

Becoming Reading Teachers: The Mediating Effects of an Innovation
Configurations Map for Guided Reading with Teachers at Private English
Supplementary Tutoring Centers in China

by

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A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

Approved January 2023 by the
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ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

May 2023

ABSTRACT

Within English supplementary tutoring centers in China, the professional development teachers are afforded is limited due to time constraints and the qualifications of teacher trainers within those centers. To facilitate a novel means of engaging teachers in their professional development related to guided reading, an innovation configurations map was introduced to teachers at two centers in southern China. This map is composed of six configurations that would foster teachers' understanding of what comprised effective guided reading classes. They include a focus on prior knowledge, vocabulary, reading skills and strategies, reading comprehension, class discussion, and written expression. Implementing the innovation configurations map for guided reading at the two centers occurred with head teachers and key informants from both centers. Other teachers participated to varying degrees based on their interests and availability. Using a qualitative case study methodology as part of an action research project, six strands of data were collected to assess how teachers used the map and what lessons were learned. These strands are institutional documents, interviews with participants, participant observation of academic meetings, direct observation of key informants' classes, and education journey maps detailing participants' experiences in using the innovation configurations map. For roughly seven months, the participants worked on developing their understanding of how to use the map and apply it within their contexts. They built this awareness within their activity systems with guidance and support from their colleagues and me. The contingent and responsive help teachers received was crucial in ensuring they understood how to use the innovation configurations map and their willingness to do so. Without that support and guidance, teachers were ambivalent about

the use of the map and used it minimally or not at all. The findings, thus, indicate that for teachers to be willing to develop themselves professionally and use the innovation configurations map, they require ongoing support and guidance based on their needs to ensure they may do so effectively.

DEDICATION

When I started this journey in October 2019, I knew that it would be a challenging one. I hoped that it also would be a rewarding one. As I end this journey as a doctoral student, I am fortunate that it has indeed been one where I leave it much richer than when I first started.

I began this journey with the support of my family, who for the last three years have been there for every high and low I experienced. I am especially grateful for my mom and brother—Diane and Michael Robinette—who have shown me love and care for not only my doctoral journey but the separation that resulted from COVID-19 and associated restrictions. I am especially thankful for the love and support of my husband, Ye Jun (叶骏), who has walked beside me throughout this journey. His patience and understanding have made the last three years easier. And his reminders that I should enjoy the world around me and experience it beyond work and school has kept me grounded in the here and now.

As I progressed on this journey, many people guided me. They have shaped my academic development and provided invaluable support. The instructors of this program helped expand my understanding of what it means to be an effective and caring educator and researcher in our complicated world. My fellow students in my cohort and leader scholar community have provided invaluable insights and comradery on this journey. My many colleagues who have worked with me over the last three years have been kind and accommodating to the many requests I have made on their time. To my friend and former supervisor, Tess Ding (丁鸿雁), thank you for being there and caring for me when I needed it.

To Drs. Dale Baker, Amy Chapman, and Feng Siyuan (冯思源), I am profoundly indebted for the insights you have provided me regarding my research. I have grown as an educator and researcher because of your efforts. The three of you have spent considerable time dedicated to ensuring that I succeed. And for that, I am thankful that you have been a part of my journey.

Finally, to my dad, Bill Robinette, who passed away before I started this journey. From an early age, he encouraged me to pursue my studies in whatever direction I wished to go. Providing me the space to discover the person I continue to become; I am forever grateful for that gift. With it, I have dared to take this journey and the journeys beyond the horizon.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Looking at me with a puzzled expression, the teacher asked, “What does it mean, to synthesize? I still don’t get it.”

Taking a moment to collect my thoughts, I eventually responded with, “Well, you take different pieces of information and evaluate how they are related. You focus on how they are similar and different. Then you take your evaluation and develop it into a new idea.”

“That sounds complicated. I still don’t get it.” The teacher turned and walked out of the room maintaining that puzzled expression.

I had this exchange with this teacher after I—at the time a curriculum developer with an English private supplementary tutoring organization in China—presented on our redeveloped guided reading program in December 2018. Having spent a few hours going over the materials, the processes they would use, and then having them participate in a demonstration, it was disheartening to have one of the teachers boldly state they did not get it. Unfortunately, I would hear similar statements over the next few months.

As I talked with teachers, I learned they had gaps in their knowledge concerning reading instruction. Later, when I further discussed the situation with colleagues on the academic and curriculum teams, I started to realize that many teachers in the organization were unaware of how to instruct reading skills and strategies. That posed a serious problem as the course changes affected new course developments. If teachers were

unaware of what they were, let alone being able to teach them to students, then the curriculum team was building a program the teachers were ill-prepared to use.

This problem originates in a unique confluence of learning trends that occurs not just within the organization but throughout China. Because of the competitive nature of education in China, many parents seek to maximize their children's potential by investing in education enrichment (S. Feng, 2021; J. Liu & Bray, 2020, 2022; W. Zhang, 2019, 2020; W. Zhang & Bray, 2020). English is one academic area that has seen concentrated parental attention. English is prevalent in Chinese society due to it being a core subject on national exams. Additionally, it is a language used as a *lingua franca* within the country and globally (Jenkins, 2015; Seargeant, 2016; Seidlhofer, 2005; Widdowson, 2018). English ability provides opportunities for employment, such as with multinational companies (Q. Guo & Sun, 2014; Wang et al., 2019; Wen & Zhang, 2020). And many parents wish their children to have a higher level of English ability to ensure they will be able to succeed within the Chinese education system and abroad (S. Feng, 2021; J. Liu & Bray, 2022; P. Liu, 2012; Wu, 2019; W. Zhang, 2020). To meet the needs of these parents and their children, English private supplementary tutoring centers were developed to meet their different academic requirements (S. Feng, 2021; Freeman, 2020; J. Liu & Bray, 2020; W. Zhang & Bray, 2020). In tandem with the growth of these centers, the need for teachers to staff these centers grew. These teachers, though, are not always prepared for the English teaching positions they are hired to do. Some teachers are trained to teach specific language skills, such as oral speaking, but are asked to teach a different skill, such as reading, that they are unprepared to teach. This situation has led to

issues related to effective classroom instruction at many English private supplementary tutoring centers, including my own.

Such concerns are common at many of these English centers, which affect teachers and students in many contexts (Trent, 2016; Xiong et al., 2022). Solutions to these concerns, however, are few. The focus of my dissertation is my attempt to address the issue of teacher preparation for guided reading instruction within my specific context. Given the situational needs of our teachers and the administrative expectations of capable teachers, I have sought an innovation to assist teachers in fostering the knowledge they need to develop as reading teachers. My quest to assist our teachers in this endeavor has led me to conduct this action research study to understand how the introduced innovation—an innovation configurations map for guided reading instruction—may provide the support teachers need to develop those skills and knowledge. I use this innovation for my specific context, but it may prove beneficial for others as well.

The reasons why I have gravitated to this idea as a possible way to address my problem of practice originate from the contextual factors of the Chinese education system and within the organization. To build an understanding of how these larger and local contexts influenced my decision to embrace an innovation configurations map for guided reading as a potential solution, I first review the larger context of English supplementary tutoring centers in China. I then discuss how issues within the larger context affect my local, work context. I next explain how these contextual factors influenced the initial steps I took to understand my problem of practice. Lastly, I present the research problems and the lens I use to investigate my problem of practice.

Larger Context

Four interconnected factors are relevant in understanding the larger context in which my study is situated. The first deals with the development of English private supplementary tutoring centers in China in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The second is the role of expatriate and native English speakers as English language teachers in China. The third is the shift to specialized foci for English instruction at English supplementary tutoring centers. And the fourth concern regulatory changes for private supplementary tutoring centers the Chinese government issued in the early 2020s. I discuss each of these factors on their own and how they interconnect.

Development of English Private Supplementary Tutoring Centers

English private supplementary tutoring centers began to develop in China a decade after the national government enacted English as a primary subject in the national curriculum in the late 1970s (Bolton & Botha, 2015; Bolton & Graddol, 2012; S. Feng, 2021; Jiang, 2003; Wen & Zhang, 2020; W. Zhang & Bray, 2021). In conjunction with the opening of the Chinese economy to a capitalistic system, there emerged a shadow education system based on neoliberalism (S. Feng, 2021; J. Liu & Bray, 2020, 2022; W. Zhang & Bray, 2020, 2021), which is the pursuit of applying capitalistic systems into social domains people traditionally understood as organized around building communities and institutions (Block & Gray, 2016). The term shadow education is a metaphor for the private supplementary tutoring system that coexists with mainstream education systems. Bray (1999) explains that this term is appropriate for describing this relationship for four reasons:

First, private supplementary tutoring only exists because the mainstream education exists; second, as the size and shape of the mainstream system change, so do the size and shape of supplementary tutoring; third, in almost all societies much more public attention focuses on the mainstream than on its shadow; and fourth, the features of the shadow system are much less distinct than those of the mainstream system. (p. 17)

The application of neoliberalism into social domains, such as education, has led to their marketization. This system has led to an education ecosystem where education is understood as a commodity valued for what it provides students (Darian-Smith, 2020; Xiong et al., 2022; W. Zhang & Bray, 2021). English supplementary tutoring centers comprise a significant segment of the shadow education system due to the importance of English in China. I focus on English supplementary tutoring centers in contrast to other private supplementary tutoring centers due to the specific needs English centers have when compared to other organizations and centers, such as those that focus on the arts or subjects like mathematics.

Originally, these English centers were developed to help students who wished to attend university pass their English language entrance exams (S. Feng, 2021; Jiang, 2003; P. Liu, 2012; Wen & Zhang, 2020; W. Zhang & Bray, 2021). As generations of Chinese students have gone through the education system and studied abroad, there has developed an increased demand for those learning English to be able to use the language beyond their ability to pass exams. There are now numerous different types of English tutoring centers designed for different niches of students' needs.

The most prominent of this new class of English supplementary tutoring centers are institutions that emphasize a communicative approach to English language teaching (Butler, 2011; Copenhagen, 2016; Y. Guo & Beckett, 2012; Hu, 2002, 2005; Liao, 2004; P. Liu, 2012). The goal of these centers is to provide opportunities for students to learn and use English effectively in a more natural way through communicative activities their teachers facilitate. In many cases, they are designed to emulate real-life conditions, such as going to the grocery store or eating out at a restaurant. Many parents prefer their children to learn in this type of environment as it allows their children to practice how to use the language orally in a manner they would likely use in real-life situations (Jiang, 2003; Rao & Yuan, 2016). As a result, teachers are expected to instruct students to help them develop their abilities to use the language well.

This focus on communication aligns with the introduction of communicative language teaching into different sectors of the Chinese education system in the 1980s (Butler, 2011; Hu, 2002, 2005; Huang, 2018; Liao, 2004). Most English language teachers have used this method in how they approach their instruction (Anderson, 2020; Richards, 2006; Scrivener, 2011; Thornbury, 2016). This method of instruction is centered on teachers providing opportunities for students to communicate meaningfully. Teachers may choose to implement this method in numerous ways, which exist on a continuum (Thornbury, 2016). At one end is the stronger version of communicative learning teaching. Teachers using a strong approach provide learning opportunities primarily through communicative activities with little explicit instruction. Teachers using a weak approach provide learning opportunities primarily through explicit instruction and more structured communicative activities. Many teachers shift their positions on this

continuum based on the needs of their students, institutional requirements, and their ideas on how to apply this method (Hu, 2002, 2005; Huang, 2018; Scrivener, 2011).

Communicative language teaching is an established component of the Chinese national curriculum for English language instruction (Huang, 2018). The government in effect requires all teachers within the country to understand this method and to apply it within their classes. Its pervasiveness has led to a washback effect across the education environment, which includes English tutoring centers where teachers are expected to use communicative language teaching.

Expatriate and Native English Speakers as English Language Teachers

At the introduction of communicative language teaching into the different sectors of the Chinese education environment, Chinese teachers were perceived as being ill-prepared for such a communicative approach without further training (Carless, 2012; Rao, 2010). There, additionally, existed resistance amongst many Chinese educators and researchers who viewed this method as a pedagogic imposition from education systems that differed from the Chinese system (Hu, 2002, 2005). To deal with this situation within the formal education sectors, the national government implemented policies and training opportunities for teachers to develop their understanding and ability to use this method (Carless, 2012; Deng & Carless, 2009; Huang, 2018). The management of English private supplementary tutoring centers in the shadow education sector, however, sought expatriate native English-speaking teachers to instruct students (Rao & Yuan, 2016).

The decision to hire expatriate native English speakers, though, led to questions about the qualifications of teachers who were hired into these positions. Many of these teachers were hired for the singular reason that they were native English speakers

(Huang, 2018). There was an expectation they would be able to teach the language because they were able to speak the language (Rao & Yuan, 2016). For many classes, the quality of lessons was limited and largely based on the ability of each teacher to apply the curriculum effectively. That left a lot to chance. Many parents and students were unhappy with the learning results. They also questioned the qualifications of teachers. As a result, many parents reported their grievances to relevant government agencies (J. Liu, 2018; W. Zhang, 2019).

The government, thus, began to impose requirements on English education centers and expatriate language teachers (S. Feng, 2021; J. Liu, 2018; Shuo, 2019; W. Zhang, 2019, 2022; W. Zhang & Bray, 2021). The requirements concerning teachers mandated all expatriate teachers had to have a university degree at the bachelor's level, an accredited qualification to teach English as a foreign or second language, two years of teaching experience, and be from a predominantly English-speaking country (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2020; National Immigration Administration of the People's Republic of China, 2020). These requirements are meant to ensure a minimum standard for teachers who are employed by English education centers. The Chinese government continues to amend these requirements to ensure the quality of teaching instruction at these centers (General Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2018; Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2020). One of the more recent amendments the government enacted led to the strict enforcement of the requirements that English education centers adhere to teachers having a certificate approved by the Chinese government before they are allowed to teach (General Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2018). These

requirements are meant to lead to a shift in policies emphasizing the hiring of more highly qualified expatriate native English-speaking teachers or non-native English-speaking teachers.

Accepted certificates for English language teaching from an accredited organization, such as Cambridge Assessment English or Trinity College London, are considered a preferred requirement for employment in English private supplementary tutoring centers (e.g., British Council, 2018). In many cases, though, online certificates issued by an accredited organization are accepted by many tutoring centers (e.g., EF English First, 2022). Regardless of the medium used, these qualifications require candidates to complete a month-long course, or 120 to 130 contact hours (Cambridge Assessment English, 2021; TEFL in China, 2022; Trinity College London, 2016), in learning practical aspects of English language teaching (Ferguson & Donno, 2003; Higginbotham, 2019). The emphasis for these certificates has been on oral and aural abilities in English with a focus on communicative language teaching. While instructors of these courses teach teaching candidates aspects of reading and writing, they are ancillary to the main focus on speaking and listening, as well as the practical aspects of teaching. Looking through the Cambridge Assessment English (2021) syllabus and assessment guidelines, reading is one of four sections that covers language skills. Reading, thus, is one component of one topic in a course that covers five topics. The language knowledge gained through these types of courses, then, is quite limited (Barnawi, 2016; Higginbotham, 2019; Hobbs, 2013; Stanley, 2013).

In addition to the focus on communication, the instructional practices used during these courses enculturates teaching candidates to emulate specific practices within their

future instructional contexts (Block & Gray, 2016; Mackenzie, 2018). Given the short duration instructors of these courses have to prepare teaching candidates, many instructors apply behaviorist-influenced models of instruction where teaching candidates are expected to develop their knowledge and skills in a prescriptive manner (Block & Gray, 2016; Mackenzie, 2018). Such a model posits that teaching candidates learn through the unanalyzed transfer of knowledge from their instructors (Mackenzie, 2018). These issues are known. The designers of these courses have made attempts to include instructional practices based on cognitive and collaborative models of learning (Ferguson & Donno, 2003; Mackenzie, 2018), which emphasize knowledge being constructed through social interactions (Costantino, 2008). Yet, these courses are rooted within a neoliberal model of education that has emphasized they be standardized and scripted (Barnawi, 2016; Block & Gray, 2016). The short duration of these courses is another limiting factor in what and how instructors can share and practice content with teaching candidates. While there are attempts to reconcile the behaviorist-influenced with the cognitive and collaborative models, tensions persist between the two in favor of the behaviorist-influenced model (Block & Gray, 2016; Mackenzie, 2018). Many teaching candidates who are enculturated within this paradigm are comfortable with following curricular structures as scripts at the expense of expanding their pedagogic understanding and knowledge (Stanley, 2013).

Instructors of these courses, additionally, expect graduates to take what they learn during these training courses and apply them to their teaching contexts as a starting point. These graduates are meant to further refine their knowledge and teaching skills in their work setting as they participate in professional learning, from their experience of

instructing students, and through formal educational pursuits (Ferguson & Donno, 2003; Hobbs, 2013; Stanley, 2013). The model of instruction used in these programs, though, does not reinforce that expectation.

When on the job, the induction and training novice teachers receive varies given the situation they find themselves in when they begin working (H. Liu & Sammons, 2021; Stanley, 2013; Xiong et al., 2022). The quality of their induction and training influences how well these novice teachers adapt to their context and work expectations. The level of guidance and support in adjusting to their jobs affects how well these teachers transition into their new positions and their confidence in fulfilling their duties (H. Liu & Sammons, 2021; Xiong et al., 2022). When presented with a supportive environment with developed induction and training programs, novice teachers are better prepared and more confident to teach their students (Mercer & Gregersen, 2020); the corollary is true that in the absence of such an environment, novice teachers are ill-prepared to meet their teaching obligations (H. Liu & Sammons, 2021).

The employers of these teachers, additionally, expect these novice teachers will be able to instruct students—children or adults—how to communicate through speaking and listening exercises when they begin with their organizations (Block & Gray, 2016; Copenhagen, 2016). The reality, though, is that these teachers require more professional learning and development than is appreciated (Block & Gray, 2016; Ferguson & Donno, 2003; Higginbotham, 2019). Because many employers are concerned about the business aspects of these institutions, the needs for professional learning and development are not always met in ways that benefit teachers (Stanley, 2013).

Specialized Foci for English Private Supplementary Tutoring Centers

The importance of training and continued learning of teachers is especially critical in the current education environment in China. Growth in the English private supplementary tutoring training market in the 2000s and 2010s saw increased competition amongst the 50,000 English education centers for the 300 million students who attend these institutions (S. Feng, 2021; Wen & Zhang, 2020). As communicative language teaching has embedded itself across the Chinese education system, owners and managers of these centers sought to differentiate themselves from their competition (J. Liu & Bray, 2020; W. Zhang & Bray, 2020). Many emphasized the two macro skills that are usually ancillary to communicative language teaching: reading and writing.

In focusing on English literacy for these centers, these owners and managers had the additional need to find ways to specialize themselves from the formal education sectors. English reading instruction is a strong area of instruction for Chinese English teachers because it is an important skill needed for national exams (Huang, 2018). Additionally, specialized tutoring centers had existed to prepare students for various examinations, such as the Chinese college entrance exam (S. Feng, 2021). Chinese students, thus, are quite capable of reading in English. Where many of these students need help, though, is in applying their skills outside of exam questions and being able to read and write critically (N. Liu et al., 2016). These owners and managers were aware of this situation, and many shifted to focus on English literacy.

Many parents, additionally, welcomed this shift as they wished for their children to develop all four language macro skills to ensure their children may pursue future educational pursuits beyond exam preparation (Chen, 2018; S. Feng, 2021; H. Gao, 2015;

P. Liu, 2012; Wu, 2019). Parents who could afford the tuition fees at these English centers were willing to pay them if it meant giving their children an advantage in being more fluent in English (Bolton & Graddol, 2012; J. Liu & Bray, 2020; W. Zhang, 2020). This process began as early as kindergarten, which afforded students early exposure to English. Introduction at this age to the English language allowed these children to practice their oral and aural abilities. As these children continued to develop their English language skills, though, many parents moved to English education centers that specialized in areas their children showed interest in or in areas where there was a perceived need (J. Liu & Bray, 2020). Owners and managers were cognizant of this situation and met this market demand with the development of specialized English private supplementary tutoring centers throughout China, especially in the larger cities.

Regulatory Changes for English Private Supplementary Tutoring Centers

The market demands based on the perceived needs of students and parents in developing specialized English private supplementary tutoring centers flourished in the late 2010s. Many centers emerged across the country through various online and offline formats. Yet, the growth of these centers caused increased concern with government regulators at all levels of government (J. Liu & Bray, 2022; W. Zhang, 2022), which led to far-reaching regulatory changes in July 2021 (General Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2021; Xue & Li, 2022; L. Zhang, 2022; W. Zhang, 2022).

While previous regulations had worked to ensure that these centers met safety and health requirements, that qualified teachers and staff were hired, and that the curriculum met governments standards (General Office of the State Council of the People's Republic

of China, 2018; W. Zhang, 2022; W. Zhang & Bray, 2021), the policy plan—*Opinions on Further Reducing the Homework Burden and Off-Campus Training Burden of Students in Compulsory Education*—announced by the government in July 2021 went further in stipulating two key changes (General Office of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China, 2021). The first dealt with homework reduction for students in primary and secondary schools (General Office of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China, 2021; Xue & Li, 2022; L. Zhang, 2022). The second dealt with the reduction of off-campus training for students (General Office of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China, 2021; Xue & Li, 2022; L. Zhang, 2022; W. Zhang, 2022), including English private supplementary tutoring centers.

There are many reasons for the changes. One such reason is the desire for a more equitable education system for all Chinese students regardless of their location (i.e., rural versus urban) or socioeconomic status (Xue & Li, 2022). Another reason was to alleviate parental anxieties about ensuring their children’s academic success, specifically the economic burden of paying additional tuition at private supplementary tutoring centers (Xue & Li, 2022; L. Zhang, 2022). Other reasons are more aligned with the government’s desire to ensure that the Chinese education system served the needs of the country and avoided the for-profit nature of neoliberal ideas of education (He & Cai, 2022; W. Zhang, 2022). The government in effect sought to ensure it had complete control over the education of Chinese students across the country and across all sectors (He & Cai, 2022).

While the rationalizations that the government used to justify the implementation of this policy are based on many issues that parents, students, and educators have faced and considered problematic, other equally important and related issues were not dealt

with in tandem. The most significant of these areas are the exams students are required to take at key milestones in their education, such as entering secondary school or university (J. Liu & Bray, 2022; Yu et al., 2018; W. Zhang, 2019). No changes as of 2022 are planned in the immediate future for these high-stakes exams (Xue & Li, 2022), and increasingly local governments are requiring students at private schools to take these exams (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2022). These exams, thus, remain important within the Chinese education system. For parents and students who worry about doing well on these high-stakes exams, private supplementary tutoring centers have been a means to better prepare for taking them given the diverse quality of schools in China (J. Liu & Bray, 2022; W. Zhang, 2019). Their perceived need among parents and students, thus, remain (He & Cai, 2022; J. Liu & Bray, 2022; She et al., 2022; L. Zhang, 2022).

The rapid pace of the implementation of this policy has drastically changed the private supplementary tutoring landscape across the country in profound ways. Many private supplementary tutoring centers now face higher regulatory oversight that affects their profitability. As such, especially in bigger cities such as Shanghai and Guangzhou, many of these centers have closed or reduced their staffing needs (C. Feng, 2022; She et al., 2022; L. Zhang, 2022). Yet, the demand for them is still there from parents and students. And the desire for those who adhere to a business model for education still seeks ways to profit from these stakeholders' perceived needs (She et al., 2022; Xue & Li, 2022; L. Zhang, 2022), but in ways that circumvent government policies. One way is to focus on small to medium markets in China with less heavy government oversight (She et al., 2022). Another is to hide the academic aspects of the curriculum with non-

academic terminology to ensure these centers are classified as non-academic. This move allows these centers to exist due to the ambiguity in how local governments classify private supplementary tutoring centers (C. Feng, 2022; W. Zhang, 2022). Additionally, one-on-one tutoring in larger cities (Xue & Li, 2022) and group tutoring in private residences are additional ways individuals and organizations can still profit from this demand (W. Zhang, 2022). Through these means, small- to medium-sized private supplementary tutoring centers persist. They, however, endure in a precarious state of uncertainty about whether local governments will permit their continued existence.

In such a situation, teachers who work at these centers are left uncertain of their future and whether they are going to have a job (A. Lee, 2022; She et al., 2022). Many teachers have opted to look for positions in more secure sectors such as international schools, or they have chosen to leave China by exerting their agency to decide what is best for them and their futures (A. Lee, 2022; Poole & Bunnell, 2021). As such, many teachers who remain at these centers are those who have limited options to change their position due to a lack of proper qualifications to work at other educational institutions or for personal reasons (Trent, 2016). This state of affairs leaves open the question of how qualified these teachers are to meet the demand that parents and students still have for additional academic enrichment, such as additional English lessons, given the unstable situation of private supplementary tutoring centers in China and the difficulty of hiring teachers (A. Lee, 2022).

The Interconnections

The demand for private supplementary tutoring centers persists regardless of government policies. Parents are willing to find ways to meet their children's perceived

education needs. Those with the means are also willing to pay those who promise to meet those needs. With their willingness to pay tuition, parents expect that their children's teachers prove capable of providing the instruction promised. The assurance that teachers at English centers are qualified to instruct students is a persistent concern (S. Feng, 2021; J. Liu, 2018; Xiong et al., 2022; W. Zhang, 2019). This is where the first two factors interconnect with the last two factors.

Because communicative language teaching is at the core of the training and education English language teachers receive, especially in short courses, they are stronger in oral and aural instruction (Thornbury, 2016). Chinese English teachers, though, have been perceived as ill-prepared to apply this approach to students (Huang, 2018). They have focused their instruction on English reading in preparation for formal exams (Yu et al., 2018). Yet, the Chinese government has implemented policies that emphasized communicative language teaching, which created a demand within the formal and shadow education sectors for teachers able to instruct students communicatively (Butler, 2011; Huang, 2018). The government provided resources to train public school teachers, but resistance to this method and the necessary time to gain awareness of how to apply the method limited the number of teachers able to use it (Carless, 2012; Deng & Carless, 2009; Hu, 2002, 2005; Tan, 2016).

A niche within the shadow education sector emerged to provide opportunities for students to develop their communicative abilities in English. Within this sector, owners and managers of English education centers sought to hire expatriate, native English speakers to instruct students communicatively (Huang, 2018; Rao & Yuan, 2016). The short courses these teachers took, with their initial training focused on communicative

language teaching, provided them with a basic understanding of how to teach students using this method. The trainers of these courses also enculturated these novice teachers into a behaviorist-influenced model of education that many tended to emulate in their classes (Block & Gray, 2016; Mackenzie, 2018).

In this process, a symbiotic relationship grew. As demand for English teachers with the ability to apply communicative language teaching within the classroom grew, so did English private supplementary tutoring centers. But as these centers proliferated, an oversaturation of the market occurred. Owners and managers as a result sought new ways to differentiate themselves from competitors (J. Liu & Bray, 2020; W. Zhang & Bray, 2020). One area they have focused on has been English literacy. Many parents and students found this new focus appealing and agreed to enroll and pay tuition at these centers. With the shift in focus, though, has been a need for teachers capable of guiding students' development in English literacy. Many, however, are ill-prepared for such an endeavor due to their training focusing on communicative language teaching.

Further exasperating this situation is the implementation of policies that curtailed the development and professionalization of English centers as part of a broader push to reduce the academic burdens of students (She et al., 2022; Xue & Li, 2022; L. Zhang, 2022; W. Zhang, 2022). Those working in these centers are left in a state of uncertainty. Many who seek stability have left this education sector and found jobs in other sectors they perceive as more stable within China, or they have left the country altogether. The teachers who remain are predominantly novices and trained in ways that emphasize speaking and listening and not reading and writing. As such, the concern of ill-prepared teachers persists and is now further exasperated by an unstable work environment.

Local Context

The teachers at the organization's English centers, thus, face multiple dilemmas that affect their work. The overarching concern of the stability of the jobs affects them in small and large ways. Additional issues they face include how to develop the skills and knowledge they need to teach English literacy given that most of them are trained to focus on communicative language teaching. Regardless of this situation, the teachers within the organization are expected to persist and teach their students to a high standard to ensure parents and students are satisfied with the education the organization provides.

The organization was established to offer a place for Chinese students to learn and develop their ability to use English for academic purposes in a student-centered learning environment. It was founded in the mid-2010s to provide Chinese children with an English literacy education that would prepare them for future academic endeavors in China and abroad. The organization is part of a larger group of educational institutions, which include English-Chinese bilingual schools. The specific organization I worked for comprises a series of English education centers headquartered in Shanghai. It has centers located in different cities throughout southeastern China.

Within the organization, I served as a curriculum developer. My main duties focused on researching, creating, evaluating, and revising course structures and associated materials for teachers to use in developing their English lessons. Associated with these duties were occasional training sessions where I supported teachers in developing their understanding of our course structures and associated materials. And as part of ongoing evaluations of the curriculum, I visited centers to observe classes and

discuss with teachers their ideas and concerns. While fulfilling my duties, I learned of and witnessed the concerns and needs of our teachers.

As with the larger Chinese context, there are interconnected factors that affect and influence my work environment. The first factor is the English literacy curriculum and the demands on teachers in knowing how to apply it. The second is how teachers are trained and prepared to implement the curriculum. The third factor concerns time constraints on everyone related to learning, training, and developing how to use the curriculum. And the last factor concerns the effect of COVID-19 policies on teachers and centers in my local context since 2020. I discuss each of these sections in detail below and then how they connect.

Guided Reading Curriculum

To meet the organization's mission, the Curriculum Director at the time and I worked on the guided reading curriculum and its later redevelopment. We designed these courses to emphasize the advancement of higher-order thinking through reading and writing in English using authentic texts. The goal of this curriculum is for students to develop their literacy skills so they can read and write a variety of fiction and nonfiction texts for creative and academic purposes. We based the curriculum on China's Standards of English Language Ability in addition to using the United States Common Core State Standards to inform the curriculum. As part of using these authentic texts, students are taught using various reading methodologies developed for first language students, such as through guided reading, and second language students, such as through phonics instruction, in an immersive English environment.

We designed our reading program to meet the needs of our students. Specifically, students who had developed a certain level of speaking and listening skills in English, as well as having a strong synthetic phonetic foundation. Students are expected to have basic language knowledge where they can have simple conversations in English, as well as be able to engage in a classroom to ensure they focus on developing their synthetic phonics knowledge instead of focusing on understanding the associated classroom instruction. Students learning English as a second or foreign language with a synthetic phonics foundation are primed to develop their reading abilities when they have reached a language threshold of roughly 3,000 words (Farrell, 2009; Taylor et al., 2006). We built the reading program based on this understanding. With a strong phonics foundation, a robust vocabulary, and strong oral and aural skills, students are better prepared to proceed to the next stage of reading development where teachers guide them to decode the surface meaning of texts and further onwards to metacognitive awareness of the reading process (Farrell, 2009; Grabe & Stoller, 2020; Koda, 2005; Quigley, 2020; Taylor et al., 2006; L. J. Zhang, 2018). This trajectory takes years of development for any reader, and thus our curriculum is built on the expectation that students will cultivate their reading abilities over years with guided practice. This expectation is explained to parents as they decide whether to enroll their children with us. Whether they stay with us is dependent on family finances, their education goals, learning outcomes, and their overall experience.

The then Curriculum Director and I researched from a wide range of sources to inform us on how we could develop the guided reading curriculum. Based on our research, we focused our attention on guided reading because studies indicated this method benefited students learning English as a foreign or second language (Avalos et

al., 2007; Nayak & Sylva, 2013). Guided reading is based on the premise that students need to develop explicit reading skills and strategies with texts appropriate to their cognitive and reading abilities (Burkins & Croft, 2017; Fountas & Pinnell, 2012; Iaquina, 2006; Nayak & Sylva, 2013; Suits, 2003). While developed for first-language learners, many of the core components from second-language reading research complement guided reading (Farrell, 2009; Grabe & Stoller, 2020), such as teachers providing students explicit instruction on reading strategies and guided practice on applying those strategies to a variety of texts of different genres (Grabe & Stoller, 2020; Hedgcock & Ferris, 2009; L. J. Zhang, 2018).

As a result of this curricular structure, teachers require a strong awareness of how best to instruct students to develop their reading skills. The majority of expatriate teachers who instruct English at private supplementary tutoring centers, though, are trained primarily in communicative language teaching through the certification programs they attended. The ability of teachers to instruct reading skills and strategies, as used in our curriculum, is limited. While the curriculum team is available to answer questions and to help with issues at the organizational level, academic administration expects teachers to determine how best to apply the curricular structure to instruct their students. In many cases, the reading knowledge and abilities required for these teachers are of a nature that they have not been trained to do, but they are asked to do since that is their working context.

Training and Preparation

To mitigate this situation, the role of teacher training and preparation is crucial (Ferguson & Donno, 2003; Higginbotham, 2019; Quinn & Kim, 2017). But here again,

there is a disconnect between the knowledge and abilities of those who are meant to conduct the training and those who receive the training. The training team is comprised of one permanent training manager. To facilitate training and preparing teachers, the training manager works with head and senior teachers who facilitate training for their respective centers. These individuals are trained as professionals in English as a foreign or second language, specifically in communicative language teaching, and most have worked in China for several years. Their understanding of reading instruction, though, is based on what they learned in their training courses, from personal experiences, and the knowledge they acquired as needed for their classes. These trainers, for the most part, lack more specified familiarity with English literacy required to train teachers on specific curricular needs related to guided reading.

Head teachers, center managers, and other administrators have asked the curriculum team to assist in providing training for teachers. But with only four full-time members, we are constrained in what we can do beyond our expected duties. Reducing our accumulated knowledge in short training sessions or workshops is perhaps a starting point, but they will not help us reach the goal of informed and capable teachers.

We reached this realization from the professional learning sessions we provided on aspects of the curriculum, such as how to incorporate reading skills and strategies into lessons. While facilitating these sessions, we increasingly became aware of their limitations as we were constrained in how much follow-up we could provide. We designed these sessions to be informative and not for an exhaustive development of pedagogic knowledge. Specifically, these sessions provided background information on courses, different materials and tools available for teachers to use, and recommendations

for using the curriculum. While there were practical activities for teachers to begin to think about these topics, follow-up activities proved challenging to schedule given that members of the curriculum team would either have to travel to the centers regularly or that there would need to be frequent gatherings of teachers in one location multiple times throughout the year.

The incident mentioned at the start of this chapter with the teacher who did not grasp the concept of synthesis was one person I encountered at one of these sessions in December 2018. For two weeks, I traveled to various centers to present to their academic teams the redeveloped guided reading courses being implemented in the spring of 2019. During the question-and-answer session that followed the presentations, many teachers asked questions about the terminology being used, how to implement different reading techniques, and the reasoning behind the structure of the course. Some of the questions were warranted given the changes being made, and I tried to answer them as best as I could. But other questions moved beyond the scope of the session and required broader and more in-depth discussions and professional learning. The teacher who did not understand the premise of synthesizing, I began to realize, was not alone among our teachers who needed deeper knowledge about what reading skills and strategies are, how to use them, and why they benefit students. After these presentations were complete, I spoke with the rest of the curriculum team about my observations and concerns. We discussed different options for how we could help these teachers and realized we had very few answers beyond a recognition that our colleagues had a need, but one that we were unaware of how best to address.

Time Constraints

These circumstances have produced an undesirable situation within and across centers. Based on conversations with teachers and head teachers, many find it challenging to take the time needed to learn how to use the curriculum because of their teaching and administrative duties. They also find it difficult to plan how to incorporate the course objectives into their lessons; many teachers lack the time to go over the materials and plan their lessons before they are to teach lessons. This issue begins when they first start working at one of the centers. New teachers are to go through a two-week induction period where they are to learn about the courses, adjust to their centers, acquaint themselves with staff and teachers, observe classes, and then begin teaching. In many situations, though, center managers or head teachers find they need to ask these teachers to begin teaching before they completed their induction.

During their induction, teachers are given rudimentary overviews of courses, limited focus on what to observe in classes with more experienced teachers, and overly broad discussions with their new colleagues on different aspects of the curriculum. In terms of gaining the knowledge and skills they need to effectively teach their future classes, there is not enough time or breadth of knowledge disseminated to help teachers. Based on personal experiences and conversations with other teachers, this feeling of incomplete preparedness continues well past the induction period. One teacher who had been on the job for half a year emphatically explained that without my help in providing materials and guidance—as this teacher assisted me to pilot some of our new materials—it would have proven challenging to plan and teach classes. As we worked together, I was able to provide responsive guidance to this teacher’s pedagogic questions and concerns.

As the teacher used the new materials, I answered questions the teacher had. I, too, asked questions about the materials and how they were used, which helped this teacher think about the lessons taught and how students responded to the materials. While these piloted materials were later incorporated into some of our courses and are available to teachers, the level of guidance I provided during the pilot phase was limited to this specific situation and for this particular teacher. But not every teacher has that opportunity.

As they start teaching, their time at work becomes limited given the duties they need to complete before, during, and after classes. Since I started with the organization, I have noticed these duties have accumulated to the point teachers are limited in how much time they can spend on professional learning and developing a better understanding of the curriculum.

A typical 40-hour workweek for a teacher consists of 25 hours of teaching with the remaining 15 hours for lesson preparation, academic and center meetings, administrative paperwork, conferences with parents, and additional duties related to marketing. In tandem with their duties is the actual structure of their schedule. As is common with English private supplementary tutoring centers, a workweek consists of working a combination of weekdays and weekends. Generally, teachers work from Tuesday to Sunday at most centers. During the workweek, teachers start work in the early afternoon when they work on administrative paperwork and attend the mandatory center and academic meetings. These meetings typically are focused on administrative or business duties. Based on the center, some academic meetings will address professional development needs based on the focus that the center's head teacher wishes to and feels comfortable addressing. Teachers instruct two classes or one class and conduct a

placement screener for potential students in the early evening. The weekend, typically, is the busiest time as students have the most time available to attend our classes. Teachers during the weekend would instruct multiple 90-minute classes in addition to other activities, such as parent conferences, marketing events, and placement screeners for potential students. Thus, teachers generally have time only on their three weekdays to spend on professional learning and development after they have completed their other duties. Most teachers in these circumstances find themselves time constrained.

Related to the restrictions they have on when they can learn how to apply the curriculum is the duration of these teachers' employment. Typical for English centers, most teachers work under one- or two-year contracts (Stanley, 2013). Most teachers will complete the duration of their contracts, but they will refrain from signing a new contract. Like in many similar situations at other private supplementary tutoring centers and international schools (Poole & Bunnell, 2021; Stanley, 2013), teachers will exert their agency to seek out better positions or work conditions (Bunnell & Poole, 2022). Some teachers, additionally, leave before they complete their initial contracts. In such a situation, the long-term possibilities of teachers' continued professional development are limited. Organizational and center management as a result has prioritized short-term solutions that have proven elusive.

All these issues with time are impediments to the adoption of effective innovations or interventions to help our teachers instruct their courses. Teachers are thus left frustrated by the expectations placed on them and the lack of guidance or opportunities for how to meet those expectations.

COVID-19 Complications

These frustrations have been amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic. In early 2020, the Chinese government's response to the pandemic further complicated matters regarding how teachers taught and developed their understanding of our courses. As in nearly all jurisdictions globally, the Chinese government mandated the closure of all educational institutions and the transfer of instruction online (Zhan et al., 2022), which included private supplementary tutoring organizations (S. Feng, 2021; Talidong, 2020; Talidong & Toquero, 2021; W. Zhang, 2022; W. Zhang & Bray, 2021). Since 2020, there have been several occurrences where local governments have mandated classes move online due to identified COVID-19 cases within their jurisdictions. They maintain such policies until government officials are assured there are no longer any community cases. When they have determined that their jurisdictions are free of COVID-19, they will gradually allow classes to resume offline.

For our teachers, as with all teachers facing the effects of COVID-19, this situation has created a precarious situation for the stability of their position, their professional development, and their general wellbeing (Bailey, 2021; L. X. Gao & Zhang, 2020; Poole & Bunnell, 2022; United Nations, 2020; J. Yang, 2021). The physical and emotional toll of the pandemic has affected everyone, which impacts their ability and motivation to teach in the different modes that are asked of them (Moorhouse & Kohnke, 2021a, 2021b; J. Yang, 2021). Emergency remote teaching differs from online teaching; it is an ad hoc way of instructing students given the technological affordability of individuals within their contexts and the timeframe administrators mandate to implement such instruction (Gacs et al., 2020; Hodges et al., 2020; Zhan et al., 2022). Teachers

receive varying degrees of training to apply emergency remote teaching and have varying degrees of familiarity with the different technologies and pedagogies related to learning online (Chiu et al., 2021; Henriksen et al., 2022; Meirovitz et al., 2022; Sharma, 2015; Talidong, 2020; Talidong & Toquero, 2021; Zou et al., 2022). Our teachers have faced this situation at our different centers on several occasions, such as at the start of the pandemic in 2020 and more recently in the spring of 2022.

In preparing our teachers for teaching online, the training manager of the organization provided a few hours of training online to the affected teachers that familiarized them with the technologies and platforms they would use. Some suggestions on how to teach online were also shared, but little pedagogical detail related to the use of technology with English language learners was presented to these teachers. Most of our teachers learned how to teach online through trial and error as they experimented and identified ways of teaching online appropriate for them and their students. Such a situation proved stressful for many teachers, as has been the case for teachers in other jurisdictions (Henriksen et al., 2022; Moorhouse & Kohnke, 2021a).

Compounding on these aspects of work, the importance of the wellbeing of our teachers has emerged as an important consideration regarding how they managed this situation with the help of people within the organization. One key issue has been the intercultural differences between Chinese and foreign staff in how they have dealt with the pandemic due to differences in their backgrounds (Bailey, 2021; Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2019). Another issue is that everyone within the organization has had to deal with the pandemic and has dealt with it in ways that are unique to them, which can result in friction in interpersonal relationships when people have opposing needs. And then

parents and students further complicated this situation as they too have had to deal with the pandemic and their specific needs (Gacs et al., 2020; Moorhouse & Kohnke, 2021a; United Nations, 2020). Given the complex, unique, and uncertain nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers have had to grapple with aspects of their lives and relationships they once thought stable. Adding further novel requirements, such as emergency remote teaching (Henriksen et al., 2022), has placed a lot of stress on our teachers. For many of them, these factors have proven to be too much; they have chosen to leave China and return to their home countries so they may be closer to their families and not deal with the Chinese government's policies related to COVID-19 (A. Lee, 2022; Poole & Bunnell, 2022).

Within such a complicated environment, continued professional development has proven an ancillary concern for those in the organization. Individuals in the organization have focused their efforts on navigating not only the COVID-19 pandemic but also the new government regulations. Difficulties in hiring and retaining teachers have proven challenging for a variety of reasons, such as restrictive entry requirements to enter China and better positions in other educational institutions (Bailey, 2021; Poole & Bunnell, 2021). The focus then has been on maintaining a minimum level of competency for our teachers as they have had to deal with numerous factors affecting their work. Although many individuals in the organization at the national, regional, and local levels have worked to help teachers develop themselves, the constant changes that have occurred have made sustained professional development challenging. Development on how to use the guided reading curriculum, thus, has become an ancillary concern.

The Interconnections

With a lack of concrete understanding of how to implement and augment the curriculum or even the opportunity and time to do so, teachers have resorted to using the curriculum as a script for how to plan their classes without constructively breaking down lessons and modifying them based on empirical knowledge germane to students' needs in their contexts (Dresser, 2012; Orchard & Winch, 2015; Valencia et al., 2006). In the fall of 2019, I had a follow-up meeting with the teachers at one of the centers to discuss their implementation of the new guided reading curriculum and what they would like to see modified in future iterations. One comment struck a chord with me when a teacher asked how they could implement the course exactly as I—the designer of the course—had envisioned. I understood why teachers may feel this way. With the limited time they have to understand and learn the curriculum, they seek a tidy solution that will allow them to teach their classes in a way that would benefit their students. Many of our teachers, thus, use the curriculum as a script to follow.

My colleague and I designed the guided reading curriculum, however, as a resource to help teachers design their lessons (Graves, 2016). We had never intended for teachers to treat it as a script. Even if it was a script, teachers would still need to find the time to understand how to implement the structure in a way that would benefit their students, and they could even perhaps learn from it (Quinn & Kim, 2017; Valencia et al., 2006). Our teachers, thus, are unprepared in knowing how to use the curriculum. Their prior training in communicative language teaching did not provide them with the needed skills and knowledge to implement a curriculum focused on English literacy. Further, many of our teachers are not provided the time or guidance on how to engage with the

curriculum and think critically about how to use it for their lessons in a manner appropriate for their classes and students. Compounding on these issues has been the COVID-19 pandemic which has exasperated these factors, as well as created new priorities for teachers and organizational leaders. Because of these circumstances, many teachers feel frustrated that they are unable to use the curriculum.

As a colleague, I empathized with their frustrations. I wished to find a means to help them understand the curriculum and feel confident in using and adapting it to their students' needs. In so doing, these teachers would hopefully not only gain that knowledge and skills but also develop confidence and security in their capacity to instruct their students. But for that to happen, I needed to consider their unique needs and situations.

Action Research and Prior Research Cycles

The question of how to provide the necessary development, skills, and learning teachers needed served as the focus of my study. At its core has been how to assist teachers to use the curriculum confidently and effectively. To ensure they feel this way, they need to receive professional learning opportunities that are ongoing, practical, and reflective (Grossman et al., 2009; Ushioda et al., 2011).

With this perspective on how to help teachers, I sought with my study to understand this problem better, provide practical solutions, and understand the applicability of those solutions. I executed this action research study to address the problem of practice: *What support and experiences increase teacher pedagogic knowledge needed to enact a guided reading curriculum?*

Action research is a methodology individuals may use to understand and improve issues in their situated contexts (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Herr & Anderson, 2005;

Mertler, 2020). These individuals determine how to address identified concerns related to their practice as both researcher and practitioner: the practitioner-researcher (Mertler, 2020). The actions of practitioner-researchers are grounded in theory, their reading of the literature, and the knowledge that emanates from their unique contexts. Those affected by action research play varying roles as participants who help inform and, in many cases, direct the progression of that research.

There are multiple steps in action research: identifying a problem, reconnaissance, planning, acting, evaluating, and monitoring (Ivankova, 2015). Action research is cyclical and iterative. What practitioner-researchers learn during each cycle informs subsequent actions. Having a reflective position throughout an action research project allows for a critical examination of the process (Buss, 2018, 2019; Dick, 2014). As such, practitioner-researchers are better able to make necessary adjustments based on information learned during each cycle (Cook, 2009; Webster-Deakin, 2021). In this way action research is iterative. What is learned may require practitioner-researchers investigating the issue to spiral back to an earlier step, such as the reconnaissance step, when new information is learned and reflected upon (Cook, 2009). Action research, thus, may continue in ongoing cycles of knowledge building and refinement to better answer the initial problem of practice.

Prior Research Cycles

Cycle 0

I initiated this action research project with a cycle 0 reconnaissance study in the spring of 2020. I interviewed four teachers who used our reading curriculum. I sought to learn about their experience in reading training, their preferences in training methods, and

how they developed their ability to instruct their students to read. I learned from them they had a desire to further develop their knowledge and skills through interactive and engaging training. They also wished for any training to include continued guidance relevant to their students and contexts.

From their insights, I explored several possibilities, such as establishing a community of practice or developing a series of ongoing workshops. I found these possibilities, however, problematic as they required time commitments from teachers, trainers, and curriculum developers that might prove challenging. Occurring at the same time, I explored Hall and Hord's (2020) Concern-Based Adoption Model for implementing change in an education environment. This model provides a means for addressing the complexity and time required to implement the change process for facilitators and implementors. One thing that struck me was a reconceptualization of my situation. I realized the redeveloped guided reading curriculum was an introduced innovation. What I needed to determine was how to implement that innovation in a way that would meet the needs of our teachers. I initially thought about implementing the Concerns-Based Adoption Model in its entirety, but I found that it again required time commitments that would prove difficult to meet. I, however, started to see how one component might prove beneficial: the innovation configurations map, which is a resource delineating the different ways adoptees of an introduced innovation might apply it (Hord et al., 2006). Such a map is comprised of configurations of core components. Each component is then comprised of variations ranging from the ideal to the less effective (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Example of a Component of an Innovation Configurations Map

00. Innovation Configurations Map for One of the Six Guided Reading Configurations (Teacher)

Target Configuration: Definition of the specific configuration.

Component 0: Description of the specific component.					
A	B	C	D	E	F
Ideal variation for the component.	More effective variation for the component but with room for further development.	More effective variation for the component but with room for further development.	Less effective variation for the component with a need for further development.	Less effective variation for the component with a need for further development.	Less effective variation for the component with a need for further development.

I decided to see if an innovation configurations map for guided reading instruction would benefit teachers (Beauchat et al., 2009; Blamey et al., 2012; G. E. Hall & Hord, 2020; Hord et al., 2006). This innovation configurations map I hoped would provide teachers with the information they needed concerning the core components for guided reading and what that might look like in practice. In the summer of 2020, the then Curriculum Director and I collaborated to write a draft version of an innovation configurations map with six configurations: prior knowledge, vocabulary instruction, reading skills and strategies instruction, reading comprehension, class discussion, and written expression. For each configuration, we determined the core components. For each component, we detailed different variations from the ideal to the less-than-ideal. We developed these configurations, components, and variations from our experiences with teaching and observing classes, from discussions with teachers, and from researching the literature.

