Florida's Adolescent Literacy Policy: An Alternative Reading and Response

Diane Kroeger
University of South Florida

Florida's Adolescent Literacy Policy: An Alternative Reading and Response

by

Diane C. Kroeger

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosopy
Department of Childhood Education and Literacy Studies
College of Education
University of South Florida

Co-Major Professor: Danielle V. Dennis, Ph.D.
Co-Major Professor: Jenifer J. Schneider, Ph.D.
James R. King, Ed.D.
J. Edwin Benton, Ph.D.

Date of Approval:
November 12, 2010

Keywords: literacy, reading, adolescent, policy, assessment

Dedication

There are several loved

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to the members of my doctoral committee whose expertise, mentorship and advice helped strengthen this work. In particular, I am grateful for the support of Danielle Dennis and Jenifer Schneider who guided me through the research and writing process with a perfect sense of the “enabling constraints” needed to help me move this project toward completion.

Secondly, I want to thank the public officials and agency leaders who contributed to this study. Public service places an individual in a precarious position. It affords the possibility of directing policy while at the same time opening one up to critique. I admire the fortitude of each and every person who takes this risk in order to strengthen the quality of education for Florida’s students.

Finally, I owe a debt of gratitude to Lisa Adkins. Her technical support has been most appreciated as I navigated the final weeks of the university’s submission requirements.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Abstract

In this qualitative case study, I constructed interpretations of the meanings conveyed by state-level discourse communities as they were manifested in the primary licy. Meanings (or values, beliefs and feelings) are highly tacit understandings embedded in the language, actions and objects of policy (Yanow, 2000), and are conveyed through informal and formal speech (Bakhtin, 1986). Results revealed (a) state policy meanings convey multiple versions of literacy with a heavy focus on receptive aspects of literate practice

Chapter I: Introduction

Policy influences practice. Government-sanctioned policy messages shape ideology, discourse, resource allocation and subsequently, the cognition, experience and practice of the implementing agents and their clients (Edmondson, 2000; McDonnell, 2009; Stevens, 2003; Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002; Yanow, 2000). Policy artifacts (language, objects and actions) provide a framework and support for enhancing practice, but when ill-designed, they can create incompetence or other counter-consequences (Cohen, Moffit, & Goldin, 2007; Mintrop & Sunderman, 2009; Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002). Whatever the result, policy, from conception to legitimation, administration, and implementation, i, ,-19(n)20(,)a4(t)- and inintergovernmental system, it is interpreted,

sense-making efforts (Coburn, 2001; Franzak, 2006). As in Roweôs (2004) ñco-constructedò adaptation of Bakhtinôs (1986) utterance linkages, the ways practitioners respond to policy informs subsequent policy responses. Practice influences policy.

Problem Statement: The Education Policy-Practice Dilemma

While it is common to configure practice and policy as polar opposites, as in the tension-filled ñus-themò paradigm documented by Atkinson (2002), the two actually rely upon one another. Along with a host of external factors, social policy and practice exist more as a co-constructed, ecological relationship (Davis & Sumara, 2006; Schneider, & Ingram, 1997; Stevens & Wikstrom, 2007; Valencia & Wixson, 2004; Weaver-Hightower, 2008). What appears to help fuel the tension in this dynamic relationship is a propensity to underestimate the complexities embedded in and surrounding the micro-macro configuration. In the education sector, this tendency is most noticeable in terms of the primary functions of schooling: *teaching and learning* (Cohen, Mofit & Goldin, 2007; Elmore & McLaughlin, 1988).

Historically, education policy has made substantive progress in building and sustaining a bureaucratic stronghold via policy designs that utilize instruments such as resource allocation and regulatory mandates (Callahan, 1964; E.oc, as

(Cohan, MoMofifider, &Goldin, 2007:181 calend vie & Wixson, 1988) rr

summing up this perplexing dilemma over twenty years ago, Milbrey McLaughlin explained: ñpolicy at best can enable outcomes but in the final analysis it cannot mandate what mattersò (McLaughlin, 1987, p. 173). And, while some progress has been made since then with respect to understanding the complexities of education policy design and implementation (Honig, 2009; Joyce & Showers, 2002; Valencia & Wixson, 2004; Weaver-Hightower, 2008), this conundrum is still at the crux of education policy and practice today (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Cohen, Moffitt, & Goldin, 2007). For this reason, some have called for policy research that links the macro and micro levels of the education endeavor (Darling-Hammond, 1990; Franzak, 2006; Valencia & Wixson, 2000).

Yet, policy cannot and does not wait for research, especially in ñurgentò situations (Lindblom, 2005; Lindblom & Woodhouse, 1993; Shanahan, 2005). And, occasionally, policy operates in *spite* of research (Cross, 2004; Jimerson, et al., 2006). Driven by a discourse of crisis, policy actors have recently turned their attention to a particular aspect of teaching and learning: *adolescent literacy* (Christie, 2008; Jacobs, 2008; Moore, 2009; Stevens, 2008). Stirred by stagnating standardized test scores, mediocre international comparisons, a persistent achievement gap, disengaged learners, and dismal high school drop-

2007, 2008; Berman, 2008; Snow, Martin, & Berman, 2008; see also Torgesen, et al., 2007).

