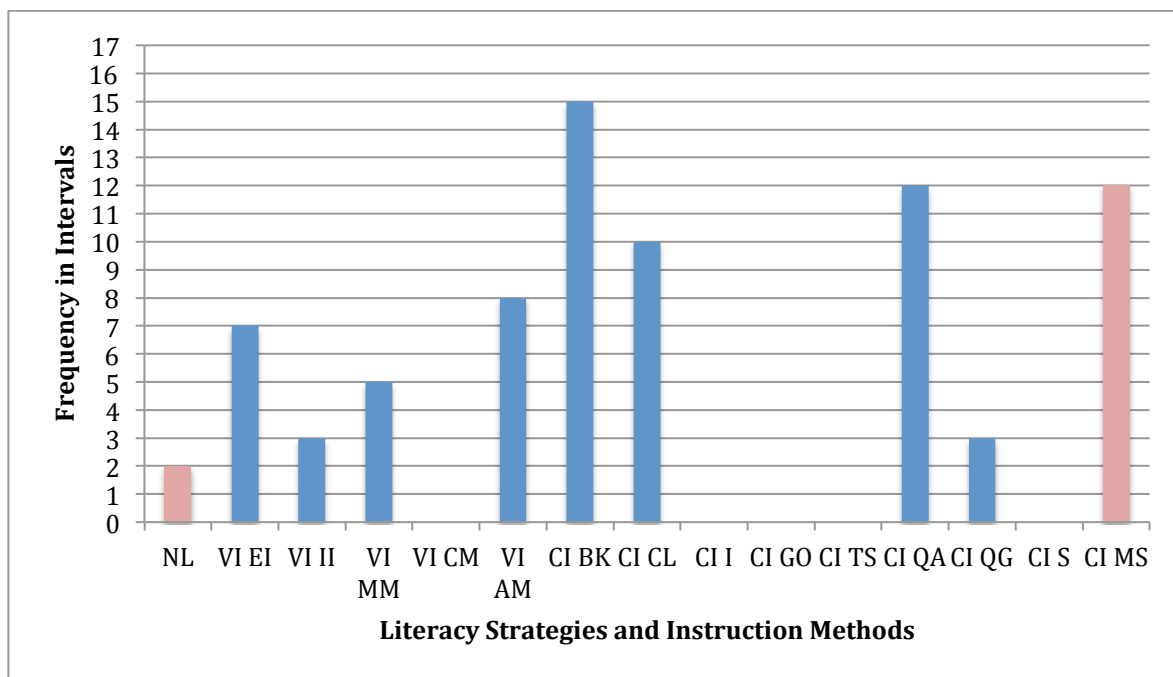
Figure 2. Frequency of literacy instruction methods used by Participant 1 over 30 intervals (150 minutes) of observation. NL = Non-Literacy, VI EI = Vocabulary Instruction Explicit Instruction, VI II = Vocabulary Instruction Implicit Instruction, VI MM = Vocabulary Instruction Multimedia Methods, VI CM = Vocabulary Capacity Methods, VI AM = Vocabulary Instruction Association Methods, CI BK = Comprehension Instruction Background Knowledge, CI CL = Comprehension Instruction Collaborative Learning and Discussion, CI I = Comprehension Instruction Imagery, CI GO = Comprehension Instruction Graphic and Semantic Organizers, CI TS = Comprehension Instruction Text Structure, CI QA = Comprehension Instruction Question Answering, CI QG = Comprehension Instruction Question Generation, CI S = Comprehension Instruction Summarization, CI MS = Comprehension Instruction Multiple Strategies.

Participant 1 used comprehension and/or vocabulary instruction methods during 28 of the 30 observed intervals (93%). The two intervals recorded as Non-Literacy took place during 5-minute breaks the students were given within the 100-minute class period. The most frequently observed comprehension instruction methods for Participant 1 were Background Knowledge, used during 15 of the 30 total intervals (50%), Question Answering, used during 12 of the 30 total intervals (40%), and Collaborative Learning and Discussion, used during 10 of the 30 total intervals (33.33%). Participant 1 often used these methods in conjunction with one another. During the first observation,

Participant 1 introduced a new unit of study covering Buddhism, which built upon the

unit students had recently completed on Hinduism. Throughout all 10 intervals of the 50-

minute observation, Participant 1 directed students to use their background knowledge of

the Hinduism unit in connection with a new piece of text they were reading on Buddhism.

In addition to accessing their background knowledge, during this lesson students worked

collaboratively to discuss and answer questions posed about the new piece of text they

were given. For each question asked, students were required to discuss with a partner

and identify textual evidence to support their answers. Participant 1 directed students to

generate questions (3 intervals of the 30 total observed, 10%), stating, "We want you to

question," while they worked in pairs to discuss their responses to the text.

An essential question, or running theme, upon which the curriculum for this

course was based is, *What is the 'good life'?* During the third observation, students'

background knowledge was activated around ideas regarding morality and the 'good life'

prior to engaging in a Socratic-style discussion over Plato's *Allegory of the Cave*, which

students had read as homework the night before. During the Socratic discussion students

discussed questions such as "What do the chains represent?", "As we get older, are we

rewarded and/or punished for certain behaviors? Why?", and "Are they aware that they

want to do something else?" Participant 1 did not use the comprehension instruction

methods of Imagery, Graphic Organizers, Text Structure, nor Summarization during any

of the observations.

The most frequently used vocabulary instruction methods for Participant 1 were

Association Methods and Explicit Instruction, which occurred during 8 (26.67%) and 7

(23.33%) of 30 total intervals. Nineteen of the 23 intervals of observed vocabulary

instruction methods took place during the second observation. This lesson included the

use of all 5 types of vocabulary instruction methods, though Association Methods and

Explicit Instruction were used most frequently. During this observation, the meaning of

the word *agora* was developed through Association Methods. After providing students

with words such as acropolis, aristocrats, oligarchy, and democracy and allowing time for

them to discuss, view images, and read text describing them, Participant 1 worked with

students to access their background knowledge of the state fair to help them develop a

thorough understanding of the Greek agora. Though students used background

knowledge, discussion, and were asked to answer questions throughout this observation,

because the questions were building vocabulary and not about a specific piece of text,

Background Knowledge, Collaborative Learning and Discussion, and Question

Answering were not recorded as comprehension instruction methods used.

Participant 2. Participant 2 teaches 8th grade Global Studies at Middle School 2

(see Table 1, p. 38). Observations of Participant 2 took place during 3 different 50-

minute blocks of time, each consisting of one full class period. A summary of Participant

2's use of literacy instruction methods appears in Figure 3.
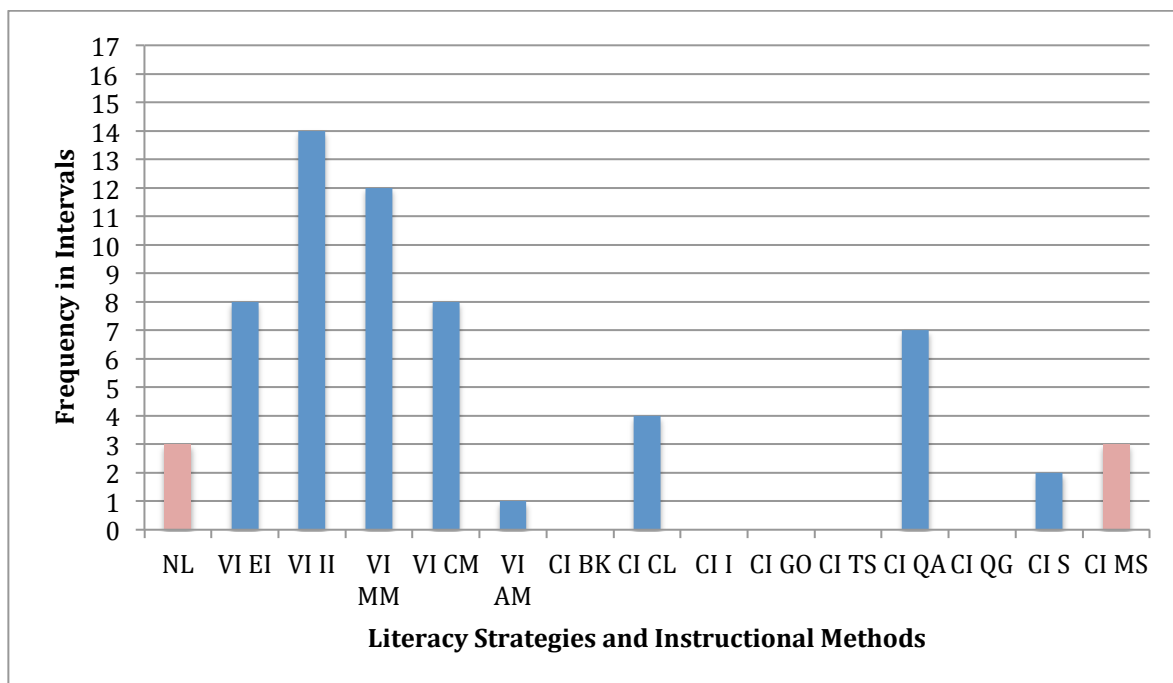
Figure 3. Frequency of literacy instruction methods used by Participant 2 over 30 intervals (150 minutes) of observation. NL = Non-Literacy, VI EI = Vocabulary Instruction Explicit Instruction, VI II = Vocabulary Instruction Implicit Instruction, VI MM = Vocabulary Instruction Multimedia Methods, VI CM = Vocabulary Capacity Methods, VI AM = Vocabulary Instruction Association Methods, CI BK = Comprehension Instruction Background Knowledge, CI CL = Comprehension Instruction Collaborative Learning and Discussion, CI I = Comprehension Instruction Imagery, CI GO = Comprehension Instruction Graphic and Semantic Organizers, CI TS = Comprehension Instruction Text Structure, CI QA = Comprehension Instruction Question Answering, CI QG = Comprehension Instruction Question Generation, CI S = Comprehension Instruction Summarization, CI MS = Comprehension Instruction Multiple Strategies.