Cycle 1

I next tested one of the six configurations—vocabulary instruction—with two teachers during a cycle 1 reconnaissance using a mixed-methods approach. For the quantitative data, I asked teachers to read through the innovation configurations to help inform them about the design of teaching materials and lesson instructions. I asked them to submit these materials, such as their flipcharts and lesson visuals, to me weekly. I assessed their materials against the innovation configuration to evaluate which variation on the vocabulary innovation configurations best represented their teaching materials. Using descriptive statistics, I developed a rudimentary understanding of how teachers used the innovation configuration over four weeks. For the qualitative data, I conducted semi-structured interviews with both teachers after those four weeks.

Based on both strands of data, the teachers found the vocabulary instruction configuration useful. As they read through it independently, they started to comprehend that different variations in vocabulary instruction existed; they used it to ascertain where they were amongst those variations. They, additionally, identified areas where they could develop their vocabulary instruction. In the interviews with these teachers, they shared they were able to understand how to use the innovation configurations but would have preferred to have worked with colleagues. Both teachers thought that working with colleagues would help them develop their understanding of how to use the innovation configurations. They, though, also presented some solutions that worried me, which included explicit and scripted directions on how to implement the innovation configurations map. They explained they would prefer if the curriculum or training teams gave them step-by-step instructions on how to reach the ideal variations. This desire,

however, works against the intention of teachers to reflect on their instructional practices and identify ways to advance to ideal variations based on contextual needs (G. E. Hall & Hord, 2020; Hord et al., 2006).

Another concern I had was the discrepancy between what they shared in their interviews with what they later shared in private discussions with me. While what they stated in the interviews was truthful, they did acknowledge they held back from disclosing concerns they had about the innovation configurations map and using it. From experience and conversations with academic staff in the past, this hesitance to share completely may stem from my outsider status. As I am from academic administration, I lack relationships with those who work in the same environment daily (Wenger, 1998). They felt more comfortable explaining the issues they had after the interview as asides as we ended our interactions. Although I still was able to address their concerns, their reticence to share that information during the interviews led me to question whether there was a better way of learning from participants.

Cycle 2

That concern led to the development of a cycle 2 qualitative study on the use of education journey maps as a research method to address my concerns. I initiated this cycle to investigate how I could better humanize research and lessen the distance between participants and myself. Researchers who use education journey mapping as a qualitative research method ask participants to share their social contexts visually, spatially, and temporally in the journey maps they create (Annamma, 2016, 2017, 2018; Marx, 2022).

For this cycle, two colleagues in the organization agreed to create and share their education journey maps of how they became curriculum developers. Each participant

created and shared their maps with me, and we worked together to understand and learn from their maps collaboratively. We identified three key insights. The first insight dealt with how participants presented themselves on the maps and how they made those decisions. Journey mapping is a deeply personal experience (Annamma, 2017; Futch & Fine, 2014; Siuty & Beneke, 2020). Both participants needed to determine how much they wished to share and what experiences had meaning for them on the path they took to become curriculum developers. Both participants felt the need to share episodes in their life they considered difficult and personal, but those that affected the paths they took.

The second insight concerned what participants discovered about themselves in the reflective process of creating and sharing maps. Participants reflected multiple times in the process of creating and sharing their maps. They reflected when they determined what to include on the maps and how to explain those episodes. They also reflected when speaking with me during the interviews. I sometimes would push for that reflection when I asked a question to clarify or probe their responses. But they also voluntarily reflected as they worked through ideas themselves or with me when they asked for my thoughts.

The third insight learned from using education journey maps concerned how both participants and I guided each other in the process. I helped both participants understand what education journey maps are, how to create them, and how to share them. They helped me understand what is involved in creating and sharing education journey maps, what participants need to know to accomplish those tasks, and how the process affects participants personally and professionally.

Using education journey maps allowed both participants and me to learn a great deal about their journeys in becoming curriculum developers. It also allowed me to lessen

the imbalance between us as participants and researcher. They took on an active role in helping me understand their journeys and guided me through their analysis of their journeys. Their insights when combined with mine helped create a fuller picture of the paths they took. Using education journey maps allowed participants to work with me to understand their maps instead of me imposing only my ideas. Education journey maps, then, did prove a way to humanize the research and empower participants to take an active role in the research process. The insights my colleagues provided influenced my understanding of how to conduct research, which helped shape how I developed my cycle 3 dissertation research.

Contextual Understanding

The insights from these previous cycles shaped this cycle of the action research project. From these prior cycles, I clarified for myself my role in this research process. As a curriculum developer who sought to help teachers, I was at the border between the curriculum and academic departments. As a border agent, I had a unique opportunity to help teachers (Wenger, 1998). I was also cognizant that this insider-outsider position required I carefully understand my role and why I came to accept this positionality.

Many people in the organization adhere to the banking model of education (Freire, 1968/2000), which sees learners as receivers of knowledge that teachers deposit within their students' minds for them to withdraw when needed. The learning experiences of these individuals have socialized them into perceiving education as a transmission of knowledge from teacher to student. Given the importance examinations have in Chinese education (Bolton & Graddol, 2012; J. Liu & Bray, 2020; Tan, 2017; Yu et al., 2018; W. Zhang & Bray, 2021), teachers, students, and parents continue to practice this banking

model of education in the formal and shadow education systems. It is a key component of their habitus. Even when presented with information about the limitations of learning in this way, people still adhere to this education model due to systematic forces that inhibit change. These forces exist across the Chinese education system, such as with the exam orientation of education that persists to influence the schooling of students concurrently as the government has enacted reforms to move away from them (Guan & Meng, 2007; Y. Guo & Beckett, 2012; Tan, 2017; Yu et al., 2018). These forces seep into my context. As a for-profit organization, many non-academic administrators push forth neoliberal policies which create tensions between the business and academic concerns of the organization. These tensions are not isolated to the organization; they exist at other private supplementary tutoring organizations as well (S. Feng, 2021; Y. Guo & Beckett, 2012; J. Liu & Bray, 2020; W. Zhang & Bray, 2020), yet these administrators perpetuate this banking model of education. I experienced this with the discussions I had about curricular structures and how we should implement programs.

This perception pervaded all aspects of my work, but I found it particularly troublesome with teachers and how they were asked to develop professionally. Here, too, people within the organization expect teachers should be able to receive information and implement it as if teaching was a technical process of inputs and outputs (Banegas, 2019; Graves, 2021; Orchard et al., 2020; Orchard & Winch, 2015; Winch et al., 2015). The unique experiences and knowledge teachers bring to their learning practices are not a consideration. Their thinking is that if they input the desired parameters the teachers should then execute as intended. This issue is a persistent concern within English language teaching education (Freeman, 2020; Freeman & Johnson, 1998; J. Lee et al.,

2016). Teachers, like their students, are not devoid of knowledge and experiences that inform how they learn. Yet, that is the prevailing sentiment amongst many key people in the organization.

This concern about how people comprehend the learning process made me more aware of how important the concept of *conscientização*, critical consciousness, in dialogue is for teachers and myself. When people develop their critical consciousness, they begin a process of understanding their place in the world and the world itself so they may take actions to positively influence the world and their place in it. Many of the teachers I have worked with over the years, and especially during cycles 0 and 1, kept commenting on how they wanted me to tell them exactly what I had envisioned they should do for their specific class. I realized many teachers had internalized this idea that learners were passive receivers of knowledge transmitted by teachers. I recognize there is a need for dialogue. Freire (1968/2000) explained:

Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers. The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow. (p. 80)

This dynamic relationship between teacher-student and students-teachers is a key concept in how I conceptualize learning. When teachers have asked me to tell them what they should do, I try to open a dialogue to get them to think about what they are asking and who in this dyad is better able to lead the talk concerning their classroom practices. Yet, they persist with this notion that since I know more about reading instruction than

they do, I should just tell them what to do. Whereas I see them as having pertinent information about their students, contexts, and particular situations that they need to share so we may have a dynamic dialogue as we build our critical consciousness.

This realization about my conceptions of learning and those of my colleagues allowed me to clarify my ideas on my problem of practice and how I wished to address it. I recognize that teachers come to the organization with a range of understandings about reading instruction. They, additionally, have much experience as learners and teachers. Thinking about my problem of practice through this lens pushed me to think about the limitations of using an innovation configurations map, the importance of how teachers would learn to use one, and what my role as a curriculum developer in that process would be. I wanted to know how that process would unfold and how effective the introduction of the innovation configurations map would be in helping teachers learn about the curriculum and how to implement it. More importantly, though, is that I wanted, and continue to want, to see them exercise their agency in that learning process with their fellow teachers, with their students, and with myself.

Research Questions

I dealt with these issues as part of my multiple identities as an educator and graduate student with this action research study. I addressed my problem of practice from a Vygotskian sociocultural approach where learning is a process involving individuals and social processes which affect each other dynamically (Freeman & Johnson, 1998; John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996; J. Lee et al., 2016; Vasileva & Balyasnikova, 2019). From this perspective, I used these five research questions to guide my study to better understand how to address my identified problem of practice:

1. How does an innovation configurations map for reading instruction in English mediate teachers' understanding of how to instruct their students?
2. How do teachers respond to the introduced innovation configurations map in their instructional practices?
3. What contradictions do teachers face when learning about and applying the innovation configurations and how are they dealt with?
4. How does the innovation configurations map I initiated as a curriculum developer influence teachers' instruction related to reading in English?
5. How do my actions as a curriculum developer affect teachers in this process of learning and applying the innovation configurations?

Path Forward

This action research dissertation was my endeavor to answer these five questions. The teachers in the organization are expected to instruct their students using a reading curriculum more advanced than is typical in most English private supplementary tutoring centers in China. Instead of solely focusing on learning how to read in English, teachers are asked to guide students to read in English to learn other subject matter. The issues related to how teachers may develop those skills and in what way to facilitate that process must meet the needs of teachers and the constraints imposed within the contexts they work in. I hoped that in working with these teachers to address their needs and concerns, they would take the initial steps to meet their potential in becoming reading teachers. I was and continue to be cognizant that the choice is always theirs to make. They are the ones who need to exercise their agency and take the time to pursue their learning and

development. My goal with this cycle of my action research dissertation was to provide them with a tool that may help them in that endeavor.

In the following chapters, I first present the theoretical framework I developed to inform this study in chapter two. I next discuss what innovation configurations are in chapter three. I then present the innovation and methodology I used to study my research questions in chapter four. In chapter five I present the findings. I conclude in chapter 6 with a discussion of how I answered my research questions, considerations about this study and future steps, and present my final thoughts about what I learned.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK INFORMING THE STUDY

How the teachers in the organization develop their understanding of the guided reading curriculum stems from complex interactions. Humans are multifaceted social beings. People exist as complete individuals with feelings, thoughts, and beliefs unique to them. At the same time, though, individuals develop these feelings, thoughts, and beliefs from interactions with others. This dynamic relationship between the self and others is repeated throughout a person's life in different situations and contexts. And each of those events is a unique instance of learning for that individual.

Every individual, thus, learns in ways unique to them, but how and what they learn is dependent on their contexts and the people they share that context with at any given moment. Teachers are but one example of how their unique development affects others, situations, and settings, and how each of these, in turn, affects them. To ask for teachers to engage in developing themselves professionally, I recognize and appreciate the unique and ephemeral nature of who these teachers are at present in their current situations and environments. How they engage with the activity of developing themselves as teachers begin with appreciating they are social individuals who can co-construct knowledge together but will understand that knowledge uniquely.

The information I learned from participants in my previous cycles crystallized this understanding for me. In cycle 0, teachers shared how they developed as teachers through the mediation that instructors provided in their teacher education courses. They also highlighted the need to learn while doing in the classroom due to gaps in their understanding of reading instruction pedagogy. Additionally, they all voiced the

importance of shared experiences and learning from others through co-planning, observations, or conversations with peers. The teachers in cycle 1 voiced many of these similar ideas as they developed their impressions on using the innovation configuration for vocabulary instruction. They explained how they started to use the innovation configuration to mediate their understanding of vocabulary instruction in their reading lessons. They described the discovery of contradictions in what they had done before for vocabulary instruction to what was described in the innovation configuration. They then explained how they initiated steps in reconciling those contradictions. These teachers also expressed how in hindsight they would have preferred finding the time to collaborate to develop their understanding of the innovation configuration instead of working on their own to make sense of it. From cycle 2, I learned from my colleagues' experience with education journey mapping how research is a dynamic learning process between participants and the researcher. The insights participants bring to the research process emerge from their life histories within their situated contexts. As such, my colleagues served as guides in how to understand their education journey maps.

The participants in each of these cycles expounded on ideas of how they continued to learn and develop as professionals through their initiatives and collaborative efforts. Mentors, instructors, and learning documents provided the support they needed to grow as teachers. Their social contexts, the people within them, and the tools available, thus, affected their endeavors.

With this understanding, I developed a theoretical framework that recognizes and appreciates the uniqueness of individuals and the dynamic relationship they have with their social contexts situated within Vygotskian sociocultural concepts. I used

Sociocultural Theory based on the work of Vygotsky (1978, 1987, 1994) and how the theory has been applied to second language teacher education (Johnson, 2009; Johnson & Golombek, 2016, 2020). In tandem with Sociocultural Theory, I used the comprehensive model of Activity Theory as education researchers have used to employ the works of Leont'ev (1974, 1978) and Engeström (2012, 2015) in contexts similar to the complexities of my work situation (Barnard, 2010; Clarà, 2015a; H. T. M. Nguyen & Yang, 2018; Yan & Yang, 2019; Yazan, 2015). I used these two theories, then, to serve as the foundation for this study.

To present this information, I first discuss Sociocultural Theory and the core components that informed my research. I then present an overview of Activity Theory and the core components germane to my study. I conclude with the implications of having used this theoretical framework for this study.

Sociocultural Theory

Before teachers are able to build the skills and knowledge needed to teach students well, they need to immerse themselves in an environment conducive to that endeavor (Mercer & Gregersen, 2020). Vygotsky's principle of social genesis allows for the development of a framework where individuals build their cognitive understanding of concepts through interactions informed by cultural, historical, contextual, and social factors (Johnson & Golombek, 2020; John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996; Ngo, 2018). Within these interactions, teachers go through a process of internalization where they synthesize their everyday concepts with academic concepts into true concepts. They, additionally, have opportunities to influence and support each other in differentiated ways as mediated by their zone of proximal development concerning their individual and shared

experiences and knowledge (Benzehaf, 2016; Edwards & D'arcy, 2004; John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996; Margolis, 2020; Smagorinsky, 2013; Warford, 2011; Xi & Lantolf, 2021). These two components of Sociocultural Theory are fundamental to my conceptualization of the learning process.

These components have developed over time. As with much of Lev Vygotsky's work and the work derived from his ideas, there are multiple interpretations (van der Veer & Yasnitsky, 2011; Vasileva & Balyasnikova, 2019). Many scholars harbor concerns that many who use ideas attributed to Vygotsky have a superficial or incomplete understanding of them (Margolis, 2020; Newman & Latifi, 2021; Smagorinsky, 2018; van der Veer & Yasnitsky, 2011; Xi & Lantolf, 2021). Many have interpreted Vygotsky's ideas in unintended ways that move their intent beyond their original meaning, but they are used to justify different practices. For example, many people associate the concept of scaffolding students' learning with the zone of proximal development (Margolis, 2020; Smagorinsky, 2018; Xi & Lantolf, 2021). Scaffolding is an idea that developed based on tangential interpretations of Vygotsky's translated works (Smagorinsky, 2018; Xi & Lantolf, 2021). In essence, the idea of scaffolding is that instructors need a framework for students to learn as increasingly challenging tasks are given to students so they progressively develop (Foley, 1994). Vygotsky never mentions this concept in any of his research or publications. The result is that many people, such as teachers, have linked the idea of scaffolding with the zone of proximal development. Scaffolding differs from the zone of proximal development; they are not synonymous. I, too, share these concerns about how Vygotsky's ideas are understood and applied.

To make my understanding of the two core concepts of Vygotsky's work I used transparent, I explain my understanding of them. I first explain the importance of thinking in concepts. I then discuss the zone of proximal development.

Thinking in Concepts

Teachers' work environments are mediated spaces between individuals and the social systems where they are members (Johnson & Golombek, 2020). Semiotic systems, including language and design, serve as the bridge between external activities into internal processes (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996; Vasileva & Balyasnikova, 2019). When individuals interact with one another through activities and dialogue in their social contexts, they begin a process of internalizing the information from those activities through an ongoing and dynamic process. The quality of that process is affected by cultural, historical, contextual, and social factors. This process, then, differs for each person.

While all participants, such as teachers, begin to internalize the information through mutually engaged activities, they process that information differently based on their prior experiences. People develop a unique perspective based on their experiences and surface awareness of those experiences: their everyday concepts (Bakhurst, 2007; Johnson & Golombek, 2016; Vygotsky, 1987). These are the concepts people develop spontaneously as they make sense of phenomena in the world around them in the "absence of systematic instruction" (Karpov, 2003, p. 65). In contrast to everyday concepts are academic concepts that individuals acquire through formal learning that allows people to think beyond commonplace matters (Johnson & Golombek, 2016; Vygotsky, 1987). These concepts originate in an empirical understanding of the world

developed through scientific inquiry, which includes inquiry in the natural and social sciences and the humanities (Johnson & Golombek, 2011; Karpov, 2003). These two concepts exist with respect to each other as the concrete understanding of the world through experiences and the abstract understanding of the world through academic knowledge; they can be assimilated into one another to become a true concept as the concrete ascends to the academic and the academic descends to the concrete (Karpov, 2003; Vygotsky, 1987). In essence, this process occurs when people take the knowledge they have learned, such as pedagogical knowledge of English as a foreign language teaching, and contemplate on their prior experiences, such as how they learned a foreign language in school, and reflect and rethink upon both to develop a true concept.

Such a process leaves open questions about the essence of those true concepts. What one person may consider a true concept, another person may consider false. These possibilities exist due to the personal nature of the internalization process; a process that is ongoing and in flux (Bakhurst, 2007). The concept of objective truth from a positivist perspective of the world differs from true concepts. Truth in this essence belongs to what the individual considers true from synthesizing everyday and academic concepts (Johnson & Golombek, 2016; M. H. Nguyen, 2019). This truth is affected by the situated context individuals find themselves in and their affective state during this process as these individuals develop true concepts (Clarà, 2013, 2015a; Johnson & Golombek, 2016, 2020; Lantolf & Swain, 2019; Vygotsky, 1994). This perspective of learning and the understanding of what is learned can be mediated.

In addition to these issues concerning true concepts, there also exists the possibility that individuals at times will be unable to develop true concepts, as Vygotsky

(1987) noted individuals are at times unable to do. In such situations, people may think in complexes or pseudoconcepts, which are developmental stages toward thinking in concepts that approximate them but include inconsistencies (Smagorinsky, 2013, 2020). When people think in complexes, they accept any connections made that seem logical based on the empirical evidence available (Smagorinsky, 2013; Vygotsky, 1987). Pseudoconcepts are a bridge between thinking in complexes and thinking in concepts (Vygotsky, 1987). On the surface, pseudoconcepts appear like concepts, but they are based on the same process of connections or associations of complexes. Individuals thinking in complexes and pseudoconcepts are unable to understand the principles associated with concepts and then apply those principles to other situations (Margolis, 2020; Smagorinsky, 2013, 2020; Vygotsky, 1987).

Thinking in complexes and pseudoconcepts is a natural occurrence in people's learning and development (Vygotsky, 1987). When individuals begin learning how to become teachers, they initiate a process they will traverse throughout their careers to develop pedagogical, true concepts. In that process, they may make misconstrued associations. With proper mediated and responsive guidance and practice, these teachers may move toward the development of true concepts (Johnson & Golombek, 2016; Margolis, 2020; Smagorinsky, 2013, 2020).

True concepts, then, require mediation from more experienced and learned others to help foster development (Johnson & Golombek, 2016; Vygotsky, 1987; Wertsch, 2007). As these true concepts develop, they impact the practice that emerges. Those with true concepts are better able to articulate how their lived experiences and formal knowledge affects practice. For teachers, this reflects the process they go through in

synthesizing the knowledge they learn in their teacher education with their experiences as students and teachers. It is an ongoing process.

True concepts are ephemeral constructs. People continue to develop and transform them as they encounter new phenomena and learning experiences that confirm or question the veracity of true concepts given changes in context and knowledge (Bakhurst, 2007; Johnson & Golombek, 2011, 2016; Ngo, 2018). These concepts are personal and reflect how individuals comprehend phenomena, as such there is always the possibility of flawed understanding. Cultural, historical, contextual, and social factors complicate the development of true concepts as well. The competing forces within each of these factors in informing the development of a true concept affect individuals in a myriad of ways (Smagorinsky, 2013, 2020). Again, true concepts are not universal but individual. They are informed by these factors but ultimately a true concept may seem false to another based on how that person internalized those factors within specific circumstances unique to that person (Lantolf & Swain, 2019; Veresov, 2017). This understanding is crucial in the study of how teachers may learn and develop because of the plethora of mediating forces that influence them (Smagorinsky, 2013).

Supporting Studies

Learned others who are asked to guide teachers in their learning and development, then, need to ensure the tools mediating that process are of a quality and character to ensure those undergoing that process can meet their full potential in developing situationally appropriate true concepts. Ngo (2018) in her narrative inquiry of a Vietnamese English writing instructor presented examples of the interplay between everyday and academic concepts. This university teacher sought to develop a course

structure for her academic English writing class. She, however, had little formal training in how to structure such a course. She, thus, relied on her everyday concepts from her experiences as an undergraduate student to structure the course. For example, this teacher as an undergraduate had poor experiences with group work and designed her course to focus on individual work. In contrast, when presented with academic concepts mediated by a learned other, this teacher developed a more informed practice. Her experience in her master's course in Australia led her to question everyday concepts as she learned academic concepts through lectures, practicums, and specific texts. With additional experiences, this teacher's true concepts evolved and changed with the addition or absence of academic concepts. For teachers, then, there will always be gaps in their knowledge. How they address those gaps and use everyday, academic, or true concepts varies with the availability of mediating tools and individuals to help in that endeavor.

The importance of teacher educators in guiding and mediating the process of how pre-service or novice teachers develop true concepts from everyday and academic concepts is critical in how true concepts influence teaching practices (Arshavskaya, 2014; Johnson & Golombek, 2016; M. H. Nguyen, 2019; Tajeddin & Aryaeian, 2017). Focusing on the dialogue between a teacher educator and a pre-service teacher, Arshavskaya (2014) studied how a teacher educator at a university in the United States provided mediated support through the use of a reflective blog. The pre-service teacher expressed everyday concepts in a series of blog entries. With each entry, the teacher educator provided mediation with academic concepts, such as renaming and refocusing concerns the teaching candidate had in instructing students. Through such acts, the

teacher educator provided support and knowledge in guiding the pre-service teacher in developing true concepts.

While teacher educators or other experts may help mediate the process of developing true concepts, this process is ongoing and iterative as Tajeddin and Aryaeian (2017) contend. In their study, they interviewed 12 Iranian teachers who had differing years of experience as English language instructors. They found that regardless of experience these teachers had similar ideas about pedagogical practices. Yet, the experienced teachers expressed these ideas in ways aligned with current understandings of English language teaching pedagogy based on continued development and practice. The experienced teachers continued to develop themselves. Tajeddin and Aryaeian (2017) assert that ongoing professional development through mediated forms provides teachers with opportunities to take their experiences instructing students, current pedagogical practices, and mediation from experts or tools to help teachers develop their true concepts.

Considerations for Applying in Practice

This engagement of teachers assimilating their everyday concepts with their academic concepts into true concepts is a realization that teachers are complex with histories and experiences that mediate their understanding of the knowledge they learn (Freeman, 2020; Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Hiver, Whiteside, et al., 2021; Johnson & Golombek, 2016, 2020; J. Lee et al., 2016; Smagorinsky, 2013, 2020). This stance in language education broadly, and in English language teaching specifically, has emphasized the push towards empowering teachers to evaluate their academic concepts with their everyday concepts.

How they accomplish this task is a concern within my former work environment. The way the teachers in the organization develop their understanding occurs in social contexts and is mediated by learned others and artifacts. To develop true concepts, teachers need to engage in that process with their colleagues. As they collaborate, they are better positioned to develop their true concepts as they work with more learned individuals who have the expertise they have yet to develop (Johnson & Golombek, 2016; Vasileva & Balyasnikova, 2019; Warford, 2011; Wertsch, 2007). Additionally, teachers may view the innovation configurations map as an actant where they work through it to interpret the map in ways that will allow them to reach their potential (Benzehaf, 2016; Prior, 2008; Vermeir & Kelchtermans, 2020). As the then Curriculum Director and I authored the innovation configurations map, our ideas and understanding concerning guided reading are imbued within it. Teachers need to contemplate how they understand the content, their acceptance or rejection of aspects of it, and how they take what they learn and apply it in their lessons (Graves, 2021; Shkedi, 2009). In all the permutations that mediation occurs, the social contexts and the people involved are continuously engaged in this dynamic process. This understanding informs how I interacted with participants during this research, as well as how I constructed the design of my study. Teachers need to know how to reflect on that assimilation process and decide how they will develop their ability to articulate their ideas that are appropriate for them and the systems in which they teach (Clarà, 2015b; Hiver, Whiteside, et al., 2021).

Zone of Proximal Development

A mediating tool to help guide teachers to develop that awareness is the zone of proximal development. The underlying concept of the zone of proximal development is

that the distance between what a learner is able to do independently and what that learner is able to do with assistance can be reduced and reformulated with appropriate guidance (Vygotsky, 1978). While originally conceived for how children learn, scholars have interpreted the zone of proximal development in several ways on the role internalization has (Lave & Wenger, 1991). When teachers participate in teacher education or professional learning programs, their instructors can mediate their progress based on their zone of proximal development in relation to the desired skills and knowledge they seek to gain (Benzehaf, 2016; Johnson & Golombek, 2016; Warford, 2011). This process is a long-term endeavor meant to guide teachers' continued learning and development within their contexts (Margolis, 2020; Smagorinsky, 2018; Xi & Lantolf, 2021). In the development of teachers in my former work setting, then, academic staff designated to support the development of these teachers need to consider the unique and ephemeral circumstances, affective states, and backgrounds of these teachers (Agnolotto et al., 2021; Feryok, 2020; Golombek & Doran, 2014; Johnson & Worden, 2014). They in tandem need to introduce mediating tools and activities that help guide teachers' short-term and long-term development within their zone of proximal development.

There are three ways to conceptualize the use of the zone of proximal development for teacher development (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The Vygotskian concept of the distance between potential ability and independent ability is germane to teachers who are learning new concepts related to their practice. For instructors and trainers who are seeking to develop teachers, there is always an underlying limit to what teachers are capable of doing based on individual knowledge and experience. Being cognizant that everyone has the potential to use a new skill and apply it does not mean every individual

will be capable of doing it without proper guidance (Lave & Wenger, 1991; H. Yang & Bernat, 2011). Being aware that adults have a zone of proximal development is crucial to successful teacher education and in-service development (Warford, 2011). This recognition is important because interaction can occur with people of equal capability, those with lesser capability, those with more capability, and with self-capability to learn vicariously through academic resources like academic articles (Benzehaf, 2016). Within these possibilities, then, individuals experience a dynamic process of learning that may help with their learning and development (Smagorinsky, 2018; Xi & Lantolf, 2021).

But the zone of proximal development is not limited to the process of learning through an external learning context, it may also occur within the individual as mediated by the everyday concepts and academic concepts being internalized into true concepts (Johnson & Golombek, 2016; Lave & Wenger, 1991). The internalization process individuals go through is to reduce the distance between the everyday and the academic concepts to reach true concepts. This process is facilitated by the zone of proximal development as the cultural knowledge produced in the social context is reduced in the distance to the lived experience of the individual that occurs through socialization (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In a professional teaching setting, induction, mentorship, and team-teaching are examples of ways to socialize everyday and academic concepts into true concepts (Banegas, 2022; Benzehaf, 2016; Gakonga, 2019; Johnson & Golombek, 2016; Ngo, 2018; Orland-Barak, 2021; Orland-Barak & Wang, 2021; Warford, 2011). Each center within the organization is unique with individuals who continuously build and maintain that environment. The culture within these centers is important for the development of teachers. The emphasis academic leadership from within and outside

these centers place on the development of teachers influences how learning activities and opportunities are enacted (Wenger, 1998, 2010). Providing mediating tools, such as the innovation configurations map for guided reading, is one component that needs to be connected with strong support and guidance from learned individuals within their shared context, whether they be formal or informal leaders within centers (Blair et al., 2020; Chang, 2021). For the innovation configurations to benefit teachers in the development of true concepts, they need a social environment that will help foster that development.

These two interpretations of the zone of proximal development are ways individuals internalize the learning process, but the zone of proximal development can also be seen externally through the distance between the actions of the individuals in the social system they participate in collectively and the potential social system that can be generated through their interactions (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Each participant brings a history and understanding of the social system, and through participating in joint actions, they transform their practice collectively to develop a community of practice (Edwards & D'arcy, 2004; Lave & Wenger, 1991; McMillan et al., 2016; Wenger, 1998, 2010; H. Yang & Bernat, 2011). The distance between individual actions and understanding with social, collective actions and understanding is an externalized view of the zone of proximal development. When individuals externalize their lived experiences and knowledge into their social context, they reduce the distance between them and that context to develop a shared environment.

In practice, the zone of proximal development can be used to help understand the readiness of teachers to implement curricular changes based on how they are socialized to use it, but at the same time also reflect upon the distance between what is expected of

them with what they are able to do in the classroom given their social situation (H. Yang & Bernat, 2011). Those within these circumstances need to share explicitly with their colleagues what they know and are capable of doing to avoid misconceptions about what teachers are to do and how they are to do it (Edwards, 2005, 2007; Johnson & Golombek, 2016, 2020). The use of innovation configurations provides a mediating tool in giving everyone a shared resource to understand what institutional expectations are. How they internalize that information within their zone of proximal development, however, requires mediation through both the internal and external aspects of the zone of proximal development. Learned and capable others are required to provide mediation that takes, which takes into account the various needs of teachers within their unique circumstances (Agnoletto et al., 2021; Fairley, 2020; Feryok, 2020; Golombek & Doran, 2014; Johnson & Golombek, 2016; Johnson & Worden, 2014; Worden, 2015; Yazan, 2018). As teachers go through this process, they are more able to actualize true concepts as they reconcile their everyday and academic concepts.

Supporting Studies

Yang and Bernat (2011) used this understanding of the zone of proximal development in their study of two Chinese teachers at a university in central China who were beginning to implement a new mandated curriculum in their English courses. The two teachers were at different stages of their careers. One teacher was a recent hire who had just received a master's degree in reading education from a university in the United States. The other teacher was a senior professor who had worked at the university and taught many classes for 17 years. Their understanding of the new academic curriculum was quite strong. For the novice teacher, the curriculum followed the academic

knowledge and skills she learned in her master's course; for the senior teacher, her experience in teaching reading and her continued learning through professional development programs were reflected in the new curriculum. But the difference between the two emerged in how they had been socialized to apply that knowledge. The novice teacher was socialized in an American university system which encouraged more critical thinking and questioning by students in the classroom, whereas Chinese university students were accustomed to lectures and passively receiving information without questioning what they had learned. When she applied interactive and discursive methods in her classes, she found students resisted. As a result, this teacher was demoralized and began to change her practices to suit the expectations of her students. The senior teacher, though, had been socialized within the classroom for several years and understood how Chinese university students learned. With that awareness, she developed ways to address students that she found effective. The distance between the two teachers' academic concepts and their everyday concepts from teaching in the classroom with students differed. To mitigate this difference, Yang and Bernat (2011) suggested that senior teachers should work with novice teachers to socialize them into the system to help them reduce that distance, but it is a process that will occur over time. Using the zone of proximal development in such a fashion allows for an understanding that there are gaps for novice teachers who have acquired the necessary academic concepts but lack the everyday concepts that come with practice. This understanding provides senior teachers the awareness that they can help novice teachers close that distance and provide the guidance novice teachers need to develop their true concepts.

In practice, those with expertise in a particular field, such as in language teacher educator preparation, may guide learners as they develop domain-specific knowledge and skills (Delaney, 2012; Gakonga, 2019; Johnson, 2015; Orland-Barak & Wang, 2021). While working with a cohort of teacher education students in an English as a foreign language methodology class, Johnson (2015) provided responsive guidance for their development by dynamically engaging them with pedagogic content knowledge relevant to their needs during their teaching practicums. The cohort worked with the instructor and with each other on developing pedagogic knowledge and skills using role-playing scenarios on how they would teach a grammatical point to students in their practicums. The instructor of the course provided feedback, guidance, and content knowledge as needed to bridge where the students were to where they needed to be. Going through this process prior to their actual teaching helped them build their understanding of the grammatical point and how to instruct it together. It encouraged them to analyze what they were doing as they reflected upon their collective actions. Throughout this process, the instructor of the course guided this cohort of students to refine their understanding and practices.

Mediating tools may also serve as a means of guiding individuals to knowledge and skill development through the zone of proximal development (Benzehaf, 2016; Warford, 2011). Studying the influence the Transition from Primary to Secondary School-file had on educators in Belgium, the researchers in this project studied how this mediating document influenced those who used it and affected their actions (März et al., 2017; Vermeir et al., 2017). The Transition from Primary to Secondary School-file required teachers at the primary level to fill out this document for the transfer of pertinent

information about students that they would present to parents. Parents would then have the option of presenting this information to the secondary school where they would enroll their child. Primary and secondary educators would inform parents of the benefits of sharing this file and how they could help ease the transition from primary to secondary school as the secondary school teachers would have information that would guide the continuity of care for their child. As teachers learned how to complete and comprehend the document, the construct of it began to influence how teachers conceptualized student care and the importance of continuity. The document itself served as the source of mediation for those who used it and provided awareness and development for the teachers based on the design and content the developers of the file integrated into it.

All three aspects of the zone of proximal development play an essential role in the learning process. Individuals learn from their social context and the people who live and participate in those contexts. They begin internalizing what they learn with guidance from others and the social environment they are in. In tandem is an external process of how individuals affect each other and impact their social environments. This dynamic process helps in framing how teachers learn and develop. As teachers internalize the knowledge they receive through their education and training, they are also learning about the social structures of the environment in which they work. This process is a life-term endeavor as individuals continuously learn informally and formally.

Considerations for Applying in Practice

While the zone of proximal development is a useful construct for understanding the learning and development of individuals, many contemporary researchers have concerns about how people have understood and applied Vygotskian sociocultural

perspectives. Four salient issues have emerged. The first concerns the general short-term manner in which the zone of proximal development is used in learning contexts (Johnson & Golombek, 2016; Margolis, 2020; Smagorinsky, 2018). Many people apply the zone of proximal development for short-term learning situations where students learn new information and skills meant to help with their immediate development (Smagorinsky, 2018). The long-term learning and development of individuals are neglected, which leads many teachers to think of learning as a segmented process of sequential development. Yet, the zone of proximal development is better conceived as an iterative process where learning and development occur as a long-term endeavor, or even a life-term endeavor, where all that an individual learns influences that process. Thus, should a learner first learn a new academic concept and still has difficulty comprehending it, the learning and development process continues until the learner has a good grasp of the concept. This understanding of the zone of proximal development, however, requires a way of looking at learning and development in a way that is atypical of many educational settings where learning is viewed as sequential and building on previously learned content regardless of how well students learn and understand that information (Margolis, 2020; Xi & Lantolf, 2021).

This arises in the second issue of the association of the concept of scaffolding with the zone of proximal development (Smagorinsky, 2018; Xi & Lantolf, 2021). As mentioned earlier, scaffolding is a concept developed from the zone of proximal development but is not the same as it. Xi and Lantolf (2021) emphasize that the zone of proximal development needs to be understood in organic terms where the seed of development requires nurturing and time to bloom to its full potential. The idea of

scaffolding, however, adheres to the premise of a pre-thought-out trajectory for learning and development. The application of such trajectories requires great care and consideration of three core tenets of scaffolding: (1) teachers and students have a shared understanding of learning goals, (2) teachers provide contingent support based on students' needs during instruction, and (3) students gradually take on the responsibility of applying what they learn from their teachers (Brownfield & Wilkinson, 2018).

Adhering to these three tenets is a challenge and requires guidance and practice on the part of teachers. In the case of fourth-grade bilingual English language learners in the United States, the teacher of these students found it challenging to provide contingent support for students (Rodriguez-Mojica, 2019). With ten years of experience, this teacher had planned to guide students as they developed their ability to provide explanations for their thought processes when discussing different texts. While that was the pre-thought-out objective, in practice many unexpected occurrences during the lesson proved challenging for the teacher to address. At times the support the teacher gave constrained and confused students in how to answer discussion questions. Even with the best of intentions and understanding of what students need, the pre-thought-out trajectory required continued modifications of the lesson based on students' needs. In tandem with the long-term need to understand the learning and development process individuals go through, teachers need to be aware that learning and development are subjective. They will occur in unanticipated ways for each individual even with the best of planning.

These two issues converge on the third concern of how learning and development is a dynamic process between the learned individual and learners (Chang, 2021; el Kadri et al., 2017; Johnson & Golombek, 2016; Margolis, 2020). Within Sociocultural Theory

the dialectic unit of instruction and learning is understood in the concept of *obuchenie* (Johnson, 2015; Johnson & Golombek, 2016; Xi & Lantolf, 2021). This dialectic unit is a collaborative activity of all involved in the learning and development experience (Johnson, 2015). Within educational settings, the process of teaching-learning occurs in a dynamic, multidirectional process to ensure effective learning and development. This learning and development are for both the learner and the teacher. As teachers instruct students and use mediating tools, their students influence their understanding of how well students respond to that information. Students, thus, mediate the learning process actively and passively through that process (Margolis, 2020). Teachers need to be cognizant of how students engage in the process and respond to their needs instead of adhering to a delineated structure to follow. Students help shape the teacher's learning and development as new insights are learned of the content and process. With this knowledge teachers need to think about how students can learn and develop content in ways appropriate for them actively, collaboratively, creatively, individually, or in any combination appropriate for that specific learning context (Chang, 2021; Johnson & Golombek, 2016; Margolis, 2020).

Being cognizant of what students need for learning to occur relates to the fourth concern of the affective state of those within these dynamic relationships. Individuals experience and understand events in ways that are unique to them that are influenced by internal and external factors (Clarà, 2013; Johnson & Golombek, 2016, 2020; Lantolf & Swain, 2019; Mahn & John-Steiner, 2002; Mok, 2017). Vygotsky (1994) used the Russian term *perezhivanie* to encapsulate this state of being. This term is a nuanced one in Russian and has no direct translation in English (Clarà, 2016a; Cole & Gajdamschko,

2016). *Perezhivanie*, though, roughly corresponds to how people's affective states in specific circumstances influence their perceptions of what and how they learn, as well as how different environments and contexts affect that process (Mok, 2017). Such a situation is true for both students (Agnoletto et al., 2021; Antoniadou, 2011b; Golombek & Doran, 2014; Johnson & Worden, 2014) and teachers (Borg, 2019; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021; Golombek, 2015; Hiver, Whiteside, et al., 2021). Within the dynamic relationship between students and teachers, ephemeral circumstances will affect the learning process of everyone involved. How students and teachers work within their zones of proximal development is contingent upon events as they occur, as well as their emotional state at any given moment (Johnson & Golombek, 2016). Equally important is that time affects how what individuals learn is understood and interpreted in the present and the future based on changing circumstances and the accumulation of experiences (Feryok, 2020; Smirnova, 2020). As teachers work with their students, they need to be aware of how students are experiencing the learning process so they can provide contingent and responsive guidance within their students' zones of proximal development that is appropriate (Johnson & Golombek, 2016; M. H. Nguyen, 2019). And at the same time, teachers need to be self-aware of their emotional state and how it affects the guidance and instruction they provide vis-à-vis their students (Golombek, 2015). This awareness is necessary to ensure that the learning process within their students' zone of proximal development is as effective as it can be within their environments at any given moment.

These four concerns stem from an understanding of the zone of proximal development as it relates to the process of learning and development itself and not with

formal education as implemented in many settings. This iterative process requires teachers to think of the long-term needs of students instead of just the short-term needs of content they are to cover in a specific time frame. They also need to consider that this process is organic and involves individuals who enact their agency in ways that are at times unpredictable. Instructors need to understand their students and tailor their instruction to the best of their abilities that are contingent and responsive to the needs of their students and the learning situation instead of rigid adherence to a pre-planned structure.

Additionally, teachers themselves are not passive receptors. They, too, are active learners who guide their education instructors, mentors, supervisors, and curriculum developers. They take an active role in shaping their social and learning environment as they become members of their work community (Cross, 2020; Engeström, 1999; Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998, 2010). Their needs help shape the contours others provide for them. The innovation configurations map the then Curriculum Director and I developed is a tool we hoped would catalyze teachers' development. Yet, mindful that teachers will develop their understanding in ways uniquely their own, the question of how they develop that awareness is of great import.

Activity Theory

In using Sociocultural Theory to explain how I conceive the way people develop and learn, I emphasize the social activities involved in that development and learning process (Holzman, 2018; Johnson, 2015). The social environments individuals live and work in are dynamic places and are numerous. Individuals interact with others in varying ways unique to their shared social context, which affects individuals in that setting and

future settings (Engeström, 2015). The activities that occur between people and the social contexts they are in at any given moment mediate this interplay between environments and individuals (Engeström, 2015; Leont'ev, 1974, 1978; Roth, 2004).

As a “comprehensive model of the interrelated elements of an activity system” (Barnard, 2010, p. 26), Activity Theory provides a framework for how to investigate teachers as they develop their understanding of an innovation configurations map for reading instruction in their social contexts. Members of an activity system engage with one another to achieve individual and collective outcomes when motivated to do so (Yazan, 2015). They attain these outcomes through specific actions that comprise an activity and via mediated tools (Leont'ev, 1978). Achieving an outcome, thus, is dependent on the quality of the actions comprising the activity, the contributions of members of that activity system, and contextual factors influencing the activity (Yazan, 2015). As such, Activity Theory complements Sociocultural Theory by facilitating a framework for studying how individuals learn and develop within their unique contexts (Barnard, 2010).

In the process of considering the application of Activity Theory to my dissertation, I encountered three iterations of Activity Theory with numerous interpretations of those iterations. Activity Theory emerged from the work of Lev Vygotsky and his work on mediation (Martin & Peim, 2009; Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). The first iteration of Activity Theory is foundational. During this period Vygotsky was working on other ideas and premises related to learning and development, but this work would inspire later scholars. During the second generation of Activity Theory, Aleksei N. Leont'ev (1974, 1978), a student and later collaborator of Vygotsky, emerged as the key

architect of Activity Theory. Moving beyond mediation, Leont'ev emphasized the importance of the accumulation of actions leading to activities, which resulted in outcomes (Martin & Peim, 2009). This second iteration of Activity Theory focused on modeling how activities within social contexts are organized and push human learning and development. Yrjö Engeström (2015) further developed Activity Theory into its third iteration with the emphasis on an activity's context, as well as the multiplicity of activity systems that may exist in a given context. With these three iterations of Activity Theory, scholars have interpreted and expanded on the theory in numerous ways. Some have combined aspects of the different iterations; others have focused on a version of Activity Theory emphasizing the psychological aspects of human activity (Bakhurst, 2009; Levant, 2018). As a result, some scholars critique that the philosophical and practical aspects of the theory are not well connected (Levant, 2018). While others warn that there are too many interpretations for it to maintain coherence as a theory (Martin & Peim, 2009).

To address these concerns, I worked to synthesize what I knew about Activity Theory and its underlying premise. I went back to the work of Leont'ev (1974, 1978) to understand what activity systems are and how Engeström (2015) expanded on his work. There is a continuum of complexity with how Engeström (2012, 2015) expanded the idea of the activity system to include the interactions of multiple activity systems at the individual and organizational levels. For example, a teacher in the organization could be a member of multiple activity systems; work is but one activity system. The work activity system at one of our centers also interacts with other work activity systems of other centers. To study that level of complexity is a challenge for one researcher and is

untenable. I, thus, followed what other researchers in teacher education have done. These researchers situated their research within the continuum of complexity relevant to their study and explained the appropriateness of that placement (e.g., H. T. M. Nguyen & Yang, 2018; Yan & Yang, 2019; Yazan, 2015).

I next describe the contours of the activity systems I studied in my research. I, additionally, explore how teachers worked within their activity systems as they faced contradictions between everyday and academic concepts as they worked to achieve true concepts.

Model of an Activity System

While I maintained a mindful understanding of external factors that influenced individuals within their activity systems, I focused on the work activity systems of the centers, how they used the mediating tool of an innovation configurations map, and what effects it had on their instruction. This focus was important because the activity system is the central focus of Activity Theory. Within an activity system, there is the desired outcome that results from meeting the different objectives of activity systems (Leont'ev, 1974). To reach an outcome, those engaging within activity systems focus on an object, or objective, for the activity they seek to accomplish (Engeström, 1999, 2015; Leont'ev, 1974, 1978). To achieve these objectives, they enact a series of actions to meet the objective of the activity. To realize these actions, people select appropriate operations, or means, of how to engage those actions that meet contextual conditions (Leont'ev, 1978). Taken together, operations and actions comprise the activity system, which is the context of a research study. As Nardi (1996) explains:

What takes place in an activity system composed of object, actions, and operation, is the context. Context is constituted through the enactment of an activity involving people and artifacts. Context is not an outer container or shell inside of which people behave in certain ways. People consciously and deliberately generate contexts (activities) in part through their own objects; hence context is not just “out there.” (p. 38)

Yet, while the activity system is the focus of research, the actions of the people within that activity system imbue meaning into it (Cross, 2020; Stetsenko, 2019, 2020). Within the activity system, people, tools, and settings influence each other. This activity system and all the constituting components are constantly in motion (Leont’ev, 1974). The nature of each activity is unique and requires continuous adjustments based on internal and external factors, such as the emotional state of participants (Clarà, 2015a; Roth, 2007) or unexpected disruptions (Engeström, 1999). The activities individuals engage in, thus, are physical and symbolic for community members as they work to reach both individual and collective goals (Valencia et al., 2009; Yazan, 2015).

The object in the activity system is the focus an individual or group of individuals, or agents, work towards (Edwards, 2015; Engeström, 1999; Stetsenko, 2019, 2020; Yazan, 2015). This work does not occur in a vacuum. A complex node of dynamic connections acts upon each other in ways unique to a specific activity system. Between the agents and the objects, there are artifacts, both physical and symbolic, that mediate that process. One such artifact is language and how it defines how people address reaching the object. It, too, is affected by individuals and how they use and understand the language themselves in communicating ideas. These individuals exist within

communities with rules and divisions that affect the relationships between one another and how they may work together. Compounded on this situation is that these individuals are constantly adjusting to their circumstances based on their emotional state at any given moment as they work on the object of the activity system (Clarà, 2015a; Roth, 2007).

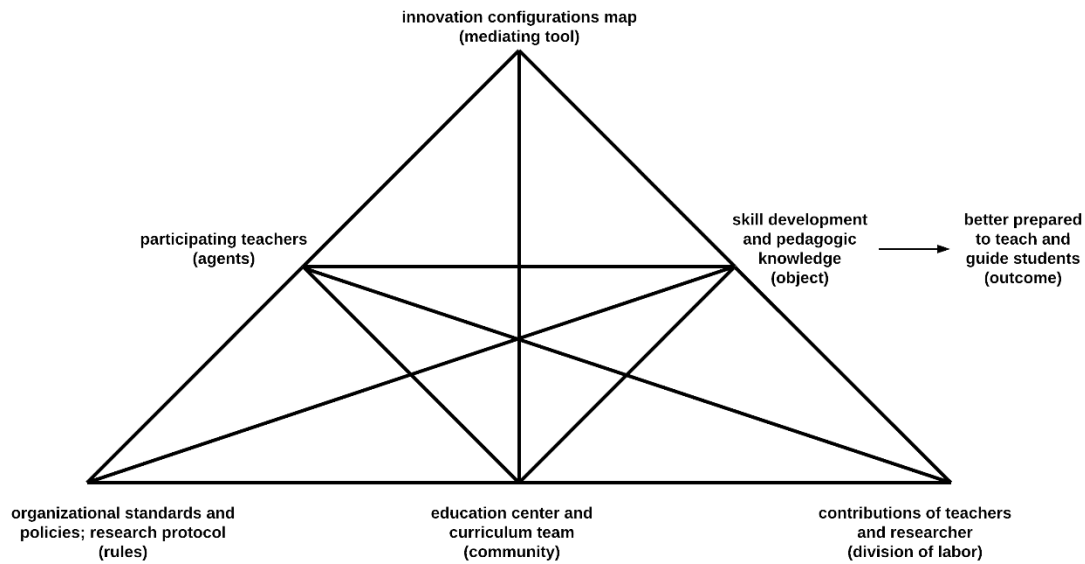
While the activity system is the context I studied, participants within these systems are crucial for the existence of those systems. The methods I used to collect data on the activity systems focused on how teachers developed their understanding of the innovation configurations map and how they applied it, which emphasized their agency within their activity system (Clarà, 2013, 2015b; Edwards, 2005, 2007, 2015; Edwards & D'arcy, 2004; Feryok, 2009, 2012; Stetsenko, 2019, 2020). Their agency within the activity system was important in understanding how they developed their comprehension of the innovation configurations. It is, for this reason, I use the term agent and not the more commonly used term subject when I describe the participants in my study.

