

National Board Certified Teachers
and Methods They Use to Teach Vocabulary

by

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the skills, strategies, and routines used by National Board Certified Teachers in order to teach vocabulary to kindergarten students. The research focused, specifically, on the strategies teachers used during shared reading activities to help children gain a better understanding of vocabulary, while also ensuring that students were meeting the academic standards. All of the participants were National Board Certified and taught in kindergarten classrooms around the Phoenix, AZ area and three of the teachers taught in Title I schools. They participated in two formal interviews that were voice recorded, as well as one week of classroom observations. During the interviews the teachers shared their experiences related to National Board Certification, their beliefs about teaching and more specifically about teaching vocabulary, and the best methods for teaching students vocabulary. They also discussed ways they use the academic standards from Common Core in their classroom, and shared if they think the standards are aligned with the National Board Professional Teaching Standards. Upon examination of the interviews and observation field notes, several themes emerged. 1) The process of National Board Certification impacted their teaching practice and increased self-reflection. 2) Vocabulary is taught throughout the school day, across all content areas, using both direct and indirect instruction. 3) All of the teachers use shared reading activities as one method of teaching vocabulary words to their students. 4) Teachers find value in academic standards and National Board Professional Teaching Standards; however, they do not all agree that the two types of standards support one another.

Dedicated to my parents, Carol and Wayne Walton.

Did you ever know that you're my hero,
And everything I would like to be?
I can fly higher than an eagle,
For you are the wind beneath my wings.

It might have appeared to go unnoticed,
But I've got it all here in my heart.

I want you to know I know the truth, of course I know it.

I would be nothing without you.

Bette Midler

Wind Beneath My Wings

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

All students need expert and accomplished teachers; however, students who come to school with limited abilities are in need of the best teachers. New teachers are routinely employed in low-income and Title I schools. According to Ryan (2009), novice teachers struggle to meet the needs of their students. The first few years of teaching tend to be the most challenging for teachers (p. 30), and, as a result, students of new teachers may receive less expert instruction and support than students of more experienced teachers. This is especially true when comparing new teachers with teachers who have received National Board Certification (NBC). One might wonder what National Board Certification is and why teachers who have earned certification should be the focus of this study. The National Board Certification process is a voluntary, rigorous, and thought-provoking endeavor. National Board Certification positively impacts teachers' attitudes and approaches to teaching by showing how to "accept that some of the things they have been doing for years really did not accomplish what they thought they did" (McLean, 1999, p. 5). Through this intense form of professional development, teachers self-reflect and learn new ways in which they are able to adapt their teaching to positively impact student achievement. Erickson (1984) claims, "The varying folk philosophies inherent in teacher culture, administrator culture, and student culture may provide cultural lenses through which the same events look different" (p. 55). This is specifically true in the case of National Board Certified Teachers. The knowledge and experiences of a National Board Certified Teacher can provide a new lens for non-NBCTs to view their own teaching practices.

The purpose of this study is to examine the skills, strategies, and routines that National Board Certified Teachers use to teach vocabulary during shared reading across all areas of their curriculum. Reading and vocabulary are especially important in ensuring students' academic achievements. The breadth of a child's vocabulary plays a major role in students' reading comprehension (Manyak et al., 2014). According to Catts, Fey, Zhang, and Tomblin (2001), children who enter kindergarten with limited vocabulary are at risk of later reading difficulty. Unfortunately, there are differences in the vocabularies of children from different socioeconomic statuses. In fact, vocabularies of young children can differ by millions of words in direct relation to their social class (Hart & Risley, 1995). Some research has claimed that children from professional homes come to kindergarten with exposure to as many as 30 million more words than their lower socioeconomic counterparts (Hart & Risley, 1995). This does not mean that children from low-income families are doomed to academic failure; however, it does mean that teachers must work to close the gap between students from lower socioeconomic situations and the mainstream. Shirley Brice Heath (1983) identifies "mainstreamers [as] people who see themselves in 'the mainstream of things'" or as people who "have much in common with the national mainstream middle class generally presented in the public media as the American client or customer" (p. 236). The mainstream is what most academic standards are based upon, and the culture and language of lower-income communities tend to be underrepresented.

Teachers

Teachers Are the Most Important Element in the Classroom

Teachers are the most important element in student learning and achievement (Hightower et al., 2011, p. 10). Students are in need of expert teachers who are able to go beyond the scripted curriculum and integrate new creative methods of teaching and learning into the classroom environment and literacy curriculum (Dresser, 2012). Teachers can influence children's perception of school and have the ability to hinder or enhance children's enjoyment of the schooling experience (Darling-Hammond & Post, 2000). Teachers who are able to focus instruction on the individual needs of each student will be able to make a positive impact, as they are more likely to ensure that students experience success in their attempt at learning.

Teachers Are Under Pressure to Meet Academic Standards

Teachers are under tremendous pressure to meet standards and ensure that children perform well on standardized tests (Rideau, 2009). Educational achievements today are based mostly on norms and standards, most of which the students and teachers are required to meet on a daily and yearly basis (Springer, 2008). It is critical that teachers are able to positively impact student learning in order to meet the educational standards required for each specific age or grade level. The scores that students achieve on norm-referenced assessments measure a teacher's success, and, as a result, many teachers focus instruction on test-prep rather than teaching above and beyond what is required by the test (Dresser, 2012, p. 77–78).

In recent years, especially since the implementation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), there has been increased value placed on standards in education (Springer,

2008). Standards can be beneficial. They help hold teachers accountable and set academic expectations for all students. Standards and standardized tests allow administrators, school districts, and federal agencies to measure a teacher's effectiveness (Springer, 2008). Standards also set grade-level specific objectives and clear expectations of what students should know and be able to do by the end of a school year. They provide students and teachers with clear, measurable learning goals.

While there are some benefits to the use of standards in education, there are also disadvantages. Standards can become difficult to meet when teachers are expected to make multiple years' worth of academic gains in one school year. Many times, children who come from low-income homes will enter kindergarten with little to no prior school experiences, which sets them far behind their middle- and upper-class counterparts. These facts pose major challenges for the teachers, as they are responsible for bringing the child's testing ability up to grade level (Driscoll, Halcoussis, & Syorny, 2008). In some cases, teachers are expected to make two to three years' worth of progress in one school year.

Unfortunately, standards can encourage teachers to stick to the scripted curriculum. With mounting pressure for children to be able to perform well on a written examination, teachers limit their instructional time to exactly what students need to know in order to achieve a passing grade on a test. As a result, use of creative, innovative skills and strategies for teaching content are limited (Dresser, 2012). This eliminates instructional time for hands-on activities, which may reach kinesthetic learners.

As previously mentioned, teachers must ensure that students are meeting academic standards; more specifically they must use Common Core, and teach specific

academic content standards based on a child's age or grade level. Students must demonstrate that they have met the grade-level standards, which is typically done through assessments. Teachers feel pressured to prove their students are achieving; the pressures seem to be greatest for teachers in low-income schools who receive federal funding from programs such as Title I or NCLB (Quirocho & Stall, 2008). Schools that receive funding are observed and assessed more regularly. As a result, many teachers will limit their use of creative, innovative skills and strategies to teach basic content (Greene, 2014). Instead, many will opt to teach the curriculum that is purchased by their district exactly as directed in the teachers' manual in an attempt to meet the required state standards. This is especially true for new teachers who will often teach only what is prescribed to them in printed curricular materials (Quirocho & Stall, 2008). Unfortunately, this style of teaching does not allow for differentiated instruction and may actually limit a teacher's ability to reach students of differing abilities and learning styles.

Pressures Are Heightened at “Underperforming” Schools

Many new and inexperienced teachers routinely earn jobs in under-performing schools (Ryan, 2009), during which time they struggle to learn classroom management skills while attempting to teach the mandated curriculum. Lower-performing schools are in need of the best teachers, as these teachers are the key component to ensuring that children make substantial academic gains during the school year (National Research Council, 2009). “Funding inequities and differential teacher qualifications and experience clearly contribute to differences in the educational experience of lower income as compared with higher-income students” (Cummins, 2007, p. 566). For many years, research has presented the idea that children from low-income schools earn lower test

scores than their middle- and upper-class counterparts. As Darling-Hammond (2010) observed, “The achievement gap would be much reduced if low-income minority students were routinely assigned such highly-qualified teachers, rather than the poorly-qualified teachers they routinely encounter” (p. 17).

High turnover. Many novice teachers never have an opportunity to develop their teaching talents because so many new teachers leave the field each year. Unfortunately, the number of teachers leaving the teaching profession is growing rapidly. The turnover rate is more than 50% of teachers in the first five years of teaching (National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future [NCTAF], 2007). According to NCTAF (2007), a third of all new teachers are leaving the teaching profession in the first three years. In the state of Arizona, the percentage of teachers leaving was as high as 25% in the Higley School District in 2007 (Ringle, 2012). The issue is even more prevalent among National Board Certified Teachers in low-income and Title I schools. According to a study by Dangenhart, Petty, and O’Connor (2010), almost 50% of the 23 (10 of 23) National Board Certified Teachers who participated in the research were planning to leave their high-needs school the following year.

High percentages of turnover means increased spending to hire and train new teachers. It also means a decrease in teacher quality, as school districts are forced to hire less experienced teachers. A national study estimates that it cost U.S. public schools about \$7 billion each year to manage the issue of teacher turnover (NCTAF, 2007). The money spent on managing turnover rates could be invested in teacher training, mentorship, and creating professional learning communities within schools and school

districts. It could even be used to help fund teachers who wish to pursue National Board Certification.

Novice teachers are most vulnerable to pressure to get better test scores. The children who are the most in need of expert teachers are the ones being taught by novice teachers (Darling-Hammond & Post, 2000). Novice teachers struggle with the basics of teaching, such as classroom management and timing and making curriculum decisions that are responsive to the students in their class (Bergeron, 2008). They are not yet equipped to manage the many idiosyncrasies that exist in today's classrooms. Teachers in their first three to five years of teaching have not had enough experience to build the skills necessary to become accomplished teachers. Novice teachers need guidance from expert, National Board Certified Teachers, as they are able to go above and beyond the mandated standards to ensure all children make educational gains. Teachers also need autonomy in their curriculum decisions and support from school leadership. "Teachers with zero to three years of experience and who are teaching in underperforming schools identified the importance of administrative support" (Quiocho & Stall, 2008, p. 23). This is particularly important regarding the ways teachers implement vocabulary in their reading curriculum. Vocabulary is a major predictor of later reading achievement and should be considered an essential component of early literacy instruction (Manyak et al., 2014). This study will focus on the many ways that National Board Certified Teachers use shared reading activities to teach vocabulary to kindergarten students.

National Board Certification

National Board Certification is a rigorous process that involves educating teachers on how to provide clear, concise, and convincing evidence of student learning based upon

their reflection of their classroom practice (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2002). Through the use of National Board Standards, teachers are able to positively impact student learning by valuing each student. A study by Vandervoort, Amrein-Beardsley, and Berliner (2004) found “evidence that elementary level NBCTs in the state of Arizona are judged to be superior teachers and leaders in their field by their supervisors, and do, on average, raise student achievement more over the course of a year than do non-NBCTs” (p. 37). The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) requires that teachers value the individual learner and use the child’s life experiences to guide their teaching (NBPTS, 2002).

National Board Certification is a process in which teachers use specific standards to reflect upon their teaching practices. National Board Certified Teachers infuse the 10 NBPTS into the mandated academic state standards, which all teachers are required to use. National Board Certification positively influences student academic achievement, as well as teacher professional development (National Research Council, 2009; Okpala, James, & Hopson, 2009). National Board Standards impact children’s learning and development, as well as the student’s family and community relationships through the incorporation of the student’s culture. “[Teachers] recognize the ways in which intelligence is culturally defined” and the importance of treating students equitably (NBPTS, 2002, p. 9).

There are many benefits for children who are taught by National Board Certified Teachers. These benefits are explained in detail in the following subsections.

Schooling

“Students taught by NBPTS-certified teachers make greater gains on achievement tests than students taught by teachers who are not board-certified” (National Research Council, 2009, p. 34). This difference is partly due to the fact that NBCTs really understand the needs of their students and how they can effectively communicate the content they teach. These skills are part of the Five Core Propositions as outlined in the publication “What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do” by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS, 2002). Teachers are having an impact by making the content meaningful to the students by incorporating the students’ interests in a way that makes learning fun and engaging while staying true to the standards.

Family and Community

The standards of National Board Certification emphasize the importance of home-school and community relations. For example, the standards indicate,

Teachers share with parents the education of the young. They communicate regularly with parents and guardians, listening to their concerns and respecting their perspective, enlisting their support in fostering learning and good habits, informing them of their child’s accomplishments and successes, and educating them about school programs. (NBPTS, 2002, p. 19)

NBCTs should consider the cultural context of the lives of children in order to create meaningful, authentic learning experiences. The standards also inform teachers to be sensitive to the needs of all families and provide parents with opportunities for classroom involvement.

Culture. The NBPTS enforce and reiterate that teachers must be sensitive to cultures and ensure they are providing students with an equitable learning experience (NBPTS, 2002). Teachers need to make sure they are not influenced by stereotypes or cultural biases. Lessons should be planned and taught in a way that accurately represents multiethnic populations, as well as diverse viewpoints and ideas. NBCTs need to accommodate diverse student backgrounds and meet students' needs at all ability and developmental levels.

Student Achievement

Numerous studies have been conducted regarding the comparison of National Board Certified Teachers with non-National Board Certified Teachers, specifically with respect to differences in student outcomes. A study by the National Research Council (2009) found that students taught by teachers who are board certified make larger gains on achievement test scores than students who are taught by non-board certified teachers (p. 168). Although these changes seem minute, the effects on student achievement are tremendous. Student understanding and student achievement were higher with students who were taught by a National Board Certified Teacher (Vandevoort et al., 2004). Vandevoort et al. (2004) concluded that the amount NBCTs "raise student achievement, compared to their peer teachers, is socially as well as statistically significant, amounting on average to over one month's more growth for students" (p. 37). In a study by Okpala et al. (2009), principals observed National Board Certified Teachers as "being highly effective in terms of instructional skills, classroom skills, and personal skills" (p. 32). One of the key factors that multiple studies identify as impactful on student learning is that National Board Certified Teachers reflect on their teaching practice and implement

new techniques and strategies into their instruction (NBPTS, 2002). This is one of the reasons why the difference in student learning is so significant.

Students are not the only ones who benefit from the National Board Certification process; the teachers benefit as well. The benefits for teachers are discussed in the following subsections.

Professional Development

National Board Certification is a voluntary, rigorous, and thought-provoking process. Reflections on one's own teaching practice are valued as a form of developing a teacher's talents. Lieberman and Wilkins (2006) state, "The increasing emphasis on standards has created a shift in how school districts deliver professional development" (p. 125). Professional development tends to be related to state and federal standards. National Board Certification encourages an intense form of professional development through which teachers self-reflect, and acquire new ways to adapt their teaching and positively influence student learning.

Work Setting

National Board Certification does affect the quality of the work setting. The process helps to build a community of life-long learners who have the same goal of improving student learning. Teachers encourage one another while providing guidance on appropriate practices they have found to positively impact what the students know. Through this process, teachers are able to "construct a genuine culture of collaboration" (Berry, Johnson, & Montgomery, 2005, p. 58).

Teacher Expertise

Teachers who go through the process of National Board Certification think critically about how and what they teach while examining how it impacts the students. National Board Certified Teachers are seen “as go-to colleagues for support as non-National Board teachers try out innovations in the classroom” (Berry et al., 2005, p. 59). National Board Certified Teachers are “respected and valued for their commitment to hold themselves publicly accountable to high standards and for their drive to continue learning and examining their teaching” (Berry et al., 2005, p. 59). Benson, Agran, and Yocom (2010) state, “Several studies revealed that NBCTs demonstrated greater in-depth knowledge of pedagogy and subject content and employed strategies to better meet their students’ needs when compared to non NBCTs” (p. 156). Achieving certification often opens new doors for teachers, including professional development opportunities and increased respect. Certified teachers are looked upon with more esteem and have more confidence in their instructional abilities. Teachers who have these skills are particularly important in low-performing schools as they have the proficiencies to impact student learning.

The disconnect between high quality teachers and lower-performing schools.

The United States of America is falling behind other countries in terms of academic abilities. This could potentially be a result of high teacher turnover and the limited number of expert teachers in classrooms, especially in low-income schools (Dagenhart et al., 2010). According to the Children’s Defense Fund (2008), one out of every six children in the United States is from a low-income family, and poverty is related to poorer student outcomes. Students entering school with a disadvantage must have the best

possible teachers, and we must ensure all students are afforded the same opportunities to learn. Research has shown that National Board Certified Teachers increase student learning and achievement (Vandevoort et al., 2004). However, there is little research that details the specific actions National Board Certified Teachers take to help students, particularly low-performing students, improve academic abilities. Drawing on this expertise would benefit all teachers who work with low-performance schools. The National Research Council (2009) found that “many school systems are not supporting or making best use of their board-certified teachers” (p. 34). Having a better understanding of how NBCT teach allows districts to make better use of these experts, especially for low-achieving schools.

Although the teachers who have achieved certification would seem to be among the most qualified to teach students who are identified as at-risk and in high-needs schools, the number of National Board Certified Teachers in low-income schools is disproportionately low when compared to the number of National Board Certified Teachers working in middle and high-income schools (Dagenhart et al., 2010). For example, the study by Dagenhart, Petty, and O’Connor (2010) sampled 590 teachers in high needs schools and 292 responded; of the 292 only 23 reported achieving National Board Certification. High-quality teachers have the ability to impact student learning and one of the greatest indicators for later reading achievement is vocabulary.

Vocabulary and Shared Reading

Vocabulary has been studied for many years and is deemed a key predictor of later reading achievement. It is critical that children have a solid foundation in vocabulary in order to become fluid readers in the later grades. “Vocabulary development should be

an important focus of early literacy intervention” (Kame’enui, Stoolmiller, Coyne, & Simmons, 2010, p. 152). Many children enter school with limited word knowledge, and a strong focus on vocabulary could significantly improve a child’s ability to succeed. One method for teaching vocabulary is through shared reading experiences.

Over the past 10 to 15 years, many researchers have concluded that teachers can use shared reading as a method to increase students’ vocabulary. It is believed that “shared story book reading activities are a valuable way to support vocabulary development in young children” (Kame’enui et al., 2010, p. 148). “Explicitly teaching word meanings within the context of shared storybook reading is an effective method for increasing the vocabulary of young children at risk of experiencing reading difficulties” (Kame’enui et al., 2010, p. 159). Many children can benefit from purposeful and incidental exposure of new vocabulary words during shared reading experiences.

Research Focus

One possible solution to the issues facing students and teachers in underperforming schools would be to conduct research to discover strategies and routines that NCBTs (in varying populations) use to teach specific skills required in academic standards. The findings of the research can be used to create professional development tools, specifically for novice teachers in underperforming schools. These professional development tools can be implemented to train teachers on how to use the strategies and routines used by National Board Certified Teachers.

Currently, there is no available research regarding the ways National Board Certified Teachers implement vocabulary during shared reading in the kindergarten curriculum. This study will be the first piece of research available to document the

strategies and routines National Board Certified Teachers utilize during reading instruction. The long-term goal is to inform new teachers of creative ways to teach diverse learners vocabulary through the use of shared reading.