Participant 2 used comprehension and/or vocabulary instruction methods during 90.00% of observed intervals (27 out of 30 observed intervals). The comprehension instruction method Participant 2 used most frequently was Question Answering (7 of 30 observed intervals, 23.33%). The only other two comprehension instruction methods Participant 2 used were Collaborative Learning and Discussion (4 of 30 observed intervals, 13.33%) and Summarization (2 of 30 observed intervals, 6.67%). Fourteen of the 16 observed intervals of Participant 2's use of comprehension instruction methods

occurred during the third observation. At times during the observation, comprehension instruction methods were used in conjunction with one another and recorded as Multiple Strategies (3 of 30 observed intervals). During this lesson, students participated in a "Tea Party" activity. Each student was given a card containing portions of text from the textbook. Students moved around the room, as if gossiping with guests at a tea party, reading their texts and using the information to discuss ideas about what the topic of the textbook chapter might be. Students were then given time to read a portion of the textbook chapter and asked to "discover what all the gossip was about".   After reading the section in the textbook, students were provided with a framework for reading and taking notes, called the Double Diary Entry (DDE) method. Using this method, students summarized each paragraph of the text on the right side of a "T-chart" and wrote their reactions to them on the left. Participant 2 utilized the first 4 of the 5 steps in Duke and Pearson's (2002) model for explicit comprehension during this observation. These steps include introducing the strategy, modeling it for students, providing students with guided practice, and providing independent practice through assigning the strategy to be used while reading the rest of the section as homework. Following the observation, Participant 2 explained that the DDE method would be the focus strategy for the remainder of the trimester for these students and the expectation was that they would eventually be able to engage in application on their own in other content courses. Application and transfer is the fifth step in the Duke and Pearson (2002) model of explicit comprehension instruction.

During all three observations, Participant 2 implemented multiple vocabulary instruction methods. The most frequently observed method was Implicit Instruction (14 of 30 observed intervals, 46.67%), followed by Multimedia Methods (12 of 30 observed intervals, 40%). Vocabulary methods were observed throughout the first and second observations as new units of study were being introduced. During the first observation, students engaged in activities such as matching pictures to definitions, categorizing new terms according to the type of physical feature (land or water), and creating their own multimedia slides for each vocabulary term including the definition, a sentence using the word, an image representing the word, and a map showing the meaning of the word. The second observation included at least 1 interval of all 5 vocabulary instruction methods being used. Images depicting urban sprawl, the topic of the new unit of study, were displayed for students. Students took turns rolling question dice, containing words such as who, what when, where, why, how, should, could, and would, to help them generate questions about urban sprawl based on the pictures displayed. Students were then given all of the upcoming unit's vocabulary terms along with pictures representing them. They worked together to match each picture to the word it represented. Next, Participant 2 provided students with a picture and definition for each vocabulary word. At the end of the lesson, students were directed to try to define the idea of urban sprawl based on the vocabulary work they had done around that topic during the class period. Though throughout this observation students were working collaboratively and generating questions, because they were using only vocabulary terms and not a specific piece of text

they had read, these activities were not coded as observed comprehension instruction

methods.

Participant 3. Participant 3 teaches 6th grade Minnesota studies at Middle School

2 (see Table 1, p. 38). Observations of Participant 3 took place during 3 different 50-

minute class periods. A summary of Participant 3's use of literacy instruction methods

appears in Figure 4.
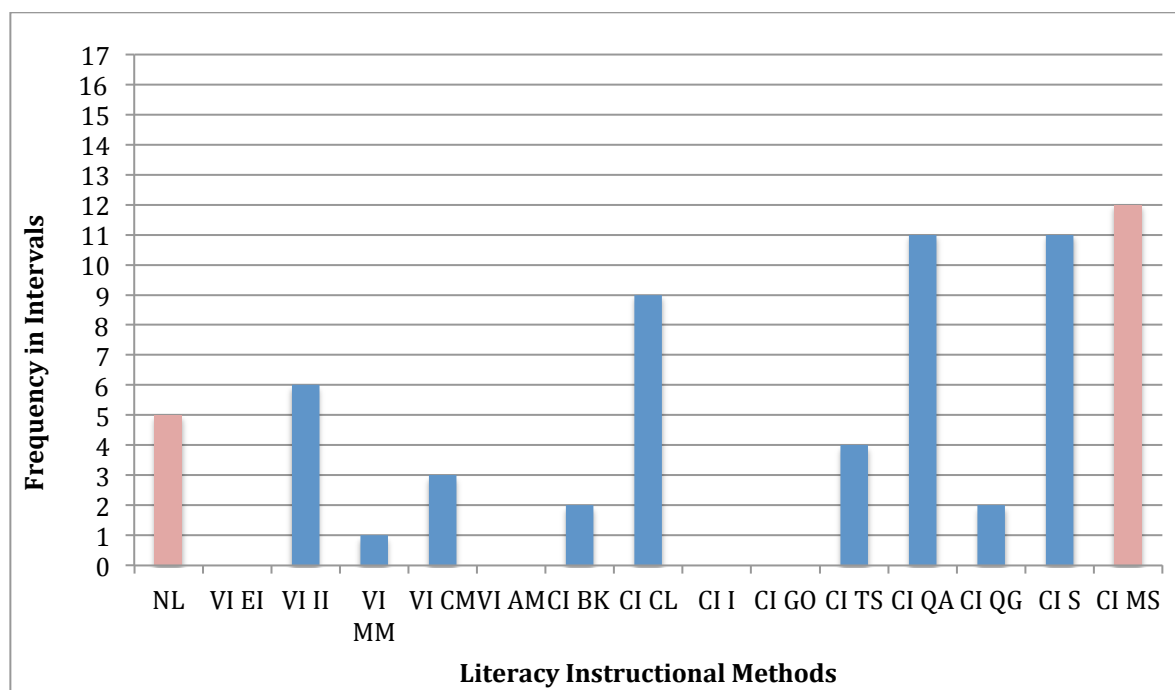
Figure 4. Frequency of literacy instruction methods used by Participant 3 over 30 intervals (150 minutes) of observation. NL = Non-Literacy, VI EI = Vocabulary Instruction Explicit Instruction, VI II = Vocabulary Instruction Implicit Instruction, VI MM = Vocabulary Instruction Multimedia Methods, VI CM = Vocabulary Capacity Methods, VI AM = Vocabulary Instruction Association Methods, CI BK = Comprehension Instruction Background Knowledge, CI CL = Comprehension Instruction Collaborative Learning and Discussion, CI I = Comprehension Instruction Imagery, CI GO = Comprehension Instruction Graphic and Semantic Organizers, CI TS = Comprehension Instruction Text Structure, CI QA = Comprehension Instruction Question Answering, CI QG = Comprehension Instruction Question Generation, CI S = Comprehension Instruction Summarization, CI MS = Comprehension Instruction Multiple Strategies.

During observations of Participant 3, comprehension and/or vocabulary

instruction methods were utilized 25 out of 30 observed intervals (83.33%). The most

frequently observed comprehension instruction methods used by Participant 3 were

Question Answering (11 out of 30 observed intervals, 36.67%), Summarization (11 out of

30 observed intervals, 36.67%) and Collaborative Learning and Discussion (9 out of 30

observed intervals, 30.00%). During the first observation, Participant 3 taught students a

new note-taking method called the Quote Note Strategy. Students were each assigned a

different city in Minnesota to research online. Through modeling, Participant 3 showed

students how to use key features of online text to identify important information and text

structure so that students could be "effective readers with research." Participant 3

modeled the Quote Note Strategy by selecting a specific quotation from the online text

and summarizing it into a shorter, complete sentence. Students were provided the

remaining class time as guided practice (Duke & Pearson, 2002), locating appropriate

webpages and using the Quote Note Strategy with support from Participant 3.