Thus, an activity system model relevant to my research provided clear delineations of how teacher learning could occur from a sociocultural perspective. Adhering to this model required me to address these components within the activity systems throughout my dissertation study (see Figure 2). It established what kind of data I should collect, possible data analysis, and assessment of whether I reached the desired outcome, which is described as:

- Object: The objective of the study, what it was I hoped to attain. In this case, teachers learning to use the innovation configurations to help them begin the process of developing their skills and knowledge to teach reading in English to their students.

Figure 2

Activity System for Pedagogic Awareness of Guided Reading Instruction



- Agents: Those who did the activity. The teachers in the organization who volunteered for this study. Understanding who these teachers are individually and collectively and how they engaged within the activity system of learning to use the innovation configurations was crucial for this study.
- Mediating Tool(s): What agents used to achieve the object of the activity system. The innovation configurations map was the primary mediating tool, but other mediating tools, such as language and experience, also were a factor. Here Sociocultural Theory was involved as the innovation configurations map served as a mediating tool within a zone of proximal development when viewed as an actant (Benzehaf, 2016; März et al., 2017; Prior, 2008; Vermeir et al., 2017; Vermeir & Kelchtermans, 2020). Teachers' experience and education mediated

how they developed true concepts. Language was important because of how teachers used and processed language (Vasileva & Balyasnikova, 2019).

- Rules: The official and unofficial parameters that regulated the activity system. Official organizational policies for the teachers, the parameters of the research, and hidden rules that influenced the activity system.
- Community: The social grouping that participants resided in. Each center during this study was a unique community, which included teachers, support staff, administrators, parents, and students. With this research, the curriculum team was also a part of the community. It was of great importance for me to describe these communities and how they affected teachers' learning.
- Division of Labor: The organizational hierarchy in place for participants. The teachers in this study had varying seniority. My role as a researcher had me serve as a type of broker between centers and academic administration (Wenger, 1998). It was important for me to describe my positionality in the research and how I was an active participant with a vested interest in what happened from both a research and professional standpoint.
- Outcome: The goal of the activity system. Ideally, teachers became capable of using the innovation configurations map in ways appropriate for them and their contexts to develop the knowledge and the skills they needed to teach their students with confidence.

As I worked on investigating the research questions of this dissertation, I needed to focus on and collect information related to these components. I, additionally, needed to keep in mind that as a curriculum developer, I was not a member of the teachers' local

communities. I could serve as a broker at the borders between different communities, but that was an ephemeral position as I visited centers irregularly a few times a year. I sought to know the contours of the teachers' activity system and how the different factors within that activity system influenced the adoption and use of the innovation configurations map. Additionally, I needed to know if through this activity the innovation configurations map helped teachers, and how my role as a broker affected them. This model, therefore, provided a means for me in focusing on what areas I needed to investigate and what data I needed to collect concerning teachers within their activity systems.

Contradictions

As teachers worked with their activity systems, they needed to comprehend that the various components that affect any activity, which was mediating their development, were reliant on the quality of their actions to work on that object (Yazan, 2015). They needed to understand that their willingness to work with each other to accomplish that goal was important. Their mutual work at times occurred without issue, but at other times there remained divergences in perspectives between members. In tandem was how their contexts affected the dynamics of the group.

In such situations there exist contradictions between what individuals conceive of and what the activity system they are working in enables (Engeström, 2015; Jonassen & Rohrer-Murphy, 1999; Langemeyer & Roth, 2006; Roth, 2004). In these contradictions, change may occur as individuals address the contradictions between their conceptions and the system. But for change to occur, those experiencing the contradictions need to be cognizant of the social context they exist in and work to rectify them (H. Yang & Bernat, 2011). For novice teachers, they may face contradictions between their theoretical

knowledge and the practices that occur in their work environment (Antoniadou, 2011a; Clarà, 2017; Smagorinsky & Barnes, 2014). These contradictions occur because of the unique confluence of people, history, culture, and artifacts that occur in social systems. In addition to the distance that may exist in the zone of proximal development, other factors in the activity system, such as rules and hierarchies, affect each individual and the collective as they work on their shared object.

Within the teachers' activity systems with whom I worked, contradictions emerged as we worked on the innovation configurations. One of the most salient issues was the tension between their identities as teachers and a push to create a business identity due to the for-profit nature of the organization (Yung, 2019). The contradiction between what teachers expected their work should be with the work they were asked to do is an example of a contradiction they faced. When asked to apply the innovation configurations for guided reading into their instructional practices, they confronted how to balance pedagogic knowledge with the business aspects of work. How teachers dealt with those contradictions occurred at the levels of the individual and collective. Working on these contradictions within their shared activity system provided a way to address how to work on these contradictions, but this process does not necessarily have a quick and seamless remedy.

Supporting Studies

Botha (2017) described such contradictions in how teachers at a South African school in Cape Town empowered themselves to make changes in their school activity system in incremental steps. When diverse actors were brought together to enact the object of organizational change at the school, what resulted were numerous

contradictions the actors had to address. These contradictions included organizational and pedagogical traditions that ran counter to the knowledge and practices the teachers thought more appropriate given the contextual and situational changes that had occurred in South Africa from when the organization and pedagogic traditions were initiated. The teachers, thus, had varying views of how to proceed and reconcile the contradictions that would meet their objectives. They worked with each other to deal with these contradictions as a prerequisite to moving forward. What this led to were compromises those participating in the activity system accepted, which allowed them to move on with the process of organizational change. When individuals in this social system, thus, engaged in an activity, it was necessary for everyone involved to reflect on those contradictions and decide how best to work towards rectifying them with appropriate measures. In doing so, the work on the object was greatly enhanced.

The contradictions in an activity system, however, are not always related to localized issues (Levant, 2018). Contradictions exist at the broader societal level influenced by histories and practices outside of the local activity system, but which influence the activity system and participants within it. Awareness of these factors affects how individuals within the activity system reconcile those different levels of contradictions. Because of these different levels, not all contradictions are dealt with effectively and may prove detrimental to the work on the object within an activity system (Langemeyer & Roth, 2006). For those engaged in working on the object of the activity system, failure is always a possibility. Being mindful of the need to contend with contradictions as they emerge is required for a successful outcome. Rahmati et al. (2019) engaged with this possibility in their study of Iranian English language teachers' visions

of their future selves as an indicator of their motivation for professional development. In understanding how the participating teachers dealt with contradictions in their activity systems that affected their motivation, the importance of reflection and exercising agency were critical indicators of whether contradictions were dealt with effectively. Some of the teachers in this study were unable to reconcile contextual factors such as school facilities, overcrowded classes, disengaged students, and pressure from administrators and parents with their expectations of what it meant to be an English teacher in this school. For some of these teachers, the contradictions they faced exerted demotivating influence they were unable or unwilling to overcome. As with any human activity, the effort put forth within the activity system will influence the outcome.

Activity Theory, thus, can guide the process in the development of learning communities that address these objects in a situationally appropriate way and that allow each member of the community to resolve the contradictions that they and the group have concerning how best to work on the object. Yan and Yang (2019) studied the development of a professional learning community in Beijing, China, between a local university researcher with two English language teaching research officers and the teachers they worked with at a public school district. At the onset of this activity there existed contradictions in the expectations of all parties concerning how they were to work with one another on developing this professional community. These contradictions stemmed from differences in understanding of true concepts by all participants based on their lived experiences and knowledge that affected the development of this emergent community. It was only through working on these contradictions with each other that the members of this community began to formulate ways of addressing teachers' needs with

the new ideas the university researcher presented. Through this process, the two teaching research officers served as intermediaries between the researcher and the teachers. They encouraged their teachers to reflect on what they could learn from the researcher. They also worked with the researcher on how to share her information that was relevant to the teachers' classrooms. In this relationship, the activity became interactional with all participants working with each other to work on their shared object of developing their learning community and capacity for expansive learning. With that capacity, members of this learning community developed the tools and skills needed to deal with continuing and future issues and situations that are ill-defined and full of contradictions so that they could continue to improve themselves, their classes, and each other.

Being able to conceptualize the learning environment in which teachers participate through an Activity Theory framework presents opportunities to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the environment and to design ways to enhance the system. Teachers, thus, are afforded lenses that allow them to zoom in on specific issues that need attention, but at the same time to zoom out to see how those issues are interrelated with one another, their contexts, and other people (Feryok, 2012; Pohio, 2016; Rahmati et al., 2019). Yet, more importantly, it presents an opportunity for participants to develop their cognizance of how they are situated in their social environment and the contradictions that exist in the different activity systems they are members of. Having that awareness empowers them to make changes individually and with others that are relevant and appropriate for them.

Implications

The use of Sociocultural Theory, as well as the use of Activity Theory, served as the foundation for how I conceptualize my problem of practice and the people within it. In using this theoretical framework, I hoped to better understand how the teachers and myself worked on our understanding of the identified problem of practice and the use of an innovation configurations map to address it. Through this development, my goal was to work with these teachers so they may develop and empower themselves.

The application of these theories and concepts to my former work context allowed me to better understand how to provide opportunities for the teachers I wished to help. Recognizing that everyone in our shared activity system had unique insights and needs, allowed us to work with each other to provide opportunities for change and development shared and learned from one another. It also provided opportunities to realize that the English private supplemental tutoring centers throughout the organization are unique contexts that require specific ways of addressing the curriculum appropriate for their location and their teachers (Banegas, 2019; Graves, 2021; Quinn & Kim, 2017). But equally true was the realization that they were not alone and that other activity systems, such as other centers and administrative support staff, were also there to support and work with them. I also needed to recognize what my role as a curriculum developer in this study was and how my fellow curriculum developers and I influenced teachers' development as border agents between different activity systems. Through this process, I strove for teachers to better understand the curriculum and how to augment it by working with each other to enhance themselves and the institution we all work for.

CHAPTER 3

THE INNOVATION

As I researched, reflected upon, and discussed my situation with people inside and outside of work, I gravitated to the potential an innovation configurations map might have in helping address my problem of practice. The contextual factors I described in chapter one delineated the possibilities of what I was able to introduce into my work environment. These factors, as well as my ontological and epistemological perspective of learning as a social endeavor, led me to craft a theoretical framework using Sociocultural and Activity Theory as I explained in chapter two. Using this theoretical framework and taking into consideration the contextual factors influencing my problem of practice, the use of an innovation configurations map aligned with the needs of the teachers at our centers.

To understand the reasons why I came to this conclusion, I first describe in this chapter what innovation configurations are and how others have used them in educational contexts. Then I will explain how they addressed the contextual needs of my situation. I conclude with an explanation of how the innovation configurations are orientated with my theoretical framework.

Innovation Configurations

Innovation configurations are part of the Concerns-Based Adoption Model, which provides a framework for how facilitating and assessing the adoption of innovations or reforms into an educational setting (G. E. Hall & Hord, 2011, 2020; Hord et al., 2006). Innovation configurations are one of three core components in this model; the other two are the Stages of Concern and Levels of Use. Each of these components is focused on

guiding the expected adoptee of the innovation or reform in how to implement it effectively (G. E. Hall & Hord, 2020). With the innovation configurations, developers may employ them to help define the ideal target for the implementation of innovations or reforms and the variations possible in how to use them (G. E. Hall & Hord, 2011, 2020; Roy & Hord, 2004). As implementation occurs, teachers will modify and adapt the introduced innovation or reform. Being aware of what the ideal implementation is, though, can assist teachers in making choices that help them move toward the ideal (Roy & Hord, 2004).

Innovation configurations are “word-picture” descriptions of how the innovation may be applied from the intended version, various modified and adapted forms, or nonuse of the innovation (G. E. Hall & Hord, 2020; Roy & Hord, 2004). Innovation configurations are combined to create a map, typically composed of 8 to 15 items; each component typically has 2 to 6 variations for each component (G. E. Hall & Hord, 2020). While the intended variations are written to illustrate what practices are ideal, the inclusion of the nonuse or poor variations illustrates what is happening instead of what is desired (Hord et al., 2006). Including them helps those asked to use the innovation configurations map to reflect on their current practices and to think about how they could improve them. These maps are created in consultation with relevant stakeholders to produce a map that benefits implementers. This collaborative work is done to ensure a consensus is reached on what configurations, components, and variations are included, especially for the idealized variations of each component. Like a map, innovation configurations are a way to understand where teachers are in the implementation process and how they can move toward the idealized forms.

With the Concerns-Based Adoption Model, the additional two components are important in the overall implementation of an introduced innovation or reform. The Stages of Concern component focuses on how teachers feel and perceive the innovation or reform (George et al., 2006; G. E. Hall & Hord, 2020), such as being concerned with the innovation or reform to how they may refocus either in novel ways. The Levels of Use component is focused on how adoptees behave or act towards the innovation or reform from nonuse to integration or reevaluation of the innovation or reform (G. E. Hall et al., 2006; G. E. Hall & Hord, 2020).

The Stages of Concern and Levels of Use constructs are critical components of the Concerns-Based Adoption Model in tandem with the Innovation Configurations construct. Taken together, facilitators of change can positively influence the adoption of the introduced innovation or reform. Yet, the model is predicated on the idea that the change process will take a minimum of three years (G. E. Hall & Hord, 2020). Based on my situation, the full adoption of the model is impractical given the time constraints Arizona State University has placed on how long I have to complete my doctoral studies. That condition, however, is ancillary to the main concern I have in applying the Concerns-Based Adoption Model in its entirety.

As mentioned in chapter 1, the guided reading program is the introduced innovation into my work context. At the end of this project in July 2022, teachers have taught using the revised curriculum for over three and a half years. All the teachers who first implemented the curriculum, however, no longer work with the organization. For these three and half years, new teachers have been onboarded and started teaching with the guided reading curriculum. Some stay for one or two years, and some even longer.

Yet, the expectation of being able to implement the Stages of Concern and Levels of Use constructs with the frequent arrival and departure of teachers would prove challenging. The use of the Innovation Configurations construct, however, has potential in my context based on how others have used it within different educational contexts for limited durations.

Supporting Studies

In one use of innovation configurations, education researchers used them as a means to help teachers develop their ability to reflect on classroom practices. Blamey et al. (2012) studied how four teachers applied an innovation configurations map on vocabulary instruction with preschool students. Based on the researchers' observations and teachers' video self-observations, the authors concluded the teachers were able to use the innovation configurations map to reflect on their classroom practices. Having the innovation configurations allowed the four teachers to plan their lessons according to best practices. When the teachers watched the videos of their instruction, they employed the innovation configurations to guide them to assess their strengths and areas where they needed to improve.

Facilitators of change in educational environments also can use innovation configurations to help assess and provide support for teachers who are implementing the introduced innovations. In her work with a Hong Kong elementary school, Yeung (2012) utilized an innovation configurations map to understand where teachers were in the implementation process of a curriculum focused on higher-order thinking activities. She first developed an innovation configurations map based on observations of what teachers were doing compared to the curricular standards. She then used this map to identify

where teachers were in terms of implementing the curriculum. What she discerned was most teachers were still in a developmental stage of understanding the curricular standards and how to implement them. The majority of teachers needed guidance and practice to foster their use of the innovation configurations to help them implement the new curriculum.

In both situations, people used the innovation configurations as a tool to help those involved in comprehending the situation, as well as provided opportunities to determine what course of action they could take next. In both studies, the scholars leveraged the innovation configurations as the tool to help with pushing forward changes in practices or facilitating guidance on how to make those changes. Both these cases illustrate ways in which an innovation configurations map can serve as a mediating tool in change efforts.

Meeting Contextual Needs

These two cases illustrate ways that an innovation configurations map can meet the needs of teachers in my context. In addressing issues of how teachers need to understand the curriculum, how they develop that awareness, and how they do so in a way mindful of their time constraints, the use of an innovation configurations map offer opportunities to mediate that development.

Concerning the need for teachers to develop their knowledge of the guided reading curriculum, the content of the innovation configurations map gives a detailed accounting of the course's core components (Blamey et al., 2012; Hord et al., 2006). Each of the six configurations— prior knowledge, vocabulary instruction, reading skills and strategies instruction, reading comprehension, class discussion, and written

expression—are divided into components that teachers should address within an idealized guided reading lesson. For each of those components, there are possible variations from the ideal, the more effective variations, and the less effective variations. In this way, teachers are presented with what is considered important for inclusion within a guided reading class (Nicholas et al., 2021). They are also provided information on what that implementation might look like.

From this breakdown of the curriculum into configurations, components, and variations, teachers can use this knowledge to reflect on their areas of strength, as well as areas they need or wish to improve (Blamey et al., 2012; Hord et al., 2006; Yeung, 2012). From there they can use the innovation configurations to make comparisons with how they are currently instructing their lessons with where they would like to reach with their instruction. They make these determinations individually or in consultation with head teachers, curriculum developers, or any other person they trust to support them. The innovation configurations can provide some guidance within the teachers' zone of proximal development to help in that development (Benzehaf, 2016; Warford, 2011). It also provides newer teachers an outline of what a guided reading class consists of if they are unfamiliar with this type of reading structure (Nicholas et al., 2021; Quinn & Kim, 2017). While presenting the entire map might prove overwhelming to these newer teachers, providing them with an overview of the six configurations would give them an initial introduction to the guided reading course's structure. Thus, teachers from their induction are introduced to the course, which they can then continue to learn how to use over time.

As a modular document, teachers can concentrate their attention on the configurations or components most relevant for them individually or collectively if used at the center level (G. E. Hall & Hord, 2020; Hord et al., 2006). There, therefore, are ways teachers may use the innovation configurations respectful of the time constraints they face. While in-depth study and reflection on how to use and apply the innovation configurations would be ideal, teachers can also reflect on and build their understanding of different aspects of the map when needed. Teachers also may refer to configurations and components as the situation requires. The numerous ways teachers can use the map allow them opportunities to use it more formally as a learning resource on their own or with other teachers over a significant period. It also may provide opportunities to consider aspects of instructional practices that are more situational and dealt with within a shorter duration.

In addressing the contextual needs of teachers, the innovation configuration provides possibilities for teachers. Based on how I have understood the utility of innovation configurations, I was left optimistic that teachers in my context could leverage them to meet their needs in a way that would help them build their understanding and knowledge of the guided reading curriculum.

Orientating with Theoretical Framework

In conjunction with meeting the contextual needs of the teachers in the organization, innovation configurations orientate with the theoretical framework I crafted for this study. As a written document, the innovation configurations map is a mediating tool teachers can use to internalize their understanding of the guided reading program through their zone of proximal development aligned with Sociocultural Theory

(Golombek & Johnson, 2019; Nicholas et al., 2021; Vygotsky, 1987; Warford, 2011; Wertsch, 2007). As a mediating tool to help in this process, the social and active components of Sociocultural Theory and Activity Theory are equally important; teachers will develop their understanding and application of the map within their activity systems (Engeström, 1999; Leont'ev, 1974; Pohio, 2016). Yet, as a mediating tool, the innovation configurations must also be understood as a document that emerges from the distinct perspective of the authors, which influences how the innovation configurations are to be implemented.

As the innovation configurations are written from the perspective of my colleague and myself, our thought process and understanding of guided reading are elevated as authoritative (Graves, 2021). We have based the development of the innovation configurations map on researching the literature, observations of classes, discussions with teachers and academic staff at centers, and our general experiences with reading instruction. The document may come across as authoritative due to how it is presented, but it is only a presentation of two perspectives. There is room for teachers to negotiate how they comprehend and use the document (Shawer, 2010; Vermeir et al., 2017; Vermeir & Kelchtermans, 2020).

In this space of negotiation with the document, and more specifically with the authors of the document, teachers may use the innovation configurations as a mediating tool. Teachers may use the innovation configurations to help them within their zone of proximal development to reduce the distance between what they understand of guided reading and institutional expectations with what they could learn (Benzehaf, 2016; Warford, 2011). Should teachers use it in this manner, the document serves as a source

for self-guidance (Benzehaf, 2016), which is a rudimentary way to reduce the distance in the zone of proximal development. A more robust means of developing understanding is through collaborative activity with other teachers and informed individuals. In such a way through the activity of comprehending how to use the innovation configurations, teachers may leverage the experience and expertise of more seasoned and learned colleagues (Edwards, 2007; Edwards & D'arcy, 2004; H. T. M. Nguyen & Yang, 2018; Orland-Barak, 2021). In this regard, they assert their relational agency to build understanding, but they do so within the activity system that structures that process.

As a for-profit organization, the structure of the context delineates how professional learning may occur which affects the activity system and the possibilities that may exist within that system. The introduction of the innovation configurations meets the contextual parameters of the activity system and the needs of teachers. It may do so in multiple ways within the activity system for individuals alone or collectively. As they learn to read, use, and apply the innovation configurations, teachers begin the internalization process based on personal experiences—their everyday concepts—in conjunction with the information of the innovation configurations—the academic concepts. In this process, they may begin to start synthesizing that information into true concepts with guidance. As teachers continue to work on the innovation configurations, they further adjust these concepts as new ideas, experiences, and academic information influence how they and their colleagues understand the guided reading curriculum.

My decision to use an innovation configurations map was situated within this theoretical framework in both its structure and how it was applied within my context. I also made these decisions because they addressed salient factors in my work setting that

precluded the introduction of other innovations or interventions that likely would have proven challenging. Thus, my colleague and I developed the innovation configurations map for guided reading.

Respect

From the process of discovering innovation configurations maps to developing one for my context, all my decisions have centered around the desire that this resource proves useful for our teachers. I have worked to understand our teachers' contextual needs, the structure of their learning processes, and the knowledge they require. My answer has been that an innovation configurations map for guided reading has the potential to meet those needs and the challenges they have. While no single resource will serve as a panacea for the complex issues involved in any social context, I had hoped the innovation configurations map provided some benefit for our teachers. In the next chapter, I discuss in depth the innovation configurations map for guided reading and how I researched its use with teachers within the organization.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

The introduction of an innovation into an educational work context requires consideration and care in how that process unfolds (Guskey, 1985, 2002; G. E. Hall & Hord, 2020). The successful implementation of that innovation can lead to positive changes for teachers and students. While much is known about how that process may develop, unique contextual and individual factors affect its implementation. Studying that process is important in learning what actions are effective. To investigate whether teachers learning to use and then applying the innovation configurations map increased their pedagogic knowledge related to the guided reading curriculum, I conducted a qualitative, case study action research dissertation. To build that understanding, I used these research questions to guide me:

1. How does an innovation configurations map for reading instruction in English mediate teachers' understanding of how to instruct their students?
2. How do teachers respond to the introduced innovation configurations map in their instructional practices?
3. What contradictions do teachers face when learning about and applying the innovation configurations and how are they dealt with?
4. How does the innovation configurations map I initiated as a curriculum developer influence teachers' instruction related to reading in English?
5. How do my actions as a curriculum developer affect teachers in this process of learning and applying the innovation configurations?

Using this methodology, I sought to learn from the lived experiences of these teachers as they exerted their agency in learning how to use the innovation configurations map, as well as how they applied them. I helped create a resource for their use, and I worked with them throughout the study in my role as a curriculum developer. Whether they used it, how they used it, and the impact using it had on them is what I wanted and needed to know to see if the academic staff at the organization should use the innovation configurations map.

To understand how I conducted this cycle 3 dissertation, I first present the innovation configurations for guided reading. I explain the procedure I used to address my problem of practices as it relates to its development, the initial implementation of the innovation configurations map for guided reading in my context, and how I facilitated teachers adopting them. I then share some considerations I had regarding the implementation process.

I then transition into describing the methodology I used. I first explain why I used a case study methodology for this cycle of the action research project. Subsequently, I detail the setting of this study, the participants, and my role as the researcher. Finally, I explain the qualitative data analysis methods I used concerning how they answered the research questions, as well as how I analyzed the data collected. I then summarize the procedure and timeline I used for this research.

The Innovation Configurations Map for Guided Reading

The writing of the innovation configurations map for guided reading occurred in the summer of 2020. In effect, though, it began long before that with the initial development of the guided reading course and the education journeys of my colleague

and myself. Our understanding of guided reading stems from numerous experiences with it. On my part, I studied guided reading during my studies for my master's degree in English language teaching, I have taught guided reading courses and seen students succeed in their reading assessments, and I have researched guided reading to help inform me for instructing students and for curriculum development. I, additionally, have spoken with other colleagues informally and formally about guided reading, as well as observed guided reading classes. My colleague has had similar experiences, but with the addition of discussions with academic administrators in the organization, colleagues within the Chinese education system who also apply guided reading in their instructional practices, and in evaluating students' reading assessment scores from all our centers. From this background, we felt confident in our ability to develop the innovation configurations map for guided reading.

The innovation configurations map for guided reading is broken into six configurations: prior knowledge, vocabulary instruction, reading skills and strategies instruction, reading comprehension, class discussion, and written expression (see Appendix A). Each of these configurations is then structured around four to nine components. Within these components, there are up to six variations based on previous observations of guided reading lessons. Based on their use during cycle 1, I tentatively have classified the variations into ideal, more effective, and less effective.

Prior Knowledge in Reading Instruction

The prior knowledge in reading instruction configuration is comprised of four components. This configuration is included in the map because of the cumulative influence students' prior knowledge has on reading comprehension (Koda, 2008;

Quigley, 2020; Taboada et al., 2009; Wixson, 2017). Ensuring students make connections between what they read with their personal experiences is important in their cumulative knowledge building and their ability to apply what they learn to a variety of contexts. An example component is “Component 2: Provides opportunities for students to make connections” with six variations.

Vocabulary Instruction

The vocabulary instruction configuration is comprised of seven components. For all students, especially those learning English as a foreign or second language, vocabulary development is important in their ability to express themselves and their thoughts (Farrell, 2009; Grabe & Stoller, 2020; Scrivener, 2011; Suits, 2003). In conjunction with building their vocabulary is to foster the development of their ability to determine the meaning of new words when reading. An example component is “Component 3: Judiciously selects words in the reading that are important to understand the text and not all unknown words” with five variations. Another example is “Component 6: Promotes the use and review of new vocabulary throughout the lesson and across lessons in writing and orally” with six variations.

Reading Skills and Strategies Instruction

The reading skills and strategies instruction configuration is comprised of seven components. Reading strategies are effortful ways readers take action to comprehend the text, such as making inferences (Koda, 2005; Nayak & Sylva, 2013; Perfetti & Dunlap, 2008; Taboada Barber et al., 2020, 2021; Taylor et al., 2006). These strategies over time develop into reading skills as they become internalized and made part of the unconscious routine of reading. Teachers can present strategies to students and guide them towards

automaticity as reading skills. An example component is “Component 5: Provides students controlled and applied opportunities to practice the target reading skill or strategy throughout the lesson” with six variations. An additional example is “Component 6: Reviews previously taught reading skills and strategies” with six variations.

Reading Comprehension

The reading comprehension configuration is comprised of five components. Teachers need to be mindful that students learning English as a foreign or second language require opportunities to develop their ability to understand what they read as they transition from learning how to read to reading for enjoyment or learning (Burkins & Croft, 2017; Farrell, 2009; Koda, 2005; Nayak & Sylva, 2013; Taylor et al., 2006; L. J. Zhang, 2018). That transition requires guidance and attention to how students comprehend what they read. One example of this component is “Component 3: Facilitates students building their ability to think about the text” with six variations.

Class Discussion

The class discussion configuration is comprised of nine components. Being able to communicate their understanding and holding conversations with others to build comprehension of a text is important for students (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012; Grabe & Stoller, 2020; Quigley, 2020). It provides opportunities to develop their speaking and listening abilities in English (Scrivener, 2011), as well as fostering their general skills to communicate with others (Ghosn, 2002; Suits, 2003). An example of this component is “Component 1: Establishes an engaging environment for the class discussion” with three variations. Another example is “Component 8: Guides students to use evidence to support their discussion input” with six variations.

Writing Instruction

The writing instruction configuration is comprised of five components. Writing provides students with an additional medium through which they can share their comprehension of what they read beyond speaking (Coker et al., 2018; Graham & Hebert, 2011; Pinnell & Fountas, 2010; Quigley, 2020). Writing, additionally, offers students with different personalities opportunities to express themselves in a more deliberate and structured way (Moon, 2000; Scrivener, 2011). One example of this component is, “Component 2: Guides students on how to express their thoughts and ideas in written form” with five variations.

Implementation Process

The introduction of the innovation configurations into the centers was organized into three phases. The first phase was the development of the innovation configurations map which occurred at the administrative level of the organization. I completed this phase as a requirement for establishing the parameters for my dissertation research. The second phase was the introduction and use of the innovation configurations map in the centers. And the third phase was the evaluation of the innovation configurations based on feedback and research from phase 2. I focused my dissertation research on phase 2 and phase 3. I planned for these two phases to be iterative and ongoing to ensure the innovation configurations map was continuously improved. I, thus, completed the first cycle with this dissertation.

I discuss each of the phases below and some considerations I had concerning the implementation process. Please see Figure 3 for the general timeline of this study and how the implementation process was situated within it.

Figure 3

Timeline and Procedures Used for Cycle 3

Time Frame	Action	Procedure
November 2021	Successfully defended the dissertation proposal and passed the oral exam.	Defended the dissertation in front of the dissertation committee successfully. Passed the oral exams.
December 2021	Received approval from Arizona State University's Institutional Review Board.	Received approval from Arizona State University's Institutional Review Board to proceed to the next stage in the study.
December 2021	At the organizational level, prepared for cycle 3 (dissertation research); phase 1 of implementation.	Worked with Academic Director, center managers, and head teachers to ensure everyone was informed of the study. Received final permission to conduct the study at two centers.
January 2022	Met with head teachers to plan the initial meeting with teachers; phase 2 of implementation.	Met with head teachers to discuss the logistics of the study and to finalize a schedule amenable to the needs of the head teacher, teachers, and centers.
January - July 2022	Data collected; phase 2 of implementation.	Received consent from those participating in the study. Collected data.
July 2022	Completed cycle 3 data collection. Analyzed the data.	Analyzed data related to cycle 3. Began to write the final chapters of the dissertation.
November 2022	Completed the written dissertation.	Developed the written dissertation, presented for multiple revisions from graduate committee members, and developed the final draft.
January 2023	Defended dissertation.	Upon submission of dissertation materials, defended in front of the graduate committee.

Phase 1

In early summer 2020, I opened discussions with my supervisor, at the time the Curriculum Director and now the Academic Director of the organization, about the possibility of developing an innovation configurations map for guided reading. After explaining the purpose and design of the innovation configurations, the director permitted me to initiate the development of the innovation configurations map.

For the remainder of the summer, I researched and wrote the map. The research included a literature review on guided reading practices; feedback provided from teachers, academic staff, and center leadership concerning the guided reading classes; prior observations of guided reading classes; and my personal experience having taught guided reading classes using our curriculum. I then submitted the draft versions to the director for input. Revisions were made that included the addition of components, such as the inclusion of a component for the prior knowledge configuration, “Component 1: Demonstrates how to make connections with prior knowledge.” The final draft version of the innovation configurations was completed at the beginning of September 2020. This version was resubmitted to the director who gave tentative approval for its use with teachers in conjunction with my cycle 1 research.

After the pilot of the innovation configurations map during cycle 1, additional changes were made to the map based on teachers’ feedback. The primary changes were the inclusion of color into the maps; each configuration was designated a specific color: purple for prior knowledge in reading instruction, teal for vocabulary instruction, yellow for reading skills and strategies instruction, red for reading comprehension instruction, orange for class discussion facilitation, and blue for writing instruction. Each component

also was divided into ideal, more effective, and less effective variations. Changes to the wording for some of the variations were made to help clarify the description. This version was presented to the new Academic Director—the previous Curriculum Director—for approval and future use with teachers at centers.

Phase 2

The implementation of the innovation configurations map for guided reading in phase 2 served as means to study how teachers used the map. It also allowed for identifying what effects it had on teachers to better understand the curriculum and their instructional practices at two of our centers before introducing them to all the centers. The intent, thus, was to learn about the implementation process. One aspect of this process that was of interest was how teachers collaborated to understand the innovation configurations. A second was how teachers applied them to meet their classroom and students' needs. A third was what contradictions teachers faced and how they addressed them. A fourth aspect was whether the innovation configurations provided the mediated guidance teachers needed. A final aspect was whether the curriculum team provided guidance that proved helpful for teachers and head teachers.

I present this information here from my position at the time as a curriculum developer. This process would have occurred regardless of the inclusion of the layer of doctoral research. I do, however, include information I shared with the head teachers pertaining to the dissertation research component of this project as it affected certain participants, such as the teachers at the centers who served as key informants.

Introduction to Key Center Staff

The start of this phase began after I received permission from the Institutional Review Board at Arizona State University to begin this project in December 2021 (see Appendix B). With that permission granted, I informed the Academic Director that we could commence with phase 2. The Academic Director scheduled a meeting with the relevant center managers and head teachers. During the meeting, the center managers and head teachers were informed of the plan to study the use of the innovation configurations map for guided reading with teachers. The meeting was held online at the end of December 2021. The Academic Director and I presented to the center managers and head teachers the innovation configurations map and explained the request to introduce and use them in their respective centers with the inclusion of my presence once a month for the roughly five to seven months the map was used. In addition to this information, I informed them of the research component of the project related to my dissertation. I shared with them the expectations of the participants who would take part in the research project. I also asked at this time if the head teachers would solicit from their teachers if anyone would be interested in serving as a key informant. During the meeting, the dates of my visits to the centers were tentatively scheduled. These dates were later confirmed within two weeks of this meeting once the head teachers had reconciled their schedules with holidays, school schedules, and my need to be present at both centers.

Initial Planning with Head Teachers

Once the general schedule had been set, I worked with the head teachers to help them develop their understanding of the innovation configurations map and their ability to lead their academic teams. Due to staff changes, restrictions on in-person work during

a flare-up of COVID-19 beginning in January 2022, and the Chinese New Year schedule in February 2022, the head teachers and I were able to meet one time in person before teachers were asked to use the innovation configurations map.

In January 2022, the city in which both centers were located implemented dynamic lockdowns, which entailed specific neighborhoods going into lockdown until cases were contained. Several staff members at both centers found themselves in this situation throughout the project. Head teachers had to contend with helping their teachers manage the situation even as one of the head teachers was also placed in lockdown in February. In tandem with the lockdowns was the government mandate that supplementary education organizations cease in-person lessons and switch to online lessons. These events occurred without much notice as lockdowns could be put into place within a few hours of residents of affected communities being notified. On top of these occurrences, other events at their centers occurred that affected the implementation of this project. Some were expected, such as interruptions from holidays. Others, however, were unexpected, which included the staff turnover at one center that saw two senior teachers leave the organization and be replaced by four junior teachers and one part-time teacher from January to May 2022. All these events affected the logistics of this project.

In lieu of being able to meet face to face, both head teachers and I emailed to go over the details of how to implement the innovation configurations with their teachers in January and early February 2022. The first email was initiated by me so I could present the head teachers with pertinent documents and information about the project, as well as the dates of my visit from January to June. I sent a copy of the initial introductory PowerPoint presentation if they wished to go over it again, the innovation configurations

map for guided reading, a 17-page document explaining what innovation configurations are and how they would be used at their centers, the evidence collection instrument that they could use when observing classes, and copies of the informed consent forms for participants who agreed to take part in the dissertation-component of this project. The head teachers replied that they received the email and that they would review the materials and contact me about questions they had. One head teacher emailed me three times, and the other emailed me four times. These emails, however, focused more on the logistics of the project rather than on the content of the project. With these emails, the head teachers confirmed the dates of center visits, shared information about COVID-19 policies and procedures regarding how classes were to be taught online, and changes to the schedule of center visits as the COVID-19 situation developed. For example, the staff at one center delayed the start of a project from January to February 2022 after we had met and introduced the project to the teaching staff due to government requirements that classes be online. The staff at the center needed time to adjust to the situation and better acquaint themselves with the computer program they would use for their emergency remote teaching. Some staff at this center were placed under lockdown as well, which affected the schedule of the project. The staff at the other center, however, was less affected by COVID-19 in January and we were able to start as planned.

For information about how to use the innovation configurations, I communicated with one head teacher via WeChat messages and held one in-person meeting with each head teacher. For the head teacher who discussed the content of the project via WeChat, we messaged each other in five major message threads in January 2022 on how to use the innovation configurations map with his teachers, as well as confirmed how they would be

implemented at this center. Each thread would last for a few minutes to up to two hours with sporadic breaks due to other work commitments we each had at the time.

Both head teachers and I were able to meet once at their respective centers on the day that we were to introduce the innovation configurations to the other teachers at their centers, which was on January 20 for one center and February 17 for the other center. During the meeting, we reviewed the different configurations, components, and variations to ensure their familiarity with the entire map. They informed me how they planned to introduce the innovation configurations map to their teachers. I apprised them of what information I would share in relation to the project for the organization and for my dissertation research. For example, I asked them about key informants who had expressed interest in participating. Both head teachers informed me that each had a teacher who was interested in participating, and one of the head teachers shared that he wanted to participate as well.

We also discussed how they planned on using the maps. The head teachers at this time were hesitant to commit to how much effort they could give to this project due to unexpected issues related to COVID-19. I found the head teachers advocated for less intrusive activities as they dealt with transferring classes from in-person instruction to online instruction during the resurgence of COVID-19 in their communities in mid-January and early February, as well as having to onboard new academic staff during this period. Mindful of this situation, each head teacher and I discussed how they could work with their teachers at their weekly academic meetings and with observations of their teachers using the innovation configurations map. While the head teacher expressed a strong desire to maximize how they used the innovation configurations map with their

teachers, they expressed concerns that organizational changes and the COVID-19 restrictions would limit what they and their teachers would be able to do.

At this stage in preparing to introduce the innovation configurations map to the teachers at each center, the head teachers reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring the project would move forward. They, however, were uncertain how that would unfold and when it the center visits would occur due to the developing COVID-19 situation in the city. We did agree to a modified schedule for my center visits and the activities for those visits (see Table 1). The eventual schedule would see one center use the innovation configurations map for five months after we postponed the start of the project from January to February 2022 due to COVID-19, the need for the center staff to work from home, the difficulty in finding a date that would work for everyone before the start of the Chinese New Year holiday, and the visit I had already scheduled at the other center. For the second center, we were able to start in late January and continued to work on this project for a little over six months until early July 2022.

During the project, I worked with all the teachers at each center on four occasions. At one center, I attended an academic meeting during one of my scheduled visits online. At the other center, I worked with the teachers there at two of their academic meetings. One was online and the other was in-person. I, additionally, had one joint meeting with teachers for both centers during this study, but it was unrelated to the use of the innovation configurations map. Both head teachers decided to reduce the number of academic meetings during the seven months of the study due to the factors related to organizational issues and COVID-19.

Table 1*Dates for When Activities Related to Center Visits Occurred*

Month	Center	Activity	Date
January 2022	Center 2	Introduction to Teachers	January 20, 2022
		Class Observations (two teachers)	January 21, 2022
		Interviews (two teachers)	January 22, 2022
February 2022	Center 1	Introduction to Teachers	February 17, 2022
		Class Observation (one teacher)	February 17, 2022
		Interview (one teacher)	February 17, 2022
	Center 2	Class Observation (one teacher)	February 23, 2022
		Class Observation (one teacher)	February 27, 2022
March 2022	Center 1	Class Observation (one teacher)	March 10, 2022
		Academic Meeting	March 11, 2022
		Interview (one teacher)	March 17, 2022
		Journey Map (head teacher)	March 25, 2022
	Center 2	Interviews (two teachers)	March 4, 2022
		Class Observation (one teacher)	March 27, 2022
		Class Observation (one teacher)	March 30, 2022
		Interview (one teacher)	March 31, 2022
		Class Observation (one teacher)	March 31, 2022
April 2022	Center 1	Class Observation (one teacher)	April 13, 2022
		Interview (one teacher)	April 14, 2022
	Center 2	Interview (one teacher)	April 1, 2022
		Academic Meeting	April 1, 2022
		Class Observation (one teacher)	April 27, 2022
		Class Observation (one teacher)	April 28, 2022
		Interviews (two teachers)	April 29, 2022
		Academic Meeting	April 29, 2022

May 2022	Center 1	Class Observation (one teacher)	May 11, 2022
		Interview (one teacher)	May 20, 2022
	Center 2	Class Observation (one teacher)	May 25, 2022
		Class Observation (one teacher)	May 26, 2022
June 2022	Center 1	Interviews (two teachers)	May 27, 2022
		Class Observation (one teacher)	June 8, 2022
		Interview (one teacher)	June 17, 2022
	Center 2	Class Observation (one teacher)	June 16, 2022
		Class Observation (one teacher)	June 22, 2022
		Interviews (two teachers)	June 23, 2022
July 2022	Center 2	Journey Map (two teachers)	July 9, 2022

Implementing the Innovation Configurations Map

After this initial planning phase, the head teachers facilitated a meeting with the teachers with my assistance. Before the meeting, the head teacher also talked with the teachers to see who would be interested in working with me one-on-one for the duration of this study. Because experience is an important indicator of how teachers understood and used the innovation configurations (Johnson & Golombek, 2002), I sought a mix of key informants from novice to veteran teachers to gain a wide range of perspectives. The meeting had three sections. In the first section, we introduced the innovation configurations map, explained their purpose, went over the structure of the map, and how to read the map. In the second section, we explained the plan to use the innovation configuration for a trial period of five to seven months. In the third section, I explained the research aspect of my dissertation to the teachers. I shared with them what the expectations were and asked participants to sign the corresponding written consent form

for whether they wished to participate generally or one-on-one. The head teachers and teachers read over the consent form, signed them, and handed them back to me.

After each meeting, I observed the key informants as they presented a mock lesson so I could learn more about their teaching styles and their understanding of guided reading. Within a day of this observation, I interviewed them to learn what their expectations and aims were for their participation in this project. All the teachers and their respective head teachers would then begin to familiarize themselves with the innovation configurations for roughly three to four weeks before the first observations where they were asked to use it to inform their instructional practices.

During the trial, when possible, teachers were asked to work with each other on one or two components of one configuration. The head teachers facilitated these engagements during the academic meetings. Due to having to deal with the events that occurred in the early months of 2022, the head teachers informed me they infrequently had their teachers work on how to use and apply the map. One center worked on the map one time at an academic meeting without any additional work regarding the map. Any subsequent work on the innovation configurations map was hindered due to the resignation of this center's head teacher at the end of March 2022. The teachers at the other center worked on it two times at their academic meetings. They also had follow-up engagements with the head teacher observing them with a focus on the components of the innovation configurations map that were covered at the two academic meetings. When these meetings occurred, the head teachers selected the configurations and components that were covered. Collectively they identified the intent of the components with the guidance of the head teacher. They then were asked to identify how they currently

enacted that component in their classroom. The head teachers would initiate this discussion by using themselves as examples and sharing what they did in their lessons. Then the head teachers would open the discussion so the teachers could share with each other whether they had used that component in prior lessons and how they did so. They would discuss how they could apply the component to their lessons if they had not done so in the past and how they could further develop their use of that component. The head teachers would provide opportunities for the teachers to look through materials from a guided reading lesson and collaborate in creating a lesson plan on how they would incorporate the targeted component into that lesson. At the subsequent meeting, if they occurred, they built on what they did previously in the prior meeting. For the head teacher who was able to have a follow-up meeting with his teachers, he observed his teachers' classes to see how they were incorporating the components of the targeted configuration into their lessons.

As part of helping their teachers, I asked the head teachers to observe their teachers' lessons and to offer specific feedback directly to them concerning their lessons. Because of the need for head teachers to instruct classes, deal with organizational tasks, and COVID-19 restrictions, one head teacher was unable to conduct any observations. The other head teacher was only able to do so infrequently. For January and February 2022, the head teachers were unable to conduct any observations. In March one head teacher's schedule precluded any observations due to his need to prepare for his leaving the organization at the end of the month. For the remainder of the time of this study, the teachers at that center had no observations from anyone within the center. The head teacher at the other center informed me that he observed teachers beginning in mid-April

two or three times based on the needs of the observed teacher. The head teacher conducted these observations until the end of June. These observations combined aspects of this project with the evaluations that they were required to do for teachers' performance reviews. The head teacher was looking for how teachers used the innovation configurations map, or in one case how the teacher chose not to implement anything. The head teacher informed me that he discussed with his teachers what they did well in incorporating the component into the class, what areas they could improve, and provided suggestions on how to make those improvements. Regarding the evaluative aspects of the observations, the head teachers focused on how the teachers instructed students, their engagement with students, the flow of lessons, the content of the lessons, and their management of the class. The head teacher with these observations generally prioritized organizational requirements that they evaluate teachers as part of their scheduled evaluation for contract renewals and potential promotions.

Assessing Implementation

Teachers' progress in working towards their selected variation was assessed based on a combination of their reflected efforts and findings from the observations of the head teachers and me. Teachers, head teachers, and I used the innovation configurations to assess the progress made using descriptive evidence from lessons that corresponded to the selected variation. We looked at the description of the identified variation and used examples from the lessons to inform their decision on what they were doing that was representative of that variation. They also identified the areas where there was continued room for improvement. When everyone agreed that practices were aligned with the variation, teachers next progressed to including additional components or focusing on a

different configuration based on the needs of the teachers at the center (Blamey et al., 2012). In practice, this principally occurred with the teachers who participated in the research component of this project and served as key informants. One non-key informant teacher at the center with the head teacher who did observations, however, did make changes based on the feedback he received from his head teacher. When the few teachers who were using the innovation configurations map to varying degrees at both centers were ready to progress, they continued to revisit and revise previously worked-on components.

My Role in the Implementation Process

In addition to facilitating these meetings, the head teacher communicated with me about the progression of implementation, how teachers were advancing towards more ideal variations as seen in observation and teachers' self-reflection, issues surrounding how they were understood and applied, as well as any other concerns that emerged. For one head teacher, our communication occurred via WeChat messages or emails in late February and March 2022 before he departed from the organization. We corresponded three times using email; we communicated once via WeChat in March. For the other head teacher, we communicated primarily in-person six times from mid-February 2022 until early July of that year. Since this head teacher was participating as a key informant of the project, we would generally talk about the project before or after we had our post-observation interviews which generally lasted anywhere from 15 minutes to an hour. We also would converse via WeChat and email, but these messages were generally concerned with the logistical needs of the project, such as confirmation of observations.

During the three academic meetings I attended concerning the innovation configurations map, I assisted the head teachers in answering questions related to the innovation configurations and guided reading, as well as offered suggestions as warranted. I, essentially, attended these meetings to serve as a resource. While teachers asked me questions or solicited advice face-to-face, they also had the opportunity to communicate with me via email or WeChat. This line of communication, however, was only taken up by the head teacher and two of the three key informants.

I, additionally, observed key informants' classes and discussed with them their impressions on using the innovation configurations map, their concerns, ideas for improvement, and any other pieces of information they wished to share. I observed their classes in the same way head teachers were asked to observe them. For the key informant at the center with the head teacher who left the organization in March, I observed her classes five times. At the other center with two informants—one of which was the head teacher of that center—I observed each of them six times. During these observations, I focused on how these teachers implemented the selected component(s) and how students responded. My observations, however, held no administrative or evaluative power over teachers. Following the observation that generally occurred within a few days of the observation, the key informant and I would meet and discuss the observation. Much of our discussion was based on my observations and their impressions of how they applied the component(s) of the different configurations. Topics we discussed included my feedback on the observations, their impressions of the lesson, how students reacted, different situations of application, areas of strengths in their application, areas of further growth in their application, advice on specific issues teachers wished to discuss,

suggestions for activities, or other concerns that arose from either the teachers or myself. I recorded this information and kept notes about our conversations.

Phase 3

As the trial progressed, I used the feedback teachers and head teachers provided to make minor modifications to the map. This happened after each post-observation interview when the key informants would share their experience with the innovation configurations map. Any changes I made were related to how the map was written to clarify points or to correct grammatical mistakes. I also included additions to the map so that it would better work for both online and offline classes. For example, I included additional information related to online classroom environments for the classroom discussion configuration with “Component 1: Establishes an engaging environment for the class discussion,” such as with “Variation A: Sets up the physical or virtual classroom in a way that facilitates students being able to comfortably discuss with each other without distractions.”

