

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LOUISE
ROSENBLATT'S TRANSACTIONAL THEORY AND ITS IMPACT ON TEACHER-
EFFICACY FOR LITERACY INSTRUCTION IN AN ONLINE ENVIRONMENT

by

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ABSTRACT

The present study sought to examine the teacher-efficacy for literacy instruction (TELI) of instructors who teach in an online environment. The phenomenological methodology sought to answer the following research questions: (1) What pedagogical practices do instructors use to provide literacy instruction in an online environment? (2) How do instructors perceive their TELI in an online environment? and (3) What impact, if any, will a Professional Learning Community (PLC) focused on Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory have on TELI in an online environment?

The study consisted of a group of seven online instructors. The researcher the acting as facilitator administered the initial interviews and exit interviews and adapted an Action Research PLC with activities modeled after those that influence self-efficacy. In initial interviews, the participants described their literacy practices as mostly dialogic conversations with students in which they provide examples and non-examples for students. They used some aesthetic strategies, but their practices were mainly efferent and low taxonomically. The initial interviews also revealed that instructors felt that they did not know their students well and that their literacy instructional practices were mostly silenced by the dominant role of the standardized curriculum. It was observed that teachers sourced their confidence in TELI in an online environment not from the practices they used in an online environment, but in the practices they once used in the traditional classroom which are now silenced in an online environment.

During the Action Research PLC, the researcher and participants collaborated in creating questions and instructional resources that helped students take a more aesthetic stance while still meeting the standards of the curriculum through the use of aesthetic questions and discussions,

semantic association, and narrative-centered learning. The PLC structure also incorporated the four influential experiences on self-efficacy.

The results of the exit interviews revealed that the teachers either remained confident or increased in confidence in their TELI in an online environment. In addition, viewing TELI through Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory aided in closing the gap in transactional distance observed by the participants because they were able to engage in more positive dialogues with their students. The PLC provided a creative space for teachers to work and deliver their personalized instruction enabling them to voice their once silenced literacy instructional practices. It can be determined that the transactions that teachers have with students mediated in an online environment have a far greater impact on TELI. Viewing literacy instruction through Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory provides a reflective experience where teachers revisit whether or not an instructional practice can improve their teaching through more aesthetic dialogue thus improving their TELI.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

ACT – American College Test

CCSS – Common Core State Standards

DBA – Discussion-Based Assessment

ELA – English Language Arts

FS – Florida Standards

FSA – Florida Standards Assessment

iNACOL – International Association for K-12 online Learning

IRA – International Reading Association

IRB – Internal Review Board

K-12 – Indication of education provided to students ranging from kindergarten to twelfth grade

LMS – Learning Management System

MOOC – Massive Open Online Course

NCTE – National Council of Teachers of English

NICHHD – National Institute of Child Health and Human Development

PLC – Professional Learning Community

PD – Professional Development

RORI – Relationally Oriented Reading Instruction

TELI – Teacher-Efficacy for Literacy Instruction

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION OF PROBLEM OF PRACTICE

This dissertation seeks to explore an important problem in practice of online K-12 literacy instruction. Teachers, although they may have been trained to deliver literacy instruction in the classroom, may not necessarily be prepared to deliver literacy instruction in an online environment. When K-12 teachers decide to switch from teaching in the traditional classroom to teaching in an online environment, many do not realize that they would be catapulting into an entirely different teaching environment.

The creation of K-12 virtual schools began in 1996 and has grown tremendously since then (DiPietro et al. 2008). These early K-12 virtual schools drew from a body of teachers who were not trained in providing literacy instruction online. At this time, there exists a generation of teachers that teach in an online environment but were trained in teacher education programs which lacked online instructional coursework.

Over the past decade, online K-12 education has become accessible to a larger population in the United States. Florida Statute 1003 part 4 (Florida Legislature 2013) requires that all students entering ninth grade in the 2013-2014 school year to take at least one online course for a graduation requirement. At K-12 online learning's inception in 1996, most online learners were self-motivated and independently driven, but now that it is more easily accessible, required in the state of Florida to graduate, and open to a larger population, the motivations of online learners have become diverse (Hartnett et al. 2011). To set standards to prepare teachers for online learning, the International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL) has developed the "National Standards for Quality Online Teaching" (2011). In Standard F, the online teacher should be "cognizant of the diversity of student academic needs and [should] incorporate

accommodations into the online environment” (p. 10). The students enrolled in online courses now are high-achieving, low-achieving and everywhere in between. The motivations of these students also range now. Some advocate that the development of a student’s self-regulation is the best method to help students learn online (Schunk & Zimmerman 2007; Barnard-Brak et al. 2010), while others have found that students taking online courses require higher levels of social presence from their instructors in order to successfully learn (Zhan & Mei 2013). Academic emotion is also key in developing a student’s self-regulation in online learning. If they experience negative emotions or none at all while taking an online course, it could possibly moderate, or hinder, the learning process (You & Kang 2014). With the online modality and environment comes challenges. Some educators feel they cannot give the same socio-cultural cues they once used in the face-to-face classroom (Liu 2004).

New Learning Environment, New Literacies

The educational philosopher John Dewey (1938) writes that “the general pattern of school organization [by which he means the relations of pupils to one another and to the teachers] constitutes the school a kind of institution sharply marked off from other social institutions” (p. 17-18), however does this statement apply to online school systems? Teachers trained to provide instruction in the traditional classroom who made the leap into teaching online may attempt to transfer many of these skills, however the relationship between teacher and student changes in the online environment so modes of instruction should change as well. Viewing this contrast between traditional classroom instruction and online instruction from Rogoff’s (2003) *Interacting Planes of Development*, which educational researchers use to investigate where learning takes place for both teacher and student, can shed some important light on the differences between the two learning environments. In the traditional classroom,

students and teachers learn together in a more community/institutional plane of development, where teachers lead a group of students in developing common language, rules, values, beliefs, and activities used in the learning process (Rogoff 2003). This community aspect of learners, however, is not as prevalent in online learning. In contrast, online learners and instructors work in the individual and interpersonal planes of development in which cognition, affect, behavior, motivation, beliefs, attitudes, and values (Rogoff 2003) of the student guide their instruction as they asynchronously read through lessons and work on assessments while communicating interpersonally with teachers through different avenues of communication, dialogue, and discourse. Therefore, instruction given at the community plane may not have the same gravity when administered in the interpersonal plane which parallels instruction transferred from the traditional classroom to the online learning environment.

Since there is a change in the interacting planes of development when switching from classroom to online instruction, not all traditional classroom literacy instructional practices will be effective in developing students' twenty-first century literacy skills in an online environment. Therefore, adaptation is necessary in order for instructors to provide literacy instruction that develops students' literacies. In interviews with eleven skilled readers, Coiro and Dobler (2007) determined three new reading skills students should have to be successful readers online: the application of (1) prior knowledge of topic and text structures, (2) inferential reasoning strategies through the use of literal matching skills, structural cues and context, and (3) self-regulated reading processes such as fixing misconceptions. Serafini (2012) expands on the role of the reader in a digital age, stating that to be literate, one must now become a navigator, interpreter, designer, and interrogator. Leu et al. (2011) have determined that online literacy has become

deictic (quickly changing), requires additional practice, skills, and dispositions, and is misaligned with public policy such as Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

In response to the changing literacy practices and learning environment, April Sanders (2012) recently wrote that revisiting Louise Rosenblatt could help students develop new literacy strategies necessary to become literate in the twenty-first century, and Dockter (2015) finds that Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory "suggests a model for online education as a series of literate transactions that enabled [the teacher] to interrogate the simplified approach to a teacher's presence" (p. 77). Using reader response, transactional distance, and relational distance theories, Dockter determined that they "all intersect at the point where transactions occur between the participants[, teacher and students,] in an online course" (p. 82). Though Sanders (2012) and Dockter (2015) look to Rosenblatt's transactional theory (1978) as a theoretical lens to view the problems in practice of literacy instruction and in online learning, they do not conduct studies to explore the possible impact the transactional theory could have on literacy instruction in an online environment. My study in this dissertation fills the void in the body of research for these complex problems in practice. Like Sanders and Dockter, I too look to the transactional theory of reading and writing (Rosenblatt 1978) as a theoretical lens and as a possible solution to problems in practice in literacy instruction in an online environment.

Contextualizing the Problem of Teacher-Efficacy for Literacy Instruction in an Online Environment

This phenomenological study examined the teacher-efficacy for literacy instruction (TELI) of online instructors. As defined by Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998), "teacher-efficacy is the teacher's belief in his or her capability to organize and execute courses of action required to successfully accomplish a specific teaching task in a particular context" (p. 233). The focus takes

place in a state driven online school district in which instructors provide online K-12 education purely in an online format. Students work asynchronously and synchronously with instructors in a learning management system (LMS) that contains lessons, assessments, and ways through which communication can travel between instructor and student.

Online instructors interact with students in various settings such as live lessons in online chat rooms, email, grading feedback, text messages, and phone calls through which tutoring or an oral quiz takes place. Since the environment and avenues that teachers use to provide instruction are quite different, many literacy instructional strategies used in the traditional classroom setting may or may not work in an online environment. This could also have an impact on teachers' sense of efficacy if strategies they used in the traditional classroom setting do not work in an online learning environment. Teacher-efficacy is cyclical in nature in that teachers build greater efficacy through accomplishing tasks and mastery experiences, but if they lack mastery experiences and often experience failure, this could lower teacher-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran et al. 1998).

Historically in the online school where this study takes place, teachers have not been asked whether or not they feel efficacious in delivering literacy instruction in an online environment within the organization. Questions about TELI have been addressed through research of Tschannen-Moran and Johnson (2011) who surveyed 648 teachers in both elementary and middle schools using the *Teachers' sense of efficacy for literacy instruction* scale. They found that elementary teachers had significantly higher self-efficacy for literacy instruction when compared to middle school teachers. Also, suburban teachers had higher self-efficacy than urban teachers, but online instructors were not measured.

Epoche: Personal Experience of My Teacher-Efficacy for Literacy Instruction

In any phenomenological study, one must attempt to separate himself from the experience which he is studying. Husserl calls the concept *epoche*, or bracketing, one's self away from the experience so as not to taint the description and analysis of the experience with the preconceived notions of the researcher (Creswell 2013). To better bracket my conception of TELI in an online environment, I will give a direct description of my experience using van Manen's (1984) suggestion to write using experiential terms while avoiding causality or generalizations.

My conception of literacy instruction began in the classroom. I had recently graduated from college with a bachelor's in music and was given a teaching schedule that included sixth and eighth grade language arts and seventh grade intensive reading. During this time, I saw literacy or reading as a performance, much like when I would perform an art song or aria. I had no idea that reading was broken up into phonemic awareness, phonological awareness, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and fluency (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD] 2000). I understood it as a whole with everything necessary for coming together. I recall fond memories of teaching each aspect of literacy in the classroom from coaching students in giving speeches for the 4H competition, to providing vocabulary quizzes and games, to helping struggling readers sound out difficult words, to questioning students on passages of great works of adolescent literature. I felt as if I were a leader in a community collaboratively learning from the lectures and activities we performed together. It gave me confidence in my ability to teach.

I did not realize the transition from the classroom to the online environment would make me feel do distant from lecturing and facilitating collaborative learning. When I switched to

online teaching, I started as a Latin instructor helping students become acquainted with the Latin language for the first time. While looking at the curriculum, I saw that the lessons were pedagogically sound and followed a logical sequence that would effectively teach the Latin language. The main interactions I felt with my students occurred in the written feedback I would provide on their written assignments and translations as well as discussion-based assessments (DBA) with the student. During the five to ten minutes for DBAs with students, I initially had the desire to review all of the concepts and vocabulary taught in the lesson. Somehow the verbal dialogue with the students gave me the security that I was teaching students and they were retaining content. However, I found this to be an impossible task. The DBAs would drag out to nearly twenty minutes, consuming large quantities of my time and to little or no gain. I would find where student gaps in knowledge are, however I would find myself giving lesson and page numbers to reference, instead of instruction. The literacy instruction I would mainly give would involve phonemic awareness, phonological awareness, vocabulary, and reading comprehension, ignoring fluency. Eventually I would accept the fact that students show their mastery of reading comprehension and vocabulary through their translations, however I still felt that any assessment auto-graded by the LMS were not part of my instructional practice. I had to accept that much of my students' learning occurred independently. My role as an instructor seemed to have shrunk. I felt as if I had less of an impact on my students' learning.

Eventually, I moved back to my first passion which was Middle Grades English Education in order to find again my role as a literacy teacher. It was true that I did provide more literacy instruction to my students in grading feedback and during our discussion-based assessments I was able to employ more literacy instruction, however I still felt distant from the skills that were assessed by auto-graded quizzes. And when struggling readers entered my class,

my wish would be for the student to have the opportunity to observe me and observe other good readers for forty-five minutes a day, thus receiving consistent help with reading comprehension. Seeing these students struggle consistently throughout the course, or drop out in the worst cases, broke me as a professional. My teacher-efficacy in the online learning environment was not nearly as high as my teacher-efficacy in the classroom. I knew I had and could employ the methods for literacy instruction in the traditional classroom, however I found it very difficult to use these same methods in an online environment. The distance between me and my students and fluidity of the fast-pace nature of the environment was not conducive for structured, guided practice.

Theoretical Framework

In order to understand the unknown about TELI of online instructors, one must ponder where does literacy instruction occur in the online learning environment? How do teachers provide literacy instruction in a curriculum that is standardized and immutable? How do teachers know whether or not their literacy instruction has improved student knowledge or ability? I view these questions through a cross-section of several theories, all beginning with what Dewey and Bentley (1949) call a transaction. Rosenblatt (2005) describes Dewey's *transaction* as being organic in that the human and the environment are parts of a whole. The term "designates an ongoing process in which the elements or parts are seen as aspects or phases of a total situation" (Rosenblatt 2005, p. 40). Viewing literacy instruction as transactions enables me as the researcher to segment the problem into various theories such as social presence (Anderson et al. 2001, Garrison 2000), transactional theory of reading and writing (Rosenblatt 1978), self-efficacy theory (Bandura 1977), and transactional distance theory (Moore 1993). Each theory allows me to observe an aspect of the teacher experience in providing literacy instruction.

Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reading and writing gives me a framework through which to view literacy instructional strategies and the techniques teachers use in an online environment. In order to understand how teachers' feel and what they know about when and how to use literacy instruction, the self-efficacy theory of Bandura (1977) will clarify these thoughts, feelings, intuitions, and perceptions. The most complex component of viewing this particular problem in practice lies within the context and environment in which online educators and learners coexist and transact with one another. To better understand the online environment, I look to social presence and transactional distance theory (Moore 1993) to better understand dialogue, structure, and learner autonomy. Each of these theories can find an epistemological connection to the origins of Dewey and Bentley's (1949) *transaction*.

Purpose of Study and Research Questions

This qualitative study of secondary online instructors focuses on teachers' perceptions of their TELI in an online environment. How do instructors feel about their TELI in an online environment? Rosenblatt (1999) stated that "Students don't need theory. It's the teacher who needs to assimilate the theory in order to act on it" (p. xxvii). Theory delivered through a professional learning community (PLC) could help instructors situate theory into practice. There are several gaps in the current body of research which this project aims to close. First, TELI of online K-12 instructors has yet to be explored. Second, using online literacy instructional practices such as the transactional theory have yet to be studied from the teacher's perspective. Third, the impact of transactional distance on teachers also has yet to be studied in terms of the impact on their TELI. This study seeks to answer the following three research questions that will inform the field of literacy instruction in an online environment: (1) What pedagogical practices do instructors use to provide literacy instruction in an online environment? (2) How do

instructors perceive their TELI in an online environment? After answering these two questions, I will then seek to describe how teachers implement Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory in an online environment and then answer my main research question: (3) What impact, if any, will a PLC focused on Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory have on TELI in an online environment?

Significance

Teaching in an online modality encourages teachers to reflect on their practice and communication with students. Teachers who teach online are also more sensitive and empathetic toward their students, although there are methodological differences between teaching online and in the classroom (Roblyer et al. 2009). Ferdig et al. (2009) suggest that research needs to identify best practices on pedagogy, content, technology, and the cross section between the three in K-12 online learning as well as a call for teacher education programs to become part of providing virtual schooling education for preservice teachers and working professionals in the field. This qualitative research will begin to explore what strategies teachers are using for literacy instruction and begin to position the methods within Rosenblatt's transactional theory as well as examining TELI in an online environment.

Dissertation Roadmap

In Chapter One, I have set the stage with an overview of the study which includes the context in which the problem is situated, bracketing myself away from the phenomenon by acknowledging my preconceived ideas and description of the phenomenon at hand, and explaining the theoretical lenses through which to observe the phenomenon in practice. Essentially, the online learning environment has several variables that could affect literacy instruction and therefore affect TELI.

In Chapter Two, I review the body of literature on research on transactional distance theory (Moore 1993), social presence (Kehrwald 2008), self-efficacy (Bandura 1977), teach-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran et al. 1998), PLCs (Stoll et al. 2006; Vescio et al. 2007) and the transactional theory of reading and writing (Rosenblatt 1978). These theories come together to focus the lens through which I view TELI in an online environment and develop the void in the body of research which my study fills in regards to transactional distance and TELI in an online environment.

In Chapter Three, I explain the methodological framework and procedures I used in this phenomenological study of TELI for current online instructors. First, I explain why I chose phenomenology and give a historical overview of the philosophy behind phenomenology via Husserl (1913), Sartre (1943), Colaizzi (1978), van Manen (1984), Moustakas (1994), and Creswell (2013). I explain the selection process, the context in which we worked, and the process of making teachers more efficacious in their ability to provide literacy instruction through experiences that influence efficacy and the reflective nature of the PLC.

In Chapter Four, I analyze data from initial interview phase and exit interview phase using phenomenological analysis prescribed by van Manen (1984), Colaizzi (1978), Moustakas (1994), and Creswell (2013). Tracing etymological sources, searching idiomatic phrases, conducting thematic analysis, determining essential themes, providing an exhaustive description, and then reaffirming the description with the participants.

In Chapter Five, I summarize the findings of the phenomena discovered throughout the duration of the study. I then thoroughly explain the implications of the findings, discuss the limitations of the study, identify implications for future studies, and conclude with where my

research should be situated in the body of literature regarding transactional distance, TELI, and the transactional theory of reading and writing.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The following literature review explores the seminal works and current research on topics pertaining to the problem of practice of online K-12 literacy instruction. The sections here seek to explain the concepts of transactional distance theory, self-efficacy theory, social presence, PLCs, and Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reading and writing. Finally, I synthesize the literature to shed light on the void in the literature and to explain how viewing the problem in practice of online K-12 literacy instruction sets the stage for the research methods and intervention designed for the phenomenological study in this dissertation in practice.

Transactional Distance

In an online environment, there is a separation between teacher and learner by physical distance. According to Moore (1993), this distinct separation leads to different “patterns of learner and teacher behaviors...that profoundly affect both teaching and learning” (p. 22). The space that separates the teacher from the learner is called transactional distance. Moore (1993) deconstructs transactional distance into three variables: dialogue, structure, and learner autonomy. Dialogue involves transactions between teacher and learner in a back and forth that possess positive qualities that other transactions may not have (Moore 1993) which can occur through various modes of communication. Structure refers to “the rigidity or flexibility of the programme's educational objectives, teaching strategies, and evaluation methods” (Moore 1993 p. 26). Finally, learner autonomy refers to the ability a learner must have to direct his own learning in a distance education program. Learner autonomy takes into account how much control the learner has over determining his own objectives, what learning experiences he wishes to have, and how he will be evaluated (Moore 1993 p. 31).

Scholars have used these components of transactional distance to create programs that shorten the transactional distance between teacher and learner. Benson and Samarawickrema (2009) developed programs for first time online students with greater dialogue and structure because first time online students have lower levels of learner autonomy. Since transactional distance was based on adult education, in which the learner has higher levels of autonomy, Barbour and Reeves (2009) suggest that online education programs for K-12 students require more structure since K-12 students lack the autonomy to control their own learning experience. In addition, they state that little research has been done in which a highly-structured program has been developed. Another study also supports Moore's assertions that high amounts of structure and high amounts of positive dialogue can lessen the transactional distance (Huang et al. 2016; Stein et al. 2005). In addition, student dialogue with content of the course has a large effect on student learning and satisfaction in online and blended modalities (Ekwunife-Orakwue & Teng 2014).

Although there are a plethora of studies using students as the unit of analysis, few studies using the teachers or instructors exist (Rose & Adams 2014; Murphy & Rodríguez-Manzanares 2008). In these studies, the researchers found that online instructors struggle with their perception of providing online students with enough care (Rose & Adams 2014) and that heavy structure of an LMS or program curriculum can hinder a teacher's ability to provide accommodations (Murphy & Rodríguez-Manzanares 2008).

Social Presence

In Irving Goffman's seminal work *The presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959), he argues that presenting one's self is comparable to a performance on stage. Dependent on the situation in which one is involved, he will put on a performance in order for the audience,

observers, or any others cannot see what is going on backstage. Goffman established this framework to analyze any social situation, which I argue is highly applicable to the theory of social presence. When learning online began to be mediated through a computer, the definition for social presence underwent an evolution to include how computer mediated communication impacts learning (Kehrwald 2008). The new definition for social presence aims “to describe the combination of skills and abilities which allow them to achieve salient interpersonal interactions” (Kehrwald 2008 p. 99). According to Garrison (2007) establishing a social presence in online education is paramount in order to create an environment for higher-order thinking. Kehrwald (2008) identified three findings that will help facilitators and teachers develop a social presence: (a) the focus should be on purposeful interactions that allow students to make meaning, build knowledge, and be productive; (b) develop “social infrastructure which promotes the combination of ability, opportunity, and motivation” (p. 99); and (c) make accommodations for the needs of the learner in addition to their wants through a balance of flexibility and structure. Social presence has been positively related to cognitive presence in online discussion boards (Lee 2014) and can relate to perceived learning moderated by other criteria such as course length, discipline, and audience of learners (Richardson et al. 2017). One of the pitfalls of creating social presence through computer mediated communication is that often text-based messages can be misinterpreted due to the lack of non-verbal cues (Kehrwald 2008). However, in a study performed by Derks et al. (2008) the researchers determined that emoticons can take place for non-verbal cues lessening the confusion in text based messages mediated through a computer. Emoticons used to express nonverbal emotions was first observed in Gunawardena and Zittle’s (1997) study of an online education conference. Later on it was determined that emoticons can be used as an indicator of a clear affective or emotional expression (Garrison et al.

2000). Students use emoticons when there is a lack of social cues in an online environment (Tu 2002) which can heighten their social presence (Yamada & Akihori 2007), but how can teachers use emoticons? Dunlap et al. (2016) provide the following suggestions for the use of emoticons by instructors in an online environment: (1) personify teaching presence, (2) Make feedback personalized, (3) Make critical feedback more approachable, (4) Establish classroom culture around the use of emoticons, and (5) Use more than just emoticons to convey clear messages.

Self-Efficacy Theory Leads to Teacher-Efficacy

The study of teacher-efficacy comes from Bandura's work on self-efficacy (1977), which he defines as one's feelings about his ability to complete desired tasks or to perform at a desired level. "Those who have a high sense of efficacy visualize success... Those who doubt their efficacy visualize failure scenarios and dwell on the many things that can go wrong" (Bandura 1993, p. 118). Self-efficacy affects four processes: cognitive, motivational, affective, and selection. The cognitive process requires self-belief to be able to use one's skills or knowledge in certain situations. According to Bandura (1993), one's personal accomplishments not only require skills, but also require "self-belief" that one can accomplish the task successfully. Those with the same skills and knowledge may not be able to perform at the same level if there is variance in their individual self-beliefs (Bandura 1993). Self-efficacy affects the motivational processes because when people form beliefs about their ability to accomplish a goal, those beliefs influence the goals they set and how much they value and want to accomplish these goals (Bandura 1993). In addition to motivational processes, self-efficacy has an impact on affective processes. One's belief in their ability to accomplish a task can either give him feelings of confidence, stress, or depression. "Perceived efficacy to exercise control over stressors plays a central role in anxiety arousal" (Bandura 1993, p. 132). One can either control these emotions in

order to achieve a task if he has positive beliefs in his abilities, or he can allow stress and depression to take over his ability and hinder him from accomplishing his goals. Finally, self-efficacy affects one's ability to determine their life courses in the selective process. "The stronger people's belief in their efficacy, the more career options they consider possible, the greater the interest they show in them, the better they prepare themselves educationally for different occupations, and the greater their staying power and success in difficult occupational pursuits" (Bandura 1993, p. 135).

In addition to affecting the cognitive, motivational, affective, and selective processes, Bandura (1997) finds that there are four major influences on self-efficacy: vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, physiological arousal, and mastery experiences. Vicarious experiences occur when a master models a certain activity. Verbal persuasion involves a transactional conversation between the master and pupil in regards to pupil's performance of an activity. Physical arousal adds to one's perceived ability to complete an activity. Positive emotions elicit self-belief while negative emotions regarding the activity can lead to self-doubt. Finally, mastery experiences allow the pupils to perform activities independently in a real world situation. Application of these four influences of self-efficacy have been used to influence the practices of teachers through professional development (PD) and positively increased the self-efficacy of beginning readers (Tschannen-Moran & McMaster 2009).

Why Does Teacher-Efficacy Matter?

Teacher-efficacy "is a judgment of his or her capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning" (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy 2001, p. 783). One of the major goals in education is to keep what is best for the student at the center of each decision an educator makes. So why does teacher-efficacy matter? According to Bandura (1993), the task

of creating conducive learning environments rest in the hands of teachers with talent and high perceived self-efficacy. Teachers with low sense of efficacy “spend more time on nonacademic pastimes, readily give up on students if they do not get quick results, and criticize them for their failures. Thus, teachers who believe strongly in their instructional efficacy create mastery experiences for their students” (Bandura 1993, p. 140). Guo et al. (2012) found that teachers’ self-efficacy has a significant indirect effect on students’ literacy outcomes. Teachers who are more efficacious use more highly effective practices which support learning and contribute to student literacy skills. In another study, it was reported that teacher-efficacy is a significant predictor of students’ perceived closeness to their teacher (Summers et al. 2017). In addition, not only is the teacher’s sense of efficacy essential, but the entire faculty’s sense of efficacy can create a campus with the sense of either academic success or failure (Bandura 1993).