Research Questions

Through in-depth interviews and observations of four National Board Certified Teachers, this study will focus on the following research questions:

1. How do National Board Certified Teachers teach vocabulary during shared reading in kindergarten classrooms?
 - a. What routines, strategies, skills, and/or tactics are used for implementing shared reading?
 - b. What routines are followed for teaching vocabulary?
2. How do National Board Certified Teachers explain the skills and strategies used for teaching vocabulary during shared reading across all content areas?
3. How do National Board Certified Teachers implement shared reading and vocabulary into the reading curriculum while teaching the mandated standards?
4. How do strategies for teaching kindergarten in low, middle, or high socioeconomic populations differ?

Goals of the Study

The objective of this study is to uncover the skills and strategies National Board Certified Teachers use to teach vocabulary during shared reading to kindergarten students. National Board Certified Teachers may use similar strategies for teaching vocabulary that can be documented and shared with less experienced teachers. Hopefully, the results from

this study will help to improve the teaching abilities of all educators, especially novice teachers working in high-needs schools.

Definition of the Terms

The following definitions have been prepared to help the reader understand the content of this study.

National Board Certification: A professional certification program that is based on the National Board Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS).

National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT): A teacher who has achieved National Board Certification.

Novice Teacher: A teacher who has less than three years of teaching experience.

Shared Reading: An interactive reading experience between the teacher and students through the use of paper books or electronic media.

Vocabulary: Word knowledge

Teacher Turnover: When any teacher leaves the teaching profession for any reason.

Title I: Schools that receive financial assistance due to the low income of the students and families enrolled in a school.

Organization of the Study

The final document has been constructed as a narrative descriptive study, in an attempt to honor the voices of the teachers who participated in my research. Information was gathered through structured and semi-structured interviews and a series of classroom observations. The goal is to share and present the four teachers' stories by using their voice. The intended audience is both educational researchers and teachers who are not yet

National Board Certified for the purpose of explaining the skills and strategies used by NBCTs, especially in relation to vocabulary.

The study will be organized into seven chapters. The first chapter is the introduction, which discusses the need for this study, the statement of the problem, and the goals for this study. Chapter 2 is a review of recent and classic literature. The literature review focuses on National Board Certified Teachers and the ways vocabulary instruction is implemented during shared reading. Chapter 2 includes the theoretical framework through which this study will be analyzed. Chapter 3 is the methods section, which will discuss the participants in this research, as well as the interview questions and the observation checklist that will be used throughout the course of this study. Chapter 4 presents the findings from the interviews and observations as individual case studies for the four participants. Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 analyze the finding using the theoretical framework. Chapter 7 consists of a discussion of the findings, limitations on present and future research, and recommendations for practical applications of the results.

Conclusion

Novice teachers could benefit from learning teaching skills and strategies used by a National Board Certified Teachers. Beginning teachers should have access to research that details pedagogical approaches and practices used by National Board Certified Teachers to teach reading. Further, having access to techniques used by NBCTs that have been proven to benefit students' reading abilities may help decrease the number of new teachers leaving the classroom every year.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

There are currently no articles available specifically related to National Board Certified Teachers and the methods they use to teach vocabulary during shared reading. There is, however, a great deal of research on expert teachers and many of the skills they possess; it would be expected that the methods the NBCT use are reflective of expert teacher practices. There is also existing research on effective skills and strategies teachers use to teach vocabulary during shared reading.

Vocabulary

Need for Vocabulary Instruction

Vocabulary is a key component to a young child's success with early literacy skills. Evidence supports the idea that the greater a child's vocabulary is before kindergarten, the more successful the child will be in his/her academic career starting in third grade, particularly in the area of reading comprehension (David, 2010; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002; Silverman, 2007b). The relationship between vocabulary and reading comprehension exists because children must understand the vocabulary words in order to make sense of the words they encounter in storybooks or informational texts.

The major issues related to vocabulary acquisition are socioeconomic status and the achievement gap between low-income and middle-income students and the discrepancies between English speakers and English Language Learners (ELLs). Research shows that we have yet to close the achievement gap between low-income and middle-income students (O'Leary, Cockburn, Powell, & Diamond, 2010). In the primary grades, children's vocabularies differ by thousands of words in direct relation to their

socioeconomic status (Biemiller & Boote, 2006). Additional studies have found that children with larger vocabularies learn new words at a faster rate than students with smaller vocabularies (Wasik, Bond, & Hindman, 2006). This compounds the issue for children starting school with smaller vocabularies or limited English and adds to the importance of explicitly teaching vocabulary to young children, especially those with limited or smaller vocabularies. As a result of these difficulties with early literacy skills, it is extremely important that teachers become aware of best practices for teaching vocabulary.

Techniques for Vocabulary Instruction

Teachers in general express uncertainties about how to teach vocabulary and are not given a lot of support or direction for teaching vocabulary effectively (Kindle, 2009a; O’Leary et al., 2010; Wasik, 2010). This must change in order to help build teacher repertoires of vocabulary teaching strategies. Kindle (2009) did a study focusing on four teachers who were not specifically trained to teach vocabulary during shared reading in order to promote vocabulary and observed the strategies they used. She found that the teachers instinctively used some of the research-supported methods to teach and reinforce vocabulary; however, they were also missing some of the key components research supports, including selecting appropriate words and follow-up activities. This coincides with Laufer’s (1990) ideas regarding the importance of selecting appropriate vocabulary words for instruction. Kindle (2009) also noted teachers varied in their style. Individual variances in teaching vocabulary during a read-aloud make a significant difference in student’s word learning (Biemiller & Boote, 2006; Silverman, 2007b). While individual

teaching styles should be embraced, there should be a common set of practices teachers learn from which they can craft vocabulary lessons.

It is essential to student success that teachers have professional development opportunities to learn the strategies that best teach vocabulary (Wasik, 2010). Neuman and Dwyer (2009) examined 10 commercially produced programs commonly used in Early Reading First programs, and they found that only two of the 10 provided support to teachers regarding how to explicitly teach vocabulary to young children. However, when teachers are specifically trained and supported in practices to support children's developing vocabulary, children have shown greater growth in words learned (Dickinson & Caswell, 2007; Wasik, 2010).

Most research supports the idea that children need to have experiences with vocabulary that extend beyond word definitions. The research shows that children must interact and have multiple exposures to words to develop a deep understanding of them and that most vocabulary words are not learned incidentally, but rather must be taught explicitly (Beck & McKeown, 2007; Greene Brabham & Lynch-Brown, 2002; Laufer, 1990; McGee & Schickedanz, 2007; Pullen, Coyne, & Maynard, 2010). Explicit vocabulary instruction can be extremely valuable to ELLs, as Silverman (2007a) described that directly or explicitly taught vocabulary words can be learned by ELLs at the same rate as native English speakers.

Laufer (1990) made reference to the importance of incidental learning alongside explicit instruction in the acquisition of vocabulary words. The use of pictures or games and contextualizing the vocabulary can help children learn new words (David, 2010; Silverman & Crandell, 2010; Wasik, 2010). Teachers believe that vocabulary should be

integrated into their daily routines, which can be accomplished with minimal adjustments (Coyne, McCoach, Loftus, Zipoli, & Kapp, 2009; David, 2010; Dickinson & Smith, 1994; Silverman & Crandell, 2010), and that vocabulary instruction is most effective when it is related to student interests (O’Leary et al., 2010). While some teachers and researchers believe there is value in incidental learning. Pullen et al. (2010) found that incidental exposure to words resulted in no substantial word learning.

As identified by the literature, teachers’ beliefs regarding vocabulary instruction vary greatly. Some believe in a naturalistic approach with incidental learning of vocabulary words, and others believe that direct instruction is most beneficial for student learning. Further research needs to be completed regarding vocabulary instruction. In order to move forward, we must uncover what teachers know and believe about vocabulary instruction and evaluate it with their everyday vocabulary practices and student vocabulary acquisition.

Critical skills for teaching and learning vocabulary. There are various articles related to skills teachers use for vocabulary instruction; however, there are no articles about “critical” skills used for teaching vocabulary to young children. There was one article found that detailed the techniques for learning vocabulary but it was specifically related to learning vocabulary words of a second language, rather than a primary language.

There was a study of novice and student teachers conducted by Wideen, Mayer-Smith, and Moon in 1998 for the purpose of learning about how these novice teachers learn their teaching craft. It discussed how novice teachers uncover the skills necessary to teach students. One profound statement from this article is: “Learning how to teach is a

deeply personal activity in which the individual concerned has to deal with his or her prior beliefs in the light of expectations from a university, a school, and society, and in the context of teaching” (p. 161). This is valuable because teachers must be confident in their teaching expertise to ensure they are using best practices for all students’ vocabulary skills, regardless of what may be effective for others.

There is conflicting research on best practices for teaching vocabulary and teaching vocabulary as part of reading instruction. A research article by Barkat and Aminafshar (2015) discussed the impact of using direct instruction methods, such as flashcards and computer assisted programs as approaches to aid ELL students in vocabulary development. They concluded that the use of computer-assisted program showed higher gains for students’ vocabulary development. One reason could be student motivation to work with technology. Foorman and Torgesen (2001) identified that “one of the essential ingredients for reading success is mastery of the alphabetic principle” (p. 205). There seems to be limited research on the best methods for integrating alphabetic instruction into vocabulary teaching and learning.

Teachers will impact the ways students learn vocabulary. An article by Oxford and Crookall (1990) detailed some of the methods used by students such as word lists, flashcards, and dictionary. The article also discussed how instruction can impact learning:

Whenever possible, the type of vocabulary instruction should be consciously matched to learners' style preferences. This means that teachers should teach students to use various kinds of techniques, so that all learners, regardless of preferred style, will be able to learn vocabulary more efficiently. The second implication is that teachers should carefully

reassess the utility of commonly employed, decontextualizing techniques such as word lists, flashcards, and conventional dictionary use. (p.25—26)

There is a direct connection between the methods used to teach vocabulary to students and what is learned.

Vocabulary and IQ

Some past and recent research has claimed that children with higher verbal IQs (such as vocabulary) will continue to have a higher verbal IQ when reevaluated in adolescence and early adulthood.

In a longitudinal analysis of cognitive development in monozygotic twins, assessed in five waves from ages 7 to 16, we found support for this hypothesis.

Twins with better earlier reading ability compared to their identical cotwin tended not only to have better reading at subsequent measurements but also higher scores on general intelligence tests. (Ritchie, Bates, & Plomin, 2015)

This study does not prove that verbal IQ is fixed throughout ones lifetime, just that there is a link between high verbal IQ in childhood and early adulthood.

One of the ways that vocabulary can increase is through reading experiences and exposure. Cunningham and Stanovich (1998) stated that “those who read a lot will enhance their verbal intelligence; that is, reading will make them smarter” (p. 147). Increasing reading and exposure to books could help improve verbal IQ.

Required Standards

As of 2016, 46 states, including Arizona, have adopted the Common Core State Standards Initiative. The standards focus on math and English language arts and outline what students should know and be able to do as they progress from kindergarten through

12th grade. The standards aim to prepare students for college and careers in an increasingly demanding market.

Kindergarten has specific standards required for “Vocabulary Acquisition and Use.” The following standards outline the required criteria for kindergarten students.

Table 1

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.4
Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on kindergarten reading and content.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.4.A
Identify new meanings for familiar words and apply them accurately (e.g., knowing <i>duck</i> is a bird and learning the verb to <i>duck</i>).
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.4.B
Use the most frequently occurring inflections and affixes (e.g., <i>-ed</i> , <i>-s</i> , <i>re-</i> , <i>un-</i> , <i>pre-</i> , <i>-ful</i> , <i>-less</i>) as a clue to the meaning of an unknown word.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.5
With guidance and support from adults, explore word relationships and nuances in word meanings.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.5.A
Sort common objects into categories (e.g., shapes, foods) to gain a sense of the concepts the categories represent.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.5.B
Demonstrate understanding of frequently occurring verbs and adjectives by relating them to their opposites (antonyms).
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.5.C
Identify real-life connections between words and their use (e.g., note places at school that are colorful).
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.5.D
Distinguish shades of meaning among verbs describing the same general action (e.g., <i>walk</i> , <i>march</i> , <i>strut</i> , <i>prance</i>) by acting out the meanings.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.6
Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts.

Note. This table was cited from: <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/K/>

Kindergarten teachers are expected to use the standards listed as the foundation for building their language instruction. For the “Vocabulary Acquisition and Use” section,

there are three main standards and six sub-standards. Teachers must ensure that all students are able to meet the benchmark for each standard and sub-standard.

Shared Reading

Instructional Methods

Shared reading is an interactive reading experience between students and a teacher who is able to model effective proficient reading strategies. While most early elementary teachers use shared reading as a method for teaching literacy skills, including vocabulary, there are varying opinions about the benefits or drawbacks to incidental learning versus direct instruction during the shared reading experience. There are many different ideas related to vocabulary learning and instruction; however, there is a general consensus that shared reading provides a platform to expose children to new words. Vocabulary growth can be enhanced through shared storybook reading (Dickinson & Smith, 1994).

Strategies used in shared reading to teach vocabulary. Kesler (2010) conducted a study of first through third grade students in a high-needs, urban elementary school using four different instructional methods during shared reading: possible sentences, using context clues, repeated readings, and using our bodies. Teachers found these methods easy to adapt and that they provided students with explicit support for comprehending vocabulary.

Similarly, a study by Kame'enui et al. (2010) focused on the idea that children enter kindergarten with varying early literacy skills—their ability to read and understand text. The study aimed to find effective strategies for teaching vocabulary during reading to preschool through second grade students. According to the study's review of literature,

“Researchers have begun to isolate factors that increase the likelihood that children will learn new vocabulary from listening to storybooks” (p. 147). These factors include:

1. Engaging in a rich dialogic discussion about the storybook.
2. Reading storybooks multiple times.
3. Providing performance-oriented readings.
4. Reading storybooks with small groups of students.
5. Selecting books: choosing engaging books with beautiful pictures and appealing stories.

At the completion of this study, Kame’enui et al. (2010) found that “explicitly teaching word meanings within the context of shared storybook reading is an effective method for increasing the vocabulary in young children at risk of experiencing reading difficulties” (p. 152). The study also found that “storybook reading activities that rely on incidental exposure to unknown words do nothing to decrease the vocabulary gap” (Kame’enui et al., 2010, p. 159). There are some striking similarities in the strategies used to teach vocabulary during shared reading in the two studies previously discussed.

Situation in Low Socioeconomic Schools

Due to the fact that many National Board Certified Teachers work in middle- or high-income schools, there is a limited amount of research about their impact specifically related to vocabulary acquisition in low-income settings. There is, however, ample research about the benefits of being taught by a National Board Certified Teacher. Students who are taught with high-quality instruction learn more than students who are not (Darling-Hammond & Post, 2010). Findings from Okpala et al. (2009) revealed,

“Public school personnel perceived National Board Certified Teachers to be reflective practitioners and highly effective” (p. 33).

One of the biggest challenges facing the education system, especially in low socioeconomic communities, is teacher retention. Many new or novice teachers are placed in schools or classrooms with lower-performing students and have difficulty bridging the achievement gap between them and high-performing students (Shakrani, 2008). A large percentage of teachers in low socioeconomic areas tend to leave the teaching profession as a result of the challenges they face. One of the big challenges in closing the achievement gap for students is that schools are not able to close the teacher quality gap for higher and lower achieving students, as lower quality teachers earn jobs in lower-performing schools (Shakrani, 2008, p. 2). “The achievement gap would be much reduced if low-income minority students were routinely assigned such highly qualified teachers, rather than the poorly qualified teachers they most often encounter” (Darling-Hammond, 2010, p. 17).

Teachers Who Choose National Board Certification

The National Board Certification process includes 25 various certificates offered in 16 different subject areas. In each certification area, there are five components, which include four portfolio entries and one assessment that is taken in an assessment center. Within each entry and assessment, the National Board candidate analyzes his or her own teaching practice and knowledge. Three entries of the portfolio include an analysis of video recordings and an analysis of student work samples. The fourth portfolio entry is a culmination of the teacher’s accomplishments working with the families of the students they teach, as well as the community and demonstrates how that

can impact student learning (Yeh, 2010), which shows why the candidate is an accomplished teacher. “Each entry is scored separately by two readers and read by a third reader if there is too much discrepancy between readers” (Burroughs, 2001, p. 224). The fifth entry is a series of six exercises that assess the teacher’s knowledge in their specific area of expertise. Each of the five entries is assigned points; the points are weighted according to their level of importance as deemed by the National Board. These scores are averaged and must meet the minimum score in order for the candidate to achieve National Board Certification.

“Advanced certification through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) is an effective way to identify highly skilled teachers, according to a congressionally mandated report from the National Research Council” (National Research Council, 2009, p. 34). Teachers who go through this process critically think about how, and what, they teach while examining how it impacts the students. National Board Certified Teachers are seen as colleagues who can offer support to non-National Board Teachers as they try out new innovations and strategies in their classrooms (Berry et al., 2005). National Board Certified Teachers are highly regarded for their commitment to ensure high standards are being met in their classrooms, as well as for their pursuit of continued professional development and reflection on their teaching (Berry et al., 2005). Benson et al. (2010) states, “Several studies revealed that NBCTs demonstrated greater in-depth knowledge of pedagogy and subject content and employed strategies to better meet their students’ needs when compared to non NBCTs” (p. 156). The certification process helps teachers to think more critically about what they do in order to improve student learning. A study by Hart, Good, and Handler (2016) found that when National

Board Certified Teachers were asked about the influence National Board Certification had on their teaching, their response included: improved teaching, positive impact on students, and effective evaluation and assessment strategies. For these reasons, I feel National Board Certified Teachers are best to use as the participants for my research in accomplished teaching.

Critics of National Board Certification

Critics of National Board Certification claim that it does not impact student achievement or increase the quality of teaching (Boyd & Reese, 2006). There are others who critique the cost of National Board Certification and critic the renewal process that is required every ten years (Hess, 2004). Boyd and Reese (2006) also call into question the amount of time that it takes, as it may take an entire school year, for a teacher to achieve certification. Further, they question if the teachers who enter into National Board Certification are already great teachers or if the process of National Board Certification improves their teaching practices and makes them great. This is important because teacher effectiveness would be directly related to student learning and ultimately student achievement. Existing research on the connection between student learning or student achievement, and National Board Certification is still somewhat limited or inconclusive, making it susceptible to criticism.

National Board Certified Teachers in Arizona

According to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards website (n.d.) there are currently 1,169 National Board Certified Teachers in Arizona. In the 2014-2015 school year the state of Arizona added 48 new NBCTs, and the number continues to grow. There are currently 437 individuals pursuing National Board

Certification in Arizona and 11,691 nationally. There is not specific evidence of the exactly number of NBCTs teaching in Title I schools.

Five Core Propositions

The National Board was officially founded in 1987, and its first task was to define their vision of accomplished teaching practices. The first policy statement of the NBPTS, “What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do” was published in 2002 and remains the cornerstone for the National Board Certification process (NBPTS, 2002). The most recent publication that outlines each of the five core propositions was made available in 2014 (NBPTS, 2014).

The Five Core Propositions are going to be used as a framework to uncover how and why NBCTs are teaching using the skills, strategies, and routines in the way they do. Brief descriptions of each of the criteria are listed below.