I, additionally, used one-legged interviews as a way to collect feedback mindful of participants’ schedules and the time they have to converse with me. This type of interview is designed to be informal and brief (G. E. Hall & Hord, 2020). During these conversations, implementers may discuss what they are doing, planning on doing, and their feelings concerning both. These interviews occurred in person when the key informants had a class observation beginning in February 2022 until the last observation in June 2022, which allowed me to provide advice on how they could apply the innovation configurations map. This roughly corresponded to five to six one-legged interviews for each key informant that occurred on the day of the class observations. The

key informants would share information with me before, after, or within the 5-10 minute break they had during class. One key informant also shared information with me via WeChat four times on the day of an observation. She messaged me information about the upcoming observation, such as any contextual information she thought pertinent to the lesson. During these one-legged interviews, I asked teachers and head teachers to discuss how they used the innovation configurations map and their thoughts and feelings toward those actions. I then worked with them to address their concerns if possible at the time or later when we had the post-observation interview. Additionally, the key informants would also initiate these conversations with me to cover issues they had with the innovation configurations or to share any information they thought I needed to know to understand how they were implementing the configurations, such as what they did in a prior class and how that related to the observed class.

At the end of the usage of the innovation configurations map, I asked the head teachers to collect feedback or for the teachers to directly send me their feedback based on the wishes of the people in each center. For the head teacher who left at the end of March, he was able to share his insights on using the innovation configurations map when he shared his education journey map. For the other head teacher, who was promoted to the regional head teacher for the two centers of this project, he was able to collect that feedback from the teachers and based on his experience and observations. Generally, though, his insights were primarily from his original center as the other center beginning in April neglected to use the innovation configurations map without the guidance of a permanent head teacher in the center. The only exception for that center was the key informant who did provide me feedback at the end of the trial. I then took

that feedback, as well as my observations, notes, and correspondence with head teachers and teachers to write a report for the Academic Director.

The Academic Director planned to take that report to evaluate the use of the innovation configurations for guided reading. The Academic Director also interviewed head teachers directly once to solicit their feedback on using the innovation configurations at the end of when they used the innovation configurations map. The Academic Director and the head teachers also informed me that they informally discussed this project, but the content of those meetings and their occurrences were not shared with me. The Academic Director as well reviewed the head teachers' weekly reports which would include how they used the innovation configurations map. The Academic Director informed me that the head teachers were doing this as part of the professional development requirement that each head teacher was expected to do, but I am not privy to the content of this information. The Academic Director also reviewed observation records when and if they occurred in relation to contract renewals and promotions. This information again is privileged, but the Academic Director informed me she did consult these records for her evaluation.

The Academic Director planned to evaluate the innovation configurations for guided reading against the value it has for students. Subsequently, the Academic Director would make a final decision on what next steps to take. The possibilities included revising the innovation configurations, modifying how to implement them at centers, making plans on introducing the map to other centers, or choosing not to pursue using them. As I left the organization at the end of data collection, I was excluded from this decision process beyond the submission of my final report in August 2022.

Considerations of Application

For the roughly five or six months of the trial, which corresponded with the spring term for classes at both centers, much was asked of teachers who participated. Given they faced constraints in their time and had to deal with varying restrictions due to COVID-19, I was cognizant that each teacher used the innovation configurations map in ways unique to them. Their willingness to work with me, additionally, differed based on their interest and ability to do so. While collaboration and sharing are important in the process of working within the teachers' zone of proximal development and their activity systems, how the teachers in this project did so was dependent on them and the effort they wished to exert, which influenced the implementation process.

The teachers who volunteered as key informants were an important aspect of this study. Their decision to volunteer influenced how they applied the innovation configurations map. Their choice to participate indicated a general willingness to develop themselves using this mediating tool (G. E. Hall & Hord, 2020). Equally important was my role in the research and how I interacted with participants, as that affected the decisions they made on what information they shared and to what depth (Tracy, 2010).

With the implementation occurring at centers, my presence influenced how teachers and head teachers discussed the innovation configurations, planned for lessons individually and collectively, reflected on applying the innovation configurations, or whether they would enact any of these aspects of the study. I directly experienced what head teachers and teachers did when I visited individual centers once a month. I relied on the information participants provided to learn what happened when I was absent. Yet, I was cognizant for the duration of the study that participants might have chosen to

withhold information (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). The data I collected, as well as my analysis, presented my perspective and understanding of this process.

Fostering Change

These steps in the implementation of the innovation configurations map into the organization required an appreciation of the burden teachers dealt with every day on the job. The use of this map was one that academic management and I imposed on the head teachers and teachers. Even with the best of intentions of assisting teachers, they may not have viewed it that way (Didion et al., 2020; Guskey, 1985, 2002; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; McMillan et al., 2016; Mercer & Gregersen, 2020). Their experiences in using the innovation configurations during this project were central to how they reacted and the degree to which they accepted the innovation configurations map. This process took time and occurred incrementally over the five to seven months that they used the map.

After the introduction of the innovation configurations, the academic staff at each center needed to decide how they wished to implement them. Head teachers took the lead in this decision process with assistance and guidance from me. But teachers were the ones asked to apply them to their classes and assess how their students were affected. Head teachers and key informants worked to understand and apply the innovation configurations based on work they did on their own and through collaborations with their colleagues when they could do so at academic meetings and in conversations with each other. They also worked with me throughout the project in building their awareness of how they could use the innovation configurations map from our discussions about how they used it and from my observations of their classes. In using the innovation configurations for observations, the innovation configuration became an evaluative tool

for the identification of where teachers were in their instructional practices during the trial (Beauchat et al., 2009; Blamey et al., 2012; Yeung, 2012). When used in this way, the teachers and I had to agree on the teachers' variation for that observation, the progress made from previous observations, and then discuss what steps they needed and wanted to take to progress forward.

My goal with this study was for positive development with students, which I hoped would lead to positive reactions and acceptance from teachers. When individuals, and organizations, experience events positively, they tend to exert self-reinforcing behaviors toward those changes (March et al., 1991; Vermeir & Kelchtermans, 2020). Each of these steps, then, fosters small wins (Weick, 1984). As all stakeholders worked on applying the innovation configurations map, they needed to ensure each step in the process was stable before proceeding to the next step. To enact this innovation, there was a need for everyone to understand what the long-term goals of the project were—and continues to be—and how they would implement each step of the process to help them develop themselves to their full potential.

This initial implementation of the innovation configurations, then, was crucial for how effective and useful it was perceived to be (G. E. Hall & Hord, 2020; Sutton & Rao, 2016). Establishing the conditions within the activity system for collaboration and the ability to use the innovation configurations was crucial, but one that proved problematic due to circumstances at the start of 2022. The support I provided participants was an important aspect of creating this environment (Mercer & Gregersen, 2020). They needed responsive guidance within their zone of proximal development so they would have the mediating tools and assistance they needed to reach their full potential (Johnson &

Golombek, 2016). To provide that assistance, I gave contingent support depending on situational needs during the implementation process (Brownfield & Wilkinson, 2018; Rodriguez-Mojica, 2019). The support I provided included discussing with them how they could apply components, presenting different perspectives on instructional practices, or facilitating a collaborative discussion with teachers on identified issues from observations. The support I gave, then, responded and was contingent on their needs throughout the implementation process of the innovation configurations map.

The application of the map required that they were first understood by those who used them. Because there are six components to the innovation configurations map, they were implemented in an agreed-upon sequence relevant to participants. I deferred to the teachers in establishing that sequence in recognition that they knew best what their situational needs were (Mercer & Gregersen, 2020). As each configuration is distinct from one another, how they were implemented and in what ways were based on teachers' pedagogic stances, preferences in instructional practices, and the needs of students. While they could collaboratively build their understanding of the innovation configurations, each teacher applied them based on their interpretations. To ensure they were applied in a manner that benefited students, head teachers were encouraged to observe and guide teachers in this process when possible.

The head teachers needed to use the innovation configurations map as a guide to identify where their teachers were and to use prior observations to determine what progress had been made from prior variations or whether no to negligible change had occurred. Paired with the observations, the head teachers and teachers were encouraged to discuss the observations one-on-one and collaboratively at academic meetings. These

discussions were important to help teachers reflect on their lessons and to determine their progress in developing their instructional practices. In practice, though, only one center was able to put into practice consecutive meetings. When those meetings occurred, they were short-lived as they only held two academic meetings that focused on the innovation configurations map. The outcome of these discussions and whether they occurred determined how teachers progressed through the innovation configurations map. As part of the discussions, the head teachers and teachers were asked to identify strengths that should be built upon, areas of growth, and how to ensure that growth. The head teachers then utilized their understanding of the innovation configurations map through their application of it into their lessons to determine what they discussed and worked on at the academic meetings to ensure their teachers had the opportunity to learn collaboratively (Boudett & City, 2014). At the one meeting held where teachers were asked to reflect on how they applied the focused components from the previous meeting, the teachers shared ideas on what worked for them in implementing the components on which they had been asked to focus, expressed concerns they had, asked questions, reflected on the additional information and ideas the head teacher provided, and thought of ways they could act on those ideas for their lessons.

During this process, the assistance and guidance the curriculum team provided were important. Yet, the reality of the situation was that I alone from the curriculum team was there to provide the support the teachers at both centers needed, which I could only give during my center visits due to my other duties to the organization. When I was able to talk with the teachers, specifically the head teachers and key informants, they provided insights from observations and conversations with academic staff at their centers when

possible. Proceeding in this step-by-step manner allowed for the opportunity that each component to be understood, practiced, and improved before the head teachers, key informants, and, when possible, the other teachers moved on to the next one. Allowing for the disconnection of the components made it more manageable for teachers to focus on working on one component instead of splitting their concentration into multiple components (Weick, 1984).

How teachers used the innovation configurations map varied based on their needs, circumstances, and their willingness to adopt it (G. E. Hall & Hord, 2020; Vermeir & Kelchtermans, 2020). Developing and executing the innovation configurations map required taking steps over an extended period to help build their confidence, understanding, and willingness to adopt it as part of their teaching practices. For this project, the head teachers and key informants were the primary users of the map. As they learned and moved through this process, the durability of the innovation configurations map and its efficacy were enhanced as they saw the positive effects of using one.

Case Study

To understand how teachers went through the process of understanding and applying the innovation configurations map for guided reading, I conducted a case study for my dissertation. I made this decision based on my findings from the previous cycles of this action research project and the opportunities my work context provided. Each center adheres to organizational policies, but they interpret and enact those policies in ways unique to them. How teachers then apply those policies is a complex interweaving of contextual and personal factors. This realization led me to the decision that a case

study approach would be appropriate for my dissertation research. Yin (2018) explains that a case study approach is appropriate if the study:

investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the “case”) in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident; and copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide design, data collection, and analysis, and as another result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion. (pp. 14-15)

My research has aligned with this definition. Using a case study approach complemented my theoretical framework of Sociocultural and Activity Theories, which helped me define the contexts I studied and their boundaries. I investigated the phenomenon of teachers learning about and using the innovation configurations map within the bounded context of English private supplementary tutoring centers (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2018). In applying this theoretical framework to my case study, I focused on how an activity system is comprised of interconnected components as people work on an activity or phenomenon (Nardi, 1996). As I studied each activity system to answer my research questions, a case study approach using multiple evidence sources proved beneficial to develop credibility through triangulation or crystallization (Tracy, 2010; Yin, 2018).

Case Study Design

For this case study, I chose to use a multiple-case design. This design allowed me to synthesize the way key informants and head teachers used the innovation

configurations map at two of our centers, which provided a richer understanding of the dynamics of teachers' learning and applying the map (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2018). Because I worked in an organization with multiple centers, I needed to study those different contexts to learn how teachers understood and applied the innovation configurations map, which I hoped would help with future implementation at all centers.

To guide the development of cases, I applied Activity Theory to this study. In Activity Theory, an activity system is comprised of tools, subjects (agents), objects, rules, communities, and hierarchies, which together comprise a specific context (Nardi, 1996; Stetsenko, 2020; Yazan, 2015). For my study, it related to how I bounded my cases (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2018). I, thus, looked at two specific activity systems of how teachers went through the process of using the innovation configurations map.

I, additionally, focused on how people understood and used mediating tools using Sociocultural Theory. I sought to know how the innovation configurations map influenced teachers and how they interpreted it with mediated guidance. I, thus, focused on one triangle within the activity system more closely. For both activity systems, I used the triangle of mediating tool, subject (agent), and community as the case with the other components of the activity system as contextual information (Barnard, 2010; Yin, 2018). Focusing on this triangle aligned best with my research questions as I built cases related to how to answer those questions. Yet, the remaining components of rules, division of labor, and outcome were important in understanding what contextual factors influenced participants in the activity system and how that affected the process.

In using my theoretical framework this way, I chose to use an embedded design (Yin, 2018). While I focused on each case on the specific triangle in the activity system

of mediating tool, subject (agent), and community, I also worked with teachers (agents) and head teachers (community guidance) at each center. These teachers and head teachers, as embedded units, gave deeper insights into how they went through the process of learning to use and applying the innovation configurations map.

Selecting Cases

An important consideration in developing that understanding of how teachers went through that process was to learn how teachers used the innovation configurations at centers. Each center is unique and offers insights into how contexts and individuals interact and affect the implementation process of an introduced innovation (Baxter & Jack, 2008; G. E. Hall & Hord, 2020; Mercer & Gregersen, 2020; Yin, 2018). I decided to focus on two centers that were representative of the centers the organization ran in early 2022.

To determine which centers to study, I established a one-phase screening process in the selection of cases (Yin, 2018). The first criterion dealt with the size of the center. Centers within the organization fall into small or large centers. I decided that one case of each type of center was needed. A second criterion for this case study was the ease of access to the site due to COVID-19 travel restrictions. As such, both sites were located within the city of my residence. The third criterion was the stability of the teaching staff, as well as their ability and willingness to participate during the entire study. These three criteria helped me determine which centers were suitable to serve as cases. In addition to using these criteria, I solicited the advice of the organization's Academic Director to provide additional insights into the appropriateness of different centers.

Table 2*Contextual Information of the Studied Centers*

		Center 1	Center 2
Geographic Location		South China	South China
Founding Date		June 2016	May 2018
Neighborhood Type		mixed residential-commercial	mixed residential-commercial
Academic Staff	January 2022	1 head teacher	1 head teacher
		2 senior teachers	2 senior teachers
		3 junior teachers	2 junior teachers
		2 part-time teachers	
	June 2022	1 regional head teacher	
	7 junior teachers	1 senior teacher	
	1 part-time teacher	2 junior teachers	
Active Students	January 2022	283 students	153 students
	June 2022	359 students	177 students

Note. All information was current on June 22, 2022.

Context

Based on the selection criteria, I conducted this case study at two centers located in the same city in southern China (see Table 2). The focus of the centers is on providing after-school classes for children who are in primary or middle school to develop their English literacy abilities. There are centers located across southeastern China that are

managed by a head office. At the organizational level, the academic division oversees all functions related to academic management, teacher training, and curriculum development. At the center level, head teachers are expected to implement mandates from the head office. Courses are designed to guide students to develop their academic English literacy abilities. Beginning English learners attend one of two synthetic phonics courses based on their age. Lower-intermediate English learners attend one of six guided reading courses based on reading ability. Upper-intermediate English learners attend one of four literacy courses. Students attend classes one or two times a week for 90-minute lessons. An expatriate English speaker teaches these classes. A designated operations officer who deals with class logistics assists as needed. They also help with students' issues, such as translating for younger students.

Center 1

The first center selected for this study started teaching classes in 2016. It is located in a mixed residential-commercial neighborhood inside a building with multiple education centers for students, as well as other offices and businesses. In January 2022, the academic staff at the start of the study consisted of a head teacher, two senior teachers, three junior teachers, and two part-time teachers. At that time 283 students attended classes from Wednesday to Sunday. The students at this center during this term attended a variety of schools, including public, international, and bilingual Chinese-English schools. Over the course of the study, academic staffing changes occurred due to accepting teaching positions at other educational institutions in the city, resignations due to contract disputes, and the onboarding of new teachers at the center. By the end of June 2022, the academic staff consisted of a regional head teacher, 7 junior teachers, and one

part-time teacher. The student population by the end of June 2022 had increased to 359 students. Additional center staff included an assistant center manager, operations officers, an operations assistant, and a parent service administrator.

Center 2

The second center started teaching classes in early 2018. It is located in a mixed residential-commercial neighborhood inside a building with multiple education centers for students, as well as other businesses. In January 2022, the academic staff consisted of a head teacher, two senior teachers, and two junior teachers. At this time, 153 students attended classes from Wednesday to Sunday. The students at this center during this term attended a variety of schools, including public, international, and bilingual Chinese-English schools. As with Center 1, academic staffing changes occurred during this study due to teachers accepting positions at other educational institutions in the city or due to personal reasons. By the end of June 2022, the teaching staff consisted of a regional head teacher, 1 senior teacher, and 2 junior teachers. The student population by the end of June 2022 had increased to 177 students. Additional center staff included an assistant center manager, operations officers, an operations assistant, and a parent service administrator.

Participants

For the duration of the study, I worked primarily with the head teachers and key informants at each center. Given the time limitations of this study, the need to travel to these two centers, and a desire to lessen the burden of this study on the participants' time and effort, I asked for different levels of participation. Based on the model of an activity system, I collected information on how head teachers and key informants built their understanding of what the innovation configurations are, how they applied them, and

their thoughts on using them for themselves and their students. I also collected information related to the rules and division of labor that affected these participants within their respective centers. The head teachers and key informants acted as agents in this study, and as such, I focused my attention on them.

During the study, I asked for one to two teachers at each center to participate as key informants (Yin, 2018). I asked them to share the process they used to learn and apply the innovation configurations map. These key informants needed to be able to participate for the planned-for six months of this study. They, additionally, needed to be teaching one of the guided reading classes. Given that some of the smaller centers only had two to three teachers, I was limited to whom I asked to participate. Yet, I still sought teachers with a range of experience from beginning to veteran teachers. This range helped provide insights into how their knowledge from teaching affected their understanding and application of the innovation configurations map. I also needed to be respectful of their willingness to participate. The selection of centers was predicated on the key informants' willingness to participate which had been based on informal conversations throughout 2020 and 2021. I asked the head teachers at each center to assist me in this endeavor.

As this study was situated within my work environment, academic leadership required involvement as it related to work. For the research component, I asked for consent from head teachers, key informants, and the teachers who wished to participate in academic meetings before the start of the implementation process within the centers. I explained clearly that the research component was voluntary and that no ill regard would be held for that person. I, however, also realized that even with this explanation, participants may have felt pressured to agree to take part in this study due to its

connection with work. I acknowledged that likelihood, but I also realized I had limited influence in this situation. In addition to this concern, I decided to limit how much demographic information I collected concerning the teachers to ensure they remained as anonymous as was feasible given the ease of identifying teachers within the scope of their work contexts (Cohen et al., 2018; Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Kitchener & Kitchener, 2009; Tracy, 2010). I collected demographic information related to (1) their years of teaching experience, (2) what subjects they had taught, (3) the length of their employment with the organization, and (4) any pertinent information that affected their use of the innovation configurations map. This information helped me better understand each participant and what their needs were. For example, I learned at this time that this job was one key informant's first teaching position in English language teaching, which affected how I supported her within her zone of proximal development through this project. This information, thus, helped me build the background context of participants as it affected how they approached learning to use and applying the innovation configurations map (Cross, 2020; Freeman & Johnson, 1998).

With head teachers, the design of this study with the two selected centers revealed the participants' information for those within the organization. I had to find a balance between what information I determined was needed for the reader and ensuring the rights of participants were upheld. I was aware I would be unable to find a balance that would satisfy everyone (David, 2002), but I was upfront with this reality with all participants and respected the decisions they made regarding how much information they shared. I, additionally, used pseudonyms for all participants to help mitigate their exposure (Cohen et al., 2018; Gibbs, 2007). To further enhance anonymity, I used tidy transcripts (Gibbs,

2007; Henderson, 2018). I focused on a loose verbatim recounting of their spoken speech that conveyed content and the flow of the conversation but omitted most linguistic fillers. I took these measures to ensure my research did not negatively affect participants, and to ensure they felt comfortable engaging with me throughout the entirety of this study.

Biographic Sketches of Participants

The following is a brief biographic sketch of the primary participants that I worked with from late December 2021 to early July 2022. I also share information about additional participants who participated in academic meetings because their contributions in those meetings assisted the head teachers and key informants in how they understood and used the innovation configurations map.

Cody

Cody served as the head teacher of Center 1 beginning in the spring of 2021. He had previously taught kindergarten and primary school children in his previous positions in China. His education background was in international business and finance before he transitioned into English language teaching. At the end of March 2022, he left this position for a teaching job at a bilingual kindergarten in the same city as Center 1. He in part took this new position due to the better schedule that would it provided, which would allow him more time for him to spend with his family.

Kennedy

Kennedy was the key informant for Center 1. She was a new teacher at the center who started working there in December 2021. In 2021 she completed an English language teaching certificate. Before being a full-time teacher at the center, she worked

as a part-time substitute there beginning in late 2021. This job was her first full-time English language teaching position.

Ash

Ash began as the head teacher of Center 2 at the start of summer 2021. For the study, he served as both a head teacher and a key informant. He had previously taught a mixed range of learners from primary school to adults in his previous positions in China. He studied theater and drama for his undergraduate and master's degrees. At the start of May 2022, he was promoted to the role of the regional head teacher for Centers 1 and 2. This new position placed him in charge of the academic systems at both centers. Near the end of the study in May 2022, Ash was offered and accepted a teaching opportunity at a bilingual school in the same city as both centers related to his background in theater and drama. He subsequently left the organization at the end of July 2022.

Elliot

Elliot was the second key informant for Center 2. She had been a teacher at Center 2 since the summer of 2021. She had previously taught health-related and English studies at the tertiary level through a joint venture between an international university with a Chinese university. Her position at Center 2 was her first full-time job working with children in primary or middle schools. During the study, she learned she was pregnant and decided that at the start of her third trimester she would begin her maternity leave and return to her home country to give birth to her child. At the same time, Elliot was in contract negotiations with the organization. Those negotiations were paused due to her taking maternity leave beginning in late July 2022.

Additional Participants

When they occurred, I also worked with teachers at their academic meetings. I sought to help them as they navigated their understanding of how to use and apply the innovation configurations map for guided reading. Many of these teachers consented to participate in the research aspect of this study, but some did not. As such, I have worked to respect the privacy of the teachers who chose not to do so. I report only on those that agreed to participate (Brydon-Miller, 2009). Their contribution to this study was more on how they affected the head teachers and key informants in understanding how teachers could apply the innovation configurations map.

As Cody—the head teacher at Center 1—left the organization at the end of March 2022, an interim head teacher took over many of the academic duties during April before Ash took over as regional head teacher. The interim head teacher—Dylan—served as the regional center manager for Centers 1 and 2. From 2016 to 2018, he served as head teacher at Center 1. As interim head teacher of Center 1 in April 2022, Dylan served as a caretaker. He helped teachers when needed or asked. In the fall of 2020, Dylan also participated in my cycle 1 study in trialing the innovation configuration for vocabulary instruction. Our interactions during April consisted of us conversing about the progress of the study and the work I was doing with Ash and the key informants. Dylan also participated in the second April academic meeting at Center 2 that I attended.

Role of the Researcher

My engagement with participants required me to be aware of the multiple roles I had in this project as a curriculum developer, participant, and researcher. Each of my roles intersected and required me to reflect on my biases and imperfections (Roulston &

Shelton, 2015; Tracy, 2010). As a curriculum developer, I had a unique role in working with academic staff as they engaged with the innovation configurations map. My work schedule precluded me from being in the different centers permanently. Government restrictions on in-person work during localized outbreaks of COVID-19 also affected how I interacted with participants and conducted my research to varying degrees based on the severity of the government restrictions (Atkinson et al., 2022; DeMatthews et al., 2020; Jung et al., 2021; Levine et al., 2021; Pyhältö et al., 2022; Rashid & Yadav, 2020). My time in each center, then, was focused on my various roles and how I was permitted to work based on the COVID-19 situation and the lockdowns that occurred during this time, as well as the availability of participants based on unexpected events that occurred such as abruptly scheduled parent-teacher conferences when we were meant to have an interview. As a curriculum developer from January to June 2022, I worked on the review and development of two English-subject curriculums for secondary students at one of the bilingual schools the organization managed. In addition to these duties, I was asked to review the work of the other curriculum developers who were assigned to work on these two curriculums. This work occupied much of my time outside of this project.

For the duration of the study, I traveled to these different centers when possible, or I used online meeting platforms, such as Zoom, to interact with participants when needed. I worked with the teachers both as a curriculum developer and as a participant in this study. As part of my duties, I sat in one online academic meeting at Center 1 and one online and one offline academic meeting at Center 2 on how they worked on understanding how to use and apply the innovation configurations and answer questions

they may have had, offered suggestions, and practiced with them on how they might choose to apply their selected configurations and components into their classrooms.

I observed key informants' lessons as both a curriculum developer for work and as a practitioner-researcher. For the key informant at Center 1, I observed three 45-minute online lessons and two 90-minute in-person lessons. These observations occurred at an interval of once every three to four weeks. For the two key informants at Center 2, I observed three 45-minute online lessons and three 90-minute in-person lessons for each key informant. These observations would generally occur during the same week with an interval of one every three to four weeks; they happened one or two weeks after my observations at Center 1. When I observed the classes, I looked at how teachers applied the innovation configurations in their lessons and how students responded to changes in instructional practices. I, additionally, was available to speak one-on-one with anyone who wished to discuss the innovation configurations. These conversations were either one of the five to six one-legged interviews each key informant had with me on the day of the observations, as well as during the five to six sit-down post-observation interviews I had with each key informant. In addition, Cody, Ash, and Elliot gave a summative narration of their use of the innovation configurations map when they shared their education journey map at their respective ends of the study. For Cody, this discussion occurred at the end of March. For Ash and Elliot, this discussion occurred at the beginning of July. How teachers reacted to my engagement with them, or lack of engagement, was an important consideration as the innovation configurations were introduced, learned, and applied. My roles as a curriculum developer and participant were intertwined and affected my perspectives of participants and the work we did together.

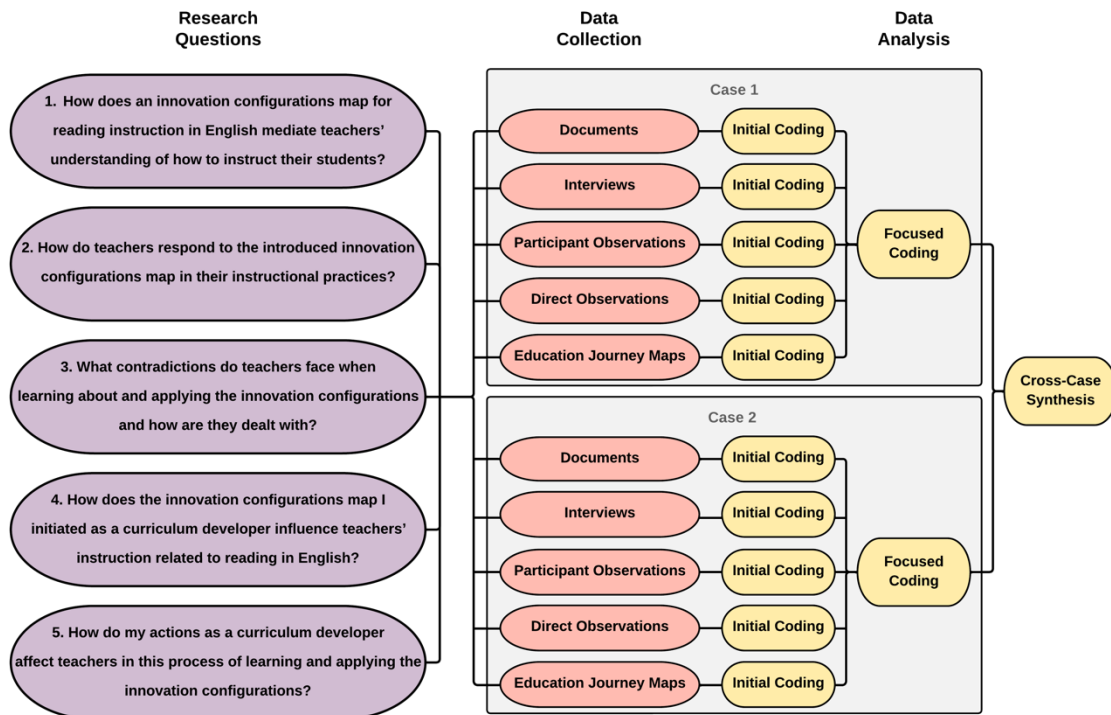
This understanding of these two identities intersected with my role as a researcher. I interacted with teachers to learn the process they used to engage with the innovation configurations map. Yet, I perceived the activity we worked on based on my insights and interpretations of the information they shared due to the subjective nature of social situations (David, 2002; Jordan et al., 2014; Vermeir & Kelchtermans, 2020). Presenting this information was the start of my reflexivity. I strove to be fair and collegial in my engagement with participants and in my analysis of what they shared with me (Roulston & Shelton, 2015; Tracy, 2010). I used the literature, as well as discussions with mentors, colleagues, and dissertation committee members to help me develop a sense of what I learned. Yet, I acknowledge my internalized concepts influenced me and lead me to make conclusions based on my understandings and interpretations. For example, my academic knowledge of guided reading, my experiences as a guided reading teacher at one of our centers, and my observations of other guided reading teachers affected my perceptions of what is involved in helping students develop their literacy skills using this reading methodology. Internalized concepts, such as my experience with guided reading, influenced how I analyzed the data and the conclusions I made.

Sources of Evidence

To understand how teachers comprehended the innovation configurations map and their impressions of using one, I used multiple data collection methods so I could crystalize the findings to allow for “a more complex, in-depth, but still thoroughly partial, understanding” (Tracy, 2010, p. 844). I conducted a multiple case study (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2018) so I could synthesize what I learned to inform future decisions on how to use the map at all centers. To build the two cases, I collected data from five data

Figure 4

Plan for Data Collection and Data Analysis to Answer Research Questions

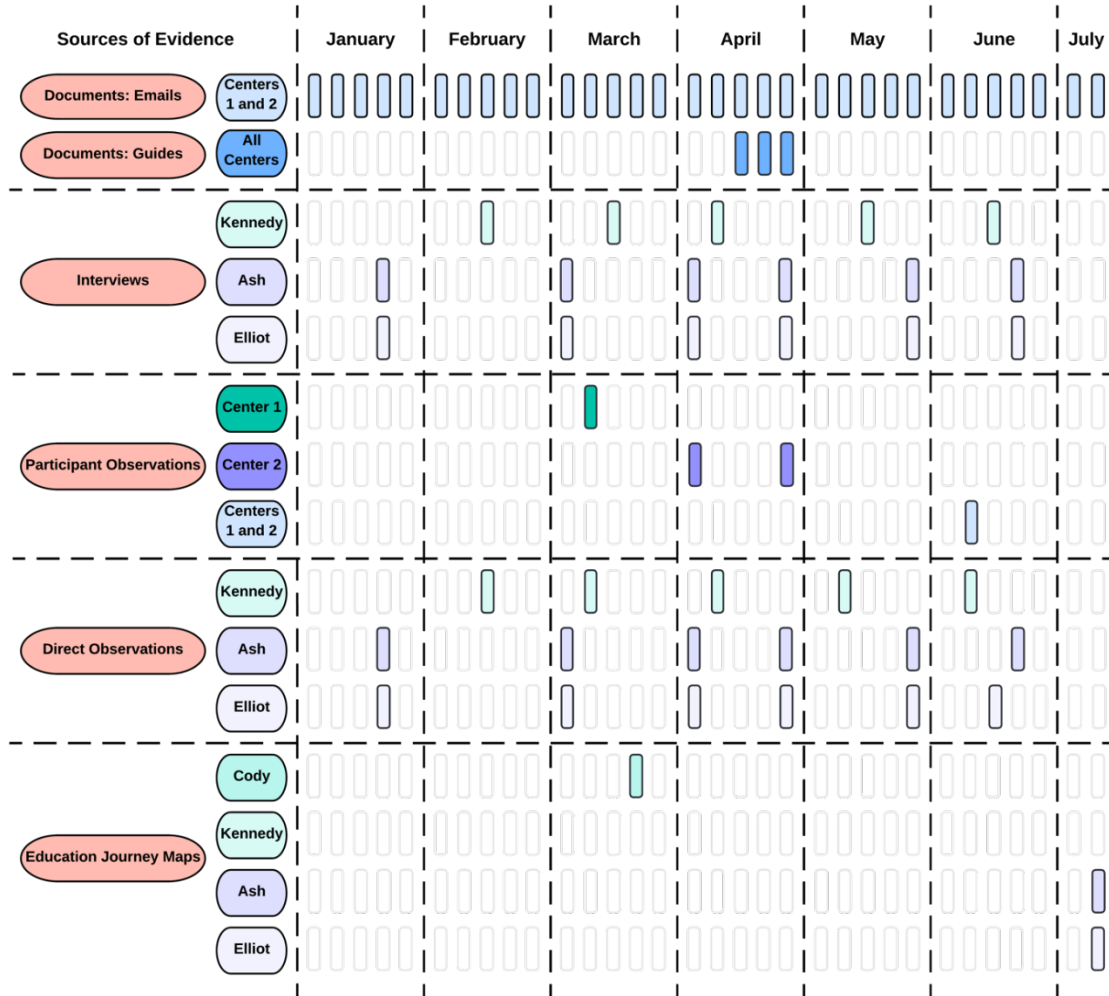


sources (see Figure 4): (1) documents, (2) interviews, (3) participant observations, (4) direct observations, and (5) education journey maps. I used these five data sources to provide evidence to increase the accuracy and contextualization of participants’ perspectives (Yin, 2018), as well as to address the research questions and provide converging lines of evidence.

I collected these data sources from January to early July 2022 (see Figure 5). I gathered data from the interviews, participant observations, and direct observations roughly once a month for the duration of data collection. For documents pertaining to teacher guides and training materials, I gathered this data during the middle of the data collection period. I, additionally, at the end of this period collected data related to the

Figure 5

Timeframe and Frequency of Data Collection for the Sources of Evidence



education journey maps. Throughout the data collection period, I saved email correspondence between participants and myself.

For each data source, I used an identifying marker to ensure data for each evidence source and participant at either center was delineated. For example, I marked an interview with a teacher at Center 1 as “INT-C01-T01-14JAN2022.” Using these

identifying markers allowed me to compare participants across the evidence sources as I worked to synthesize the data.

Documents

I gathered academic documents to help describe each case's context. I used these documents: (1) guided reading course guide, (2) training guide for guided reading, (3) onboarding materials for new teachers related to guided reading, and (4) ongoing training and development materials for guided reading. These academic documents proved useful in offering insights into how curriculum developers and academic trainers explained our courses to others and the way they expected others to apply the content. These documents provided a glimpse into the relationship between authors and users (Graves, 2021; Shkedi, 1998, 2009).

These documents also provided context for the data collected from interviews, participant observations, and direct observations. What teachers said and did was in part a reflection of how they interpreted what their supervisors expected of them. I, thus, used these documents at the end of the data collection to help put into perspective what participants said and did. I also used them to help build their activity systems.

I also analyzed emails from participants and head teachers related to this study. From Center 1, Cody and I emailed each other five times from December 2021 to March 2022. As the interim head teacher at Center 1 in April 2022, Dylan and I emailed each other once about the current situation regarding the changes in academic leadership at the center. I also emailed him information about the project and updated him from my end on what had occurred regarding the use of the innovation configurations map at Center 1. I initially tried to email Kennedy information about the project in January and February,

but she informed me at our first meeting in February that she rarely read her emails. At Center 2, Ash and I emailed each other seven times from January to May 2022; Elliot and I emailed each other four times in February and March.

These documents provided information during the implementation and application of the innovation configurations. Emails from participants included questions they had, as well as updates on their progress in using the innovation configurations. Emails from head teachers included logistical concerns related to academic meetings and my center visits, as well as any issues or challenges that occurred. These documents provided insights from different perspectives, which provided a way to corroborate or augment the evidence from the different sources (Yin, 2018).

I saved the emails as a PDF and organized them once I was approved to start data collection. I also modified these emails using Adobe Acrobat to alter the name of the participants and the organization. This entailed me removing email signatures and identifying information of senders or receivers other than myself. I included the pseudonym or identifying code of the participant and center to ensure I kept those messages organized.

Interviews

Because I collected data from late January to early July, as well as my focus being on understanding the process teachers went through to learn how to use and apply the innovation configurations, I used prolonged case study interviews with the key informants (Yin, 2018). I collaborated with one key informant at Center 1: Kennedy. From February to June, we met and discussed her use of the innovation configurations map five times. At Center 2, I worked with the head teacher, Ash, as a key informant.

Also at Center 2, I worked with Elliot, who served as the second key informant. I met each of Center 2's key informants separately six times from late January to June concerning their use of the innovation configurations. Throughout the study, I availed myself to participants in their academic meetings to help them understand the innovation configurations map, offered suggestions on how to implement them, helped them plan how they would apply them, and answered any questions they had. I, additionally, observed their classes to learn how they applied the selected configuration(s) and component(s). For Kennedy, I observed 5 classes; for Ash and Elliot, I observed six classes each. Following these observations, I discussed with each of them one-on-one their lessons and their perspectives on what they did, what they wished they did, and what they planned to do next. The interviews served as the setting for those discussions.

I asked the head teachers to identify key informants willing to participate. These key informants needed to have been teaching at least one guided reading course and were able to commit to the entirety of the study. I then solicited their interest in participating in this role. I spoke with them in person or online each month for up to one hour to learn how they used the innovation configurations map (see Appendix C).

I sought for these discussions to be 20-30 minutes in duration so as not to burden these teachers. As the study progressed, I found teachers wished to extend our conversations so we could go into more depth about their use of the innovation configurations and how they affected their classes. These discussions were an open dialogue between the teacher and me. The initial interview consisted of five primary questions:

1. Please tell me about your current position and how long you have been in that position.
2. Which configuration and component did you focus on for this week? Why?
3. How did you apply that configuration and component in your lesson?
4. What resulted from your implementation?
5. What do you next plan to do regarding that configuration and component?

These questions shaped the dialogue, but each conversation unfolded differently for each participant as they wished to discuss specific topics relevant to their needs (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Charmaz, 2014). I asked additional follow-up questions as needed to clarify or elaborate on what participants said. These questions included:

6. What have you done to understand how to use the innovation configurations?
7. Who has helped you with your understanding?
8. How has your experience changed over the past week?
9. How has using the innovation configurations influenced your teaching?
10. What has affected your use of the innovation configurations?
11. What challenges have you noticed in using innovation configurations?
12. Is there something more you would like to add or would like to ask me?

I, additionally, asked teachers to elaborate on points and open myself to questions they had as part of our dialogue (Freire, 1968/2000; Johnson & Golombek, 2016). Because these interviews were meant to be relevant for the key informants, I did not ask all the follow-up questions. I used these questions in subsequent interviews except for “Question 1.” See Appendix C for the complete interview protocol.

These interviews provided a close-up perspective of these individual teachers within their activity system and how they internalized academic concepts as situated in the innovation configurations and their discussions with colleagues about their everyday concepts. I also sought to know who and what helped mediate their understanding. As agents, the key informants' perspectives concerning the other components of the activity system were important. I needed to understand the process they went through in learning about and applying the innovation configurations map. Their decision to participate, additionally, was an important consideration in understanding how volunteering affected their use of the innovation configurations. In this way, I zoomed on their experiences to provide insights into that process (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010), which might affect future implementation plans.

I recorded these interviews using my iPhone for face-to-face meetings or on an online meeting platform for the remaining interviews. For both platforms, I used the Otter program to produce partial transcripts. I, additionally, wrote short notes to help me record salient points during the interviews, but my focus remained in the present for the duration of the conversation with the participating teachers.

Participant Observations

To help with crystallization, I observed three academic meetings as a participant-observer. Center academic teams are required to conduct academic meetings to discuss issues related to class logistics, disseminate information, and for training and development. The Academic Director of the organization asked that the two selected centers for this study discuss the innovation configurations during these meetings. Due to COVID-19 lockdowns and the ramifications of those restrictions, the head teachers at

both centers limited the number of academic meetings they held. From January to April 2022, the head teachers at each center held an academic meeting once every three to four weeks. After he was promoted to the regional head teacher at the beginning of May, Ash scheduled academic meetings at least once a month with the teachers of Centers 1 and 2 at either of their centers.

Because of the aforementioned mitigating circumstances, I only was able to attend one academic meeting at Center 1 in March 2022, which was held online. At Center 2, I participated in one online meeting at the start of April and one in-person meeting at the end of April. Additionally, I worked with teachers from both centers at an in-person meeting they held in June 2022 at Center 2. Ash, however, asked that we focus this meeting on education journey mapping and not on the innovation configurations map for guided reading.

When the meetings occurred, they lasted between 30 to 60 minutes. The time allotted for the innovation configurations varied according to the other items on the agenda for the academic meeting. These meetings were structured around the identification of a configuration and components that teachers focused on for that meeting. They discussed the intent and meaning of the selected configuration and components. They developed ideas on how to apply them and how to address anticipated problems. And once they began to use them, they shared how they implemented them in their previous lessons and discussed their plans regarding them when possible.

When the academic meetings did occur, I participated in them as a curriculum developer to provide assistance and guidance as requested by the teachers and head teachers. While typically I would not attend these meetings, participating in them allowed

me to see how teachers collaborated to understand the innovation configurations map and how they dealt with concerns they had in the process of using them. As I was not in charge of these meetings, each center's head teacher and teachers engaged with each other and the innovation configurations in varying ways. That information was important to understand as it affected how they implemented the innovation configurations map.

I chose to collect this strand of data because of the importance these meetings had in illuminating the activity system of each center. The teachers, head teachers, and I aligned with different aspects of each center's activity system. The teachers and head teachers were the primary agents with distinct divisions in the organizational hierarchy. I was a member of a different community interacting with this community with a specific position vis-à-vis the members of this activity system. The innovation configurations served as a mediating tool in developing an awareness of reading pedagogy. And all of us were governed by formal and informal rules.

I audio-recorded the meeting using my iPhone or the online meeting platform, as well as the Otter app. This app provided the initial transcript of the meeting, which I then subsequently modified (Jenks, 2018). Before recording the meeting, I informed everyone I would record as agreed upon when they were asked for their consent. For all but the joint meeting, I recorded the sections related to the innovation configurations to ensure I collected their discussions about them. As the June 2022 academic meeting was a joint meeting between teachers at Centers 1 and 2, it included teachers who had not consented to participate in this study. I, thus, took short notes during the meeting and focused on information from participants who consented to participate in the study. After the meeting, I wrote more comprehensive notes of what transpired in the meeting based on

my notes and recollection. This information was for my records as a curriculum developer rather than for this project as the focus of the meeting was unrelated to the innovation configurations map.

Direct Observations

In addition to the participant observations, I directly observed the entirety of either a 45-minute online guided reading lesson or a 90-minute in-person guided reading lesson for each key informant. The COVID-19 restrictions that were in place at the time of the scheduled observation determined whether an observation was online or in-person. The first scheduled observation I had with each key informant, however, required modifications due to Kennedy being unable to teach classes as she waited for the approval of her work permit. After consulting with Cody and Ash, we decided that each key informant would walk me through a guided reading class. From this walk-through of a lesson, which we did in person, I learned about each key informant's pedagogic understanding of guided reading (Nicholas et al., 2021; Orchard & Winch, 2015; Winch et al., 2015), as well as how they planned to use the curriculum and associated materials (Graves, 2021; Shaver, 2010).

For these classes, I observed them once a month when I visited each center. For Kennedy, I observed five lessons that occurred roughly once every three to four weeks beginning in January 2022 and ending in June 2022. For Ash and Elliott, I observed six classes each that occurred every three to four weeks beginning in January 2022 and ending in June 2022. I used a protocol focused on how teachers applied the targeted innovation configurations over time (see Appendix D). I designed the protocol around each configuration and the different components for that configuration. During the

observation, I wrote notes detailing what the teachers did for the duration of their class. I then followed up with more detailed notes within 24 hours of the observation (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018). The detailed notes of the observation included a determination of the configuration, component, and variation for each action that I noted occurred in the class. In some instances, I selected multiple variations because aspects of that component touched upon multiple variations as the class progressed. For each variation of an identified component, I explained my reasoning for why I made that selection. These observations, thus, provided data on the actual use of the innovation configurations that complemented the other data sources (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Foster, 2006; Simmons, 2017; Yin, 2018).

With these observations, I maintained my focus on the teacher. As the purpose of my research was to understand how teachers used the innovation configurations map during this cycle, I wished to minimize how much data I collected related to students. During observations, I collected data as it pertained to how teachers enacted their selected configurations and components. Regarding students, I collected information on how they responded to their teachers' direct use of the selected configurations and components. For example, when one of the key informants chose to focus on "Component 2: Strategically asks questions during the reading that enhances knowledge and comprehension building" of the configuration for reading comprehension instruction, my focus was on how the teachers enacted that component. In observing the class, I sought to see how students responded to the teacher's application of the component. I was interested in whether all or only a handful of students engaged in activities designed to help them answer the questions, how they answered those questions, and how they discussed those answers

with their teacher and amongst themselves. I, thus, tried to limit how much intrusion I made into the students' learning. As with all parts of my study, the teachers who volunteered for this study did so out of their willingness to participate. For students, however, Arizona State University's Institutional Review Board required that the staff at Centers 1 and 2 inform parents of affected students about the study, provide them the opportunity to share their concerns, and answer any questions they may have had with staff members or me. For the duration of the study, no parent objected to my presence in observing classes.

Education Journey Maps

At the end of the data collection, I asked the key informants and head teachers to create education journey maps and share them in one-on-one interviews (Annamma, 2017). Education journey mapping as a qualitative research method is a means of humanizing research (Annamma, 2016, 2018; Beneke, 2021; Futch & Fine, 2014; Marx, 2022; Siuty & Beneke, 2020). Participants are asked to share their lived experiences in their social contexts visually, spatially, and temporally with their education journey maps (Annamma, 2017; Futch & Fine, 2014; Marx, 2022). Using this method provides participants the opportunity to explore the spaces and events meaningful to them (Annamma, 2017). Participants have a cue to help them express themselves visually through their maps and orally when they recount what they included on their maps (Annamma, 2017; Futch & Fine, 2014; Leavy, 2020; Marx, 2022).

For this study, these interviews provided a summative understanding from the participants' perspectives. I sought to learn broadly how they learned to use the innovation configurations and how they applied them in their classes. In this sense, I

wished to learn how they synthesized the academic concepts contained in the innovation configurations map with their everyday concepts from prior experiences and current pedagogical practices (Johnson & Golombek, 2016). As they created their education journey maps, participants reflected on their journeys so they could include episodes they thought were important and wished to impart. During the interviews, additionally, I had the opportunity to ask participants to elaborate on those episodes to build a more complete understanding of their process of using the innovation configurations map.

Participants used this prompt adapted from Annamma (2017) and Beneke (2021) to guide them in creating their maps:

Map your journey in using the innovation configurations map from your introduction to them to this moment. On your map, please include the individuals, locations, opportunities, experiences, and obstacles that affected and influenced your journey. Be creative with your map and make it your own. Some suggestions include using color to express your ideas and feelings. Including symbols, pictures, and words may also provide you with opportunities to share your thoughts and feelings. If you do not wish to draw, you may make a flowchart, timeline, or other visual representation. When you are done, we will discuss your map one-on-one.

To help the teachers understand what was involved with creating an education journey map, Ash asked that I present to the teachers at Centers 1 and 2 how to create a map. He thought it best if all teachers had the opportunity to create an education journey map and not just the key informants. At the time of the meeting, four teachers had recently started working at Center 1. These teachers had little exposure or experience with the innovation

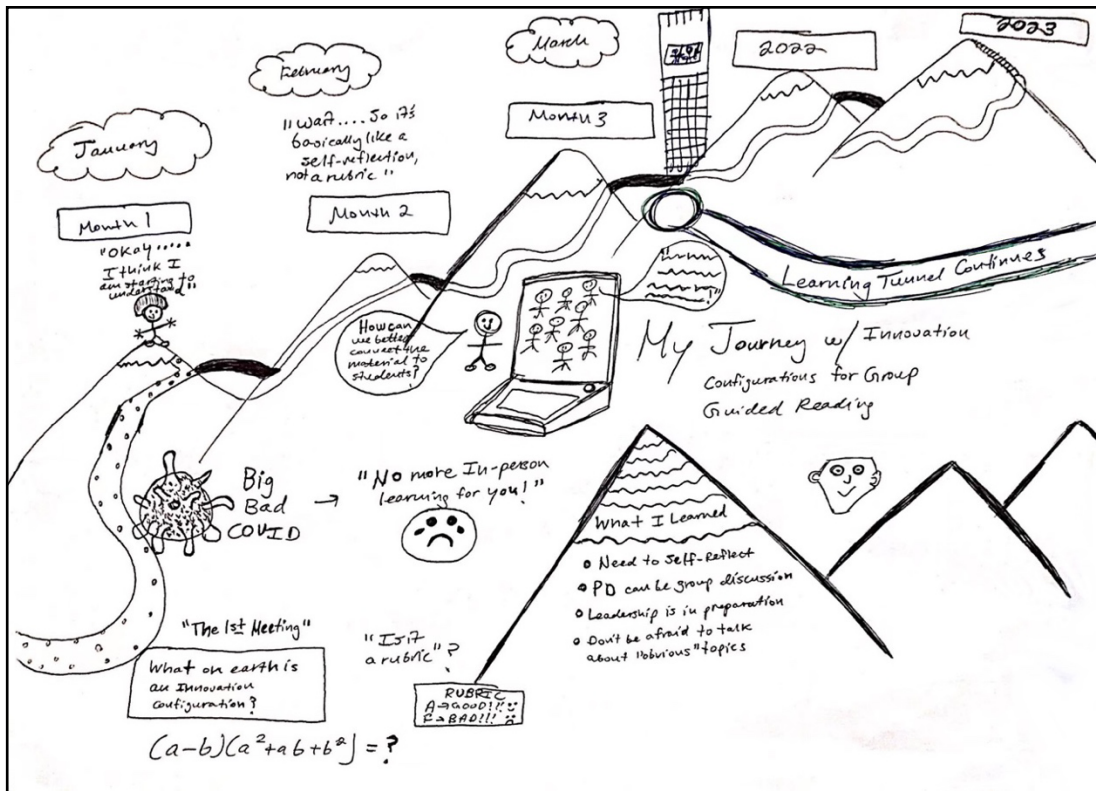
configurations. Ash and I decided it would be more beneficial for the teacher to create a map about their journey to becoming a teacher. We thought it important to ask them to reflect on that journey to help them comprehend what motivated and affected them to make that decision (Mercer, 2018; Mercer & Gregersen, 2020). This awareness we hoped would help them begin to think about what kind of teacher they wanted to be and how they could develop themselves in the present and future (Kubanyiova, 2012, 2015). During the meeting, I first shared how to create an education journey map. I next presented a map I created on how I became a reading teacher. I then asked them to create their maps. We then compared their maps to find similarities in their journeys and the aspects that were unique. We finally ended with sharing final thoughts about what we learned from the journeys shared.