Continued research into measuring teacher-efficacy has grown. Instrumentation measuring teacher-efficacy through surveys with Likert scales have been developed. Bandura (1997) developed a 30-item teacher-efficacy survey with seven subscales: decision making, school resources, instructional, disciplinary, enlist parental involvement, enlist community involvement, and create a positive school climate. Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) used Bandura’s first scale to develop the Ohio State teacher-efficacy scale with questions arranged into three factors: efficacy for instructional strategies, efficacy for classroom management, and efficacy for student engagement. Tschannen-Moran continued her work along with Johnson to develop a Teacher-Efficacy for Literacy Instruction Scale (Tschannen-Moran & Johnson 2011) in order to inform a field of research that is quite small. Although Literacy Instruction might be considered an instructional strategy and could be measured using an instructional strategy measure, Tschannen-Moran and Johnson (2011) also found that the

teacher-efficacy measures and the teacher-efficacy for literacy instruction measures operated independently. They determined that just because teachers had a high sense of efficacy for instructional strategies, that did not also mean they had a high sense of efficacy for literacy instruction. When compared to elementary school teachers, middle school instructors have lower self-efficacy for literacy instruction (Tschannen-Moran & Johnson 2011). Additional instruments have been developed to measure teacher-efficacy in applying computer supported education (Celik & Yesilyurt 2013).

A Greater Focus on Professional Development for Literacy Instruction

The old saying “every teacher is a reading teacher” has become truer and truer in today’s educational landscape. According to the American College Test (ACT 2015) there has been a rapid decline in students meeting the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks in reading comprehension from 50% in 2011 to only 46% in 2015. In response to this, the federal government funded the develop of the CCSS, and now more than ever are English Language Arts (ELA) educators held accountable for what their students can comprehend from a text. The state of Florida has adopted similar standards to CCSS called the Florida Standards (FS) which are assessed through the Florida Standards Assessment (FSA). These standards are more specific, spiral in difficulty, and require high cognitive demands from students. A major component in the CCSS and FS literacy strands for ELA, Science, and Social Studies is the ability for students to use literacy skills.

This gap in literacy achievement has led to PD in literacy strategies and the instructional coach position becoming more prominent in K-12 education. When middle school teachers are given PD in literacy strategies, their general efficacy increases (Cantrell & Hughes 2008). In a synthesis of studies on PD of literacy strategies, Reed (2009) determined that literacy PD should

meet the needs of teachers to increase their confidence in instructing students who come from diverse backgrounds and varied reading abilities while acknowledging the importance of the contextual factors that could affect the implementation of literacy strategies. Collaboration with colleagues and a coach are two important aspects of literacy PD that teachers found most effective (Cantrell & Hughes 2008, Reed 2009).

Many of these PD models in the studies have taken place at traditional, face-to-face classrooms and focused on academic reading (Cantrell & Hughes 2008) and other traditional literacy techniques such as dissecting words, fluency, and comprehension (Reed 2009). However, the models of PD and the type of strategies used may not work in an online, asynchronous learning environment nor did they instruct teachers on teaching new 21st-century literacies.

Professional Learning Communities

When asked about the impact of PD on their practice, not even 25% of teachers report that it affected their instruction (Horizon 2002). In contrast to the typical forms of PD, PLCs were found to impact teachers by helping them become more student centered as well as feeling more authoritatively empowered and wanting to continuously learn (Vescio et al. 2007). A PLC is a group of professionals who share and critically investigate their own practices in an “ongoing, reflective, collaborative, inclusive, learning-oriented, growth-promoting way” (Stoll et al. 2006 p. 223). Vescio et al. (2007) and Stoll et al. (2006) describe the various characteristics of a PLC as having the following: (1) shared values and vision, (2) collective responsibility, (3) reflective professional inquiry, (4) collaboration, (5) group and individual learning is promoted, (6) knowledge is situated in the day-to-day experience of teachers, (7) clear consistent focus on student learning, (8) reflective dialogue between colleagues. In addition to these characteristics,

the future PLC research should document the impact a PLC could have on teaching practice (Vescio et al. 2007). Though typically facilitated in a face-to-face model, teachers also value virtual PLCs via teleconferencing as an effective alternative if distance separates educators with a common goal (McConnell et al. 2012).

Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory of Reading and Writing

Rosenblatt's transactional theory stems from Dewey's (1934) idea of *an* experience as an event or process that has a clear beginning and end. In his seminal work *Art as Experience*, Dewey (1934) explains how "we have *an* experience when the material experienced runs its course to fulfillment. Then and then only is it integrated within and demarcated in the general stream of experience from other experiences. A piece of work is finished in a way that is satisfactory... Such an experience is a whole and carries with it its own individualizing quality and self-sufficiency. It is *an* experience" (p. 36-7). *An* experience becomes aesthetic in the Deweyan epistemology when the experience becomes "appreciative, perceiving, and enjoying. It denotes the consumer's rather than the producer's standpoint. It is gusto, taste" (Dewey 1934, p. 49). Often when experiences lack the clear beginning and end, and are mechanical in nature, they create an anesthetic experience, and many times some are fooled into thinking that these mechanical experiences create an aesthetic experience for students in the classroom. Hewitt (2006) warns against this commercialization of education in the hopes that a turn to a more Deweyan perspective on education can liberate students and truly provide them with the means and understanding for a democratic life.

After the development of Dewey's epistemology of the aesthetic experience emerged the Transactional Theory of Reading and Writing from Louise Rosenblatt, a literary theorist, critic, and educator in two seminal works: *Literature as Exploration* (1965/1995) and *The Reader, the*

Text, the Poem (1978). The tenets of Rosenblatt's theory are that (1) the transaction occurs when a student takes a stance somewhere on the efferent to aesthetic scale, (2) students bring with them past experiences which affects how they read a text, and (3) There are several valid readings of a text. The job of the teacher of literature is to guide students through this transactional process in order to mold the student's ability to make judgements and evaluations in the real world.

The Event of the Transaction

Along with the scientific community during the early 1900s and Dewey's philosophy, "*transaction* is being used to designate a process in which the elements are aspects or phases of a total situation. The underlying metaphor is organic, as in the ecological view of human beings in a reciprocal relationship with the natural environment" (Rosenblatt 1965/1995, p. 26). This *transaction* occurs between the reader and the text from which springs a poem that is individual and unique to each reader. When meaning is derived from the *transaction*, now the reader and the text both contribute to the creation of meaning and have equal importance in the transaction. Her theory posits that the text "should not be seen as self-contained, ungrounded, ready-made code of signifiers and signifieds(sp), but as embodied in transactions between individuals and their social and natural context" (Rosenblatt 1986, p. 124).

While writing about the reader, Rosenblatt contends that readers have a much more difficult job because they must pick up on non-linguistic cues in the text such as emphasis, pitch, inflection, rhythm. They also should incorporate aspects of a viewer in the form of facial expression and gesture (Rosenblatt 1978, p. 20). While viewing art, Dewey (1934) delineates between recognition and perception. "The difference between the two is immense. Recognition is perception arrested before it has a chance to develop freely" (Dewey 1934, p. 54). Dewey goes

on to describe recognition as falling back on stereo-types, barely filled in outlines. However, he does recognize that recognition is the first step toward perception where “the perceived object or scene is emotionally pervaded throughout” (Dewey 1934, p. 55). From the dichotomy between recognition and perception springs Rosenblatt’s efferent to aesthetic continuum using the text as the “perceived object” in the transaction. Aesthetic reading requires the reader “to focus attention on what is being lived through in relation to the text *during* the reading event... This lived-through ‘work’, this ‘evocation’, is what the reader ‘responds to’ as it is being called forth during the transaction, and as it is reflected on, interpreted, evaluated, analyzed, criticized afterwards” (Rosenblatt 1986, p. 124). The aesthetic stance is quite personal and individual to each reader, who focuses his “attention to the associations, feelings, attitudes, and ideas that [the] words and their referents arouse within him. ‘Listening to’ himself, [the reader] synthesizes these elements into a meaningful structure” (Rosenblatt 1978, p. 25). No one else can have the same aesthetic experience while reading as another, because each reader brings new relations and connections to each reading. While thinking of Rosenblatt’s aesthetic stance in regards to Dewey’s aesthetic experience, it is the hope that aesthetic experiences can give students “an enriched sense that students are creating something in and through themselves, a synthesis of what they have already discovered and what and who they are becoming” (Gaudelli & Hewitt 2010, p. 97).

In contrast to the aesthetic stance, when one takes an *efferent* stance while reading, “[m]eaning results from an abstracting out and analytically structuring of the ideas, information, directions, or conclusions to be retained, used, or acted on after the reading event” (Rosenblatt 1994, p. 11). Rosenblatt’s lists examples of efferent reading such as instructions for medication, cooking recipe, algebraic equations, and chemical formulas (Rosenblatt 1978, p. 24).

Rosenblatt contends that a reader can approach any text aesthetically or efferent-ly, however “we should think rather of most reading as hovering near the middle of our continuum. This would do justice to the fact that the reader has to learn to handle his multiple responses to texts in a variety of complex ways, moving the center of attention toward the efferent or aesthetic ends of the spectrum” (Rosenblatt 1978, p. 37). I argue that reading in the middle is akin to Aristotle’s golden mean. In his *Nicomachean Ethics* (trans. 1996), Aristotle argues that the intermediate is relative to us, not to the object at hand. In this instance, Aristotle takes into account that the virtuous life and the intermediate is different for everyone, as is the reading event and being able to read in the middle. The past, lived experiences of all readers vary. It is the job of the reading teacher to help develop this reading in the middle so that students can generate a virtuous reading of text that can appeal both to the efferent and aesthetic stances.

Past, Lived Experiences

For both Dewey and Rosenblatt, a student’s past, lived experiences affect the way they perceive art or literature. Dewey writes that it is part of the transaction, “a transformation of energy into thoughtful action, through assimilation of meanings from the background of past experiences. The junction of the new and old is not a mere composition of forces, but is a recreation in which the present impulsion gets form and solidity while the old, the ‘stored,’ material is literally revived, given new life and soul through having to meet a new situation” (Dewey 1934, p. 63). Rosenblatt too acknowledges that the viewer’s or reader’s lived experiences influences his perception. “[W]e must recognize the reader brings to or adds to the nonverbal or socio-physical setting his whole past experience of life and literature. His memories, his present preoccupations, his sense of values, his aspirations, enter into a

relationship with the text” (Rosenblatt 1978, p. 81). Therefore, “the experience of no two people, not even of two children within the same family, is identical” (Rosenblatt 1965/1995, p. 147).

Literature on Using Rosenblatt’s Transactional Theory

Though Rosenblatt’s Transactional Theory is eloquently set in her seminal works, there is little in her writing that scaffolds the process for teachers to use in the classroom, and very little literature on the use of the transactional theory in the online environment. The following sections review the literature using, or closely associated with using, Rosenblatt’s transactional theory as a theoretical framework. I focused on searching for practices that help students take an aesthetic stance toward literacy or in some way reawake a past, lived experience in the study. The sections are organized by important topics in literacy and reading as determined by the International Reading Association (IRA), and National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) (IRA & NCTE 1996) and National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD 2000). The literature also expands Sanders (2012) concept that Rosenblatt’s Transactional Theory of Reading and Writing can help students develop both traditional literacy skills such as the ones stated previously, but also develop new twenty-first century literacy skills such as application of prior knowledge, inferential reasoning, and self-regulated reading processes (Coiro & Dobler 2007). The literature in these preceding sections tend to include strategies and practices that have students take a more aesthetic stance toward literacy practices, however they do not necessarily acknowledge that Rosenblatt (1978) thinks that most reading should occur in the middle of the efferent-aesthetic continuum.

Fluency: Choral Reading

The NICHD (2000) defines fluent readers as those who “are able to read orally with speed, accuracy, and proper expression” (p. 11). Two instructional strategies are used to teach

fluency: (1) guided, repeated oral reading and (2) independent silent reading. While observing her classroom and finding that her students are not engaged enough to handle the complexity of the texts and tasks of the new CCSS, Brewer (2016) incorporated choral reading into her classroom to support students' language learning and fluency. "Choral readings are not a performance of epic acting ability but provide an opportunity to explore an understanding of text through symbolic choices with movement and text" (p. 77). Brewer found that through the use of choral reading students understand the purpose of the text, which has students take an aesthetic stance on the efferent-aesthetic continuum.

Vocabulary Instruction: Semantic Association and Semantic Mapping

According to the NICHD (2000), vocabulary instruction leads to reading comprehension gains and ought to be taught directly and indirectly. The importance of semantic mapping in vocabulary instruction began with the studies conducted by Stahl and Vancil (1986) who describe semantic mapping as an activity during which "a teacher chooses a key word and other target words from material that the students will read. The key word is listed on the board and students are asked to suggest terms associated with the key word" (p. 62). The teacher continues to list the words suggested by the students on the board. The teacher hands an incomplete semantic map to each student. Students then read the materials containing the key word and target words. Afterwards, students and teacher discuss their concept maps. This activity contains essences of Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory because students are required to think about their past, lived experiences and to draw on their "already existing knowledge structures through the use of the map" (Stahl and Vancil 1986 p. 64). When paired with discussion, the semantic mapping activity yield positive results to vocabulary development and acquisition. The National Reading Panel (2000) suggests in their report that semantic mapping to

help provide vocabulary instruction. More recently Nash and Snowling (2006) finds that teaching vocabulary in context along with semantic mapping yielded positive results in finding meaning in text when compared to a group who were given strictly definition vocabulary instruction. However, Wright and Cervetti (2016) still suggests that more studies should be conducted to advocate the generalizability of the impact of semantic mapping on vocabulary instruction and reading comprehension.

Reading Comprehension: Questioning and Discussion Techniques

The National Reading Panel (2000) suggests using transactional strategies as an instructional technique to help students develop reading comprehension. They describe transactional strategies as “the ability of teachers to facilitate student discussions in which students collaborate to form joint interpretations of text and acquire a deeper understanding of the mental and cognitive processes involved in comprehension” (p. 16). Standard 3 of the *Standards for the English Language Arts* (IRA & NCTE 1996) states that “students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identifications strategies, and their understanding of textual features” (p. 22). Much of the existing literature on reading comprehension inspired by Rosenblatt’s Transactional Theory explores the impact of either using a more aesthetic stance in response to text or activating a student’s past, lived experience to have a deeper transaction with the text.

Early quantitative research by Many (1991) indicates that students taking an aesthetic stance toward literature is associated with high levels of personal understanding. The quantitative study of the use of transactional strategies in the classroom continued in several studies that

showed that strategies in which students take a more aesthetic stance toward reading are associated with better comprehension (Block et al. 2009; Khatib & Farahian 2013; Henschel et al. 2016) than the standard curriculum.

In a study of a younger population of 2nd through 6th grade students across the United States, Block et al. (2009) had several experimental groups each using a different widely-used literacy instructional strategy: work book practice, individualized schema-based learning, situated practice, conceptual learning, and transactional learning. In this study the transactional learning was used in the form of selecting books that were thematically related. Students would read these books for 15 minutes and then discuss for the last 5 minutes. The questions varied requiring the “students to relate the books read to the theme that was being studied. The teacher opened every discussion by asking, ‘What did you read today that furthered your understanding of the theme being studied?’” (Block et al. 2009, p. 270). At the end of the study, they found that in addition to traditional literacy instruction students who receive an extra 20 minutes of literacy instruction using either individualized schema-based learning, conceptual learning, or transactional learning performed just as well or better than their peers in a state-wide reading comprehension examination.

In Iran, Khatib and Farahian (2013) tested three groups: one control group and two experimental groups. One group received the standard curriculum, while the other two groups were given different reader response tasks: in class discussion taking an aesthetic stance and reading logs that helped the students take an aesthetic stance. The group with the discussions focused on questions derived from Mitchell (1993) such as “what struck you about the story? What kinds of things did you notice? What would you like to talk about after reading this? What issues did it raise for you? Were there parts that confused you? What questions would you like to

ask? Did anything upset you or make you angry? Is there anything you want to ask about any of the characters? How did you feel after you read the story? What made you feel this way?" (p. 4). The other group used reading logs inspired by Carlisle (2000) in which the students ask questions about themselves in relation to characters, memories from past experiences provoked by the short story, reflecting on the most striking moments, and sharing their thoughts and feelings about what occurred in the short story. Both the strategies from Mitchell (1993) and Carlisle (2000) have students take a more aesthetic stance having the students become a part of the reading (Rosenblatt 1978). When Khatib and Farahian ran a one-way ANOVA to compare the performance between the control and two experimental groups, they found that the experimental group using the reading logs outperformed the control and experimental discussion group.

In Germany, Henschel et al (2016) performed a study in which they placed a population of low achieving readers into two experimental groups and one control group. The first experimental group received text-based task and the second experimental group received reader oriented tasks inspired by Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reading. The control group received the standard curriculum. The experimental group performing reader-oriented tasks were asked to change the text into different media or genres, create new texts, or to illustrate text passages (Henschel et al. 2016, p. 15). Their results indicate that the text-based experimental group slightly outperformed the reader-oriented task experimental group and the control group.

Lysaker and Tonge (2013) developed relationally oriented reading instruction (RORI), a reading method that uses Rosenblatt's transaction as a setting where "readers form relationships with fictional others through the use of social imagination as part of the meaning-making process" (p. 634). In this process, teachers and students read using an interactive style that makes

the entire group think about the text “to demonstrate and foster children’s abilities to understand the thoughts, feelings, and intentions of others by focusing on picture book characters” (p. 635). At the conclusion of their study, RORI produced positive outcomes in listening comprehension, narrative comprehension, and social imagination (Lysaker & Tonge 2013). Although the study was performed on elementary school students, there are implications that using this model could help middle school and high school students take a more aesthetic stance to understand character traits, motives, and actions as well as develop an understanding of difficult themes in a variety of literature.

In order to use a student’s own experience and knowledge during the reading transaction, Pennell (2014) used dialogic discourse and the fluidity of text to aid students’ reading comprehension. Through dialogic discourse and philosophical inquiry, students develop their ability to reason. In addition, “[t]hrough open ended discussions, students negotiate ideas with peers, experience tension in their thinking, and collectively search for meaning” (Pennell 2014, 253). In her study, students went through discourse training, completed story maps, vocabulary development, and think-aloud in order to develop and to test hypotheses on literature. The components of her intervention are “the dialogic frame of discourse, the fluidity of the text, and the readers’ experiential knowledge” (Pennell 2014, p. 254). Like Rosenblatt, Pennell (2014) contends that the text has no ready-made meaning intrinsically placed which allows the reader to let their experiences influence the text. The philosophical discourse allows readers the freedom and enables the teacher to facilitate a conversation that involves both the critical thinking necessary in philosophical discourse along with students’ past, lived experiences.

Similar to Pennell (2014), Maine (2013) sought to engage students with the text through dialogue and conversation, although Maine leaves out the philosophical inquiry piece. Instead,

her case study sought to examine “How do children engage in the transaction to make meaning from the text? How did they engage in the transaction with each other? How did a hypothetical modality of language enable the transactions between readers and text?” (Maine 2013, p. 151) positing that an additional component of the transaction exists: transaction between readers in co-creating meaning. The past experiences of the children indicate that they may derive differing meanings from the text. Using this method, Maine observed that students were able to make meaning and show comprehension through “creative thinking and dialogue, with children building on the ideas of each other in a dialogic space that existed between themselves and the text” (Main 2013, p. 154) instead of just a text and one, single reader.

Using read aloud as a vehicle for facilitating the textual transaction, Morrison and Wlodarczyk (2009) sought to create text-to-self connections for students. They give the following instructions: The text-to-self connection happens when something in the text reminds them of their own lives and that a teacher modeling reading aloud and also thinking aloud their text-to-self connection. The strategy is meant to enhance the students’ understanding of the complex text when they hear the process modeled verbally and then can create concept maps or notes.

When exploring the literature written using Rosenblatt’s Transactional Theory as a theoretical framework, the quantitative studies have shown mixed results in regards to appealing to a students’ aesthetic stance, although qualitative results show that students are often more engaged and ready to have a transaction with the text. However, the body of literature associates Rosenblatt’s Transactional Theory with Reader Response theory and most of the studies only appeal to the aesthetic stance. Rosenblatt advocates that reading should occur somewhere in the middle of the efferent-aesthetic continuum (1978). Future research using Rosenblatt’s Transactional Theory as a theoretical frame should do justice to this key tenet.

Writing Instruction

The IRA and NCTE (1996) provides supplemental standards that coincide with CCSS and other state standards. The IRA and NCTE believes that “[r]eading and writing are intertwined. Emergent writing efforts focus young learners’ attention on details of text and reinforce beginning concepts about how print is produced” (1996 p. 25). Rosenblatt (1995) finds parallels in both the reading and writing process believing that both can be viewed as a transaction. “As with the reader, any new meanings are restructurings or extensions of the stock of experiences the writer brings to the task” (p. 17). In “Interrogating texts: from deferent to efferent and aesthetic reading practices” (Hogue Smith 2012), the author attempts to triangulate Rosenblatt’s reading spectrum with a new type of reading: deferent. The deferent reading experience allows the reader to narrow his focus with the assumption that the text is difficult and too hard to comprehend. Instead of being blinded by this fear, Hogue Smith encourages her students to interrogate the text “by focusing on questions instead of answers” (p. 65). She provides clear instructions that require the students to first read questions/directions for assessments, answer the question or respond to the direction, ask questions of the task, share responses with a group and repeat. Hogue Smith finds that this process allows the students to come to a clearer understanding of the text. The pitfall of her work is that she simply writes a reflection on practice and observation, not a formal study.

Multimedia and Technological Literacy Instruction

In order to examine how students use their past, lived experiences, Hammond (2012) conducted a study using reader response theory as her theoretical frame. She sought “to determine whether students’ knowledge of comic conventions involving multi-modal literacy skills would affect their responses to a graphic novel” (Hammond 2012, p. 26). Having students

read the graphic novel *American Born Chinese*, the students were able to struggle with important social issues such as immigration, culture, racial identity, and stereotyping. The students took surveys and participated in discussion groups. Hammond (2012) found that reading a graphic novel came naturally to most, but scaffolding was necessary to indicate what the visual cues specific to graphic novels meant. By using Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory and exploring the student's experience, Hammond (2012) concludes that "[g]raphic novels are capable of presenting serious issues, and [that] students felt that they could be included in the school curriculum" (p. 30).

Ethical Instruction

Many of the supplemental standards from the IRA and NCTE (1996) incorporate ethical understanding of reading and writing as part of the ELA curriculum. In a case study with preservice teachers and adolescents in an online environment, Schieble (2010) observed how teachers through questioning can prompt discussion that helps students take an aesthetic stance toward constructing "the other", which is the construct of a character or person who differs from the reader. Ultimately, the case-study IS intended to see if the assumption that taking an aesthetic stance helps develop an understanding of "the other" in the hopes that "these assumptions [would] inform English teachers and teacher educators working toward more equitable schooling practices" (Schieble 2010, p. 376). Drawing on the student's sense of communities and cultural knowledge, Schieble seeks to take an aesthetic stance in the transaction with literature. "Framing their teaching as leading to self-transformation and critical self-reflection, the teachers positioned the adolescents as part of a dominant and oppressive heterosexual culture" (Schieble 2010). Using digital media allows teachers to reflect on the questions and conversations that follow.

Interdisciplinary Use of Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory

In another reflective paper, "Experiencing documents" (Latham 2014), posits that Rosenblatt's transactional theory can be applied not only to reading, but to the study of various objects Latham calls 'documents'. Although documents such as newspapers and other library and information science articles focus mainly on efferent readings, Latham argues that "the aesthetic stance with regards to document experience is less often subjected to systematic inquiry" (p. 547) which then opens the door to her research. In her study prior to this paper, Latham (2007) uses Rosenblatt's transactional theory as a lens through which to view museum objects. Participants in Latham's (2007) study yielded four connective descriptions: Unity of the Moment, Object Linkage, Being Transported, and Connections Bigger Than Self. One of the major contributions Latham provides to the development of Research in Transactional Theory and Aesthetic Experience are the descriptions her previous studies have yielded as well as a questionnaire that can aid in the study of aesthetic experience.

Gamification: Narrative-Centered Learning

In science education, narrative-centered learning has been widely studied and tested as an effective means through which to teach science content (Spires 2015, Lester et al. 2014, Rowe et al. 2011, McQuiggan et al. 2008). Narrative-centered learning theory is based on two principles (Gerrig 1993): (1) transporting readers through a text taking them to another place and time that compels feelings of reality and (2) having the reader perform some role, like an actor, in the narrative. Spires (2015) relates the idea of using gamification to both the narrative-centered learning approach and Rosenblatt's transactional theory. "In the same way that a good reader employs a particular stance to achieve his or her reading purpose and goals, game players may employ a stance, not unlike those in the efferent-aesthetic continuum, to read and participate

successfully in the game” (p. 128). Researchers have found that the addition of narrative-centered learning approaches such as games like *Crystal Island* provide a cognitive load that helps to support students’ science content mastery (Lester et al. 2014). In addition, when empathetic characters are used in the narratives, students show significant signs of being present and empathetic to the cause of the character, the effect having a greater impact on middle school students versus high school students (McQuiggan et al. 2008).

Narrative-centered learning has not only had an impact on science education, but also writing education. Dickey (2011) found that using narrative-centered learning to facilitate argumentative writing instruction piques student curiosity which aided them in transferring their experiences with the narrative to performing prewriting activities.