Participant 3 combined comprehension methods frequently (Multiple Strategies =

12 of 30 observed intervals, 40.00%), most often utilizing Collaborative Learning and

Discussion in conjunction with Summarization (5 out of 30 observed intervals, 16.67%)

or Question Answering (4 out of 30 observed intervals, 13.33%). During the third

observation, students engaged in a Tea Party activity, similar in structure to that of

Participant 2, as a way to preview the next chapter in the textbook. Students were each

given a card with 2-3 sentences from their textbook. They mingled with other "tea party

guests" to read, discuss, and generate questions about what was written on their cards.

The goal of this activity was for students to identify other students who had information

from the same portion of the textbook chapter, based solely on the content of the cards

and without using the textbook as a guide. Students then worked with the group they had

formed to identify the subheading in the chapter from which their sentences came and put

their cards in sequential order. Prior to this observation, students had developed preview

questions about this chapter. They were able to use the remaining class time to share the

questions they developed individually and work with a small group, supported by

Participant 3, to answer one another's questions using the textbook.

During the second observation, students worked collaboratively in small groups to

summarize the chapter, with particular attention paid to vocabulary (Implicit Instruction =

6 out of 30 observed intervals, 20.00%). The posted learning target for this class period

was, "Pre-read Chapter 4 for content and vocabulary practice." Using an activity

Participant 3 called "Chapter Walkie," students worked together to find facts from the

textbook and summarize them on a poster. For each section of the chapter, a timer was

set and small groups of students recorded summarized facts on a collaborative poster.

Students were directed to identify the kind of fact and where each fact was found in the

text (vocabulary from the sidebar, pictures/illustrations, captions, colored insets, text,

etc.). When the timer sounded, the "team captains" counted the number of facts their

team had summarized and recorded the number on their poster. Each group was given an

opportunity to share this number. This continued for each section of the chapter.

Participant 4. Participant 4 teaches 6th grade Minnesota studies at Middle School

1 (see Table 1, p. 38). Observations of Participant 4 took place during three 50-minute,

full-length class periods during different times of the day. Data from observations of

Participant 4 are summarized in Figure 5.
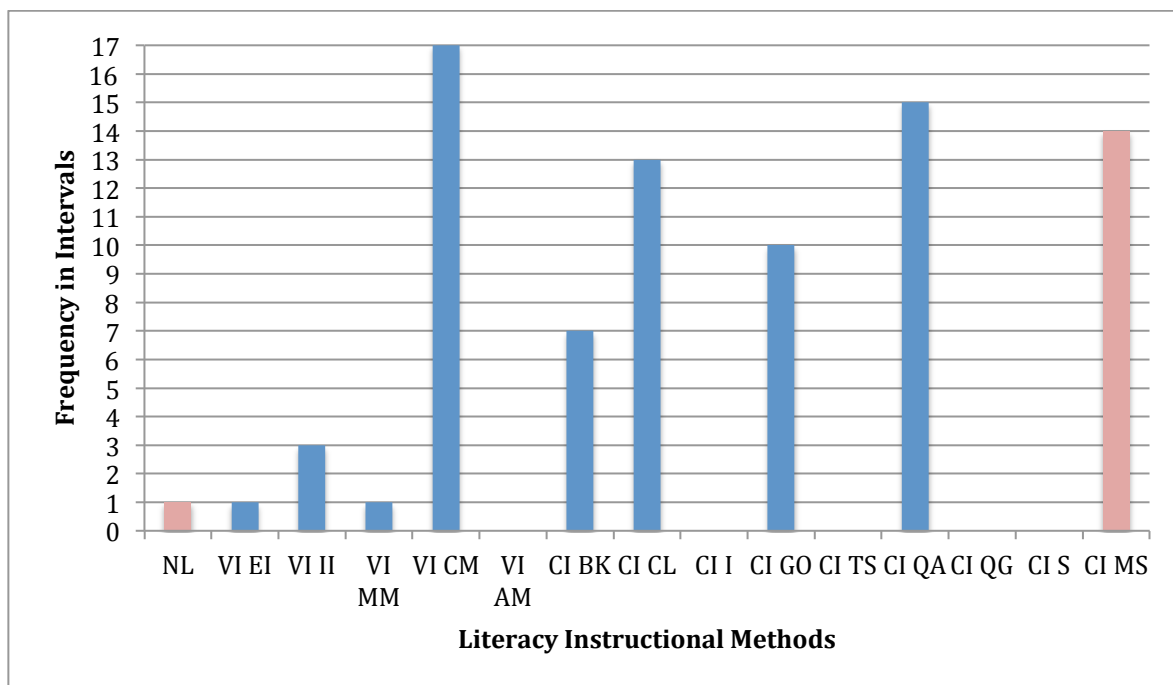
Figure 5. Frequency of literacy instruction methods used by Participant 3 over 30 intervals (150 minutes) of observation. NL = Non-Literacy, VI EI = Vocabulary Instruction Explicit Instruction, VI II = Vocabulary Instruction Implicit Instruction, VI MM = Vocabulary Instruction Multimedia Methods, VI CM = Vocabulary Capacity Methods, VI AM = Vocabulary Instruction Association Methods, CI BK = Comprehension Instruction Background Knowledge, CI CL = Comprehension Instruction Collaborative Learning and Discussion, CI I = Comprehension Instruction Imagery, CI GO = Comprehension Instruction Graphic and Semantic Organizers, CI TS = Comprehension Instruction Text Structure, CI QA = Comprehension Instruction Question Answering, CI QG = Comprehension Instruction Question Generation, CI S = Comprehension Instruction Summarization, CI MS = Comprehension Instruction Multiple Strategies.

Participant 4 implemented comprehension and/or vocabulary instruction methods during 29 of the 30 observed intervals (96.67%). The only Non-Literacy interval occurred during the first interval of the third observation when students were returning from their "exploratory" classes, rather than the nearby "team" classes. It took the first five minutes of class time for all students to enter the classroom and get settled for instruction to begin.

Question Answering was the most frequently observed comprehension instruction method used by Participant 4, used during half of the observed intervals (15 out of 30

observed intervals, 50.00%). Following Question Answering, Collaborative Learning and Discussion (13 out of 30 observed intervals, 43.33%) and Graphic and Semantic Organizers (10 out of 30 observed intervals, 33.33%) were the most frequently implemented. During the second observation, Question Answering was used as a way to review previous reading. Prior to this observation, students read a chapter in their textbooks about the Dakota Indians, with particular emphasis on the parfleche, a box made for carrying important items and decorated with special designs. After reading this section, students created their own parfleche boxes and described their own special items they would put inside. During this observation, students worked in small groups to share their parfleche, describe what was inside, and discuss their answers to questions such as "What is the equivalent of a parfleche today?" and "Using a rating scale, how important do you think the parfleche were to the Dakota? Why?" Following the small group discussions, Participant 4 engaged the whole class in a discussion around these focus questions, providing feedback to students based on their responses. Next, students continued their review of the textbook chapter by working as a whole class to create an "ABC Chart" of important vocabulary and concept words. Students were directed to identify an important term from the chapter for each letter of the alphabet and record at least 2 facts about them, using the textbook as a guide. Participant 4 modeled the use of this activity for students on the board as students followed along using their own notebooks. Students worked collaboratively with a partner or small group to identify their own words and facts. Participant 4 then asked groups to share the words they had

identified, asking questions about each term and the facts they had chosen, providing feedback. Students recorded any terms and facts they did not already have.

Graphic and Semantic Organizers were implemented 7 of the total observed 10 intervals during the first observation. Prior to this observation, students had begun adding information from a chapter in the textbook to a concept map, a graphic organizer that helps students see the relationships between all parts of a larger concept. Students spent time during this observation working in pairs, using the text to add more details to the concept map. Following this, Participant 4 engaged the whole class in a discussion where questions were asked and answered using the text and their concept maps. Students recorded any new information on their own concept maps. For the remainder of the class period, students combined information from this concept map with that of another previously created concept map, on a new "double bubble" style concept map, used to compare and contrast information. Students also used Graphic and Semantic Organizers during the third observation as a way to organize information from a chapter in the textbook they read to show relationships between the roles of the Europeans and American Indians involved in the fur trade.

Of all comprehension and/or vocabulary instruction methods used, Participant 4 implemented the vocabulary instruction method of Capacity Methods most frequently, 17 out of 30 observed intervals (56.67%). Capacity Methods were utilized during all 3 observations. This was done through providing students with repeated opportunities to use, discuss, write, and see the important terms from the current unit of studies. For example, during the "ABC Chart" review activity during the second observation, students

discussed vocabulary terms with one another as they worked to identify important words and facts about them from previous readings. Pictures representing vocabulary words were hung on the wall in front of the classroom and were frequently referenced by Participant 4 during the whole class and small group discussion. For example, during the discussion of the concept maps students created during the first observation, both the students and Participant 4 used the term "artifacts" repeatedly. Participant 4 pointed out the term and its corresponding image at the front of the room. During the third observation, the learning target was "Get to know the different roles of people in the fur trade." Students read a piece of text with several journal entries written by John Sayer, a fur trader during the early 1800s, identifying and categorizing all of the words dealing with weather, trade goods, and people. During the discussion that followed, students and Participant 4 connected these words to make meaning around the previously identified vocabulary concept words of "overseeing" and "profit".