Proposition 1: Teachers Are Committed to Students and Their Learning

Teachers need to be committed to their students and helping them learn. Teachers need to know that just because they are teaching, it doesn’t mean their students are learning. Every moment of teaching needs to be meaningful and work toward building a foundation. By being life-long learners teachers are able to constantly learn new strategies to assist their students.

Proposition 2: Teachers Know the Subjects They Teach and How to Teach Those Subjects to Students

It is important for teachers to know the content and how to specifically teach each concept while adapting how they teach based upon the student’s needs. Professional development is a necessary component for teacher development. Teachers are always

learning more about students, how they can better teach, new strategies to use, and adapting the curriculum for the various levels of learners.

Proposition 3: Teachers Are Responsible for Managing and Monitoring Student Learning

Classroom management is a huge factor for student learning success. In a well-managed classroom, students know what is expected of them, in regard to behavior, routines, and learning procedures. Teachers are able to effectively keep students on task while adapting classroom management procedures to best reflect the needs and behaviors of the students.

Proposition 4: Teachers Think Systematically About Their Practice and Learning from Experience

Accomplished teachers think in advance about their students' needs and how they can keep students engaged and learning. They anticipate possible challenges and plan for ways to avoid and remedy those situations. Teachers also use what they have learned, adapt it, and apply it to their future lessons.

Proposition 5: Teachers Are Members of Learning Communities

Expert teachers take pride in their profession. They see the value of being a part of a professional learning community. By sharing perspectives, teachers are able to work with other teachers in developing strategies and figuring out what is best for their students and school.

NBCT Teaching Practices

While there is no specific research related to how NBCTs teach vocabulary through the use of shared reading, there is research that explores the teaching practices of

NBCTs. Gunter, Reffel, Rice, Peterson, and Venn (2005) found that NBCTs made instructional modifications to their curriculum in order to more successfully teach students with learning disabilities. Further, their research showed that NBCTs would reflect on the effectiveness of their teaching practices and make changes to better support their students. The central focus of NBPTS is to ensure student learning. “Shifting the focus to student learning requires that educator to take a hard, close look at how all students are progressing, and begin to ask themselves how they can increase or improve that progress” (Allen, Snyder, & Morely, 2009, p. 11). National Board Certification encourages teachers to reflect on their teaching practice and use student assessments to help guide instruction.

In the 2004 publication, “Describing the Behavior and Documenting the Accomplishments of Expert Teachers,” author David Berliner listed qualities that are likely to be identified in expert teachers as:

- better use of knowledge;
- extensive pedagogical content knowledge, including deep representations of subject matter knowledge;
- better problem-solving strategies;
- better adaptation and modification of goals for diverse learners and better skills for improvisation;
- better decision making;
- more challenging objectives;
- better classroom climate;

- better perception of classroom events and better ability to read the cues from students;
- greater sensitivity to context;
- better monitoring of learning and providing feedback to students;
- more frequent testing of hypotheses;
- greater respect for students; and
- display of more passion for teaching.

Of these characteristics, three were found to have the greatest ability to discriminate between expert and non-expert teachers; they were “the degree of challenge that the curriculum offered, the teachers’ ability for deep representations of the subject matter, and the teachers’ skillfulness in monitoring and providing feedback to his or her students” (Berliner, 2004, p. 209).

Responsibilities of Early Elementary Teachers

Early elementary teachers may face some of the biggest challenges because students enter kindergarten with varying abilities and school experiences. “Children enter kindergarten with significant differences in critical early literacy skills, and these differences place many children at serious risk for failing to learn to read and understand text” (Kame’enui et al., 2004). It is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure all children in their class are able to make academic gains and meet the required state or national standards.

Standards

As discussed prior, teachers in Arizona are required to teach using the recently adopted Common Core Standards. In the current circumstance surrounding education,

there are two conflicting trends related to the use of standards in the classroom— professional teaching standards and academic standards for students. Teachers must conduct instruction using “skill and drill” techniques and rote memorization in order to prepare students for standardized tests. Conversely, teachers who pursue additional professional development, such as National Board Certification, are urged to construct and implement creative curriculums that meet the individual needs of students while considering the context of their lives. There is an obvious disconnect between these two types of standards.

Recently, most states have implemented Common Core Standards for all students from kindergarten to grade 12. In order to meet the standards, many districts have adopted curriculum to help meet the standards. Many of the curriculums are scripted and demonstrate what teachers should be saying and doing to teach a specific skill or standard. If all the lessons are standardized and scripted, how can teachers be creative in their practice? The binary between the two definitions of standards becomes even more evident. Can teachers accomplish both?

Theoretical Framework

Teachers take on a variety of roles and make complicated decisions when it comes to best practices in their classroom. All facets of their personal and professional personalities may play a role in the decisions they make. Teachers have regulations and standards they are mandated to follow, but in reality they also have an education and years of experience that may contradict the prescribed curriculums their districts purchase for them to teach. What actions will they take? What theoretical implications are present in their actions? Teachers use different theories as they make decisions regarding

teaching. The same theories that teachers use to inform their practice will be used in analyzing the data from this research. Using the same theories will allow for consistency between the way teachers discuss and view teaching skills and strategies and the way the researcher views teaching skills and strategies. The theories examined below will relate to both the academic standards and professional teaching standards.

Althusser

Louis Althusser is a theorist whose ideas can easily be applied to the use of standards for teaching vocabulary during shared reading in the kindergarten classroom. He believes there are two types of power present in society: the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) and the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) (Althusser, 1971). The RSA can be defined by examples of power such as the police or the army. They are those who can rule by force, or at least threaten with force. Althusser (1971) also explains a second source of power as the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA), which is defined by places such as schools and families. The ISA is most closely related to the way in which one thinks, or it can be what one has internalized as right or best.

In education today, National Board Certified Teachers are faced with meeting Common Core standards as well as National Board Professional Teaching Standards, and this could cause an internal struggle regarding best methods for teaching and ultimately student learning. Should they teach using rote memorization and follow the highly standardized curriculum, or should they develop creative activities for the students in order to generate more meaningful learning experiences? The answers may seem obvious but are proven to be much more complex. The discourse between the two influences of standards is where the RSA and the ISA can be translated into the use of standards for

teaching literacy skills in the classroom. Should the teachers be forced by the RSA to teach to the standards? Should they teach according to what most in the teaching society have deemed as best practice? Are teachers really free to choose the best method for teaching in either option? This research will allow teachers to explain the decisions they make regarding how they teach using the required standards and how it impacts their teaching abilities, specifically related to teaching vocabulary.

When the RSA is related directly to the school system, it can be portrayed by the role of the principal, superintendent, and school board members; they are the people who rule by power and force. The members of the RSA are also those individuals who decide upon and enforce the standards by which teachers must teach students. In this case, the RSA does not rule by physical force, but they have power. They have the power over the teacher's employment, salary, and tenure, which has the same authority to instill fear and cooperation as physical power does. This can impact the methods a teacher chooses to employ for teaching vocabulary. This type of rule by force will be considered when analyzing teaching interviews and classroom observations.

Throughout my own classroom teaching experience, I have seen the RSA at work within the school system. The teachers I worked with hated being forced to use the Basal readers as their source for curriculum and the only method allowed for meeting the assigned standards. Unfortunately, many new or novice teachers use this anyway because they are afraid of losing their job. If they refuse to teach directly to the standards and the students do poorly on the standardized test, it becomes a negative reflection of their practice. The standardized curriculum and tests provide the RSA with more power over the teachers. I can remember teaching in a low-income school where I was told to never

teach anything but the assigned curriculum. It took away all of my autonomy, removed my ability to be creative, and made for an uninspired lesson day after day. In this school, the only form of resistance the teachers had was to attempt to secretly work around the standards, rather than with them.

One of the more complex issues within Althussers' (1971) ideologies is that the ISA may vary based on class and ideas about social reproduction. As humans, we are subjected to certain ideals and social norms, which are then internalized. Every person carries these ideologies with them, including curriculum developers, superintendents, and school board members. It is a known fact that schools in low-income areas are more highly standardized than schools in wealthy neighborhoods. Why is the happening? Is it because the people in power have internalized the idea that poor students will become poor adults? It is sad and disheartening to think that our hyper-standardized school systems are further stratifying the opportunities provided to students deemed "at-risk." The highly standardized curriculums are forcing children to be nothing more than items on a factory line and teachers to be merely workers within that factory.

Relating standards to the ISA can be explained by what teachers think is the best way to teach the standards to students. But even within the framework of the ISA, teachers are not truly free. According to Althusser (1971), this is because what teachers are trained to believe is best for students is really based on what society says is best for students. This directly relates to interpellation, which can be defined as a process where we encounter our environment and culture and internalize it. Interpellation is another significant term used by Althusser (1971) that lends itself to our discussion of the use of standards. I alluded to interpellation during my discussion of the ISA. Individuals can be

interpellated by a society, social class, school, and so on. It becomes a part of us and our everyday life. Teachers and curriculums are forced to meet more standards in low-income areas, and questioning how that happened can be an example of interpellation on the part of the curriculum and policy makers. Not only are they interpellating teachers and students to believe certain things about education, but they have also been interpellated by the society in which they live.

de Certeau

One might wonder what is really happening in the classroom; how are teachers able to balance the different standards and effectively increase student achievement? For the explanation of this topic, I turn to de Certeau (1984) and his theory regarding the use of strategies and tactics. The words “strategies” and “tactics” are often used in the English language interchangeably; however, their meanings according to de Certeau (1984) have clear distinctions.

A strategy is used when the powerful aim to further manage the weak. Actions are considered tactics when someone from the lower class attempts to subvert the upper class but with no intention of overthrowing the system. As referenced by de Certeau (1984), tactics are also known as the “practices of everyday life.” Teachers can use both strategies and tactics when teaching the Common Core State Standards or accomplishing professional teaching standards. Teachers take on the roles of both the powerful and the weak with regard to the two different types of standards discussed throughout this paper. This new research will allow teachers to make the distinction between strategies and tactics for teaching and how they are using them to ensure student learning in their classroom.

Within the context of the classroom, teachers use strategies every day. The teachers are considered the people who have the power in the classroom; the students are considered the weak. Therefore, the teachers use strategies when attempting to manage their students. For example, any type of classroom management activity that a teacher employs upon their students is a strategy. Strategies can be used for teaching the students the standards for achievement; that is the material they would be tested on.

Teachers also use tactics within the walls of their classroom. When you relate teachers to their students, they are the ones in the powerful position. However, when you relate teachers to policy makers or principals, they are the weak. When the teacher is in the role of the weak, they must use tactics to endure the rules of the profession. They must use tactics to accomplish the professional teaching standards because they are not directly aligned with student achievement standards. I will evaluate the ways in which NBCTs use both strategies and tactics for teaching vocabulary. Teachers must engage in developing a curriculum that meets the standards in a meaningful and creative way. Another aspect of National Board Certification is student engagement. In order for students to be engaged in the learning process, the teachers have to teach outside of the mandated curriculum.

Wigging is another notion in de Certeau's (1984) theory that can be used to describe the way teachers attempt to work around the standards. The idea behind wigging is that someone is putting on a wig to disguise themselves or their actions. As discussed previously, teachers are obligated to teach certain standards to their students. However, not all teachers use the same methods. All teachers are supposed to teach the same material the same way, but some will put on the "wig" and pretend to be teaching the

assigned way when they are really using other methods. In a sense, they are putting on a performance. If an administrator would walk in the classroom door, the teacher would put the “wig” on and perform what they were expected to do, and once they would leave, the teacher would return to teaching the way he or she deemed best for their students.

Teaching vocabulary and the strategies used by teachers can be aligned to the work of Althusser and de Certeau. This can connect to what teachers do during shared reading while meeting the required standards in their classrooms. This study will help further what we know about the skills that expert teachers use to increase student learning.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

This chapter will discuss the methods used to complete the research study, which includes four individual case studies of National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) who teach kindergarten in and around the Phoenix, AZ, metropolitan area. The study focuses on the methods NBCTs used to teach vocabulary, specifically during shared reading activities across all content areas. Vocabulary was selected as part of the research criteria as it is a predictor of later reading achievement and a critical skill for reading success (Foorman & Torgesen, 2001).

The research process consisted of two in-depth interviews and weeklong observations of four National Board Certified Teachers. The four teachers completed one pre-observation interview and one post-observation interview. This research focused on the following research questions:

1. How do National Board Certified Teachers teach vocabulary during shared reading in kindergarten classrooms?
 - a. What routines, strategies, skills, and/or tactics are used for implementing shared reading?
 - b. What routines are followed for teaching vocabulary?
2. How do National Board Certified Teachers explain the skills and strategies used for teaching vocabulary during shared reading across all content areas?
3. How do National Board Certified Teachers implement shared reading and vocabulary into the reading curriculum while teaching the mandated standards?

4. How do strategies for teaching kindergarten in low, middle, or high socioeconomic populations differ?

The research commenced in the beginning of 2016 and continued for approximately five months. The observations were a week of full-day observations for each teacher. A voice recorder, rather than a video camera, was used. One of the goals of the observations was to examine how the classroom rules, routines, and expectations are presented and internalized by students. The research specifically looks for ways that teachers use the Five Core Propositions as a guide for their teaching of vocabulary during shared reading and as a foundation for creating a classroom of learners.

Descriptive Study

The research draws on ethnographic research methods, such as observation and interviews, in order to uncover the skills that National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) use (including skills they use effortlessly and unconsciously) in the classroom. Formal research began in January of 2016 with the interviewing of National Board Certified Teachers about their teaching beliefs and philosophies, as well as the impact the National Board Certification process had on them and their beliefs about teaching young children. Many of the research methods being used are associated with ethnographic studies.

Erickson's (1984) article regarding school ethnography says that

What makes a study ethnographic is that it not only treats a social unit of any size as a whole but that the ethnography portrays events, at least in part, from the points of view of the actors involved in the events. (p. 52)

The social unit that was studied here is National Board Certified Teachers. The events that were uncovered during the research were specific to the National Board Certification

process and the teaching skills and strategies that National Board Certified Teachers use when teaching vocabulary during shared reading to kindergarten students while meeting the mandated standards.

Participants

The participants were four NBCTs who are certified in the Early Childhood Generalist or Literacy: Reading/Language Arts for Early/Middle Childhood certification areas. All four were kindergarten teachers who work in or around Phoenix, AZ, in public elementary schools. Each of the teachers worked at a different school with their own unique set of students and demographics. This research includes a diverse group through the selection of teachers from varying school districts with different populations of students and socioeconomic statuses. All of the teachers have a minimum of five years of teaching experience.

In order to select National Board Certified Teachers, the Arizona K-12 center was contacted to assist with recruitment. The Arizona K-12 center aims to help teachers advance their teaching practice by offering quality professional development opportunities. This organization also aids teachers with the National Board Certification process and maintains a current list of teachers who are certified in the state of Arizona. Teachers and their certification areas are easily located on the Arizona K-12 website, and this resource was utilized for research participant recruitment. I was able to recruit participant teachers from different school districts.

Phases of the Research Project

Phase 1

I interviewed the four kindergarten teachers who are National Board Certified and public elementary schools around the Phoenix area. All of the teachers served in schools that teach students from varying populations. Each of the four teachers was interviewed individually for approximately 30 minutes to one hour using the list of questions provided below. The researcher used a voice record and transcribed notes from the interview.

Each teacher participated in two formal interviews: one pre-observation interview and one post-observation interview. The first interview was structured and focused on the process of National Board Certification, while the second interview was semi-structured and focus more on vocabulary instruction. There was also a series of follow-up interviews after completing classroom observations to discuss the skills and strategies used to teach vocabulary during shared reading.

Initial Structured Interviews. The first interview was structured with a set of questions to ask the teachers. Questions were focused on teaching philosophy, beliefs, and National Board Certification. They were asked how the National Board process has influenced their teaching and/or beliefs about teaching. Some of the questions were inspired by and adapted from Anderson-Levitt's (2002) book *Teaching Cultures*, in which, she asked teachers about the ways in which they taught children.

The interview consisted of the following questions:

- Can you tell me about National Board Certification (NBC) and the process you went through in order to achieve certification?

- What is your teaching philosophy?
- How has NBC impacted your teaching philosophy?
- What are your beliefs about teaching?
- How has NBC impacted your teaching beliefs?
- Is there a technical language associated with the teaching profession?
Insider's language?
- Does NBC have an influence on professional language?
- Has the NBC process influenced your definition of "classroom culture" or how you go about creating it in your classroom?

Phase 2

Classroom observation took place after the initial interview. During the observations notes, were taken if teachers did something other than what they claim they did or if they did not actually practice the way they think they do. These notes were then brought up in questioning during the follow-up meeting. The NBCT was asked about the situation and prompted to tell more about it. I hypothesized that I would find NBCTs are doing more in the classroom than they realized. I also hypothesized that the guidelines and standards provided by the National Board have gotten "inside" the teachers and that their teaching has been impacted as a result of this.

Each teacher was observed for full school days, over the course of one week; though for one teacher it was four days due to testing. It was important for the researcher to remain in the classroom for the full school day and over many different days in order to gain a deeper understanding of the teaching strategies used by each NBCT. The focus of the research was primarily during shared reading activities: however, all content areas

were observed. Throughout this time, I wrote down strategies the teachers used to teach vocabulary, complete a checklist (see Appendix D), and noted the frequency of each of the strategies used. After completing the observations, I analyzed the strategies teachers used to teach vocabulary during shared reading activities and then compared the difference between the strategies teachers said they used during the interview to what was actually observed.

Observations. Participant observations are less intrusive and tend to be more on the ethnographic side of research.

The researcher who adopts this role advances very slightly in her/his involvement with the insiders. While still mostly involved in observing, she/he may conduct short interviews. Unlike the covert activity that is typical of the complete observer, in this role the researcher's identity can become more overt as it becomes known to more of the insiders. (Baker, 2006, p. 175)

Observing allowed me access to more private conversations and use of insider language. I am a former teacher, and my presence in the classroom was not that of a formal teacher. Students could have viewed me as a teacher figure; however, over the full week my identity was more understood and furthered my inside view. I also took field notes documenting the teachers' actions, including pedagogical skills and strategies, as well as routines the teachers used daily.

Phase 3

The final phase of the research was a post-observation interview. I asked the teachers to expand on ideas related to teaching vocabulary, as well as probed them to explain further how they teach vocabulary skills. In doing this, additional questions were

asked. After the interview process was completed, I reviewed the interview notes and looked for common themes/trends among the teachers' responses. Common themes did emerge and were analyzed for similarities and differences.

Semi-Structured Interviews. The second interview was semi-structured. The teachers discussed their classroom teaching practices. The goal was to have them explain in detail what they did during shared reading to teach vocabulary. The main areas of interest were: the daily classroom norms, routines, and how they come to be established. The interview was based off of the following questions:

- Do you think it is important to teach vocabulary? Why?
- What strategies do you use to promote vocabulary growth?
- What strategies do you use during shared reading to enhance vocabulary?
How did you learn to use this strategy?
- What are the critical skills that are most beneficial for students' vocabulary development?
- Have you received training or professional development on vocabulary instruction? How much?
- What teaching skills need to be mastered to teach vocabulary?
- How do you incorporate the standards into your teaching?
- Do you find that teaching mandated standards is difficult? Why or why not?
- Are curriculum standards in line with your professional teaching standards, as they relate to National Board Certification?

The teachers were also asked follow up questions when necessary. I would mention something that was observed and asked question such like, “can you tell me more about why you did that?” to gain a better understanding of their thinking.