At the end of the last interview I had with each key informant concerning their use of the innovation configurations map, I asked them to take a week to create an education journey map and schedule a time to share their map with me. For the head teachers, I asked Cody to create and share his map before his departure at the end of March 2022 (see Figure 6). For Ash, who participated as both a head teacher and key informant, I asked him and the other two key informants to create and share their maps by the end of July 2022. Ash (see Figure 7) and Elliot (see Figure 8) shared their maps at the start of July 2022. Scheduling conflicts with Kennedy prevented her from creating and sharing a map.

After they had created their maps, I met with each participant one-on-one so they could share their maps. I asked for consent to record them as well as to scan their maps for further analysis. The original maps were theirs to keep. I asked participants to walk

Figure 6

Cody's Education Journey Map

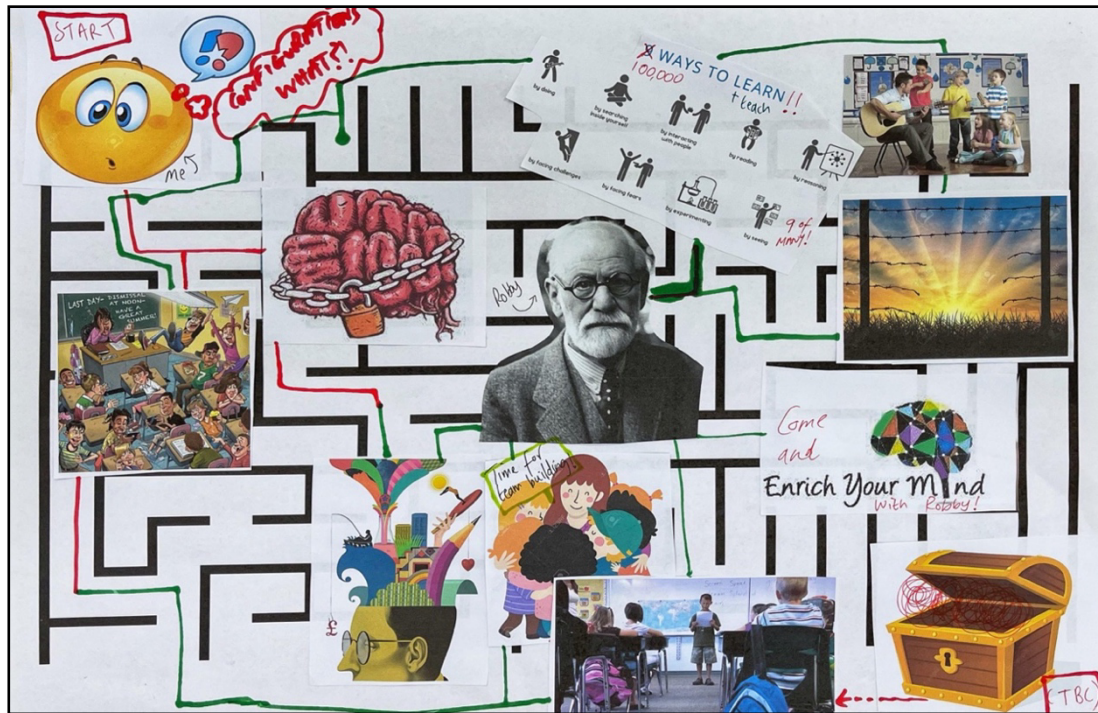


me through their education journey maps. After they had shared, I asked follow-up questions based on their narrative and map to elicit clarification of points the head teacher or teachers made, parts of the map they neglected to mention or glossed over, their selection of visual representations, the meaning of those visual representations, and the creative choices they made with their maps. Examples of follow-up questions and prompts included:

1. Please elaborate on this episode/individual/item and how it affected you.
2. What contextual factors influenced this episode?
3. Please explain why you selected this image.

Figure 8

Elliot's Education Journey Map



analyze the data. The data management system within the program allowed for different data sources to be organized into folders with the option of creating subfolders (VERBI Software, 2019). For this project, I had two separate databases for each case. This separation pushed me to study each case as a unique entity before I conducted a cross-case analysis (Yin, 2018).

Within each case's database, I created a folder for each data source: documents, interviews, participant observations, direct observations, and education journey maps. For documents, I created subfolders for academic documents and emails. Each piece of evidence was titled using the document or participant identifier and the date of data collection. For education journey maps I included a digital copy of each participant's

education journey maps with their interview transcripts. For participant observations, I placed the transcripts within the main folder and titled them participant observation and the date of the academic meeting.

Data Preparation

I began using MAXQDA 2020 as I prepared the data for analysis. I began this step at the same time as data collection to disperse the tasks and mitigate bottlenecks in the research process so I would be able to keep to my timeline. I transcribed all audio and video recordings, scanned or downloaded pertinent documents for future analysis, and transposed and organized my notes.

In balancing the need for the transcripts to accurately reflect the discourse spoken when I recorded them with the need to ensure the anonymity of the participants, I used a tidy transcript style (Gibbs, 2007; Henderson, 2018). Henderson (2018) explains that this approach is appropriate when the concern of the analysis is on the content rather than the structure of the discourse. This transcript approach mimics written discourse instead of attempting to transpose spoken speech into written form. I adhered to a loosely verbatim rendition of the recorded materials with the inclusion of most fillers, repetitions, repairs, and pauses. I, however, omitted them when they were unnecessary. For example, when a participant used the filler, “eh,” I included it in the transcript. When a participant, however, used a series of them, “eh, eh, eh,” I reduced it to a single utterance if it did not contribute to understanding the content of the discourse.

I used the Otter app to produce the initial transcripts. I then cleaned them up for analysis within MAXQDA 2020. One feature of MAXQDA 2020 is the ability to upload Otter transcripts and audio files directly into the program. I then listened through each

recording at least once before I began to modify the transcript. I asked participants if they wished to review the transcripts before I began to analyze them (Sandelowski, 1993; Tracy, 2010). All the participants choose not to review the transcripts.

For all documents, I scanned or downloaded a copy of them onto the computer I used for this project. I then removed any participant or organizational identifying markers and replaced them with pseudonyms. I then uploaded them into MAXQDA 2020.

With my field notes, I maintained a field journal and then transposed them into a Microsoft Word document. As the field notes during the actual data collection primarily consisted of short notes, within one day of the actual event I wrote out in detail my notes (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018). I stored these field notes in MAXQDA 2020.

Analysis—General Strategies

For the overall general strategy of data analysis, I used both theoretical propositions and working from the ground up (Seaman, 2008; Yin, 2018). I decided to relate my research questions and data sources to my selected theoretical framework and methodological choices. Within this theoretical framework of Sociocultural and Activities Theories, I modeled how the teachers' activity system should work as they went through a process of expansive learning on how to use and apply the innovation configurations map (Engeström, 2015). How teachers enacted that activity occurred due to the dynamic interactions of many factors related to each individual, their contexts, and the mediated guidance available (Johnson & Golombek, 2016). Taking an inductive approach allowed for the building of an activity system from the perspective of all participants, including the researcher's, to "preserve the dynamic flow of events" (Seaman, 2008, p. 13). In this way, I was able to describe my emerging understanding of

the activity systems unique to each specific case, as well as how they compared to one another.

With the application of this general strategy, I used qualitative coding to analyze the written and visual evidence in two rounds within MAXQDA 2020 (Saldaña, 2021; VERBI Software, 2019). In the first round, I looked for patterns within each piece of data. I used Initial Coding that applies Process and In Vivo Codes to the data (Saldaña, 2021). I chose to use Process Coding because it allowed me to emphasize the actions or inactions of participants. In tandem with my use of Process Coding, In Vivo Coding allowed me to use honor participants' voices with the use of their words to code. In using both coding systems for Initial Coding, I accepted that at times my insights on the data took precedence, but at other times the insights from participants emerged as more important (Saldaña, 2021). In the second round, I used Focused Coding to converge the evidence from the different data sources (Saldaña, 2021; Yin, 2018). In this way, I synthesized and developed categories and themes from the data coded using Initial Coding. I analyzed the data for each case this way. After I had analyzed each case, I moved towards a cross-case synthesis to compare within-case patterns across the two cases to identify similarities and differences (Yin, 2018). Ultimately, I worked to take all the converging data to answer my research questions and build a conceptual understanding of how teachers at Centers 1 and 2 used the innovation configurations map. Using multiple sources of evidence and analyzing them to reach convergence in this way, thus, strengthened the construct validity of my study (Tracy, 2010; Yin, 2018).

In tandem with data coding, I wrote analytic memos to help me advance my thinking concerning the data (Charmaz, 2014; Saldaña, 2021). As I coded, I wrote

analytical memos to work through my understanding of the data as I answered the research questions (Charmaz, 2014; Saldaña, 2021; Yin, 2018). Initial memos included transitioning from ideas generated during data collection and written in my field notes. The ideas I generated during this phase influenced my impressions of the data as I coded them. I, additionally, wrote memos that included my thoughts on possible codes I might use, how they would fit within the context of the recordings and maps, conceptual contradictions and tensions, questions I had, and reflections on the content and the data analysis process (Charmaz, 2014; Reyes et al., 2021; Seaman, 2008). I wrote and organized my analytic memos directly into MAXQDA 2020. These included general memos related to the study overall and more specific memos related to data groups, specific pieces of data, sections within the data, and codes (VERBI Software, 2019). I organized these memos in the program within a specific tab for memos.

Throughout the coding process, I worked with participants so they would have opportunities to reflect on the data. As participants' memories and feelings about the research transformed over time (Sandelowski, 1993), I asked participants to reflect on my initial impressions and opened a dialogue with them on their insights and concerns (Tracy, 2010). I shared with them my observation notes after our interviews. After I had completed my analysis of the data, I presented the findings to the head teachers and key informants to review if they wished. Only one individual acknowledged receipt of those findings, but that person did not contact me about any concerns. While I afforded opportunities for participants to share their thoughts with me after I had completed the data analysis, I respect their wishes not to share their thoughts as well.

Analysis—Analytic Technique

In using these general strategies of analysis, I also applied explanation building as an analytic technique to help develop internal and external validity (Yin, 2018). As a type of pattern matching, my use of this technique allowed me to develop an explanation for each case. I then converged both cases to provide an overall explanation of the process of how teachers learned and applied the innovation configurations map.

To begin this process, I explained how and why teachers learned and used the innovation configurations map (Yin, 2018). Beneficial in this endeavor was the use of theoretically-based propositions (Yin, 2018). For this case study, I used Sociocultural and Activity Theories to develop those propositions.

The first proposition considered the role of contradictions in the process of learning and development. Engeström (2015) delineated a model of expansive learning where subjects (agents) learn and develop through the reconciliation of contradictions while engaging in an activity. Individuals, such as teachers, who successfully face contradictions in their activity systems are better positioned to expand their learning (Engeström, 2015; Roth, 2004). For example, the teachers in this study experienced contradictions between their current practices—everyday concepts—and described new practices—academic concepts. How they reconciled those contradictions led many of the teachers to initiate the development of true concepts in some instances. In other instances, though, they still were working on reconciling those contradictions. When teachers successfully faced those contradictions, they expanded their learning regarding their teaching practices.

The second proposition concerned how teachers resolved the contradictions they encountered. As learning and development occur within social contexts, which influences those within those settings, teachers benefit from mediated guidance from others within their zone of proximal development (Johnson & Golombek, 2016). The teachers in this study faced numerous contradictions as they learned how to use and then apply the innovation configurations map. Teachers who were provided mediated guidance from head teachers, colleagues, and me were more likely to successfully reconcile the contradictions they faced. When they were provided directed and tailored guidance to face those contradictions, teachers had more opportunities to deal with them. Working to reconcile those contradictions, then, led teachers to expand their learning on how to use and apply the innovation configurations map (Johnson & Golombek, 2016; Smagorinsky, 2018; Xi & Lantolf, 2021).

My third proposition centered on how teachers transitioned into taking ownership of how to use the innovation configurations map. This transition was necessary for the innovation configurations map to be durable and used within teachers' work contexts. Teachers needed to take an external imposition from the curriculum team and adopt it as part of their practices (Guskey, 1985; G. E. Hall & Hord, 2020). While they were guided on how to use one, they ultimately either took ownership of using the innovation configurations map or discarded it. Teachers, thus, needed experience in using the innovation configurations map before they decided to accept or reject it as a resource for learning and development (Guskey, 1985).

I used each of these propositions to serve as the first step in a series of iterations in the explanation-building process (Yin, 2018). I tested each proposition against the data

for that case and revised the proposition. I then compared this revision to other details related to the case to ensure synergy between the lines of evidence (Yin, 2018). At the same time, I explored divergent findings and rival explanations (Yin, 2018). Then I took the revised first case and compared it to the second case, which led to additional revisions. I repeated this process iteratively until the explanation was refined. This process worked nicely with the strategies of using theoretical propositions and working from the ground up (Yin, 2018).

Using this analytic technique as part of the general strategy for analysis helped me focus on answering the research questions of the case study. To further ensure the quality of my research, I attended to all evidence, investigated plausible rival interpretations, focused on the significant aspects of the case study related to the research questions, and situated what I learn with my current understanding of teacher learning and development in the context of private supplementary training centers (Yin, 2018).

Timeline and Procedures

The general procedure I used for all cycles of this study covered the period of fall 2019 to fall 2022. I initiated this cycle 3 dissertation study by reaffirming my approval from the organization's Academic Director (see Figure 2). We negotiated how we would introduce the innovation configurations, which centers would participate in this cycle of research, my role within the research, travel requirements, and the timeframe. Once I received approval, I moved on to the next phase which was the development of the dissertation proposal. After I achieved a successful defense of the proposal and was given permission to move forward, I then completed the institutional review board process at

Arizona State University. After approval was granted, I next moved to participant recruitment and project introduction at the two centers.

To initiate the data collection phases, the Academic Director facilitated a discussion between the head teachers and myself. We went over the timeline of the study and what they and their teachers were expected to do. At the end of these meetings, we scheduled the dates of my center visits.

At the first meeting between the participants and myself, I introduced the project and went over the consent process. I repeated this process as new teachers joined this project until mid-May 2022 when continued participation was untenable due to changes in center priorities and the approaching conclusion of the data collection phase of this study. All teachers at both centers to whom I presented this information consented; one teacher, however, did not consent. I respected this teacher's decision. That teacher was informed that all teachers would still need to participate as part of their work duties. I, however, did not collect any information related to that teacher. For the academic meetings with the teachers at each center, the head teacher and I facilitated the discussion of the use of the innovation configurations. For the study's duration, I worked with the key informants for up to seven months. I observed their classes once a month. I also met with these teachers to discuss the observations and their application of the innovation configurations map. At the end of the study, I asked these teachers to complete education journey maps and share them with me one-on-one. I also asked the head teachers to complete education journey maps at the end of data collection.

Throughout the data collection phase, I prepared the data for analysis. Once I had collected and prepared all the data, I move to data analysis. These procedures and

timelines framed my action research study. What I learned has allowed me to better understand the efficacy of using an innovation configurations map for guided reading and whether the organization should implement them with all our teachers.

The Journey is Set

I used this protocol to help guide me in implementing this multiple-case study. This study was an opportunity for me to research a topic rarely discussed in the literature: *Teacher development within private supplementary training centers*. Scholars have explored this topic focusing on its political and economic components (e.g., W. Zhang, 2019). Studies into teaching practices are quite limited and have mainly focused on teachers' identity formation (e.g., Xiong et al., 2022) and not on teachers' professional learning and development within this sector. I hope this study will contribute information about how teachers can develop and learn within a unique corner of the education world. Yet, most importantly, I hope it will contribute to a better understanding of how to empower teachers to take an active role in their learning and development for the benefit of their students.

The use of these five data collection methods allowed me to answer the five research questions that guided me in understanding the process of teacher learning and development. The two cases I studied helped to shed light on how teachers learned to use the innovation configurations map, how they reacted to a mediating tool the curriculum team introduced, and how the activity of all the stakeholders unfolded. Through the work within these activity systems, I gained a stronger awareness of what effect the innovation configurations had and their efficacy as a mediating tool. As with any action research study, this cycle of research was but one of many iterative cycles of ongoing learning.

What I learned during this cycle of the research project has informed what further actions the organization will take with the innovation configurations map for guided reading.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

An expectation when implementing an innovation into an activity system is that how it unfolds will include the unexpected (G. E. Hall & Hord, 2020). With that understanding in mind, those in charge of this process need to be able to pivot when deviations appear. Flexibility is required for the success of that innovation in an activity system as participants face contradictions, build an understanding of those contradictions, and find ways of reconciling them (Roth, 2004). For participants to achieve that objective, they need support and guidance from colleagues and learned others (Clarà, 2015a; Engeström, 2015; Mercer & Gregersen, 2020; Roth, 2007). During this project with the use of the innovation configurations map for guided reading at Centers 1 and 2, unexpected occurrences occurred and required minor to significant alterations. Comprehending how participants dealt with those unforeseen events with the support and guidance from others is crucial in understanding the effect the innovation configurations map had on participants.

The significance of why recognizing the unexpected is an essential aspect of how participants worked within their activities system with others emerged from the inductive analysis of all strands of data. This awareness emerged from the initial coding, the categorization of the data for each center, and the synthesizing of the data. This analysis also elucidated how educators can use the innovation configurations map as they dealt with challenges in learning how to use and apply it. Within the activity system of each center, there was a clear importance in how participants interacted, the mediation they

received from learned others, and their shifting perceptions of the innovation configurations map.

Because this study occurred over the first half of 2022, changes occurred in the dynamics of the activity system that affected how well people in each center worked towards achieving the objective of this study: *Furthering the teachers' ability to instruct guided reading for their students*. This overall objective is a mid-to-long-term goal for the teachers, but the participants made strides toward achieving that objective. But these strides varied for each individual, which affected what participants achieved at the end of the project period.

To fully comprehend this process, how it occurred, and the effects of it in understanding the process that participants went through in learning about and applying the innovation configurations map, this chapter is structured around the research questions that guided me in my process of comprehending the experiences of everyone involved. The first section deals with how teachers used the innovation configurations map to mediate their understanding of appropriate instructional practices. The second section focuses on how teachers responded to the innovation configurations map. The third section explains the contradictions the teachers faced as they learned how to use and apply the innovation configurations map, as well as how they worked to reconcile those contradictions. The fourth section illuminates how teachers related to an innovation that I initiated and asked them to use as part of their development. The fifth section clarifies how my actions influenced participants throughout the study. I conclude this chapter with a summary of the findings.

The data presented here is a synthesis of the two case studies of Centers 1 and 2. This synthesis presents an insight into the process participants took to learn about and apply the innovation configurations map as they dealt with events as they unfolded. I begin with how the innovation configurations map mediated the participating teachers' instructional practices.

Mediation Process Via the Innovation Configurations Map

For the teachers in this study who actively used the innovation configurations map, it initially served as a codex of “what” teaching guided reading entailed (Nicholas et al., 2021). Given that guided reading for many of these teachers was a novel reading practice, knowledge of what to teach was an important consideration for them in fulfilling their expected duties. Four points emerged in how the participants' use of the innovation configurations map mediated their knowledge and skill development. The first point was how participants developed true concepts. The second was on how they learned what was involved with guided reading. The third point was on how they applied the content of the innovation configurations map effectively. The fourth point was how participants used the map to move beyond it. Each of these four points exemplifies how the innovation configurations map was used to help mediate the participants' understanding of guided reading instruction.

Developing True Concepts

While every teacher had numerous everyday concepts related to guided reading at the start of the study, they had fewer academic or true concepts. Many of their practices were based on instinct in combination with prior experience as students or that they had observed other teachers do. For example, Kennedy in our second interview had a difficult

time explaining how she would teach the differences between the reading strategies of prediction, inference, and synthesis. When I asked her how she thought she could help her students differentiate between them, she responded:

So that is ... another thing that is kind of the problem when it comes to our curriculum. ... at no point does the curriculum really give room or say like, "Okay, today's ... reading [strategy] is this." It's already such a feat sometimes to get these kids to wrap their minds around something like synthesizing. It's, and even for me when I first learned about synthesizing as ... a concept, versus something that I do naturally ... As a native English speaker, we do this naturally, just people, in general, do this naturally. Right?

Kennedy identified the curricula materials as a source for her understanding of how to teach guided readings versus a resource to help her facilitate guided reading. When those materials were ambiguous regarding how to achieve instructional objectives, Kennedy was unsure how to proceed and sought information from other sources. When I observed Kennedy teach synthesis to the students, she first defined it for them as an opinion based on accumulated knowledge. Synthesis in reading concerns making connections between what is read with information from other sources and then developing an original idea that encapsulates those connections (Quigley, 2020). This understanding of synthesis differed from what Kennedy presented as an opinion. Kennedy then had her students look at a partial picture of a tiger and asked them to think about what they knew based on what they could see in the picture. After the students had discussed what they knew about tigers, Kennedy displayed more of the picture which included the tiger behind a glass enclosure. She then had them discuss what they thought they knew about the tiger based

on this new information. Finally, Kennedy presented the whole picture of a girl looking at the tiger inside an enclosure. Kennedy presented this process to her students as to how to synthesize. The process Kennedy taught her students in this situation combined different reading strategies, which included inference and prediction making. When I asked her how she would differentiate between them and help her students develop these different reading strategies, Kennedy avoided answering the question and left it open-ended by questioning whether she should.

Kennedy's confusion about the facets involved with guided reading was echoed by other teachers. Many of them were unsure of what specifically was involved with guided reading instruction. During our interviews, several teachers kept looking for affirmation of their general statements about their practices from me. For example, Elliot tended to focus on the grammatical and mechanical aspects of language instruction instead of literacy development, especially when it came to written instruction. In her last observed class in June 2022, Elliot had her students grade each other's written assignments. She had them focus on the grammatical and language aspects of what was written instead of the content as related to demonstrating comprehension of the reading text. As Elliot monitored the students, I observed she asked students about grammar and spelling mistakes instead of anything related to the content. When I asked her in our follow-up interview what the focus of students marking each other's writing was in one of her reading classes, she tentatively replied, "I thought it would be overwhelming to try and get expect them to think about everything. So, I guess, spelling. Although they're not that great at spelling. So maybe that's the wrong answer." Elliot had focused on spelling, a matter that is more germane to writing classes. Written assignments in reading classes

are generally focused on helping students build their comprehension of the texts they read (Burkins & Croft, 2017; Pinnell & Fountas, 2010). When I probed her further about her understanding of the focus of written assignments for reading classes, she and I went back and forth to determine what benefited students more in reading classes:

Robby: Spelling is a convention, where does that fall in English language teaching?

Elliot: Do you mean in terms of enforcing ...

Robby: So, speaking, listening, reading, or writing; spelling, where does that fall into?

Elliot: In writing.

Robby: Writing. Which class are we in?

Elliot: Reading.

Robby: Reading. ... What are you focusing on in terms of grading when you're doing reading?

Elliot: Understanding the text.

Robby: Showing understanding, comprehension. Using like reading skills, reading strategies. Now, this is where there's a fine line, appropriate use of vocabulary related to the text or the reading skill. That's fine. But then focusing on the spelling of the vocabulary, yeah, goes into ...

Elliot: Here.

Robby: Writing. So, just think about what is the purpose of the grading that is appropriate for the class, and then what'll actually help the students.

As we talked, she started to develop her awareness that focusing on the technical aspects of the language for students grading each other's works was more appropriate for writing classes; for reading classes, the grading of written assignments should focus on the students' understanding of the text. For this aspect of guided reading, Elliot relied on her everyday concepts about what should be graded for written assignments regardless of the differences between writing and reading lessons.

Their use of the innovation configurations map, however, began to mediate how they thought about and communicated their awareness of guided reading. In our fourth interview, Kennedy articulated her reasons for why she facilitated classroom discussion the way she did in the observed class with the incorporation of different components from the discussion configuration. For example, she talked about how she arranged the classroom for classroom discussion (Component 1: Establishes an engaging environment for the class discussion), as well as her decision process in selecting prompts for the class (Component 2: Uses guiding questions and prompts to facilitate the discussion). She said:

I took that into consideration when I gave them those prompts for our discussion.

I hope it helped. But yes, so this entire portion I read over before I ... actually made my lesson plan [and] to take into consideration to have more open discussions with my students rather than just giving them something on ... the screen and then regurgitating that information to them.

Through her use of the innovation configurations map, Kennedy was building an understanding of "what" she should be focusing on in her classes. As Kennedy became more familiar with the innovation configurations map, she started to use terminology from it to delineate what exactly she was doing in the class. She, thus, started to move

away from her everyday concepts toward true concepts with the introduced academic concepts.

Ash also started to build his ability to use the terminology regarding guided reading in explaining his decision process, as well as his awareness of the purpose for the inclusion of certain elements included in specific lessons. In our third interview, Ash explained that he wanted to focus on helping students to use more of their reading skills and strategies to help build their reading comprehension (Component 4: Guides students to use reading skills and strategies to help build their comprehension). To accomplish this task, Ash had his students work on multiple reading skills and strategies throughout one lesson as was suggested in the curriculum. For most of the lesson he and the students focused on text and graphic features. At the end of the lesson, though, he had his students work on synthesizing what they learned from the reading text, which they had read multiple times in class. His thought process about the use of synthesis demonstrated his understanding about why synthesizing was included in the lesson and how his students could benefit from developing this reading skill. He shared:

We put ... synthesizing in. And so, I thought, okay, well, then, the purpose is there for a reason. And this is, there's a lot of knowledge that the students have about nature that we've already began to talk about, in other lessons plus knowledge that they have anyway. So, I wanted to show them. Like, this is something that we should be doing [with] more and more texts.

In the exchange, he was still unsure of why synthesis was incorporated into a class that had primarily focused on text and graphic features, but he thought that there was a reason

for its inclusion and had extrapolated one. I then asked him how the two could be connected, and he responded:

So, you have the text, which is giving some sort of knowledge. And the way the text features are using, you know, if, for example, using bold, it's highlighting the piece of knowledge you want. The graphic features are then used to enhance that knowledge or add something else. So, when you combine them together, you get this end result, which would be very different if you only had one of them. So, it's kind of maybe it's mirroring that idea that you have this one set of knowledge.

And now another set of knowledge, what happens when you put these two together? That ... I don't know if that's right. But that's my understanding of it

As I asked him to think about how text and graphic features related to synthesizing in his lessons, Ash began to think about the reasons why it could help his students. Through his use of the innovation configurations map in determining what he should focus on and with our conversation, Ash began to think deeper about guided reading and his students' needs.

At this beginning stage, Kennedy, Elliot, and Ash were showing signs of being able to use the terminology related to guided reading, which can be construed as an act of reverberation. Reverberation occurs when individuals begin the internalization process by first echoing and imitating what they learn with signs of a deeper—but incipient—understanding of the academic concepts (Dellagnelo et al., 2022). With guidance and support from those who present those academic concepts, participants can move towards synthesizing the academic and everyday concepts (Johnson & Golombek, 2016; Smagorinsky, 2013). All three participants increasingly reverberated the academic

concepts that were presented to them (Dellagnelo et al., 2022), yet they were still in the process of developing their true concepts.

Learning What is Involved in Guided Reading

Teachers, additionally, used the innovation configurations to determine what they should focus on to ensure they covered the core facets of a guided reading class.

Accompanying with identifying what they should focus on was the inclusion of how they would incorporate those configurations and components into their classes. As the innovation configurations map is designed to explain the general contours of a guided reading class, nothing is said of “how” teachers are to specifically incorporate them into their classes because of contextual considerations. Teachers need to make this decision for themselves.

Because the contextual situation of each teacher at each center was different, the teachers needed to think about appropriate means of applying the content of the innovation configurations map for their classes. Yet, their everyday concepts limited the range of possibilities that they knew about on appropriate and effective possibilities to those of which they had prior knowledge. For example, Kennedy relied on speed reading with her students as one of the ways she had her students read in class, but it lacked any pedagogic purpose for the students. Speed reading hinders reading fluency development; pronunciation becomes problematic the faster students read (Quigley, 2020). Kennedy thought about it in terms of it being “more just a game” and “not ... caring what they actually are doing with pronunciation.” To expand the possibilities, a learned other who could guide Kennedy, share resources, and discuss possibilities with her was important for her development (Gakonga, 2019; Johnson, 2022; Orland-Barak, 2021). In this

instance, we talked about the appropriateness of speed reading when the focus of the lesson is on comprehension, and what could be used in lieu.

Teachers could do this work independently to a degree based on their everyday and academic concepts (Benzehaf, 2016; Warford, 2011). Cody, who chose not to work directly with me on using the innovation configurations as Ash did, did incorporate the innovation configurations map in some of his lessons based on how he interpreted the configurations and components he chose. In one instance, which he described at the March academic meeting at Center 1, Cody shared how he focused on the prior knowledge configuration. He had his students practice identifying how the problems in the text they were reading that day were like other problems in texts that they had read before (Component 2: Provides opportunities for students to make connections). He instructed in a way that was teacher-directed by having students listen to him and answer his questions. While this activity did help students make some connections with what they knew, a more student-centered design might have further engaged and helped students (Chi & Wylie, 2014).

In comparison, Ash after having a previous discussion with me about the benefits of student-centered activities began to experiment with including those types of activities as part of his application of the innovation configurations map into his lessons. During his lesson on March 30, I noticed he had his students ask each other questions that they had created based on what they read as a means of applying a component of the reading comprehension configuration (Component 3: Facilitates students building their ability to think about the text). When I asked him his thought process regarding this activity, Ash explained:

We had one activity where I just said, I want them to find pieces of information. And so okay, you're reading this, and then you can tell me the information. And the reason I did that was to kind of build up to that. Okay, next thing, you're going to say you're finding out information and going to turn it into a question. And then I remember, like, one of the things we discussed last time was how to make the students more involved. So that's why I wanted to try and be like ... you choose a student to answer this question.

Ash after our conversation concerning student-centered activities began to think about how he could include engage his students in a way that empowered them in his reading lessons to incorporate components of the innovation configurations map.

While Cody had used the map and interpreted it in one way, there were missed opportunities to engage his students. How he used it was very much based on his everyday concepts. Ash had similar everyday concepts. As we began to work with each other, he started to learn different academic concepts regarding how he could structure his classes and engage his students and the reasons why they could benefit his students. Without the learned other, then, teachers might overly rely on their everyday concepts (Ngo, 2018).

Direct guidance can help push teachers to incorporate academic concepts into their practices. This process would hopefully lead to the development of true concepts. Ash and Elliot had ideas of what they wanted to do and shared them with me at each of our meetings. For example, in our second meeting, Elliot shared that she used the prior knowledge configuration to inform her in ensuring students were aware of the meaning of cultural references in the text they read in the observed class. As she explained:

Like checking to see if she gets, like, some of the references, ... like a little joke, which I think it was kind of a cultural reference. I wanted to check does she understand this. Has she had this type of joke before? And therefore, does this make sense to her? Does she interpret it in a funny way? ... I know that I made an effort to actually do that in that time. Just because I thought also if she doesn't get that, how is she going to understand some of the other references, maybe.

Elliot thought about what the students would need to know and asked students what they knew about their understanding of some of the jokes in the text. She did this on her own cognizance. Yet, she was unaware if what she did was appropriate for her students. When I shared some of the academic reasons, such as the importance of asking questions about what the students knew and having the students lead the direction of the discussion, Elliot appreciated that knowledge. As she said, "I didn't really know that I was doing a good job at doing it ... until I heard it from you. I guess because I didn't really get shadowed much. So that was very useful." The direct support a learned other can give in putting into academic terms the veracity of some of the ideas the teachers used, as well as providing more robust pedagogic ideas, is one way a learned other can help in developing them.

Kennedy, however, was a bit different. Throughout the six months we worked together she only used the innovation configuration once to structure her lessons. She did this in the fifth month of the project, well after we had three prior conversations where we talked about her classes to work out areas that were strengths and how to build from them. We also talked about areas where she found weaknesses and we discussed those as well. But she deferred to me by asking what I thought about her classes.

It is here, one degree separated from her usage, that the innovation configuration also was applied. In my notes of her observed classes, I used the innovation configurations to help determine what we would focus on in our discussions. For example, in the third observation, I noted that Kennedy had her students draw two clouds that they had learned from that day's reading. Using the reading skill that was focused on in that class, she then had them compare and contrast the two clouds using a Venn diagram with a few written notes. They then shared and discussed their work as a class. When I asked her why she did this activity, Kennedy responded:

So, I was like, okay, I know how much they love drawing. So, I was saving it for the end. ... And I'm like, I know them, because they are perfectionists when it comes to their drawing. So, they will keep drawing. So, I left it to the end, just like to end off the class, because I knew, I know them.

Her explanation for why she included this activity focused more on motivational factors, which is an important consideration for students (Reeve, 2013; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2020; Schiefele et al., 2012; Taboada et al., 2009; Ushioda, 2009). There are, though, pedagogic reasons for the inclusion of activities like this one for students. The activity Kennedy used is a means to assess what students learned by using the Venn Diagram as a graphic organizer, which allowed her students to share visually and textually what they learned (Farrell, 2009). I presented that academic information to help her understand the pedagogic reasons for doing this activity. I focused on this specific activity to help her gain some academic knowledge about how activities like this one are important because it was within her zone of proximal development, as well as her having had a positive experience using it with her students.

My observation notes helped me decide what I wanted to talk about with the participants concerning the content of the innovation configurations map. These notes mediated my development of how to guide the teachers. For the participants who had worked with the innovation configurations map, I worked with them directly by talking about their use of the map. I then encouraged them to experiment in ways that I thought would benefit them and their students. For Kennedy, I used my notes to help her see how the innovation configurations map could be used. Using my notes like this was one way of applying the content of the innovation configurations map to help with Kennedy's development. My use of it focused on key aspects of the class that I thought was important for her and her students. For both ways of using the innovation configurations map, I served as a person who could guide participants to think about how to use the map in ways that would benefit their instructional practices.

Effective Applications of the Innovation Configurations Content

The innovation configurations map, thus, helped determine what the participants and I conversed about regarding guided reading. That, however, was not enough. In such situations, the learned other in tandem with the teacher needed to work on the why and how of guided reading to ensure that teachers would be able to enact changes into their classes that were situationally appropriate (Nicholas et al., 2021). The dialogue between the teacher and the learned other is important in ensuring that what is implemented is based on incipient true concepts and not merely everyday or academic concepts (Dellagnelo et al., 2022; Johnson & Golombek, 2016).

A case in point is the discussion of round-robin reading that occurred at Center 2 and specifically with Ash. From the reading comprehension configuration, Ash had

selected reading strategies (Component 1: Provides opportunities for students to read the target text multiple times in a variety of ways) as one area he wanted to focus on for his development. In the second and third observations with him, I noticed that he had his student round-robin read in his class. I evaluated this choice of strategies as less ideal, and, subsequently, I asked Ash why he selected this strategy in our post-observation interview. In our third interview, Ash explained:

I was thinking, okay, so I want to hit ... some different strategies. So, one reading on their own, then do a little bit of the round robin reading [with] a much shorter passage, you know, and then get them looking for information, and then building that into turning that into questions.

Ash had considered my thoughts on how his students would likely benefit from using different reading strategies. This component, however, had not been a focus of our previous discussion. I included it in my observation notes and Ash decided to try incorporating different strategies in addition to the ones that he used based on those notes. Some of those strategies, specifically round-robin reading, I found less beneficial to the students. Ash was bewildered why I had assessed his chosen reading strategies as less effective than what he thought they would be when we discussed them in our post-observation discussion. Immediately after I explained the variation I gave and the reasons for it, Ash asked, “You said, so you gave me an E in that? So is it ... So, by doing that one little thing, it's a drag? So, if I took that away, what would that score be?” I informed him that section would have received a higher variation and I explained why, such as the inclusion of round robin changing the momentum of the lesson when he switched from focusing on the class reading collaboratively to then reading one-by-one.

Round-robin reading is a common reading practice where students read a passage of a text aloud individually in turns (Farrell, 2009; Grifhorst et al., 2012; Quigley, 2020). Reading research has found that round-robin reading is not an effective reading strategy for students (Kuhn & Schwanenflugel, 2006). Some students are negatively affected by the pressure of having to read aloud, other students are more focused on what they are to read and not on the content of the reading, many students remain passive and are inattentive when they are meant to listen and follow along in the text when others read, and it generally takes more time in class that could be spent on other aspects of reading.

In our interview, I asked him what he knew about this reading strategy and his thoughts on using it. He stated that it was something that he thought was appropriate because that was how he was taught. He, additionally, shared that, “You know, and I think there is on one level, a sense of comfortability, having the students do that.” We then discussed the pros and cons of using this strategy. I later sent Ash some additional reading articles (e.g., Grifhorst et al., 2012) explaining the concerns we discussed and alternative reading strategies. Ash, additionally, researched and found more strategies that he could experiment with in his classes which he later shared with his teachers at a subsequent academic meeting.

As he experimented, he started to see changes in his classes and how that positively influenced his students as they were better focused on what they were reading. For example, he experimented with having students read passages silently to themselves and then had them generate questions that they would ask each other or the entire class. Ash shared that having his students do this led to a realization, “I learned ... that they ... will discuss with each other more, and they can ask these questions.” In using this

strategy, Ash created a more student-centered class. The discussion questions originated from the students, which was based on their understanding of what they read.

For Ash, the innovation configurations map served as the fulcrum of what to focus on for his development as a guided reading teacher. Our discussions, additionally, helped him learn about the more academic aspects of guided reading, in this case different ways of reading in class, and how to do it in ways that would benefit his students. In our collaboration, we determined what areas to focus on. We then discussed the importance of making those changes. And then we talked about how those changes could be made. This knowledge was then used to facilitate Ash's development in the how and why of actualizing the map's content into his instructional practices.

Expanding the Innovation Configurations Content

While the learned other can help teachers understand the content of the innovation configurations map to mediate their instructional practices, the learned other also can use the map to expand teachers' knowledge on topics beyond it as is warranted by teachers' needs. This person, thus, can help encourage teachers to further develop their pedagogic practices related to guided reading.

In the one instance in May 2022, Kennedy used the discussion configuration to help structure her lesson. She chose to focus on how to get her students to discuss the reading text more collaboratively (Component 4: Encourages students to co-create knowledge through discussion amongst each other). This again focused on the what of guided reading and not the how or the why. She continued to focus on this aspect, which I noted when I observed her class in June. For the June observed class, she used a jigsaw reading technique where students got pieces of the text they were to read and put them

back in the correct order. Such collaborative acts are beneficial to students in learning (Chi & Wylie, 2014), which is a good way to not only read but to discuss the text with other students with a purpose (Quigley, 2020).

As the students worked on this task the first time, they focused on the graphic features to deduce how the text should be put together than on the textual features. Kennedy noticed this and encouraged the students to focus on the textual elements. The students, however, persisted in using the graphic features. What resulted was that their text was incorrectly ordered. Kennedy asked them why they did it the way they did and what resulted. After the students answered, Kennedy then asked what they could do to ensure they would get it in the right order. The students mentioned they should read the text. The students did much better with their second attempt with only one section of the text incorrectly placed but within the correct sub-passage.

In our follow-up interview, I asked Kennedy to explain why she did the exercise this way. She talked about some aspects that are mentioned in the innovation configurations like the importance of co-construction of knowledge and using a variety of reading strategies. Here she was showing initial signs of what to include, but not necessarily why. So, we talked about it a bit more and discussed possible reasons. But then she talked about the mistake the student made and her thoughts about it. She shared:

I think the reading portion was a little bit more difficult for them because they were unable to ... They kept trying to organize the pieces of the story based on what the, what it looked like because there was like ridges around because it was a book, like a notebook. ... I'm like no, you're missing the point. Please read and see how it makes sense and piece it together.

I noticed she seemed bothered by the students making this mistake in both the class and in her recounting of it. I asked her why it bothered her so, and it became clear that she wanted the discussion and reading to go smoothly without mistakes. I took this as an opportunity to talk to her about productive failure (Kapur, 2014), which is when students and teachers try something the first time unsuccessfully, identify their mistakes, understand why they are mistakes, and then try again. My question in this originated on what she wanted to focus on in terms of reading and discussion. I then expanded the discussion into how mistakes can be used as a source of learning for students and their importance. Kennedy did this intuitively as her everyday concept, I provided her with academic concepts, and in time she could synthesize them into true concepts.

The role of the learned other is an important one in helping teachers use the innovation configurations to mediate their understanding of how to utilize it. As an introduced innovation to their activity systems, teachers can try to ascertain how to use one without the assistance of a learned other (Benzehaf, 2016; Warford, 2011). With the support and guidance of a learned other, though, teachers can reflect on their choices before, during, and after implementation (Clarà, 2015b). This learned other can give responsive guidance that is tailored to their needs (G. E. Hall & Hord, 2020; Johnson & Golombek, 2016). In this way, teachers can begin using the innovation configurations to mediate their ideas of how to think about and discuss guided reading, as well as how to instruct their classes that benefit their students. Having a general focus on what to develop and then later questioning pedagogic practices are crucial ways that the innovation configurations can be used to mediate teachers' instructional practices.

Responses to the Innovation Configurations Map

Teachers' familiarity with an initiative meant to improve their teaching practices will affect how they respond to it over time (G. E. Hall & Hord, 2020). The introduction of changes into an activity system affects people as they learn about and apply it (George et al., 2006). As they continue to use—or not use—the change initiative, their impressions transform due to their experiences regarding that initiative (Clarà, 2015a; Roth, 2007). As activity systems are comprised of numerous parts with actors intersecting with different components of the system, such as the rules of the system and the different community members, responses to change initiatives will vary as the components affect them (Engeström, 2015). Navigating through these changes differs for each person as they are influenced by the experiences, individuals, circumstances, and tools that exist within their activity systems. For the teachers of this study, their work with the innovation configurations map and how they responded to it emerged from how each participant engaged with the different components of their activity systems.

Cautious Reactions

Each participant varied in their reasons for why they wished to develop their instructional practices related to guided reading. Ash felt the need to develop himself not only for self-development but in becoming more capable of helping his teachers at Center 2, such as Elliot. In our second post-observation interview, Ash informed me:

The whole idea for me of this project is to become better. But if I'm only just constantly only focusing on the things that I feel like I'm good at, then, you know, to me, it's just ... self-congratulating myself, which is not really useful. And ... I'm looking at it, you know, I'm, when I'm looking through it as well, I'm trying to

look at ... from the head teacher perspective, what maybe is the team weak in, and then how we can, you know, improve on that collectively.

While Elliot had experience with guided reading, she felt the need to further elaborate on what she knew and to gain a firmer understanding of the different possibilities available to her. As she explained in our first interview:

I'm really just hoping that as a result of this, and being able to apply some of these things to my own teaching, that I'm able to improve my practices and that could be universal because I always kind of want to be in a position of someone who can educate in some way.

Cody, however, focused his attention on the individual needs of his teachers at Center 1 and encouraged them to use the innovation configurations in ways they thought were appropriate for their development. When recounting his education journey map, Cody explained his thought process in how to use the innovation configurations map with his team:

But at that time, you know, COVID was also saying, like, no more in-person learning for you. Right? And it was pretty clear that we are going to be online for quite a, you know, for quite a while. So, at that point, I was sort of like saying, okay, wait, so it's basically like a self-reflection, not a rubric. It's just an opportunity for teachers to, you know, to be more mindful of these different aspects of guided reading, like the different components of guided reading and sort of assess whether ... they're actively thinking about these things, whether ... they're in a conscious state, where when they're preparing to teach, they're

thinking about these things ... Just being more mindful on each component, each component of, of our group guided reading.

For Kennedy, she felt that given the newness of everything in her new permanent position as a teacher at the center, learning more about guided reading would benefit her development. Her initial goals were to be, “Just an all-around better teacher for my students, for myself, for my confidence as a teacher. So, like I said, I am hoping that this, this will help.” The divergent needs of the head teachers and key informants affected the activity systems that emerged and how they dealt with and responded to the innovation configurations map as the project unfolded. Yet, from the start of the project, they began with similar goals of general improvement.

On the introduction of the innovation configurations map at both centers, teachers were generally positive in their sentiments about this project. Kennedy stated that it felt that something was being done in terms of professional development instead of just a promise of something that would happen sometime in the future. She also hoped that the innovation configurations map would help her better comprehend how to teach guided reading. As she said, “I do like finding new ways to better myself as a teacher. So, I'm hoping that [the configurations] will give me better guidance and structure for my lessons and my lesson planning.”

While the participants were happy that something concrete was happening, the head teachers and teachers were still skeptical about whether the project would have a positive effect. Ash in our last post-observation interview, noted:

But just from previous past experiences, I genuinely was a bit apprehensive if this was going to be helpful. And that was nothing against you, or [the organization].

... I am now very thankful that I joined. And I think it's a shame that other people didn't. Because I can imagine other people didn't join because they [had] the same ... thoughts.

Elliot and Kennedy also were skeptical at first about using the innovation configurations map and what the results would be as it was a new type of professional development they were asked to do. For example, as Kennedy informed me in our first meeting, “Well, first off, I would like to read through the innovation configuration[s] ... And then I will implement them as I see fit or as I am comfortable. Or see how they are applicable to my lesson plans.” Such sentiments are common in the introduction and incorporation of innovations into an education setting (Guskey, 1985, 2020; G. E. Hall & Hord, 2020). The experience of improvement and seeing its impact is valued more than the promise of improvement.

The initial uncertainty teachers felt at the beginning influenced how they responded to the innovation configurations at the start of the project. The head teachers and other key informants shared that they felt overwhelmed with the amount of information they received. As Cody explained about his initial reaction to the innovation configurations map:

I was like, "What on earth is an innovation configuration?" You know, to me [it] is just like ... an industry term, or, you know, jargon. Like, at that point. So, ... you know, ... in my head, I was just sort of like, A minus B to the ... A square, just like ... I couldn't figure out what exactly it was, ... you know.

In addition, they were unsure what it would be like to work with me as I was essentially an unknown individual to them. As Ash stated at the last post-observation interview:

Again, I didn't know you very well, and I still don't know you well, but I know you better than before. A part of me was like, well, I should volunteer because it's my position. And to put my money where my mouth is, I always talk about I want to improve and different things. So do it.

Besides me being an unknown individual, Ash also shared that he personally placed pressure on himself to participate when he discussed his use of the innovation configurations throughout the project with his education journey map. He explained:

The pressure from me on me, because I know that I want it to get to, and also, like, I feel because I am while head teacher, now regional head teacher, that I should be of a certain level already. You know? Whether that's right or wrong, that's what I feel.

The unknowns at the start of the project, thus, affected their initial reactions to the innovation configuration.

Given these conditions, the participants were cautious at the beginning. Many initially viewed the innovation configurations as a code that needed to be deciphered, but they were hopeful that if they were able to decipher it the map would help them. Though some of their skepticism originated from being asked to use a novel mediating tool for professional development, other aspects of their hesitance resulted from the contextual situation they found themselves in at the beginning of 2022.

The Influence of Contextual Factors

During this initial period at the start of the year, many things were going on that affected the participants' activity systems. At the city level, there was an increase in the number of COVID-19 cases that led to the lockdown of neighborhoods for each of the

key informants, head teachers, as well as other academic staff at both centers.

Additionally, all classes were required to move online, which required an adjustment in teaching practices. Both situations resulted in sudden changes in the day-to-day aspects of life.