Participant 5. Participant 5 teaches U.S. Government in 9th grade at the high school level. Observations of Participant 5 took place during 2 full-length 50-minute classes and the last 50-minute portion of a 90-minute block period. A summary of Participant 5's observations appears in Figure 6.
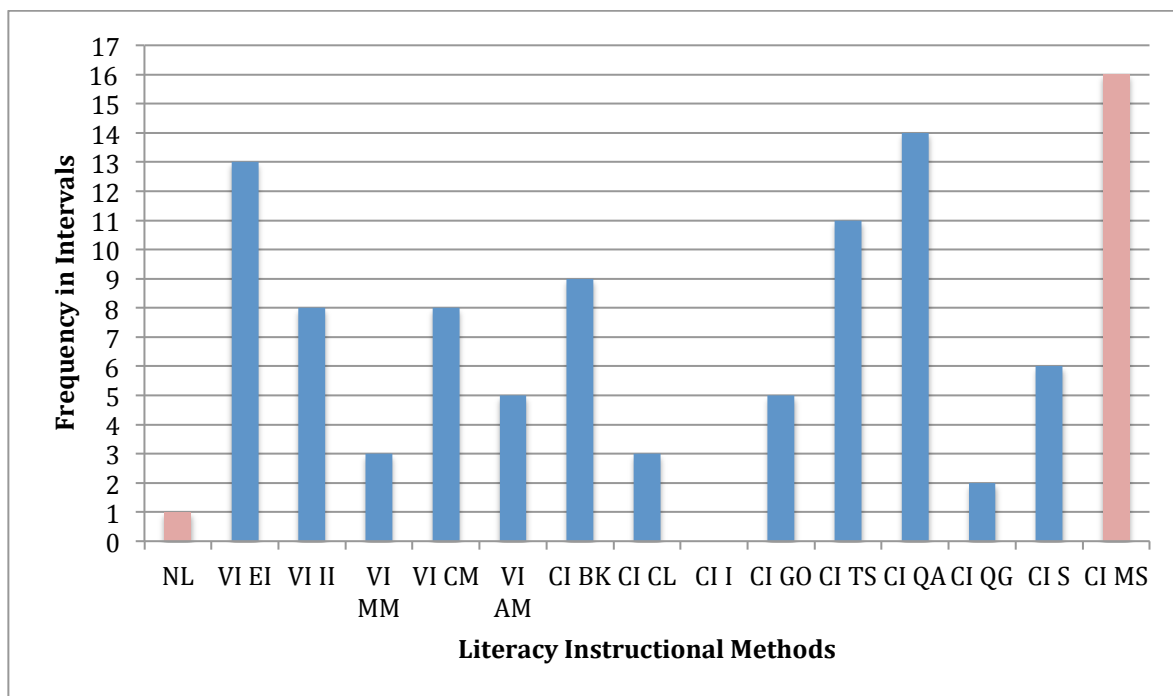
Figure 6. Frequency of literacy instruction methods used by Participant 3 over 30 intervals (150 minutes) of observation. NL = Non-Literacy, VI EI = Vocabulary Instruction Explicit Instruction, VI II = Vocabulary Instruction Implicit Instruction, VI MM = Vocabulary Instruction Multimedia Methods, VI CM = Vocabulary Capacity Methods, VI AM = Vocabulary Instruction Association Methods, CI BK = Comprehension Instruction Background Knowledge, CI CL = Comprehension Instruction Collaborative Learning and Discussion, CI I = Comprehension Instruction Imagery, CI GO = Comprehension Instruction Graphic and Semantic Organizers, CI TS = Comprehension Instruction Text Structure, CI QA = Comprehension Instruction Question Answering, CI QG = Comprehension Instruction Question Generation, CI S = Comprehension Instruction Summarization, CI MS = Comprehension Instruction Multiple Strategies.

Similar to other participants, Question Answering was the most frequently observed comprehension instruction method for Participant 5 (14 out of 30 observed intervals, 46.67%), followed by Text Structure (11 out of 30 observed intervals, 36.67%) and Background Knowledge (9 out of 30 observed intervals, 30.00%). Comprehension and/or vocabulary instruction methods were observed during 29 of the total 30 intervals (96.67%). The 1 interval recorded as Non-Literacy took place during the third observation. Though none of the identified comprehension and vocabulary instruction

methods were observed, students were actively engaged with a piece of text during this interval as they numbered the paragraphs and previewed it in preparation for reading.

During the first observation, the learning target was "Students will be able to use textual evidence to explain economic activities and land use patterns in the world." Participant 5 modeled how to use a text-marking strategy while students read an article about developed and developing countries. Through this strategy, Participant 5 used Multiple Strategies (8 of this observation's 10 intervals. Multiple Strategies were observed being used in conjunction with one another 16 out of the total 30 intervals, 53.33%). During this observation, students were engaging with the text prior to reading through accessing their Background Knowledge (3 of this observation's 10 intervals) from previously taken notes. After rereading their notes and looking over the article, students answered questions such as "What do you think this article will be about?" and "What do you already know about development?" Students were given an opportunity to discuss their answers with a partner before engaging in a whole class discussion. During the reading of the text, Participant 5 read aloud and modeled how to use Summarization (6 of this observation's 10 intervals) in the margins after each paragraph, as well as modeled identifying Text Structure (4 of this observation's 10 intervals), while students followed along writing their own notes in the margins of their texts. Throughout the modeling, Participant 5 used Question Answering (6 of this observation's 10 intervals), to probe students' thinking about the text. Students then engaged in post-reading Collaborative Learning and Discussion (2 of this observation's 10 intervals), responding to such questions as "What is the author telling us about life expectancy?", "What is the

author telling us about the unemployment rate?" and "What is the author telling us about poverty?" These questions served to focus students on the summarization of the text as a whole. Finally, students were directed to identify the author's claims from the text. Participant 5 asked questions and guided students to use the text as a reference for answering them.

The third observation took place at the beginning of a new trimester. Participant 5 explained that each trimester, a new literacy skill is introduced and serves as a reading focus. Participant 5 further explained that when a new skill is introduced, it is done using content with which the students are already familiar so that they can focus on learning the skill rather than the content. Once the students have learned the skill through modeling and guided practice, the expectation is that it will be transferred and used for the purpose of learning new content in the future. The new focus skill for the trimester was "analyzing" and was introduced during the third observation. Participant 5 utilized Text Structure (5 of this observation's 10 intervals) and Graphic and Semantic Organizers (4 of this observation's 10 intervals) to teach the skill of analyzing, using an article titled, "Should Kids Wear School Uniforms." Students followed along, writing in the margins of their articles, as Participant 5 modeled interacting with the text. A particular focus was paid on identifying text structure during the reading, as Participant 5 broke down paragraphs, explaining to students how text clues and signal words indicated the article was written using the problem and solution text structure. Participant 5 pointed out that in the first paragraph of the text, the author asked 3 questions about problem student behavior and used the rest of the article to provide support for the potential solution being

students wearing uniforms. After reading the article, students recorded information from the text on graphic organizers as a way to analyze information about school uniforms. In small groups, students first created a list of benefits and costs of school uniforms based on the information presented in the text. They then recorded this information on a graphic organizer, showing wearing school uniforms as a concept broken down into costs and benefits, supported by specific evidence from the text.

Over the total 30 observed intervals, Participant 5 used all 5 methods of vocabulary instruction. Explicit Instruction was the most frequently observed vocabulary instruction method for Participant 5 (13 out of 30 observed intervals, 43.44%), followed by Implicit Instruction and Capacity Methods (each observed 8 out of 30 total intervals, 26.67%). During all 3 observations, prior to reading an article, Participant 5 directed students to skim the text and identify vocabulary terms they recognized, words they believed to be important, and/or words with which they were unfamiliar. Throughout the reading, as they came to important words, Participant 5 would model for students how to use word roots and context clues within the text to determine each word's meaning.

During the second observation, Participant 5 combined all 5 vocabulary instruction methods throughout the entire 10-interval observation. Introducing the new concepts of "multiculturalism" and "assimilation" were the focus of instruction during this observation. Participant 5 first introduced the ideas of the "Salad Bowl" and the "Melting Pot". Images of a bowl of salad and a bowl of soup were shown.   Participant 5 provided descriptions of the characteristics of each concept and how they relate to immigration and American citizenship. Participant 5 then showed students a bowl full of

plastic fruit, representing a fruit salad. Each student took a piece of fruit from the bowl, wrote their culture on a sticky-note, affixed it to the piece of fruit, and returned it to the bowl. Participant 5 then mimed pouring salad dressing over the bowl of fruit. Students were asked to determine what that action might represent. With support, they came to the conclusion that the dressing represented the idea of being "American". Next, Participant 5 showed students the separate ingredients for making cookies, including sugar, flour, and butter. Students were then shown a bag full of baked cookies and directed to think about the ingredients about how they came together to become cookies. Each of these activities was related back to the concepts of the melting pot and the salad bowl. Students were then given the terms "multiculturalism" and "assimilation". Participant 5 identified the roots within each word and worked with students to develop what each word part meant. Along with those meanings, students were asked to connect the fruit salad and cookie examples to develop an explanation for what each concept might mean. Participant 5 then described the Latin phrase, "E Pluribus Unum," meaning "out of many, one" and explained that it appears both on United States currency and on its national seal. Images of these were projected on the screen at the front of the classroom. Student attention was brought back to the concepts of the salad bowl, or multiculturalism, and melting pot, or assimilation, when students were asked to consider, "Why is this [phrase] on money?" When students received the article they were assigned to read, titled "Melting Pot vs. Salad Bowl," they were directed to identify important and unfamiliar words. Student volunteers provided words for Participant 5 to circle during modeling. Two of the student selected words were *mosaic* and *homogenous*. Holding up the bag of

cookies and the fruit salad bowl from the previous activity, Participant 5 asked the students, "What word can we associate with melting pot? Salad bowl?"