Data Analysis Procedures

Prior to formal research this study was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board. The data collection began in January 2016 and last through May 2016. The data that were collected from pre- and post-observations interviews, as well as, observation notes and checklists from weeklong observations in each participant teacher’s classroom were analyzed. During the week of observation, conversations took place and follow-up questions were asked. The teachers willingly provided further clarification on how they teach vocabulary or further explained why they were using a certain strategies. They also shared information about their leadership within the school, as well as general information about the schools administration and the influence it has on their teaching methods. Notes were added to the weekly observations regarding these informal conversations. The observations and the interviews were reviewed for consistency between what teachers were doing and what they said they were doing. The Five Core Propositions were used as a framework to uncover how and why NBCTs are teaching using the skills, strategies, and routines in the way they do. There were two methods of data analysis used: grounded theory and narrative analysis

Analysis

Grounded theory was used to review field notes and uncover the categories of strategies that NBCTs use to teach vocabulary. “The grounded theory method stresses discovery and theory development rather than logical deductive reasoning which relies on

prior theoretical frameworks” (Charmaz, 1983, p. 110). During the week of observation notes were taken throughout the school day. When a teacher would engage in a vocabulary activity, of any kind, it was highlighted; when they would engage in a shared reading activity it was noted with a star. If the teacher included vocabulary during a shared reading activity the field notes were highlighted and noted with a star for reference. This method allowed a quantifiable amount of vocabulary lesson and shared reading activities to be identified. As a result, common themes began to emerge as the data was reviewed. Highlighting all vocabulary instruction helped in coding the strategies that the NBCTs used to explain the vocabulary word to students. Grounded theory uses coding to help simplify the process of categorizing and sorting data (Charmaz, 1983).

Narrative analysis was used for the interview portion of the research, as each teacher described her journey through the National Board Certification process and explained the methods they use to teach vocabulary.

Narrative can be, and often is, a method, a mode of inquiry into the human realm.

In addition, the idea of narrative can be employed in the context of theory about some aspect of the human condition, for instance cognition or personal identity.

Finally, it can be considered in the context of practice, that is, the various human “doings” that are part of everyday life. (De Fina, A., & Georgakoulou, A., 2015)

All of the recorded interviews were transcribed. The interviews were organized using the order of the questions. If subsequent questions or clarification questions were asked during the interview they were listed under the original interview question to help in the narrative analysis process. Each of the transcripts was placed side-by-side and the questions were analyzed one by one. In reviewing one question at a time, for all the

teachers, it was clear when they had similarities and differences in their responses to the questions.

The information gathered will be presented in the following chapter as four individual case studies. In this research, case studies are used to look at a small group of participants, which are NBCTs who teach kindergarten. The case studies are used to illustrate the ways in which these teachers think about their teaching practice, the influence of National Board Certification, and the methods they use to teach vocabulary while meeting curriculum standards. Case studies allow a more personal view of the participants as it relates to the research questions.

Assumptions

It is assumed that all the teacher participants in this study were honest in their interviews and surveys. This research provides National Board Certified Teachers the opportunity to share their beliefs and strategies for teaching vocabulary and shared reading with other novice teachers. The information obtained from this research may help provide greater insights into the skills and strategies used by National Board Certified Teachers. The teachers who participated in this study taught in schools in and around Phoenix, Arizona. The students who were taught and impacted by these teachers were from varying socioeconomic situations and demographics.

Summary

This chapter describes the methods that were used to conduct this research. The participants were all National Board Certified Teachers in kindergarten classrooms. The research began January of 2016 and lasted approximately five months. The research went through the Institutional Review Board for approval to work with human subjects. The

teacher participants gave verbal consent to partake in the interviews and classroom observations.

CHAPTER 4

CASE STUDIES

This research was completed as four individual case studies of National Board Certified Teachers who teach kindergarten in and around the Phoenix, AZ, area. This chapter presents information about each teacher participant and discusses detailed information about their teaching methods and strategies, as well as some of the impacts of teaching in Title I or non-Title I schools. The teachers and the districts in which they work will be given pseudonyms to protect their privacy.

The participants in this research are four National Board Certified Teachers. All of the teachers achieved National Board Certification and have current certifications. The first teacher (Carol) is a female in the Sandalwood Unified School District. Her class does not qualify for Title I funding. Her certification area is Early Childhood Generalist. The second teacher (Sarah) is a female from the Pine School District. Her class does qualify for Title I funding. She teaches the kindergarten class that is specifically grouped for non-native English speaking students, which is identified as the Spanish-English Emersion (SEI) class. Her certification area is Literacy: Reading-Language Arts in Early/Middle Childhood. The third teacher participant (Kathy) is a female from the Cedar School District. Her school is classified as Title I. Her certification area is Early Childhood Generalist. The fourth teacher participant (Jenna) is a female from the Willow School District. Her school is categorized as Title I. Her certification area is Literacy: Reading-Language Arts in Early/ Middle Childhood.

Table 2

Participant Demographics

Teacher	Race	Gender	School District	Years Teaching	School and Class Label	National Board Certification/ Year of Certification
Carol	White	Female	Sandalwood	18 years	Non-Title I	Early Childhood/ 2011
Sarah	White	Female	Pine	19 years	Title I (Spanish/ English Emersion Classroom)	Literacy: Reading- Language Arts/ 2010
Kathy	White	Female	Cedar	11 years	Title I	Early Childhood/ 2014
Jenna	White	Female	Willow	17 years	Title I	Literacy: Reading- Language Arts/ 2014

Each case study will be presented similarly. They will open with a quote that is reflective of each of teacher's teaching practice. Their individual teaching styles impact how they think about teaching, which ultimately impact student learning. Next, background information will be addressed. This includes the time of participation, school information, socioeconomic status of the school, and any other important information.

The National Board Certification story section will share how each of the teachers achieved National Board Certification and the process they went through to achieve certification. The following section is School and classroom environment, which will provide a discussion of the classroom space, size, arrangement, school requirements, Title I requirements, and each teacher's leadership roles in their school or grade level.

The next section is Vocabulary is taught, which details the teacher's thoughts about vocabulary instruction, as well as how they teach it and use vocabulary in all academic areas. Shared reading strategies will follow this, which will explain what they said in their interview that they do to teach vocabulary using shared reading. This section will also provide evidence of what was observed during shared reading.

The final section is National Board Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) and curriculum standards. This section will explain how teachers use NBPTS and if they feel as though the NBPTS are aligned with current curriculum standards. This section will be presented using the Five Core Propositions, which are the basis for all National Board Certification. Direct quotes will be used to honor the voices of the teacher participants.

The following two chapters, Chapters 5 and 6, will focus on the four main research questions and discuss the findings related to each question. The study findings will be presented in two chapters. Chapter 5 will discuss findings specifically related to vocabulary and shared reading, and Chapter 6 will discuss the findings related to teaching strategies/methods/routines, the teachers use of standards, and the impact of Title I. The data were analyzed using the theories from de Certeau and Althusser, and the Five Core Propositions from the NBPTS.

Case Studies Overview

The participants in this research are four National Board Certified Teachers. Each of the teachers has a current certification in the area of Early Childhood Generalist or Literacy: Reading-Language Arts Early/Middle Childhood. The case studies presented will uncover information about the process each teacher went through in order to achieve certification, as well as how certification impacted their teaching, the methods they use to teach vocabulary, and how they include shared reading in the curriculum.

Case Study, Carol: Expert at Customizing Curriculum

His little face lit up yesterday. These are the three words he needs to do because I do.... We have them typed for the class but then, once the kids get down lower, I make their own. Anything that's handwritten that goes home, the parents know this is personally for them....He was so excited. I said, "I'll make you a chart and you can study it and... We'll get it done. His little face, you could just see the confidence go up. You need those little things, those little perks. He sometimes is very hard on himself because he knows he struggles, and so to know that "I only need three more" and his whole face lights up. Oh it's so fun.

Carol is a master when it comes to customizing the curriculum and following up with students to monitor their progress. She is able to observe and assess student success during seat work in the morning and meet with them individually later in the afternoon while all students are engaged in another activity. It is evident that every student matters. She displayed evidence of being able to effectively individualize instruction even though she did not seem to be aware of it in her post interview. When asked about her teaching strategies, she stated, "You can't, unfortunately, with 25 kids, you can't plan each lesson

to suit their individual needs. I would love to, but it's not possible. You can't do it." This is contrary to the observations, specifically when it was related to learning new words. She is actually creating an environment for students to learn and succeed.

Background. Carol was interviewed and observed for one week during the month of January. The observations took place shortly after winter break. Carol is employed by Sandalwood Unified School District at a school that is not a school-wide Title I school; however, the school directory information lists that the school does serve 62 students that qualify for Title I accommodations. The school serves students from kindergarten through sixth grade, and approximately 600 students are enrolled there. The majority of the school population is White, non-Hispanic.

When I first met Carol, she was warm and welcoming and excited to be a part of the research process. She introduced me to her kindergarten team and administration. Our first interview took place in her classroom, which was large and visually engaging.

National Board Certification story. Carol was initially uncertain about the National Board Certification process and opted to complete Take 1, which is a program where she is able to complete one component of the certification requirements and earn a score that could be "banked" and applied to the whole certification later. She decided on beginning the process with Take 1 in order to see if National Board Certification was right for her. After completing Take 1, she said, "...then the next year I ended up doing the whole certification. And it was a great process that really helped me to reflect upon what you do."

One notable topic that she brought up when discussing the National Board Certification process is that it forced her stop looking at student achievement alone, but

rather made her to look more closely at her teaching and how it impacted student achievement. She said during our first interview:

We look at the data and we say, “Oh, that’s great, the kids are achieving!” But we don’t look at what we did to achieve the data. So, it was very helpful just to see, you know, what was working and what wasn’t working instead of just moving forward.

Her most significant take away from going through the National Board Certification process is that it makes her look back and reflect on her teaching practice.

School and classroom environment. Carol has a classroom that showcased the students’ work and fosters an environment for working together. The classroom was extremely large. In the classroom, there was evidence of students’ work on the walls, word lists, lyrics of songs were posted, and the tables were grouped for students to sit together. All of the centers were organized for students to sit in groups. She did have one lone desk in the room for students who were not making the choice to work with their peers. There was a large carpet area, computer station, housekeeping center, library, and art area. The classroom was well equipped with technology; it had four computers and iPads, a smart board, and a listening center with headphones. A detailed diagram of Carol’s classroom layout is presented in Appendix E to further depict the layout of the classroom.

The school is large and spread out over the campus. The doors to each of the classrooms are all outdoors. The kindergarten area was gated off and had its own age-appropriate playground. This school does not require that students wear a uniform or an ID badge as part of their dress code.

Carol is the team leader for the kindergarten grade level. She works closely with each of the other two kindergarten teachers. One of the other kindergarten teachers was new to teaching, so Carol worked as her mentor to help her through her first two years. Carol plans and organizes events and helps with curriculum decisions for their grade level.

Assessments are part of the weekly routine in Carol's classroom. She has an aide that comes in and completes formal assessments to monitor student progress. Individual assessments took place during center time. The use of an aide allowed Carol the opportunity to work in small groups with students while the aide completed the assessments. During the week of observations students were observed completing DIBLES assessments that are mandated. The students were also observed completing an assessment the teacher referred to as 'million dollar words' where students practiced reading sight words. This was something she created to ensure students had an opportunity to learn as many sight words as possible.

Vocabulary is taught. Vocabulary is used throughout the day in this classroom. Carol values student's ability to use vocabulary so that they have the words to appropriately articulate what they are thinking. When Carol was asked about her methods for promoting vocabulary growth, she said her main strategy was reading books.

All the stories that we read, we pull out some of the words that are included in the story that they might not know. The kids know if they don't know a word that they usually ask right away, and we try to figure out of the comprehension piece what it means. Usually some of the kids do know because we have some very well-rounded students that are out and about in the world, and so they listen to

their parents and their parents say those words and so... It's nice just to really have the class help each other to figure out what those words mean. Reading books is really the main source of vocabulary.

Based on the field notes from the observation, the primary source of vocabulary instruction was reading, including both read alouds and shared reading activities.

When she does a read aloud lesson and comes across a new word, she usually did one of two things: act out the word or have students share what they knew about the word and provide them with an example. One of the words she discussed was "whisper." She modeled how to whisper and then had each student place one hand over his or her throat. She told them to speak loudly, and they could feel their throat vibrate. Then she told them to whisper and, when they whispered, they would not feel their throat vibrate. Another word that was presented during the week of observations was "mittens." In order to activate students' prior knowledge, she asked them to tell what they knew about gloves. Then she was able to discuss some of the similarities and differences between gloves and mittens, using what students already knew as a guide for her instruction.

The observations did provide evidence that Carol was able to include vocabulary instruction across content areas. During morning circle time, the students complete math activities, and one of the vocabulary words that was presented was "algebra." One of the social science topics was about the community. The teacher pulled out the words: community and commuter. She asked students what they knew about each of the words, and used examples to explain them in more detail. She is intentional about making connections that are relatable to her students. When I asked her about how she is able to connect to the students during our post-observation interview, she stated, "I think it's just

about getting to know the kids. They're all little individual people.... You have to take the time to get to know them.”

Shared reading strategies. Carol's primary method of vocabulary instruction is shared reading or read-aloud activities. She does her best to ensure that she is teaching students at their developmental level. During our post-observation interview, I asked her about the strategies she used to teach vocabulary during shared reading. Her response, as shown below, does not list the steps she takes to teach vocabulary during shared reading but rather explains how she considers the students abilities and makes instructional decisions based on their individual needs.

The kids are all at their different levels. I've got one that's reading in the fifth-grade level, _____. She's very worldly. The books that she's reading, she can fluently read them, but the comprehension piece isn't always there because it's made for like 12-year-olds and she's 6. If there's a lot of vocabulary in there that we're talking about, we look at the different sentence structures and “Let's try to figure out what this word means based on the picture, based on the story, or the sentence.”... It just depends on what level they're at, but the higher-level kids, we really focus a lot on comprehension because they're able to read so high but that vocabulary, they don't always understand. Then the lower kids, we try to pull it [vocabulary] out when we're doing other things because the stories they're reading, there's just not a lot of comprehension yet.

Carol did not specifically mention that she tried to differentiate instruction based on student needs: I asked her about it based on some of the examples that I observed and in response to her answers to the interview questions. During one shared reading activity,

Carol, directly taught the words “queasy” and “cellar.” For the word queasy, she was able to explain it as an upset stomach or having the feeling of “butterflies in your belly.” For the word cellar, she connected it to a word they previously learned, which was “basement.” Then she was able to help students make connections between cellar and basement, as they can both be located under a house.

When I probed about the use of differentiated instruction and how she learned to use this method, she attributed it to her background in Special Education. Carol stated:

I have a Special Ed degree too, so that I think that plays a big part of it, because I taught Special Ed first, before I started teaching regular ed, for many years. I guess my philosophy is meshed with both.... Every child has different weaknesses and strengths, and so I really feel like you have to hit every child. I think my Special Ed background really pushes me to make sure that each child is getting what they need.

Carol is able to explain that she customizes instruction to meet the needs and abilities of her students; however, she does not articulate the specific methods used to break down and explain or teach the vocabulary words to students.

NBPTS and curriculum standards. The Five Core Propositions are the basis for all National Board Certification and are in place to ensure student learning. The Five Core Propositions are listed below. Examples of ways in which Carol meets the criteria are included in each section.

1. Teachers are committed to students and their learning: Carol is reflective on her teaching practice. She aims to guarantee that each child is learning; she wants to challenge even her most advanced students.

2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students: Carol places value on getting to know her students. She greets and hugs them at the door as they are on their way into the classroom each morning. She listens to their stories from home and places value on their words and interest by using what she learns to guide her instruction. When asked about how she uses curriculum standards she said,

We look at the standard and then figure out what we're going to teach. We don't try to teach and then figure out what standard it fits in. I don't know. We have curriculum maps that... If we hit the curriculum map, we're hitting every standard. It's kind of like a tally mark. We actually have to do this. If it's not a standard or a life skill, because I feel like that's important... Calendar is not one of our standards, but they need to know that it's Monday, and they need to know the days of the week. That's a daily skill. We don't teach it unless there's some need for it. We've gotten rid of the fluff. There isn't time for fluff. We make fun stuff and we still do talk about the little yellow dog and the silly stuff, but we're talking about penguins and Antarctica and polar bears and we're Googling facts. That's all part of the standards. They need to know non-fiction versus fiction. Even when they were talking about the core standards and different things, I don't feel like it's any harder. You look at the standard and say, "What am I going to teach to teach it?" That's how you should be teaching. You shouldn't say, "Oh I like this book so how am I going to fit it in?" It should be the opposite way.

Carol is intentional in selecting materials or books that best meet the needs of her student, and, she is involved in learning about new curriculums for the kindergarten team.

3. Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning: Each week an aide visits the classroom and completes an assessment on letters, letter-sounds, or words. Carol uses the information gathered from the assessments, or classroom observations, to make sure students are actually meeting the benchmark goals of each lesson.

4. Teachers think systematically about their teaching practice and learn from experience: Carol has her curriculum planned and posted in her classroom. Based on her interview response, she uses the mandated curriculum standards as a guide for her instruction. When asked about using standards she mentioned “getting it [the standards] organized can be difficult....Once you figure out where it’s going to go, it’s not difficult.” She explained that having a map helps ensure that you get it all in and that you hit all the standards. She did somewhat contradict her statement by saying, “It takes years to figure out where all the standards go because there’s so many, but once you have the standard where it’s going to, it just falls into place.” So it may be easy for her with years of teaching experience to use the standards to guide curriculum, but it may not be easy for all teachers.

5. Teachers are members of learning communities: Carol is the team leader for the kindergarten grade level. She is actively involved in her school and with the other kindergarten teachers. For the observations and interviews, it could be inferred that she has a positive working relationship with other teachers and the administration at the school.

During the post-observation interview, Carol was asked about the relationship between NBPTS and the learning standards that teachers must implement into their classroom. Her response uncovered an interesting dynamic within her school. She said,

We're very fortunate here, at this campus: we're not micromanaged. We get a lot of resources. We're lucky with that because we've got reading series after reading series. We have a lot of different resources that we are able to pick.... If it was a perfect resource, then everyone would be using it. We're able to pick and choose what we like. Antarctica, actually, is in another series, but I loved the book "If We Lived in Antarctica," and it relates to so many of the standards that we kept it. We have the freedom to be able to do that. I think that's really important because we're not micromanaged and we're not ... Some of the schools are and we're fortunate enough that our principal trusts us: "Just do your job. Our scores are good, and so just continue whatever you're doing." because every student is going to learn it differently. As long as you have what you're trying to teach, you have to individualize to your specific class. Even though we all do the same thing, we all do it a different way because our classes are so different. You have to include your own personal voice. You have to be excited to teach; otherwise they're not going to care. If you don't care, they're not going to care. You have to pull the standard out, but then make it your own in order for them to learn. Otherwise they're not going to pick it up. You have to make those connections.

This statement uncovers something significant; although she seems to value standards and the importance of meeting benchmarks for student achievement, she also wants

freedom to teach her students the way she feels is best and using methods that she believes will have the greatest effect on students' learning.

Case Study, Sarah: Balancing Regulations with Best Practice

You have to do what is best for students. I may not agree with a direct instruction model, but that's what my district wants me to do and that's what they think is best for students, then that's what I'm going to do.