The effects for each participant varied due to unique circumstances. For Kennedy, these events occurred simultaneously as she was beginning to teach her classes after she had received her work permit. Kennedy also had a more strenuous experience with the imposed lockdowns. At one point she was required to relocate from her residence to a centralized location for more stringent monitoring and testing. Just this one aspect influenced her affective state and how she approached the innovation configurations map.

Kennedy's use of the innovation configurations map was quite limited. In our second interview when I asked her how she used the innovation configurations map, she told me she was unable to do so because she had not received the innovation configurations map. She said, "Yeah, no, I only got the configuration after I did that observation. Because you didn't send it to me, and I didn't actually have it." Her statement surprised me. I backtracked my actions to see whether I had indeed forgotten to send her the map. When I reached out to Cody in an email about whether the teachers at his center received the innovation configurations map, he responded that he had sent them a copy after our first meeting. Kennedy, though, had neglected to save it to her computer or ask for an additional copy from him or me. During this same interview when I asked her how she planned to use the innovation configurations map when she did receive a copy, she replied:

I don't know if it's going to change the way I teach or not. I don't know if it's something that I will implement conscientiously. I will read over it and try to, obviously, if I feel like this is something that is beneficial then I will try to implement it. But I cannot honestly say that I can promise to conscientiously be like, “Okay, am I doing this step? Check. Am I doing this step? Check.” Like, I'm just going to teach like I teach.

At this point, I felt confused as to whether she wanted to participate in this project. She, however, agreed to continue with the next scheduled observation and interview.

After she had received the innovation configurations map, she continued not to use it personally. When I asked her in our third meeting how she had used the map, she replied, “Um. I read through it, but I didn't. I don't know why I completely forgot that I was ... need to be more mindful about incorporating it.” While Kennedy had not used the map personally, she had used it with her fellow teachers during an academic meeting that focused on using the innovation configurations map. Immediately after informing she had not used it, she shared that she had thought it was useful during that meeting. She said:

We would spend our meetings talking about like, different segments of the configuration. But now that [Cody's] gone, it's like ... and we got some really good feedback, like [this teacher], and all the other teachers are saying that actually feels more like a meeting that makes sense. When we are talking about different segments, configurations during our meetings with some purpose.

Kennedy, additionally, spoke about how she felt she needed to take responsibility and determine how she wanted to use the map. She explained, “I feel like I do need to, like,

be serious and sit down and take the time to read through and consciously start applying it into my teaching.”

The difference in how she approached the innovation configurations map between the second and third meetings struck me. When I asked her about how she was feeling now that she was released from the lockdown in her neighborhood, she explained:

I remember feeling like so dark. Well, I'm like, this isn't me. This is like, I'm never this dark. But I felt so dark where I even asked [Cody], I was like, okay, I'm getting released on Friday. Is it okay that I take three days off, because I need to recenter myself. I need to reground myself because I'm getting dark. And I do not like this feeling. And I don't like showing up to class and emitting that energy to my students, you know, or getting easily annoyed by like the little things that kids may or may not do while we're offline. So, yeah, I definitely needed to like recenter myself, and now I feel ... I actually feel a lot better now that we're in-center. Even though we're doing online ... I remember yesterday feeling so motivated during my lessons. Like, I'm not seeing you guys right now. But I still feel like I'm so close to seeing you. So, I felt really energized. I feel really good now. Actually, it feels like it's a wave. Like it's finally going to get normal soon. So, I feel good about that.

Between our two interviews, Kennedy's contextual situation improved greatly. This change affected her emotional state and how she initially thought about and worked with the innovation configurations map.

To lesser degrees than Kennedy's experience, the other key informants and head teachers' experiences with the lockdown and teaching online affected them as well. Elliot stated:

I'm on a lockdown currently as well. It's been like day six so far and I think you may have noticed that I've just been rocking a bit back and forth during this class because normally I would just go to the gym in the mornings, and like do the treadmill, but I feel like I'm getting antsy from not doing so much, like not being active. I'm getting lower back pain and it's like, "Oh my gosh! I need to do something." Gosh. It feels like being in prison.

While being in lockdown affected Elliot personally, it also affected how she taught her lessons. In our second meeting when we discussed how she had used her the innovation configurations map, she explained she had limited opportunities to do so:

If I'm being completely honest because of my lack of classes ... I've not really been able to apply it much because everything's been online, and many classes were canceled, and ... I guess I didn't think about applying it to all the [guided reading] classes, because, yeah, for no reason. I guess I could do that just to put it into practice. I guess.

When she did have classes, her plans for how she would use the innovation configurations were at times upended suddenly. In the class I observed in February, one student attended when three had been planned. Elliot learned of this situation just before the start of class and had to modify the lesson accordingly. In the post-observation interviews, Elliott shared with me her uncertainties about how she taught:

I guess I just thought am I doing the right thing with one student here? Like is there more that I could be doing? Were there any awkward moments? Did I misinterpret anything? Did I rush the student at all? Did I guess ... what was I doing wrong?

These uncertainties affected how she taught her lessons when she had them, as well as her plans for using the innovation configurations map.

The adjustment to online classes and how best to teach a 45-minute online lesson was a challenge Ash faced during this period. In our third post-observation interview, he explained his choices regarding how he applied the first component of the reading comprehension configuration (Component 1: Provides opportunities for students to read the target text multiple times in a variety of ways) in the observed online lesson:

Yeah, I think one of the reasons, like ... I think as well ... It's maybe more common online, is, you know, when a student's finished, like, because I meant there were times like in the other strategy, where "Are they reading? Are they finished? Are they ..." Where it's easier to monitor in a face-to-face class. So, I think sometimes I ... When I first started online teaching, having silence online is more uncomfortable than having silence in class.

The online medium affected Ash's choices in how he taught his students and how he applied the innovation configurations map, in this instance how he had his students read the text in an online class.

Such experiences were common for the participants who were isolated in their homes without a definitive date for when the lockdowns would end. For some, they would have to go through multiple lockdowns. Cody for example experienced one

lockdown of about a month, was released from that lockdown for a day, and then the next day was placed on a city-wide lockdown for a week. In his education journey map recounting, he described this period as:

So, then as we went along, the big bad COVID sort of hit as a little virus particle. And it sort of put, like, a temporary block in the road. Right? And then we got through that first online period. And then we sort of regathered together a couple of weeks later, and then said, like, “Okay, you know, where are you at, with your, you know, team of teachers?” And, you know, and, and all that.

The lockdowns were unpredictable as to when they happened and when they would end. That uncertainty affected Cody and his plans for his teachers, but he made the best of the situation and regrouped with them when he could.

For the key informants and head teachers, the effects of these lockdowns and having to teach online affected them and how they responded to using and applying the innovation configurations map. Yet equally important was how they managed this situation and the support they had during this period.

Influence of Collaborating with a Learned Other

To help support and encourage participants during this period, I used the innovation configurations map to guide me in assessing their class observations and how I structured our post-observation discussions. For example, from Kennedy’s observed class in May 2022, I focused on how she facilitated the classroom discussion and the related components of the discussion configuration (see Figure 9). In our subsequent interview, we talked about the class discussion, in which I focused on how engaged students were in the class (Component 3: Encourages active participation of all students

Figure 9

Example of Observation Notes from Kennedy’s Class on May 11, 2022

05. Innovation Configurations Map for Class Discussion Facilitation (Teacher)

Component 1	Examples of Component	
Establishes an engaging environment for the class discussion.	The teacher has a good rapport with the students and the room is set up in a way that is conducive to a discussion.	
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation
	A	The classroom is set up in a way that a classroom discussion is possible.
Component 2	Examples of Component	
Uses guiding questions and prompts to facilitate the discussion.	Then the teacher has one student read a question on the flipchart and then has the student pick a different student to answer the question. Then another question is asked, and the student then is to choose a person to answer. The next question has a lot of words that the teacher asks the students what they’re meaning to comprehend the question. The teacher reads the next question. Then for the next question has students work on what the word “sail” means in the text. The teacher again asks the next question. The teacher asks them to clarify their answers instead of using onomatopoeias. Then moves on to the next question. Goes to the next question about the situation the main character finds herself in. The teacher guides the students to answer the question. Use the text and the illustration to help in finding the answer. Much of this scaffolding is built into the flipchart. The teacher asks about what “torn” means, which is important to answer the question. Then goes back to the reading skill: problem and solution.	
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation
	B	The questions the teacher uses come from the flipchart and are useful in engaging the students in a discussion about the text. The logic behind the questions is for a more general understanding of the text. Links between the discussion and the writing portion of the class could have been weaved in the discussion better to help the students prepare for the writing portion of the class.
Component 3	Examples of Component	
Encourages active participation of all students that is appropriate.	Then the teacher has one student read a question on the flipchart and then has the student pick a different student to answer the question. The teacher then helps the selected student. One student helps the student. Then another question is asked, and the student then is to choose a person to answer. A bit of time to pick a student. The teacher again asks the next question. The question is about what the character thinks the word “dive” means. The students work well on the question.	
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation
	D	I am sure the teacher is aware of the students and their uniqueness. Yet, the discussion was done in a teacher-directed way and was done in just one way where nearly all answers went through the teacher. There was one instance of a student directly talking to another student, but it was a quick exchange. The discussion instantly went back to the teacher.

that is appropriate). In working with me and noticing the way I used the innovation configurations map, Kennedy and the key informants had the opportunity to learn of one way that they could use the innovation configurations map.

Ash and Elliot, additionally, mentioned that as they saw how I was using it, they were able to generate ideas on how they could apply it. I offered Ash, Elliot, and Kennedy a copy of my observation notes and assessment, which they could use to help them. Ash and Elliot did this on numerous occasions as they mentioned in our interviews. Elliot explained:

I feel like definitely your feedback always helps me to focus on the areas that I should be improving on. And I know before I only ever wanted to focus on one area, perfect that, then move to the next, and then perfect that, and then ... But I feel like it doesn't always work like that in reality.

Being in that role of the learned helped shape the participants' impression of the innovation configurations. Ash wondered on more than one occasion what would have happened if someone else had been asked to lead this project. He expressed, "If somebody else, though, is implementing it, how they go about it, whether it's as successful or more unsuccessful, that would be my interest. Like, how could it be rolled out ... to get the same effectiveness?" Such a concern can be warranted. Implementers of change in education settings will have their unique ways of managing projects and how they engage with people (G. E. Hall & Hord, 2020).

My demeanor and rapport with the teachers influenced their experience in using the innovation configurations map. Ash and Elliot both mentioned in the narrations of their education journey maps and within the maps themselves my role as being significant. Ash compared me to a guru who helped guide him and others by asking questions for self-discovery. He explained, "You are the guru. Who is, you know, I think you know, your demeanor, you're very warm and calm. You have a calming effect, I

think, which is nice. And you are the guide who's showing the way." Elliot saw me as a resource that she could go to for information and support, which helped her realize that:

... the more I learned from you, the more I realized that there are just so many ways that are possible for me to do things the right way. Like it's not that a million things are wrong, and one or two ways are right. It's like a million things are right if done in a certain way.

Both began to identify me as someone who could help them achieve their goals and began to seek out my help (Edwards, 2005, 2007; Edwards & D'arcy, 2004).

While Kennedy was the one who used it less directly, she did mention during a one-legged interview we had near the end of the study that she appreciated my feedback and how that helped guide her as she progressed during the initial months of her classes. Kennedy applied many of the suggestions I provided and ideas we generated together. One example is her using my feedback to rethink how she checked her students' understanding of what they read. As she explained, "So now I've taken your feedback, based off that, and started stopping them at different segments of the reading, while they're going through, and doing concept checking questions [to] make sure that they understand." Kennedy and I noted how doing that kept the students focused during class and helped them with comprehending what they read. As she saw positive changes in some aspects of her class, Kennedy became more willing to make more changes based on our discussions.

Such issues also were present for the other teachers at each center, but with the exception that outside of the infrequent academic meetings, these teachers were not actively engaged with the innovation configurations map to the degree that the head

teachers and key informants were. Teachers at Center 1 had one meeting using the innovation configurations map; teachers at Center 2 had two meetings using the innovation configurations map. Some teachers also conveyed the impression of being more interested in dealing with other matters related to their students and classes rather than on guided reading. In the first academic meeting at Center 2 I attended, for example, Ash and I presented different reading strategies the teachers could use when having their students read in class and the reasons why using a variety of them can help with students' reading development, one of the teachers who was not actively participating as a key informant interrupted me and injected a question about pronunciation, "So, let's say we as teachers, what, what do we do when students mispronounce a word? Do we stop them on the spot? Or do we leave them you know, finishing reading the paragraph and then correcting them?" While an important question and one that should be worked on by this teacher and others, I thought it a tangent to the discussion that the group had been having. I at the time shared some ideas about pronunciation and reading that I hoped would help him, but Ash soon changed the discussion back to reading strategies for the remainder of the meeting. At the second academic meeting at this center, near the end of the discussion, Elliot started to share how she would ask students to look at text features to better understand the text. As she was finishing her thought, "So then speaking about, like, what audience? Who's it for? Like, why is this ...," the same teacher who interrupted in the first academic meeting cut Elliot off and asked me:

I have a question, but not on text features. So yesterday I had this class here.

There was, there was a question in the workbook. Look at the first paragraph and answer the question. So, the kids were pointing at the number one here. We all

thought that this is paragraph one. But then the workbook it says, it says, look at this subtitle, and this, there's number two here. So, then there was a little confusion.

The teacher directed this exchange to me and followed up with a question about the numbering system as he seemed more interested in dealing with his confusion on this issue rather than the discussion on text features. This topic was unrelated to anything that had been discussed before in the academic meeting. For him, though, this issue concerned him enough to interrupt Elliot and ask me directly in my capacity as a curriculum developer during the academic meeting. Ash later shared in his education journey map narration that he felt frustrated with this teacher. He shared: “It's like somebody's literally talking to a brick wall. And we can talk and talk. And I feel like, you know, I've got the point, even to the point I said to him, like I'm doing, you know, CCQs, concept checking questions.”

Ash then recounted a subsequent exchange he had with this teacher:

Ash: What is most important from this meeting?

Teacher: Oh, we should focus on the reading skills.

Ash: Good. So how are you going to focus on the reading [skills]?

Teacher: So, I'm going to do this.

Ash: Okay, I'll observe you tomorrow.

Ash then added what he observed in the class, “And nothing changes.” Ash felt that this teacher from Center 2 was more focused on dealing with other aspects of his classes rather than using the innovation configurations. Even though this teacher has been asked to make suggested changes based on feedback from Ash, this teacher did not. The reasons

for this are unknown as this teacher did not share with me his reasons, but it is common in professional development initiatives that teachers will go through various levels of use ranging from nonuse to active usage (G. E. Hall et al., 2006). While professional development is a personal endeavor that can be mandated, how it occurs is dependent on how teachers engage in the involved activities and their motivation to do so given that they may have other pressing needs to address (G. E. Hall & Hord, 2020; McMillan et al., 2016; X. Zhang et al., 2021).

In the end, three salient factors influenced teachers in how they responded to the innovation configurations. The first dealt with their experience in using the innovation configurations map. The more they learned how to use it through direct experience or through interactions with me, the more they became accustomed to and engaged with how they applied the map. The second dealt with contextual factors that influenced the affective state of each teacher. Lockdown resulting from cases of COVID-19 and the move to emergency remote teaching impacted teachers in numerous ways concerning their work and their application of the innovation configurations. And third was the rapport we built with each other and how that affected their understanding and thoughts about the innovation configurations map.

Contradictions Encountered

As the participants worked on the innovation configurations map, three classes of contradictions emerged in this process. The first class of contradictions participants dealt with concerned the differences between their everyday concepts regarding guided reading with introduced academic concepts. The second class of contradictions participants faced occurred when they were unaware that what they enacted in their teaching practices

countered what they hoped to achieve in their classes as they applied the information in the innovation configurations map. The third class of contradictions participants encountered focused on what they felt they ought to do based on expectations of the organization versus what they ideally thought they should do based on the information they learned from the innovation configurations map. As they encountered different contradictions, the participants needed to address the ones they faced so they could move forward with their use of the innovation configurations map.

Reconciling Everyday with Academic Concepts

One of the most fundamental contradictions that prevailed in the study occurred between the participants' everyday concepts and the academic concepts that were presented to them. How they understood the academic concepts and worked to resolve the contradictions that emerged with their everyday concepts required guided mediation and personal reflection (Johnson, 2015, 2022; Johnson & Golombek, 2016; Wertsch, 2007).

Teachers' conceptualizations about what constituted effective teaching practices would at times manifest as contradictions. For instance, Kennedy's understanding of how to use the curriculum showed indications that she had an everyday concept about how to use it. As she said:

Being at any training center doesn't really give you the freedom to be that creative with your lessons, or to put a personal touch on it as you say, as much as you can. So, it is a little bit limited with what I can ... with what I want to do in the direction with ... I mean, our, our curriculum is pretty set in stone.

Figure 10

Steps to Deliver a Lesson from the Guided Reading Teacher's Guide

3.4 Step-to-step Lesson Delivery Guide

Please read the model lesson delivery guide below to better understand how to deliver a GGR lesson. Training videos showing how to teach fiction and nonfiction texts are also available in the [GGR Teacher's Resources folder](#) on SharePoint.

Before Class

Preparation before class:

1. Check the GGR syllabus of each stage to find out which lesson to be taught;
2. Find the lesson folder on the SharePoint and print off materials to be used during class;
3. Log onto ClassDojo and find the class on ClassDojo;
4. Open up the flipchart and show up the cover page on screen;
5. Open up the reading text of the lesson on screen for later use in class (Optional);
6. Finish marking classwork sheet from previous lesson if you haven't had time to do so;
7. Complete students' evaluation in the passports if you haven't had time to do so in previous lesson;

During Class

Please note that you may see a combination of the following slides within a single lesson depending on the level and target focus for the lesson. The timing for each section is for reference ONLY.

I became concerned she felt constrained by the curriculum and that she felt she had to teach in one way without the opportunity to do what she thought was best for her students. Within the organization, the rules of upper management do indicate that teachers are to standardize their practices to the curriculum. The Guided Reading Teacher's Guide has an entire section giving step-by-step instructions on how to teach a class (see Figure 10). While these organizational documents are meant to help teachers and non-teaching staff members understand the expectations of the guided reading class, these documents can also present an idealized perspective of the curriculum that teachers might feel compelled to implement as described (Graves, 2021; Shkedi, 1998, 2009).

I reminded Kennedy, however, that she should be flexible in how she interpreted the curriculum and used the provided materials instead of adhering to a strict interpretation of it. I also informed her the innovation configurations map would help in informing how she could do both. This led to a contradiction which confused me in what she thought she needed to do regarding instructing students in how to use the reading skills and strategies. When I asked her what her thoughts were on the need to teach reading skills and strategies to students, she first responded:

Yeah, I don't think it's as necessary for them to understand the terminology, actually synthesizing versus implementing it naturally. Right? Same thing for making inferences. Same thing for making predictions. But again, a lot of these skills are things that kids have, we all have innately. Right? We're already doing it. It's just something for them to try to be a little bit more conscientious of for them to help develop their reading skills a little bit better. So, I'm not sure. Really when it comes to the curriculum, which one they want? Like, do you want me to know ... that make sure they know how to say the word synthesizing? Or do we want to make sure that they know what it is and that they are going to start naturally implementing this into their reading like in their reading skills?

Her concepts of synthesizing and the other reading skills as something that is natural and not learned influenced how I explained why the reading skills and strategies are included in the curriculum and how she could think about using the provided materials to structure how she taught them in ways appropriate for her students. She then responded that she thought it important to teach the students these skills from a metacognitive perspective to ensure they could use them. As she said:

I think it is essential to go over the reading skill and make sure that they understand them. Because I mean, again, it is good to understand [and] go over these concepts with these kids. Because some people, especially native English speakers, like we don't see them as a foreign like a concept, like, oh, am I synthesizing today while I'm doing my reading now, which is something that we do. So, I think it's cool for them to understand that.

In response to my suggestion that she could deviate from the curriculum and make it her own, she instead contradicted her initial statement of questioning the need to follow it with one explaining the importance of following it. This again spoke of how she viewed her preparedness for being a teacher and her knowledge base. I had created a dissonance between her image of what she felt a teacher should do in our context versus what I explained as her right to exert her agency in determining what was best for her classes (Hiver & Whitehead, 2018; Kubanyiova, 2009, 2012).

In essence, Kennedy was using the curriculum as a scaffold for how she thought best to instruct her students in a way that would benefit them in the absence of her academic concepts about guided reading (Dresser, 2012; Valencia et al., 2006). With the contradiction that emerged in our discussion about how to use the curriculum to teach reading skills and strategies, Kennedy needed to reflect on the distance that existed between her everyday concepts and the academic concepts regarding reading skills and strategies as used in the curriculum. What she elected to do next would be based on her reflection and what she determined would be the best course of action (Clarà, 2015b).

Kennedy, ultimately, addressed this contradiction concerning how to use the curriculum to inform her guided reading instruction incrementally with my guidance.

From the last three observations we had, I noticed that she took my feedback from our previous meetings to experiment with her guided reading practices. For example, in the June class, she shared that she incorporated group activities that had students move and collaborate with each other based on my feedback. She, however, did not use the innovation configurations map to help her think about her instructional practices except for her class in May 2022. As such, I was the one who supported and encouraged her to address this contradiction. She did progress in further developing her understanding of how to use the curriculum, but it was at an initial stage of reverberation (Dellagnelo et al., 2022); she was beginning to understand the academic concepts related to how to use a curriculum for her guided reading classes.

Such findings occur in academic settings when those new to the profession or teaching context are still developing their teaching practices and pedagogic knowledge. For less experienced teachers there is a level of certitude in adhering closely to a curriculum as it is assumed that it should meet the needs of students (Quinn & Kim, 2017), whereas more experienced and knowledgeable teachers are more comfortable in adjusting materials to meet the needs of their classes. How teachers become familiar and comfortable in adjusting the curriculum comes with time and experience, but also with the guidance of others who can encourage those changes (Johnson, 2022; Johnson & Golombek, 2016; Orland-Barak, 2021).

Equally important was the attachment that participants had with their everyday concepts. Ash felt comfortable with using round-robin reading and kept asking me questions about how he could still use it in his class even as I presented him with academic facts related to why I continued to encourage him to move away from using

round-robin reading even if it is used in tandem with other strategies for reading (Farrell, 2009; Grifhorst et al., 2012; Kuhn & Schwanenflugel, 2006; Quigley, 2020). After explaining my reasons for encouraging him to use other means of reading with his students, Ash shared:

You know, one of the things, like, because I know we mentioned it in the feedback last time. So that's why I would say, out of all the reading, the things I did this time, it was probably the shortest one to do the round robin style. I purposely made sure it was the shortest. You know, and I think there is on one level, a sense of comfortability, having the students do that.

I commented that I thought how he conducted the class reading in the third observation, overall, was strong and benefited his students. The use of round-robin strategy, however, I felt hindered the flow of the lesson. Ash understood my reasonings, but he also acknowledged that it would take him time to identify different ways of reading that were appropriate with his students. As he explained:

I really appreciate, you know, the discussion. And it's something, like I said, I, I wanted to decrease it a lot this time, and focus on the other things. And so, you know, next time, you know, to remove it completely, you know, that's something I'm, I'm willing to try and, you know do because at the end of the day, if it all goes wrong, that's a backup, you can always ... It may not be the best backup, but it's something you know, I know that okay, we can do that. It might not be the best, and there might be many, many other ways. But let's try and get these better ways doing and if they don't work out, okay, you've got option B, which is not the best, but something.

Ash had used round-robin reading with his students in the two classes I had observed with him in February and March and he indicated that he felt a certain level of comfort using it. Ash explained that part of this comfort likely originates from his background in theater and how speaking individually is important in that field. He stated:

I think also having maybe a theatre background, as well [as] ... knowing the way that we speak and produce speech and that kind of thing. ... Maybe ... it's like to ... get people speaking. I know, people get afraid and different things. But what I would like, is if it was a theater scene, the idea is you don't just get up and speak it, you actually get up and do it, which can be 10 times more terrifying than just reading it.

The use of his academic concepts related to theater conflicted with the knowledge I presented about reading comprehension with school-aged students. I reiterated to him the reading research behind why round-robin is a poor reading strategy compared to other reading strategies. He understood what I was saying, but he continued to ask for ways that he could do something similar in an appropriate way. He asked:

So, as a question, we have the children [who] are uncomfortable with it. What about the children that are really into it? They really enjoy the reading out loud, reading in turn. How would you incorporate it so they get the opportunity to read out loud, but then the other child doesn't feel that I'm going to be next? What would you do in that situation?

I made some suggestions, such as peer-to-peer reading or choral reading, if he wanted to focus on oral fluency. My goal at this stage was to meet him halfway. I realized intellectually he understood what I was saying, but he needed experience and time to

research and process the academic concepts that he found and that I had shared with him (Agnoletto et al., 2021; Guskey, 1985).

Like Kennedy, Ash needed to reflect on his past and current practices to determine what he wanted to do with his guided reading lessons (Clarà, 2015b). I was there to support and guide him as he needed through our discussions and with my observation notes. In the subsequent observation, I noticed that Ash had incorporated many new ideas based on what we talked about, such as choral reading, and ideas that he generated, such as having the students read to create discussion questions. He also was more cognizant of his students and their needs and how round-robin reading could affect them. For example, Ash noted: “I remembered what you said about round-robin ... and I think for someone like her, it ... 100% applies. So, by bringing that choral reading, that would allow her [to read with the] stronger readers. That will work.” Ash was describing a student that found reading aloud unappealing. In the observations when she was asked to read, she would speak quietly. Ash worked on this component of the reading comprehension configuration (Component 1: Provides opportunities for students to read the target text multiple times in a variety of ways) for over two months before focusing on another configuration and component. He did so as he said, “I didn't want to just move on to something else straightaway because I think that necessarily, the purpose is just to improve.” His attitude toward his progress and how he approached the innovation configurations map influenced how he dealt with this contradiction. The more he learned about this topic, experimented with different ways of class reading, and saw the effects of his choices on his students, the more he progressed he made in how he reconciled this contradiction (Roth, 2004).

In the absence of academic facts, Kennedy and Ash fell back on what they knew based on their everyday concepts and what they felt were important for their students (Orchard et al., 2020; Orchard & Winch, 2015). For Kennedy, it was using the curriculum to structure her lessons in a meaningful way that would ensure she felt she was teaching effectively. For Ash, it was linking his background in theater to his current teaching in ways that made sense to him. The responsive guidance I provided in ways contradicted these ideas and caused them to have episodes of dissonance that had the potential to affect them (Agnolotto et al., 2021; Dang, 2013). How that played out is one that required further guidance and understanding from me, as well as the effort they put into reconciling those contradictions. At this point in their development, being given information that met their needs within their zones of proximal development was an important first step (Dang, 2013; Johnson & Golombek, 2016; Johnson & Worden, 2014; Mahn & John-Steiner, 2002; Song, 2016). Kennedy and Ash subsequently needed to reflect on what that meant and what they wanted to do with that information. The choices they made reflected their priorities and how they used the innovation configurations map to reconcile the contradictions they had about guided reading.

Contrary Actions to their Aims

Another significant contradiction occurred when teachers sought to make changes in their instructional practices but relied on practices that hindered or conflicted with that aim. After discussing or reading about the core aspects and components of guided reading in the innovation configurations map, teachers needed to know how best to apply its content to their instructional practices that would allow them to reach their objectives. Without information and training on how to address this need, contradictions emerged.

Kennedy as a new teacher faced this aspect of her development as she started with the organization. When I asked her in her first interview how she felt about her initial training, she responded, “All the knowledge I have is basically, ... it's all innate. And it's all just me learning from my own errors and just pushing forward. I didn't have any guidance or any kind of real training when I came into [the organization].” Kennedy felt that the organization had not adequately prepared her for her expected duties from those who were meant to help situate her in her new role. Other means of preparation, such as training materials and guides, could have helped mediate her understanding of what her teaching duties were (Benzehaf, 2016; März et al., 2017; Vermeir et al., 2017). Yet, for that to happen Kennedy would have needed to know about those materials. She, however, was unaware of the existence of specific materials that she could use for her classes. When I asked her what she thought about using some of the organization’s retired materials for her classes, she needed me to clarify where she could find them. As I was explaining what the resources were and where she could get them, she told me, “I didn't know what this folder was, to be honest with you.” She then stated that these materials were the first time she had heard of them, and she explained, “Resources I didn't know.” She then further elaborated, “I’m not going to lie, but I’m pretty sure no one uses half the resources that are on the actual computer. ... I’m not sure we’ve actually looked at or even know where to find most of the resources.” Kennedy knew the organization had resources she could use, but she was unaware of how to find most of those materials or even what the content was of those resources. The resources that could help her were useless without her actively being aware of what was available and how she could use them for her classes.

As a result, she used her “innate” and developing awareness of how people learned to read to guide her in how she thought her classes. For example, Kennedy had indicated throughout our time working together that she was interested in helping her students develop their ability to think independently. As she said in March, “I hate nothing more than just spoon-feeding all the answers to all my students.” Kennedy repeated this in subsequent meetings. At times, though, Kennedy was unaware that some of her actions could inhibit her students' motivation to think independently. For example, in the May meeting, she shared possible actions she was considering taking for classroom management, “I think I’m definitely implementing some more stricter rules, especially with my more vocal students.” Her contemplation of enacting these rules originated from how some of her students were unresponsive to a point system she was using in class. As she said, “I need to find another way to discipline him so that I can keep them under control.” Such actions might help ensure students behaved in the way Kennedy wanted, but it could also demotivate them and inhibit the development of their independent thinking skills (Reeve, 2013; Reeve & Tseng, 2011; Ushioda, 2009).

After she had shared her situation with me, we discussed several things she could do to use her students’ talents to the benefit of the class. She shared some ideas about having them lead discussions on their own. She, however, expressed her concerns that the vocal students would monopolize the conversation and the other students would not participate. As she said, “It does fall sometimes short because I do like that they are so engaged and they are always, you know, trying to lead discussions, but at the same time it ends up being just that the two of them are leading all the discussions.” I then presented alternatives that she could use in how to set up discussion pairs or alternatively to have

the students create posters and anchor charts to convey their information on their own or in some other group formation.

In the absence of information about how to assist her students' independent thinking abilities and what that would entail, Kennedy was unsure how best to proceed. When presented with the academic concepts we discussed in our post-observation interviews, Kennedy started to generate ideas about how she could use that information to benefit her students and help her reach her goals as a teacher. As she shared at the end of this interview in May:

So, I can actually see that they're, they're able to start thinking creatively and freely on their own rather than me spoon feeding them everything that we are going over. Especially with these guided readings. I think that I would like to start breaking them up into groups while doing the reading versus reading together. So that they are reading together in pairs, and then they can actually go over like comprehension questions alone versus me going over these questions on the board. Maybe I can start splitting off into pairs while they do the reading. And they could read quietly and then I can give them these questions, and then have them come up with the answers in a pair and then exchange the answers afterward to see like if they came up with the same answers.

With guidance, Kennedy began to think about how she could apply the information we discussed in her classes. In this way, she began to use more academic concepts that helped her reach her teaching goals rather than what she had initially planned when she relied on her everyday concepts.

This issue is a contradiction of wanting to improve but not having or being aware of the tools or knowledge to improve at a particular time and in a particular context (Nicholas et al., 2021; Orchard & Winch, 2015). Such a situation implies that the desire to improve abuts against not knowing where to start. Within the activity system, learned others, such as mentors, can be an important mediating resource to help teachers bridge what they want to do with how they can do so (Gakonga, 2019; Johnson, 2022).

The importance of guidance is crucial for the converse when teachers are unaware a problem exists and requires an outside perspective to point out the situation (Yan & Yang, 2019). During my last observation with Elliot, I noticed how tense she was throughout the lesson. She had messaged me earlier that day explaining that she was dealing with issues outside of work that was deeply affecting her. In addition, Elliot was six months pregnant and preparing to temporarily move back to her home country with her husband for the birth of their child. From the moment the class started Elliot was strained and it affected her students. Emotions can be contagious dynamically between teachers and students (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021; Mercer, 2018; Mercer & Gregersen, 2020; Moskowitz & Dewaele, 2021), and during this class, the tense atmosphere affected how the students related to the teacher. Near the end of the class, Elliot had an interaction with a student which aggravated her to the point where she exercised her authority and asked the student to either leave the class to put distance between herself and the student or to lose class points. The student was unsure how to respond and Elliot interpreted the silence negatively. After a few moments, she took away the student's class points. The student was silent for the remainder of the class; the intensity of the exchange affected all the students and even I was left feeling uncomfortable.

In our follow-up interview, this aspect of the class came up when we discussed what she focused on from the innovation configurations for this class. Elliot stated that she focused on the class discussion; specifically, she worked primarily on facilitating when the students read the text for reading comprehension (Component 3: Facilitates students building their ability to think about the text). After asking her what she did to apply this component, I asked her what she thought of her implementation and the students' reactions. For me, I wanted to use this opening to discuss the emotional aspects of the class and how that affected both her and her students. I thought it would go in this direction as when we met up that day Elliot apologized for the class and again explained all the stressors she was facing. Yet, when Elliot started to talk about how the class discussion went, she explained she thought it went well, even while acknowledging the challenges she faced. She stated:

I thought it was going very well but given the type of day that I'd had ... Yeah, the pressure for me internally was high, wasn't a good week. Really ... just a really stressful day. Towards the end of the class maybe I was a bit harsh. But I mean, I did want the student to just go and cool off outside ...

I agreed with her that the technical aspects of the class went well. When I brought up how the emotional aspects of the class influenced the class discussions, she was a bit surprised that should be a factor in the overall assessment of how well the discussion went. At that point, I presented some ideas about how emotions are contagious and how that can influence how well students do. I also talked about how students may be able to do the tasks, but the quality of their understanding of it may be influenced by what they are feeling at that moment (Moskowitz & Dewaele, 2021). I finally asked Elliot to

consider the perspective of her students, especially the one she took the class points away, on what happened that day and how she would have reacted if their roles were reversed. When I presented the information in this way, Elliot started to become aware of how her actions that day differed from what she normally would do. I asked her to think about how she would have responded on a better day to that student. She said:

I guess, normally, if students do something that was a bit cheeky, I will be ... a little bit jokey and just kind of still call them out on it. Don't usually ignore it. And sometimes if it's something very small, it's kind of ... I will decide if it's worth addressing or not. If it's just like a one-off thing, maybe I'll just look at them. And then pause and then they'll stop. But otherwise, if it continues, like a couple more times, they've repeated it, then I'll mention it and just say something about it, but not so harsh or say, "Right, I will do this."

I asked Elliot if these actions were what she normally would do, how might her student have felt when she took all the points away. Elliot replied she thought the student might have been "shocked" by her actions. Elliot, then, started to extrapolate what she could have done differently and sought advice from me.

In this instance, the contradiction is about self-awareness of what it is that she was unaware of and how that lack of awareness impacted her class. Elliot's class for this observation was technically done well in terms of activities and student-centeredness, but they were undermined by the uneasiness the students felt and the quality of their interactions. Being aware of all those facets that go into a class comes with experience, but it is also learned with the help of others.

The lack of knowledge, experience, resources, and self-awareness hindered Kennedy and Elliot from developing themselves. Each wanted to improve their teaching practices, but they were unaware of how they could accomplish their goals. In the case of Elliot, additionally, there were aspects of her classes she needed to address that she was unaware of before they were pointed out to her. In dealing with this contradiction, I as an outsider helped them reconcile the issues that emerged by providing the information or materials they needed (Gakonga, 2019; Johnson & Golombek, 2016). Yet, such assistance is ephemeral and dependent on the learned other being capable of helping the teachers (Yuan, 2016).

Organizational Versus Personal Expectations

Many of the contradictions the teachers faced originated from what teachers knew or not-knew from their everyday, academic, or true concepts. Yet, one important contradiction that all the teachers faced and has been alluded to is the one between organizational expectations and individual expectations (Xu, 2012, 2013). To frame this discussion, it is possible to argue that there is an incongruence between what the teachers ideally wanted to do, what they felt they ought to do, and what they feared would happen if either was not met (Dörnyei, 2009; Higgins, 1987; Kubanyiova, 2009, 2012, 2015; Markus & Nurius, 1986). The participating teachers, thus, faced the task of reconciling institutional expectations with their professional goals. How they did so affected the trajectory of how they developed as teachers generally, and for this study how they applied the innovation configurations specifically.

Throughout the study, the head teachers and key informants mentioned on more than one occasion that they faced institutional pressure to adhere to a certain way of

doing things even if it made little sense. Ash talked about why he taught new vocabulary in a class focused on reading comprehension using different reading skills and strategies. When I asked him why it was included, he said, “The [operation officers] and the [center manager] will come and ask, ‘Well the students said they didn't learn any new vocabulary. Why didn't they learn vocabulary lately?’” Ash felt pressured to include vocabulary in this lesson by the operation officers because they expected the teachers to teach a certain number of words per class. The operation officers received this information from the teaching guides and associated materials. For example, the lesson guides included recommended vocabulary that teachers could incorporate into their lessons. The operation officer had interpreted the guides as stating that teachers were expected to teach these words. Ash was aware of this reality. When I shared with him that I thought his inclusion of a vocabulary section in his class was a performative act as it added nothing to the class, Ash readily agreed and stated he felt the same. I asked if he would be comfortable not including it and if he could justify his reasons. He felt conflicted about this suggestion as he explained:

And so often like when we miss something, ... I don't feel there's a lot of support. We are the teacher. We know best here. It's more like, no, but the course says you should hit everything. Like I've had them comment about other teachers. Oh, well, he was only on slide three, 35 minutes into the class. He should be on slide seven by now. And I said, who set that rule? This is a constant.

I then suggested ways of talking to the operations officers and the importance of being able to explain the decisions made in class. The innovation configurations map could provide information to facilitate such a conversation by providing insights into how the

class was structured and the reasons why. As a head teacher, Ash had a level of authority that gave weight to what he said and what he could do. He certainly could have modified his classes in a way that deviated from the suggested curriculum, and he could have talked to the operations officers in clarifying the reasons why. Yet, he still felt the pressure placed upon him by the operations officers to adhere to the curriculum verbatim.

Elliot, Kennedy, and the other teachers, however, did not have that same level of authority. But they were certainly aware that some of the things they felt they had to do countermined what they thought they should do. For Elliot and Kennedy one thing I noticed in their first offline classes was that their students sat at their desks for the duration of the 90-minute lessons. I had initially thought that it was a result of having spent the last two months teaching online and that they were still transitioning to offline classes, but both Elliot and Kennedy mentioned that they felt they were unable to have students move around in the classroom. Kennedy shared:

But a lot of my [operation officers], I'm not [going to] lie, like especially for my younger classes, they always tell me to [have the students] sit down, like as a way of controlling the classroom. ... If they are moving around too much, it's always like, something must be wrong.

Elliot had a similar reaction, she mentioned, “I didn't know if like ... You know sometimes you don't know if you're like bending the rules or if you're allowed to.” Both felt that as a teacher they preferred having students move around and engage with the materials, which is encouraged in the innovation configurations map through its emphasis on student-centered activities, such as in the vocabulary configuration with the second component (Component 2: Encourages students to co-construct their understanding of

non-targeted, but novel [i.e., key], words throughout a lesson). Both, however, felt that the institutional expectations inhibited what they could do regarding students moving around in class. In this sense the fear of what others thought they ought to do outweighed what they ideally thought was best.

As we talked, however, I began to encourage them to shift their thinking to focus on what was beneficial for their students and how they could communicate that to others. Part of using the innovation configurations was to help them develop their understanding of what they should be incorporating in their guided reading classes. Our work together was helping them develop their understanding of the why and how of guided reading (Nicholas et al., 2021). As they developed that knowledge, they began to experiment with different activities that were student-centered and had students move around more.

Kennedy tried group activities where students worked out the sequence of a text from passages of the text that are in the incorrect order. Elliot had her students in pairs look through the center's library to find a book to practice their ability to summarize the text with pertinent information. Both Kennedy and Elliot shared that they saw their students were more engaged with the learning process, which helped each teacher realize the goals they had for their students and classes. Kennedy described her thoughts about that sequence in her class:

Seeing them try to work together to piece it, like, and [this student] be like, "Okay, now let's wait, like, let's read and see just does this go first." Like seeing my students, like, take that leadership role to, like, make sense of things ... Like I really liked that.

When I observed that Elliot had her students find a book of their choice in the library and summarize it, I noted in my observation notes the students were excited and ran to find a book as Elliot monitored them. The students quickly came back and read their books with their partners. Some groups read their selected book aloud and would talk over each other as they summarized the text. Elliot did this activity to get her students to move around a bit, as she stated, “I started incorporating that more in classes, like getting people to move and be more active, because if you're just sitting there for like, 90 minutes, it's, you know, sometimes numbs the mind a bit.” From both their reactions and my observations of their classes, having the students move did seem to help with getting the students to be more active in class instead of sitting at their desks for the entirety of their class.

As they experienced the positive aspects of these developments, they began to feel more confident in using such activities as they used the innovation configurations map (Guskey, 1985). For example, Elliot shared in our last meeting together:

I want to make kids like get up and do things or go out there. But a part of me, I always thought, like, “Am I going to be told I'm wrong?” And you literally were like, “Well, no, if it's still a learning activity, then it's still a valid way of teaching something.” And so like, for me, it felt like something that's very restrictive. Like that day when we had that interview, you just made me feel so good about, like, being able to do that. That I felt like I broke free out of this, like barbed wire fence, and probably the children might feel like that as well, in the way that now they're being taught by me that they're able to do things that maybe they wouldn't be allowed to do in other classes with other teachers.

Such a change shifted their focus from a fear of not doing what they ought to do— institutional expectations—to a desire of attaining what they ideally wanted to do— teaching effectively to their students.

Such an alteration in perspective was freeing for the teachers, especially Elliot, who felt that she had wanted to do such actions in the past. She, however, felt that she was not allowed to due to her perceptions of what was expected of her. While true that people within the organization do expect a certain level of adherence to the curriculum, it is untenable to do so as every teacher, student, and class will differ given the infinite combinations of factors that influence every class. Teachers need the leeway to generate ideas that are suitable for the class. At both Centers 1 and 2, the teachers felt they lacked that possibility until I countermined that idea and presented an alternative position (Meyerson, 2001). When they became aware that they had that freedom, the possibilities of what they could do expanded for them. As Elliot demonstrated in her education journey map of a chained fence being cut open (see Figure 11), she felt free to engage with her students more than she had thought possible.

But institutional expectations had such a strong sway, including on Ash, that to move beyond them the participants needed encouragement to do so (Fairley, 2020). They began to reconcile this contradiction between what they ought to do and what they ideally wanted to do with assistance. I encouraged them to do what was best for their students and to be able to justify their reasons to do so. We worked on that collaboratively, and they also worked on it in the few academic meeting they had with their other colleagues. For example, at the second academic meeting I attended at Center 2, Elliot started a discussion about questioning in class with her colleagues. Elliot first shared:

Figure 11

Section of Elliot's Education Journey Map of a Chained Fence Cut Opened



So, like with questioning, making it more like you said student-directed rather than teacher-directed. And wanting to also makes it a bit more fun and give them more freedom if you like. ... Okay, so what would you ask ... that student about this text, if they've read it as a pair or something? That would be ... I've done it before, where ... they asked questions, but ... the answer wasn't in the text. So, I was like, how's that student going to answer that question?

Dylan who was attending this meeting replied to her inquiry with:

On what [Elliot] was saying, ... One of the things that I've done sometimes is like, "Okay, if we can answer the questions that you guys have asked in the text, we'll all answer them using the text." ... Maybe try and give them that opportunity to find, okay, that there're other sources of information, not just this text.

Ash and the other two teachers further contributed to this conversation so they would have a better idea of how they could help students with the questions they may have about what they read but were unable to find in the text. Discussing ideas like this one helped the participants formulate appropriate practices for their classes.

While the pull of the institutional expectations remained an influencing factor, the fear of not adhering to the ideal teaching practices began to supersede the institutional stipulated instructional practices when the teachers found that the ideal practices described in the innovation configurations map and that they generated in their discussions were seen to affect their students' learning more positively (Kubanyiova, 2009). Participants reconciled these contradictions as they collaborated with others and reflected on them.

My role as a curriculum developer, researcher, and mentor influenced the teachers in how they dealt with these contradictions. For them, they saw positive outcomes. For me, I tried my best not to dictate what they should do but to help them understand some of the factors involved and to collaborate with them in deciding what they could do in their classes (Freire, 1968/2000). The contradictions between everyday and academic concepts, between engaging in actions that led to the opposite of what teachers wanted to accomplish, and between institutional and personal expectations on what to teach in the class were reconciled through this process. But this process is an ongoing one that requires teachers to continue to be aware of the multiple factors involved with teaching, as well as developing their self-awareness concerning their actions and why they make the choices they do for their classes (Hiver, Sánchez Solarte, et al., 2021; Hiver, Whiteside, et al., 2021).

Relating to the Innovation Configurations Map

People who are asked to go through professional development or change initiatives progress through various stages of concern based on their perceptions of what they are being asked to do (G. E. Hall & Hord, 2020). Guidance and support can help meet the needs of individuals who are asked to undergo these actions (Heath & Heath, 2010). Yet, equally important is that those who are asked to make these changes take a leading role in voicing what it is they are feeling about regarding the change initiative and what they hope they will receive from their actions (Blair et al., 2020; Fullan et al., 2015). The head teachers and key informants who were asked to take part in this study were presented with the innovation configurations map in January 2022 and were asked to use it until early July of that year. Over that period, they adapted their understanding and use of the map in stages, which continuously affected how they used the innovation configurations map.

Determining How to Use the Map

At the start of the project, the participants needed time to determine the best way to use the innovation configurations map for themselves. Ash mentioned at the end of the project that he might have preferred to have received one configuration at a time and worked through them that way instead of being given all of them at once. His natural tendency is to push himself to test his limits. He also felt that as a head teacher he should have a more developed understanding of guided reading than the teachers whom he was meant to support and guide. After his initial look over the entire map, Ash felt that he was implementing many of the components. He, additionally, thought he was doing adequate with his application of them. Yet, he also recognized that for many other components of

the different configurations he either did not apply them to his classes or was unaware that he should apply them. As he shared in our second interview:

I'm going to have a look through them and see whether there are certain parts of each category that I can improve because just on my initial look through them, I think, for example, if I focus purely on number one, prior knowledge and reading instruction, I think there are some things that I do well already. So, I'd rather focus on one ... that I don't do well and try and improve it. I think my overall goal of this is to improve my abilities and cross off as many as much as possible.

Focusing on the aspects that were new to him were areas he wished to work on simultaneously. In this initial meeting, I encouraged him to take a step back and consider which configurations and components were most salient to his current needs.

For Elliot, her use of the innovation configuration map was more focused on the configuration aspect and less on the component aspect of the study. For example, in our second post-observation interview when asked which configuration and components she was working on, she replied:

Um, the, so, the prior ... the prior knowledge. ... I'm just going in the order in which it is in the document. ... But I just thought that this would actually be ... It kind of made sense. It's kind of a good starting point, like am I doing the right thing to address the prior knowledge of my students because, obviously, that's going to be helpful in being able to add to their learning experience, I think, and if I'm doing ... taking the right steps to get that out of them.

Multiple times over the course of the project she would need to consult the map to identify any of the components she worked on. Even when she selected them, she was

unsure if that was the exact component she had focused on during the periods between our monthly visits. Such an incident occurred in our third meeting, as she told me, “Oh, I forgot what it's called. I know which one I focused on. One sec, let me just go up” Elliot left the room to retrieve her copy of the innovation configurations map where she identified that she had worked on the reading comprehension configuration. Elliot, thus, was confident in identifying the configuration she was working on for that period. Based on my observations, Elliot did focus on multiple configurations and components. For the observation in February 2022, Elliot worked on components from the prior knowledge, vocabulary, reading skills and strategies, and reading comprehension configurations (see Figure 12). When making these combinations, she generally did so at an acceptable level of instruction without necessarily moving beyond where she was at that point. Her use of the innovation configuration, thus, remained focused on the configuration level.