Criticism of the Transactional Theory

In “The emergence of pragmatic philosophy’s influence on literary theory: Making meaning with texts from a transactional perspective”, Connell (2008) provides a detailed history of literary theory in the early twentieth-century, an overview of Rosenblatt’s transactional theory, and critical questions and concerns for the theory in practice. The organization of this conceptual paper made it clear that Connell attempted to engage in a dialogic with the text to extract limitations and questions for practice.

In her address to the theory itself, Connell (2008) posits that transactional theory does not go far enough in addressing the social and cultural conditions of the reader. How do these conditions come into play with the personal responses, feelings, and connections the readers make with the text during transaction? When it comes to concerns about practice in the classroom, Connell (2008) explains the unpredictability during classroom discussion can be a deterrent. There are also logistical concerns about transactional theory. Since each response to a

text is individual, it can be difficult to manage the responses of a massive amount of students which may lead to generalizations during class, a clear, decisive turn away from transactional theory. The shortcomings of Connell's questions and concerns are in her lack of solutions to these clear problems of practice.

However, Cai (2008) and Spring (2016) seem to address shortcomings in problems of practice and misunderstanding of theory in her research refuting Connell's position. Cai (2008) responds to several critical responses to Rosenblatt's theory in practice throughout "Transactional theory and the study of multicultural literature" arguing that with a thorough understanding of transactional theory, educators will be able to heighten students' "aesthetic and efferent responses to multicultural literature to a higher level of critical reading" (p. 219). One of the critical responses to Rosenblatt's theory is it lacks the depth for critical thinking or critical literacy. While admitting that Rosenblatt does not delve into the critical perspectives of various theorists, Rosenblatt contends that Transactional Theory uses aesthetic reading as the first step toward developing critical literacy through various perspectives and theories, not completely disregarding them as components of literary theory. As Connell (2008) expressed in her work, Rosenblatt does not address the social and cultural conditions of the reader in her theory. However, Cai (2008) explicitly cites Rosenblatt stating that the readers social, cultural, and political conditions play a role in aesthetic response. Aesthetic response also has three components: perception, association, and affection. Each of these three parts contributes in some part to critical reading. In addition, Spring (2016) performed a case-study in which she observed that students' transactions with the texts "were shaped by their knowledge of the world, including their experiences of place" (p. 368).

Transactional Theory in Preservice Teacher Education

Creating meaningful experiences in the classroom presents itself as a complex problem of practice in “Aesthetic flow experience in the teaching of preservice language arts teachers” (Augustine & Zoss 2006). The teacher educators perform a study on 19 preservice teachers in which they incorporate conversations about aesthetic flow experience into their ELA education curriculum. Throughout the course, they are able to gather personal anecdotes from each student and use the class to help describe the aesthetic flow experience as such: Intangible becomes tangible; Sensory stimulation; Beyond “physical” surroundings—back in time; A different frame of mind or unfamiliar territory; An A-Ha experience; A greater understanding; making meaning; A flow experience or being in the zone; An overwhelming; consuming surreal moment; Feeling of being transported out of yourself; Thinking and feeling come together; Difficult to put into words; Sounds weird to others; Involves tensions and intensities in terms of emotions (Augustine & Zoss 2006, p. 80). The authors also provide a set of questions and subcategories that help students describe the aesthetic flow experience into words.

The next study, “Venturing into unknown territory: using aesthetic representations to understand reading comprehension” (Cuero et al. 2008), aims to educate pre-service elementary teachers in early reading pedagogy, which, to the authors, has become quite mechanical. This mechanical nature made the experience of teaching reading anesthetic and efferent rather than a meaningful, aesthetic experience. Instead of having their students complete assessments that were rather formalized and impersonal, the authors had students create aesthetic representations of the reading process and early reading education that connect to an activity to which the students are emotionally close. Findings indicate that “[s]tudents affirmed that the aesthetic representations yielded greater insight into the sociocultural and affective aspects of literacy

development” (p. 19). Using the aesthetic representations build deeper connections between the feelings of the students and the content knowledge gained in literacy education.

Implications of the Literature for this Study

The literature explored the origins and current body of work on transactional distance, social presence, self-efficacy, teacher-efficacy, literacy instruction PD, PLCs, and Rosenblatt’s Transactional Theory of Reading and Writing. The literature review provides a theoretical framework through which to view TELI as well as developing some gaps in the research. First, TELI has been measured in the past (Tschannen-Moran & Johnson 2011), but none of the studies have explored the TELI of online instructors. Secondly, the completely online, asynchronous environment and changing population of online learners presents new challenges for K-12 online instructors, but none have conducted a study in regards to the impact that transactional distance has on K-12 online instructor’s TELI. Third, literacy PD appears to raise the efficacy of instructors when a coach is involved, however PLCs have become the new standard for professional development in many organizations but the method lacks a coaching role. Fourth, the use of Rosenblatt’s transactional theory of reading and writing has been studied both quantitatively and qualitatively in traditional settings, but has yet to be examined in an online setting and from the perspective of the teachers as the unit of analysis. Finally, much of the literature refers to the use of Rosenblatt’s transactional theory for students to take a more aesthetic stance on literacy instruction, however this ignores Rosenblatt’s suggestion that readers should read somewhere in the middle of the continuum (Rosenblatt 1978).

From the gaps developed in the literature review, I pose three research questions: (1) What pedagogical practices do instructors use to provide literacy instruction in an online environment? (2) How do instructors perceive their TELI in an online environment? After

answering these two questions, I will then seek to describe how teachers implement Rosenblatt's transactional theory in an online environment and then answer my main research question: (3) What impact, if any, will a PLC focused on Rosenblatt's transactional theory have on TELI in an online environment? Sanders (2012) and Dockter (2015) looked to Rosenblatt's transactional theory as possible remedies to the problems of teaching new twenty-first century literacies and teaching in general in an online environment. Sanders feels that the perspective of students and the flexibility of the interpretation of text or media can allow students to think critically in the various new forms of media students need to comprehend in the twenty-first century, while Dockter sheds light on how each transaction with a student in an online environment ought to be individualized and meaningful, however these assumptions are anecdotal and have not been systematically tested quantitatively or qualitatively

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

In this chapter, I outline the methods used develop the study on TELI in an online environment. The literature review in the previous chapter revealed several gaps in the body of research. First, TELI has been measured in the past (Tschannen-Moran & Johnson 2011), but none of the studies have explored the TELI of online instructors. Secondly, the completely online, asynchronous environment and changing population of online learners presents new challenges for K-12 online instructors, but none have conducted a study in regards to the impact of transactional distance has on K-12 online instructor's TELI. Third, literacy PD appears to raise the efficacy of instructors when a coach is involved (Cantrell & Hughs 2008, Reed 2009), however PLCs have become the new standard for professional development in many organizations but the method lacks a coaching role and lacks activities that increase TELI. Finally, much of the literature refers to the use of Rosenblatt's transactional theory for students to take a more aesthetic stance during literacy instruction, however this ignores Rosenblatt's suggestion that readers should read somewhere in the middle of the efferent-aesthetic continuum (Rosenblatt 1978).

From the gaps developed in the literature review, I have formulated three research questions: (1) What pedagogical practices do instructors use to provide literacy instruction in an online environment? (2) How do instructors perceive their TELI in an online environment? (3) What impact, if any, will a PLC focused on Rosenblatt's transactional theory have on TELI in an online environment?

Studies on the experiences of using technology in education or education mediated through technology is quite limited and is a field in need for deep, rich investigation that phenomenology can offer (Cilesiz 2011). Phenomenological studies have been performed

detailing the student experience in online learning environments such as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) (Adams et al. 2014) and the online teacher's experience of giving care (Rose & Adams 2014). Based on the success of these studies to detail the lived experiences of humans living through experiences in an online environment and the ability of phenomenology to bring them to life, I decided to use a phenomenological methodology for this study. I first establish a methodological framework. Then, I explain the philosophical implications behind qualitative phenomenological research. Afterwards, I describe the site and context of the study along with participant selection. Then, I provide a description of the data collection tools and an explanation of the Action Research PLC process that occurred. Finally, I explain the data analysis process and any issues in trustworthiness in this study.

Methodological Framework

Since the observation of TELI in an online environment is some rather uncharted territory, I want to select a methodological framework that will truly do justice to observe the initial TELI of online instructors prior to intervention and the possible impact of Rosenblatt's transactional theory on TELI. According to Creswell (2013), there are four philosophical assumptions necessary in order to produce qualitative research: ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological. Ontological issues relate to the reality as it is lived during the study and reporting the multiple realities that occur with each individual participating in the study. The epistemological assumption requires that the researcher becomes very close to the participants in the study. The researcher is in the field with the participants and interprets their experiences subjectively. The axiological assumption requires that the researcher implement his own beliefs and past experiences with the subject into the study so that they are clearly known by all participants and those that read his study. This allows the researcher to position himself so

that biases are known when interpreting data and information. Finally, Creswell describes the methodological assumption as “inductive, emerging, and shaped by the researcher’s experience in collecting and analyzing the data” (2013 p. 22). Qualitative research follows an inductive reasoning, starting without any presuppositions. During the research process, research questions may change and therefore data collection methods may also need to change in accordance. This was the case after the initial interview phase of the study during which data revealed that two additional sub-questions should be answered: (a) “What impact, if any, does transactional distance have on TELI?” and (b) “What impact, if any, will Rosenblatt’s transactional theory have on teachers’ perception of transactional distance?”

Qualitative Phenomenological Research

When selecting which qualitative approach to use in my design, I wondered which type will truly allow me to embody the experiences of the teachers as they venture to understand their own TELI in an online environment, and to follow them as they adopt a new theoretical framework from which to base their practices. Although each participant in the study gave individual accounts of their TELI, finding common experiences was important to understand the essence of literacy instruction in an online environment using Rosenblatt’s transactional theory. In phenomenological research, the approach has the researcher gather common experiences from individuals to develop the essence of an experience (Creswell 2013).

Phenomenology explores a single idea through the lived experiences of the participants in the study (Creswell 2013). Phenomenological study has its roots in the field of philosophy starting with Husserl’s *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie* (1913), but also continued in the works of Sartre (1943), and other philosophers and researchers of the mid 1900s. Researchers like van Manen (1984), Moustakas (1994), and

Colaizzi (1978) used Husserl as a foundation for the procedures they employed to perform phenomenological analysis. I use Husserl, Sartre, van Manen, Moustakas, and Colaizzi's philosophy and procedures as the foundation for the methods used to perform this study.

Starting with Husserl (1913), the German mathematician sought to contrast *transcendental* phenomenology with the psychological phenomenology of his time in explaining that his *pure* phenomenology is eidetic, or vivid, and irreal, or not real. First, the researcher should identify the *phenomenon* he wants to study. In Sartre's *L'être et le néant*, the French author and philosopher expounds on Husserl's phenomenology to explore one's existence of being. Sartre describes a phenomenon as absolute because "it reveals itself as it is. The phenomenon can be studied and described as such, for it is *absolutely indicative of itself*" (Sartre 1943 p. 5). Van Manen writes that phenomenological research is the study of "the world as we immediately experience it rather than as we conceptualize, categorize, or theorize about it" (1984 p. 37).

In order to describe a phenomenon, one must describe its *essences*, or linguistic interpretations of a phenomenon. "A good description that constitutes the essence of something is construed so that the structure of a lived experience is revealed to us in such a fashion that we are now able to grasp the nature and significance of [the] experience in a hitherto unseen way" (Van Manen 1984 p. 43). Moreover, Husserl writes that a "transition to pure essence yields, on the one side, eidetic cognition of the real; on the other side, with respect to the remaining sphere, it yields eidetic cognition of the irreal. Moreover, it will become apparent that all transcendently purified 'mental processes' [*Erlebnisse*'] are irrealities posited outside any incorporation into the 'actual world'" (1913 p. xxi). When the researcher discovers one of many

essences of a phenomenon, the essence “is the manifest law which presides over the succession of its appearances, it is the principle of the series” (Sartre 1943 p. 5).

The goal is to develop an exhaustive description of the phenomenon through the many common essences and thematic clusters that make themselves discoverable during the process of documenting a lived-through experience. The description of the phenomenon developed by the researcher should transcend the events that have occurred in the study so that it can contribute to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. “Thus the appearance, which is *finite*, indicates itself in its finitude, but at the same time in order to be grasped as an appearance-of-that-which-appears, it requires that it be surpassed toward infinity” (Sartre 1943 p. 6).

Narratology: Silence and Covert Narratives

Narratology is the scientific study of narratives (Berning 2011). Originating in the mid 1900s through analysis of Russian folklore, narratology broke off into two separate schools of thought: classical and postclassical. I use the ladder to examine the voices of the participants and what their narratives describe. According to Genette (1980), perspective can be broken-down into voice and mood. Voice, in this study, acts as an important vehicle. Through narratives and story telling, teacher educators, or even PD facilitators, can help teachers recognize that their experiences have implications about their beliefs about their practice (Olan 2015; Olan & Kaplan 2014). In addition, experiences both in preservice education and in the field are valuable experiences that can inform practice (Whitney et al. 2013). The silence narrative is a concept developed from the field of psychology that has implications for qualitative research. In narrative research, Clair (1997), in an attempt to organize the silence of the stories about the Treaty of New Echota, a famous historical event in Cherokee history, explains that silence takes many forms. People are silenced either physically, through imprisonment, or through acculturation.

Fivush (2010) describes two different types of silence: being silenced or being silent. Being silenced implies an outside force “when [it] is contrasted with voice, it is conceptualised[sp] as imposed, and it signifies a loss of power and self” (Fivush 2010 p. 88-9). Being silent, in contrast, has implications of power either through shared silence or self silence in the form of reflection or meditation (Fivush 2010). Often times, silence narratives are discovered within a predominant culture that have established “both normative and prescriptive [narratives. The silence narrative emerges when] experiences conform or deviate from these narratives [which] create spaces for voice and silence” (Fivush 2010 p. 89). Silence research has begun to emerge in educational studies (Skrla 2000) finding that silence marginalizes female superintendents. In order to give being silenced a voice, Clair (1997) suggests that a “combined [historical and personal] narrative form allows [one] to voice an injustice that has never been rectified” (p. 332). In an ethnographic study, Zembylas and Vrasidas (2007) attempted to listen to the silence of online learners in both synchronous and asynchronous environments. They too found that silence has multiple meanings such as (1) non-participation, (2) confusion, (3) marginalization, and (4) thoughtful reflection, all of which are in agreeance with Fivush (2010) that silence can create both positive and negative narratives. In a review of psychological literature, O’Grady and Meinecke (2015) found that silence “generates psychological phenomena such as pressure, anxiety, suspicion, isolation, rejection, inner conflict, ambiguity, and agitation” (p. 17). Although research has been done on the silencing of a marginalized group of female superintendents and students in both synchronous and asynchronous environments, studies still have yet to be performed on online teachers.

When examining narratives, one must also examine what type of narrator each narrative has. Jahn (2005) defines two types of narrators: overt and covert. Covert narrators provide a

narrative voice that “fades into the background, perhaps, one who camouflages him- or herself, who goes into hiding” (Jahn 2005 p. 6). One way to silence one’s narrative is for the narrator to take on this “covertness” in the way he reveals his narrative.

Site of Study and Professional Learning Community Setting

This study took place in a PLC within one of a middle schoolhouse at the online school district servicing the state of Florida. All instructors in the middle schoolhouse must be part of a PLC in order to focus their PD on problems in practice for their respective grade level, content, or professional learning needs. Within the PLC, the cohort of teachers is able to choose between a Lesson Study or Action Research model. This study used an Action Research PLC model. According to Fitzpatrick et al. (2011), action research helps develop a culture within an organization that is conducive to learning, examining, and researching one’s own practices. The middle schoolhouse under study uses Dana and Yandel-Hoppy (2008) as a guide to develop the action research model. During the PLC cycle, instructors use an inquiry cycle during which they (1) develop a wondering, (2) collect data, (3) analyze data, (4) take action, and (5) share with others.

PLC Procedures

The PLC is required to meet twice a month in order to complete the Action Research Inquiry Cycle. These meetings are recorded with audio and video in a Blackboard Elluminate online classroom. Although the study follows the Action Research PLC model, I as the researcher also implemented the four major influences on self-efficacy (Bandura 1997): vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, psychological and emotional arousal, and mastery experiences. When new strategies are discussed in the PLC meetings, I as the facilitator modeled the use of the strategies or theory, talked about performing tasks using the strategy or theory,

helped teachers feel capable of implementing theory through listening to their stories, thoughts and feelings as well as coaching them through the use of the theory, and finally had them complete mastery experiences using the strategies and theories collaboratively in their everyday practice. The addition of the four major influences on self-efficacy allowed me as the facilitator to assume a coaching role so as to model PD that impacts TELI (Cantrell & Hughes 2008; Reed 2009).

Throughout the duration of the PLC cycle, teachers learned how to implement literacy instruction in their classrooms that use the transactional theory as a theoretical lens: questioning and dialogic techniques, semantic association, gamification, the use of emoticons, and narrative-centered learning in instruction.

The PLC first explored using questioning and dialogic instructional strategies that help students take a more aesthetic stance toward reading comprehension. Carlisle (2000) has the students think of themselves in relation to the characters, relive memories from past experiences provoked by a text, reflect on most striking moments in a text, and share thoughts and feelings that occurred while reading the text. Mitchell (1993) has the students reflect on issues raised in the text, striking moments, topics students would like to discuss in the text, having students ask questions, and again attuning to how the students feel about the text. Teachers were shown examples of questions I have used to elicit a more aesthetic interpretation of the text in the course. These types of questions were used in both feedback to students, instructions for assessments, and in discussion-based assessments for teachers to see how they work in helping students adopt a more aesthetic stance toward literacy. Although these strategies encouraged students to take an aesthetic stance, to keep Rosenblatt's (1978) key tenet of reading being in the

middle of the efferent-aesthetic continuum the instructors still matched the questions to FS and also measured the complexity of the questions using Webb's Depth of Knowledge.

Rosenblatt also believes that when we teach the reading of text, the relationship one has with his students is quite different from the standard teacher-student relationship. Instead, Rosenblatt suggests that teachers "are perhaps closer to the voice teacher, even the swimming coach, than we are to the teacher of history or botany" (1995 p. 266). In order to embody this new role as a teacher of literacy, the participants were also taught to position themselves as a facilitator in a philosophical inquiry according to Pennell's (2014) suggestions so that a more dialogic discourse can happen during conversations with students on discussion-based assessments. In this new position, teachers "pose questions, prompt for elaboration, and help students establish relationships between ideas" (Pennell 2014 p. 255).

Next, teachers were taught word association techniques to facilitate the development of vocabulary. Semantic association links new vocabulary to words already familiar to the student, activating their prior knowledge and experience with words closely familiar to the new vocabulary term. Coupled with semantic mapping, this vocabulary strategy has a strong impact on connecting prior knowledge and experience to new vocabulary (Little & Box 2011).

After learning how to utilize questioning and dialogic techniques and semantic association, teachers then explored how the gamification of content could add an aesthetic experience in their literacy instruction. Instructors explore using simple games through digital means such as creating vocabulary lists in quizlet.com to help their students become more literate in their content areas. Additionally, Using Gerrig's (1993) two principals of narrative-centered learning, the instructors were shown an example of a narrative-centered learning lesson that helped scaffold the argumentative writing process.

Finally, teachers explored the use of emoticons in their instruction to help students take a more aesthetic stance toward literacy. When used in an online environment, emoticons can function the same as nonverbal communication (Dunlop et al. 2016; Derks et al. 2008). Since taking an aesthetic stance toward reading requires the reader to be more attuned to their thoughts, feelings, emotions, senses, and perceptions, emoticons can possibly help bridge the gap to help students better understand the aesthetic aspect of a text.

By the end of the PLC Cycle, the participants and I developed DBA questions and assessment reminders that helped students take an aesthetic stance toward the task at hand while also still meeting the complexity set by the corresponding FS. Throughout the process, the participants collaborated online in Google Docs to develop the final products.

Participant Selection

During the 2016-2017 school year, I requested to become a PLC facilitator within my schoolhouse. In November 2016, I presented my ideas about developing our wondering as professionals about our TELI and how does it manifest itself in an online environment. Then, I began taking volunteers for the study. Seven instructors, one lead teacher, and one learning specialist volunteered to take part in the study. In order to capture shared experience through phenomenological study, the all needed to meet shared criteria (Porter 1999). Though they were selected out of convenience, another layer of purposive sampling was established. The purposive sampling of this population required that all of the participants be online instructors in some capacity and that they all are comfortable with one another in order to share openly and truly emulate the construct of a PLC. Their years of experience ranged from a first-year teacher to seasoned veterans with nineteen years of experience in the education field. Four participants hold master's degrees while the other five participants held bachelor's degrees. Eight of the

participants identified as White while one participant identified as Hispanic/Latino. The subject areas represented are six ELA instructors, two Science instructors, and one foreign language instructor/learning specialist. The study was open to teachers from various disciplines and roles other than instructor because no matter what instructional role one has in any organization, every aspect of teaching has a literacy component. Throughout the study, the participants were instructed to use pseudonyms to protect their confidentiality during meetings. In writing this dissertation, I have used a second layer of pseudonyms to further protect the confidentiality of and amongst the participants.

Table 1. Participant Demographics

| Participant Pseudonym | Gender | Race | Total Years Experience in Education | Highest Level of Education | Subject Area |
|-----------------------|--------|------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Bianca | Female | White | 10 | Master's | English/Lang. Arts |
| Diane | Female | White | 10 | Bachelor's | Science |
| Melissa | Female | White | 5 | Bachelor's | English/Lang. Arts |
| Kennedy | Female | White | 19 | Master's | English/Lang. Arts |
| Vanessa | Female | White | 13 | Master's | English/Lang. Arts |
| Denise | Female | White | 10 | Master's | Science |
| Christina | Female | Hispanic /Latino | 15 | Bachelor's | Foreign Language/ Learning Specialist |
| Lisa | Female | White | 7 | Bachelor's | English/Lang. Arts |
| Grace | Female | White | 1 | Bachelor's | English/Lang. Arts |

It should be noted that Diane and Lisa chose no longer to participate in the study due to personal family issues and could not juggle meeting the demands of participating in the PLC. Only seven participants completed the study.

Data Collection Instruments

Initial Interview Questionnaire and Follow-Up Interview Phase

In order to establish what are the current literacy instructional practices of the participants and their perception of their TELI in an online environment, I developed an initial interview questionnaire which has questions made from some of the statements on the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy for Literacy Instruction Scale developed by Tschannen-Moran and Johnson (2011). The open-ended questions are semi-structured and used to elicit a richer, deeper understanding of the participant's sense of efficacy for literacy instruction prior to participation in the PLC cycle (See Appendix A). A follow-up interview with participants allowed me the opportunity to ask questions if I felt that further explanation was necessary in order to discover a richer response to the initial interview questionnaire. The follow-up interviews were mediated through an instant messenger program that enabled the researcher and participants to participate in an interview mediated through distance (De Felice & Janesick 2015) however the interviews were done via the chat function in order for the participants to engage in the dialogic environment that an interview affords but also allows the participants to be engage in the reflective activity of writing. This act of writing their responses in a dialogic interaction of the instant messenger should allow instructors to be more thoughtful about their response, able to finely craft their thoughts, which is similar to phenomenological writing in education that "orient[s] to the pedagogical dimensions of teaching" (van Manen 2007). When asking follow-up questions, I attempted to restrict myself to van Manen's (1984) suggestions for gathering deeper responses without leading participants to my own conclusions. These instruments were used to collect data to answer the first two research questions: (1) What pedagogical practices do instructors use to

provide literacy instruction in an online environment? (2) How do instructors perceive their TELI in an online environment?

Exit Interview Phase

Much like the Initial Interview Questionnaire and Follow-Up Interview, the participants at the end of the PLC cycle completed an exit interview using the same statements derived from Tschannen-Moran and Johnson's (2011) TELI scale with some of the language changed to modify it to an open-ended question rather than a Likert scale (See Appendix B). Similar to the initial interview phase, the exit interview was mediated through online instant messenger to allow for both the act of dialogic transactions between research and participant while affording them the opportunity to be reflective in the responses they give so that a deeper level of connection to the lived experiences could be obtained. The purpose was to gather in-depth descriptions of the participants' TELI after participating in the PLC focused on viewing literacy instruction through Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reading and writing. When asking follow-up questions, I attempted to restrict myself to van Manen's (1984) suggestions for gathering deeper responses without leading participants to my own conclusions. This instrument provided data in order to answer the research question (3) What impact, if any, will a PLC focused on Rosenblatt's transactional theory have on TELI in an online environment? Over the course of the study, two sub-questions emerged that will be discussed in Chapter Four.

Data Collection Procedures

First, I obtained approval from the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and then obtained approval from the online school district. Each participant completed an informed consent document. Afterwards, participants were given an initial interview questionnaire with open-ended questions that they could fill out before the first PLC meeting. A follow-up interview

to the initial interview questionnaire was held via instant message to get a deeper understanding of the PLC participant's using question stems from van Manen (1984 p. 56) such as "In what way?", "How did you feel about that?", "Can you give an example?". After the data from the initial interview questionnaire and follow-up interview are collected, the researcher then analyzes the data using Colaizzi's (1978) data collection procedures. I then shared the essences discovered with the participants and use the data from the initial interview questionnaire to help shape the activities of the PLC to help participants focus on deficits or inconsistencies of their literacy practices. The PLC focused on both using literacy strategies inspired by Rosenblatt's transactional theory and developing teacher-efficacy. Finally teachers participated in an exit interview via instant message to see what impact, if any, did the participation in a PLC focused on using Rosenblatt's transactional theory have on the teacher-efficacy for literacy instruction.

Data Analysis Procedures

For procedures to analyze the data collected from the transcripts of the interview questionnaires and observations of the meetings, I look to Colaizzi (1978), Moustakas (1994) and van Manen (1984). The phenomenological approach requires that the researcher be sensitive to finding data in a variety of places. Van Manen suggests that this process should be an educative experience for the researcher, "that is, finding ways to develop deeper understandings of the phenomenon being investigated" (1984 p. 50).