The influence of mandates, rules, and regulations was felt the first time I stepped foot on campus. This school was strict about their visitor's policy, as well as student dress and behavior. The presence of administration was not observed during the week of observation; however, a structured model to schooling was in place. It impacted the students, the lines they use for walking around campus, and even teaching procedures and testing.

I met Sarah in person for the first time for our pre-observation interview, which took place in her classroom. She was welcoming but firm and structured in her answers. Her first interview was very structured with a question-response, question-response dynamic; at one time she even asked, "are we done?" The second interview was more conversational, and she offered deeper insights into her teaching when prompted.

Although I didn't notice it at the time of observation, there seems to be a disconnect between what this teacher does and what she thinks is best. While reading through the data, she clearly talks about filtering out mandates and doing what is best for students; however, the majority of her reading instruction is directly out of a textbook.

Background. Sarah participated in the research during the month of March 2016. She was observed for four full school days, rather than five, because of mandated testing.

She asked that research not be conducted on the test day. We had limited weeks to select from to complete the observations because she was over 35 weeks pregnant and would be leaving for maternity leave in the near future.

Sarah is employed at a Title I School in the Pine School District. The school serves approximately 878 students ranging from kindergarten through fifth grade. Of the 878 students enrolled at the school, 875 qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. Sarah teaches the Spanish English Immersion (SEI) kindergarten class; therefore, most of her students are non-native English speakers.

National Board Certification story. Sarah went through the traditional process of completing all components of the National Board portfolio at one time. She described her certificate area as literacy and early childhood. When asked about the process, she went through to achieve certification she said, “I really had to look at literacy and what I was teaching in my reading and writing, like more in depth than what I had been doing.” She further explained that the process forced her to think “outside the box” and prompted her to look for research regarding instructional ideas that she could implement with her students. She also described attending meetings with other teachers who were going through the certification process when asked about professional language. She did not mention sharing the process with other teachers when she was asked about the process she went through to achieve certification.

School and classroom environment. I would describe the classroom and school environment as clean, quiet, and orderly. The classroom was very small, which limited the room arrangement. This kindergarten classroom was significantly smaller, approximately half the size of the other classrooms involved in this research. The tables

were set up to make four circle tables, with about six children per table, and she also had three free-standing desks placed around the room. There was a small carpet at the front of the room, placed directly under the white board, where students would sit in rows for circle time. The back section of the room was split with a bathroom and a small table with four computers. The teacher had a half-circle desk in the front corner of the room that she used for both her desk and as an area of individual or small group assessment. A detailed diagram of Sarah's classroom layout is presented in Appendix F to further depict the layout of the classroom. She has, what she labeled, a focus wall. This wall details the learning objective for each of the following areas: reading, math, writing, and grammar. Sarah had 25 students enrolled in her class at the time of observations.

The school requires students to wear uniforms and ID badges. It offers many resources for the students and their families. The school itself is made of older buildings and a few portables for specials, such as art. During the week of observation, I visited the portable for art, and it was in bad condition. The ceiling tiles were falling out or missing, and there was a free-standing fan going because the air conditioner had not been working properly. Sarah is responsible for teaching the Spanish English Immersion (SEI) kindergarten class. The vast majority of the students enrolled in the school are categorized as Hispanic.

Assessments are part of the daily routine in Sarah's classroom. During the week of observation she completed DIBELS assessments, reading comprehensions assessments, writing assessments, and AZELLA (Arizona English Language Learner Assessment) testing. All of the assessments observed were formal tests and were required by the school or district.

Vocabulary is taught. Sarah describes vocabulary instruction as very important. She explains that it should not come from “just straight vocabulary lessons, but from what you are teaching when students have a question about something in context, or they’re trying to tell you something and they don’t have the right words.” She explained that vocabulary is particularly important for her English language learners (ELL) students who come to the classroom with limited vocabulary and have difficulty translating their thoughts to the English language. She gave the example of “When I color my hair, they’ll say, ‘Did you paint your hair?’ Having those understandings of the different way we use English words, I think is another reason to teach vocabulary.” She further explained in her post interview that she tries to teach vocabulary all throughout the school day.

Sarah spends a great deal of class time each day teaching language arts based topics. Every day Sarah is required to teach SRA (Science Research Associates) language curriculum for 45 minutes. From the week of observation, this is done using direct instruction. The students listen and repeat, or listen and respond to a prompt that the teacher reads directing from the provided curriculum book. She is able to teach some vocabulary during this time, but it is primarily taught during other times during the school day. When asked about her strategies for vocabulary instruction, she stated that she teaches it

whenever it comes up in conversation or when we’re reading. Or we’re doing writing and they don’t know what word it is, I’ll say, ‘Do you need help with the word.’ I think it’s conversation with kids all the time. Anything I do I always try and expose them to new vocabulary. The writing center I do during reading time.

It has all these different vocabulary words and pictures to help try and expose them to this.

The data from the observations shows that she does in fact try to teach vocabulary across the curriculum. She is able to connect vocabulary to writing, conversations, math, and social studies or science activities. One lesson she was teaching was related to classification of items. She would read a word aloud and students would have to put the item in the correct category. As she would read each of the words, she took additional time to explain each word stating its definition in proper English.

Shared reading strategies. This teacher really made an effort to include vocabulary throughout the school day. When asked about strategies she uses to teach vocabulary during shared reading, she connected back to the topic of having conversations. She said, “One of the things I like to do is just talk with your partner, what do you think that word means?” She also stated that she likes to have them “show me what the word means” by having them act it out. During the interview, she did say that some words could be acted out while others words need to be explained. She said, “sometimes I just tell them what it is. There are just some words you have to know.”

During the week of observation, Sarah completed five shared reading lessons with her students. The methods that were observed during shared reading were: pointing for tracking, stopping to explain the vocabulary words, and checking for understanding. The stories were also usually read more than one time so the children had repeated exposure to the text. When she would stop to explain the words, she did use the acting out method. One of the words she pulled out from a story was “panting.” She explained that a dog pants to cool off. She modeled panting by sticking out her tongue and breathing heavily.

The children did the same thing. Other words that were taught were “farm” and “city.” For these words, Sarah used pictures and detailed descriptions to build on what the students already knew in order to teach the meaning of the word.

NBPTS and curriculum standards. Five Core Propositions are the basis for all National Board Certification and in place to ensure student learning. The Five Core Propositions are listed below. Examples of ways in which Sarah meets the criteria are included in each section.

1. Teachers are committed to students and their learning: Sarah explained in her interview that she would try various methods for teaching to ensure student learning. She is willing to try new curriculum adopted by her district to help her students make gains. It was evident from conversations that the vast majority of the students come to her with limited language and vocabulary, and she tries to help bridge the gap between where they are and where they need to be by the end of the school year.

2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students: Sarah had some complex dynamics operating in her classroom. One of the students had a father in prison, and another was believed to be on the spectrum for severe learning disability but had not received testing that was requested months prior. She took the time to know the history of each student and worked to meet individual needs. One child was dirty and needed to be cared for, so she would send him out for a bath and a clean uniform. She wanted to make sure that basic needs were met so that she could teach them and give them an opportunity to learn.

During the post interview Sarah discussed the value of conversation in promoting vocabulary. When asked about professional development opportunities she said, they

received “some but not a lot. Not a lot of specific vocabulary activities you can take back and use in your classroom”. She demonstrated knowledge of the content she was teaching, however, the best method to teach that content to children was unclear.

3. Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning: Sarah completed assessments at her round-table desk daily. She did assessments both one-on-one and in small groups. These assessments are required to monitor student success and help the teachers with instructional decisions. During our interview, she discussed one of the difficulties with teaching kindergarten students who do not have knowledge of the alphabet or alphabetic principles.

When you have students who come in and have no letter names and no letter sounds, but yet, I’m also trying to teach them how characters react in the story. And yet, they don’t have basic fundamentals of reading or basic fundamentals of writing and they’re having to answer a writing prompt when they don’t really understand what to do.

She was clearly thinking about trying to teach students at their level and then pushing them to meet the required benchmarks.

4. Teachers think systematically about their teaching practice and learn from experience: Sarah discussed methods for modifying instruction regularly during the week of observation. One part of the curriculum she did not modify was the 45-minute SRA direct instruction and writing instruction. Her students really struggle with writing, but they needed to be able to listen to a story and write three sentences as part of their writing assessments. So she made multiple attempts at writing instruction and even asked me for

instructional suggestions. She did mention making changes to the curriculum based on what she and other teachers observed from their students.

I know our district is working on possibly the first quarter, just being focused on letter names, letter sounds, and basic reading fundamentals. All of those standards as opposed to comprehension standards. I'm a little weary about that because we could get so far behind in comprehension standard that that might be more difficult for them to catch up. But then again, it took us almost two quarters for most of my students to learn letter names and letter sounds fluently.

She demonstrates thinking about her teaching and trying new methods to teach students.

5. Teachers are members of learning communities: Sarah is involved in her school, as the kindergarten team leader. She is also a leader among other National Board Certified Teachers. She is the coordinator for the NBCTs in her school district.

During the final interview, Sarah was asked about the relationship between NBPTS and the mandated curriculum standards she must teach.

I do not think that our curriculum standards are totally in line with what I would teach as a National Board Certified Teacher. Only because, like I said, I'm trying to teach, you get 30 minutes to teach letter names and letter sounds and then you have 30 minutes to try and teach a comprehension standard or writing standard that they are not ready for. They haven't gone through stages of writing in the years before like they should have, and now you're trying to force them to quickly go through them, as well as now you have to learn how to do this. For me, I think I would take that step back and do basic fundamentals the first quarter and not worry about any of the other standards. I scaled up fundamental basics, as much

as I could. Then start focusing on standards that are reasonable, like sequencing and stories. We didn't even do really sequencing a story this year. You can't talk about two texts unless you can sequence a story.

This passage demonstrates her deep desire to teach the students what they need to know to meet the grade-level standards or benchmarks, but also displays frustration in that fact that her students have to make up for years of learning as a result of limited exposure to formal learning environments.

Case Study, Kathy: Teaching Through Caring Relationships

“They don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care.”

These are the words spoken by Kathy's late father, and she claims that he was her first teacher, trainer, and mentor. She seems to use this quote as a guide for her teaching as she demonstrates a positive relationship with her students and their families.

When I first met Kathy, she was kind, soft-spoken, and very helpful. One thing she would comment about was that she wanted to make sure she was giving me what I needed. I told her she just need to teach as she normally would, and I believe that she was authentic in her teaching practice, as well as in the interviews and informal discussions.

Background. Kathy was observed during the month of April 2016 for one full school week. She is employed at a Title I school in the Cedar School District. The school is relatively new and very large. It serves approximately 892 students from kindergarten to eighth grade. This school receives school-wide Title I funding as 815 of its students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. The majority of the student population is Hispanic.

National Board Certification story. Kathy was initially introduced to National Board Certification from a class that she took. She said, that the class “laid out all the

parameters toward board certification and then we divided kind of into our little groups by what our subject was and got a little bit more information.” After that she said she decided to start the process and pay the money. During the time she was going through certification, she had up to three years to complete it: however, she had hoped to complete it in two years. For her certification, she said, “I had to complete three portfolio-type items and also to take a test.”

The process of becoming Nationally Board Certified took her three years to complete. She shared that when she submitted her documents the first time she did not earn enough points on one of the portfolio items, so she had to redo and resubmit that piece. She did, however, state “I did pass the test the first time, which I am joyful, because it took a lot of writing and that’s not my favorite thing.”

Kathy was able to discuss how going through the process of becoming National Board Certified impacted her teaching. She claimed that “the most important thing was reflecting on my teaching.” She describes the importance of reflecting because it allows her to explain: “I do this because I know kids and I know my program and I know how what I am doing is affecting kids.” She believes that actually thinking about what you are doing in the classroom and verbalizing it out loud and in writing, which is not something teachers do all the time, can make a big difference in what and how teachers teach their students.

School and classroom environment. The school where Kathy is employed is large. It’s so large I got lost going between the classroom and school office the first two days of observation. It is what I would consider an indoor school; all of the classrooms have doors that open to indoor hallways. The kindergarten classrooms are also large with

plenty of space for a carpet for circle time. The desks were set in groups of four in the middle of the room, and four individual desks were placed just off to the side of the four groups. The front of the room had a large carpet for students to sit during circle time. The back of the room had two large tables for groups or center work. The room was lightly decorated with words and evidence of student success. Kathy used two bulletin boards at the back of the classroom to display bar graphs that track students' progress in key learning areas. A detailed diagram of Kathy's classroom layout is presented in Appendix G to further depict the layout of the classroom.

The area has a fenced playground that's only used by the kindergarten students. During the week of observation, the teacher had 23 students enrolled in her class. She did mention that she does have some turnover during the year, as students leave and new students enroll. The school requires students to wear uniforms and an ID badge.

Kathy has been at this school since it was built and is a leader there. She is a seasoned teacher and was team leader for the other three kindergarten teachers. She had been the team lead for the past few years, but did not specify the number of years. She is also a mentor to a first-year teacher on the kindergarten team. During the week of observation, she demonstrated a positive working relationship with her administration and support staff.

Assessments are part of the weekly routine in Kathy's classroom. Two formal assessments were observed during the five days of in classroom observation. Kathy assessed literacy skills, such as phonemic awareness and letter recognition. She posts the results of assessments in the classroom so that students can see their progress.

Vocabulary is taught. Kathy had strong opinions about vocabulary and believes that people need to know the language. She stated the phrase “vocabulary is essential” during her final interview. She mentioned later in her interview that at school they use a different type of language, which she referred to as “academic and formal,” rather than the casual language that might be used at home or with friends. It is important to note that the majority of the students enrolled in Kathy’s classroom are non-native English speaking students.

Kathy shared her method of promoting vocabulary growth as multiple exposures to the word. She said, “We’re repeating, repeating, repeating and using the word in sentences and then often bringing it up. If I do a morning message, I might include a word that we have studied before.” There was evidence of repeated exposure to words during the week of observation. Kathy was also able to use casual conversations to teach vocabulary words to students. One of the activities coming up was field day, and the students had to bring in white shirts that would be tie-dyed. Kathy had to take time to explain tie-dye, how it’s done, and what it looks like so that students understood what their shirts would look like for field day.

She is able to teach vocabulary during reading, as well as connect the vocabulary words to other subjects, such as math. During one of her math lessons, she was having the students work with words such as “capacity,” “height,” “lighter,” and various others. She would have the students place their finger on the word, and then she would discuss what it means. She would provide examples and use pictures from the math text to help with instruction. For the word “capacity,” she used an example of a bathtub and a bucket to explain which had more capacity, which one could hold more water. Then they were

able to trace the word, and then the words would be taken home to be practice with their parents.

Shared reading strategies. During the post-observation interview, Kathy was asked to discuss the strategies she used during shared reading to enhance vocabulary. She pinpointed two topics—planning ahead and discussing new words prior to reading the story—and individualizing instruction to meet the needs of her students. She said,

Usually, I go over the new vocabulary before we start. Or, I go through it when it comes up or if somebody has a question. You kind of develop strategies for different people depending on what it is that they need... what part of it is not making sense to them. As far as vocabulary, I think it's a natural condition of children who want to learn new words, to want to learn this language. It's their language, and they're completely ready to grasp new words and they like to use them.

She gave examples of students in her classroom, who are non-native English speaking, who have difficulty pronouncing words. She shared an experience that a student was saying one word but meant another word. The words from the example she shared were flash and flask, which sound similar but have different meaning.

Kathy was observed participating in six shared reading experiences during the observations. There was not a lot of evidence of vocabulary being taught, directly or indirectly, during these shared reading experiences. She did engage in some vocabulary, asking questions such as “what does ‘tan’ mean?” From the observations, she seems most comfortable teaching vocabulary during conversations, assignment directions, and in all

content areas. The observations are not exactly aligned with the comments Kathy offered in her interview.

NBPTS and curriculum standards. The Five Core Propositions are the basis for all National Board Certification and in place to ensure student learning. The Five Core Propositions are listed below. Examples of ways in which Kathy meets the criteria are included in each section.

1. Teachers are committed to students and their learning: Her teaching philosophy of “They don’t care how much you know, until they know how much you care” directly relates to this proposition. Kathy works to get to know how her students, learn about their families, and aims to ensure all students are learning by critically reflecting on her teaching practice. During the process of National Board Certification “we learn so much about how we teach” she said in an interview.

2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students: Kathy talked about the developmental levels of her students during the interview. She expressed an interest in teaching students things that were more developmentally appropriate rather than pushing them into reading or other subjects. One of her comments related to this topic was “It seems like the people who are writing the standards don’t really know kids and haven’t been around them.”

Kathy knows the background of each of the students in her class. Many of the parents walk their students to school and right to the classroom door. Kathy welcomes them and talks with the families to learn more about the student. She would ask questions such as “how is she/he today?” or “how was his/her night?”

She also shared that she has attended many trainings specifically related to teachings, but said that one of the most important things she learned is learning from her students. She said that she had some training for teaching English as a second language that was related to vocabulary, but it was limited. She did demonstrate knowledge of the content she taught in her preparation and delivery of lessons. She was well prepared to teach the lessons each day.

3. Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning: Kathy has data charts posted in the back of the classroom. One of the requirements for her Title I school is assessments that document student achievement in various areas. She completed the assessments and posted the results for each child in graph form for the children to see their progress. “I don’t talk about the standards as much as I talk about the data charts because they speak on their own.... They [the students] know where they are on the data charts.” The teacher and the students are able to see academic gains based on assessment scores.

She also talked more introspectively about testing. She was referring to herself asking, “Why do you test them using the methods that you do? I’m thinking well because I’m required to. I mean it’s challenging to do it period, because it’s time-consuming and requires effort.” But based on the observations and the way she uses the findings from the assessment, I believe she values the insights they offer.

4. Teachers think systematically about their teaching practice and learn from experience: Kathy uses student needs and student data to inform curriculum decisions. She does work with the mandated standards to ensure that students are meeting the required grade-level benchmarks. When discussing her teaching practice, she stated, “I

think that rather than even recommending curriculum stuff, the national board thing is more for you, for the participant, to look at what you're doing, why you are doing it.”

5. Teachers are members of learning communities: Kathy is a teacher leader in her school. She is able to work with her grade-level colleagues and administration. She was part of a small group of other National Board Certified Teachers while going through the process of certification. She takes an interest in learning and continuing her education by attending trainings that are offered to her.

When asked about the connection between NBPTS and curriculum standards her response was:

I think and most the important thing to me about the standards is to talk about “why.”... In my opinion, a lot of the mandated standards are not what these kids need developmentally.... I mean, I'm going to keep doing it because that's what I have to do, but I'm afraid that's gonna come back to bite us as a society.

She continued to share her belief that the standards are not developmentally appropriate and how they push students and that she is fearful that students may burn out.

This did not exactly correlate with her thoughts about being able to meet both NBPTS and curriculum standards. She said, “No I don't think it's hard to meet both.” She attributed her response to being able to think more about her teaching practice. She further discussed using the standard as a guide. Basing instruction off what they know, figuring out where they need to go, and working it down into little tiny pieces. From there, she is able to figure out how she is going to teach each piece of the standard.