Kennedy’s early reaction to the innovation configurations map was measured regarding how she would use it to influence her instructional practices. During this period Kennedy noted she felt overwhelmed and in a dark place. The support Kennedy received differed from the support Elliot received from Ash who directly participated in this study as a teacher. At Center 1, Cody had to deal concurrently with onboarding a new cohort of teachers during the first three months of the study and the departure of more senior teachers. His focus on this project was further disrupted by the COVID-19 situation for his center and the move to online classes. On top of this activity system for Center 1, Kennedy also had taken over the classes of one of the departing teachers. As such, she was upfront with me during our first three sessions that she had not looked over the

Figure 12

Example of Elliot Using Multiple Configurations and Components

01. Innovation Configurations Map for the Use of Prior Knowledge in Reading Instruction (Teacher)		
Component 1	Examples of Component	
Demonstrates how to make connections with prior knowledge.	The teacher gives an example by explaining how some friends think they are similar to the Queen of Hearts from <i>Alice in Wonderland</i> . The teacher also uses the terms “characteristics” and “behavior” to try to make the connection for the student. The teacher also describes the student with the character of Hermione Granger. The student eventually understands and then explains how they are like Peppa Pig and gives examples, such as both having annoying younger brothers.	
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation
	A	Technically an “A” variation given that the teacher did give a good example and the student was able to provide an example as well. The issue is mainly in identifying the breakdown of the student’s understanding based on using the word “like” to indicate “similarity” and not “affection” as the student thought. The sequence could have been changed, but at the same time, it is good to offer the student the opportunity to try first before explaining.
Component 2	Examples of Component	
Provides opportunities for students to make connections.	: To get students into the idea of fictional characters, the teacher asks the student to look at a picture of a person dressed as the Mad Hatter from <i>Alice in Wonderland</i> .	
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation
	B	The teacher has the student use their prior knowledge during the start of the class as part of a warm-up activity. The activity went long, and the student had difficulty understanding the prompt. More connection with the reading skill and with the text could have been built in as well. But the student did have to use their prior knowledge and, in the end, the student was able to do what was expected.
02. Innovation Configurations Map for Vocabulary Instruction (Teacher)		
Component 1	Examples of Component	
Directly instructs vocabulary to facilitate and guide students in understanding the meaning of targeted vocabulary.	Pre-planned vocabulary instruction is absent from the lesson as it is taught. The exception is with the reading skill.	
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation
	E	The teacher did not instruct vocabulary in the lesson besides the meaning of the reading skill. There are indications during the lesson that there are probably words that would have benefited the student as seen with the confusion the student had at some of the words during the reading. Time in the class is an issue.

innovation configurations map. And when she talked about it, she felt that she might not want to use it. In our second meeting, she emphatically said:

I don't know if it's going to change the way I teach or not. I don't know if it's something that I will implement conscientiously. I will read over it and try to, obviously, if I feel like this is something that is beneficial then I will try to

implement it. But I cannot honestly say that I can promise to conscientiously be like, okay, I [am] doing this.

She made this statement on more than one occasion in the first two months I worked with her. For this period the innovation configuration map did not influence her instructional practices.

The initial reactions the participants had varied based contextual factors and needs. As they continued to use the innovation configurations map, their experiences in how they learned to use it was one means of affecting how they applied it to their instructional practices (Guskey, 1985; Guskey & Yoon, 2009).

Collaboration Helps Mature Understanding

The participant's initial impressions and use of the innovation configurations map, however, changed over time as they utilized the map to varying degrees. Part of these changes occurred because of the work we did together, as well as their collaboration with their colleagues.

Ash and Elliot increasingly used the innovation configurations more directly and strategically with my guidance, but they still progressed based on the initial trajectory they had established. Ash used it by pinpointing components of configurations he wanted to work on and reviewing ones that he felt he had improved. Ash in our fourth post-observation interview explained:

I was focusing again on the reading skill, so the same component as last time. I think I didn't want to just move on to something else straight away because I [don't] think that, necessarily, the purpose is just to improve ... and then move

on. So, to focus on something that I know I can continue, so it's the same component.

Elliot continued to focus more on the configuration level, but with a more conscious awareness of the different components. In April and May 2022, she tended to work on multiple components in tandem as if they were one component. As she explained in our fourth meeting:

Because, originally, I was trying to focus on just one area at a time. But then I kind of ... started focusing on like various areas [in addition] to also your feedback. So maybe it's like a little bit of everything. Oh, that's it, ... reading comprehension and prior knowledge. So that's kind of what I wanted to [do] to work on those areas, so experimenting more with different types of reading and then trying to apply [and] ... see if [the students] could apply what they've gained from the reading to also [their] current knowledge and whether they can connect the two.

While she continued to combine aspects of components, she did so to target areas that she thought were important for her development. For both these teachers, there were changes in how they focused their efforts as they continued to learn how to use the innovation configurations map to their benefit.

Ash and Elliot contributed that change to the guidance and information I provided. Ash shared:

You are the guru. Who is, you know, I think you know, your demeanor, you're very warm and calm. You have a calming effect, I think, which is nice. And you are the guide who's showings the way. So, it's like, I think ... every time I've

asked you a question about something, I'm sure you've been able to give me an answer. Or if you couldn't give me an answer, you could help point [me] in the direction. Or we've had, like, a discussion where we can figure something out. And I think also ... the reason I chose like a guru, instead of like, a teacher figure is sometimes a [guru's] job is to make you look back at yourself to then get the answer with you asking questions. It's been like, kind of, okay, I've got a question, then you ask the question back, and then it leads to, you know, that moment.

While I do think that I did influence how their use of the innovation configurations map changed, I also think that they did most of the work. As Elliot stated:

I think you've like put me in the right direction. And things that you know ... I think [I'm] doing wrong, actually, you've kind of said, well, it's not that you're doing this incorrectly or badly, it's you know, you could do it this way, or, you know, it's not that you've told me [what to do]. ... We've kind of done it together. And I've kind of figured those things out myself through your guidance and feedback.

What is important here is that they saw how we used the innovation configurations to discuss their classes, how we determined possible ways of implementing different pedagogical practices, and how we assessed the enactment of those practices. As we did this together, Ash and Elliot began better understood how to use the innovation configurations map to improve their instructional practices.

Ash and Elliot, additionally, received support from each other and their colleagues. Both would talk with each other when they had time as they worked on their

use of the innovation configurations map. Ash explained: “But I think, again, [Elliot], I know she really appreciates it. And we've talked about, like ... We have a little chat about our classes after we've had our interviews with you and discuss, ‘Oh! I did this and this and this.’ And, you know, that's nice.” These talks allowed them to discuss matters related to different aspects of how they were using the innovation configurations map (Golombek, 2022; Zoshak, 2016). Ash and Elliot also worked with their colleagues. In a joint meeting with teachers from Centers 1 and 2 in May 2022, Elliot learned of ways she thought might benefit her guided reading classes. For example, she recounted:

We had a meeting with [Center 1] teachers, and we all kind of shared ideas and collaborated a bit. And that was quite nice. So, one of the other teachers said that they will incorporate some of, like, the library books into classes or for homework or something. So, I was like, okay, maybe I'll try that in my next class. And then, yeah, I thought with this class. It also worked quite well.

Such collaborations assisted Ash and Elliot, which affected their instructional practices as they shared successes and received advice on ways they could use to improve (Mercer & Gregersen, 2020).

For Kennedy, her minimal use of the innovation configuration persisted throughout the study. Her attitude towards it, though, did change as the project continued. By mid-April, she and her colleagues were working back in the center. During the transition to being around others again, she started to feel better about her situation. As she explained, “I feel really good now. Actually, it feels like it's a wave. Like it's finally going to get normal soon. So, I feel good about that.” Her more positive perspective

about life, in general, was mirrored in how she related to the innovation configurations map. For example, she said:

All the other teachers are saying that [it] actually feels more like a meeting that makes sense. When we are talking about different segments, configurations during our meetings with some purpose. And not just like, I have nothing to say and bye. Okay, but when we see each [other's] feedback, and then we think about like, "Okay, how could we go about using this and get everybody [else's] ideas?" It ... I feel like it definitely made our meetings ... Like, I mean, we're all teachers, we all have different teaching styles. And I learned a lot from all the other teachers. So, when I hear, like, their ideas, I think it's really, really good. We should start incorporating it into our meetings again, even though Cody left.

Her perspective on the utility of the innovation configurations began to change after Cody had his teachers generate ideas on how to apply the prior knowledge configuration to their lessons. This change in attitude did not equate with her engaging with the map actively. As she said in this discussion, "I read through it, but I didn't. ... I don't know why I completely forgot that I was ... Be more mindful about incorporating it. Because since Cody left, we stopped really going over it. So, he's gone now." Without Cody's support and encouragement for Kennedy to use the innovation configurations map, she tended to forget to use it until it was brought to her attention, specifically during our meetings. Her use of the innovation configurations occurred more through collaborative efforts with Cody and her colleagues at Center 1, and to a lesser degree with me.

Kennedy did directly use the innovation configurations once to inform her instructional practices for the observed May class. As she told me in our May post-

observation interview, “This is actually the portion I took into consideration [from] my last class with you is the portion about classroom discussion. . . . It's about facilitating classroom, class discussion.” In the April interview, we talked about different ways of engaging students during a lesson, such as during their discussions, which she then focused on for the following month. Kennedy benefited from having others take the lead in what to focus on and how to use the innovation configurations. Cody helped facilitate her understanding in the academic meeting where Kennedy and her colleagues used it. And she saw how I used the map to help me think about her classes. She, thus, indirectly learned about the innovation configurations map after she had seen others use it.

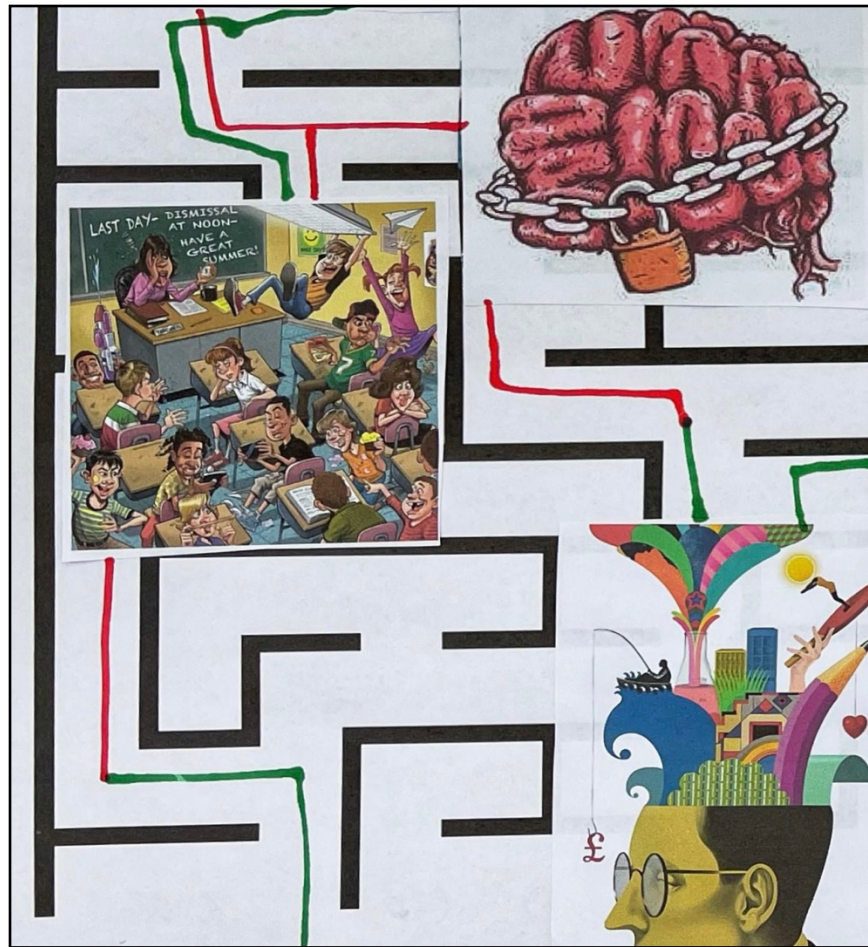
The participants, therefore, developed their impressions of how the innovation configurations map affected their instruction based on the level of guidance and support they received (G. E. Hall & Hord, 2020). The more guidance and support they received from multiple people, the more positive they felt about the steps they took to develop their instructional practices (Johnson & Golombek, 2016). While collaborative efforts were of great importance in how teachers used the map (Edwards, 2005, 2007), teachers ultimately were the final arbiters in determining how they utilized it.

Matured Understanding

As they progressed with this project, their awareness of how to use the innovation configurations map matured. An indication of this matured understanding was how they conceptualized the different ways they could use the innovation configurations map. Elliot in her education journey map situated the events and people who influenced her within a maze with red and green arrows going through its different passageways (see Figure 13). When I asked her the significance of the maze, she responded:

Figure 13

Elliot's Education Journey Map as a Maze Background with Colored Lines



In this maze ... there's actually ... so many different ways to go in, and also more than one entrance and exit. And I feel like teaching is kind of like that as well.

And so is learning that there's just so many different entry points and exit points.

And I think that you kind of do get lost on the way and [get] stuck at certain areas, and maybe you're not sure what to do. And I think with some guidance you can ...

be led back towards ... one of the many correct paths.

As for the colored arrows, she shared:

I call the green parts ... kind of like a traffic light. This is the way that I want to go and ... the direction that I was able to go in. And that red is kind of where I probably started. And I think there were some green areas I had as well. But also, a lot of red areas for me and for students, and I want to go in a more, like, green direction. But I guess I've put this in red because that's ... or, maybe it should have been amber. Because it's ongoing, like, I'm still not [there].

The use of the maze and colored imagery demonstrates an understanding of how to think about teaching and the innovation configurations map that is multifaceted and situated within her context (Hiver, Sánchez Solarte, et al., 2021). Instead of one correct way of accomplishing her professional development goals, Elliot reconceptualized her thinking about how to reach those goals as one that can be obtained through various means. The key to attaining those goals was to understand whether those means were appropriate for her, her students, and her contextual situation. This awareness developed through the collaborative effort Elliot had with her colleagues and me, her reflection on her instructional practices, her understanding of what her needs were as a person and teacher, and her advancing understanding of how to teach guided reading (Antoniadou, 2011b; Clarà, 2015b; Mercer & Gregersen, 2020; Tajeddin & Aryaeian, 2017). This journey for her was a continuing one, as she said, “The journey is not easy or simple. But it requires a learning curve for you to get from A to B. And I feel like this is still my journey. And it's ongoing.” This metacognitive awareness is of great importance in the development of how teachers use the innovation configurations map (Hiver, Whiteside, et al., 2021). Elliot reconceptualized the way she thought about the map from one with only a single

way of being used to one that can be used in a variety of ways depending on the needs of her students and herself (Hord et al., 2006).

While the exposure a teacher had to the innovation configurations map in a collaborative environment helped in developing participants' expanded interpretation of how to use it, individual perceptions also impacted how the innovation configurations influenced teachers even when they had minimal opportunity to use it. Cody exemplified how a person could use the innovation configurations map to positive effect within a short period. Cody recounted that after the first meeting, everything "was definitely a little bit confusing." After Cody went through the provided materials, he developed a better idea of how he could use the innovation configurations map. He explained, "The more that I was able to really, you know, dissect and to really simplify it, you know, ... then it just clicks." In one of his last academic meetings as a head teacher, Cody worked with his team on the prior knowledge configuration and how they could facilitate opportunities for students to use their knowledge to better comprehend what they are reading (Component 2: Provides opportunities for students to make connections). When he narrated his education journey map, he stated:

So, it came to an end currently because I'm leaving. But I created a little tunnel, right here, the tunnel actually goes and continues on, you know, like infinitely. And what that means to me is that, although I've had a very brief interaction with it, I'm still actively thinking about it. And it's something that has opened my mind to like, I really need to be more mindful of when I'm planning classes to be thinking about learning outcomes more. ... And the ... configurations, the configurations map is a really good way to sort of start with that.

Within the three months that Cody used the map, he modified his conceptualization of how to use the innovation configurations map and how it could influence his instruction. Regardless of the length of time that one is exposed to the map, how one approaches its use is of great importance. Kennedy, for example, had more exposure to the map. Yet, because of her contextual situation and how she regarded the map, her use of the map in ways differed from Cody's. She had a more ambivalent stance towards it. The decision to adopt the innovation configurations map, thus, is one that teachers must make for themselves with the encouragement and support of others (G. E. Hall & Hord, 2020).

Throughout the project, the participants' ideas about the innovation configurations map were transformed. They initially saw it as something complicated and were unsure how they could use it to their benefit. Over time their experience of using it affected them. With guidance and support from colleagues and me, the teachers moved beyond those initial ideas to viewing the innovation configurations map as a tool that could help inform their practices. Whether they used it differed for each participant. Seeing and experiencing how they could utilize the innovation configurations map to influence instructional decisions did help the participants reconceptualize how they thought about it and its utility.

My Effect on Teachers

My role, thus, was more significant in the entire process than I thought it would have been for the duration of the project. Not only did I help guide teachers in using the innovation configurations map and how to apply its content to their classes, but I also served as a mentor and advisor for each of them. The need for me to play these roles

emerged as we worked together. The progression of this development in my role in the project occurred over time and differed for each participant based on their needs.

Mentoring Relationship

Mentoring has been seen as an important aspect in situating teachers into their contexts and the expectations of what their instructional practices are meant to be for teachers throughout their careers (Gakonga, 2019; Johnson, 2022; Mercer & Gregersen, 2020; Orland-Barak, 2021). Capable mentors are those who can address the needs of mentees and understand that this relationship—like any other—needs to be given care so it may mature to meet the needs of both parties (Gakonga, 2019; Mercer & Gregersen, 2020). As Ash commented about finding a mentor at his new workplace, “For the beginning, it will be on my own until I found someone I can do that relationship. Because I think also ... My experience ... Just because someone is in a higher position doesn't mean they know more or care.” What was important for Ash was that he could find someone to have a mutually beneficial relationship with so that they could help and support each other. Being aware of the importance of this relationship as being dynamic is important for the success of mentoring.

Mentors provide multiple facets of what teachers need within their situated contexts, such as professional knowledge, pedagogic knowledge, empathy, support, honest assessments, and encouragement (Banegas, 2022; Gakonga, 2019; Orland-Barak, 2021; Orland-Barak & Wang, 2021). Mentors in education, in essence, focus on the wellbeing of teachers and consider what they need at any given time. Throughout this project, I found I needed to pivot multiple times as I learned what the teachers were dealing with to help them within the given moment. My experience as a literacy teacher

Figure 14

Observation Notes Concerning Ash's Emergency Remote Teaching

Component 5	Examples of Component	
Provides opportunities for students to practice vocabulary appropriately.	After the students have worked on the definition, the teacher asks them to give example sentences using the word. One tried and the other found it difficult to do. One student speaks Chinese and seems distracted.	
	Then the teacher asks students to give examples. The youngest student doesn't give an example and seems to be distracted by the online medium of the class.	
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation
B/C	There are opportunities for students to use them, but some students found them unengaging. Part of the issue is the online medium and part of it is the age of the students. Finding an appropriate way of engagement is needed. The teacher does push the students to show understanding.	

within the organization and managing the expectations of administrators, students, and parents afforded me insights that aided me in empathizing with and assisting the participants.

During the first few months, I helped the participants with their technical understanding of how to teach students online given the emergency remote teaching they were required to do (Hodges et al., 2020). In this instance, I tried to provide them with pertinent advice on how they could apply and build upon their technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge (Koehler & Mishra, 2009; B. Li, 2022; Mishra & Koehler, 2006; Shulman, 1986, 1987). For example, in the observation with Ash in February 2022, I noted that how he had his students practice vocabulary (Component 5: Provides opportunities for students to practice vocabulary appropriately) was unengaging for the students as they used an online meeting platform (see Figure 14). In our post-observation interview, we discussed ideas of what he could use to make it more engaging. While I shared some initial ideas, Ash informed me of some of the things he had tried but found inappropriate for his class. As he said, “Well, one of the things I did try in the past

was being ... allowing the students to annotate. But with this particular class, I have to switch it off, because, again, [the younger student] ... just end up writing the word poop on screen.” Our dialogue continued as we thought of different ideas that would be appropriate for his students. We also worked through the differences between online and offline teaching in these early post-observation discussions to help apply the innovation configurations map to the different modes of instruction as Ash tried to improve.

As someone who was a step back from their day-to-day teaching, I could recall what I observed to help the teachers to take a moment to breathe, reflect, evaluate, think, and plan on what steps they wished to take to help their students. Sometimes it was even giving them the time to vent their frustrations, such as when Elliot shared her experience about students reading online:

They didn't read it. ... I guess I kind of wanted to see, okay, who will do it. It's just, again, something I was trying. I don't know whether it's good or bad. But some of the students did read it and remember it. The ones who are eager to learn. The others who are just kind of not as interested didn't do that. ... There are times when it did get a bit frustrating. I found that sometimes online classes, kind of, I can feel my blood boiling sometimes. And I'm like, okay, calm down ... So, then you have to ... calmly ask another student ... [to] read that story.

Providing support and a safe space to vent, in addition to technical support, was critical in helping the teachers develop their understanding of the innovation configurations map and in applying them online or offline (Henriksen et al., 2022; Orland-Barak, 2021; Orland-Barak & Wang, 2021). Once Elliot had expressed her feelings about students reading online, we moved on to discussing this issue. For example:

Robby: We don't necessarily know the reasons for that. So sometimes you have to be careful in getting them involved, but at the same time, not penalizing them for something a bit outside of their control. But I think asking those types of questions is a good way of doing it. You might want to throw that out to the entire class ... first, before you ... single out one student, just to see ...

Elliot: I will normally do that as well. It's just that sometimes, because of online classes, sometimes everyone that's speaking at the same time, and then I'm like, then everyone puts their hand up. And sometimes I will just go in the order that their pictures are or who puts the hand up first. So, I have also done that where everyone can discuss. And then when everyone, if everyone is speaking at the same time, then I will choose individuals, or get one student who gave an answer to then choose the next student.

Robby: I think that's fine. Just making sure that you're being ... fair to the students, and then you're ... mixing it up with the students.

This exchange between Elliot and me is an example of how we collaborated to think about how Elliot could overcome her concerns about engaging all her students to read the texts for their classes that had been moved online. But it emerged first from acknowledging her affective state and allowing her time to express her thoughts and feelings about what happened in her online class (Henriksen et al., 2022).

Such interactions were possible as I worked to comprehend the needs of the teachers. Through observations, listening to them, and empathizing with them, I took on the role they needed from me at the time of our engagement. As our work progressed, this

development in our relationship increasingly took the comportment of a mentor working with a mentee.

Negotiating Roles

Concurrent with the mentorship role within the activity system, I negotiated multiple roles between a curriculum developer working to help teachers develop their guided reading skills and a confidant in actively listening to their concerns. As part of this process, I had to pivot between these roles and focus on what the teachers were saying—or not saying—and tailoring my messages to what they needed. For example, Ash experienced stressors during this period in his life. His promotion in the organization increased his administrative workload and responsibilities without a comparable reduction in his teaching hours, which compounded a situation where Ash felt that center management expected more from him than he could realistically provide. Ash narrated in his education journey map:

Then this is actually, maybe, the mounting pressure I have felt over the last six months, but not necessarily because of the project. And the reason I chose this picture, I don't know if you know this picture. This is from the Disney movie *Encanto*. I watched it maybe in February. And there's this song called "Surface Pressure." ... And I remember one day, I had a ... I had a bad day here, and it was so much work. On my 90 minutes subway journey home, I guess I watched this song on YouTube in a loop for 90 minutes, you know. And it was kind of like, this is, it's too much. Well, I'm going to have to start saying no. And this is when we talked about different things, you know ... The reason I put it in this section, because even though I was having this pressure, you did help alleviate stuff like

that. And especially like, obviously, I know, there's only so much within your control. But the ... this program, the pressure that maybe I felt before this, you know, our first interview, immediately went away, you know, so I have pressure in other parts, but that was gone. Which is good.

Throughout the project, Ash and I would talk before or after our post-observation interviews about different matters. These private discussions would take place over a few minutes or last up to an hour. As we talked, I would constantly reflect in motion on what Ash and the other teachers needed at that moment so I could try to meet their needs (Clarà, 2015b). I would think: Should I ask guided questions to help them reflect on their situations? Do I provide direct information about a specific pedagogic issue? Do I remain silent on some issues instead of others? Do I push or do I fall back? Dealing with these many factors required balancing the different needs of everyone involved and required me to develop myself in this process (Gakonga, 2019).

To help support the participants, I researched matters they asked for information about or that I observed in their classes. For example, I learned more about online education during this period. I read books and articles about the topic (e.g., Pawan et al., 2022) that helped me understand the participants' situations and what actions they could take. I was cautious with this information because much of it was new to me, and I was unsure of how beneficial it would be to the teachers. I would, however, share some of these resources with them so they could use them if they wanted. We also would discuss the content of these resources together, such as when Elliot and I talked about how students could read a text in a synchronized, online lesson. With these actions, I tried to be mindful of the participants' needs on which they chose to focus and which I observed.

Without that mindfulness, I contend that the teachers might have resisted using the innovation configurations map. Kennedy is an example of someone who minimally used the innovation configurations because of her affective state at the start of the project, which left me frustrated after our second interview when she informed me that she did not use it. During the interview I tried to maintain my composure, and only later did I vent in a memo and contacted Cody to see what the situation was. Cody in an email conjectured, “I think what happened was I sent the file out in the group chat in February, but [Kennedy] didn't save it to her computer or phone and the file expired.” While I felt she could have reached out to either Cody or myself earlier in getting another map, I came to an understanding with myself that Kennedy might not have felt comfortable in doing so for whatever her reasons were. Given that the situation was already past and that she had not said anything about leaving the project, I resent the document to her and let her know that I was there to help her. As the COVID-19 situation improved and classes went offline, Kennedy began to feel more positive about her situation and I noticed that our interactions improved as well. In our last meeting, Kennedy shared, “Thank you so much. I actually used a lot of your feedback for that class, especially ... you told me like to get them moving around more.” Taking the time to learn more about her and to understand her way of engaging with me and the project was important in moving her to start to use the innovation configurations map, even if Kennedy minimally used it for the duration of the project (Heath & Heath, 2010).

Each of the participants required different things from me at different times. While I was cognizant of meeting my goals concerning this project and those the organization had regarding how to better develop teachers, I realized I had to prioritize

their needs first. As a result, I played different roles for each participant so I could help them find benefits with their participation in their project and with their work. To do so I had to address their other needs, such as those related to their affective and cognitive states (Borg, 2019; Mercer & Gregersen, 2020), before they were in the right state of mind to work on the innovation configurations map.

Building a Trusting Rapport

Equally important was the vulnerability I shared as I was dealing with issues myself. At the start of the project, the academic director informed me that the general manager of the organization had decided not to renew my contract and would not explain to me the reasons why. After multiple entreaties, the academic director speculated the reasons but was unable to confirm them even though I had multiple months left on my contract. My situation deteriorated as we went along to the point that I had consulted an attorney about my rights in terms of the termination of my contract and severance under Chinese law, which the company refused to give. Throughout this agonizing process, I felt quite helpless. While I did not share my plight negatively, I answered honestly when Ash and Elliot asked about my situation given that they had heard rumors. Being open with them allowed them to be open with me. One time in March, Elliot and I spent two hours online—one hour to talk about her class which I recorded, and one hour talking about how we were dealing with our respective issues that were off the record. This mutual openness to one another is an important part of mentorship as it is a dynamically crafted and negotiated relationship (Gakonga, 2019; Orland-Barak, 2021).

Thus, the teachers and I developed a rapport that influenced their perceptions of the work we did regarding the innovation configurations map. As time went on and our

relationship developed, the initial uncertainty they had dwindled as we got to know each other. As Ash had mentioned, he was unsure about the veracity of this project based on prior experiences with professional development activities. Kennedy too was a bit skeptical based on her onboarding and how she felt that there was little guidance given during that time. But working with and helping them allowed each participant to try the suggestions I provided as they determined how best to implement the innovation configurations to meet their needs.

When working specifically on technological, pedagogical, or content knowledge, I focused on where the teachers were at that moment in their knowledge and skills development to push them forward (Johnson & Golombek, 2016). Sometimes I worked with them to help them articulate what they already knew or what they still needed to know (Margolis, 2020; Smagorinsky, 2018; Xi & Lantolf, 2021). For example, Kennedy and I discussed modifying one of her warm-up activities at the start of class to incorporate vocabulary review with her students. Kennedy at the start of the class would occasionally have her students complete a crossword puzzle she had designed on a whiteboard. The words she chose were general and not specific to anything related to class; during this lesson, she chose classroom-related words. We discussed the possibility of using some of the vocabulary words from the students' lessons instead so that they would have opportunities to practice those words, which is one of the components of the vocabulary configuration (Component 6: Promotes the use and review of new vocabulary throughout the lesson and across lessons in writing and orally). I, thus, would focus on what I thought they needed based on what they shared with me about their needs and my observations. I indirectly nudged them in certain directions, or I would directly suggest

they try something. But ultimately, I always left it up to them to decide what they thought was best for their classes.

That was my intent throughout the project, and I took great care to encourage the teachers to exert their agency as teachers (Bandura, 2006; Edwards, 2005; Stetsenko, 2019; Teng, 2018). Multiple times throughout the project Elliot and Kennedy, as well as Ash and other teachers in academic meetings, would look to me for definitive answers. Elliot commented on more than one occasion that she took my feedback on the observation forms and then incorporated them into her classes. As she explained, “I’ll go by your feedback again because I feel like ... your feedback always helps me to focus on the areas that I should be improving on.” While we talked about it during our interviews, I was a bit hesitant for her to use that feedback in the exact way I had suggested. As we went along, I wanted to help Elliot and the other teachers to think about what was best for their students and combine that with my suggestions to synthesize instructional practices appropriate for their classes. In reflecting on our initial post-observation interviews, I started to use guided questions to help the participants think about what they were doing or were hoping to achieve, as well as how they could actualize their ideas. For example, when Elliot and I discussed how she could make her classes more student-centered during the classroom discussion, I used questions, such as, “What could you have done?” and “How would you structure it to make it so that they’re discussing with each other?” to encourage her to think about how she could incorporate her ideas into her classes. I would then help refine her ideas or to help her view them from a different perspective. I chose this course of action to build their confidence in their decision-making capabilities

and to push them to think about what they were doing, as well as the effects they had on their students and classes (Orland-Barak, 2021).

This more encompassing role of mentor was not one I expected when I started this project, but it is one that I saw as important in addressing the needs of the teachers as I asked them to use the innovation configurations map. Working with them and addressing their different needs is in effect realizing that their wellbeing is an important consideration regarding professional development (Mercer, 2018; Mercer & Gregersen, 2020). The advancement of their metacognitive understanding of teaching guided reading is multifaceted, and each of those facets needed to be addressed in ways appropriate for each teacher (Borg, 2019, 2022; Hiver, Sánchez Solarte, et al., 2021; Hiver, Whiteside, et al., 2021). I could provide some help in this regard as it related to the innovation configurations map. In the absence of others within the organization who could provide additional support, many teachers stated that what I could provide was important for them. As we worked together, I realized I needed to understand what their needs were to support them so that they might take ownership of the innovation configurations map.

Reflections on the Findings

Based on the two cases of Centers 1 and 2, I have learned a great deal about how teachers can use an innovation configurations map for guided reading within their activity systems. As with any social situation, the confluence of each component of an activity system needs to be considered in understanding how the teachers in this study worked towards the objective of improving the instructional practices (Engeström, 2015). The rules of this system established the foundation for how teachers understood what they were to do and what they felt they were permitted to do. Many of the teachers interpreted

that they were to use the curriculum verbatim. The overall community within centers reinforced this idea; operations officers and center managers conveyed to teachers that they were to disseminate the content of the curriculum as written. As for teachers, their roles within the organization left them more susceptible to following the precepts that upper management thought appropriate for a Chinese education context. These peripheral components of the activity system created an environment that encouraged teachers to take a passive role in how they taught their students.

Within the activity system, there were others who were willing to destabilize this status quo when these factors were seen as hindering the positive development of teachers and students (Meyerson, 2001). While the head teachers and teachers were cognizant of the rules at each center and within the organization, many also recognized that they were flawed and did not address the needs of each unique teaching situation they found themselves in online or offline. Yet, they were hesitant to assert their agency given the prevailing perspective of how they should teach from operation officers, center managers, and organizational upper management. Within the institution, however, there were individuals, such as the academic director and me, who took a different perspective. For the duration of this project, I increasingly took on roles within their activity system that aligned more with the needs of the teachers than with the organization. I did this under an awareness that when teachers were more capable of meeting the needs of their students, understood how to use the curriculum flexibility, and felt comfortable in asserting their agency, they would better benefit the organization (Blair et al., 2020; Xu, 2012, 2013). I shared with the participants of this study that understanding and

encouraged them to think about the curriculum as the foundation for what they could build upon based on the needs of their students and classes (Graves, 2021).

As for how they began to see how they could build upon the curriculum, the participants of this study required mediating tools that could facilitate their development and provide us with the terminology to advance their understanding of guided reading. The innovation configurations map was one tool that we used. Initially, I had conceived that this tool could be used by the teachers to support their development within their zones of proximal development (Benzehaf, 2016). As I worked with the teachers, I began to realize that while they could proceed in this manner, the quality of that development was affected by the familiarity the teachers had with reading instruction (Quinn & Kim, 2017). The addition of me as a mentor, guide, and advisor within the activity system, however, provided them support on how to use the innovation configurations map, as well as engaging them to think about how they could apply the map to influence their instructional practices (Johnson, 2022; Johnson & Golombek, 2016). Additionally, talking and collaborating with colleagues provided additional support (Golombek, 2022; Zoshak, 2016). These mediating tools were important catalysts for how teachers worked towards attaining the objective of improving their guided reading instructional practices.

The progress the teachers made through the first half of 2022 in using the innovation configurations map occurred in ways that reflected their backgrounds as teachers and individuals. Many of the participants' education and training were primarily in fields outside of English language teaching, such as health for Elliot and business for Cody. They came to their knowledge of English language teaching in short courses and through on the job experiences that varied in quality and length. For example, Kennedy

has only been on the job less than a month after having passed her short course. Their knowledge and awareness related to English literacy, thus, came about from their use of the curriculum and from their personal research. The use of the innovation configurations map was a tool that introduced many novel concepts about reading instruction to the participants. This tool, additionally, required collaborative work for the participants to initiate the process of them developing their knowledge concerning guided reading.

The work the participants put forth in developing their understanding of guided reading, though, was affected by the contextual events that occurred throughout the project and the contradictions they had to reconcile. COVID-19 for both centers required classes to go online for two and a half months at each center. In addition, all participants at one time found themselves under lockdown for varying durations. This situation began to improve as the COVID-19 cases lessened in the communities of each center and the lockdowns were lifted. These events influenced teachers as they worked within their centers and applied the innovation configurations map for guided reading.

These contextual elements affected the work the teachers did as they encountered the contradictions they faced, which shaped how they approached using the innovation configurations map (Song, 2016). These contradictions included the tension between introduced academic concepts with their everyday concepts, engaging in teaching practices that were contrary to their goals, and reconciling institutional expectations with what teachers ideally thought was best for the classes. Working on these contradictions required a concerted effort on the teachers' part. The results varied based on the individual and the center. What was of great importance was the mediating effect a learned other could provide to disseminate information, give emotional support, offer

encouragement, share advice, and impart guidance based on what the teachers needed at the time so they could work through the encountered contradictions (Edwards & D'arcy, 2004; Engeström, 2015; Gakonga, 2019; Orland-Barak, 2021; Roth, 2004).

Within this activity system, then, the support and guidance that prioritized the needs of the teachers, as well as the students, over organizational needs proved beneficial in how teachers used the innovation configurations map. While organizational needs are important within the activity system, the individuals who are engaged within that activity system are the ones who ensure that organizational objectives are met. Meeting the needs of these individuals is crucial to ensuring that they are positively engaged in working towards the objectives that they desire for themselves and the organization (Clarà, 2015a; Rahmati et al., 2019; Roth, 2007). The willingness of participants to apply the innovation configurations map to inform their instructional practices stemmed from this understanding.

The two cases I synthesized for this study have presented insights into how educators can use an innovation configurations map for guided reading to influence their teaching practices within unique activity systems. As a qualitative study, these insights are principally germane to these two centers and to the other centers in the organization that have similar contextual situations. This reality, however, does not preclude comparisons with contexts and situations that are reminiscent of the cases I described (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Yin, 2018).

The findings of this study are not surprising when overlaid against how activity systems are conceptualized in Activity Theory and how individuals are understood from Sociocultural Theory. What has been surprising is how participants responded to this

knowledge in practice. How they reacted to encouragement and guidance from me was something that I saw as common human decency. It was, however, something I took for granted that others would also emulate. While I do not consider that those in the organization are without empathy, I do contend that they have been enculturated in ways that prioritize profit over people as is common in neoliberal policies within education contexts (S. Feng, 2021; J. Liu & Bray, 2022; Saltman, 2014; Xiong et al., 2022; W. Zhang & Bray, 2021). Such policies neglect the needs of individuals, which has adverse effects. In addition, intercultural differences are an influencing factor in how colleagues from different backgrounds engage with one another (Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2019).

Focusing on individuals—in this case, head teachers and key informants at Centers 1 and 2—was an important consideration in ensuring that they were in the right mindset to engage with this professional development program (Mercer, 2018; Mercer & Gregersen, 2020). How teachers used the innovation configurations to positive effect resulted not from top-down orders or individual decipherment of the map. It originated from collaborative efforts between teachers and between them and me (Blair et al., 2020; Fullan et al., 2015). This work was grounded in an understanding that humans are multifaceted. Acknowledging how people are complex and ever-changing was a necessary first step in ensuring that teachers took the initiative to use the innovation configurations map in ways that were appropriate and meaningful for them.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUDING CYCLE 3

In endeavoring to understand how an innovation configurations map for guided reading influenced teachers' instructional practices, this cycle of my doctoral action research project has allowed me to learn in collaboration with the staff members at Centers 1 and 2 how educators in their activity system undergo that process. As with any implementation of a novel initiative into an activity system, multiple factors interacted in tandem that affected the outcome. In this arrangement, there were individuals who learned to use the introduced innovation within the bounds of their capability at the time of this initiative. The guidance, tools, and support these individuals received in working towards that objective were of great importance in ensuring they were afforded the opportunities and dignity to progress as they deserved. They were the ones who were asked to do the work on changing aspects of their practices and developing their thinking about their practices.

These tenets are based on the precepts of Sociocultural and Activity Theories, which have governed my conceptualization of this project. Based on these theories, I provide an assessment of this project concerning how principally the head teachers and key informants used the innovation configurations map for guided reading at Centers 1 and 2. This assessment is based on my ontological and epistemological understanding, and as such is only one way that this study can be evaluated, but it aligns with my understanding of what I experienced and learned during my collaboration with the participants from both centers. To initiate this evaluation, I first focus on how the research questions were addressed and answered. I then move on to consider the limits of

this study. I next discuss how the findings can influence future decisions regarding the use of the innovation configurations map within the organization and how they may influence others who wish to apply what was learned to their contexts. I finally conclude with my final thoughts regarding this cycle in the action research project.

Addressing the Research Questions

In seeking a way to help teachers better develop their knowledge and practices related to guided reading for Chinese students learning to develop their English literacy skills, I focused on using an innovation configurations map as a mediating tool to help in that endeavor. This action research project's previous and current cycles have been my attempt to learn about this problem of practice and address it. For this project, I used five research questions to structure it and to help me assess the efficacy of the innovation configurations map. I discuss each below.

Research Question 1

How does an innovation configurations map for reading instruction in English mediate teachers' understanding of how to instruct their students? The first question regarded how the innovation configurations map mediated teachers' understanding of how to instruct their guided reading classes. Based on my analysis of the data I have argued that the head teachers and key informants of this study developed a deeper awareness of guided reading via the innovation configurations map in four ways. The first way that the map mediated teachers' knowledge concerned their development of true concepts concerning guided reading. These participants began to learn about academic concepts related to guided reading and began to synthesize them with their everyday concepts about reading instruction. In tandem with the development of true concepts, the

second point in how the innovation configurations map helped teachers relate to how they used the map to develop their conceptualization of what an ideal class would look like in action. The third point expands on their first two points and focused on the reasoning behind the content of the innovation configurations to build a stronger awareness of why certain teaching practices were preferable to others. The fourth point concerned how the innovation configuration map helped teachers build a foundation of knowledge that they could expand from in ways they needed due to their contextual situations.

While the data showed indication that the participants used the innovation configuration to mediate their practices in these four ways, how that occurred was one that required multiple support systems. The map itself provided key information for the teachers, but the amount of information within it was a lot for individuals to unpack without a learned other to guide them on how to use and interpret the map in ways that were appropriate to their needs (Johnson, 2022; Johnson & Golombek, 2016). Support also came from their colleagues who were using the map, which allowed participants to collaborate on developing their understanding of how to use the map to meet their instructional needs (Golombek, 2022; Zoshak, 2016).

The support system teachers had in conjunction with the innovation configurations map helped mediate teachers' understanding of what was involved in guided reading. In the absence of both support and the map, teachers were more likely to rely on their everyday concepts and to use the innovation configurations minimally or not at all. When present, though, the innovation configurations map with a support system could help mediate teachers' awareness of what is involved with guided reading.

Research Question 2

How do teachers respond to the introduced innovation configurations map in their instructional practices? The second question sought to understand how participants responded to the innovation configurations map. As an introduced innovation, participants could respond in numerous ways based on numerous factors unique to them (G. E. Hall & Hord, 2020), such as their personal professional development needs or specific events affecting them at the time of the project. The participants of this study did respond in ways that were unique to their circumstances. Yet, the data did indicate that there was a general pattern the participants progressed through in how they responded to the innovation configuration map. While each participant had specific reasons for why they wished to develop their guided reading practices, such as head teachers being able to help their teachers or to ensure they were doing their best to help their students, they all had that a general desire to improve their knowledge and skills. Their prior experiences with professional development, training, and onboarding programs, however, left them predisposed to take a wait-and-see approach as to whether the innovation configurations would prove beneficial to them (Guskey, 1985). When presented with the innovation configurations map itself, many of the participants also felt overwhelmed with the amount of information presented and how they should read the map and use it for their needs.

Compounding on this situation were contextual factors related to COVID-19 in the communities where participants lived and worked. During the first half of the project, participants faced lockdowns and the need to teach their classes online. Both events affected participants and how they responded to the innovation configurations map.

Participants had to deal with sudden changes to class schedules, the number of students in classes, and uncertain policies related to what and where they were permitted to go based on the severity of lockdowns in their communities.

Like the first research question, the role of a learned other was important in how the participants responded to the innovation configurations map. The participants had to contend with events that occurred suddenly and with little recourse for them to change, as well as their initial uncertainty about how to read and apply the innovation configurations map. I, as a learned other, became an important mediating force in how teachers responded to the map. As they collaborated with me on how to use and apply the innovation configurations map, they learned from how I used it to determine how they could use it for their purposes. There were two main ways participants could learn how to apply the map based on how I used it. The first was how we used the contents of the innovation configurations map to structure our post-observation interviews. The second was how I used the map to inform how I wrote my observation notes, which I shared with them. Whether they imitated how I used the innovation configurations map or eventually developed a system that worked for them, they needed support and time to decipher the map so they could learn how to use them to meet their needs.

Research Question 3

What contradictions do teachers face when learning about and applying the innovation configurations and how are they dealt with? The third research question is based on a core premise of Activity Theory that people who work towards achieving the objective of their activity will face contradictions (Engeström, 2015; Roth, 2004). How they reconcile those contradictions is crucial in whether and how they achieve their

objectives. During this study, participants did face contradictions. Three distinct classes of contradictions were identified in the data that most participants encountered and had to reconcile in the progression of the study.

The first identified contradiction focused on participants facing a discrepancy between their everyday concepts of reading instruction with the academic concepts they were introduced via the innovation configurations map or in the post-observation interviews participants had with me. Many of the participants had practices and ideas about what they should do in their classes based on their experiences in the classroom or what they had observed other teachers do in their lessons (Smagorinsky, 2020; Smagorinsky & Barnes, 2014), such as with many participants' adherence to round robin reading. When introduced to the new academic concepts, the progression to incorporate them with their everyday concept took time and experimentation. Many of the teachers needed to see how these new practices worked within their classes and how students responded. While some participants felt that they needed more time in working out the best way to implement some of these ideas, with encouragement from me they persisted. As they worked on implementing changes into their practices, some participants began to see changes in how their students were learning and engaging with lessons. While the timeframe for this project precluded the development of many true concepts, many participants were moving in that direction.

A second contradiction that the participants faced was being unaware that some of their actions or ideas for their lessons would hinder their ability to achieve their goals. When reading the innovation configurations map or when discussing their plans with me, many participants generated ideas they thought would prove beneficial for the classes.

Yet, some of these ideas based on research in other situations might have done the opposite of the participants' intended goals without them being aware of them. For example, several actions that some participants suggested related to classroom management might have demotivated students. Such actions would have hampered the goals of some teachers, such as encouraging students to develop their independent thinking. The presence of a learned other was beneficial for teachers in dealing with these contradictions as that person could point out potential conflicts between the teachers' goals and their generated ideas on how to achieve them.

The third contradiction participants had to contend with concerned how they could reconcile institutional expectations for teachers with the information they learned from the innovation configurations map and from the discussions they had with me. Each participant faced this contradiction and had to determine how best to manage the discrepancy between the two when they emerged. The institutional expectations sought to standardize practices based on the curriculum. Many administrative staff members, additionally, advocated for a rigid adherence to that system, which countered what the participants were learning that they should tailor the curriculum to meet the needs of their students and be flexible with their lessons. This contradiction was the most challenging in terms of participants exerting their agency as they continued to express concerns about dealing with administrative staff resistance. My support could only go so far in encouraging the teachers to do what they thought best for their students and classes. The confidence teachers had in dealing with this contradiction varied based on their experience and their awareness of what they knew would benefit their students. Most participants came from backgrounds outside of English language teaching. One

participant, additionally, had only a few months of experience teaching English. This contradiction was the least reconciled of the three due to the strong pull of institutional expectations, the time needed to develop their knowledge and skills related to guided reading, and the transient nature of the support I could provide.

While the participants faced contradictions in ways unique to them, how they did so required encouragement and support for them to begin the work of reconciling them. Without someone there to provide the information they needed, to provide insights into their ideas, or in general encourage them to focus on their students' needs flexibility versus a rigid adherence to the curriculum, many of the participants might not have started the work of dealing with these contradictions. Activity Theory posits that contradictions will emerge in activity systems (Roth, 2004). How participants deal with them requires guided mediation (Edwards, 2005). The question of who or what provides that mediation is important. The innovation configuration furnished much information for participants, but I provided guidance and support which helped participants in dealing with the contradictions they faced. In the absence of my presence, some participants like Ash pondered how the project might have unfolded with a different person leading the project. Thus, the choice of the person who is there to help provide mediation is crucial in how participants deal with the contradictions they face.

Research Question 4

How does the innovation configurations map I initiated as a curriculum developer influence teachers' instruction related to reading in English? The fourth question concerns how using the innovation configurations map influenced the way teachers taught and helped their students develop their English literacy abilities. The data

collected from the participants indicated that time was a factor in how the innovation configurations map influenced teachers. The initial reaction of the participants was one of uncertainty about how to use the map and in what areas they should focus their efforts. Each participant had to make this determination, which established an initial pattern of how they approached using the map. For some, this period was a time to reflect on their practices and to plan what areas they wished to focus on so they could improve their instructional practices. Others, though, had a measured response on how they would use the map and would need to gauge whether it was worth their effort to incorporate their map into their teaching practices. Regardless of the approach, the participants of the study felt the need to explore and become more accustomed to the map in the initial stages of this project.

Helping their progress in developing that understanding of the contents of the map and how it could influence their maps, collaborative efforts proved beneficial in assisting teachers build that understanding, generate ideas they could use, temper goals to those that were more realistic, and influence their attitudes towards the map. Throughout the study, I worked with the participants and helped with their development of thinking about and applying their map to their instructional needs. Tailoring my support and guidance to what they needed at the time of our collaboration was important as each participant had their own unique needs and ways of using the innovation configurations map. As they progressed, their understanding of the content of the map matured, but the way they used it remained similar throughout the project. Collaboration with colleagues also was an important factor in generating ideas that participants could use in their classes and to develop a collective understanding of the map when participants were able to do this in

their respective centers. As they worked with each other and with me, the rapport that was developed helped participants work through their issues with the map. As they did so, their attitudes towards it became more amenable to using it as they saw its effects, and as their concerns were addressed regarding the map's utility.

The matured understanding participants developed concerning the map affected how they perceived their instructional practices. Some participants started to see that teaching was a multifaceted endeavor without clear answers, but that the innovation configurations map could help provide some guidance on what could be included in a class that would likely benefit students. That decision would rest with the teachers, as well as how they would enact it in practice. At this stage and with this understanding of the innovation configurations map the teachers had developed a more nuanced view of their instruction and how they could approach their decisions. The innovation configurations map was a resource they could use to help them think about what choices were appropriate for their classes.

Reaching this matured level of understanding took time, collaborative effort, and working through the innovation configurations map. Each participant learned more about it as they used it, but they differed in how that affected their thinking about their instructional practices and their application of the map in their lessons. The efforts each participant made for this project also differed, influencing what they gained from their efforts. Most participants, though, shared that they felt that they had learned much during this project that influenced their instructional practices.