The data analysis method used for the initial interview questionnaire, follow-up interview, and exit interview comes from Colaizzi's (1978) data analysis procedures with the incorporation of various other phenomenological analysis suggestions (van Manen 1984, Polkhorne 1989, Moustakas 1994, Sanders 2003):

- A. The first step is to read participants' descriptions from transcripts and observations. The initial reading of transcripts and observation notes could yield a preliminary understanding of the data collected (Colaizzi 1978; Polkinghorne 1989; Sanders 2003).
- B. The next step is to extract significant statements related to the experience. These significant statements were taken from the transcripts and observations and were put into a separate protocol for analysis. I formed the new data protocol using excel to help organize and analyze the data (De Felice & Janesick 2015). In the new data protocol, I *horizontalized* each statement in order for each statement to carry equal value (Moustakas 1994). The new data protocol is read repeatedly to discover the repetition of similar statements, which are noted and categorized. Data transformation (Colaizzi 1978; Polkinghorne 1989; Sanders 2003) occurs during this process with the researcher rewriting using both the significant statements from the participants and his own words interpreting the significant statements in order to reflect on the experiences of the participants with the phenomenon under study by the research.
- C. The third step has the researcher begin to formulate meanings (Colaizzi 1978; Moustakas 1994) from the significant statements in order to be involved in the process of interpreting what the participants have said and to find hidden meanings in regards to the phenomenon under study. The researcher also should not influence the findings with his own thoughts and feelings about the phenomenon understudy or obstruct meanings if they are contrary to his beliefs (Husserl 1913; van Manen 1984; Moustakas 1994; Creswell 2013).
- D. The fourth step involves clustering individual themes into general themes (Colaizzi 1978). This is done by re-reading the new protocol and going back to the original

protocol to ensure that the results of the new protocol truly show a thematic finding, accepting any contradictions or discrepancies that may arise (Colaizzi 1978 Polkinghorne 1989; Sanders 2003). During this stage, it is also important to consult with the participants in order to reflect in a more dialogic way on the preliminary themes that the researcher has discovered (van Manen 1984). I due this phase with the Table 2, Table 3, and the *vignettes* on the thematic clusters from the initial interview phase and exit interview phase found in Chapter Four of this study.

- E. The fifth step is for the researcher to form exhaustive description of the phenomenon (Colaizzi 1978; Sanders 2003). The description should only describe the experience, not seek to analyze or to explain the experience of the phenomenon under study (Moustakas 1994). In writing the exhaustive descriptions, the researcher should be sensitive to the connotations that words bring to the description in order to allow the phenomenon to speak for itself (van Manen 1984, p. 64). In addition, van Manen (1984) states that the exhaustive “description is a fine one if it reawakens our basic experience of the phenomenon[, and] it describes but now in such a manner that we experience the more foundational grounds of the experience” (p. 65).
- F. The sixth and final step is to discuss with the participants the accuracy of the description (Colaizzi 1978). During this step, the participants can identify whether or not the researcher has accurately described the experience or if there is something that has been left out that they think is important.

In addition to these procedures, I use van Manen’s (1984) suggestions for writing phenomenological descriptions of essences and themes. He suggests that data can be found in “a variety of places: idiomatic phrases and expressions, other people’s experiences, biographies or

reconstructed life stories, experiential descriptions contained in artistic and literary sources, and so forth” (1984 p. 50). I use his suggestions to help analyze the DBA questions and assessment reminders the PLC created as a final product.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Because of the nature of qualitative research, Creswell (2013) asserts that researchers should seek validation for their studies. One form of validation in phenomenological research is to bracket one’s thoughts, feelings, and perceptions of the phenomenon away from the way the researcher investigates the phenomenon as experienced by the participants. Husserl calls this process *Epoche*, in which the researcher views the phenomenon “naively and freshly through a ‘purified’ consciousness” (Moustakas 1994 p. 84). In Chapter One, I made my thoughts and feelings about literacy instruction in an online environment quite clear so that I am able to bracket these ideas out of my analysis which allows the phenomenon as experienced by the participants to unfold before me. In addition to account for the trustworthiness of the data collected, the procedures and analysis outlined above were followed. To further validate this qualitative research, I look to answer four key questions that Whitemore et al. (2001) suggest are the four primary criteria for validating qualitative research: credibility, authenticity, criticality, and integrity. They also provide secondary criteria in the forms of explicitness, vividness, creativity, thoroughness, congruence, and sensitivity. I hold my research up to these primary and secondary standards of qualitative research.

Credibility: Are the phenomena reported an accurate interpretation from the participants’ significant statements? In order to accurately portray the significant statements of the participants, I use van Manan’s (1984) suggestions for phenomenological writing. I also connect any interpretation that I have gleaned from the participants to a significant statement of the

participant. Although I look into the connotations of the words that they use to describe their literacy instructional practices and perceptions of TELI, I try to report their thoughts and feelings as I perceive them from the standpoint of an online instructor. In order to determine the reliability of the findings, I used interrater reliability as a solidification instrument (Marques & McCall 2005). My dissertation chair Dr. Elsie Olan and I performed separate analyses using Colaizzi (1978) procedures and compared themes afterwards. In order to validate the instruments, I too used interrater reliability with colleagues in the educational field (Stolorova et al. 2014) to determine the least amount of divergence.

Authenticity: “Are different voices heard?” (Creswell 2013 p. 248) Has the researcher demonstrated an higher awareness to multiple voices of the participants? Throughout the study, I attempt to make multiple voices heard both from the literature review and the participants. Many times throughout the research, the participants disagreed about how they perceived their TELI in an online environment. The selection of participants although represents some bias in gender and race, there is a health mix of years of experience and degree level in the study. Some teachers are rather green; some are in mid-career. A few are in the ladder part of their careers.

Criticality: “Is there a critical appraisal of all aspects of the research?” (Creswell 2013 p. 248). Chapter One through Chapter Three has shown in detail the steps I’ve taken in first developing my problem in practice. I observed that a great number of online instructors first had training in teacher preparation programs that lack the requirement of online teaching courses or were alternatively certified in programs that lacked online teaching courses. I then described my experience in transitioning to the online environment and how I faced many challenges. From the problem in practice, sprang my research questions on the perceptions of TELI in an online environment as well as the possible impact Rosenblatt’s transactional theory could have on

TELI. The problem in practice and research questions lead into the literature review and methods section.

Integrity: “Are the investigators self-critical?” (Creswell 2013 p. 248) Are the interpretations grounded in the data collected? While analyzing the data and creating the vignettes interpreting the data, I attuned myself to the phenomena through my *Epoche* and through Van Manen’s (1984) suggestions to employ a *thoughtfulness* throughout the process, constantly reflecting on one’s preconceived notions of a phenomenon while allowing the phenomenon to unfold before him from the participants. “As pedagogues we ongoingly must act responsibly and responsively in our relations with children, with youth, or with those to whom we stand in a pedagogical relationship” (p. 38).

The secondary criteria are additional standards against which one should hold up his research. Explicitness can be found in the detailed nature of the descriptions I provide in my methods chapter as well as the tables found in Chapter Four that show the train of thought from significant statement to interpretation, to thematic cluster, to exhaustive description. Vividness is found in the vignettes I write in Chapter Four of the thematic clusters supported by the significant statements of the participants. It is in the very nature of transcendental phenomenology to write *eidetic* descriptions of the phenomena under study (Husserl 1913). In regards to the criteria of creativity, I have sought to fill a void in the literature in regards to TELI in an online environment as well as possible solutions to any problems discovered in the initial interview phase. I then incorporated the four major influences on self-efficacy (Bandura 1997) to the Action Research PLC model to allow the facilitator to take more of a coaching role so that teachers will feel more confident in using new literacy instructional practices in an online environment. I meet the criteria of thoroughness in my connections of the themes to one another

and how each contributes to TELI in an online environment. Congruence is found in the clear connection between the problem in practice, research questions, literature review, methods, results, and findings throughout the entire study. Finally, I display sensitivity to the study through the careful consideration of the participants' differing perspectives on their perceptions of their TELI in an online environment. I also try not to generalize about all teachers' perceptions of their TELI in an online environment. Instead, I explain the journey these seven teachers have gone on to reflect on their TELI in an online environment as well as the challenges they faced and overcame in providing literacy instruction in an online environment.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The following results were collected and analyzed using Colaizzi's (1978) data analysis procedures. As the researcher, I collected data from the following sources: Initial interview questionnaires, follow-up interviews to the initial interview questionnaire, and exit interviews. I used these sources to answer the following research questions: (1) What pedagogical practices do instructors use to provide literacy instruction in an online environment? (2) How do instructors perceive their TELI in an online environment? (3) What impact, if any, will a PLC focused on Rosenblatt's transactional theory have on TELI in an online environment?

To begin the study, the participants filled out an informed consent and an initial interview questionnaire. After the questionnaire, I conducted follow-up interviews with each participant mediated through instant messenger to have them elaborate on their responses in an open-ended interview format. I then conducted Colaizzi's (1978) procedures of data analysis during which I read through descriptions from the transcripts to have a preliminary understanding of the participants' experiences. Afterwards, I compared my data analysis protocol with my dissertation chair's protocol to determine interrater reliability (Marques & McCall 2005). Next, I extracted significant statements related to the experience, which were *horizontalized* so that each statement carried equal weight (Moustakas 1994). Then, I began to interpret the significant statements in order to formulate meaning from the statements. Next, the formulated meanings were clustered into general themes. Finally, an exhaustive description of the phenomenon as experienced was written, which the participants then had a chance to review and discuss with the researcher.

During the analysis process I attuned myself to performing phenomenological interpretation. Van Manen (1984) writes that phenomenologists ought to have thoughtfulness, which is a "minding, heading a caring attunement" (p. 38) as they analyze their data. As I read

through each transcript of the interviews, I wanted to relive the events of teachers retelling their experiences in providing literacy instruction in an online environment.

Initial Interview Questionnaire and Follow-Up Interview Analysis

The results of the Initial Interview Questionnaire and Follow-Up Interviews were organized step by step using Colaizzi’s (1978) data analysis procedures. From the initial interviews, I gathered 64 significant statements. I then interpreted and formulated meanings from the 64 significant statements that were then organized into the following seven thematic clusters: (1) Efferent Instructional Strategies, (2) Lack of Time, (3) Limited by Curriculum, (4) Impact of Transactional Distance on Literacy Instruction, (5) Rich Bank of Classroom Practices, (6) Aesthetic Instructional Strategies, and (7) Confidence. After thematic clusters were formed, an exhaustive description of the phenomena observed were written. The data and the analysis has been organized into the following table.