Case Study, Jenna: Teaching with High Expectations

My teaching philosophy is teach it and they'll learn it kind of. It's working with the little ones in kindergarten. I run across a lot of teachers that think they can't do things or that it's not developmentally appropriate for them. While that might be the case, we know that the standards are what they are. They might not be the most developmentally appropriate things under the sun; however, I have found... They blew away our expectations. That, again, was another kind of "aha" moment for me.

Jenna has high expectations for her students. She understands that her students come from backgrounds that could label them "at-risk," but she teaches them to their fullest potential. She is able to adapt and use various methods to teach vocabulary and other literacy skills across all areas of the curriculum.

I first met Jenna for her pre-observation interview. She was kind, self-confident, and structured (as far as time management). She invited the questions and wanted to make sure she was answering them thoroughly. She asked for clarification once, when expanding on a response during an interview. She seemed excited about sharing her story with me, and I learned from my week of observation that she enjoys challenging herself and her teaching craft.

Background. Jenna participated in the research during the month of May 2016, just a few weeks prior to the end of the school year. She teaches at a Title I school in Willow Unified School District. The school is mid-sized, serves 446 students, and ranges in age from kindergarten through fifth grade. There are 325 students who qualify for free

or reduced lunch through Title I. The two primary demographics that make up more than 75 percent of the students enrolled in the school are White/non-Hispanic and Hispanic.

National Board Certification story. Jenna completed the National Board Certification process in one year. She shared how she decided to take on the process during our first interview. Before she made the decision to attempt certification, she spoke with her principal and discussed areas that interested her, and she landed in the area of literacy. When she spoke about the process of earning certification, she explained that it was challenging. The way she described it was as if it was a labor of love, which you have to completely pour yourself into and solicit help from every possible resource.

During that process that entire year I... I mean, it was rigorous. I really took advantage of every amount of support that I could get from the Arizona K12 Center, and our district has some women that support us here. Then, I solicited to veterans on our campus, our literacy specialist, and our instructional coach to kind of be my team on campus.

She created her own learning community to help her through the process. Jenna is still very active in her school this way. She seeks out support and works with others.

Jenna explained that she felt that she had always been self reflective, as she has been a mentor teacher for student teachers and has to explain her teaching methods to them; however, being reflective was not the area that was impacted the most. For her, she said that National Board Certification impacted parent involvement. “Inviting parents to come and be a part of their child’s learning was kind of a eye-opener for me. That, to me, was the most significant change in my teaching practice that came out of National Boards.”

School and classroom environment. The school where Jenna works is unique. All of the classrooms face the outdoor hallways, the office is located in the center of the school, and they are very strict about monitoring visitors. There is an obvious presence of parent-teacher partnerships. Parents volunteer and are stationed with teachers around the school to welcome and direct students as they enter for the day. The principal was observed walking around campus in the morning.

The classroom is large. Jenna shared with me that the kindergarten classrooms are double the size of the classrooms for all the other grade levels. The teacher's desk is in the back corner of the room, near the computer station. The desks are arranged in rows facing forward, but students are seated in pairs. The front of the room has a large carpet for circle time. There are two other larger tables of centers or group work in the room. A detailed diagram of Jenna's classroom layout is presented in Appendix H to further depict the layout of the classroom. The classroom is well decorated. Students' work is displayed. There are posters related to the theme, and there is a large word wall with all of the students' sight words. The school is categorized as school-wide Title I. The students must wear uniforms to school each day, although the students were not observed wearing ID badges.

Jenna is an active leader in her school. She is the grade-level team leader for the kindergarten team. She is also a mentor teacher for college-level student teachers in their final teaching placements. She works consistently with her reading specialist to plan curriculum and scaffold lessons to meet the abilities of her students.

Assessments are part of Jenna's classroom environment, but were not observed as frequently in her classroom as they were in the other classes. Jenna was observed

conducting an informal reading assessment once during the week of in class observations. The assessment focused on reading skills and reading comprehension and was used to help guide her teaching. No formal or mandated assessments were observed.

Vocabulary is taught. Jenna was clear about the methods that she used for teaching vocabulary to students. She explained that she tries to enhance vocabulary “when I’m speaking to use language that they may have not been exposed to before and then kind of explain it and then use it in context a lot.” She also explained that she tried to answer students questions about what things mean, then make connections to things they know or have experiences with so they can better understand the word.

When it comes to teaching vocabulary during any reading activity she said, “I definitely will stop. I’ll read aloud even if they don’t ask me and point out some key vocabulary that I think is something that they could grasp on to.” She explained that she doesn’t stop all of the time, because that would just hinder their ability to comprehend the story. She tries to be intentional with the words she picks from readings. She attempts to select words that “would strike a chord with them or that they would come across again either listening or reading on their own.”

During the week of observation, Jenna completed 14 reading activities that included some form of vocabulary instruction. She also demonstrated vocabulary instruction on 13 different occasions during circle time or in conversations with students. She seems comfortable teaching vocabulary in both direct and indirect ways. She was able to explain the word “subtracting” during a math lesson.

Shared reading strategies. During the post interview, Jenna was asked about the strategies used to teach vocabulary during shared reading, and her words describe her methods exactly.

I will do some, kind of, that activate prior knowledge. If we're reading a book, I'll have them even before we open it look at the front cover and the picture and have them predict what it might be about based on that and then I might ask them. If it's a farm picture, tell me things that you know about a farm and get their brains kind of thinking along those lines so if they come across that word as they are reading that they already have that word kind of ready and available to them....

You want them to have a little bit, especially this population that does not have life experiences, if it's a farm, probably none of these kids have ever been to a farm or seen a farm or know what happens at a farm unless their parents have read a book to them or they happen to have gone to the petting zoo or something like that, so I have to kind of give them some of that or hope their peers can give them some of that. Some kids have a little more life experience that they can bring to the table and give some of that language to their peers and not just me.

During the week of observation, Jenna read aloud to the students in whole groups, as well as in small groups with the students. In small groups, she pre-plans vocabulary instruction based on the ability of the group and the books they are reading. She has words on Popsicle sticks, which she picks out and helps students to learn the meaning. Then they will be re-exposed to the word while reading it in the context of the story.

NBPTS and curriculum standards. The Five Core Propositions are the basis for all National Board Certification and in place to ensure student learning. The Five Core

Propositions are listed below. Examples of ways in which Jenna meets the criteria are included in each section.

1. Teachers are committed to students and their learning: Jenna takes time to get to know her students and their families. She works to ensure that they are all learning. She works with support staff to provide every opportunity for students to learn.

2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students: Jenna tries to incorporate the standards into her teaching. She has them posted on a white board in the back of the classroom. When asked to explain, she stated the following:

I think, especially in kindergarten, you can relate almost every single thing to a standard. It really drives your instructional practices. I think you need to know them really well and have a deeper understanding of those standards so you really are understanding what the kids need to know.

She displays a deep understanding of her students' abilities by grouping students into ability-based reading groups. She also plans and is prepared to teach the lessons. Jenna knows the content she teaches well. She is prepared with materials and manipulatives and is ready to answer and ask content related questions. She is able to use various resources, such as the Internet, songs, and more to build on her existing curriculum.

3. Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning: Jenna must conduct assessments regularly to measure student learning. She believes the standards are attainable for kindergarten students. She explained and demonstrated that there are

varying levels of students in the classroom, and I don't always get the kids to meet all of the standards. However, if they are moving along and continue at a kind of expected rate or a rate that I've seen kids move along before, then I don't get overly concerned because teachers know that learning is a process.

She shared a story about a computer test that her students recently took. And the class scored the lowest among other kindergarten classes. She explained that she can use the information from the test but knows that it is not the only measure of student learning. She further shared, "I have a great administration that understands that kids are moving along, and we have great systems in place on our campus to kind of capture those kids that are struggling and support them."

4. Teachers think systematically about their teaching practice and learn from experience: Jenna is able to reflect on what she teaches and how she teaches it. She has years of experience as a mentor teacher, which has helped to be able to discuss the methods she uses to teach.

5. Teachers are members of learning communities: Jenna is a teacher leader. She is the team leader for the kindergarten grade level. She is a mentor teacher to student teachers in their last year of college who are pursuing a degree in education. She works with her administration, literacy specialist, and other support staff to create better opportunities for student learning.

Jenna believes that teachers can use best practices based on National Board Professional Teaching Standards and meet state standards. She thinks one is aligned with the other.

I think if you are teaching the standards then you are a reflective teacher and you are looking at how you can move your students along, that you are also then demonstrating, in my professional evaluations, that you're doing those things too. She works to improve her teaching practice and pushes her students to learn as much as they can in one school year.

Summary

The case studies in Chapter 4 presented critical information about each teacher. They highlighted information about the participating National Board Certified Teachers school, their beliefs, and methods of teaching vocabulary, as well as discussed the connection between curriculum standards and NBPTS. The following two chapters will be a discussion of the analysis of the research and the data collected during the research process. Chapters 5 and 6 will focus on the four main research questions and discuss the findings related to each question.

CHAPTER 5

TEACHING VOCABULARY AND SHARED READING

This chapter and the following chapter will discuss the findings from the analysis of the research. These chapters will focus on the four main research questions and discuss the findings related to the questions. The study findings will be presented in two chapters. Chapter 5 will discuss findings related to vocabulary and shared reading, and Chapter 6 will discuss findings related to teaching, standards, and the impact of Title I. These data analysis chapters will conclude with a summary of the findings, as they are related to the research questions and the theoretical framework used to analyze the data.

The data were analyzed using the theories from de Certeau and Althusser. The data was also analyzed using the Five Core Propositions, which are the basis of all National Board Certifications. The Five Core Propositions are listed below:

1. Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
3. Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
4. Teachers think systematically about their teaching practice and learn from experience.
5. Teachers are members of learning communities.

The four teachers who participated in this study demonstrated the Five Core Propositions through their pre- and post-interviews, as well as during the week of in-class observations. Each teacher revealed a deep knowledge and understanding of the Five Core Propositions,

and their importance, as it relates to teaching. The teachers exhibited the propositions as a part of their everyday teaching style and practices.

From the perspective of de Certeau (1984), all people use strategies and tactics as a part of their everyday life. The teachers who participated in this research used strategies and tactics as methods to negotiate the best techniques for effectively teaching vocabulary to students. Teachers are in an interesting position, relating to de Certeau's theory of strategies and tactics, as they have the ability to use both. Strategies are used when the powerful aim to manage the weak, and tactics are used when the weak try to subvert the powerful but without overthrowing the system (de Certeau, 1984). Teachers can be viewed as the powerful, in regard to their students but can also be viewed as the weak with regard to their administration. Therefore, they have the unique ability to use both strategies and tactics in their professional lives. This proves to be a challenge, even for accomplished teachers, as they try to navigate teach using what they believe are best practices and what they are mandated to teach. Another topic presented by de Certeau's, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), was the concept of "wiggling." Teachers are able to put on a "wig" and pretend to be teaching a scripted curriculum exactly as stated in the curriculum manual. But when doing so, these teachers were wiggling; most of the time, teachers use the methods they believe are best for students.

Luis Althusser (1971) presented the term, interpellation, which can be explained as the process of internalizing outside forces, such as one's culture and environments. When the outside influences get inside and shape our thinking and/or our view of the world, we have been interpellated. Althusser has argued that people are never really truly

free because of these outside forces; they shape one's thoughts, ideas, opinions, and create biases.

The sections that follow will use the theories from de Certeau and Althusser in order to provide a framework for discussing the findings related to the first two research questions:

1. How do National Board Certified Teachers teach vocabulary during shared reading in kindergarten classrooms?
 - a. What routines, strategies, skills, and/or tactics are used for implementing shared reading?
 - b. What routines are followed for teaching vocabulary?
2. How do National Board Certified Teachers explain the skills and strategies used for teaching vocabulary during shared reading across all content areas?

Skills and Strategies for Teaching Vocabulary

I ask pardon for those teachers who, in dreadful conditions, attempt to turn the few weapons they can find in history and learning they “teach” against the ideology, the system and the practices in which they are trapped. They are a kind of hero. But they are rare, and how many (the majority) do not even begin to suspect the “work” of the system (which is bigger than they are and crushed them) forces them to do, or worse, put all their heart and ingenuity into performing it with the most advanced awareness (the famous new methods!).” (Althusser, 1971, p. 119)

The four teachers worked and operated within the systems by which their school operated. All of the teachers were provided with various curriculums, purchased by their

school or district, which should be used to help guide instruction. Sarah was given the most rigorous guidelines, by her administration, for following the curriculum and using direct instruction, including dictation directly from the curriculum text, to teach early literacy skills to her students. All of the teachers made decisions for teaching based on what they thought was best for students. It is important to note here that there was a clear disconnect between Sarah's beliefs about what was best for students' vocabulary and the type of vocabulary instruction that was observed. She clearly stated, multiple times, in her interview that she wanted to do what was best for her students. However, she then went on to share that she did not agree with the direct instruction model to teaching which she was using daily. But it was what her district deemed best for her students, and, as result, she felt like that's what she should do. If Sarah wanted to teach outside of her curriculum, she would need to use tactics, according to the theory of de Certeau, although this was not observed. She seemed to be aware that skill-and-drill and read-and-repeat methods for teaching were not the best, but felt obligate to make them work in her class. Her students are so far behind when they enter her class and she does not have a clear vision for how to help bridge the achievement gap.

For Carol and Jenna, the curriculums provided a framework for their teaching. It was a starting point from which they could build lessons and fun activities, or "fluff," as Carol referred to it. Carol was less concerned with forcing content than some of the other NBCTs. She tired to make learning fun and aimed to instill a love of learning in each of her students. Kathy had less freedom than Carol and Jenna, but Sarah had the most limitations placed on her teaching. Vocabulary instruction was not limited to only formal teaching, it was also observed in informal classroom situations.

The teachers who participated in the research demonstrated both direct and indirect instruction methods to teach vocabulary to their kindergarten students. When asked about how they promote vocabulary growth during the post interview, the teachers gave various responses. Some of the responses included reading books, using conversations, and repeated exposures of the word. Upon deeper investigation into both the interviews and observations, two common themes became more apparent: 1) having conversations to promote vocabulary and 2) meeting the needs of the children in their class. The topic of meeting the needs of their students is not really a specific teaching skill, but rather a method to ensure that all students have an opportunity to learn. This insight indicates that, in going through the process of National Board Certification, the Five Core Propositions had gotten inside of them; they had been interpellated.

The participants used informal teaching methods to enhance vocabulary gains. One of the most common things teachers did was to explain vocabulary during conversations. These conversations took place predominately during circle time, but also during the school day in non-academic situations. During circle time, teachers would give directions, show videos or pictures, and talk with their students. Carol's class was preparing for a lesson on birds, and she brought out a magazine with bird pictures in it. She engaged in conversations with the students about the bird pictures, and students noticed differences about the birds' surroundings. This discussion led into a deeper analysis of the words "puff," "roost," and "migrate." Carol went on to explain them in words that were relatable to the students. She even had the students act out what it is to puff yourself up. Sarah provided an example of an informal conversation, when she was walking with her class to the art room for specials. The students were walking in two

lines, one for girls and one for boys, and Sarah instructed them to stop at the fire hydrant. When they got there, she stopped and explained that the yellow thing in front of them was a fire hydrant. Earlier in the day, the class had been sorting items into groups, and fire hydrant was one of the words (and pictures) that none of the students were able to identify. So she was able to make a real-world connection to one of the words she attempted to teach earlier in the day. This was a strategy, according to de Certeau, where she was attempting to teach the students using unconventional instructional methods to ensure they understood the meaning of the words.

The National Board Certified Teachers were all observed using direct instruction methods to teach vocabulary words as well. Many of the students who are in the classrooms that were observed come to school with limited vocabulary skills, or limited vocabulary in the English language. All of the teachers believe that vocabulary is important for students to know, especially those teaching ELL or in an SEI classroom, and they mention that in their post interviews. Vocabulary is a critical component of early literacy intervention (Kame'enuei et al., 2010), which makes it even more important for students who need additional support in early literacy. The most common form of vocabulary instruction was implemented during formal reading activities, but not limited to once specific content area, such as language arts. Silverman (2007a) expresses that explicit vocabulary instruction can be extremely valuable to ELLs.

Incorporating Vocabulary into Shared Reading Experiences

Of all of the times during the school day, vocabulary is taught most frequently during reading activities; this includes both shared reading and read alouds, across all areas of the curriculum. The teachers were asked about the strategies they use in shared

reading to promote vocabulary. Two specific strategies for teaching vocabulary during shared readings were mentioned by the teachers: activating prior knowledge and using context clues. Carol said that she would say the following to students, “Let’s try to figure out what this word means based on the picture, based on the story, or the sentence.” Kathy shared that she “goes over new vocabulary before we start.” In these situations, teachers are using strategies as references by de Certeau to manage student learning.

Based on the responses from the teachers, it can be inferred that the teachers are less concerned with shared reading activities and more concerned with what impacts student learning, which can be connected to Proposition 1: Teachers are committed to students and their learning. Some ideas that the teachers mentioned for increasing student vocabulary development were: providing opportunities for conversation, engaging in movement activities, or trying to connect the vocabulary words to students’ prior knowledge.

Vocabulary instruction was part of the storybook reading process for all teachers. The field notes from the classroom observations revealed that the methods teachers used to teach vocabulary during shared reading varied. There was not one specific method that every teacher used. Jenna and Sarah had their students use their fingers to track words as they were being read to. Carol and Kathy used large easels with passages or words written on them to introduce new words prior to reading. Sarah also used an easel for shared reading activities, such as poems. Sarah’s was slightly different, in that she would have the vocabulary words written in a different color than the rest of the reading passage. Regardless of the exact method they used, they all used methods from de Certeau’s

theory. The NBCTs used “strategies” to ensure that students were learning and “tactics” to teach, using the type of instruction that they believe was best for student learning.

Reflecting on Their Teaching Practice

I will turn to Althusser’s concept about interpellation for discussing how National Board Certified Teachers thought critically about their teaching practice, as well as reflecting on best practices to increase student learning. Interpellation is the process of internalizing the outside forces that exist as a part of our everyday life, such as one’s environment and culture. It’s how the outside influences get inside of us and shape our thinking and beliefs that defines interpellation. The process of becoming National Board Certified impacted all of the teachers and shaped their view of teaching. It influenced how they monitor progress and adapt lessons in order to more effectively increase student learning.

The pre-observation interview questions were focused on the process of becoming a National Board Certified Teacher and how the process of certification impacted their teaching. This directly relates to Althusser’s (1971) theory of interpellation. Does going through the process of National Board Certification get inside the teacher and impact their teaching? Based on interviews and classroom observation, the answer is yes!

Reflection is a critical component of the National Board Certification process, as teachers must think about why they are doing what they are doing and then connect it to how it impacts student learning. When asked about the process of becoming National Board Certified, all of the four teachers commented at least once about how they became much more reflective of the teaching as a result of going through the certification process.

Carol said, “It was helpful to just take the time to reflect back on what you do because you don’t even realize what you are doing half the time.” Sarah commented on the writing component and how she had to write more in-depth about what she was doing in the classroom. Kathy said,

I think the most important thing was reflecting on my teaching. I do this because I know my kids and I know my program and I know how what I am doing is affecting kids. Actually thinking about that and verbalizing it out loud or in writing, not something we do all the time.

Jenna also commented on the use of reflection, but she shared that she had always been reflective so that wasn’t the biggest change in her teaching. For her, she said it impacted her desire to create opportunities for more parent involvement.