Research Question 5

How do my actions as a curriculum developer affect teachers in this process of learning and applying the innovation configurations? The fifth question for this study concerned my role within the project and how I affected participants as they learned to use and then applied the innovation configurations map. From direct engagement with the participants as I worked with them and collected data, my role proved consequential for participants. It developed over time from one I had initially envisioned as a curriculum developer helping teachers learn how to use the curriculum via the innovation configurations map, to one that aligned more with a mentor-mentee relationship. The emergence of this relationship between participants and me occurred organically over time. As the participants worked with me directly, they saw that I was tailoring my feedback and advice based on what they said they needed instead of me imposing my ideas on them. My goal was to support and guide them in the way that they asked for and that I thought they needed. We negotiated this role over time as we mutually learned about each other and how we interacted. On my part early in the project, I realized that we had to address their situations to help them get in the right frame of mind for working with the innovation configurations map. COVID-19 lockdowns and online teaching were two of the main events influencing participants that we had to address, and which affected how the teachers learned about and used the innovation configurations map. Learning about how these events affected them, thus, influenced my decisions on how to engage with them.

The consequences of my working to address their needs related to the innovation configurations map influenced participants in how they approached the innovation

configurations map. I opened myself to whatever avenue of discussion they wished to talk about. Providing them a forum to share their concerns, vent their frustrations, or talk about their general wellbeing allowed them to decompress from their stressors. The outcome of providing this forum was that teachers were in a better state of mind to work on the innovation configurations map. Many participants saw me as someone they could trust to help them and support them in their efforts with this project.

This development in our relationship matured over time as we built a trusting rapport between us. The ideal situation for mentors and mentees is that there are mutual benefits for both participants (Gakonga, 2019). My work with the participants benefited me in my learning about their needs and in collecting the data on this project. The participants informed me during our official meetings that I did help them with how they used the innovation configurations map and with other aspects of their teaching practices. What I was able to provide was based on what they allowed me to know as I worked with them within each participant's zone of proximal development. I learned about where they were in their understanding of the innovation configurations map and how to address their needs from the input they directly informed me and that I observed. Our work, thus, was a collaborative effort. For my part I learned that to help them use the innovation configurations map, I needed to learn what they required from where they were in their understanding of the project. From there I could provide the support and guidance they needed as they moved forward to make changes to their instructional practices. Without that relationship how they used the map would have differed.

Insights Regarding the Research Questions

These five questions informed me about what data I collected and how I did so. These questions also structured the way I thought about the data and reached my findings. As I have endeavored to answer each of these questions, the answers that emerged have been both surprising and unsurprising.

In terms of surprise, I have found that the significance of my role was far greater than I thought it would have been for this project. The level of support and guidance I provided went beyond what I initially anticipated the teachers would need or even want. Equally surprising was the consequence of unexpected events and how the participants reacted to those events and their involvement with this project. The wellbeing of the teachers indeed was a consideration that I had neglected to consider in detail before the start of this study, but one that I learned was of deep importance if participants were to be in the right state of mind to use the innovation configurations map (Mercer, 2018; Mercer & Gregersen, 2020).

The answers to the research questions were also unsurprising, especially as they related to reconciling their everyday concepts with the academic concepts they learned. Throughout their use of the innovation configurations map and their discussions with me, the participants learned a great deal about guided reading that questioned their everyday concepts. How they dealt with them proved consequential as they worked to develop true concepts (Roth, 2004). Many participants were starting to do so as they began to take the academic concepts they learned and started to reconcile them with their everyday concepts (Dellagnelo et al., 2022).

In the end, then, the answers to these research questions have helped me better understand how participants used the innovation configurations map and how their use influenced their instructional practices. Based on these answers the map did prove useful to participants. With the support and guidance that benefited participants, they were able to better use the innovation configurations map for their instructional needs.

Considerations Concerning the Study

The participants who engaged with me from January to early July 2022 indicated in their words and actions that they did indeed learn more about guided reading and how to use that information to inform their instructional practices. For these participants, then, this project proved beneficial for them. What this information can inform of future practices with teachers at centers in the organization and perhaps in other contexts similar to this one is more nuanced and limited. Several considerations need to be taken into account concerning what can be learned from this study, how it was conducted, and what the future use of the innovation configurations map for guided reading might be.

Limitations

The nature of this study required working with a small number of teachers available at the two centers, which already had less than 10 teachers at both locations. While much can be learned from the experiences of these individuals (March et al., 1991; Tracy, 2010), they underwent this process in ways unique to them in a context with events and individuals that affected them that are specific to their situation. Factors such as the Chinese context and the prevalence of COVID-19-related events influenced the progression of the study and the way participants dealt with these specific factors. While communicative diseases have affected education and influenced the protocols related to

dealing with medical emergencies before COVID-19 with SARS in the early 2000s in East and Southeast Asia (e.g., Tay et al., 2021), COVID-19 did have a profound impact on education on a scale that differed from similar events in modern history (United Nations, 2020). And within China, the government response has had a significant impact on how teaching progressed in-person or online, which ultimately affected students and teachers (Zhan et al., 2022). The participants of this study dealt with these events in ways specific to each person's personality and situation. Their unique experiences reflect how they as individuals had to deal with these events and the support they had during this period (Clarà, 2016b; Feryok, 2020; Vasilyuk, 1991). In other situations, as well as with other people, how they engaged with the innovation configurations would have differed.

The two centers are unique activity systems that influenced how participants dealt with these events in addition to their general work contexts with colleagues and organizational expectations. Both centers were in the same city and dealt with events that occurred throughout the city. For head teachers and teachers in other centers located in other regions of China, their response to the innovation configurations may have differed due to their unique contexts and personnel at their centers. And for those working in educational contexts outside the organization and in different types of institutions within and outside of China, their unique situations also would affect the way they would use the innovation configurations map. What I learned from how the participants used the innovation configurations map is thus focused on what happened in their specific activity systems. I also worked primarily with two head teachers and two key informants for this study. While I have learned much from them, their experiences shed light on how each of them specifically used the innovation configurations map. Opportunities to see how other

teachers at either center used the map were limited by events that occurred in each center and their communities.

While both centers had to deal with similar circumstances, specifically related to COVID-19, they also had unique situations that affected their activity systems that has influenced how I have understood the collected data. Center 1 had significant personnel changes in the first half of 2022 that saw that center's head teacher and two senior teachers leave. The teachers who replaced these more senior teaching staff members were junior teachers with less teaching experience and familiarity with the organization's curriculum. The resignation of Cody, additionally, left a void in academic leadership in how to use the innovation configurations map. Without a person who was in the center who could provide opportunities for the teachers at Center 1 to use them, guide them in how they understood the map, and support them as they worked to apply them to their lessons, the teachers were either unaware of this resource or neglected to use it. In this situation, Kennedy was the only teacher at Center 1 who continued to use the innovation configurations map in some capacity. Yet, the way she used it was infrequent and had minimal impact on her instructional practices. What was more beneficial for her was the feedback I provided her and the discussion we had.

Center 2, however, throughout the study had a more stable staff situation. Only one senior teacher left in January 2022, which required the other teachers at the center to take on his classes. Ash, as the head teacher of this center, was present throughout this project and provided opportunities for his teachers to use the map, guidance on how they could do so, and support as they worked to apply them. His own experience in using the map as a key informant helped inform him on how he could use the map with his

teachers. The difference between these two centers was significant in how participants used the innovation configurations map and what they gained from the experience with it. Being able to understand how additional teachers used the map at these centers and at other locations would have proven helpful in building a stronger awareness of how teachers learned to use the map, applied it, and how it affected their instructional practices.

Equally important to consider is that this project occurred roughly within a six-month period. Professional development is a long-term endeavor. It requires time in addition to consistent support and guidance for it to have a lasting effect on participants and in the contexts where they happen (G. E. Hall & Hord, 2020). Continued use of the innovation configurations map over an extended period is necessary for teachers to begin the process of synthesizing academic and everyday concepts into true concepts (Johnson & Golombek, 2016; Smagorinsky, 2020). The opportunity for that to happen with the participants of this study, however, is uncertain. By July 2022, many key members within both centers and the organization departed. Cody in March 2022 was the first to leave. Subsequently, I was forced out of my position at the end of June 2022. And in July, Ash left the organization, as did Dylan—the regional center manager—and the academic director of the organization. These senior individuals were the most familiar with the innovation configurations map, had supported its development and implementation within the organization, and had the authority to ensure that the map would be used with teachers at the different centers. Without the support and guidance that comes from those who created and used it, the future of the innovation configurations map and its effect on the teachers of this organization is questionable.

An additional consideration is the qualifications of the teachers who participated in this project. These teachers came from backgrounds outside of English language teaching. They had received their credentials from short courses, which affected their knowledge base and how they approached reading instruction. Many of these teachers also had taught for less than five years. Teachers with different educational backgrounds and experiences, especially those who earned a degree with a focus on English education, likely would have approached the use of the innovation configurations map differently from the teachers who participated in this study. While the map was designed for teachers who had learned about English language teaching from short courses, the usefulness of the map with teachers with different backgrounds is information that would prove beneficial in understating how the map could be used and with whom.

While the participants of this study and I have learned much about how to use the innovation configurations map, there is still more that needs to be learned. As a qualitative action research study, I sought to understand how an introduced tool I developed could help the teachers within my former organization. Whether this tool could be used in different contexts with teachers with different backgrounds requires additional research. Further studies in different situations, as well as long-term use of the map, would help in developing a better awareness of how beneficial the innovation configurations map for guided reading is.

Application to Other Contexts

While similarities will exist within other contexts between situations and individuals, there are also specific factors unique to them that precludes making a one-to-

one connection (Engeström, 2015). The structure of this study, though, could be used to test whether an innovation configurations map might prove beneficial to those contexts.

If the decision is made to use the innovation configuration in any given context, one salient factor that needs great consideration is the individuals who will enact it within that context. In working through this project, one factor that emerged of great importance was my role in supporting and guiding the participants. I had a vested interest in the success of this project and took strides to provide the help participants needed for the duration of the project. With the introduction of an innovation to a context, the people who are to implement it must be qualified and provide the aid that those who are asked to make the changes for it to be durable and last (G. E. Hall & Hord, 2020; Heath & Heath, 2010). Without that level of support and guidance, the initiative is less likely to succeed (G. E. Hall & Hord, 2011, 2020). How this project would have unfolded with a different person could have occurred in numerous ways. For a more positive outcome, that person needs to have the qualifications and the determination to ensure the initiative is a success. In the case of this project, I served in that role. In other contexts and situations, the question of whether people are willing and able to take on that role needs to be taken into serious consideration. Relying on the merits and initiative of those who have personal ambitions that dovetail with organizational needs is unsustainable. Strong and capable individuals who can take on that role need to be trained and encouraged who have the support of administrators to lead change initiatives long-term (Blair et al., 2020).

For the innovation configurations map to have longevity, there is a need for individuals who can use the innovation configurations map and who can support others in their use of it (Hord et al., 2006; Roy & Hord, 2004). In the absence of those factors, the

initiative of individuals in whether they use the map takes precedence and would fall on a continuum of use to nonuse with varying levels of success and failure based on individual knowledge and initiative (G. E. Hall & Hord, 2020). When those individuals are present to provide support and guidance to those who are asked to use it, the likelihood of those users benefiting from it is greater (G. E. Hall & Hord, 2020). The data from this study indicate that the use of the innovation configurations map for guided reading did prove useful for the participants, but they needed guidance and support to develop their understanding of how to use and apply it. Should that guidance and support be present from people who are able and willing to help others use the innovation configurations map, then the map can prove beneficial for different programs and contexts.

Future Steps

There is great potential for the use of an innovation configurations map within the context where this study took place and perhaps in other educational contexts. Yet, much still needs to be known about the utility of the map in different environments and how it affects teachers and students of different backgrounds. Additionally, ideas about how to use the map and to train individuals who can provide guidance and support for those who are asked to use the innovation configurations map is a step that should be considered in how it is used in the future.

This study has focused on the perceptions that teachers and I have had on how they used the map and how it influenced their instructional practices. While important in developing an awareness of how to introduce and encourage the use of the innovation configurations map, equally important is to know how that impacts teachers and the effects their developing understanding of guided reading has on students. Learning about

what specifically teachers gain from using the innovation configurations map and how that impacts students' literacy development in English are potential areas for future research. Expanding on that within the context of this study would prove beneficial in gauging the utility of the innovation configurations map.

Equally important is ensuring that there are qualified individuals within contexts that can support those asked to use the innovation configurations map. As I worked with the head teachers during the project, I realized that it likely would have proven more beneficial to have had an additional cycle to this action research project where I worked with them directly. This cycle would have allowed them the opportunity to develop their understanding of how to use the innovation configurations map. And with that understanding, they could have used that knowledge from personal experience to guide and support their teachers in how to use the map (Blair et al., 2020). The more individuals within the center who can lead the use of the innovation configurations map, the more durable and sustainable the use of the map might be within that specific context (G. E. Hall & Hord, 2020).

These ideas are initial steps beyond this current research, but there are many other opportunities to better understand the use and effectiveness of the innovation configurations map for guided reading within the organization and outside it. While I no longer work for this organization, I do see potential in the use of the innovation configurations map as a means for professional development in other educational contexts comparable to mine. Private supplementary tutoring organizations still exist within China, and they continue to grow in other countries around the world (Zhang, 2022; Zhang & Bray, 2020). The working conditions and training needs of the educators

who work in these contexts have many similarities (Bray, 1999; Zhang & Bray, 2020), such as generally beginning to teach after having taken short courses on English language teaching (Barnawi, 2016; Ferguson & Donno, 2003; Higginbotham, 2019; Hobbs, 2013). The use of the innovation configurations map can provide the necessary information on the structure of their courses, the expectations of how to instruct students, and what exactly their leaders hope to see them achieve in their classes. This tool, then, can prove beneficial to those who are in situations where they may not have all the information they need to succeed. Yet, for that to happen they need support and guidance on how to use the map specifically and more generally in being encouraged to continue to develop themselves professionally. The innovation configurations can be a useful tool in meeting that need, but it is only a tool. How it is wielded and how it is understood is based on the individuals within an activity system and the choices they make as they exert their agency.

Final Thoughts as this Journey Ends

This action research project has been a journey for me. I have learned much about the needs of teachers and how they used the innovation I introduced. I also have learned more about how that process can unfold and how I can better facilitate it. Change whether small or large is a disruption in the equilibrium that people have grown accustomed to. When that balance is ruptured, it requires an adjustment. To ensure that adjustment meets the needs of those affected, support and care can prove consequential in how people work to reach a new equilibrium.

I came into this project without fully comprehending the influence I would have or could have. As I worked with all the participants of this project, I have grown to a

realization that my role was greater and lesser than I thought it would be. It was greater in the sense that I expanded my role from implementer of a change initiative as a curriculum developer and researcher, to one that included being a mentor to the participants, an advisor on professional and personal matters, and a confidant who would sit and listen when they needed a person to empathize with them. With these additional roles, it did lead to a realization that I am only one person. Our work together was limited to our monthly visits. This awareness of how my role was less pervasive is one I expected, but it is one I have realized is still consequential. With both these understandings I, additionally, recognize that the support I offered needed to benefit the participants in the ways they required during the time we were working together. With that contingent and responsive support, the participants were better able to use the innovation configurations map for guided reading. They did so to varying degrees based on the amount of support they received, the affordance their situations allowed, and the effort they put forth.

This study has been about how participants used the innovation configurations map and their impressions on using it. What I have learned and can be said is that the teachers developed a positive stance on the innovation configurations map. Ash and Cody discussed the possibility of how they could use it in the future. Elliot and Kennedy talked about the impact of our discussions on their development. With support and guidance, these teachers concluded that they benefited from using the innovation configurations map and participating in this project. They developed a better awareness of the needs of their students and how they could accommodate those needs in their guided reading classes. They, additionally, began to exert their agency in pursuing pedagogic practices that aligned with what they thought was important for their students. While contextual

factors affected them—and still do—the teachers began to emphasize their idealized versions of what they could do with their classes using the innovation configurations map over what the institution said they ought to do. They overcame the fear of the consequences of not meeting institutional expectations when they knew that they were misaligned with what their students required. These teachers over the course of this cycle developed that awareness, and they grew into stronger and more confident instructors. These teachers did a tremendous amount of work. I am grateful that they allowed me to support and help them as they worked to develop themselves into better and more knowledgeable teachers in guided reading.

So, what would I now tell the teacher who was confused about synthesizing and who had inadvertently started this journey? I would ask him what he needed to know and how I could support him. And that we should get right to work—together.

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APPENDIX A

INNOVATION CONFIGURATIONS MAP FOR GUIDED READING

01. Innovation Configurations Map for the Use of Prior Knowledge in Reading Instruction (Teacher)

Prior Knowledge: The previous knowledge and experiences readers have acquired. Readers may use their prior knowledge to help them better understand and remember what is being read by making connections that are relevant and personal.

Component 1: Demonstrates how to make connections with prior knowledge.					
A	B	C	D	E	F
Demonstrates to students how to make connections by verbally explaining how to do it when necessary effectively, and then has students try.	Demonstrates to students how to make connections by verbally explaining how to do it when necessary effectively, but does not have the students try.	Demonstrates to students how to make connections by verbally explaining how to do it when it is not needed, but it is done well.	Does not demonstrate to students how to make connections when students would benefit from having a demonstration.	Demonstrates to students how to make connections by verbally explaining how to do it, but it is unclear, and students are unsure of how to make connections.	

Component 2: Provides opportunities for students to make connections.					
A	B	C	D	E	F
Provides opportunities for students to use their prior knowledge at appropriate moments throughout the class.	Provides opportunities for students to use their prior knowledge during specific pre-planned sections of the class.	Provides opportunities for students to use their prior knowledge randomly throughout the class when it seems appropriate.	Provides opportunities for students to use their prior knowledge during inappropriate moments in the class.	Does not offer opportunities for students to use prior knowledge.	The focus on prior knowledge is on the teacher's prior knowledge unrelated to the students' prior knowledge.

Component 3: Encourages direct connections to the lesson's reading.					
A	B	C	D	E	F
Consistently encourages students to make linkages with the day's reading and their prior knowledge.	Occasionally encourages students to make linkages between the reading and their prior knowledge, but misses opportunities.	Seldom encourages students to make linkages between the readings.	Demonstrates how to make connections between prior knowledge and the day's reading.	Ask students to make connections, but does not encourage them to contribute and quickly move on.	Does not encourage students to make linkages between the day's reading and their prior knowledge.

Component 4: Guides students to make appropriate direct connections.					
A	B	C	D	E	F
When needed, guides students to make appropriate connections between the day's reading and their prior knowledge.	Guides students only during designated sections of the lesson, but guidance is done well.	Selectively guides students to make appropriate connections, but misses opportunities to guide students.	Sporadically provides guidance when the need arises, but it is inconsistently given.	Does not guide students at all.	Guidance is not done well; students make inappropriate connections and they are not corrected.

02. Innovation Configurations Map for Vocabulary Instruction (Teacher)

Vocabulary Instruction: Vocabulary is taught explicitly through direct instruction and implicitly through indirect instruction. Students have opportunities to co-construct knowledge with the teacher and fellow students. Students are given opportunities to practice engagingly using the new vocabulary. Students actively use the new vocabulary throughout the lesson and across lessons in writing and orally. Through this process, students enhance their vocabulary and expand their ability to communicate using more precise and exact words in writing and orally.

Component 1: Directly instructs vocabulary to facilitate and guide students in understanding the meaning of targeted vocabulary.					
A	B	C	D	E	F
Consistently introduces all targeted vocabulary words and allows students to begin to make connections of their meaning through a variety of oral, visual, and physical materials.	Consistently introduces all targeted vocabulary words through direct instruction in which students listen to the teacher and copy the information and/or listen to the meaning.	Inconsistently introduces targeted vocabulary words with some words not being taught, but allows students to begin to make connections of the meaning through a variety of oral, visual, and physical means.	Inconsistently introduces all targeted vocabulary words through direct instruction in which students listen to the teacher and copy the information and/or listen to the meaning.	Does not instruct vocabulary directly in class.	Directly instructs vocabulary unrelated to the lesson.

Component 2: Encourages students to co-construct their understanding of non-targeted, but novel (i.e., key), words throughout a lesson.					
A	B	C	D	E	F
Consistently encourages students to co-construct knowledge of non-targeted words when they are encountered throughout the lesson by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and/or consulting reference materials.	Inconsistently encourages students to co-construct knowledge of non-targeted words when they are encountered throughout the lesson by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and/or consulting reference materials.	Consistently defines non-targeted words for students when they are encountered and does not encourage using context clues and/or vocabulary skills to decipher meaning.	Inconsistently defines non-targeted words for students when they are encountered.	Does not work on non-targeted words throughout the lesson.	

Component 3: Judiciously selects words in the reading that are important to understand the text and not all unknown words.					
A	B	C	D	E	F
Chooses to explain only words that are needed to understand the meaning of the text when students encounter an unknown word while reading.	Chooses to explain all words that are needed to understand the meaning of the text when students encounter an unknown word while reading.	Chooses to explain only words that are needed to understand the meaning of the text even if students don't show signs that the word is unknown to them.	Chooses to explain all words that are needed to understand the meaning of the text even if students don't show signs that these words are unknown to them.	Chooses to not explain any unknown word while reading the text.	

Component 4: Guides students to build connections among related words.					
A	B	C	D	E	F
Consistently guides students to make connections between targeted vocabulary and associated words using a variety of connections, such as synonyms or domain-related words.	Inconsistently guides students to make connections between targeted vocabulary and associated words, such as synonyms or domain-related words.	Guides students to make connections between targeted vocabulary and associated words, but only emphasizes one form of connections.	Directly instructs students on how words are connected without allowing students the opportunity to make the connections themselves.	Does not guide students.	Guidance is not done well; inappropriate connections are made.

Component 5: Provides opportunities for students to practice vocabulary appropriately.					
A	B	C	D	E	F
Creates and facilitates opportunities for students to use the new vocabulary engagingly, as well as requiring students to understand the meaning of the new words and how to use them correctly.	Creates and facilitates opportunities for students to use the new vocabulary engagingly, but does not emphasize understanding the meanings of the words and/or using them correctly.	Creates and facilitates opportunities for students to use the new vocabulary that are unengaging, but does require students to understand the meanings of the new words and how to use them correctly.	Creates and facilitates opportunities for students to use the new vocabulary that are unengaging, as well as not emphasizing that students understand the meanings of the words and/or use them correctly.	Opportunities to practice new words are absent.	Opportunities to practice the target vocabulary are inappropriate for students in terms of academics and/or safety.

Component 6: Promotes the use and review of new vocabulary throughout the lesson and across lessons in writing and orally.					
A	B	C	D	E	F
Throughout the lesson and across lessons has students actively identify and use the new words in writing and orally.	Occasionally throughout the lesson and across lessons has students actively identify and use the new words in writing and orally.	Points out the new words during the lesson and across lessons but does not encourage students to actively identify and use the new words in writing or orally.	Points out new words during the lesson when they were taught and has students actively identify and use the new words in writing and orally; does not have students work on new vocabulary across lessons.	Points out new words during the lesson when they were taught; does not have students actively identify and use the new words in writing or orally.	Does not point out the new words during the lesson.

Component 7: Efficiently instructs students in the allotted time for vocabulary instruction.					
A	B	C	D	E	F
Uses the time to instruct students well, as well as accomplishes the task in the allotted time.	Uses the time to instruct students well but goes over the allotted time.	Does not use the time well to instruct students but does accomplish the task in the allotted time.	Does not use the time well to instruct students and does not accomplish the task in the allotted time.	Does not use any time to instruct students on the targeted vocabulary.	

03. Innovation Configurations Map for Reading Skills and Strategies Instruction (Teacher)

Reading Skills: The automatic and routine actions readers take to comprehend a text while reading. Many times, skills began as reading strategies. Strategies become skills through the process of automaticity were sustained and guided practice transitions to unconscious use and selection of appropriate skills over the years.

Reading Strategies: The effortful actions readers take to think about, understand, and remember a text. Strategies over time may become reading skills through continued and sustained practice. Direct instruction on what, how, when, and why to use these strategies are important for young readers to begin to internalize how to use reading strategies effectively.

Component 1: Provides direct instruction for students on the meaning of the terms used.					
A	B	C	D	E	F
Teaches the meaning of the target reading skill or strategy using level-appropriate language and examples when needed effectively.	Teaches the meaning of the target reading skill or strategy using level-appropriate language and examples when it is unnecessary due to students already understanding the meaning, but it is done well.	Teaches the meaning of the target reading skill or strategy using level-appropriate language and examples when needed, but it is not done effectively.	Teaches the meaning of the target reading skill or strategy using level-appropriate language and examples when it is unnecessary due to students already understanding the meaning, but it is not done well.	Present the meaning of the target reading skill or strategy but is not taught or explained.	Does not teach the meaning of the target reading skill or strategy.

Component 2: Provides direct instruction for students on how to use the target reading skill or strategy.					
A	B	C	D	E	F
Teaches the target reading skill or strategy using level-appropriate language and examples that explain the what, how, when, and why of using these targets.	Teaches the target reading skill or strategy using level-appropriate language and examples but does not explain what, how, when, and why of using these targets.	Teaches the target reading skill or strategy using inappropriate language and examples, but does explain what, how, when, and why of using these targets.	Teaches the target reading skill or strategy using inappropriate language and examples, and does not explain what, how, when, and why of using these targets.	Presents the target reading skill or strategy without directly instructing students.	Does not teach the target reading skill or strategy.

Component 3: Guides students on how to use the target reading skills or strategy.					
A	B	C	D	E	F
Consistently encourages and guides students on how to use the target reading skill or strategy efficiently.	Occasionally encourages and guides students on how to use the target reading skill or strategy.	When asked by students, does well in guiding students on how to use the target reading skill or strategy.	Does not encourage or guide students on how to use the target reading skill or strategy proactively.	Seldom encourages and guides students on how to use the target reading skill or strategy.	When asked by students, does not do well in guiding students on how to use the target reading skill or strategy.

Component 4: Checks to see whether students are applying the target reading skill or strategy well.					
A	B	C	D	E	F
Asks appropriate concept checking questions to gauge how well they are doing and whether they are better understanding the text in oral discussion and in written expression.	Occasionally asks appropriate concept checking questions to gauge how well they are doing and whether they are better understanding the text in oral discussion and in written expression.	Seldom asks appropriate concept checking questions to gauge how well they are doing and whether they are better understanding the text in oral discussion or in written expression.	Checks to see how well students are using the target reading skill or strategy either in reading or in writing but not in both; it is done well.	Does not check to see whether students understand what they are doing or if they are gaining anything from their actions in oral discussion or in written expression.	Checks to see how well students are using the target reading skill or strategy either in reading or in writing but not in both; it is done poorly.

Component 5: Provides students controlled and applied opportunities to practice the target reading skill or strategy throughout the lesson.					
A	B	C	D	E	F
Creates and facilitates opportunities for students to use the target reading skill or strategy with students better understanding what they read.	Creates and facilitates opportunities for students to use the target reading skill or strategy, but the practice is more performative and does not help students understand what they read.	Creates and facilitates opportunities for students to use the new reading skill or strategy; the teacher directs the practice with little to no student input, there is some benefit to helping students better understand the reading.	Creates and facilitates opportunities for students to use the new reading skill or strategy; the teacher directs the practice with little to no student input, there is little to no benefit to helping students better understand the reading.	Opportunities to practice the target reading skill or strategy are absent.	Creates and facilitates opportunities for students to use the new reading skill or strategy, but the practice is untied to the lesson text and is largely inappropriate.

Component 6: Reviews previously taught reading skills and strategies.					
A	B	C	D	E	F
When appropriate, encourages and has students use prior readings skills or strategies throughout the lesson.	Encourages and has students use prior readings skills or strategies during the direct reading portion of the lesson.	Frequently encourages and has students use prior reading skills throughout the lesson, but misses opportunities throughout the lesson.	Infrequently encourages and has students use prior reading skills or strategies throughout the lesson.	Does not encourage or guide students to use prior reading skills or strategies.	Application of prior reading skills or strategies not done well due to students misapplying them.

Component 7: Efficiently instructs students in the allotted time for the instruction or reading skills and strategies.					
A	B	C	D	E	F
Uses the time to instruct students well, as well as accomplishes the task in the allotted time.	Uses the time to instruct students well, but goes over the allotted time.	Does not use the time well to instruct students, but does accomplish the task in the allotted time.	Does not use the time well to instruct students, and does not accomplish the task in the allotted time.	Does not use any time to instruct students on the target reading skill or strategy.	

04. Innovation Configurations Map for Reading Comprehension Instruction (Teacher)

Reading Comprehension: After having read a text, the reader can understand the author’s purpose and the main idea of the text. They can summarize the information learned. They are also able to synthesize the information with prior knowledge.

Component 1: Provides opportunities for students to read the target text multiple times in a variety of ways.					
A	B	C	D	E	F
Provides opportunities for students to read the text more than two times during the class using different, effective methods.	Provides opportunities for students to read the text two times during the class using different, effective methods.	Provides opportunities for students to read the text-only one times during the class using an effective method.	Provides opportunities for students to read the text two or more times during the class, but uses the same effective method.	Provides opportunities for students to read the text more than once but uses a mix of effective and ineffective methods.	Provides opportunities for students to read the text more than once but uses ineffective methods.

Component 2: Strategically asks questions during the reading that enhances knowledge and comprehension building.					
A	B	C	D	E	F
Consistently asks questions throughout the readings that are appropriate for the lesson and student level.	Occasionally asks questions throughout the readings that are appropriate for the lesson and student level.	Seldom asks questions throughout the readings, but they are appropriate for the lesson and student level.	Asks questions throughout the readings that are partially inappropriate for the lesson and student level.	Asks questions throughout the readings that are completely inappropriate for the lesson and student level.	Does not ask questions through the readings.

Component 3: Facilitates students building their ability to think about the text.					
A	B	C	D	E	F
Consistently has students develop their abilities to answer comprehension questions through guided learner-centered practices.	Occasionally has students develop their abilities to answer comprehension questions through guided learner-centered practices.	Consistently has students develop their abilities to answer comprehension questions through direct teacher-centered practices.	Occasionally has students develop their abilities to answer comprehension questions through direct teacher-centered practices.	Provides opportunities for students to build comprehension but then does not give adequate time for students to work on developing their abilities.	Does not ask questions to build comprehension.

Component 4: Guides students to use reading skills and strategies to help build their comprehension.					
A	B	C	D	E	F
Effectively and consistently guides students to use reading skills and strategies to comprehend the text as seen through oral and written answers.	Effectively, but inconsistently, guides students to use reading skills and strategies to comprehend the text as seen through oral and written answers.	Effectively, but selectively guides, students to use reading skills and strategies, but misses opportunities to guide students.	Guides students to use reading skills or strategies, but does not assess how effective their use is in comprehending the text.	Does not guide students to use reading skills or strategies through oral and written answers.	Guidance is not done well; students make inappropriate use of reading skills or strategies.

Component 5: Effectively uses the allotted time for students to build their understanding of the text.					
A	B	C	D	E	F
Uses the allotted times for students to understand the text well.	Uses the time for students to understand the text well, but goes over the allotted time.	Does not use the time for students to understand the text well, but does accomplish the task in the allotted time.	Does not use the time for students to understand the text well, and does not accomplish the task in the allotted time.	Does not use any time for students to understand the text. Students merely read the text.	Does not use any time for students to understand the text. Students are not given time to read the text.

05. Innovation Configurations Map for Class Discussion Facilitation (Teacher)

Class Discussion: Active engagement of the target text for students to co-construct knowledge and to gain a deeper understanding of the author’s purpose in writing the text, the main idea, and personal and collective takeaways.

Component 1: Establishes an engaging environment for the class discussion.					
A	B	C	D	E	F
Sets up the physical or virtual classroom in a way that facilitates students being able to comfortably discuss with each other without distractions.	Sets up the physical or virtual classroom in a way that facilitates students being able to comfortably discuss with each other but there are distractions.	Gives little thought to how to set up the physical or virtual classroom and the discussion is awkward.			

Component 2: Uses guiding questions and prompts to facilitate the discussion.					
A	B	C	D	E	F
Asks strategic questions and prompts throughout the discussion to facilitate a logical flow of discussion amongst the students.	Frequently asks strategic questions and prompts throughout the discussion to facilitate a logical flow of discussion amongst the students.	Ask random questions and prompts throughout the discussion.	Does not ask questions or prompts throughout the discussion and has students talk about random topics related to the text.	Does not ask questions or prompts throughout the discussion and has students talk about random topics unrelated to the text.	

Component 3: Encourages active participation of all students that is appropriate.					
A	B	C	D	E	F
Actively encourages students to participate in a way that recognizes the unique learning needs of each student throughout the entire discussion.	Encourages students to participate in a way that recognizes the unique learning needs of each student throughout most of the discussion.	Seldomly encourages students to participate in a way that recognizes the unique learning needs of each student throughout the lesson.	Encourages students to participate in the discussion but does so in a way that does not recognize the unique learning needs of each student.	Does not encourage students to participate in the discussion.	Encourages only a select few students to participate in the discussion.

Component 4: Encourages students to co-create knowledge through discussion amongst each other.					
A	B	C	D	E	F
Guides students to co-create knowledge through the discussion with necessary teacher input to clarify relevant points.	Guides students to co-create knowledge through the discussion without necessary teacher input to clarify relevant points.	Asks students to co-create knowledge through the discussion but does not guide students on how to do so.	Only provides teacher input to clarify relevant points throughout the discussion and students do not actively participate.	Students talk directly to the teacher and not to each other throughout the class discussion.	

Component 5: Encourages students to make connections with themselves and the world critically and express their ideas in discussion.					
A	B	C	D	E	F
Encourages students to make connections to themselves and the world that are related to the discussion and to share with others, and it is done effectively.	Encourages students to make connections to themselves and the world that are related to the discussion and to share with others, but it is not done effectively.	Encourages students to make connections to themselves and the world, but the students make connections unrelated to the discussion and are not guided to correct themselves.	Encourages students to make connections to themselves and the world, but the students make connections unrelated to the discussion but are guided to correct themselves.	Students are not asked to make connections to themselves or the world throughout the discussion.	

Component 6: Guides students to practice active listening.					
A	B	C	D	E	F
Encourages students to listen attentively to what each other says and to repeat what the previous speaker said to help move the discussion forward.	Asks students to listen attentively to what each other says at the start of the discussion but then does not follow up throughout the discussion.	Does not ask students to listen attentively to what each other says throughout the discussion.	Accepts that students will share their ideas absent of any connection to what any other student said.		

Component 7: Encourages students to ask questions.					
A	B	C	D	E	F
Actively encourages students to ask relevant questions throughout the entire discussion with each other and the teacher.	Encourages students to ask relevant questions throughout the entire discussion only with each other.	Encourages students to ask relevant questions throughout the entire discussion only with the teacher.	Encourages students to ask questions throughout the entire discussion, but they tend to be questions that are not relevant to the discussion.	Does not encourage students to ask questions.	Encourages only a select few students to ask questions.

Component 8: Guides students to use evidence to support their discussion input.					
A	B	C	D	E	F
Actively encourages students to use relevant evidence to support their answers consistently throughout the discussion.	Encourages students to use relevant evidence to support their answers inconsistently throughout the discussion.	Asks students to use evidence to support their answers, but occasionally does not correct students when they use evidence that is not relevant.	Asks students to use evidence to support their answers, but does not correct students when they use evidence that is not relevant throughout the discussion.	Does not encourage students to ask to use evidence to support their answers.	Guides students to use inappropriate evidence or evidence that is not relevant to support their answers.

Component 9: Encourages students to support each other during the discussion with positive and constructive responses.					
A	B	C	D	E	F
Consistently encourages students to use positive language in support of each other and guides students away from using negative language.	Occasionally encourages students to use positive language in support of each other and guides students away from using negative language.	Encourages students to use positive language in support of each other, but does not guide students away from using negative language.	Does not encourage students to use positive language in support of each other, but does guide students away from using negative language.	Does not encourage students to use positive language to support each other, nor guides students away from using negative language.	Accepts students using negative language with each other throughout the discussion.

06. Innovation Configurations Map for Writing Instruction (Teacher)

Written Expression: Using the written form to reflect on and express understanding of the targets of the lesson. Guiding students to develop their ability to put their ideas onto paper in an organized and logical way that reflects their unique thinking.

Component 1: Provides opportunities for students to express their thoughts and ideas in written form.					
A	B	C	D	E	F
Encourages students to generate their ideas to reflect upon the targets of the lesson with teacher guidance.	Encourages students to generate their ideas to reflect upon the targets of the lesson with the teacher pushing for a predetermined way of thinking.	Informs students what they need to write about, but allows students the flexibility on how they will write.	Informs students what they need to write about and how they will write about it.	Does not offer opportunities for students to write about the lesson targets.	Provides opportunities for students to write, but the focus on the writing is unrelated to any of the lesson targets.

Component 2: Guides students on how to express their thoughts and ideas in written form.					
A	B	C	D	E	F
When needed, effectively uses probing and clarifying questions to guide students on how to express their ideas in writing.	Provides needed guidance to students on how to do their writing, but the information is not relevant.	Provides unneeded guidance to students on how to do their writing, but the information is relevant.	Does not guide students.	Guidance is not done well; students are left confused as to what they need to do because guidance was unfocused or unclear.	

Component 3: Provides examples for students to understand what they need to do.					
A	B	C	D	E	F
Shows and/or does an example with students to help them understand what is expected of them with an explanation and answering students' questions.	Shows and/or does an example with students to help them understand what is expected of them without an explanation but does answer students' questions.	Shows and/or does an example with students to help them understand what is expected of them with an explanation but does not answer students' questions.	Shows and/or does an example with students to help them understand what is expected of them without an explanation or answering students' questions.	Does not provide examples to students.	Shows and/or does an example with students but the process does not help students to know what they should do in the written assignment.

Component 4: Monitors students as they write.					
A	B	C	D	E	F
Throughout the student writing portion, monitors the students at intervals that allow the teacher to gauge how well students are doing and to assist.	During parts of the student writing portion, monitors the students at intervals that allow the teacher to gauge how well students are doing and to assist.	During the student writing portion, monitors the students at intervals that allow the teacher to gauge how well students are doing but does not assist.	During the student writing portion, monitors the students only to assist when brought to the teacher's attention.	Does not monitor students' writing.	Sits at the table and will look up from other work to look to check that students are working but does not gauge how well they are doing.

Component 5: Completes the written tasks in the allotted time.					
A	B	C	D	E	F
Uses the time to instruct students well, as well as accomplishes the task in the allotted time.	Uses the time to instruct students well, but goes over the allotted time.	Does not use the time well to instruct students, but does accomplish the task in the allotted time.	Does not use the time well to instruct students, and does not accomplish the task in the allotted time.	Does not use any time for the written task.	

APPENDIX B

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD EXEMPTION LETTER

EXEMPTION GRANTED

[Dale Baker](#)
 Division of Educational Leadership and Innovation - Tempe
 480/965-6067
 DALE.BAKER@asu.edu

Dear [Dale Baker](#):

On 5/17/2021 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Impressions of Academic Professionals on Using Education Journey Mapping as a Qualitative Research Method
Investigator:	Dale Baker
IRB ID:	STUDY00013904
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chinese Law for Human Subjects.pdf, Category: Off-site authorizations (school permission, other IRB approvals, Tribal permission etc); • interview protocol, Category: Recruitment materials/advertisements /verbal scripts/phone scripts; • IRB_protocol_05-05-2021.docx, Category: IRB Protocol; • recruitment_methods_email_letter_05-05-2021.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials; • recruitment_methods_short_consent_17-05-2021.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • school principal, Category: Off-site authorizations (school permission, other IRB approvals, Tribal permission etc); • supporting_document_employee_handbook_05-05-2021.pdf, Category: Off-site authorizations (school permission, other IRB approvals, Tribal permission etc);

The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (2) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation on 5/13/2021.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

If any changes are made to the study, the IRB must be notified at research.integrity@asu.edu to determine if additional reviews/approvals are required. Changes may include but not limited to revisions to data collection, survey and/or interview questions, and vulnerable populations, etc.

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc: Robby Robinette

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS FOR TEACHER KEY INFORMANTS

Initial Interview

Introduction

Thank you again for agreeing to participate in this study. In our earlier conversation, I gave you a form that detailed the reasons for this study and asked you to sign and return it to me. Do you have any questions about the contents of that form? Are you still okay with your continued participation? And, please, may I have your form(s) (if not already collected)?

Great! For this discussion, I will ask a series of questions related to your use of the innovation configurations. I want to learn what you thought about using them, as well as how you used them. I and the rest of the curriculum team are looking for ways we can support teachers to better engage with the curriculum and ensure our students are developing their literacy skills. The innovation configurations may be one tool that we will use.

Before we start, I want to remind you your participation is voluntary. Everything you say will remain confidential. It will not be shared with anyone in a way they will know what you said. If you wish for me not to use what you said at any time during or after this discussion, I will honor your wishes. This information is yours and I am grateful for your willingness to share it with me.

With your permission, I will be recording this discussion, which I will later transcribe. If you would like a copy of either, I would be happy to provide them. To ensure the anonymity of everyone involved, please do not use the names of any individuals in your responses, as well as the name of our organization. If you prefer our

discussion not to be recorded, that is fine as well. I, though, will take notes of what you said during and after our discussion. Do you have any questions before we start?

Okay, I will begin recording.

Interview Questions with Teacher Key Informants

1. Please tell me about your current position and how long you have been in that position.
2. Which configuration and component did you focus on for this week? Why?
3. How did you apply that configuration and component in your lesson?
4. What resulted from your implementation?
5. What do you next plan to do regarding that configuration and component?
6. I will use these follow-up questions with each key informant as needed:
 - ◆ What have you done to understand how to use the innovation configurations?
 - ◆ Who has helped you with your understanding?
 - ◆ How has your experience changed over the past week?
 - ◆ How has using the innovation configurations influenced your teaching?
 - ◆ What has affected your use of the innovation configurations?
 - ◆ What challenges have you noticed in using innovation configurations?
 - ◆ Is there something more you would like to add or would like to ask me?

Interview Wrap-up

That's everything I need. Thank you again for sharing your thoughts and experiences. I appreciate you taking the time to speak with me today. Again, this information is yours. I will be using what you said to help me understand whether we

should use the innovation configurations and how to make them better. I will use this information for my dissertation and maybe with other publications. If you are interested, I will send you the portions of what I write concerning your information before I submit it to ensure my representation of what you said is accurate. If you have any disagreements, please let me know and I will work with you to fix them.

If you don't have any additional questions, I will let you get back to your work. I will see you at our next scheduled discussion. If you do have questions or concerns later, please feel free to email or message me. I'm more than happy to talk to you about anything on your mind.

Cheers! Thanks again and have a great day.

Subsequent Interviews

Introduction

Here we are again! Thank you for your continued participation. As a reminder, I will be asking some questions to better understand how you have used the innovation configurations and how you've developed that understanding. Before we start, do you have any questions or concerns? Just a reminder, I will record this conversation with your permission. If you're ready, let's get started.

Interview Questions with Teacher Key Informants

1. Which configuration and component did you focus on for this week? Why?
2. How did you apply that configuration and component in your lesson?
3. What resulted from your implementation?
4. What do you next plan to do regarding that configuration and component?
5. I will use these follow-up questions with each key informant as needed:
 - ◆ What have you done to understand how to use the innovation configurations?
 - ◆ Who has helped you with your understanding?
 - ◆ How has your experience changed over the past week?
 - ◆ How has using the innovation configurations influenced your teaching?
 - ◆ What has affected your use of the innovation configurations?
 - ◆ What challenges have you noticed in using innovation configurations?
 - ◆ Is there something more you would like to add?

Interview Wrap-up

Thanks again for your continued participation! If you have any questions or concerns, please email or message me. Have a great rest of your day!

APPENDIX D

INNOVATION CONFIGURATIONS DATA COLLECTION TOOL

01. Innovation Configurations Map for the Use of Prior Knowledge in Reading Instruction (Teacher)

Prior Knowledge: The previous knowledge and experiences readers have acquired. Readers may use their prior knowledge to help them better understand and remember what is being read by making connections that are relevant and personal.

Component 1	Examples of Component	
Demonstrates how to make connections with prior knowledge.		
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation

Component 2	Examples of Component	
Provides opportunities for students to make connections.		
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation

Component 3	Examples of Component	
Encourages direct connections to the lesson's reading.		
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation

Component 4	Examples of Component	
Guides students to make appropriate direct connections.		
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation

02. Innovation Configurations Map for Vocabulary Instruction (Teacher)

Vocabulary Instruction: Vocabulary is taught explicitly through direct instruction and implicitly through indirect instruction. Students have opportunities to co-construct knowledge with the teacher and fellow students. Students are given opportunities to practice engagingly using the new vocabulary. Students actively use the new vocabulary throughout the lesson and across lessons in writing and orally. Through this process, students enhance their vocabulary and expand their ability to communicate using more precise and exact words in writing and orally.

Component 1	Examples of Component	
Directly instructs vocabulary to facilitate and guide students in understanding the meaning of targeted vocabulary.		
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation

Component 2	Examples of Component	
Encourages students to co-construct their understanding of non-targeted, but novel (i.e., key), words throughout a lesson.		
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation

Component 3	Examples of Component	
Judiciously selects words in the reading that are important to understand the text and not all unknown words.		
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation

Component 4	Examples of Component	
Guides students to build connections among related words.		
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation

Component 5	Examples of Component	
Provides opportunities for students to practice vocabulary appropriately.		
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation

Component 6	Examples of Component	
Promotes the use and review of new vocabulary throughout the lesson and across lessons in writing and orally.		
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation

Component 7	Examples of Component	
Efficiently instructs students in the allotted time for vocabulary instruction.		
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation

03. Innovation Configurations Map for Reading Skills and Strategies Instruction (Teacher)

Reading Skills: The automatic and routine actions readers take to comprehend a text while reading. Many times, skills began as reading strategies. Strategies become skills through the process of automaticity were sustained and guided practice transitions to unconscious use and selection of appropriate skills over the years.

Reading Strategies: The effortful actions readers take to think about, understand, and remember a text. Strategies over time may become reading skills through continued and sustained practice. Direct instruction on what, how, when, and why to use these strategies are important for young readers to begin to internalize how to use reading strategies effectively.

Component 1	Examples of Component	
Provides direct instruction for students on the meaning of the terms used.		
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation

Component 2	Examples of Component	
Provides direct instruction for students on how to use the target reading skill or strategy.		
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation

Component 3	Examples of Component	
Guides students on how to use the target reading skills or strategy.		
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation

Component 4	Examples of Component	
Checks to see whether students are applying the target reading skill or strategy well.		
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation

Component 5	Examples of Component	
Provides students controlled and applied opportunities to practice the target reading skill or strategy throughout the lesson.		
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation

Component 6	Examples of Component	
Reviews previously taught reading skills and strategies.		
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation

Component 7	Examples of Component	
Efficiently instructs students in the allotted time for the instruction or reading skills and strategies.		
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation

04. Innovation Configurations Map for Reading Comprehension Instruction (Teacher)

Reading Comprehension: After having read a text, the reader can understand the author’s purpose and the main idea of the text. They can summarize the information learned. They are also able to synthesize the information with prior knowledge.

Component 1	Examples of Component	
Provides opportunities for students to read the target text multiple times in a variety of ways.		
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation

Component 2	Examples of Component	
Strategically asks questions during the reading that enhances knowledge and comprehension building.		
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation

Component 3	Examples of Component	
Facilitates students building their ability to think about the text.		
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation

Component 4	Examples of Component	
Guides students to use reading skills and strategies to help build their comprehension.		
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation

Component 5	Examples of Component	
Effectively uses the allotted time for students to build their understanding of the text.		
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation

05. Innovation Configurations Map for Class Discussion Facilitation (Teacher)

Class Discussion: Active engagement of the target text for students to co-construct knowledge and to gain a deeper understanding of the author’s purpose in writing the text, the main idea, and personal and collective takeaways.

Component 1	Examples of Component	
Establishes an engaging environment for the class discussion.		
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation

Component 2	Examples of Component	
Uses guiding questions and prompts to facilitate the discussion.		
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation

Component 3	Examples of Component	
Encourages active participation of all students that is appropriate.		
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation

Component 4	Examples of Component	
Encourages students to co-create knowledge through discussion amongst each other.		
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation

Component 5	Examples of Component	
Encourages students to make connections with themselves and the world critically and express their ideas in discussion.		
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation

Component 6	Examples of Component	
Guides students to practice active listening.		
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation

Component 7	Examples of Component	
Encourages students to ask questions.		
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation

Component 8	Examples of Component	
Guides students to use evidence to support their discussion input.		
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation

Component 9	Examples of Component	
Encourages students to support each other during the discussion with positive and constructive responses.		
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation

06. Innovation Configurations Map for Writing Instruction (Teacher)

Written Expression: Using the written form to reflect on and express understanding of the targets of the lesson. Guiding students to develop their ability to put their ideas onto paper in an organized and logical way that reflects their unique thinking.

Component 1	Examples of Component	
Provides opportunities for students to express their thoughts and ideas in written form.		
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation

Component 2	Examples of Component	
Guides students on how to express their thoughts and ideas in written form.		
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation

Component 3	Examples of Component	
Provides examples for students to understand what they need to do.		
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation

Component 4	Examples of Component	
Monitors students as they write.		
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation

Component 5	Examples of Component	
Completes the written tasks in the allotted time.		
	Variation	Reasoning for Assessed Variation