Table 2. Initial Interview Data Analysis

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|
| Bianca | When asked about her instructional practices as they pertain to oral reading, Bianca asks students "to pronounce words (when needed) and how we analyze the text and discuss what makes the selection a strong sample. Every now and then, as needed, I have students read aloud for their DBAs and | The instructor describes how she provides literacy instruction as it pertains to oral reading. The technique she reviews helps her assess fluency from her student. She does not do much more than provide feedback about sounds. Fluency and prosody are not assessed. | Thematic Cluster 1 - Efferent Instructional Strategies. The instructor mainly focused on procedural and repetitive aspects of learning in her oral reading instruction. | The initial interviews revealed that literacy practices in an online environment range from aesthetic to efferent when viewed through the lens of Rosenblatt's transactional theory. However, instructors use mainly efferent |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|--|--|--|---|
| | we discuss how their reading sounds out loud and if changes need to be made". | | | strategies such as looking up definitions in a glossary or dictionary, paraphrasing the text, rereading the text, summarizing the text, etc. Along with the efferent strategies, the instructors also use a plethora of aesthetic practices too such as providing real world examples, relating content to student past, lived experiences, etc. The instructors also revealed that they have a rich bank of classroom practices such as the use of graphic organizers, questioning techniques, group work, differentiated instruction, etc. but that some of these practices were not easily transferred |
| | When asked about her instructional practices as they pertain to vocabulary instruction, Bianca has students " review how prefixes, roots and suffixes connect and how breaking words into parts can improve vocabulary. We review the definitions and then I provide examples and the students provides example. If affixes are used in any responses throughout the DBA we refer to them as well...I ask students to compare and contrast words and ideas a lot during DBAs, but otherwise I don't use a lot of vocabulary strategies." | The instructor has her students analyze vocabulary and break it down into components (roots, prefixes, and suffixes). She also has them provide examples, and she provides examples as well. Sometimes she has students compare and contrast words. She states that she doesn't use vocabulary strategies a lot in her practice. | Thematic Cluster 1 - Efferent Instructional Strategies. The instructor has students perform analysis, which falls on the efferent side of the transactional scale. | |
| | "I review grammar with my students via primarily through my grading feedback. I will make a few notes to the students in my feedback asking them to review their grammar, spelling, etc." | The instructor has her students review grammar, essentially read rules. She gives no further details in how she has students fix grammar mistakes. | Thematic Cluster 1 - Efferent Instructional Strategies. She again only marks grammar mistakes on student work, otherwise she does not provide | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|---|---|---|--|
| | | | grammar instruction. | online. Instructors revealed several telling problems in their practice online such as lack of time due to the amount of students online instructors have. In addition, the transactional distance in online education separates instructors from their struggling students. The instructors also feel limited by the curriculum due in part to the fact that they had no hand in creating the curriculum or are able to change the curriculum. Overall, the instructors are confident in their ability to provide literacy instruction, but there are challenges that the online environment presents that they |
| | "My biggest ethical issues are copied work from either outside sources or other students. We have a very clear SOP here at [the middle schoolhouse] to deal with these issues and I feel confident in the process." | The Instructor states that the ethical issues that occur happen with students plagiarism. The instructor follows explicit instructions given by the organization in how to handle ethical issues. | Thematic Cluster 1 - Efferent Instructional Strategies. The instructor follows procedures for dealing with plagiarism and other ethical issues in education. | |
| | "I feel that teaching technical skills could encompass its own course and we don't have the time to teach these skills." | Instructor feels that she does not have time to teach the tools of technology to be successful in an online course. | Thematic Cluster 2 - Lack of Time. The amount of time required to teach students how to use technology could encompass an entire course to this instructor. | |
| | "In the online environment I don't have as much control over my course content or the time to identify and remedy and reading issues with my students." | The instructor feels that she lacks the time to help struggling students due to the nature of online learning. She also doesn't have much control over her curriculum. | Thematic Cluster 2 - Lack of Time. The instructor doesn't feel that she has the time to help struggling readers and writers as an online instructor. Thematic Cluster 3 - Limited by Curriculum. The instructor also feels that she doesn't have a choice in the curriculum she teaches. | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|---|--|--|--|
| | <p>When referring to the vocabulary strategies she used in the classroom, the instructor responded "I used a lot more in the traditional classroom. Every class period started with word sorts for bell work (identifying how the words were connected and sorting them into groups), we used a lot of graphic organizers, we focused a lot more context clues every time we read and had full vocabulary days where we preview the vocab for upcoming readings. Just to name a few."</p> | <p>The instructor listed several highly effective vocabulary practices such as collaborative learning, graphic organizers, context clues, in context vocabulary review, previewing vocabulary, all utilized in the classroom but not necessarily in her online practice.</p> | <p>Thematic Cluster 5 - Rich Bank of Classroom Practices. The instructor has utilized several vocabulary strategies in the classroom prior to working in an online environment.</p> <p>Thematic Cluster 7 - Confidence. The instructor clearly knows this instructional practice from the classroom and can implement it in the classroom context.</p> | <p>must work to mitigate.</p> |
| | <p>"I taught ESOL in the traditional classroom, so most of my students were struggling readers. To help we used tiered texts, read a-louds, pre-loading vocabulary, high-low peer groups, emphasized text features, KWL charts to make connections to previous experiences or readings and small group instruction."</p> | <p>The instructor used techniques in the classroom that explained that she is knowledgeable about techniques to help struggling readers and writers, however she made no indication that she uses these strategies in online practice.</p> | <p>Thematic Cluster 5 - Rich Bank of Classroom Practices. The instructor has the ability to help students, but for some reason these tools have not transferred to the online setting.</p> | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|---|--|--|--|
| | "Reading comprehension strategies are harder for me to implement in an online setting because I feel that they require me to know more about the student's background and they require more follow up and daily instruction...In a traditional classroom at least the students are in front of you for 50 minutes each day and you can try to motivate them. Here, I struggle to even get the students on the phone that need the most motivation." | The instructor feels that she struggles to make contact with her students, even with her best students, perhaps due to the nature of the online learning environment. She recalls that in the classroom she knows her students are in front of her for at least 50 minutes each day, ensuring that there's contact with the student. She's unable to provide the same type of reading comprehension instruction to her students in the online setting. | Thematic Cluster 4 - Impact of Transactional Distance on Literacy Instruction. Since the instructor works in a learning environment mediated by the online environment, she has more transactional distance between her and her students, making dialogue less often. This, in her mind, has prevented her from being able to provide the type of literacy instruction necessary to her students. | |
| Melissa | When describing a moment where she provides oral reading instruction. "For example a comma is a pause or and exclamation(sp) point is excitement, or a complete thought must have a period." | The instructor shows that she is knowledgeable about the part of fluency called prosody, in which students emote through oral reading. She describes the different emotions each punctuation indicates. | Thematic Cluster 6 - Aesthetic Instructional Strategies. The instructor has students emote or explains emotions through different types of punctuation, indicating that she is attuned to aesthetic aspects of instruction. | |
| | Recalling what she does for reading comprehension instruction, "I feel | The instructor uses checking for understanding questions during | Thematic Cluster 1 - Efferent Instructional Strategies. The | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|--|---|---|--|
| | <p>that students comprehend my instruction because I give checks for understanding throughout teachin(sp) and let them be the teacher so to speak by explaining to me how they understand the lesson being taught".</p> | <p>reading and then has students explain concepts as if the student were the teacher.</p> | <p>"check for understanding" questions have students recall knowledge or information from the passage.</p> <p>Thematic Cluster 6 - Aesthetic Instructional Strategies. The instructor has students take on the role of the instructor, which essentially has the student take on a different purpose to INSTRUCT rather than LEARN.</p> | |
| | <p>The instructor answered the question "What are the specific strategies that you use for vocabulary instruction?" Her response: "I use the glossary in the course materials and then have the student use the word in a real life setting so that I know that they understand the meaning and are not just memorizing it "</p> | <p>The instructor here has students perform the simple task of researching definitions into he glossary of the course in addition to also using the terminology "in a real life setting".</p> | <p>Thematic Cluster 1 - Efferent Instructional Strategies. Researching definitions in the glossary has students recall and simply define.</p> <p>Thematic Cluster 6 - Aesthetic Instructional Strategies. The instructor helps the students make deeper connections to the terminology by using the</p> | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|--|---|--|--|
| | | | vocabulary in real life settings. | |
| | "I have the student paraphrase what the passage means or give a brief summary as a comprehension check pointing out context clues that lead to their understanding" | The instructor says that she has students paraphrase, summarize, and use context clues to check for understanding. | Thematic Cluster 1 - Efferent Instructional Strategies. These strategies have students extract explicitly from the text without much depth of understanding. | |
| | In regards to participating helping students participate ethically in an online environment, she states "That is correct, and I do let the student know in the welcome call to turn in original work and be careful when doing research, to give credit to the author. Most of my students understand what is expected from our first conversation." | In this regards, she has explicitly stated expectations for ethical participation. She defines her ethical participation as students submitting "original work and be careful when doing research, to give credit to the author." | Thematic Cluster 1 - Efferent Instructional Strategies. The instructor uses lecture method to set expectations for ethical participation. | |
| | When asked about specific strategies she uses to help struggling readers, she explains that "We find the trouble in the reading as to whether it is comprehension or not understanding the vocabulary through | The instructor explains that she uses context clues to help struggling readers, she also uses organization to help students write paragraphs. | Thematic Cluster 1 - Efferent Instructional Strategies. The instructor uses strategies such as context clues that extracts meaning from the text alone. | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|--|--|---|--|
| | <p>conversations and using context clues. With writing it is usually a comprehension issue. Like they can speak fluently but have trouble putting it into written format based off of their knowledge of the English language. Then I teach them how to write paragraph by paragraph."</p> | | | |
| | <p>"I would like to have more one on one face time with students so that I can see for myself that they are reading. Even the online classroom experience could be more personal. The strategy is working though."</p> | <p>The teacher wants more time and a deeper connection to her students so that she can check for reading comprehension. She wants her experiences to be "more personal".</p> | <p>Thematic Cluster 4 - Impact of Transactional Distance on Literacy Instruction. The instructor still wants more time with her students to help them with comprehension and that the transactional distance still impacts her instruction.</p> | |
| Kennedy | <p>In regards to the comprehension strategies she uses with her students, "I typically read through content and discuss with the student, relate content to background knowledge and</p> | <p>The teacher explains several instructional strategies that range the spectrum of efferent and aesthetic. She builds on students' background knowledge and personal experience</p> | <p>Thematic Cluster 1 - Efferent Instructional Strategies. The instructional strategies used here are efferent strategies that has students extract from the text.</p> | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|--|--|--|--|
| | <p>personal experience, and to knowledge of text structure and story plotlines (for narrative). I ask students which particular part of a task or lesson is challenging and tackle that specific part together, then review how it applies or relates to the larger concepts in the module. I help students relate the new material to previous tasks in other classes or to stories or movies they remember."</p> | <p>(aesthetic), but also reviews text structure and plot lines (efferent). She also connects content to larger concepts and other classes or "to stories or movies they remember".</p> | <p>Thematic Cluster 6 - Aesthetic Instructional Strategies. The instructor also uses aesthetic strategies to help students relate to the content such as background knowledge and personal experience. There's also the aspect of interdisciplinary education.</p> <p>Thematic Cluster 7 – Confidence. The instructor clearly knows a plethora of strategies to perform with her students.</p> | |
| | <p>In regards to vocabulary instruction "I feel I am in a rut with the same basic techniques each time."</p> | <p>The instructor feels bound by using the same strategies, using them over and over again.</p> | <p>Thematic Cluster 4 – Impact of Transactional Distance on Literacy Instruction. The instructor feels that she has only a few basic techniques, possibly because she only thinks that instruction can be facilitated through phone call.</p> | |
| | <p>In regards to reading comprehension instruction "We</p> | <p>The examples and non-examples in reading</p> | <p>Thematic Cluster 1 - Efferent Instructional</p> | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|--|--|--|--|
| | discuss examples and non-examples, too." | comprehension instruction has students pull from the text. | Strategies. Pulling examples and non examples has the students think on the efferent end of the scale. | |
| | In response to grammar and spelling instruction "To tackle #2.09 we discuss examples and non-examples and demonstrate how the subject of a sentence is receiving the action in passive voice." | The use of examples and non examples to provide instruction. The instruction seems to be explicit lecture. | Thematic Cluster 1 - Efferent Instructional Strategies. Pulling examples and non examples has the students think on the efferent end of the scale. | |
| | In regards to becoming proficient in technology: "I provide links to supportive materials in my emails and feedback...During calls with students we discuss how to save files in different formats, how to use the Student Comments box provided, how to access open source software for word processing." | The instructor here seems to provide links to other supportive material to help her students. She also provides procedural instructions on how to use the course features. | Thematic Cluster 1 - Efferent Instructional Strategies. Offering procedural knowledge falls on the efferent side of the scale. | |
| | "We discuss the morality of providing credit to the original author who created the work and I provide examples of citing time-consuming research | The instructor explains the morality of original work putting students in a situation about how they would feel. She states "they are quick to agree that if | Thematic Cluster 6 - Aesthetic Instructional Strategies. Having students understand how they feel about moments of breaking morality | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|--|---|--|--|
| | <p>completed by another. They are quick to agree that if someone else did all the work, they should get the credit. We discuss how citing reliable sources demonstrates that a student is a thoughtful scholar and looking for good information."</p> | <p>someone else did all the work, they should get credit".</p> | <p>helps students understand the wrongfulness of plagiarism and falls on the aesthetic side of the transactional scale.</p> | |
| | <p>"I feel my grammar instruction is limited to the feedback I provide for written work. As such, it is less important than the instruction for the concepts in the assessments themselves. In my campus classroom I had more time dedicated to grammar instruction itself."</p> | <p>Instructor explains that she feels limited to providing grammar instruction in feedback, perhaps due in part to the online environment. She compares this to her experience in the classroom where she dedicated more time to grammar instruction.</p> | <p>Thematic Cluster 1 - Efferent Instructional Strategies. She only corrects grammatical errors in the writing, transacting only with student text.</p> <p>Thematic Cluster 4 - Impact of Transactional Distance on Literacy Instruction. Because of the online learning environment, she's limited in her ability to provide grammar instruction.</p> <p>Thematic Cluster 5 - Rich Bank of Classroom Practices. The instructor has a rich</p> | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|--|---|--|--|
| | | | memories of dedicating more time in the classroom to grammar instruction. | |
| | <p>“I feel my options are more limited than on campus. I feel my interventions are less immediate. Many of the strategies suggested by the reading leadership team are the same, it just seems less natural to apply them to interactions with students on the phone. Using them in live lessons feels more natural, but so few students choose to use the mic during live lessons. I think part of it is I have so few phone interactions with students regarding reading ability or selection of reading materials.”</p> | <p>The instructor describes her experiences with literacy instruction in an online environment as "more limited than on campus" and "less immediate". She also explains that the strategies from the classroom feel "less natural" in an online setting or in one-on-one conversations with students. She describes her phone interactions with students as "so few...with students regarding reading ability or selection of reading materials".</p> | <p>Thematic Cluster 4 - Impact of Transactional Distance on Literacy Instruction. The instructor throughout her response feels that the transactional distance has impacted her literacy practice giving her less opportunities and less options to provide literacy instruction since she is mediated through the online environment and phone calls with students.</p> | |
| | <p>In response to grammar and selling instruction "The feedback I provide for my current students' written work is less detailed than what I provided</p> | <p>The instructor states that the grammar instruction she provides is not as detailed as it once was in the classroom.</p> | <p>Thematic Cluster 4 - Impact of Transactional Distance on Literacy Instruction. The nature of the online environment has hindered her practice, since she</p> | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|--|--|--|--|
| | in the campus classroom." | | compared it to what she once did in the classroom. | |
| | In response to how she once generated motivation for reading in the classroom. "This is the single most item in my experience as a teacher that makes me wish I were back in the classroom. I just really miss the chance to actually HAND a book to a kid." | The instructor compares her experience online motivating students to that of the classroom. The instructor shows her appreciation for HANDING a student a book when she states "I miss" the act. | Thematic Cluster 4 - Impact of Transactional Distance on Literacy Instruction. The instructor from this statement has not figured out a way to fulfill the act of handing a student a book in the online environment to motivate students to read. | |
| | In regards to overall efficacy for literacy instruction " I feel confident, but feel my opportunities are limited, or I am not maximizing the opportunities I have." | The instructor has the content knowledge to provide literacy instruction online, but feels limited in her current role or she's not maximizing on her opportunities. | Thematic Cluster 4 - Impact of Transactional Distance on Literacy Instruction. The instructor states clearly that she's limited and not maximizing opportunities. She currently does not do what she once did in the classroom. | |
| Vanessa | In response to elaborating on her grammar instruction, "sometimes I do use acronyms to help them remember little tips" | Acronyms help students associate new concepts with a familiar word in which each letter contains a meaning. | Thematic Cluster 6 - Aesthetic Instructional Strategies. The instructor has students associate grammatical concepts to a familiar word, which | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|---|--|--|--|
| | | | falls on the aesthetic scale. | |
| | "I just explain what is wrong and go over it" in response to grammar/spelling instruction. | The instructor essentially provides instructions for what was wrong with student work and gives direct instruction. | Thematic Cluster 1 - Efferent Instructional Strategies. The instructor essential indicates or points to what is wrong with the work, which falls on the efferent side of the scale. | |
| | In response to her reading comprehension strategies, "I can break a passage down with them and ask questions in DBAs to aid in comprehension". | The instructor helps students comprehend passages by separating the passage into different sections. | Thematic Cluster 1 - Efferent Instructional Strategies. Breaking up a text into sections falls on the efferent side of the scale. | |
| | "Ethics can be a hard issue online. I discuss the importance of using ethics within the online environment, it is not a subject that I have a hard time discussing with students...I just don't like confrontation and sometimes those can be difficult conversations, as I have been here longer it gets easier...before we do research I remind them about plagiarism and | The instructor shows that she doesn't like confrontation when it comes to providing instruction for ethical participation in an online environment. Often she discusses with students "about plagiarism and making sure to use their own words". | Thematic Cluster 1 - Efferent Instructional Strategies. The instructor reminds students of expectations or instructions about plagiarism, which is mostly procedural which falls on the efferent end of the scale. | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|--|---|--|--|
| | making sure to use their own words, not to copy from the internet." | | | |
| | In regards to creating resources used in the classroom, "with most of these students unless its a required assignment most of the time they don't look at it or want to use it...so taking the time to sit and make PowerPoints, videos, graphics, doesn't always seem to be beneficial ...it's just hard because you aren't teaching actual lessons for each assignment so it's kind of a create as needed or predict what they may need type of thing ." | The teacher seems to think that these extra assignments that she creates won't be utilized by the students. The students are not required to do the extra assignments as it pertains to the curriculum. She feels as if she's not teaching these lessons, which makes creating resources difficult. | <p>Thematic Cluster 4 - Impact of Transactional Distance on Literacy Instruction. The instructor states that she is not "teaching actual lessons for each assignment" because the lesson delivery is asynchronous and built within the course. The teacher feels distant from instruction so she does not provide additional resources on a consistent basis to her students.</p> <p>Thematic Cluster 3 - Limited by Curriculum. She feels that the way the course is designed students do not want to use the additional resources she could create, which has her less motivated to create her own resources for literacy instruction.</p> | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|--|---|--|--|
| | In regards to creating resources or providing more instruction, "of course if I didn't have 185 kids I would have more time to do things like that". | In this statement the instructor shares that she has too many students, which take up the time that could be used to make resources. | Thematic Cluster 2 - Lack of Time. The teacher feels overloaded with too many students. | |
| | "it's just having the time to create the tools I need. there are ways to help with literacy, things I could do better, I'm not incompetent when it comes to creating strategies and ideas, but who has the time with almost 200 kids to do the extra." | Again, the instructor finds it difficult to create resources but because she has too many students it is hard for her to find the time to create them. The instructor knows how to create the resources. | Thematic Cluster 2 - Lack of Time. The instructor again states how she is overloaded with students which hinders her ability to create new resources. Thematic Cluster 7 - Confidence. She states that she is "not incompetent when it comes to creating strategies and ideas". | |
| | "It is seemingly less difficult to discuss word meanings with students during oral quizzes and help sessions on the phone. However these strategies do differ from the face to face environment where one can create graphics, games, tools and visually complete them with students...now for [the middle | The instructor discusses the contrasting styles in which she teaches. She relies more on dialogue and discussion with students over the phone, which differs from the classroom strategies she used with graphics, games, tools, and visuals. | Thematic Cluster 4 - Impact of Transactional Distance on Literacy Instruction. The instructor shows how facilitating such activities is difficult in the online environment asynchronously. Thematic Cluster 5 - Rich Bank of Classroom | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|---|--|--|--|
| | schoolhouse] I don't really have the ability to teach a lesson on things, or use strategies such as group work, practicing with worksheets, teaching songs" | | Practices. The instructor lists several practices that she used in the classroom for literacy instruction. | |
| | "The strategies used online seem to be geared more towards discussion with the student, as in the classroom setting there was more of a variety of tools one could use." | The instructor again states that discussion with students seems to be the most used form of instruction for her. | Thematic Cluster 4 - Impact of Transactional Distance on Literacy Instruction. The instructor here seems limited by the online learning environment to provide instruction to her students. | |
| | "This is a difficult area for me in the online environment. As a language arts teacher I am used to working with struggling readers, however in a classroom setting you can break passages down, and walk a student through a reading passage and help them use strategies such as underlining, circling words, looking words up. When you are not face to face with a student this is more difficult." | The instructor describes how she once helped struggling readers with a plethora of strategies such as "underlining, circling words, looking words up." She's not afforded this same opportunity as easily in the online environment. | Thematic Cluster 4 - Impact of Transactional Distance on Literacy Instruction. Because her and her students are separated by the distance, she doesn't feel she's as able to help students. Thematic Cluster 5 - Rich Bank of Classroom Practices. The instructor lists several strategies she once used in the classroom to help struggling readers. | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|--|---|---|--|
| | In response to elaborating on helping struggling students, "sometimes it's just hard because you aren't sitting there with them...I just have always found that when I've worked with my struggling readers, looking at the same thing they are in front of them helps more." | The instructor appreciates lookings at the work "with my struggling readers". In addition, she finds it hard because she isn't sitting next to them in an online environment. | Thematic Cluster 4- Impact of the Transactional Distance on Literacy Instruction. The instructor finds it difficult to help her struggling students when she's not present with them. | |
| Denise | In regards to vocabulary instruction. "I feel very strongly about my delivery in this field. My previous background is in elementary education, specifically reading. I use the tools from my background knowledge to help students better understand the vocabulary by using text-to-world and text-to-self example, so they can relate and master the vocabulary presented to them." | The instructor states some strategies that she uses to help students comprehend vocabulary in science. The specific strategies she uses are "text-to-world and text-to-self example[s]". She wants her students to relate to the content. | Thematic Cluster 6 - Aesthetic Instructional Strategies. The instructor has her students relate the vocabulary to themselves and the world they know. This falls on the aesthetic side of the scale. Thematic Cluster 7 - Confidence. The instructor states that she once was an elementary school teacher so she's comfortable with literacy instruction. | |
| | "I love giving examples in science. When you can talk about something a student knows | The instructor recalls how she teaches the concept of gravity. She explains that the curriculum may | Thematic Cluster 6 - Aesthetic Instructional Strategies. The instructor gives a | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|--|---|--|--|
| | <p>firsthand something that is probably not in the curriculum they can relate sometimes to verbal examples. Explaining gravity and the force that pulls down on something they can somewhat understand but if you give an example of trying to put a book on the shelf in the book falls from balance towards the ground it helps and visualize their head what gravity actually does and looks like in the real world.”</p> | <p>explain it well, however giving an example of a book falling helps students "visualize [in] their head what gravity actually does and looks like in the real world".</p> | <p>real world example that all students can relate to, which falls on the aesthetic end of the scale.</p> | |
| | <p>“I think breaking it down to as short or smaller level for them to understand multimedia tag some students they are new today some students they are pros at it so I think making sure that they understand for thought what a multimedia texted and then relating it on their level as a middle school student.”</p> | <p>The instructor describes chunking information to help students comprehend multimedia text.</p> | <p>Thematic Cluster 1 - Efferent Instructional Strategies. Chunking separates text into parts, which falls on the efferent end of the scale.</p> | |
| | <p>“Teachers don't have enough time, as they would like, to work one on one with</p> | <p>Helping struggling students seem to be difficult for online instructors. She</p> | <p>Thematic Cluster 2 - Lack of Time. Literacy Instruction is difficult because</p> | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|--|--|---|--|
| | struggling students because of the high demands.” | describes the high demands in other areas as the cause that prevents instructors from helping them. | of the demands on teachers. | |
| | “I do feel limited to the times which are appropriate to use them. There is not much in my course that lends itself to do much more than re-reading the curriculum to the students.” | The instructor feels limited when to use literacy strategies. She usually re-reads course content with students. | Thematic Cluster 1 - Efferent Instructional Strategies. Rereading the content falls on the efferent side of the transactional scale. Thematic Cluster 3 - Limited by Curriculum. The instructor does not see any other opportunities in the curriculum for literacy instruction. | |
| | “A lot of times science is a bullet point answer type of questions that we ask. So the most that I've done is asked for complete sentences. For science it's very black-and-white.” | The instructor describes how her assessments limit her in providing grammar instruction as well as writing instruction because the assessments ask for black and white answers as well as bullet points. | Thematic Cluster 3 - Limited by Curriculum. The instructor finds that the assessment built within the curriculum limits her from writing and grammar instruction. | |
| | “In the traditional setting there is also the opportunity to "bring in" more hands-on learning tools for students who are more | The instructor describes how she would have more "hands-on learning tools for students" to address the needs of different types of | Thematic Cluster 4 - Impact of Transactional Distance on Literacy Instruction. The instructor explained that she | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|---|--|--|--|
| | kinesthetic in their learning styles. Therefore, in my opinion, reading comprehension is better addressed for a broader spectrum of students in the traditional classroom.” | learning styles. She feels that reading comprehension is better instructed in the face-to-face format. | found the face-to-face modality a better fit for literacy instruction. Thematic Cluster 5 - Rich Bank of Classroom Practices. The instructor mentioned multiple strategies used in the classroom to help students comprehend content. | |
| Christina | "I used things like choral reading and pop-corn reading to help students develop their fluency" | Choral reading and pop-corn reading help students with prosody, or emoting when they read out loud. | Thematic Cluster 6 - Aesthetic Instructional Strategy. Since these strategies help students emote, it falls on the aesthetic end of the scale. | |
| | “I tried to normally tap into the background knowledge the student would have in order to make connections for new information.” | The instructor describes how she uses a student's background knowledge to make connections with new information. | Thematic Cluster 6 - Aesthetic Instructional Strategy. Tapping into student background is making reverence to their past, lived experiences, which falls on the aesthetic end of the scale. | |
| | “I would ask the students to go back to the text and use the context clues to | Having students use context clues and text evidence for reading comprehension is a | Thematic Cluster 1 - Efferent Instructional Strategies. Context | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|--|--|---|--|
| | gather meaning and make connections.” | strategy the instructor uses in online learning. | clues rely solely on what is in the text, which is an efferent strategy. | |
| | "The only tools I have used is written feedback" in response to grammar/spelling instruction” | The instructor uses the word "only" in this example, which leads me to believe she feels limited in her ability to provide grammar instruction. | Thematic Cluster 4 - Impact of Transactional Distance on Literacy Instruction. She seems to feel limited by the distance between her and her students. She can only make comments on grammar in her feedback to students. | |
| | "Therefore, as a teacher I had limited time to creatively create something that used any of the teaching strategies I enjoyed due to the number of students that I had." | The instructor feels she has limited time to create due in part to the number of students she had. | Thematic Cluster 2 - Lack of Time. | |
| | “...nor the time to be able to develop individual plans for each student due to the large number of students I had to help.” | Again, the instructor attributes the lack of time in online education to help struggling students. She had "a large number of students she had to help." | Thematic Cluster 2 - Lack of Time. | |
| | “The one I miss the most is having students creatively create images of what they understand the | The instructor states that she used to have students create images associated with the meaning of | Thematic Cluster 3 - Limited by Curriculum. She states that the curriculum has | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|--|---|---|--|
| | <p>meaning to be. This can be adapted to online learning, but I never saw the opportunity to do so due to limitations in the flexibility I had with the curriculum given to me.”</p> | <p>vocabulary in the classroom. She no longer does this online because of the "limitations in the flexibility [she] had with the curriculum".</p> | <p>"limitations in [its] flexibility".</p> <p>Thematic Cluster 4 - Impact of Transactional Distance on Literacy Instruction. The instructor feels that in the online setting, she does not have the means to use a strategy she once used in the classroom.</p> <p>Thematic Cluster 5 - Rich Bank of Classroom Practices. The instructor described a word to image association activity she once used.</p> <p>Thematic Cluster 7 – Confidence. The instructor believes in the effectiveness of this classroom practice.</p> | |
| | <p>"In [the middle schoolhouse] the curriculum is not dictated by the teachers. All lessons and assignments have been created by the curriculum team."</p> | <p>The instructor felt like she has no control over the curriculum.</p> | <p>Thematic Cluster 3 - Limited by Curriculum. The instructor finds that she had to teach to the curriculum in regards to vocabulary instruction.</p> | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|---|--|---|--|
| | <p>“I felt a bit limited when trying to help struggling writers in an online environment. There is something about being able to sit in front of a student and generate writing simultaneously that I was never able to replicate online.”</p> | <p>The instructor compares her feeling limited to the classroom experience "being able to sit in front of a student". She enjoyed the simultaneous act of writing together that she could not do online.</p> | <p>Thematic Cluster 4 - Impact of Transactional Distance on Literacy Instruction. The contrast between the classroom and the online environment shows that the instructor was hindered by the transactional distance.</p> | |
| Grace | <p>“I explained it in a "tree" analogy: main idea/topic sentence is the "trunk", the key details/reasons are the "branches", and supporting details/evidence are the "leaves"”.</p> | <p>The instructor uses an analogy to a familiar image to help students understand organizing a paragraph.</p> | <p>Thematic Cluster 6 - Aesthetic Instructional Strategies. The instructor uses a familiar image, which activates a students past, lived experiences, which falls on the aesthetic end of the transactional scale.</p> | |
| | <p>“I connect the two words by say they're the Zack and Cody of figurative language- though the words have the same goal, the execution is different. The benefit of teaching the same lessons every year is that it gives me time to broaden my method of scaffolding each lesson instead of</p> | <p>The instructor uses a familiar example to help students understand figurative language.</p> | <p>Thematic Cluster 6 - Aesthetic Instructional Strategies. Again, the instructor uses a familiar example.</p> | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
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| | spending that time preparing a new lesson plan.” | | | |
| | “I’ve also used Doctor Who for 3 types of irony and Supernatural for moods, which students who struggle with” | The instructor uses a familiar example to help students understand irony and mood. | Thematic Cluster 6 - Aesthetic Instructional Strategies. | |
| | “I like to incorporate history along with it, since English evolved to be a direct language, unlike the Romance language such as Spanish, Italian, and French.” | The instructor uses history interdisciplinarily to discuss word parts with her students, making reference to the evolution of the English language. | Thematic Cluster 6 - Aesthetic Instructional Strategies. The instructor connects the idea of word parts to history, which is interdisciplinary in action. This falls on the aesthetic end of the scale. | |
| | “For phonemic awareness, we will “break apart” unfamiliar words to look over prefix, root, and / or suffix to better understand the meaning of a word.” | The instructor helps analyze words with students by breaking it up into parts and then sounds. | Thematic Cluster 1 - Efferent Instructional Strategies. The instructor has students analyze word parts and then repeat sounds, which falls on the efferent end of the scale. | |
| | “With an image of a sample completed assignment so he can reference it” | The instructor uses a Sample for students to imitate. | Thematic Cluster 1 - Efferent Instructional Strategies. | |
| | “Over the phone we will look back at a failed exam together | The instructor reviews test questions that the | Thematic Cluster 1 - Efferent Instructional | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|--|---|--|--|
| | and I will go over the question, for example a question looking for the a supporting detail. The student and I will discuss the differences between main idea, key details, and supporting details, then the student will read the question –“ | student missed. Discusses differences in vocabulary terms with the student as they read questions. | Strategies. To review missed questions only addresses the content in context of the course, which is efferent. | |
| | “I instructed her to go to "Course Information" -> "Materials List" -> Scroll down to download "Adobe Flash Player".” | The instructor here provides procedural knowledge for understanding how to use technology in the course. | Thematic Cluster 1 - Efferent Instructional Strategies. The student is given procedural knowledge, which is efferent. | |
| | “I will give a few examples of mine so they know how to respond. Another thing struggling learners love is looking at examples, that way they know where they need to start and they get a sense of what to do to get there. One last thing to help struggling learners is when an educator is able to break up a BIG assignment into smaller assignments” | The instructor uses examples to help struggling readers and writers so that they can "get a sense of what to do to get there". She also chunks assignments into manageable parts. | Thematic Cluster 1 - Efferent Instructional Strategies. The instructor uses samples to imitate and chunking, which are on the efferent end of the scale. | |
| | “Over all I am confident but I would love to learn new | The instructor indicates her | Thematic Cluster 7 - Confidence. The instructor feels | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|---|--|------------------------------------|--|
| | things every year and grow with my students.” | confidence and wants to grow still. | confident but wants to learn more. | |

Vignettes on Thematic Clusters from the Initial Interview Phase

Vignettes are short, literary, descriptive texts. I have chosen this word because I find that the connotations associated with *vignettes* match with the goals of sketching out the thematic clusters found in the experiences of the participants while still aligning with the goals of phenomenological writing outlined by van Manen (1984). He writes, “we may wish to capture the thematic statements in more phenomenologically sensitive paragraphs. This is a process of writing notes and paragraphs on the basis of our reading and other research activities” (p. 61). To this end, he also writes that these themes are woven together (van Manen 1984) much like the grape vines in a vineyard, from which the term *vignette* is rooted etymologically. The advice that van Manen provides to the phenomenologist is “to be sensitive—sensitive to the subtle undertones of language, to the way language speaks when it allows the things themselves to speak” (van Manen 1984 p. 64). I attempt to do so in the following vignettes on the thematic clusters formed from the initial interview questionnaires and follow-up interviews.

Thematic Cluster 1 - Efferent Instructional Strategies

The initial interviews yielded 25 significant statements in which the instructors described the use of efferent instructional strategies practiced in the online environment. The term efferent comes from one end of Rosenblatt’s efferent-aesthetic continuum (1978). Taking an efferent stance occurs when a reader is more attuned to abstraction, analysis, structure, information,

directions, conclusions, usefulness, or actions (Rosenblatt 1978). In a way, when teachers give tasks that are efferent, the tasks have the students take an efferent stance toward reading or writing. In an example of the way a participant provides efferent instruction, Bianca describes the following vocabulary instruction:

“We review how prefixes, roots and suffixes connect and how breaking words into parts can improve vocabulary. We review the definitions and then I provide examples and the student provides examples. If affixes are used in any responses throughout the DBA we refer to them as well...I ask students to compare and contrast words and ideas a lot during DBAs, but otherwise I don’t use a lot vocabulary strategies.”

In Bianca’s response, she thoroughly explains the level analysis that she has students go through to understand words and their word parts. She also has students compare and contrast words for further understanding of vocabulary. The work she does with her students has them approach the words efferent-ly in understanding their parts through analysis and meaning in a denotative manner.

Many other techniques teachers mentioned using in literacy instruction included several strategies that could also be perceived as efferent. Melissa mentioned having students look up definitions to terms in glossaries. When it comes to reading comprehension, Melissa also stated that she has students paraphrase and summarize reading passages to check for understanding. Kennedy stated that she used examples and non-examples during her literacy instruction as well as providing procedural instructions for the use of technology. Vanessa and Grace stated that they would often review incorrectly answered questions with the student and “*go over it.*” Several instructors (Vanessa, Christina, and Grace) mentioned that chunking passages or essays into smaller manageable parts also helped the students. Though most of these strategies are effective ways of providing literacy instruction in either vocabulary acquisition, reading

comprehension, writing, or grammar, they are rather procedural or analytical and do not make reverence to a student's past, lived experiences, feelings, thoughts, or associations.

Thematic Cluster 2 - Lack of Time

The statements that indicated that the instructors lacked time to provide literacy instruction occurred seven times among four of the participants in initial interview phase.

Vanessa reflects on how she does not have many literacy instructional resources at her disposal:

“it's just having the time to create the tools I need. There are ways to help with literacy, things I could do better, I'm not incompetent when it comes to creating strategies and ideas, but who has the time with almost 200 kids to do the extra.”

This statement from Vanessa echoes the thoughts and feelings of other instructors. They know how to provide literacy instruction, but they lack the time to create the resources they want to use. Bianca, Denise, and Christina gave similar statements about lacking time. Denise stated that *“Teachers don't have enough time, as they would like, to work one-on-one with struggling students because of high demands.”* Class loads seem to be the problem for Christina. Her statements indicated that there is a shared belief among instructors that literacy instruction takes time, which is a common problem amongst online instructors. Additionally, there is a shared belief among the instructors that literacy instruction takes time to implement in an online environment.

Thematic Cluster 3 - Limited by the Curriculum

The theme of being limited by the curriculum occurred in six statements from the participants. Christina seems to describe the limitations and feelings shared by the participants regarding the curriculum and structure of the LMS:

“The one [thing that] I miss the most is having students creatively create images of what they understand the meaning to be. This can be adapted to online learning, but I never saw the opportunity to do so due to limitations in the flexibility I had with the curriculum

given to me...In [the middle schoolhouse] the curriculum is not dictated by the teachers. All lessons and assignments have been created by the curriculum team.”

The limitations that the instructors perceive that the curriculum places on them hinder their ability to provide differing strategies for literacy instruction. Denise stated that most of the time, she is unable to provide grammatical instruction to her science students because most of the assignments only require “bullet points” for answers. Vanessa wrote that much of the time, she felt that students would not use resources she created outside of the curriculum, “*unless it’s a required assignment most of the time they don’t look at it or want to use it*” in referring to the literacy tools she could create or has created in the past. These perceived limitations of the curriculum have impacted the instructors preventing them from having the autonomy to choose which literacy instructional practices they wanted to use. The curriculum acts a predominant narrative that silences the individual narratives of the once autonomous literacy instructional narratives the participants once had.

Thematic Cluster 4 - Impact of Transactional Distance on Literacy Instruction

From the initial interview phase, 17 statements from the participants illuminated the impact that transactional distance has on the instructors and their literacy practice. Vanessa best summarized the experience of the participants with transactional distance:

“The strategies used online seem to be geared more toward discussion with the student, as in the classroom setting there was more of a variety of tools one could use.”

There’s this sense of feeling impacted in a negative way by the transactional distance instructors feel. When it came to generating motivation for reading, Kennedy gave a most telling account of her thoughts on the transactional distance:

“This is the single most item in my experience as a teacher that makes me wish I were back in the classroom. I just really miss the chance to actually hand a book to a kid.”

Kennedy reminisces about her past classroom activity of handing a book to a student. The sense of longing for what she had once done is a shared belief amongst the participants. Kennedy further elaborated on the impact of the transactional distance in another statement:

“I feel my options are more limited [online] than on campus. I feel my interventions are less immediate. Many of the strategies suggested by the reading leadership team are the same, it just seems less natural to apply them to interactions with students on the phone. Using them in live lessons feels more natural, but so few students choose to use the mic during live lessons. I think part of it is I have so few phone interactions with students regarding reading ability or selection of reading material.”

In this statement, Kennedy shared her thoughts on the classroom practices feeling less natural in an online environment and less immediate indicating that there is a gap in transactional distance. Her interactions with students are few. Overall, the tone of her statement expresses that the transactional distance has had a negative impact on her literacy instruction, which was once strong in the classroom, because she no longer performs literacy instruction as often. Bianca explains that she finds it harder to provide reading comprehension instruction because of the transactional distance:

“It requires me to know more about the student’s background and they require more follow up and daily instruction...In a traditional classroom at least the students are in front of you for 50 minutes each day and you can try to motivate them. Here, I struggle to even get the students on the phone that need the most motivation.”

Reading comprehension, for Bianca, requires frequent contact with her student. Her perception of her literacy instruction is hindered by the transactional distance that she feels from her students who need her most. These statements illustrate the essence of online literacy instruction as difficult because of the limited amounts of contact with their students.

Thematic Cluster 5 - Rich Bank of Classroom Practices

When thinking about an experience, especially one of an aesthetic nature, Dewey (1934) thinks that memory plays a key role in experiences:

“Memories, not necessarily conscious but retentions that have been organically incorporated in the very structure of the self, feed present observations. They are the nutriment that gives body to what is seen. As they are rewrought into the matter of the new experience, they give the newly created object expressiveness.” (p. 93)

The participants made reference to classroom practices in seven significant statements in the initial interview phase of the study. These memories of classroom practice play a significant role in the teacher’s perception of their TELI. The memories of classroom practice are what feeds into their confidence in providing literacy instruction. Denise makes reference to her own classroom experience to explain her thoughts on reading comprehension instruction:

“In the traditional setting there is also the opportunity to ‘bring in’ more hands-on learning tools for students who are more kinesthetic in their learning styles. Therefore, in my opinion, reading comprehension is better addressed for a broader spectrum of student in the traditional classroom.”