Each of these teachers is required to complete assessments on their students and track progress. All of the teachers exhibited how they go beyond just completing the assessments and use the assessments as a guide for their instruction. The school institution may require them to test, but they are the ones who make the tests meaningful for their students or not. Sarah test many students daily during center time, which limits her ability to be a facilitator of learning when students are in the various centers. Sarah uses the information from assessment to measure student abilities, but she did not share how, or if, these assessments are used to shape her instructional decisions. Kathy completes literacy or math assessments daily. She posts the results of the assessments on bar graphs at the back of her classroom. Students are aware of this and can use it to track their own progress. For her, she shared that posting assessment results serves as visual reminder of what needs to be taught and who needs the additional instructional support.

Vocabulary Across All Areas of the Curriculum

The NBCTs in the study all used direct and indirect instruction to teach vocabulary to their kindergarten students. All of the teachers also used shared reading activities throughout the week, but it was not the only method of teaching vocabulary words to their students. The observation notes were reviewed and specific areas were identified as times when vocabulary was taught throughout the school day. Table 3 indicates the number of times vocabulary instruction was observed in each of the classrooms across all content areas.

Table 3

Vocabulary Instruction Observations

	Carol	Sarah	Kathy	Jenna
Read Aloud	4	3	3	8
Shared Reading	5	5	6	6
Writing	1	1	0	2
Circle Time/ Conversations	3	4	6	13
Movement or Acting Out	2	1	0	1
Math	2	1	2	2
Social Studies/ Science	1	3	2	5
Transitions	1	1	0	1

Teaching vocabulary is a critical skill for students' success, and Table 3 shows that all of the NBCTs promote vocabulary learning throughout their school day. The research observations documented that all four teachers attempted to teach new vocabulary words across all areas of the curriculum. All of the teachers directly taught vocabulary during circle time, math instruction, and shared or guided reading activities. The types of vocabulary words were varied based on the topic being taught. Carol and Jenna were able to incorporate vocabulary into classroom transitions, the calendar, movement activities, and during casual classroom conversations.

All of the teachers taught vocabulary; however, Jenna was able to include the most vocabulary instruction across all areas of the curriculum so it is important to highlight her teaching methods and routines. Literacy is a large focus of her daily instruction. In the morning students had phonic instruction, which included blends, digraphs, sight word review and introductions, word wall review, and word family review. Jenna used many opportunities during phonics instruction to teach vocabulary. For example, if the words family was –ake, and the words students made were wake, fake, and brake; Jenna explained the words and asked for students to share what they knew. Phonics instruction was about 45 minutes and was followed by literacy centers that lasted about an hour and a half. During this time Jenna was able to work with small groups of students and shared reading was observed as a method to teach new vocabulary words. Literacy center time was followed by lunch. When the students returned to the classroom, Jenna read a novel as a whole group read aloud. She introduced new words during the reading read aloud when it was appropriate. In the afternoon the students were taught math, writing and science topics. Jenna was able to include vocabulary instruction in

math and writing. She also taught a science lesson on the farm and was able to provide opportunities for students to learn new vocabulary words related to the farm topic.

Some of these methods of instruction can be viewed as strategies, as referred to by de Certeau, as methods to increase students' acquisition of vocabulary words in new and creative ways. Students are learning the words and may not even realize they are learning and obtaining new skills.

CHAPTER 6

TEACHING, STANDARDS, AND TITLE I

All students deserve the best education possible regardless of race, gender, income, or any other factors. Kindergarten-age students come to school, some for the first time, with varying abilities, and it is the teacher's professional responsibility to help them meet the grade-level requirements. National Board Certified Teachers tend to have higher achieving students based on their teaching abilities (Vandervoot et al., 2004). So, the question remains, how do they do it? Why are their students making more academic gains during the course of one school year? This chapter will uncover some of the critical skills, strategies, and routines National Board Certified Teachers use as part of their everyday practice, as well as specifically in their vocabulary instruction. The third and fourth research questions are listed below and will be discussed in detail in the sections that follow.

3. How do National Board Certified Teachers implement shared reading and vocabulary into the reading curriculum while teaching the mandated standards?
4. How do strategies for teaching kindergarten in low, middle, or high socioeconomic populations differ?

The Impact of Curriculum Standards on Teaching

When teachers were questioned about curriculum standards, it produced varied reactions. Two of the teachers thought that using curriculum standards was not difficult, while another teacher found it more difficult because the standards seem to be developmentally ahead of her students' abilities. Through responses from the post interview, as well as informal conversations with the teachers during the week of

observation, it was evident that all teachers were impacted by the standards. Some teachers were stricter about teaching to the standards, while others were more relaxed. This was usually in direct relation to the beliefs and expectations of the administration. During a casual conversation during the week of observation, Carol mentioned that she is given the freedom to teach using the methods she believed were best for students as a result of her students regularly meeting grade-level expectations each year. This hierarchical structure that lies within the school unit correlates directly with Althusser's (1971) theory of the ISA and RSA and the power struggle that exists between the two groups. The RSA are those who are able to rule by power and force, or can at least threaten force. The ISA are those in lower positions; this can vary based social class, social norms, and ideas about social reproduction. The teachers are in the position of the ISA, while the administration is in the position of the RSA. While school administrators don't rule by force, they are still dominant over the teachers, as they control wages, tenure, and employment; thus, they have the ability to influence what teachers teach and the methods they use for instruction.

Each of the teachers was asked the following three questions as part of their post-observation interview (For a detailed list of the questions, please see Appendix B):

- How do you incorporate the standards into your teaching?
- Do you find that teaching the mandated standards is difficult?
- Are the curriculum standards in line with your professional teaching standards as they are related to National Board Certification?

The responses varied widely in content and length. All of the teachers use the standards to guide their teaching. But as I looked back on the field notes and reviewed the interview

transcription, I found that teachers don't want to limit themselves to teaching only the standards. None of the teachers explicitly stated this, but it is implied that teachers want to start with the standards, and the curriculum that is provided, and use them and the materials as a guide for their instruction. Carol said, "We look at the standard and then figure out what we're going to teach. We don't try to teach and then figure out what the standard fits in." Carol talked about mapping out her school year and developing themes. She also shared that some of the standards had changed or been removed, and she felt that it needed to be added back in based on the needs of her students. This is related to de Certeau's theory about wiggling, which is when a teacher appears to do one thing but may really be doing another. In this case, Carol is striving for excellence by adding in what she believes is best for students. She may only report teaching what is required, when really she is adding to the curriculum.

Based on observations, curriculum standards had the greatest impact on Sarah. She taught in a Title I school and in an SEI classroom. She and her administration would categorize her students as at-risk. She is mandated to teach 45 minutes of literacy skill instruction every day. The students sit on the carpet, and she reads directly from the curriculum book. The students must repeat or respond to her statements during the 45 minutes of direct instruction. Although, it would have been possible, she did not participate in wiggling. She taught directly from the curriculum text each day for the mandated 45 minutes. During her interview she mentioned that she did not agree with some of the district decisions but shared that she would do what she was required to do. She seemed frustrated with the system and struggled with getting her students to meet grade level benchmarks.

The Impact of NBPTS on Teaching

For the discussion about curriculum standards and their relationship to the NBPTS, I will focus on the concepts presented by Althusser. One of the most common beliefs that teachers shared about their teaching philosophy was the idea that they wanted to do what was best for their students. But where did the deep desire to do what is best for students come from? As a result of going through the process to achieve National Board Certification, the Five Core Propositions may have been internalized, and now these NBCTs teach using the principles as a foundation for all of their instructional decisions. Althusser (1971) would explain this as interpellation. The expectations for NBCTs had gotten inside of them and now influence their beliefs about teaching and their teaching practices. The NBCTs wanted to use a method that was most effective to teach the most students and make adaptations to reach all students. Carol made comments such as, “Everyone needs a chance, everyone can learn” and “I want to do what is best for my group of students and for what they need.” There was also discussion about mutual respect and demonstrating that she (the teacher) cared for the students.

All of the teachers in one way or another addressed teaching the whole child. They place value in getting to know their students, the parents of their students, and ensuring that all children feel safe. They also encourage teaching children real-world skills, such as teamwork and problem solving. And encourage children to understand their emotions and how to appropriately regulate them. Kathy stated, “Their social emotional atmosphere is at least as important [as academics], if not more so. And they need to feel safe, and they need to feel that it’s okay to make mistakes or to cry or whatever.”

National Board Certification impacted them all, in terms of their teaching philosophies; three of the four teachers said it made them more secure in their teaching. Kathy claimed, “I do what I do with more intent now,” and Sarah said, “I have a stronger conviction for it [teaching].” They all commented about the importance of learning how to reflect on their teaching, as well. Again, the National Board Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) had become engrained in their everyday decision-making.

Proposition five of the Five Core Propositions of NBPTS states that “teachers are members of learning communities” (NBPTS, 2007). Three of the four teachers claim they try to create communities of learners. Classroom cultures influence the ways students feel in their classroom. Sarah focused more on the academics only, whereas the other three teachers were more focused on whole child. This may be a result of the fact that her students are part of the SEI program, and, for the majority of her students, this was their first time in school, which means she must focus on academics in order for them to meet grade-level standards by the end of the school year.

The four teachers that participated in the research are leaders and, actually, all of them are the grade-level leaders their kindergarten teams. They lead groups of three or four other kindergarten teachers in activities such as planning curriculum, planning special activities, reviewing assessments, and grouping students; they help all of the teachers work as a team. These leadership roles allow them an opportunity to voice their belief about best practices for teaching and learning. The leadership positions put them in the place of the RSA, rather than the ISA, and could allow them an opportunity to make changes that would positively impact their teaching and ultimately student learning.

All of the teachers demonstrated an ability to communicate with school administration and/or support staff. The principal at Carol's elementary school had an obvious presence in and around the classrooms. She visited the classroom during the week of observation, and all of the students knew her by name. The students would even run up and hug her. During informal conversations, Carol mentioned that the principal allows her to manage her class the way she see as appropriate because her students consistently demonstrate academic achievement through assessments.

Another example of working with support staff was noticeable during the week of observing Jenna. She works very closely with her literacy specialist in planning her weekly and monthly lessons. The literacy specialist selects a variety of books based on the themes and based on the wide span of students' reading abilities. Sarah teaches in an extremely low-income Title I school and regularly works with her principal and vice principal to ensure she and her grade-level teammates are meeting the required standards and using any new curriculum appropriately. She strictly follows the guidelines set forth by her administration and district.

Title I and Non-Title I Schools

This is one of the more complex themes that emerged as a result of the in-classroom observations. Three of the four classrooms included in this research were classified as Title I. The fourth school did serve a small number of Title I students, but it was not labeled as school wide Title I. It is important to point out that there are varying levels of poverty associated with the Title I label and that was extremely evident in this research. The complexities associated with socioeconomic status impacted the classroom routines and norms. Althusser (1971) address issues in his discussion of the ISA; some

decisions in education could be made based on ideas related to social class and social reproduction.

Carol taught in a non-Title I school. The families from this school would likely be classified as upper middle class. The parents are involved and even run fundraisers to support the teachers. One of the luxuries associated with the fundraisers is that the parent-teacher organization hired a teacher's aide for each grade level. This aide is able to complete weekly assessments on the students so that the teacher can conduct whole-group instruction, work with small groups, or progress monitor students while they work independently.

Sarah taught in a Title I school and in an SEI classroom. This classroom had the poorest students of any of the schools visited, as reported by the teacher. Title I funding provides this class with breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack. There is also a resource room for these students and their families. Sarah, must concern herself with making sure that the students' basic needs are being met. She would keep all the leftover food provided by Title I to send home with the students. One student was observed being pulled out of the classroom to be given a bath. While not all students in the class require this amount of supportive care, there are a few who do. She even mentioned that she occasionally struggled with individual students because it was hard to teach and get them interested in learning when their basic needs were not being met.

Kathy and Jenna also taught in Title I schools. Most of the students in these classrooms came from non-native English speaking homes but did have experience with the English language, and most had at least some preschool experience. The students in these two classrooms qualified for free breakfast and lunch as part of Title I funding for

their school. Jenna made a significant effort to include and encourage parents to play active roles in their child's learning and school. Parental involvement was one of the greatest impacts on Jenna's teaching as a result of achieving National Board Certification.

Althusser (1971) claims that some of the power struggle between the RSA and ISA may vary based on social class and ideas about social reproduction. This would appear to be true, in direct response to the observations and interviews with the four NBCTs. It was evident that the lower-income the students, the more structured of a school environment they were learning in. Teachers may be influenced to believe a particular method is best for students based on what society deems is best, even though that may not really be true.

Testing Requirements

These teachers are all accomplished with years of experience and National Board Certification. Three of the teachers are in Title I schools, which require frequent testing of students' abilities. The most frequent testing took place in Sarah's classroom. The teachers would often have to sit at a table with one student at a time to complete an assessment. The teachers cannot appropriately monitor student progress or help the other 20 plus students in their classroom because they are completing assessments for the entire time that was allotted for centers. The one teacher who had an aide, paid for by the parents association, is the only one who did not have daily or weekly assessments as part of her classroom routine. The testing still took place regularly, but she was not the person responsible for administering the tests. She was the only teacher that created her own assessments to help students learn words.

Summary

Chapters 5 and 6 presented the findings that were drawn from the data collected from the pre-observation interview, classroom observations, and post-observation interviews. The data analysis procedures were discussed, and the themes that emerged as a result of the data analysis were presented in narrative format. The information is presented as a narrative, and direct quotes from the participants are used to honor their voices and personalize the data.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to uncover the skills and strategies that National Board Certified Teachers used to teach vocabulary during shared reading. The study also looked at how they were able to teach vocabulary skills while meeting the Common Core academic standards for students. By looking back at the four research questions, a framework for presenting a summary of the findings was developed.

The interviews and observations presented in this research, of the four National Board Certified Teachers, provided awareness and a deeper understanding of each of the following research questions.

1. How do National Board Certified Teachers teach vocabulary during shared reading in kindergarten classrooms?
 - a. What routines, strategies, skills, and/or tactics are used for implementing shared reading?
 - b. What routines are followed for teaching vocabulary?
2. How do National Board Certified Teachers explain the skills and strategies used for teaching vocabulary during shared reading across all content areas?
3. How do National Board Certified Teachers implement shared reading and vocabulary into the reading curriculum while teaching the mandated standards?
4. How do strategies for teaching kindergarten in low, middle, or high socioeconomic populations differ?

The research exposed many unique components that impacted vocabulary instruction. Upon detailed review of the observations and interviews, there were specific

topics that emerged. A summary of these findings will be presented in three categories: Teaching Excellence, Value of Vocabulary, and the Discrepancies in Low-Socio-economic Situations.

Findings and Interpretations

Teaching Excellence

National Board Certified Teachers have been through a rigorous process and met rigorous standards in order to achieve certification. They participated in self-reflection, peer review, and evaluation (NBPTS, 2014). The Five Core Propositions are the basis for all National Board Certification and are in place to ensure student learning. Teachers who are certified should demonstrate these professional qualities in their teaching practice, schools, and their community. The Five Core Propositions are:

1. Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
3. Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
4. Teachers think systematically about their teaching practice and learn from experience.
5. Teachers are members of learning communities.

There is a substantial amount of research regarding the process of becoming a National Board Certified Teacher—how the process forces teachers to become much more reflective on their teaching practices and encourages them to collaborate with other teachers (NBPTS, 2007). Wideen, Mayer-Smith, and Moon (1998) studied new teachers and found that learning how to teach is an extremely personal endeavor. New teachers

should learn from National Board Certified Teachers, as they have refined their craft and may be able to offer skills and strategies that would be effective for novice teachers.

Findings from this research clearly show that National Board Certified Teachers think about what they are doing in the classroom, why they are doing it, and how it's impacting student learning. As a result of this critical reflection, teachers are able to adapt their lessons to best meet the needs of the students in their classroom. National Board Certified Teachers are known to have a positive impact on student learning (Vandervoort et al., 2004). The National Research Council (2009) found that those who achieved NBC were identified as highly skilled teachers.

National Board Certified Teachers are reflective practitioners. Almost all of the teachers reported that going through the process of National Board Certification has caused them to become much more reflective of their teaching practices and the impact it has on student learning. These teachers understand good teaching practices and do their best to implement best practices for teaching in their classroom. Sarah's classroom was operating under the most mandates and limitations; she clearly struggled with the disconnect between required curriculum and what she knows is best practices for teaching and learning.

Additionally, National Board Certified Teachers are part of learning communities and work with others, including the families of their students, to ensure that their students are learning (NBPTS, 2002). Kathy, Sarah, and Carol all work with their kindergarten teams to make instructional decisions. Sarah is the only teacher who stated some resistance to instructional decisions made by her district, stating: "I may not agree with a direct instruction model, but if that's what my district wants to do and that's what they

think is best for students, then that's what I'm going to do." The broader implications of this research demonstrate that teachers would benefit from attempting National Board Certification, and through their professional growth, student learning would be positively impacted as well.

Value of Vocabulary

Vocabulary is an important component of the early literacy curriculum. Vocabulary has been the focus of many research studies and deemed a predictor of later reading achievement. There has been a strong link between kindergarten vocabulary and reading comprehension in third grade (David, 2010). During the post-observation interviews, all of the teacher participants were asked about their beliefs regarding the importance of vocabulary, how they promote vocabulary in their classroom, and the teaching skills required to effectively teach students vocabulary words.

All of the teachers reported in the interviews that they believed it was important to teach vocabulary to students. During the interview, Carol talked about vocabulary being important so the children could "express what they are thinking" or have the ability to understand "higher level books because they understand the words" they are reading. Kathy discussed the use of academic language at school, where children would get exposed to words that are different than the words spoken at home. She gave the example of words such as "authenticity" and "memorize." Sarah and Jenna both teach in classrooms where the majority of the students are non-native English speaking. This influenced the responses they gave during the interviews. A great deal of research claims that students benefit from multiple exposures to words and that those words should be taught using direct instruction (Pullen et al., 2010). Sarah focused her response on the

importance of incidental learning of vocabulary words rather than direct instruction. She stated that vocabulary was important, but “not just from vocabulary lessons, but from what you are teaching when students have questions about something in context. Or they’re trying to tell you something, and they don’t have the right words.” This was interesting because it was in direct opposition to the techniques that she used to teach the majority of her literacy curriculum; however, she did weave in opportunities for vocabulary words to be taught in conversations throughout the day. Jenna talked about bridging the language gap for her students. She explained that many of them came in with limited life experiences; lacking these experiences reduces the number of vocabulary words they may have been otherwise exposed to. She explains that “you [the teacher] have to build that strong foundation and language for them.” Novice teachers could learn a great deal from the methods NBCTs use to ensure that students gain an understanding of the words used during shared reading experiences, as well as in conversations.

During the weeks of observations, teachers in this research were observed using both direct and indirect instruction to teach vocabulary words to students. Direct instruction was the primary method for teaching vocabulary words, even if the words came up in a secondary manner. According to Silverman (2007), explicit vocabulary instruction can be as valuable to ELL students as it is to English-speaking students. This is particularly important because the majority of the students impacted by the NBCTs who were observed were ELLs. When asked about the methods they used to promote vocabulary learning in the classroom, there were three main topics that emerged: repeating the word, using the word in conversations or context that is important to the student, and storybook reading. Most new teachers will encounter second-language

learners in their classes, and vocabulary is a critical skill to their long-term educational achievement.