Hypotheses. It was hypothesized that participants in this study would be observed incorporating literacy instruction methods in their social studies courses. It was also hypothesized that the most frequently utilized literacy instruction methods would be explicit vocabulary instruction, followed by graphic and semantic organizers. The results strongly supported the first hypothesis, demonstrating that participants were actively utilizing literacy instruction methods (mean = 27.60 of 30 intervals, 92%). Alternatively, the second hypothesis was not supported by the observational data gleaned from the same subjects. Instead, the most observed methods were Question Answering followed by Collaborative Learning and Discussion. Explicit vocabulary instruction was observed 29 of the total 150 intervals (mean = 5.80 for each participant, comprising 19.33% of 150 intervals). Participant 3 and Participant 4 used explicit vocabulary instruction the least, observed during 0 intervals and 1 interval respectively. Graphic and Semantic Organizers were only implemented by Participant 4 (10 out of 30 observed intervals) and Participant 5 (5 out of 30 observed intervals). This comprehension instruction method was observed during only 10.00% of the total 150 intervals (mean = 3.00 for each participant).

Phase 2: Focus Group Discussion

Phase 2 of the current study consisted of the 5 participants engaging in a 45-minute focus group discussion, during which they responded to questions about their use of literacy strategies and instruction methods. The purpose of this phase of the study was

to determine participant's beliefs about and purposes for using the literacy strategies and instruction methods they choose. Questions such as "What are your beliefs about content area literacy instruction?" and "What are your purposes behind implementing the strategies you choose?" helped to frame the discussion (see Appendix E). The discussion was transcribed and coded. Through axial coding, 175 codes were identified and then combined into 18 axial codes. Using selective coding, 5 themes emerged from the focus group discussion: emerging beliefs about literacy, student ability, motivating and engaging students, literacy instruction methods and strategies, and challenges with implementing content area literacy.

Theme 1: Emerging beliefs about literacy. Each participant had unique background experiences with literacy that impacted his or her current beliefs about utilizing literacy strategies. All participants agreed that it was important to be able to read text and understand it. Participant 2 stated, "You have to be able to read. And you have to be able to understand what you're reading. And so, I can give up [social studies content] time for this." This belief for Participant 2 began during her first year of teaching when she found her students were doing the assigned reading, but were unable to glean important information from it. It was this realization that led Participant 2 to learn more about content area literacy. "I just started to explore it. I started, you know, reading different books about reading strategies and things like that and started to explore…how can I make this better for my students?"

Participant 5 explained that while she was earning her initial teacher licensure, she was also working toward a reading license. She came to the realization through these

courses that as a student, she had never been explicitly taught reading strategies, nor had she been taught how to become a more effective reader. As she began making connections between the coursework through these two programs, it occurred to her that, "with content like social studies, you're not only reading a textbook or reading background information, you're also reading primary sources." Students need tools and strategies to tackle these texts, as she states, "because, [reading] is a life skill." Not only does Participant 5 want her students to have the tools for finding information, she wants them to be able to understand it once they do. "They'll be able to Google search when the Declaration [of Independence] was written, but what the heck did it mean?"

Participants 3 and 4 are both licensed to teach elementary students (kindergarten-6th grades) as well as secondary social studies. As a result, both participants began their teaching careers in different positions: initially, Participant 3 was an elementary teacher and Participant 4 taught 6th grade language arts. Experiences within these settings have shaped how each thinks about the delivery of social studies content. As a 4th grade teacher, Participant 3 explained, "I was teaching all the subjects and [saw] how all of it connects, and it was amazing to see this. So when I ended up…teaching a little bit older kids, but in a certain subject area I thought, well, I'm not going to drop…what I know about reading." She went on to state, "I understand the importance and helping my students." During her 7 years as a language arts teacher, Participant 4 described developing an understanding of the process of teaching writing. This knowledge of "looking at text and looking at authors and being able to pull from it, draw from it, and then…write about what you've learned, I just brought with me to social studies."

Similarly, Participant 1 has had specific experiences with the language arts content. He team-teaches an interdisciplinary world history and world literature course with an English teacher. Because of this partnership, Participant 1 has had the opportunity to "look at the course through different lenses." He noted, "now that I've been with my current partner for a long period of time, it's very interesting about how we're both…using a lot of the same strategies."

Four of the 5 participants brought up the importance of this sort of collaboration among colleagues as having an impact on their literacy implementation. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) were mentioned by Participants 2, 3, and 5 as being positive influences on their classroom instruction methods. They valued the opportunities PLCs provided to participate in activities such as learning together, sharing strategies and ideas, and challenging one another to implement different strategies. Participants even took the current study's focus group discussion as an opportunity to learn new activities and ideas from one another. At one point, Participant 4 remarked to Participant 3, "Cool! [I'm] totally emailing you for that idea." At the conclusion of the focus group discussion, Participant 3 stated, "It would be nice to have these discussions more regularly."

Theme 2: Student ability. Participants identified student ability as an important factor in their reasons for implementing literacy instruction methods in their classrooms. A common theme among the participants was the differing ability levels of students in their classes. Participant 4 explained that students are "all over the place" in terms of

their abilities. Similarly, Participant 1 reported that "the difference between the higher

readers and the lower readers is extraordinary".

Participants proposed potential reasons for the varying student abilities they see,

based on their experiences with students. One possible reason was that students do not

read as much as they used to. Another idea was that the kind of expository writing done

in social studies is more difficult to draw out than the creative types of writing students

do in literacy-related classes. The most discussed reason for differing student ability that

emerged through the focus group was identified as gaps students have in their

comprehension skills, concept knowledge, and vocabulary development. Participant 4

noted that if students are just let "loose in [the text] there would be no comprehension".

Participant 5 explained that her students do not make connections between what the

author does and how that impacts the meaning of the piece of text. Participant 2

described students struggling with the ability to identify the main importance of a piece

of text and summarize it. She shared an experience during her first year of teaching when

she assigned 2-3 pages of textbook reading and students came to class with little to no

understanding of the material. She explained her initial assumption was, "they're not

really doing the work. They're not really reading." But when she began looking at their

notes and class work she realized "they're just not even picking out the important

information." According to Participant 1, references to what used to be viewed as

common knowledge, now throw students off. He believes what is commonly known

among students has changed since he began his teaching career. Further, participants

reported seeing students struggle with specific vocabulary that is important to the current

topic of study, but also find challenges with some non-vocabulary terms they come across while reading content area texts.

Theme 3: Motivating and engaging students. The importance of motivating and engaging students was a common theme among participants as they discussed their reasons behind implementing the literacy instruction methods they do. Participant 1 went as far as to say he believes for students who really want to succeed but struggle, "school becomes more drudgery than anything else." Participants discussed a variety of ways they use literacy instruction methods to make learning social studies engaging for students in order to motivate them.

First, making learning meaningful was a common theme among participants. It was suggested that finding ways to help students take ownership over and invest in their learning was important. Participant 4 described making connections "to either their world, or something else that we've already done or they've done in another class" as a way to get students invested in their learning. One way she does this is through an online website that combines current events with rap, called Flocabulary. During a recent unit, Participant 4 encouraged students to make connections between a Flocabulary rap about supply and demand and her current unit of study on the fur trade. Participant 5 also spoke about helping students make connections, though in a way that helps them recognize and repeat their successes.

> How do we pick apart the Declaration of Independence or the Magna Carta that
> [were] written hundreds of years ago? And how do we take out what we know
> and how do we make those connections? We might not be able to look at the

whole document, but I bet [we] can figure out these 4 words. And if you give them the tools and that level of confidence that [they] have the ability to figure out what those 4 words mean, now use those same tools and let's apply it to the next line.

Participant 1 agreed with the idea of using connections to guide readers in understanding the context within the historical time period, which is particularly important in his content area of world history. "What's interesting is that, for the lower readers just to kind of understand [what] was going on at the time. I've made that connection and I understand why that's important." For the more able readers, he further describes their ability to connect to the historical context by "pulling out something that is much more global in scale, where [it] can relate back to…the religion of the period and not the religion that's there now."