Here, she explains how an instructional practice of bringing in an object to share with her students to touch is a fond memory for her. Kennedy also shared her fondness for handing books to students, something she can no longer do. Bianca reminisced about all of the instructional strategies she used to use in the classroom:

“I taught ESOL in the traditional classroom, so most of my students were struggling readers. To help we used tiered texts, read-alouds, pre-loading vocabulary, high-low peer groups, emphasized text features, KWL charts to make connections to previous experiences or readings and small group instruction.”

This rich bank of classroom practices is much more robust when compared to the instructional practices that she states that she uses in the online environment, which is a shared narrative among many of the participants. Many of them came with nostalgic memories of classroom practices. The memories are strong, positive memories for the participants, which is indicative of a longing for what they once did in the traditional classroom. However, the online environment impedes on their ability to use these instructional strategies in their current practice.

Thematic Cluster 6 - Aesthetic Instructional Strategies

In addition to the 25 statements mentioning efferent instructional strategies, the instructors also provided 14 statements that they incorporated aesthetic instructional strategies. Grace provided several examples of aesthetic instructional strategies that she uses in her practice in the online environment:

“I connect the two words by say[ing] they’re the Zack and Cody of figurative language- though the words have the same goal, the execution is different.”

Here, she gave an example of her experience in figurative language instruction by using a familiar reference to pop-culture for the students, which is referent of a student’s past, lived experiences. In her science instruction, Denise explains how she uses *“text-to-world and text-to-self example”* to make a more personal connection to vocabulary. Kennedy mentions that she too uses some aesthetic instruction in which she *“relate[s] content to background knowledge and personal experience... [She] help[s] students relate the new material to previous tasks in other classes or to stories or movies they remember.”*

Thematic Cluster 7 - Confidence

When it comes to confidence, six statements were made from the participants that they feel confident in their literacy instructional practices in an online environment. However, many of the practices that they used in the online environment exhibited a lack of confidence in regards to feeling limited by the curriculum, transactional distance, lacking time, and opportunity to provide literacy instruction. The confident statements often come from descriptions of classroom practices. A sort of pride beams through those statements much more so than the instructional practices they provide in the online environment.

In Medias Res: The PLC Procedures and Any Deviations

The purpose of the Action Research PLC is to address problems in practice (Fitzpatrick et al. 2013). Although I had initially sought to answer my three research questions, during the initial interview process, I realized that the participants knew strong literacy practices based on the responses they gave about their former traditional classroom practices, however they have greater challenges with lacking time, using too many efferent instructional practices, feeling the transactional distance between them and their students, and feeling limited by the curriculum. Because of the fluid nature of phenomenological research and the inductive methodology of qualitative research, studies have to be flexible for change, deviation, or addition (Creswell 2013). The task at hand now was to not only continue to answer my final research question, but to also see whether or not viewing literacy instruction through a transactional lens can impact or inform the field of research for the problems the participants had presented in using literacy instruction in an online environment. From this point forward, my third research question had sub-questions to be answered: (a) “What impact, if any, does transactional distance have on TELI?” and (b) “What impact, if any, will Rosenblatt’s transactional theory have on teachers’ perception of transactional distance?”

After the Initial Interview Questionnaire and the Follow-Up to the Initial Interview Questionnaire, the instructors participated in a PLC cycle focused on action research in which the researcher and the participants worked on problems of practiced discovered in the initial interview questionnaire. Acting as the facilitator of the PLC, I presented Rosenblatt’s transactional theory. I explained the main components of viewing the events of literacy instruction as a transaction between the reader and the text. The reader, or student in this case, ultimately takes a stance while reading text which falls on a scale with one end being efferent

and the other end being aesthetic. I then taught the instructors about several strategies that could be implemented in an online environment to help facilitate literacy instruction in areas of vocabulary, writing, and reading comprehension. The instructors learned about the transactional strategies of aesthetic questioning (Carlisle 2000, Mitchell 1993), philosophical inquiry (Pennell 2014), Gamification, Semantic Association and Mapping (Stahl & Vancil 1986), using emoticons in instruction (Derks et al. 2008), and narrative-centered learning (Gerrig 1993). All of these strategies are used to help a the transaction between student and teacher to take a more aesthetic stance on the transactional scale so that they can incorporate literacy practices that bring to life the act of literacy instruction for the instructors and their students.

As the facilitator, I incorporated the four major influences on self-efficacy (Bandura 1997). Including the four major influences on self-efficacy allowed me to also take on the role of a coach, which is an important aspect of literacy PD (Cantrell & Hughes 2008, Reed 2009). I facilitated vicarious experiences in which the instructors saw examples of each the strategies and in what capacity as an online instructor they can use each of these strategies. The PLC mainly focused on incorporating these strategies in DBAs as well as assessment reminders that students view prior to completing and submitting work for an assessment. I used verbal persuasion to convince the participants with the literature from which these practices came. Physiological arousal came in the form of the participants sharing their own thoughts and feelings about their own practices and attempts at using the transactional strategies. We also worked together using Google for Education Suite such as Google Docs and Google Sheets to create resources such as DBA questions and assessment reminders that were more aesthetic in nature, which provided mastery experiences to give the participants the confidence that they could provide a more aesthetic approach to literacy instruction.

Exit Interview Data Analysis

The PLC cycle had the participants meet nine times in an online chatroom in which they collaborated using Google Docs and Google Sheets to create new questions for DBAs and assessment reminders that appealed to the aesthetic side of literacy instruction while still meeting the taxonomy and depth of knowledge of the FS. After the nine meetings, I conducted exit interviews with the instructors. Again, using Colaizzi's (1978) procedure for phenomenological analysis, I gathered 39 significant statements. I then interpreted and formulated meanings from the 39 significant statements that were then organized into seven thematic clusters: (1) Confidence, (2) Deeper Connection with Students, (3) Closing the Gap in Transactional Distance, (4) Lack of Time, (5) Using Classroom or Preservice Teacher Education Knowledge in Online Instruction, (6) No Change in Practice, and (7) "Ah-Ha" Moments from Students. After thematic clusters were formed, an exhaustive description of the phenomena observed were written. The data and the analysis has been organized into the following table.

Table 3. Exit Interview Data Analysis

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|--|--|---|---|
| Bianca | "I feel more confident in my ability to use literacy instruction as a online teacher. We have done a great job of creating a treasure trove of resources to bridge the gap between face to face learning and online learning. These resources have helped me to connect to my students and | Throughout the entire process, Bianca has embraced using Rosenblatt's transactional theory in her practice. She has used aesthetic questioning techniques in her Discussion-Based Assessments with | Thematic Cluster 1 - Confidence. Instructors feel more confident in providing opportunities for literacy instruction in their practice now that they have mastered the technique of using aesthetic questioning. Thematic Cluster 2 - Deeper Connection with Students. Since | After participating in a PLC focused on understanding literacy instruction through Rosenblatt's transactional theory, the instructors either remain |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|--|--|--|--|
| | create more meaningful teachable literacy instruction moments." | students independently without the aid of Facilitator 1 and feels as if she's connected to her students on a deeper level now that she has incorporated this into her practice. | <p>past, lived experiences are incorporated into their questioning, the instructors feel they know their students better.</p> <p>Thematic Cluster 3 - Closing the Gap Transactional Distance. Bianca has shown that she is more connected to her students, she is increasing the amount of positive dialogue she has with her students, thus closing the transactional distance in online education using Rosenblatt's transactional theory.</p> | confident or feel more confidence in their practice as online instructors. They identify several times that the PLC has given them more resources to use with students. When speaking with students, they identify that they too are finding deeper connections emotionally with their students by either understanding how students feel about content, or relating content to a student's past, lived experiences. |
| | "One experience that stands out in my mind is my informal evaluation. I completed a module 3 DBA with a student while my Instructional Leader observed. The student really came out of her shell when inquired about the choices she made to write her narrative story and why she made those choices. My IL also appreciated the in depth questioning." | When Bianca stated that "[t]he student really came out of her shell when inquired about the choices she made to write her narrative story and why she made those choices", it shows that the instructor is having a deeper connection to her student's written work. It also shows that she understands that | <p>Thematic Cluster 1 - Confidence. In stating that her IL appreciated the "in depth[sp] questioning", she has proven her ability to superiors that the aesthetic questioning truly is a highly effective strategy.</p> <p>Thematic Cluster 2 - Deeper Connection to Students. The instructor shows that she has a more intement relationship with her student.</p> | When teachers are able to connect to the students more, they increase the amount of positive dialogue with their students, |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|---|--|--|---|
| | | aesthetic questioning is meant to elicit responses such as this one from students. | Thematic Cluster 3 - Closing the Transactional Distance. Bianca now show's that the dialogue she has with her students is much more aesthetic/emotive, closing the gap in transactional distance. | which closes the gap in transactional distance instructors feel between themselves and their students. The instructors still report a lack of time when attempting to provide literacy instruction, but they are more apt at using classroom and preservice teacher education knowledge of instruction in an online environment. Although the instructors went through several strategies, some still felt that in certain aspects of instruction they have not changed their practices. Finally, teachers observed |
| | "Yes, this comes in handy during my DBAs. Sometimes students forgot vocabulary terms, but they actually do know them and can apply them. Being able to relate the terms back to the student's life or pervious lessons helps the students with recall and application." | Bianca gives an example of a transactional strategy, semantic association, in which she helps students understand vocabulary through relating it to past, lived experiences and other familiar words. She also shows mastery of the interdisciplinary aspects of the transactional theory relating it to other lessons or curricula. | Thematic Cluster 2 - Deeper Connection to Students. The instructor states that she relates vocabulary to past, lived experiences, showing she has a deeper connection to her students. Thematic Cluster 3 - Closing the Gap in Transactional Distance. Since she has a deeper, personal connection to her students through vocabulary instruction and assessment, she is increasing the amount of positive dialogue she has with her students and is closing the gap between instructor and student in an online environment. | |
| | When asked about generating motivation for reading, Bianca responded "I feel very confident in this area | The instructor feels that she's more confident because of the connection she | Thematic Cluster 2 - Deeper Connection with Students. The instructor knows her students better now. | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|--|---|--|--|
| | now! This PLC has helped me to connect more to my students and as a result I have a better idea of how to best motivate them." | has with her students and better to motivate them. | Thematic Cluster 3 - Closing the Gap in Transactional Distance. The instructor is more connected to her students because of the transactional strategies, which creates positive dialogue that shrinks the gap in transactional distance. | students having "Ah-Ha" moments, in which students make realizations that they did not think of before. Overall, the PLC on Rosenblatt's transactional |
| | When asked about the impact the PLC has had on her efficacy for helping students become proficient in tools of technology, " I still don't feel I have the time or the opportunity to really instruct students on how to use these tools and incorporate them into their learning...I feel they more effective change would come from curriculum building in some changes to our actual course." | Bianca's concerns about not having time or the opportunity to provide this instruction. She feels that it should be a built part of the curriculum. | Thematic Cluster 4 - Lack of Time. Bianca still feels as if she lacks time to provide this type of instruction to her students, feeding into a problem that online instructors face. Thematic Cluster 6 – No Change in Practice. If Bianca feels that the need for change should be in the curriculum, then it could be inferred that her practices for instruction in the use of technology remain the same. | Theory has led instructors to feeling more efficacious about their literacy instruction. |
| | When asked about her efficacy for helping struggling readers and writers, "I feel that I have learned a lot of great strategies for helping struggling readers and writers and I hope that I have the | Bianca mainly indicates that chunking the writing assignments helps the struggling students, however hasn't mentioned any of the | Thematic Cluster 4 - Lack of Time. The instructor feels that she still needs more time with struggling students to help them be successful. | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|---|---|--|--|
| | <p>time and opportunity to apply them with efficacy. I feel more confident in my ability to help struggling writers because our course does such a great job of chunking the writing assignments. This helps me to really narrow down on specific part of a student's writing at a time and really help them to improve that skill. The reading is a little harder because we have students who are really struggling and who are grade levels behind. I feel like I need more one on one time with these students to make a difference."</p> | <p>transactional strategies that we had learned to use and made resources for.</p> | | |
| Melissa | <p>"I feel more confident now and have better ideas on how to make learning more personal, and yes my instructional practices have changed by the wording of my questions in DBA's. The student has to think more about their response."</p> | <p>Melissa when asked about her efficacy for providing literacy instruction after Rosenblatt's, she states she's more confident in asking questions. She also has made the learning students do more personal based on changing the</p> | <p>Thematic Cluster 1 - Confidence. Melissa feels more confident after participating in the PLC using Rosenblatt's transactional theory. She shows her confidence in the independent nature in which she answers the question. Also, throughout the PLC meetings Melissa was more willing to include</p> | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|---|---|--|--|
| | | wording of her questions in her Discussion-Based Assessments. | <p>instructional resources like using quizlet.com to help provide vocabulary instruction.</p> <p>Thematic Cluster 2 - Deeper Connection to Students. Kennedy stated that the learning was more "personal".</p> <p>Thematic Cluster 3 - Closing the Gap in Transactional Distance. Learning has become more "personal" for Melissa, and so she has increased the opportunity for positive dialogue with her students, closing the gap transactional distance.</p> | |
| | "I feel more confident in vocabulary instruction. This PLC has reminded me of all of the golden nuggets I learned at UCF and now I am using them again, where I did not realize I could in an online environment before. This PLC helped me expand my teaching beyond the lessons." | When asked about her efficacy for vocabulary instruction after the PLC, the participant expressed that she remembered the techniques when she was in preservice teacher education. The PLC could have helped remind her of these techniques and how to use them | Thematic Cluster 5 - Using Classroom or Preservice Teacher Education Knowledge in Online Instruction. Melissa stated that she "did not realize [she] could [use these techniques] in an online environment before." | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|--|---|--|--|
| | | more effectively in practice. | | |
| | In reference to gamification of vocabulary instruction, "The students say that they make learning more fun." | Melissa stated using quizlet.com to help students comprehend vocabulary better. Gamification made the vocabulary fun. | Thematic Cluster 2 - Deeper Connection with Students. Students are having more fun. | |
| | "I feel confident in my literacy instruction after this PLC. The PLC has shown me a more detailed way to look at and make the lessons more relevant to the student and everyday life for them. I think they can make better connections than before and enjoy Language Arts more." | The instructor feels she's more confident in providing literacy instruction after the PLC. She was able to look more detailed into her practice as an online instructor. Her description of instruction appears much more aesthetic since she's making the content "relevant to the student and everyday life". | <p>Thematic Cluster 1 - Confidence. The instructor clearly stated that she's more confident, part of which has to do with seeing the results in her student's work and responses.</p> <p>Thematic Cluster 2 - Deeper Connection with Students. The instructor has stated that instruction and learning is more "relevant to the student" creating a more personal learning experience for the student.</p> <p>Thematic Cluster 3 - Closing the Gap in Transactional Distance. The instructor now uses instructional practices that are more relevant and part of "everyday</p> | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
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| | | | life", hence increasing the amount of positive dialogue that closes the gap in transactional distance. | |
| Kennedy | "I feel confident, and better equipped with additional techniques and strategies...Especially the recent conversation about injecting narrative into conversations - that was eye-opening." | Kennedy shows that she's more confident. The conversation about teaching through narrative seems to permeate through her practices as an instructor now. | Thematic Cluster 1. Confidence. She's more equipped with more strategies to use to help facilitate learning in an online environment. | |
| | "In several DBAs I've used role reversal. I found that especially effective with the Mod 6 DBA as it functioned as guided practice for the skill they use independently in the semester 2 essay exam...I actually think it was a good mix of both [efferent and aesthetic]. Many of my conversations with students are technical and focused on vocabulary and skill, but having them imagine themselves as a teacher and relating it to their own emotions and experiences made it more personal, more | Her description of her Discussion-Based Assessments with students shows that she has mastered the content knowledge of Rosenblatt's transactional theory. She has students explain what they know technically, but also relates the content to the students' emotions and life experiences. | Thematic Cluster 2. Deeper Connection with Students. She has described adding a layer of instruction that relates to students' "own emotions and experiences [making] it more personal, more relateable, more emotional". Thematic Cluster 3 - Closing the Gap in Transactional Distance. The instructor shows that she has incorporated more transactional strategies into her practice, making the likely hood of having positive dialogue with her students, which lessens | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
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| | relatable, more emotional." | | the gap in Transactional Distance. | |
| | In regards to using transactional strategies outside of live lessons and Discussion-Based Assessments, "Honestly, no. I'm treading water. However, I have a stack of kids ready to "graduate" this week and will try to utilize it more after I have fewer students...If I can make it habitual when I have a small class load, then it will be more efficient and natural when I am loaded with new students again." | When the instructor states that she is "treading water", it can be interpreted that she has a high amount of work. She could make more changes to her instructional practices if she had a "small class load". | Thematic Cluster 4- Lack of Time. She still feels that she lacks time to incorporate these strategies more systematically. Thematic Cluster 6 – No Change in Practice. She still hasn't changed much of her practice in regards to literacy instruction due to a lack of time. | |
| | In response to how the PLC has impacted her efficacy for vocabulary instruction, Kennedy responds "I have included some more techniques in my conversations, like non-examples, but talking about vocabulary for me often remains very technical." | The instructor does not seem to have changed in this area of instruction. | Thematic Cluster 4 - Lack of Time. She still feels that she lacks time to incorporate these strategies more systematically. Thematic Cluster 6 – No Change in Practice. The instructor still uses the technical aspects of vocabulary instruction. | |
| | In response to the impact the PLC has had on her efficacy for Reading Comprehension | The participant describes the assessment reminders and DBA questions as | Thematic Cluster 1 – Confidence. The Instructor shows that she's confident in using the materials when she | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
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| | <p>Instruction, Kennedy stated that "Yes, I've talked with students who struggle and need support about using the assessment reminders as additional tips for completing assessments. I do feel it's valuable to have another layer of support - lesson instructions, HELP site workfiles, credit recovery files, assessment reminders, live lessons AND direct instruction on the phone. All useful - all offering a DIFFERENT approach that might present it in just the right light that a student needs."</p> | <p>another resource for the students to use. She has used these resources with students who struggle and views it as another form of support. The feeling that she gives me from this statement that it's akin to resources such as the help site, credit recover files, live lessons, and direct instruction over the phone. She gives each of these resources equal weight.</p> | <p>suggests them and implements them with struggling readers in her online class.</p> | |
| | <p>When asked about how she feels after the PLC on Literacy Instruction in regards to generating motivation for reading, "I still feel this is an area that is lacking in online instruction. I do wish I could hand books off a book shelf to students. I continue to discuss literature and books with students in most conversations, but I know that the</p> | <p>In this statement, Kennedy shows that she's hindered by the transactional distance, which makes her unable to effectively generate motivation for reading.</p> | <p>Thematic Cluster 6 - No Change in Practice. The instructor feels that the transactional distance doesn't afford her the opportunity to help students as effectively in this area of literacy practice.</p> | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
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| | <p>likelihood that they will seek out the books we discuss is small. This is one major deficit. My confidence and practices have not changed."</p> | | | |
| | <p>"I recognize now there are many ways I could better incorporate this generation's preferred communication style in my interactions with students. The images and emoticons and bitmojis really do grab them in a unique way, and I'd like to add more of them. I hesitate because I know much of that communication also goes to the parents, and I worry about seeming unprofessional. There are in fact some images that we used in the assessment reminders that I would not have chosen to. I think we walk a fine line, and as someone who is short and "cute" with a squeaky voice, I have always worried about being respected by PARENTS, but I'm recognizing that in order to be effective I</p> | <p>The instructor voices her concerns over using emoticons to provide instruction to students. She worries that because of the way she appears and sounds, students and parents will not take her seriously as an instructor, so she has opted not to use the instructional resources in her classroom. She does plan to use them more eventually.</p> | <p>Thematic Cluster 6 - No Change in Practice. The instructor is more worried about teacher presence and having respect from her students than to try a novel instructional practice.</p> | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|--|---|--|--|
| | need to be catching the STUDENTS. I plan to add more emoticons and bitmojis and images to my communications with students." | | | |
| | I feel confident, and happy to have more techniques to try. I'm glad they respond so well to the narrative we can weave around the DBAs, and that's a simple change to make. I think I can grab their attention and interest more effectively with the image-based interactions, and hopefully they will be more motivated by the tasks in the course. | Kennedy continues to remain confident in her practice and uses some of the instructional strategies that the PLC helped teachers understand better. | Thematic Cluster 1 - Confidence. Kennedy has shown that she can effectively weave narrative into literacy instruction during Discussion-Based Assessments. It was a "simple change to make". | |
| Vanessa | "I feel like it has helped some...I feel like finding new tools and using the new tools we have developed especially the assessment reminders have given me a good bag of ideas to use for the students who are struggling" | Vanessa found the experience helpful, that it gave her new tools to use. | Thematic Cluster 1 - Confidence. Vanessa now has more resources to use, making her a more confident teacher. | |
| | When asked about which transactional strategy she feels most confident with using, Vanessa responded | Vanessa focused mainly on aesthetic questioning to help improve her | Thematic Cluster 2 - Deeper Connection with Students. Vanessa shows that she wanted to improve her practice | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
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| | <p>"Aesthetic questions that strategy in particular was one I really wanted to improve on because I am always looking for ways to connect more with my students so I felt like I really focused on that"</p> | <p>practice, making more connections with her students.</p> | <p>by connecting more with students.</p> <p>Thematic Cluster 3 - Closing the Gap in Transactional Distance. In creating more opportunities for personal connections to her students, Vanessa is increasing the amount of positive dialogue she has with her students, which helps to close the gap in transactional distance.</p> | |
| | <p>When asked to tell me about an experience she had with a student using aesthetic questioning, "during my DBA last week in module 5 I was talking to a student about their novel, The Hobbit...I asked him how the theme of the book can help apply to his life...he began talking about how anyone can make a difference and that through the theme he has seen this...well as we finished the DBA. We moved into feeding forward to module 6. I explained about the argument and how he would develop a claim</p> | <p>The instructor shows evidence that she's used aesthetic questioning effectively in her DBA. She has the student connect what he learned from The Hobbit to an argumentative writing task, in which he chooses a topic that he wants to make is meaningful to him. "He then started talking about how he wanted to do animal testing and that he didn't agree with it and</p> | <p>Thematic Cluster 2 - Deeper Connection with Students. Vanessa shows that she had a deeper connection to her student when she found out that he did not agree with animal testing. This was all prompted by the aesthetic questioning.</p> <p>Thematic Cluster 3 - Closing the Gap in Transactional Distance. This shows evidence of her ability to create moments of positive dialogue, which closes the gap in transactional distance.</p> | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
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| | <p>counterclaim, etc...he then started talking about how he wanted to do animal testing and that he didn't agree with it and working on this can help make a difference. I explained yes, so using that question we kept moving forward instruction to the next module. We went on more about finding strong arguments etc but it was neat that we tied it all together in his mind."</p> | <p>working on this can help make a difference". This statement shows there's carry over from the literature into a non-fiction writing task. The teacher successfully used the transactional theory in her practice.</p> | | |
| | <p>When asked about her efficacy for teaching students to ethically participate in an online environment, "I don't think my practices have changed, I think adding some new ideas especially ones in helping students make connections has been good for helping them participate ethically, I feel like I have had a few more issues lately and using some of the tools we discussed, especially making sure the students connect things they have done to their own person, ie, taking responsibility</p> | <p>The instructor is attempting to make changes, but overall perhaps her mindset about teaching students to participate ethically in an online environment has not changed. She does not elaborate on issues.</p> | <p>Thematic Cluster 6 - Practices have not changed. She feels that she understands how some of the strategies could possibly benefit her instruction, but has not changed.</p> | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
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| | for their actions and changing the way I discuss these issues with them by connecting ideas more to them personally has helped" | | | |
| | Describing an experience helping a struggling writer, "I was working with the student the other day in module 3, and he was struggling on what to write for his narrative...so I said, pretend you are Kate, put yourself in the narrative, what would you do...make yourself the character. then I kept asking him how would you feel, what would you want to see happen...so I made him a part of the story more and then it started clicking...so then I said, now tell me back what you need to do in your story, pretend I don't understand what to write and tell me what you must include, and so he said, conflict, and I said what is that...so I kind of did 2: aesthetic questioning and role reversal. It was kind of | The instructor used aesthetic questioning and role reversal to help a struggling student. She has the student imagine that they are the main character of the novel and asked them "what would you want to see happen?" She "made him part of the story more and then it started clicking". The experience was positive for both student and teacher. The instructor reports that "I felt like I was teaching again." | <p>Thematic Cluster 1 - Confidence. Using role reversal and aesthetic questioning provided the instructor the opportunity to provide instruction which shows that she is confident in her ability to provide instruction online.</p> <p>Thematic Cluster 2 - Deeper connection with Student. She connects the writing task to the student by asking him "what would you want to see happen".</p> <p>Thematic Cluster 3 - Closing the Gap in Transactional Distance. The instructor has tools to create moments of positive dialogue, closing the transactional distance.</p> <p>Thematic Cluster 5 - Using Classroom Knowledge/Preservice Teacher Education Knowledge in Practice</p> | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|--|---|---|--|
| | fun, I felt like I was teaching again." | | <p>Online. The instructor stated that she "felt like [she] was teaching again" indicating that she is using the experiences she had in the classroom.</p> <p>Thematic Cluster 7 - "Ah-Ha" Moments from Students. The teacher described that through using the aesthetic questioning and role reversal, the student's creativity "started clicking" and he was able to plan his narrative better.</p> | |
| Denise | <p>"Yes, from both the student and myself. Real-world to text relations are a huge part of understanding topics in science, because if students can't relate something they have done or I can't tell a past experience that I've done they might not master the skill. For example genetic engineering, the definition is fine, but explaining a that taking a trip to the produce section where you can find seedless watermelons, or cherry</p> | <p>Denise has given a thorough description of using past, lived experience in providing literacy instruction in her middle school science description. The result is that the students understand the concept better.</p> | <p>Thematic Cluster 1 - Confidence. The instructor gives a very thorough description showing her ability to provide literacy instruction using the transactional strategy.</p> <p>Thematic Cluster 2 - Deeper Connection with Students. Since the instructor relates genetic engineering to going to the produce section and seeing seedless watermelon and cherry tomatoes, she is connecting to students on a deeper, more personal level</p> | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
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| | <p>tomatoes is a time you can actually experience seeing it first hand. Then talking about what else could be engineered becomes more clear to them."</p> | | <p>bringing up an experienc they can all relate to.</p> <p>Thematic Cluster 3 - Closing the Gap in Transactional Distance. Since the instructor is providing moments of posive dialogue to her students by connecting to their past, lived experiences, she is closing the gap in transactional distance.</p> | |
| | <p>"This is tough, because as a science instructor we don't focus on reading comprehension, and our course is very black and white, with a lot of vocabulary and bullet points. However, I have been able to work with some students who struggle on specific topics that are text heavy, by breaking down the text for them. This comes from my background knowledge in reading education as well as this PLC. I would say it has changed, per say, but I would say it has made me more aware of</p> | <p>The instructor stated that she is "more aware" of using what she's learned from her reading education and from what she's learned int he PLC. The instructor seems to still feel hindered by the curriculum.</p> | <p>Thematic Cluster 5 - Using Classroom/Preservice Teacher Education Knowledge in Practice Online.</p> | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
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| | when I should use my skills." | | | |
| | <p>"Sure. During one of our project sessions we have the students create "travel brochures" built around different ecosystems. One area we talk about what to include and I begin with, 'I am going to the rainforest, and as I pack my bags I will need.....' I think it makes the student put more effort and take more ownership on what is being submitted, because they are the ones coming up with the ideas. Once they begin with objects I begin to ask why and they would have to explain it more. Sometimes they realizes certain things are more useful than others. I like using this type of narrative technique, because it's more about what the students can bring to the table, and less teacher "spoon feeding" ideas."</p> | <p>The instructor shows her use of putting the students in a certain situation. She states that "students realize certain things are more useful than others" and relates this to using narrative as instruction.</p> | <p>Thematic Cluster 7 - "Ah-Ha" Moments from Students. Students coming to a realization using real, world situations helps students understand the content better.</p> | |
| | <p>"It was a great process and it allowed me to view my course</p> | <p>In writing about her response, she saw the value in</p> | <p>Thematic Cluster 1 – Confidence. The participant saw the</p> | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|---|--|--|--|
| | through a different lens, but also seeing how other courses work has been helpful. I do think it was a little difficult to apply some areas were difficult to relate to the science subject, but either way with was a positive experience." | viewing science curriculum through a literacy lens or theoretical framework. | value in the experience and it helped her view her course through a literacy lens. | |
| Christina | "After completing the PLC I feel more equipped. The ideas that other teachers suggested and the collaboration that occurred in the meetings really opened my mind to the many possibilities I can still take advantage of as an online instruction. Many of the tools that I used in the traditional classroom can still be incorporated with a transactional point of view for the student to take ownership of their learning. An example of this is the semantic map- which sets the stage for the student to use the content we put together in the map in order to draw his/her conclusions about the material." | The instructor feels that she has found a way to take what she "used in the traditional classroom" and use it in an online setting. She states that students have begun to "take ownership of their learning", which means that there's a deeper connection to the students. | Thematic Cluster 1 - Confidence. The tone of her voice conveyed a confidence in her instruction as an online instructor. Thematic Cluster 2 - Deeper Connection with Students. She finds that students are taking "ownership" of their work, which means that the transactional theory has helped her students under her care. Thematic Cluster 3 - Closing the Gap in Transactional Distance. Since the instructor has deeper connections through implementing the transactional strategies, she has more positive dialogue with students and thus the gap in transactional distance lessens. | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|--|---|---|--|
| | | | Thematic Cluster 5 - Using Classroom/Preservice Teacher Education Knowledge in Practice Online. The instructor stated that she has brought a lot of what she had done previously from the traditional classroom into the online setting. The example of the semantic map shows that she's implementing the transactional theory into practice online. | |
| | "I would have to say that I feel most comfortable with Semantic Association and with Teaching through Narrative. I feel that both of these strategies allow for me to bring up something that is familiar to the student in order for the student to make connections as they interpret and master new information." | The "something that is familiar to the student" indicates that she understands that students should transact with the content in their online learning, bringing forward the aesthetic aspect of learning. When students make the "connections as they interpret and master new information" is indicative of the interdisciplinary nature of the | Thematic Cluster 2 - Deeper Connection with Students. Since the instructor is bringing something familiar to the students and has them make connections, she essentially is creating a deeper connection between the student, the content, and the instructor. Thematic Cluster 3 - Closing the Gap in Transactional Distance. The instructor shows evidence of having positive dialogue with students as they are mastering the content. Having more positive | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|---|--|--|--|
| | | results of the strategies used. | dialogue closes the transactional distances. | |
| | <p>"As a learning specialist I tend to rely on well known narratives to make associations with new concepts I am hoping the trainees acquire. Sometimes I will mention the story of the Giver and explain that many of our students have been living in a world where everything is black and white and has been given to them. I remind them that it is their job as teachers to impart knowledge with the hopes that they will be able to awaken the curiosity in their students - so that they would be equipped to make decisions in life. I remind them that our job as teachers goes far beyond that of teaching a subject. Our roles are far greater-like that of the Giver-and that there are times where it can be difficult and feel lonely."</p> | <p>In this experience, the Instructor recalls using Narrative to help "make associations with new concepts". She uses the narrative The Giver to help her students, in this case training newly hired online instructors. She indicates that online instructors should be able to "awaken the curiosity in their students - so that they would be equipped to make decisions in life."</p> | <p>Thematic Cluster 2 - Deeper Connection with Students. The use of narrative as a means for instruction helps associate the task of teaching online to a familiar narrative, making a deeper connection for students.</p> <p>Thematic Cluster 3 - Closing the Gap in Transactional Distance. The instructor seems to describe an experience that provides a positive instructional moment for both her and her students. The gap in transactional distance lessens.</p> | |
| | <p>"Other times I will use graphic organizers that have familiar terms</p> | <p>In this example, the Instructor recalls using</p> | <p>Thematic Cluster 2 - Deeper Connection with Students. The</p> | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|---|--|---|--|
| | <p>that are used in the brick and mortar school the teachers are coming from so that in turn they would be able to better understand the new terminology I am exposing them to. They get to use the graphics and the words to make a determination about how this new things are very similar to what they already did-it all just looks a bit different."</p> | <p>graphic organizers, which uses familiar terms from face-to-face education. She does this in the hopes to make connections to the new terminology used in online education.</p> | <p>instructor connects the familiar face-to-face classroom terminology to new online education terminology in order for students to make associations to their past, lived experiences.</p> | |
| | <p>"After completing the PLC I feel extremely confident about helping the new teachers use new technology. Part of the training that happens via Blackboard is the element of practicing how to engage each other because these teachers will be expected to lead their own live lessons with students. After completing the PLC, I now incorporate other tools that will enhance the teacher's ability to engage students. I am incorporating Bitmoji and graphics that will</p> | <p>The Instructor states that she feels more confidence in her literacy practices. She uses bitmojis and graphics that "speak louder than words". She feels more equipped "to help other teachers understand how to effectively use the tools of technology they will be using in their online environment."</p> | <p>Thematic Cluster 1 - Confidence. The instructor feels more confident after going through the PLC cycle and being equipped with the transactional strategies.</p> | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|--|---|--|--|
| | <p>speak louder than words. I am able to use snagit to show examples of what I need. I am allowing teachers to share their own screen and be the ones that "own" the example we are using in training. The way we collaborated during our PLC meetings and the content we created together equipped me to help other teachers understand how to effectively use the tools of technology they will be using in their online environment."</p> | | | |
| Grace | <p>"I believe my overall ability to use literacy instruction in my practice as an online instructor has increased after completing the PLC on Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory because it has strengthened the teacher-student relationships as well as allowed the student to think critically about questions that could be applied to their own lives. It also has helped me to get know the</p> | <p>The instructor shows her confidence in thoroughly explaining the aesthetic aspect of the transactional theory. She states that using the theory "has strengthened the teacher-student relationships as well as allowed the student to think critically about questions that could be</p> | <p>Thematic Cluster 1 - Confidence. The instructor states that her ability "has increased".</p> <p>Thematic Cluster 2 - Deeper Connection with Students. The instructor states that she has "strengthened th teacher student relationships" using the transactional theory.</p> <p>Thematic Cluster 3 - Closing the Gath in Transactional Distance. The instructor reports to have had more positive</p> | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
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| | student better through aesthetic questioning." | applied to their own lives". | dialogue with her students therefore lessening the transactional distance both she and her students feel in an online environment. | |
| | <p>"My instructional practices have improved with Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory by allowing the student to answer the question "why". Sometimes students ask "Why do I need to know this?" Thanks to strategies like role reversal, they understand the importance of argumentative elements, such as in Module 6 of the class, or how to keep a journal or log of one's travels such as in Module 5. They "get it" and why it's important to learn these techniques for the future. Without the transactional theory they wouldn't know, therefore wouldn't care. I also noticed I received fewer messages on lessons utilizing Rosenblatt's theory than the lessons</p> | <p>In this statement, the instructor indicates that she utilizes the transactional theory to give her students a purpose for learning. Using the strategies have resulted in her students understanding at a deeper level. In her words, "They 'get it' and why it's important to learn these techniques for the future." The instructor demonstrates her ability to utilize the transactional strategies, helping her students transcend their learning not just for the context of the classroom, but for real world as well.</p> | <p>Thematic Cluster 1 - Confidence. she states that she has "improved" her literacy practices with the use of role reversal/philosophical inquiry, which has the student question "why" and "what is".</p> <p>Thematic Cluster 2 - Deeper Connections with Students. She connects the content interdisciplinarily as well as to real-world experiences.</p> <p>Thematic Cluster 3 - Closing the Gap in Transactional Distance.</p> | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
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| | I don't use the transactional theory." | | | |
| | <p>"I am confident in my ability to use reading comprehension instructional strategies with Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory because when it comes to philosophical inquiry or semantic association, even if I'm not familiar with how to convey the information - because the student can look into his or her own personal past lived experiences he/she can connect the content to something he/she knows, meaning they do the critical thinking leaving me with less to worry about, when it comes to how to link information to something they might know. For example, when reading The Lion and the Mouse, when identifying the theme a student had mentioned how the mouse reminded her of Jerry from Tom and Jerry and the Lion was Tom. There are times when they don't get along but Jerry proves he can</p> | <p>The instructor describes an instructional moments where she activates students' past, lived experiences. She describes how this has helped her to "link information to something they might know" and provides an example of comparing "Tom and Jerry" to "The Lion and the Mouse". The student connected these stories. The instructor believes that students will be able to transact with literature aesthetically without prompting over time.</p> | <p>Thematic Cluster 1 - Confidence. The instructor feels confidence and shows her confidence in her explanation of theory as well as in her example of practical application of the theory in conversation with a student.</p> <p>Thematic Cluster 2 - Deeper Connection with Students. The instructor gives an example of a deeper, more personal connection with her student using theory.</p> <p>Thematic Cluster 3 - Closing the Gap in Transactional Distance. In her description of an experience with a student, the instructor shows that she is having a more positive, personal dialogue with her student, which shrinks the transactional distance in online education.</p> | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
|-------------|--|--|--|--|
| | <p>make as big of a difference, if not bigger than Tom can. I didn't think about connecting these two stories until she brought it up, proving that over time students will begin to utilize Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory without being prompted to."</p> | | | |
| | <p>"This question... is the best. I don't think we have enough time for me to rave about how much I LOVE Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory. I definitely see a dramatic increase in student motivation and general interest. It motivates me as well, especially when getting through DBAs. For example, the Module 5 DBAs (which I'm starting to do more of) have become much more exciting while I pick the students' minds on whether or not they'd be friends with the protagonist or would they respond with indicative mood or interrogative mood if</p> | <p>In this statement, the instructor describes her conversations with students as "more exiting" when using aesthetic questions such whether or not they would be friends with the protagonist or how they would respond to someone speaking in the indicative or interrogative moods. The instructor also observes that she too is more motivated by the responses she receives from her students, adding</p> | <p>Thematic Cluster 1 - Confidence. The instructor shows that she's more motivated to use the theory because of the results she's seen. Her efficacy has increased</p> <p>Thematic Cluster 2 - Deeper Connection with Students. The instructor uses aesthetic questioning that allows her to go deeper into connecting with her students such as asking whether or not the student would be friends with the protagonist</p> <p>Thematic Cluster 3 - Closing the Gap in Transactional Distance. The instructor has more meaningful, positive</p> | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
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| | <p>their mom said "You're going to clean your room today!" It's made conversations more exciting and I love knowing the hamster wheel is spinning and the hamster is having a blast."</p> | <p>to her confidence. She uses a "hamster wheel" metaphor to indicate that the students are thinking and enjoying the experience.</p> | <p>dialogue with her students, thus closing the gap in transactional distance.</p> <p>Thematic Cluster 7 "Ah-Ha" Moments from Students. The hamster metaphor shows that the instructor believes that the students are thinking critically but also enjoying the learning process.</p> | |
| | <p>" I am confident in my ability to use instructional strategies to help struggling readers by utilizing techniques gathered from Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory. Students who normally struggle are ones who are used to having things told TO them but not used to DISCOVERING it themselves. The art of being an effective teacher is to give scaffold until they get it, that way their brains say "hey, this is important because I LEARNED it, it wasn't given to me. I will put it in my long term memory." Using</p> | <p>In this response, the instructor explains her perspective on quality teaching. Students should "discover" in order to learn. She describes the "ah" moment as "hey, this is important because I LEARNED it, it wasn't given to me. I will put it in my long term memory." She goes on to explain how struggling students will understand concepts "if they</p> | <p>Thematic Cluster 1 - Confidence. The instructor shows that she is more confident in her ability to provide literacy instruction for struggling readers and writers through using transactional strategies.</p> <p>Thematic Cluster 7 - "Ah-Ha" Moments from Students. The instructor describes the thought process students go through when she uses the transactional strategies to provide them instruction. The students change into active agents, having "LEARNED" the material and are</p> | |