The NBCTs shared their opinions on the most important skills in order to effectively teach vocabulary. They shared ideas such as knowing the students you are teaching and knowing the vocabulary words you are teaching. It was critical for each of these teachers to know their students and know the abilities with which they were coming to the classroom. The teachers needed to know if they were coming to class with limited life experiences, so they could try to “bridge the gap” on student learning and provide a foundation on which the students could learn new words. According to O’Leary et al. (2010), the education system has yet to close the achievement gap between low- and middle-income students. One of the examples from classroom observations was from Jenna’s class and was related to a lesson on the farm. Most of her students had never been to a farm, so she provided them with pictures, videos, and words with pictures to help them make connections to the words she was using during a classroom activity.

Professional development opportunities should be offered in order for teachers to be more informed of times when they should help provide students with background knowledge.

Shared reading. Shared reading has received more attention as a method for vocabulary instruction over the past decade. Children can benefit from learning new vocabulary words during shared reading experiences. Field note evidence from the classroom observations captured that all of the teachers conduct some shared reading experiences for their students during the school week. Some of the shared reading activities that were observed were with one or two students, and others were during centers with five or six students and the teacher. The number of students differs, but the

method of reading, tracking words, and explaining vocabulary during the story remained the same.

Children at risk can effectively be taught vocabulary words through shared reading experiences (Kame'enui et al., 2010). This is valuable as a strategy for teaching vocabulary, as it relates to this research, because the majority of the students were from Title I schools. When the teachers were interviewed about how they used shared reading to help promote acquisition of new vocabulary words, two common ideas were presented. The NBCTs discussed methods for activating prior knowledge and using context clues from the story to help students figure out the word's meaning. One thing that the NBCTs did not explicitly mention, but was observed during classroom observations, was knowing the students and knowing their strengths and weaknesses. Some of the shared reading lessons were done in ability-based groups with leveled books so that students would not become frustrated. Other students were able to work with a partner with a different reading ability to help them figure out the meaning of the words.

Discrepancies in Low Socioeconomic Situations

One of the more complex topics to investigate was related to the differences observed in each of the classrooms based on the socioeconomic situations of the students enrolled in the school. The teacher in the school with the highest percentage of lowest income students had the least freedom in her teaching practice, while the teacher in the highest socioeconomic school environment had the most freedom with her curriculum choices. She had the ability to implement the type of instruction that she thought was in the best interest of the children in her class.

During the interviews, each of these two teachers shed light on the impact of their administration and/or district on their curriculum decisions. Sarah mentioned that she wanted to do what was best for her students but also said that she would teach what her district believed would be best for her students. The two ideas about best practices for student learning seemed to conflict with one another, as she did what she was told but never stated that what she was doing was what she thought was best for her students. Carol also talked about her administration; she said how fortunate she was that she has the freedom to make some of her own curriculum decisions. She further explained that some of her freedom was given as a result of her students meeting the benchmarks on assessments regularly.

Limitations

This research was conducted with the help of four National Board Certified Teachers who taught in public elementary schools, and the skills they used to teach vocabulary were observed. One of the limitations of the study was its narrow scope of focus. This prevented the research from being generalized to larger populations of teachers. Using a larger number of National Board Certified Teacher participants could strengthen the research, as well as more effectively reveal what teachers do to teach vocabulary to all students. Using a larger number of NBCT participants would allow learning from a broader range of teaching experiences.

There is limited research related to the strategies or methods that NBCTs use to teach vocabulary, and, as a result, this limited the background knowledge when beginning this research study. Hopefully, this research will provide a foundation for

future research regarding best practices for teaching vocabulary, as well as further the discussion of the skills that National Board Certified Teachers use to teach vocabulary.

Suggestions for Further Research

Expanding this research to include information about the type of curriculum the teacher is using to teach the subjects would have offered more insight into their instructional decisions. Further information could have been gathered about the type of curriculum that each school (or school district) had adopted and why they adopted that particular curriculum might have been beneficial. It would allow for a deeper understanding of what the teachers would be teaching across all content areas, and this could have strengthened interview questions prior to the week of observation.

Further, it would have been beneficial to interview the administrators in each school regarding their opinion on best practices for teaching vocabulary. Their perspectives could have been compared and contrasted to those of the classroom teachers involved. This may prove if the administrations beliefs about teaching vocabulary had an influence on the skills and strategies that NBCTs used to teach vocabulary to their kindergarten students.

Summary and Conclusion

Vocabulary is a critical skill that children must master in order to become readers, as well as one of the five essential areas of reading instruction (National Reading Panel, 2000). Vocabulary is also a predictor of later reading achievement and a skill that students must learn in kindergarten to help with reading fluency in the years to come. Shared reading activities give teachers an opportunity to teach vocabulary words using the context of a book, both fiction and non-fiction.

In relation to this study, the researcher found that not all teachers used the same methods to teach vocabulary to their students, but rather, all NBCTs described wanting to do what they thought was best in order to have the greatest impact on student learning. However, what was best for students looked different in each classroom. Carol and Jenna were able to incorporate vocabulary into classroom transitions, the calendar discussion, and movement activities, as well as during casual conversations. Sarah focused most of her vocabulary instruction to circle time and used direct instruction as the primary teaching method. Kathy demonstrated the highest number of shared reading activities and informal vocabulary instruction using a variety of instructional methods. Each teacher discussed the importance of reflecting on their teaching practice and using assessments to guide instruction.

This study is the first piece of research that specifically focuses on the skills and strategies implemented by National Board Certified Teachers to teach vocabulary during shared reading. The hope is that information gathered from this study will guide future research and provide insights about the methods that expert National Board Certified Teachers use to teach vocabulary. This information should be shared with new and novice kindergarten and primary teachers, and professional development opportunities should be provided to teachers in an attempt to increase the quality of vocabulary instruction. Those teachers should be encouraged to reflect on their teaching practice as a method to inform instructional decisions and improve student learning.

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APPENDIX A
PRE-OBSERVATION INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The interview will consist of the following questions:

- Can you tell me about National Board Certification and the process you went through in order to achieve certification?
- How would you explain your teaching philosophy?
- How has NBC impacted your teaching philosophy?
- What are your beliefs about teaching?
- How has NBC impacted your teaching beliefs?
- Is there a technical language associated with the teaching profession? Insider's language?
- Does NBC have an influence on professional language?
- Has the NBC process influenced your definition of "classroom culture" or how you go about creating it in your classroom?

APPENDIX B
POST-OBSERVATION INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The interview will consist of the following questions:

- Do you think it is important to teach vocabulary? Why?
- What strategies do you use to promote vocabulary growth?
- What strategies do you use during shared reading to enhance vocabulary?
How did you learn to use this strategy?
- What are the critical skills that are most beneficial for students' vocabulary development?
- Have you received training or professional development on vocabulary instruction? How much?
- What teaching skills need to be mastered to teach vocabulary?
- How do you incorporate the standards into your teaching?
- Do you find that teaching mandated standards is difficult? Why or why not?
- Are curriculum standards in line with your professional teaching standards, as they relate to National Board Certification?

APPENDIX C
RECRUITMENT LETTER

Hello,

My name is Laura Nichols and I am a graduate student in the Curriculum and Instruction Program at Arizona State University working under the direction of Dr. Kathy Nakagawa. I am writing to invite you to participate in a research study about the skills, strategies, and routines used to teach shared reading by National Board Certified Teachers in kindergarten classrooms. I obtained your contact information from Kathy Wiebke, the Executive Director for the AZ K-12 Center.

I would like to audio record two interviews and conduct observations in your classroom. Each interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes. The information from the interviews and observations will help to better understand the different methods used by NBC teachers. The audiotapes will be kept until the completion of this research (approximately 1 year) then will be deleted. Your name will not be attached to the observation notes or the interviews.

The data will be analyzed and will be used in presentations and research papers, but no individual information will be used. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. There will be no penalty if you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time. You may also skip any interview questions. You must be 18 years or older to participate in this study.

If you'd like to participate please email or contact me at lcwalto1@asu.edu or (305) 975-2843.

If you have any questions about this research, do not hesitate to contact me or Dr. Nakagawa at (480) 965-0582 or nakagawa@asu.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, or feel that you have been placed at risk, you may contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Laura Nichols

APPENDIX D

CHECKLIST

Skills of Expert teachers**Examples****Frequency**

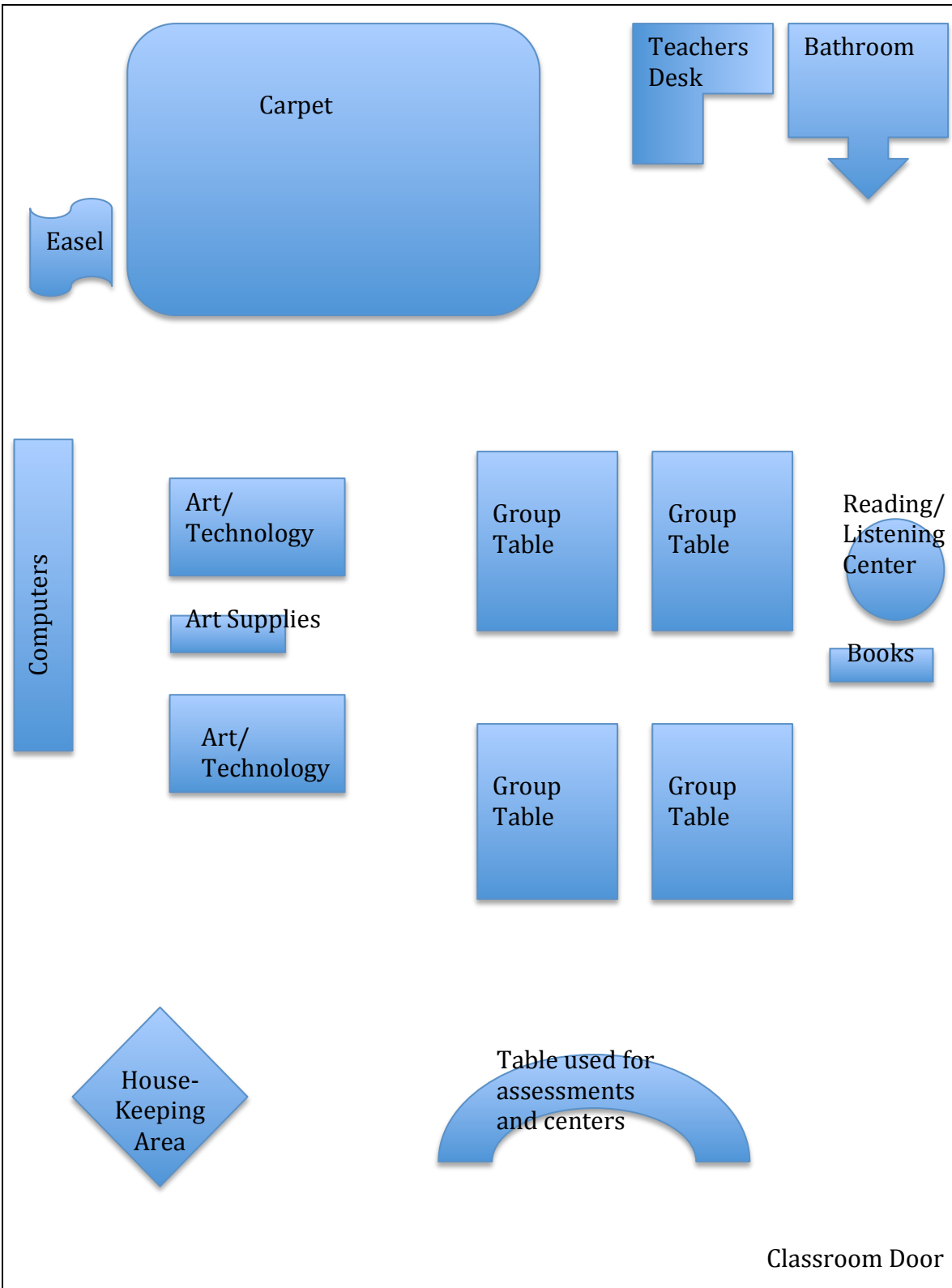
Better use of knowledge		
Extensive pedagogical content knowledge, including deep representations of subject matter knowledge		
Better problem-solving strategies		
Better adaptation and modification of goals for diverse learners and better skills for improvisation		
Better decision making		
More challenging objectives		

Better classroom climate		
Better perception of classroom events and better ability to read the cues from students		
Greater sensitivity to context		
Better monitoring of learning and providing feedback to students		
More frequent testing of hypotheses		
Greater respect for students		
Display of more passion for teaching		

APPENDIX E

CLASSROOM DRAWING: CAROL

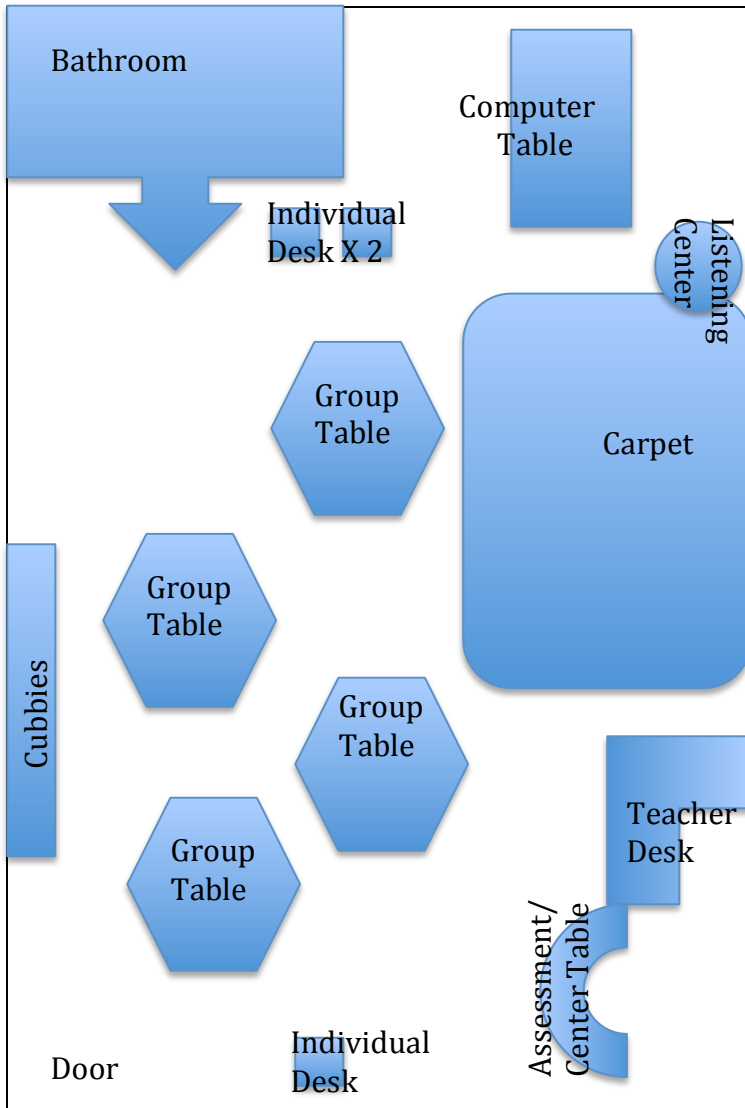
Carol's Classroom



APPENDIX F

CLASSROOM DRAWING: SARAH

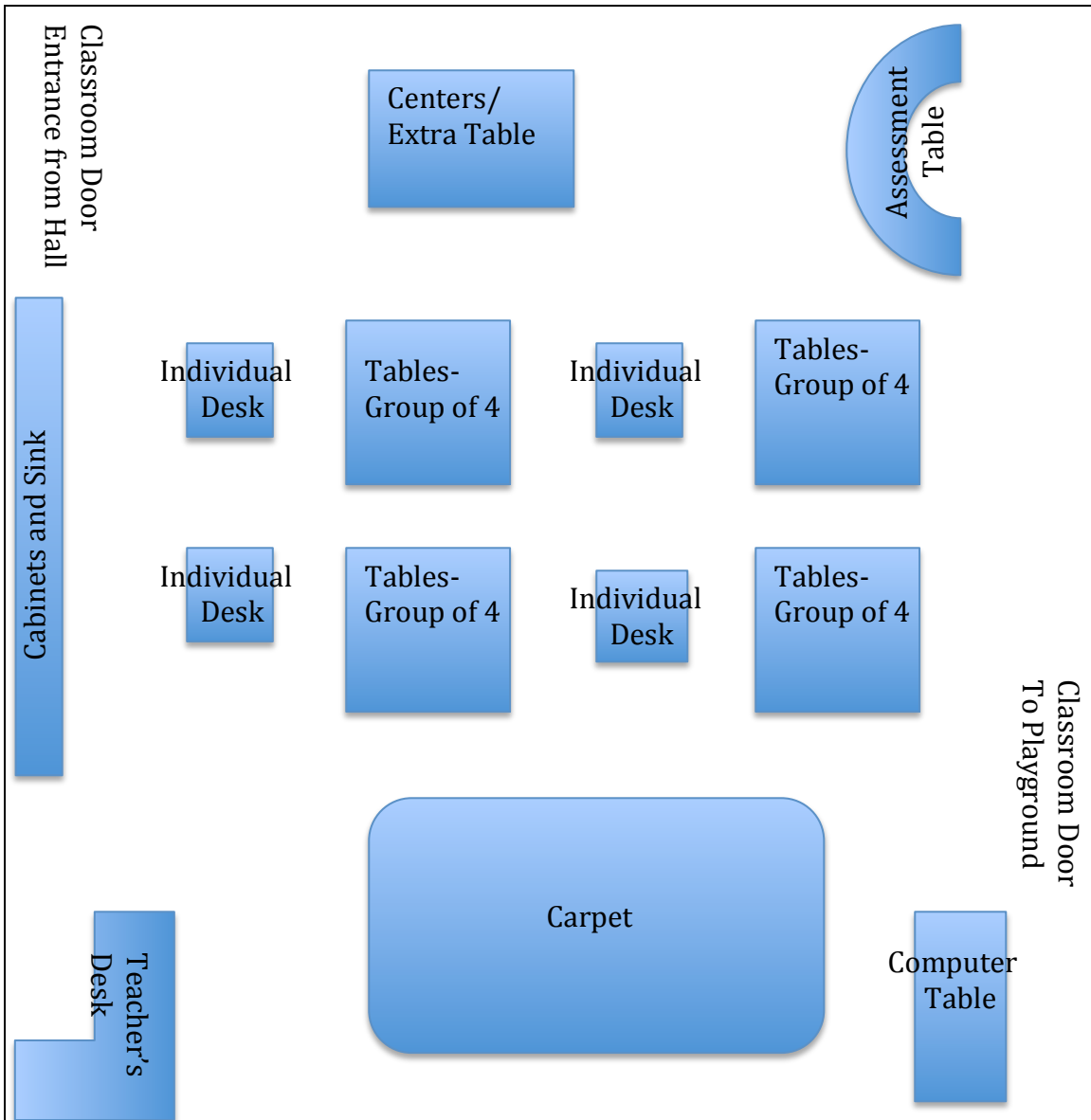
Sarah's Classroom



APPENDIX G

CLASSROOM DRAWING: KATHY

Kathy's Classroom



APPENDIX H

CLASSROOM DRAWING: JENNA

Jenna's Classroom