Providing students with opportunities to recognize successes and realize they can read and comprehend on their own was another common concept that emerged around motivating and engaging students. Both Participants 1 and 5 spoke about instilling within students the confidence that they have the ability to utilize strategies effectively to understand what they're reading. According to Participant 5, "Giving them that boost of confidence… for many of my students, has given them the sense that… I am a good reader." Participant 1 stated,

"It's hard enough to struggle; we have to keep these kids motivated to stay in school, some of them. And so, if they can have some successes, where suddenly

they feel, 'you know what, I might not be going to college, but I at least am going to be able to understand this kind of stuff'. I think that's an important victory."

It has been the experience of most participants that when students have this confidence and begin applying the skills and strategies they've been taught, they are able to think more deeply about the content. According to Participant 2, "I start to see them going places with the information that…kids weren't going before". The ultimate goal for these teachers is to help students transfer these skills to new literacy situations, both in and outside of school. As stated by Participant 5, "How can we keep giving them that level of confidence…and those strategies, so that when they walk out [of the classroom] they [can] pick up a newspaper or read a blog...[and] they have those skills?"

Another theme that emerged from participants' discussion around engaging and motivating students in using literacy to learn social studies was having fun. The concept of having fun in learning was so powerful for a student in Participant 3's class that he began attending her class on a regular basis, though his pattern had been to skip his classes or not attend school altogether.

He's so into it that he wants to be there; I see him working, interacting, talking with kids…And it's just been this amazing turn-around…He's got a lot going on with his family, you know, probably lots and lots of factors going on here that I don't even know about and he struggles a bit with understanding what he's reading. He's in a small group with kids. They're excited to work on this. They're using different kinds of strategies throughout different stations. He's having fun and he's learning, and it's just so great to see him in class.

Using games, movement, and the power of mystery were also ideas that participants discussed as ways to incorporate fun into their classes. Participants 2 and 3 both use "question dice" as a way to help students work with text in an engaging way. They described a set of dice including 1 cube with the words *who, what, where, when, why,* and *how* written on each face and another cube containing words such as *should, could,* and *would* written on the faces. In pairs, students roll both dice and develop questions they have about the content of the text.

Participant 4 incorporates movement and dance into her vocabulary and concept learning so that students can associate a specific motion with a word or idea. One example she shared was the motion of putting her hands up to the area where her suit lapels might be and miming tugging them out with a puffed up chest. She recalls asking her students, "Do you remember when we did this? What does this mean? Right! A guy that's in charge."

Creating mystery around a concept is a way Participant 2 has found to incorporate fun into learning. She described a recent unit on *urban sprawl* where rather than providing students with the meaning of the concept, she gave them opportunities to work with vocabulary, pictures, maps, question generation, collaborative learning, and other activities around it, all the while keeping the definition of urban sprawl a "secret" from the students. Participant 2 believes that keeping the students "hooked" on the mystery for a few days allowed them to be invested in working to find the answer. "I love seeing them invested…I just feel like I see them work harder and try harder. And I

feel like they're reading the text even harder because they want to find out the answer to [the] question that I posed that I've made such a secret."

Theme 4: Literacy instruction methods and strategies. Participants identified a variety of different specific ways they incorporate literacy into their social studies classes. First, and likely most importantly, they all provide time for students to read during class. These opportunities to read are often accompanied by specific comprehension strategies or an introduction of using literacy instruction methods. According to Participant 4, "I'm doing it all the time. It's almost an innate thing that we do when we're putting things together because there is so much…reading happening, and writing that goes along with it. It's almost not a separate thing."

Differentiating for students by using multiple strategies, sometimes simultaneously, was another emerging concept within this theme. Participant 1 mentioned "we've come a long way on trying to make that not [a] one-size-fits-all" experience for students. He further stated, "one thing that works against education in general is this thought of the 'magic pill'. If we only follow these three steps, then everything is going to work out." Guiding students through their use of different strategies was also an important idea, as stated by Participant 3, "I don't know that I'm always using the best strategies, but I'm always trying to help my kids understand what we're studying, and not just the…'old school', if you will, method of read these pages, answer these questions, good luck." The purpose behind implementing these strategies, according to all participants, is to help students become better readers and transfer their learning to new experiences. They are trying different approaches in an effort to reach all

students. According to Participant 1, "Differentiating and trying different approaches is essential when we're younger. Not everybody is going to be amenable to an approach."

A considerable amount of time in participants' classes is spent frontloading context and vocabulary to enable students to go into a new unit of study with some background and concept knowledge. Participant 3 stated, "I'm finding that it's really important to spend a lot of time frontloading." Participant 4 added, "I'm doing so much of that this year, too." Collaborative learning and discussion between student pairs and small groups was a frequently mentioned instruction method among participants that was observed frequently during Phase 1 of the current study.

Several participants described their use of previewing activities when introducing students to a new piece of text. Participant 5 described how she guides her students through previewing a piece of text. "We do a lot with predicting…OK, you read the title, the section headings, the big bolded words. Without even reading [more] what do you think you're going to be reading?" Participant 3 has students preview a textbook chapter through question generation.

> I had the kids do a chapter walk to preview the chapter. With a partner [they]
> were discussing and looking at all the different parts of the text and writing down
> their own questions that they were coming up with from the headings, captions,
> and pictures.

These previewing activities help to give students an idea of what they're getting into prior to reading.

Once students begin to engage in reading the text, participants described ways they guide students in analyzing, taking meaningful notes, and generating questions. Participant 5 equates reading to viewing a completed puzzle and looking at how each individual piece contributes to the picture as a whole. She stated, "We're taking different pieces out or analyzing what this piece [is] suggesting to us, the reader. Or, what is the author trying to share with the reader just by looking at this one piece?" Similarly, Participant 2 describes using note-taking strategies as ways to ensure students are identifying the important information within a piece of text. She introduces new note-taking strategies through modeling and guided practice, helping students understand what is important and why. Participant 2 describes going back to a piece of text after both she and the students have taken notes.

> We spend time going back…here are the notes you took, here are the notes I took. Why didn't you think this was important? And why did I think this was important? And then going back to the reading and finding those key words that might have said to them, 'oh, maybe I should have thought about writing this down.'

Question generation was an instruction method many participants stated they often used. Participants 2 and 3 often guide students' question generation through the use of the previously described question cubes. It has been Participant 3's experience that students are able to "dig deeper to try to come up with a question from the question cubes." Participant 2 agreed, stating "One of the things that's really nice about [question cubes] is they're not going to get all their questions answered right away." Throughout

their unit of study, students work to answer the questions they constructed, using any new information they learn from the text and class activities. Often, students will develop questions prior to the unit that require depth of thinking to answer. Participant 2 suggested, "most of the questions they can answer by the end, and the ones that they can't, we talk about. But it is really fun to get them thinking about [the content] in that way." Students' ability to think deeply about the content leads to the construction of some powerful questions, according to Participant 1. "It's the questions they ask, not the answers they give, that tell you where the mind is going." He further stated it's his belief that when a student comes up with a question that stumps him, it's a victory for the student.

All participants noted the importance of teaching and learning vocabulary and had varied ways of incorporating vocabulary instruction into their classes. Vocabulary methods are used as pre-reading as well as during reading activities. Participants 3 and 4 described explicitly teaching vocabulary terms prior to the beginning of a new unit of study. All participants agreed that often, students do not know the specific vocabulary for a new topic of study, but there are non-vocabulary terms that are unknown, as well. In Participant 1's class, students are given time to read during class. "If they come across a word they don't know they write it on the board. Then, we go up…and we'll write in their language, here's what it means, here's kind of the context." He described the importance of students knowing contextual information as well as word meanings. Participant 1 further believes it's important for students to understand both the denotative

and connotative meanings of words, in other words, both the literal definitions and the associative or secondary meanings of words.

Participant 5 helps students break words into parts, focusing on the meanings of common affixes and roots and comparing them with words they already know. She explained, "I let them make those connections so…if they come across a new word later on in the text, I don't have to…guide them the whole way through." In Participant 4's class when students come across words with which they are unfamiliar, they stop and discuss them. "We make references and analogies and we do vocab dancing." Participant 2 explained that she guides students in using key words to determine important information from within a piece of text.

Theme 5: Challenges with implementing content area literacy. All participants agreed that there is a lot of reading and writing that happens in content area classes. They also identified a few challenges associated with trying to implement strategies to support all students' work with literacy. Participant 1 explained that there are so many "marvelous ideas that are out there". It can be a challenge to identify and continue trying new ideas. He further suggested that implementing a strategy well takes several repetitions before having a good handle on it, and that can become difficult. Participant 2 pointed out that it is easier to try literacy strategy implementation in social studies than it is in another content area, such as science, because currently social studies does not have a high-stakes, standardized test associated with its content. Finally, Participant 4 believes that some teachers may hesitate to implement literacy activities because they teach social studies, not literacy. In her experience as a former language arts

teacher, there are different kinds of teaching and learning associated with those two

contents.