| Participant | Extracted Significant Statement | Interpretation/ Formulating meaning | Thematic Cluster | Exhaustive Description of the Phenomenon |
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| | aesthetic techniques has been a valuable resource to achieve the "ah" moment that so many students crave, especially struggling students who have yet to discover aesthetic learning and application. It is common for struggling students to "get" something if they can "see" it with their mind, for example how I explain verbal irony as a Halloween party. They will never forget which is a participial and which is a gerund because they can "picture" the costumes each verbal phrase wears to the parts of speech costume party." | can 'see' it with their mind." | actively "DISCOVERING". | |

Vignettes on the Thematic Clusters from the Exit Interview Phase

As I had done with the initial interview phase, I have created *vignettes* on the thematic clusters found in the exit interviews using van Manen’s (1984) for phenomenological writing. During the process, I attuned myself to the experiences of the participants through their significant statements using them as evidence and examples for the thematic clusters I have formed.

Thematic Cluster 1. Confidence

During the exit interview phase, 18 significant statements expressed the instructors either growing more confident or remained confident in their ability to provide literacy instruction in an online environment. Many of the instructors found confidence in using the new DBA questions and assessment reminders viewed through the lens of the transactional theory as a new resource to have in their teacher “tool box”. Kennedy mentioned she felt *“better equipped with additional techniques and strategies...Especially the recent conversations about injecting narrative into conversations – that was eye-opening.”* Bianca referred to the new questions and assessment reminders with pride as *“a treasure trove of resources.”* Vanessa wrote that she uses the transactional strategies as a resource as well:

“I feel like finding new tools and using the new tools we developed especially the assessment reminders have given me a good bag of ideas to use for the students who are struggling”

Christina described her confidence about the PLC cycle as eye-opening:

“After completing the PLC I feel more equipped. The ideas that other teachers suggested and the collaboration that occurred in the meetings really opened my mind to the many possibilities I can still take advantage of as an online instruct[or].”

Not only did the transactional strategies have an impact on the instructors, but so did the collaboration that took place in a synchronous online environment.

Thematic Cluster 2. Deeper Connection with Students

The instructors expressed a deeper connection with students in 20 statements from the exit interview phase. Bianca found that the deeper connection with her students created *“more meaningful teachable literacy instruction moments.”* Vanessa described a truly connective, aesthetic conversation she had with a student during a DBA:

“During my DBA last week in module 5 I was talking to a student about their novel, The Hobbit...I asked him how the theme of the book can help apply to his life...he began talking about how anyone can make a difference and that through the theme he has seen this...well as we finished the DBA, we moved into feeding forward to module 6. I explained about the argument and how he would develop a claim, counterclaim, etc...he then started talking about how he wanted to do animal testing and that he didn’t agree with it and working on this can help make a difference. I explained yes, so using that question we kept moving forward instruction to the next module. We went on more about finding strong arguments etc. but it was neat that we tied it all together in his mind.”

This transaction Vanessa had with her student truly embodies the aesthetic experience that many of the other participants shared. In this statement, Vanessa has connected her student to the content. It is quite clear that the student has connected to the novel *The Hobbit* and its theme “anyone can make a difference” which is his inspiration for writing his argumentative essay. This affective, emotional, and interdisciplinary transaction Vanessa had with her student made her value the experience and become deeply connected to her student.

Christina, a learning specialist, also used transactional strategies and recalled a teaching moment with her teacher trainees:

“Sometimes I will mention the story of The Giver and explain that many of our students have been living in a world where everything is black and white and has been given to them. I remind them that it is their job as teachers to impart knowledge with the hopes that they will be able to awaken the curiosity in their students—so that they would be equipped to make decisions in life. I remind them that our job as teachers goes far beyond that of teaching a subject. Our roles are far greater—like that of the Giver—and that there are times where it can be difficult and feel only.”

The instructor used a familiar young adult novel to help her trainees have a deeper connection to their practice as online instructors. She uses the narrative to explain that the world is full of possibilities for their students and that they can make an impact on their students that go far beyond content, but to free them from boundaries that society has set.

Thematic Cluster 3. Closing the Gap in Transactional Distance

In playing off the previous theme of deeper connections with students, instructors inadvertently realized that they have somewhat closed some of the gap in transactional distance from their students. Eighteen statements reveal that the gap in transactional distance has lessened. Melissa stated that the transactional strategies inspired by Rosenblatt's transactional theory had made learning "more fun" for her students. Vanessa described the closing of the gap in transactional distance through feeling like she is teaching again:

"I was working with the student the other day in module 3, and he was struggling on what to write for his narrative...so I said, pretend you are Kate, put yourself in the narrative, what would you do...make yourself the character. Then I kept asking him how would you feel, what would you want to see happen...so I made him a part of the story more and then it started clicking...so then I said, now tell me back what you need to do in your story, pretend I don't understand what to write and tell me what you must include, and so he said, conflict, and I said what is that...so I kind of did 2: aesthetic questioning and role reversal. It was kind of fun, I felt like I was teaching again."

In her description, Vanessa had her student become part of the narrative and stated using the transactional strategies of role reversal and aesthetic questioning. In doing so, she felt closer to something that she felt like she had not done previously in her online instruction. Here statement of *"It was kind of fun, I felt like I was teaching again"* reveals that she felt at once far removed from literacy instruction, but through the use of the transactional strategies she has regained some of what was once lost.

Christina describes the close in the gap of transactional distance differently with her online teacher trainees:

"I am allowing teachers to share their own screen and be the ones that 'own' the example we are using in training. The way we collaborated during our PLC meetings and the content we created together equipped me to help other teachers understand how to effectively use the tools of technology they will be using in their online environment."

This sense of “ownership” that Christina describes shows a closer connection to the content and learner and being part of the learning process. These are positive dialogues that open communication between teacher and learner, which helps to close the gap in transactional distance.

Thematic Cluster 4. Lack of Time

There were four statements from two participants who felt that they lacked the time to be able to implement the transactional strategies in certain areas of their practice. Bianca felt that she lacked time to provide instruction of tools of technology. She felt that the transactional strategies would not necessarily be effective in this area of literacy and that “*the more effective change would come from curriculum building in some changes to our actual course*”. Kennedy viewed that the transactional strategies require time to craft and make habitual:

“I’m treading water. However, I have a stack of kids ready to ‘graduate’ this week and will try to utilize it more after I have fewer students...If I can make it habitual when I have a small class load, then it will be more efficient and natural when I am loaded with new students again.”

The amount of students teachers have seem to weigh on their ability to provide literacy instruction using the transactional strategies they learned from the PLC. In the use of the words “*habitual, efficient, and natural*” Kennedy reveals some important aspects of her teaching practice. They must be consistent (habitual), useful (efficient), and authentic (natural).

Thematic Statement 5. Using Classroom/Preservice Teacher Education Knowledge in Practice Online

In four statements, instructors eluded to the use of knowledge they had once had in the classroom or in preservice teacher education. Melissa reflected on her confidence in vocabulary instruction:

“I feel more confident in vocabulary instruction. This PLC has reminded me of all of the golden nuggets I learned at UCF and now I am using them again, where I did not realize I could in an online environment before. This PLC helped me expand my teaching beyond the lessons.”

Here, Melissa shows that she can use practical classroom techniques in an online environment.

The PLC helped her come to certain realizations about the importance of going beyond the curriculum as well.

Thematic Cluster 6. No Change in Practice

Although the participants showed signs of changes in their practice, there were six statements that revealed that some of their practices have not changed. Much of the time, the lack of change in practice coincided with lack of time to change practices. There were a few statements that did not coincide with time. Kennedy reflects on still not feeling like she can generate motivation for reading effectively:

“I still feel this is an area that is lacking in online instruction. I do wish I could hand books off a book shelf to students. I continue to discuss literature and books with students in most conversations, but I know that their likelihood that they will seek out the books we discuss is small. This is one major deficit. My confidence and practices have not changed.”

Though Kennedy had learned about how taking an aesthetic stance toward questioning, using narrative in instruction, and role reversal, she still did not change her confidence and practices in motivating students to read.

Thematic Cluster 7. “Ah-Ha” Moments from Students

In four statements, the participants reported “Ah-Ha” moments, or moments of realization, from their students when using transactional techniques. Grace described how she achieved these “Ah-Ha” moments through aesthetic questioning:

“Students who normally struggle are ones who are used to having things told TO them but not used to DISCOVERING it themselves. The art of being an effective teacher is to

give scaffold until they get it, that way their brains say ‘hey, this is important because I LEARNED it, it wasn’t given to me. I will put it in my long term memory.’ Using aesthetic techniques has been a valuable resource to achieve the ‘ah’ moment that so many students crave.”

In her description, Grace thinks that the aesthetic questioning allows students to do the learning on their own, rather than the teacher giving them instruction. She uses the word *discovery* in all caps to add emphasis to her thoughts on the learning process through a transactional approach.

With her science students, Denise described students coming to realization about what students would need when going to different ecosystems.

“Sometimes they realized certain things are more useful than others. I like using this type of narrative technique, because it’s more about what the students can bring to the table, and less teacher ‘spoon feeding’ ideas”.

Denise and Grace both enjoyed having students discover and bring what they know to the content, and that transactional strategies help them achieve these “Ah-Ha” moments without “*spoon feeding*” or giving everything to the student up front.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The following chapter discusses the findings, implications, and conclusions of the phenomenological study examining the experiences of online instructors as they reflect on their TELI. In the study, the participants initially reflected on their current practice in providing literacy instruction mediated through an online learning environment and their perceived TELI. Participants received an intervention through an Action Research PLC in which they learned about literacy instruction through the lens of Rosenblatt's transactional theory. They shared experiences of TELI, pedagogical practices, and their thoughts about literacy instruction in an online environment. Next, they worked collaboratively to create resources using transactional strategies in their DBAs and assessment reminders. Coupled with the Action Research PLC model were activities that build TELI using the four major influences on self-efficacy (Bandura 1997).

The first two research questions sought to answer (1) "What pedagogical practices do instructors use to provide literacy instruction in an online environment?" and (2) "How do instructors perceive their TELI in an online environment?" prior to any intervention that the PLC provided. After the participants and researcher finished the intervention of an Action Research PLC cycle focused on viewing literacy instruction through Rosenblatt's transactional theory, the study sought to answer the third research question (3) "What impact, if any, will a PLC focused on Rosenblatt's transactional theory have on TELI in an online environment?" with the addition of the sub-questions (a) "What impact, if any, does transactional distance have on TELI?" and (b) "What impact, if any, will Rosenblatt's transactional theory have on teachers' perception of transactional distance?". After performing Colaizzi's (1978) phenomenological data analysis procedures, I reported the results of the analysis in Chapter 4. In this chapter, I describe four

phenomena discovered during this study that contribute to answering the research questions and sub-questions while informing the field of TELI in an online environment. Afterwards, I suggest implications for pedagogical practices, identify limitations of the study, and explain how this research informs the field of teaching and learning.

The Phenomenon of Literacy Instruction in an Online Environment

The exhaustive description from the initial interview questionnaire and follow up interviews describe the experiences of the seven participants as they perceive providing literacy instruction in an online environment. The exhaustive description included seven thematic clusters: (a) efferent instructional strategies, (b) lack of time, (c) limited by curriculum, (d) impact of transactional distance, (e) rich bank of classroom practices, (f) aesthetic instructional strategies, (g) confidence. To answer the first research question (1) “What pedagogical practices do instructors use to provide literacy instruction in an online environment?”, the literacy instructional practices of the participants in the study were mainly efferent and occurred in dialogue that was in a one-on-one format. The strategies had students reread content, ask questions, give examples and non-examples, and some reading comprehension strategies such as paraphrasing, summarizing, and chunking the text. Although the participants listed mainly efferent strategies, they also included strategies that appealed to the aesthetic stance as well. In some of their statements, they sought to provide examples that were familiar to students when giving vocabulary instruction or asking students about their background knowledge and past experiences.