Chapter V

Discussion

The incorporation of literacy strategies into content area classes has never been more important. Implementing the Common Core State Standards coupled with the high-stakes testing focus on reading and writing has placed pressure on schools and teachers of all content areas for more literacy instruction (Ippolito et al., 2008; Schoenbach et al., 2010). Further, as students progress through school, the literacy skills required of them become increasingly more complex (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006). Teachers of secondary content classes, particularly social studies, tend to rely more heavily on textbooks and informational texts to deliver course content, despite the challenges students face with accessing information from them (Allington, 2002; Brozo & Hargis, 2003; Fisher & Ivey, 2005; Herber 1978; Key, Bradley, & Bradley, 2010; Lesley, 2004; Moje, 2008; Myers & Savage, 2005; National Institute for Literacy, 2007; Spor & Schneider, 1999; Ulusoy & Dedeoglu, 2011). As a result, in 2012, the International Reading Association (2012) revised its original 1999 position statement on adolescent literacy, stating, "Adolescents deserve content area teachers who provide instruction in the multiple literacy strategies needed to meet the demands of the specific discipline" (p. 5). Unfortunately, though many secondary content teachers recognize their adolescent students' needs for literacy instruction, for a variety of reasons, some continue to be resistant to incorporating literacy strategies into their classes (Jacobs, 2008; Lesley, 2004; Lester, 2000).

The present study sought to determine which literacy instruction methods were being utilized by secondary social studies teachers who were identified as successfully

implementing literacy strategies into their courses, and their reasons and beliefs behind doing so. Observations and a focus group discussion of 5 secondary social studies teachers revealed information that has the potential to impact those secondary social studies teachers who continue to be reluctant to incorporate literacy instruction into their own courses, thus, impacting the potential success and achievement of their students.

Summary of Findings

Literacy instruction methods were observed during 92% of the 150 five-minute intervals. This finding was as predicted in this study's first hypothesis, that these secondary social studies teachers would be implementing literacy strategies. Overall, the most frequently observed literacy instruction methods were the comprehension methods of Question Answering and Collaborative Learning and Discussion and the vocabulary method of Capacity Methods (see Table 4, p. 47). Though the current study's hypotheses predicted the most frequent use of the vocabulary method of Explicit Instruction and, following that, the comprehension method of Graphic Organizers, this study's actual findings are supported by the current literature. Both Ness (2009) and Ulusoy and Dedeoglu (2011) found question answering to be one of the most preferred strategies implemented by secondary science and/or social studies teachers.

Five themes emerged from the focus group discussion. Each participant had experiences during their careers as educators that impacted their beliefs about literacy. For one participant, it was as a first year teacher realizing that students lacked the ability to understand reading assignments, for two participants it was having experiences teaching or team-teaching English/language arts skills, for one participant it was taking

courses toward a reading license, and for the final participant it was experience as an elementary teacher early on in her career. Recent studies have shown that these types of positive experiences can lead to more comfort and feelings of efficacy with literacy strategy implementation, thus making it more likely that teachers will continue to use them (Cantrell et al., 2009; Fisher & Frey, 2008; Spor & Schneider, 2001).

A second theme that emerged was participants' recognition of varying student ability levels and challenges with reading and writing. As a result of the realizations that their students struggle with literacy and represent a wide range of ability levels, the participants in this study began working harder to help them access textual information through literacy instruction methods, rather than shying away from the use of text-based materials. This is contrary to what other studies have found about many content area teachers. It has been reported that lack of student ability is one reason secondary teachers can be reluctant to implement content area literacy strategies (Cantrell et al., 2009; Heller & Greenleaf, 2007; Herber, 1978; Lesley, 2004; McKenna & Robinson, 1990). It seems that for the teachers in this study, knowledge of varying student ability had the opposite affect on their choices to implement literacy instruction methods into their courses.

The importance of motivating and engaging students was a third theme that emerged from the focus group discussion. It has been reported that one reason secondary teachers might be reluctant to utilize literacy instruction methods is due to the challenge of motivating and engaging students in challenging content area texts (Brozo & Flynt, 2008). However, participants in this study use literacy strategies as ways to motivate students and engage them in the course content. This is done by making learning

personally relevant and meaningful to students, providing students with opportunities to be successful with literacy, and incorporating games, movement and the element of mystery into instruction.

A fourth theme was the idea of incorporating a variety of different literacy instruction methods and strategies. All participants agreed that trying different approaches was important to reach all students. This was observed during Phase 1 of the study. Two or more comprehension methods were combined for a total of 57 of the 150 observed intervals (mean = 11.40 out of 30 intervals for each participant, comprising 38.00%).

One participant spoke about the tendency in education to identify the one-size-fits-all program or "magic pill" that would be the solution for helping all students overcome all difficulties. Alvermann (2002) suggested this tendency as one reason content teachers are resistant to incorporating literacy strategies into their courses. The participants in this study not only recognize that there is no magic pill, but that it is their responsibility to identify multiple strategies and techniques to ensure the success of all students. Participants mentioned techniques such as frontloading, particularly connected with historical context and vocabulary, as well as analyzing texts, taking meaningful notes, vocabulary instruction (in addition to what is done as a way to frontload the information), and question generating. Interestingly, though 3 of the 5 participants spoke passionately about the importance of question generation, Question Generation was the second least observed literacy method (mean = 1.40 for each participant, comprising 4.67% of 150 intervals), followed by the comprehension instruction method of Imagery

(mean = 0, 0% of 150 observed intervals) (see Table 4, p. 47 and Figure 1, p. 49). One

reason for this might have been the small amount of time spent observing in each

participant's class. It is possible that more Question Generation activities may have been

observed if the data collection had taken place over a longer period of time, including

more observations.

Vocabulary activities and instruction methods were frequently observed being

implemented by all participants (mean = 18.20 out of 30 intervals for all participants,

comprising 60.67% of 150 observed intervals) (see Table 4, p. 47 and Figure 1, p. 49).

All participants agreed on the importance of explicitly teaching vocabulary, as well as

described a variety of ways they incorporate vocabulary methods into their classes.

Current literature supports the finding that teachers believe vocabulary, and the skills

associated with determining word meanings, are important (Cantrell et al., 2009; Fisher

& Frey, 2008; Ulusoy & Dedeoglu, 2011).

The final theme that emerged from the focus group discussion was specific to the

kinds of challenges teachers might face in utilizing content area literacy strategies. First,

the sheer number of good strategies available to teachers can be overwhelming and

challenging to implement well. Second, it was stated that content teachers may feel

reluctant to implement literacy strategies due to the differences in the ways social studies

is taught and learned as opposed to the ways reading and writing are taught and learned.

It was suggested that some content teachers may revert back to the idea that they teach

social studies, not literacy. Both of these concepts are supported by current literature.

Content classes are typically teacher focused whereas literacy instruction methods are

more student focused (Barry, 2002; Cantrell et al., 2009; Jones & Thomas, 2006).

Further, Cantrell et al. (2009) found that teachers felt their role was in building content

knowledge rather than teaching literacy through the content material. Finally, the lack of

a high-stakes standardized test in social studies was suggested as an explanation for why

it might be easier for teachers in that particular field to experiment with literacy

implementation as they do not feel pressure the way other teachers might in focusing

solely on their course content.

Implications

The findings of this study suggest that not only is it possible for secondary social

studies teachers to successfully implement a variety of literacy instruction methods into

their content area classes, but that there are certain general literacy strategies that these

participants preferred for delivering social studies content. Further, the results suggest

that the beliefs about and reasons for implementing literacy instruction methods stem

from teachers' background experiences with literacy. Due to their beliefs about the

importance of reaching all students, participants in the current study reported that the

wide-range of student abilities and the importance of student motivation and engagement

are factors that contribute to their use of literacy instruction methods, whereas current

literature describes these as reasons some content area teachers are reluctant to

incorporate such methods.

As one participant suggested, there are so many different strategies available, it

can become overwhelming to find those that work well and invest the time in introducing

them to feel comfortable with continued implementation. The identification of the

literacy strategies and instruction methods that these participants prefer may help to support other secondary social studies teachers in determining which methods they might try. It is possible that content area teachers may feel less resistance to attempt incorporation of specific literacy instruction methods that have been determined to be successful for delivering social studies content by teachers within their own discipline, as opposed to those in a field of literacy. Collaboration around literacy seemed to be a supporting factor in these secondary social studies teachers' implementation of instruction methods, as well. It is possible that providing secondary social studies teachers opportunities to work with one another in determining which strategies to choose and sharing their experiences during implementation might cause them to be less reluctant.

More secondary social studies teachers incorporating literacy instruction methods could impact the academic achievement of more students. This would provide opportunities for more students to access challenging content area texts, as suggested by the International Reading Association's (2012) position statement on adolescent literacy. Moreover, more teachers incorporating literacy strategies into their courses would help to support schools' implementation of the Common Core State Standards and the demands of preparing students for successful achievement on high-stakes evaluations.