As the researcher, I also used the initial interview questionnaire and follow-up interviews to answer the second research question (2) “How do instructors perceive their TELI in an online environment?”. The participants generally feel confident but feel that they lack opportunities to

provide literacy instruction in an online environment. Often, they would refer to their past classroom experiences from which they gain their confidence in TELI, rather than as an experience of providing instruction in an online environment. They felt limited in their ability to provide literacy instruction in an online environment, which I attribute to the greater amounts of transactional distance that they felt between themselves and their students and the limitations the participants felt from the structure of the curriculum and LMS imposed on them. These two findings helped develop the description of two phenomena that emerged from the study: the Gap in Transactional Distance as Perceived by Teachers and the Silence Narratives of Teacher's TELI in an Online Environment.

The Phenomenon of the Gap in Transactional Distance as Perceived by Teachers

It was observed prior to the start of the PLC that instructors had a rich bank of classroom practices that ranged from efferent to aesthetic when viewed through the lens of Rosenblatt's transactional theory. The participants in this study experienced the transactional distance that separates instructors and students in an online environment. Participants reported having few and far between dialogues with students and reported using the efferent literacy instruction that is not conducive for creating positive dialogue, lessens transactional distance. Although in the past, it has been found that student satisfaction is correlated with less transactional distance through positive dialogue (Ekwunife-Orakwue & Teng 2014), the significant statements from the participants in this study have indicated that transactional distance also impacts the instructors TELI. They feel as if their practices and instruction are "*less immediate*" or that it's hard to reach students when mediated through an online environment. Teachers are not able to see the immediate impact they have, and they are not able to employ their literacy practices as often as they once did in the classroom culminating an overall feeling of lower TELI. The participants

reported that low amount of dialogue and immutable structure of the course, which increases the amount of transactional distance (Stein et al. 2005). Many statements from the participants also were references back to being in the classroom.

Distance Due to Low Dialogue

Bianca in her initial interview reported that it is difficult for her to provide reading comprehension instruction in an online environment. *“I feel that [reading comprehension strategies] require me to know more about the student’s background[,] and they require more follow-up and daily instruction.”* The instructor does not have enough positive dialogue, an element of Transactional Distance (Moore 1993), for her to feel close enough to her students to provide them with literacy instruction. Kennedy also reported feeling limited by the transactional distance due to low ability to engage in dialogue about grammar instruction with her students. She stated that her *“grammar instruction is limited to the feedback [she] provide[s] for written work.”* When comparing what she did in the classroom, she *“had more time dedicated to grammar instruction”*.

Distance Due to Structure

Vanessa reported feeling distant from her students due to the structure, another element of Transactional Distance Theory (Moore 1993), of the course. She stated that she does not *“teach...actual lessons for each assignment”* which leads her to think about whether it is worth the time to create resources for her students. She also stated she feels that student may not *“want to use”* the resources she created because they are not part of the curriculum and assessments for the course. Vanessa also stated that she is not able to help students who struggle because she does not sit next to them. In fact, several participants, Bianca, Kennedy, and Christina, refer to being next to struggling students or have that human interaction with the students as a key

component to literacy instruction, which indicates that they feel that the transactional distance they have between themselves and their students hinders their ability to provide literacy instruction.

Kennedy also reported feeling transactional distance due to the structure of her course. Since she works in the online environment, she felt that many of the suggestions from the reading leadership team “*seems less natural to apply them to interact with students on the phone.*”

Christina shed some more light on the impact of the structure of the learning platform that hindered her literacy instruction. She stated that she “*never saw the opportunity to do so due to limitations in the flexibility [she] had with the curriculum given to [her].*” The structure of the asynchronous online environment hindered her from providing the literacy instruction she felt confident in providing in the traditional face-to-face classroom. In this case, transactional distance as perceived by the teacher is opposite of that of the student. High amounts of structure lessens the transactional distance for the student whereas it heightens the transactional distance for the teacher because they feel that they are no longer employing their own literacy practice, thus negatively impacting TELL. The phenomenological analysis in this study confirms the finding from Murphy and Rodríguez-Manzanares (2008) that immutable structure in an online LMS and curriculum can impede on teacher’s ability to provide accommodations in addition to impeding on their ability to implement alternative curricular decisions into their pedagogical practices.

The Phenomenon of the Silence and Covert Narratives of Teacher-efficacy for Literacy Instruction in an Online Environment

Going through the initial interviews, I found it perplexing that these teachers stated that they feel confident in their ability to provide literacy instruction in the online environment, but they also think that the nature of the online environment interferes with their ability to practice literacy instruction when compared to the instruction they provided in the traditional classroom. I position these findings in narratological terms. Having never been taught in preservice teacher education how to implement literacy instruction online, the memories of the practices that the participants once used in the traditional classroom have been silenced, unintentionally, by the new environment through which they now deliver literacy instruction. This is reminiscent of Fivush's idea of *being silenced* (2010) in which these teachers past narratives of literacy instruction are silenced by the online environment and standardized curriculum built into the courses because they have not yet figured out how incorporate their literacy instruction through these new avenues of communication. The curriculum, in this case, acts as Fivush's (2010) dominant culture that is normative and prescriptive, which has good intentions. These limitations of the environment and curriculum ultimately silenced the once strong voices of the instructors when they switched from the traditional classroom to the new online environment.

Bianca writes that she feels as if she doesn't "*have as much control over my course content or the time to identify and remedy [any] reading issues with my students*" in addition to also stating that she "*struggle[s] to even get the students on the phone that need the most motivation.*" Many of the instructors feel the same way that they do not have enough contact with the students who struggle most in their courses. Also, that the inability to supplement the curriculum has led them to feel as if they are unable to provide additional literacy instruction.

The predominate narrative is the curriculum. Though many of the participants stated that they felt confident in their TELI, many of them drew confidence from their previous classroom experience. Here, we see an example of Jahn's (2005) covert narratives. Teachers are camouflaging their TELI in an online environment by sharing their TELI in the classroom. In this study, teachers looked to past experiences which inform their perception of their practice (Olan 2015; Olan & Kaplin 2014; Whitney et al. 2013) but this study reveals that their past experiences should also examine context and that confidence in one context does not reveal confidence in another.

Impact of the Professional Learning Community

The final research question, (3) "What impact, if any, will a PLC on Rosenblatt's transactional theory have on TELI?" and the sub-questions (a) "What impact, if any, does transactional distance have on TELI?" and (b) "What impact, if any, will Rosenblatt's transactional theory have on teachers' perception of transactional distance?", were answered using the exit interviews with participants. The participants went through the PLC that focused on teaching strategies that took an aesthetic approach. The instructors focused on creating instructional resources that facilitate learning in an online environment. The participants worked on incorporating aesthetic questioning, philosophical inquiry, gamification, emoticons for instruction, semantic association, and narrative-centered learning. The participants were led by the researcher through vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, physiological arousal, and mastery experiences (Bandura 1997) to build their teacher-efficacy in using these transactional strategies to provide literacy instruction in an online environment. In their exit interviews after the completion of the PLC cycle, data suggests that the participants valued using aesthetic instructional strategies and viewing literacy instruction through Rosenblatt's transactional theory.

From the exit interviews, the following thematic clusters were formed to show the impact, or lack thereof, the PLC focused on Rosenblatt's transactional theory had on the participants in the study: (1) Confidence, (2) Deeper Connection with Students, (3) Closing the Gap in Transactional Distance, (4) Lack of Time, (5) Using Classroom or Preservice Teacher Education Knowledge in Online Instruction, (6) No Change in Practice, and (7) "Ah-Ha" Moments from Students. From these thematic clusters we can begin to answer the sub-questions: (a) transactional distance can either positively or negatively impact TELI in an online environment dependent on forms of dialogue and structure; and (b) when teachers use transactional strategies inspired by Rosenblatt's transactional theory, they are able to have more positive dialogic transactions with their students thus closing the gap in transaction distance from the teachers' perspective.

The Phenomenon of the Impact Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory on Teacher-Efficacy for Literacy Instruction in an Online Environment

When viewing their literacy instruction through Rosenblatt's transactional theory, the participants found the transactional strategies to be extremely helpful not only in giving them a new set of tools to use in their practice as online instructors but also manifested more personal connections to their students while still meeting the FS in the curriculum's assessments and lessons. The personal connection can be seen as a positive interaction, or in Moore's terminology as dialogue (1993). When online instructors are afforded the use of Rosenblatt's transactional strategies, the gap in transactional distance between instructor and student is minimized. Teachers described feeling more connected to their students and that they felt like they were "*teaching again*". The data generated from the study supports the claim of Stein et al. (2005) that the higher amount of dialogue, positive interactions, can lessen the transactional distance.

What is novel about this approach is that we provided these positive dialogues through the use of transactional strategies inspired by Rosenblatt's transactional theory.

Giving Voice to the Silence: Teacher-efficacy for Literacy Instruction

The instructors, generally speaking, remained confident or felt more confident in their ability to provide literacy instruction in an online environment after the conclusion of the PLC. As Clair (1997) suggests, qualitative research ought to aim to view problems, or injustices, from multiple historical and personal narratives to shed light onto silence narratives. Initially when the PLC began, some of the participants felt that the curriculum was unchangeable, and they could not incorporate their own practices into the online environment. With the curriculum acting as the predominant learning culture in their practices, their creative voices were silenced because they had not seen the curriculum as merely a textbook which could be supplemented. In the PLC, the participants shared their struggles about their TELI, or silenced narratives, with others in a safe environment. They worked collaboratively on assessment reminders, which are changeable windows of text before an assignment. In the assessment reminders, teachers were able to deliver their literacy instruction to all students in their course that was personalized by the instructor, essentially giving them a space of autonomy to employ their literacy instruction. The stark change in their TELI could be due to giving them the ability to use what they did best from the classroom in an online environment as well as have deeper, more impactful dialogue with their students.

Pedagogical Implications

Teaching and Learning for Online Environments

Instructors can use Rosenblatt's transactional theory (1978) to inform their practice about online learning. Transactional strategies such as aesthetic questioning, philosophical inquiry,

semantic association, emoticons, and narrative-centered learning can help students have an affected experience in online instruction as well as allowing the teacher to experience the same affect with the student.

Teacher-Efficacy for Literacy Instruction and Transactional Distance

TELI in an online environment can be influenced by structure and dialogue built within a LMS. Viewed through transactional distance theory, too much structure or too little dialogue can lower TELI, whereas structure that is mutable and more positive dialogue can increase TELI. LMS and curriculum designers should develop an LMS that is both structured but allows for slight changes so that teachers can use instructional practices they think will help students. This will allow them to flex their teacher autonomy and increases their confidence in TELI.

Professional Learning Communities as Common Spaces

The study found that teachers' practices were positively impacted by the PLC, agreeing with Vescio et al. (2006) and Stoll et al. (2006) that the common purpose of a PLC is to improve a teacher's practice in addition to providing a place where their silenced narratives can be heard and examined. Some implications for PLCs are to include influences on teacher-efficacy so that once instructors leave the PLC, they will have the efficacy to assimilate the theoretical lens and practices that they learned from the PLC as part of their pedagogical practices. Another suggestion would be to expand the role of the facilitator to also become knowledgeable in the field of the topic of the PLC. The facilitator should act as a coach and also be familiar with both quantitative and qualitative research to set the PLC up for a successful study when designing an action research cycle. PLCs provide a space free of judgement for sharing common narratives and experiences. This should be made more of an explicit practice in the PLC so that problems of practice can emerge worry free for the teachers.

Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory and Transactional Distance

An implication is for Rosenblatt's transactional theory and the transactional strategies inspired by her theory can be appropriate in the online environment with modification and generates positive dialogue used to lessen the gap in transactional distance for both teacher and student.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Studies

The limitations of the study are as follows. The study took place within an organizational setting that is quite flexible. PLCs are designed to allow for deviation and so the findings that Rosenblatt's transactional theory has an impact on TELI could be skewed. The next limitation of the study is that the participants were mainly middle school instructors who taught ELA, so we are unable to generalize how the impact of Rosenblatt's transactional theory could impact other subject areas and grade levels. Finally, the sample size of seven is quite low, which could also hinder generalizability.

Since this study used phenomenological methodology, the purpose should first be to discover the phenomenon of literacy instruction in an online environment. The study described the practices of seven instructors and how a PLC focused on viewing literacy instruction through Rosenblatt's transactional theory could impact TELI. The results of the study suggests that the PLC has had an impact on TELI and teacher's pedagogical practices and beliefs. The following studies could be performed to further the field of online literacy instruction:

1. Study on the impact of transactional distance on instructors rather than students.
2. Explore how transactional distance can impact survey tools that measure TELI.
3. A comparative study of using these transactional strategies online and in the classroom.

4. Using Rosenblatt's transactional theory as a theoretical lens to view problems in practice across disciplines such as science, mathematics, foreign language, and fine arts.
5. Longitudinal study to determine the impact of this PLC on the participants' TELI long after the PLC concludes.
6. Use the same Action Research PLC model with influences on self-efficacy for other content areas and different problems in practice other than literacy instruction.

Conclusion

This phenomenological study sought to examine the TELI of instructors who teach in an online environment. It was discovered that at first, literacy instruction in an online environment is mostly limited to dialogic interactions with students, mainly taking an efferent stance, and used in a much more limited capacity when contrasted to the literacy instruction provided in the traditional classroom. The participants used their TELI of the traditional classroom as a source for their reported confidence of TELI in an online environment, however it was observed that these perceptions were covert narratives camouflaging the mostly efferent, few, and sometimes ineffective practices that the instructors perform in an online environment due to transactional distance. They experienced this transactional distance through the few dialogic transactions with students and the perceived immutable structure of curriculum and course LMS. In addition, TELI in an online environment is heavily influenced by the structure and dialogue of an online environment. Rosenblatt's transactional theory allowed teachers to view their practices on the efferent-aesthetic continuum in order to provide more opportunities for positive dialogue which closes the gap in transactional distance. The PLC Cycle provides a space for teachers to share stories, whether positive or negative, in a reflective manner that allows them to examine their pedagogical practices and possibly find solutions to problems they observe in the online

environment. Through the PLC, the participants in this study found a way to change their instruction through creating resources such as aesthetic questions and embedded literacy instruction in assessment reminders built into the LMS.

When instruction and curriculum become systematic, formulaic, and procedural, the more in danger are students to experiencing anesthetic educative experiences. With the ever growing impact commercialism has on education, now more than ever are students monetized and boiled down to a number and performance metric, which puts our ideals of a democratic education for all in jeopardy (Hewitt 2006). The need for aesthetic educative experiences like the ones the participants in this study were able to share help to counterbalance the encroaching sense that education should be behavioristic instead of experiential.

In today's educational landscape with more K-12 students taking online courses and the possibility of online courses being opened to younger kindergarten, first, and second grade students through bills such as HB 833 (Sullivan et al. 2017), it is imperative that teacher preparation programs and school districts provide education or professional development to future teachers and current teachers regarding the pedagogical differences between literacy instruction in the traditional classroom versus literacy instruction in online environments. In a recent executive order issued by President Donald J. Trump (2017), he ordered the Secretary of Education to investigate whether or not the Federal Department of Education has overreached its role to regulate state level educational programs in regards to curriculum, administration, personnel, and library resources. If federal, state, and local governments will soon exercise less control effectively allowing teachers to be more autonomous in their pedagogical practices, now more than ever should it be the job of teacher preparation programs and local school districts to provide course work or professional development for future and current teachers working in

online environments to reflect on their pedagogical practices, especially as it pertains to literacy instruction.

APPENDIX A: INITIAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Initial Interview Questions: Teacher-efficacy for Online Literacy Instruction

1. How do you feel about your ability to use oral reading instructional strategies in your practice as an online instructor? How do the oral reading instructional strategies compare to those that you were taught in your preservice teacher education? How do they compare to the ones that you used when you taught in a traditional school? Explain.
2. How do you feel about your ability to use vocabulary instructional strategies in your practice as an online instructor? How do the vocabulary instructional strategies you currently use compare to those that you were taught in your preservice teacher education? How do they compare to the ones that you used when you taught in a traditional school? Explain.
3. How do you feel about your ability to use reading comprehension instructional strategies in your practice as an online instructor? How do the reading comprehension instructional strategies you currently use compare to those that you were taught in your preservice teacher education? How do they compare to the ones that you used when you taught in a traditional school? Explain.
4. How do you feel about your ability to use grammar and spelling instructional strategies in your practice as an online instructor? How do the grammar and spelling instructional strategies you currently use compare to those that you were taught in your preservice teacher education? How do they compare to the ones that you used when you taught in a traditional school? Explain.
5. How do you feel about your ability to generate motivation and interest in reading as an online instructor?
6. How do you feel about your ability to use help students become proficient in tools of technology in an online environment? How do you feel about your ability to use technology in your instructional practices?
7. How do you feel about your ability to help students ethically participate in an online environment?
8. How do you feel about your ability to use multi-media instructional strategies in your practice as an online instructor? How do the multi-media instructional strategies you currently use compare to those that you were taught in your preservice teacher education? How do they compare to the ones that you used when you taught in a traditional school? Explain.
9. How do you feel about your ability to use instructional strategies to help struggling readers and writers in your practice as an online instructor? How do the instructional strategies for struggling readers you currently use compare to the ones that you were taught in your preservice teacher education? How do they compare to the ones that you used when you taught in a traditional school? Explain.
10. Overall, how do you feel about your ability to use literacy instruction in your practice as an online instructor? Explain.

What subject area do you teach?

- Art
- Elective
- English/Language Arts
- Foreign Language
- Math
- Music
- Physical Education
- Science
- Social Studies

What is your highest level of degree?

- Bachelor's
- Master's
- Specialist
- Doctorate

How many total years experience do you have in teaching?

Race?

- White
- Black/African American
- Hispanic/Latino
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Native American
- Other

Gender?

- Male
- Female

APPENDIX B: EXIT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Exit Interview Questions: Teacher-efficacy for Online Literacy Instruction

1. After completing the PLC on Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory, how do you feel about your ability to use oral reading instructional strategies in your practice as an online instructor? Have your instructional practices changed? If so, explain.
2. After completing the PLC on Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory, how do you feel about your ability to use vocabulary instructional strategies in your practice as an online instructor? Have your instructional practices changed? If so, explain.
3. After completing the PLC on Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory, how do you feel about your ability to use reading comprehension instructional strategies in your practice as an online instructor? Have your instructional practices changed? If so, explain.
4. After completing the PLC on Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory, how do you feel about your ability to use grammar and spelling instructional strategies in your practice as an online instructor? Have your instructional practices changed? If so, explain.
5. After completing the PLC on Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory, how do you feel about your ability to generate motivation and interest in reading as an online instructor? Have your instructional practices changed? If so, explain.
6. After completing the PLC on Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory, how do you feel about your ability to help students become proficient in tools of technology in an online environment? How do you feel about your ability to use technology in your instructional practices?
7. After completing the PLC on Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory, how do you feel about your ability to help students ethically participate in an online environment? Have your instructional practices changed? If so, explain.
8. After completing the PLC on Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory, how do you feel about your ability to use multi-media instructional strategies in your practice as an online instructor? Have your instructional practices changed? If so, explain.
9. After completing the PLC on Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory, how do you feel about your ability to use instructional strategies to help struggling readers and writers in your practice as an online instructor? Have your instructional practices changed? If so, explain.
10. After completing the PLC on Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory, how do you feel about your overall ability to use literacy instruction in your practice as an online instructor? Explain.

APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT

Informed Consent for the Professional Learning Community (PLC) Participants

Title of Study: A Phenomenological Study on the Implementation of Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory and its Impact on Teacher-efficacy for Literacy Instruction in an Online Environment

Principal Investigator: Marcus A Vu, MLS

Faculty Advisor: Elsie Olan, PhD

Investigational Site: Professional Learning Community within an online school district

Introduction: Researchers at the University of Central Florida (UCF) study many topics. To do this we need the help of people who agree to take part in a research study. You are being invited to take part in a research study which will include about 7 teachers at the online school district. You have been asked to take part in this research study because you are a teacher who teaches K-12 students in an online environment. The person doing this research is Marcus A Vu, a student in the Professional EdD in Curriculum and Instruction program at the University of Central Florida. Because the researcher is a graduate student, he is being guided by Dr. Elsie Olan, a UCF faculty advisor in the College of Education and Human Performance.

What you should know about a research study:

- Someone will explain this research study to you.
- A research study is something you volunteer for.
- Whether or not you take part is up to you.
- You should take part in this study only because you want to.
- You can choose not to take part in the research study.
- You can agree to take part now and later change your mind.
- Whatever you decide it will not be held against you.
- Feel free to ask all the questions you want before you decide.

Purpose of the research study: The purpose of this portion of the study is to observe and describe how teachers work together to provide 21st-century literacy instruction in an online environment using researched best-practices.

What you will be asked to do in the study: Your participation in the Professional Learning Community (PLC) on Literacy Instruction will involve all of the obligations that are involved with participating in a PLC at the online school district which includes attending meetings, collecting data, and implementing what you have learned from the Professional Learning Community into your practice. In addition to your regular participation in the Professional Learning Community, you will be given an initial interview questionnaire to fill out prior to the start of the meetings in November and an exit interview questionnaire to fill out after your participation in the PLC cycle. The meetings will be recorded and the principal investigator will

develop an understanding of what is specific about literacy instruction in an online classroom environment.

Location: The research will be conducted within a PLC at an online school district

Time required: The time required will be participation in two hour long meetings each month from November 2016 to March 2017. The initial interview questionnaire will take about 15 minutes to complete. The exit interview questionnaire will also take about 15 minutes to complete.

Audio or video taping:

You will be audio taped during this study when you are in attendance in PLC meetings. If you do not want to be audio taped, you will *not* be able to be in the study. Discuss this with the principal investigator. If you are audio taped, the tape will be kept in a locked, safe place. The tape will be erased or destroyed when the principal investigator has concluded the analysis of the data gathered from the recording.

In the online Blackboard collaborate room, you will be video taped during this study when you are in attendance in PLC meetings. If you do not want to be video taped, you will *not* be able to be in the study. Discuss this with the principal investigator. If you are video taped, the tape will be kept in a locked, safe place. The tape will be erased or destroyed when the principal investigator has concluded the analysis of the data gathered from the recording.

Risks: There are no reasonably foreseeable risks or discomforts involved in taking part in this study.

Benefits: Participating in this study will allow you to become more reflective on your practice and will inform the researcher on a new trend in Literacy Education.

Confidentiality: We will limit your personal data collected in this study to people who have a need to review this information. We cannot promise complete secrecy. Organizations that may inspect and copy your information include the IRB and other representatives of UCF.

Study contact for questions about the study or to report a problem: If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has hurt you, talk to Marcus A Vu, doctoral student in the Professional EdD in Curriculum and Instruction program at the College of Education and Human Performance (941) 313-2176 (marcus.a.vu@knights.ucf.edu) or Dr. Elsie Olan, Faculty Supervisor, College of Education and Human Performance at (407) 823-5179 (elsie.olan@ucf.edu).

IRB contact about your rights in the study or to report a complaint: Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (UCF IRB). This research has been reviewed and approved by the IRB. For information about the rights of people who take part in research, please contact: Institutional Review Board, University of Central Florida, Office of Research &

Commercialization, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246 or by telephone at (407) 823-2901.

You may also talk to them for any of the following: Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team. You cannot reach the research team. You want to talk to someone besides the research team. You want to get information or provide input about this research.

Selecting the “yes” option below indicates your consent and permission to take part in this research.

- Yes, I consent to participate in this study.
- No, I do not consent to participate in this study.

Participant Name (First and Last)

Participant Email Address

APPENDIX D: IRB OUTCOME LETTER



University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board
Office of Research & Commercialization
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246
Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276
www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html

Approval of Human Research

From: UCF Institutional Review Board #1
FWA00000351, IRB00001138

To: Marcus Vu

Date: October 03, 2016

Dear Researcher:

On 10/03/2016 the IRB approved the following human participant research until 10/02/2017 inclusive:

Type of Review: Submission Response for UCF Initial Review Submission Form
Expedited Review
Project Title: A Quasi-Experimental Study of the Implementation of the
Transactional Theory of Reading and Writing through a
Professional Learning Community in an Online Learning
Environment and its Effects on Teacher Efficacy for Literacy
Instruction
Investigator: Marcus Vu
IRB Number: SBE-16-12478
Funding Agency:
Grant Title:
Research ID: N/A

The scientific merit of the research was considered during the IRB review. The Continuing Review Application must be submitted 30 days prior to the expiration date for studies that were previously expedited, and 60 days prior to the expiration date for research that was previously reviewed at a convened meeting. Do not make changes to the study (i.e., protocol, methodology, consent form, personnel, site, etc.) before obtaining IRB approval. A Modification Form **cannot** be used to extend the approval period of a study. All forms may be completed and submitted online at <https://iris.research.ucf.edu>.

If continuing review approval is not granted before the expiration date of 10/02/2017, approval of this research expires on that date. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

Use of the approved, stamped consent document(s) is required. The new form supersedes all previous versions, which are now invalid for further use. Only approved investigators (or other approved key study personnel) may solicit consent for research participation. Participants or their representatives must receive a copy of the consent form(s).

All data, including signed consent forms if applicable, must be retained and secured per protocol for a minimum of five years (six if HIPAA applies) past the completion of this research. Any links to the identification of participants should be maintained and secured per protocol. Additional requirements may be imposed by your funding agency, your department, or other entities. Access to data is limited to authorized individuals listed as key study personnel.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the [Investigator Manual](#).

On behalf of Sophia Dziegielewska, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patria Davis". The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive.

Signature applied by Patria Davis on 10/03/2016 12:44:28 PM EDT

IRB Coordinator

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