Strengths and Limitations

The development of an appropriate process for identifying participants, identifying specific literacy strategies secondary social studies teachers prefer, and the possible connection between prior literacy experiences and peer collaboration around

literacy instruction methods are strengths that have arisen from the current study. The process for participant identification included contacting secondary principals and asking them to compare their social studies teachers' characteristics to the International Reading Association's Standards for Middle and High School Content Classroom Teachers (International Reading Association, 2010) (see Appendix A). Those teachers best meeting the standards were provided an opportunity to volunteer for the current study (see Appendices B and C). The result of this process was the successful identification of secondary social studies teachers who had strong literacy integration skills.

The purpose of the current study was to determine which literacy strategies were being used by those secondary social studies teachers, identified by their principals as having strong literacy integration skills, as well as their beliefs about and purposes for using those strategies. A second strength of this study is the identification of those strategies. Participants overwhelmingly utilized the comprehension instruction method of Question Answering (mean = 11.80 for each participant, comprising 39.33% of 150 intervals) (see Table 4, p. 47 and Figure 1, p. 49). Though this was not one of the literacy strategies predicted by this study, current literature does support that it is common among content area teachers. The methods of Collaborative Learning and Discussion and Implicit Instruction of vocabulary were observed most frequently following Question Answering, and combining multiple comprehension strategies took place frequently in all participants' classes. A third strength of this study is the identification of a potential connection between participants' past experiences and collaborative work with literacy, and their willingness to incorporate these instructional methods.

Though this study has merit with these strengths, there are a few limitations. First, all data were collected in 3 schools within the same Midwest suburban school district. Second, the participants consisted of a group of just 5 secondary social studies teachers representing grades 6, 8, 9, and 10. These two factors limit the extent of generalizability to some degree.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the promising results of this study in connection with its limitations, further research recommendations can be made in 3 areas. First, it is recommended that another similar study be done for a longer period of time using a larger participant pool. Having more secondary social studies teachers to observe for a longer period of time and from different locales would yield results that are more generalizable to all secondary social studies teachers and potentially further hone in on the specific literacy instruction methods and strategies best implemented in social studies.

Second, further research is recommended in other secondary content areas. Due to the unique needs of adolescents and the increasingly complex literacy demands placed upon them as they move through the grades, it is important to find ways to support them in accessing challenging texts in all classes (International Reading Association, 2012; Moje, 2007; Moore et al., 1999; National Institute for Literacy, 2007, Ness, 2007; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). Conducting similar research to the present study in all content areas would yield strategies used by those already successful in supporting their students in navigating content area texts and provide more opportunities for the academic success of all students.

Third, it is recommended that further research be done around the possible connection between prior literacy experiences and collaboration amongst colleagues. If a correlation exists between these concepts, this would provide a first step in supporting those secondary teachers who are still reluctant to implement literacy instruction methods into their content area classes to adopt some of the more positive beliefs around its importance.

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Appendix A

Principal Checklist

Dear Secondary Principals:

Thank you for your willingness to allow me to work with the teachers in your school. Please take a few moments to think about each of your social studies teachers in terms of the ways they utilize literacy strategies to deliver content. The teachers you identify as having strong literacy integration skills will be invited to participate in my study.

Please use the checklist below to serve as a guide as you consider your social studies teachers' integration of literacy strategies. It would be ideal to identify at least two teachers who demonstrate all four characteristics as suggested by the International Reading Association's Curriculum and Instruction Standards for Middle and High School Content Teachers:

_____ The social studies teacher evaluates the curriculum to ensure that instructional goals and objectives meet the reading and writing demands of the content areas.

_____ The social studies teacher selects and implements content area reading and writing instructional approaches based on evidence-based rationale, student needs, and purposes for instruction.

_____ The social studies teacher implements and evaluates content area instruction in each of the following areas: vocabulary meaning, comprehension, writing, motivation, and critical thinking.

_____ The social studies teacher guided by evidence-based rationale, selects and uses quality traditional print, digital, and online resources.

Once you have identified the teachers you believe exemplify these behaviors, please give them **one** of the enclosed invitation letters along with **two** copies of the enclosed consent form. Any teacher who is interested in participating in the study may contact me for further information and to set up observations.

Sincerely,

Kelly Killorn
Enclosure

Appendix B

Participant Letter

Dear _____,

Kelly Killorn, a Bloomington teacher and doctoral student at Minnesota State University, Mankato, is performing a research study to identify the literacy strategies secondary social studies teachers prefer and their reasons for choosing them and would like to invite you to participate. I think you would be an ideal participant for the study, as you routinely demonstrate the following four characteristics, as suggested by the International Reading Association's Curriculum and Instruction Standards for Middle and High School Content Teachers:

- Evaluate the curriculum to ensure that instructional goals and objectives meet the reading and writing demands of the content areas.
- Select and implement content area reading and writing instructional approaches based on evidence-based rationale, student needs, and purposes for instruction.
- Implement and evaluate content area instruction in each of the following areas: vocabulary meaning, comprehension, writing, motivation, and critical thinking.
- Guided by evidence-based rationale, select and use quality traditional print, digital, and online resources.

The study will first involve Ms. Killorn observing three of your classes. The observations will take place during fall 2014 and will be planned in advance between you and Ms. Killorn. After these observations are completed, she will ask you to participate in a 45-minute focus group with other study participants, during which you will be asked a series of questions about your use of literacy strategies in the classroom. The focus group discussion will take place once all classroom observations have been completed with all participants.

If you are interested in participating in this study or learning more about it, please contact Kelly Killorn via phone or email by October 1, 2014 952-237-8407, kelly.killorn@mnsu.edu, or kkillorn@bloomington.k12.mn.us

Sincerely,

Principal's Name

Appendix C

Informed Consent Participant Letter

Dear _____,

My name is Kelly Killorn. I am a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership program at Minnesota State University, Mankato. I would like to conduct a research study in your school titled "Literacy Strategies Implemented by Secondary Social Studies Teachers," under the supervision of my advisor, Dr. Candace Raskin. The purpose of my study is to identify the literacy strategies secondary social studies teachers prefer and their reasons for choosing them.

If you agree to participate, I would like to observe you teach in your classroom for 3 full class periods of approximately 50 minutes each, during fall of 2014. While I am in the classroom I will be observing only for comprehension and vocabulary strategies you incorporate into your lessons. Following the 3 classroom observations, I would like you to participate in a 45-minute focus group with the other participants to discuss your beliefs about content area literacy, the literacy strategies you choose, and your reasons for choosing them.

Your participation is totally voluntary. If at any time during the observations or focus group you decide that you would prefer to discontinue your participation in the study completely, you are free to do so. Discontinuing the study will not affect your relationship with Minnesota State University, Mankato. You can stop participating by telling me that you no longer want to be in the study.

A benefit of this research is the identification of general literacy strategies that work best for delivering social studies content. This could provide opportunities for more students, particularly those who struggle with informational text, to access challenging textbooks and class materials. Further, other content area teachers who have previously been resistant to incorporating literacy strategies may feel more comfortable trying strategies their peers identify and suggest as useful, as opposed to those suggested by literacy specialists. Finally, this study could be replicated in the future to identify literacy strategies that work particularly well in other content areas.

The only identified risk associated with your involvement in this study is your level of comfort during observations and focus group discussion.

All information obtained in this study will be kept private by the staff of this research project. All information will be stored in a locked file cabinet at Minnesota State University. No names will be recorded other than on the consent forms. The focus group discussion will be video recorded digitally, directly onto a laptop computer belonging to me. No copies of the video will be made and the original file will be destroyed after participant responses have been transcribed, by August 31, 2015.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at kelly.killorn@mnsu.edu or (952) 237-8407. You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Raskin, at candace.raskin@mnsu.edu or (952) 818-8881. If you have any questions about the rights of research participants please contact Dr. Barry Ries, Administrator of the Institutional Review Board, at (507) 389-2321 or barry.ries@mnsu.edu.

Enclosed is a copy of this letter for you to keep. If you are willing to participate in this study please sign one copy of this letter and contact me at kelly.killorn@mnsu.edu or kkillorn@bloomington.k12.mn.us or (952)-237-8407. During that initial contact, I will make arrangements with you to collect this signed consent letter. Your signature indicates that you have read and understand the information above and willingly agree to participate. Thank you for your consideration.

Your Name (printed) _____

Your Signature _____ Date _____

MSU IRBNet ID# 608333

Date of MSU IRB approval: 6/6/2014

Appendix D

Observation Protocol

	NL		VI EI	VI II	VI MM	VI CM	VI AM		CI BK	CI CL	CI I	CI GO	CI TS	CI QA	CI QG	CI S	CI MS
0-5																	
5-10																	
10-15																	
15-20																	
20-25																	
25-30																	
30-35																	
35-40																	
40-45																	
45-50																	
TOTAL																	

	NL		VI EI	VI II	VI MM	VI CM	VI AM		CI BK	CI CL	CI I	CI GO	CI TS	CI QA	CI QG	CI S	CI MS
X3 TOTAL																	

Appendix E

Focus Group Questions

1. How long have you been teaching social studies?

2. How long have you been in this school district?

3. What are your beliefs about content area literacy instruction?

4. What are your purposes behind implementing the strategies you choose?