Purpose of the Study

This research focuses on Floridaôs response to concerns about literacy teaching and learning at the secondary level. Based on the assumption that policy meanings are culturally situated and multivocal (Marshall, Mitchell & Wirt, 1989; Yanow, 2000), the purpose of this qualitative case study was to construct interpretations of the values, beliefs and feelings conveyed by state-level discourse communities as they were manifested in the primary and secondary speech genres of Floridaôs adolescent literacy policy (Bakhtin, 1986; Yanow, 2000). Supported by the results, and guided by complexity thinking, I proposed a model for reconfiguring Floridaôs approach to reform (Davis & Sumara, 2006; Stevens, 2006).

More specifically, I isolated the explicit and implicit meanings state policy actors conveyed about adolescent literacy through the language, actions and objects (Yanow, 2000) of policy reform. Because adolescent literacy policy is disseminated to local education agencies and ultimately teachers and students through both informal primary speech as well as more complex, secondary speech (Bakhtin, 1986), I used this framework to structure my analysis. Once these key assumptions and structures were identified, I reconfigured them in terms of the conditions under which complex systems flourish, with an emphasis on adolescent literacy teaching and learning (Davis & Sumara, 2006; Morrison, 2008; Stevens, 2006). The unit of analysis, then, was the design of Floridaôs secondary literacy policy, or the mechanisms created and disseminated by state level policy actors for implementation at the school level. Stated differently, this study

was situated at the macro, or state level, but conceptually, it was concerned with the micro, or classroom level. In this sense, it is policy research with a ñpedagogical eye.ò (Darling-Hammond, 1990, p. 340).

In particular, I was interested in complexity thinking, and the idea that highly complex systems ñlearn,ò or constantly adapt to their environment by operating within the parameters of proscribed (as opposed to prescribed) conditions (Davis & Sumara, 2006; Davis, Sumara, & Luce-Kapler, 2008). Complex systems are scale-free, meaning they are comprised of parts that resemble the system attion>BDC[(t)te ating within

Because I was interested in the qualities of the artifacts that house government-sanctioned meanings about adolescent literacy, I conducted a qualitative case study in order to construct interpretations of state level policy actorsô values, beliefs and feelings about adolescent literacy reform vis a vis adolescent literacy policy (Dyson & Genishi, 2005; Yanow, 2000). As a framework for data collection and analysis, I used Yanowôs (1996, 2000) interpretive policy analysis (IPA).

Anchored by the premise that a policyôs meaning is ambiguous and multivocal, IPA is particularly well-suited for a study of the policy-practice of Floridaôs adolescent literacy policy design. Yanow describes three dimensions of human meaning making: values (logos), feelings (pathos), and beliefs (ethos). These abstract, tacitly held dimensions of meaning are manifested more concretely in the language, actions and objects of human interaction (Yanow, 2000, p. 15). And, across the various communities of a system at large, these dimensions filter policy actorsô interpretations as they make sense of policy (Cohen, Mofit & Goldin, 2007; Yanow, 2000). In this case, I was interested in the values, feelings and beliefs of a relatively small subset of policy actors who exert a heavy influence on the design of Floridaôs adolescent literacy reform (Song & Young, 2008). Along with others (Agnello, 2001; Edmondson, 2002, 2004; Peters, 2007), Yanow (2000) highlights the need to ask alternative questions of policy that step away from the realm of functional analysis (e.g., cost-benefit or decision studies) and engage in questioning that explores the meanings that under gird policy as they are conveyed by different communities of practice.

Rationale

Because this study addresses both system-wide and local concerns about adolescent literacy reform, the rationale for this study was multifaceted. Theoretically, it reaches across educational research domains, answering the call for policy studies, especially those informed by both literacy and policy expertise (Valencia & Wixson, 2004). In practical terms, this study addresses concerns about policy efficacy on both normative and functional grounds.

Crossing the domain divide. Education policy researchers have cited the need for the analysis of policy designs as they relate to teaching and learning (Elmore & Mc

understandingsò of literacy or policy, depending on the researcherôs orientation (Valencia and Wixson, 2000, p. 929). This dearth of literacy-informed policy research along with a persistent academic disconnect across domains is problematic, especially as it relates to education reform designed for struggling students who have been marginalized by the system (Alvermann, 2002; Franzak, 2006; McDonnell, 2009).

This study addresses the paucity of literacy policy research. Because it is concerned with the quality of policy design and implementation, this inquiry is an examination of Floridaôs policy from an *organizational* approach (Floden, 2007). Although it falls within the domain of policy research, unlike many policy-oriented studies, this study is infused with research-based knowledge about adolescent literacy teaching and learning. In other words, this study has the potential to strengthen organizational robustness and efficiency (Davis & Sumara, 2006) because it is augmented by discipline-based knowledge about the end-users of adolescent literacy policy (i.e., students and teachers). End-users are those who, according to Stevens (2006, p. 304), either ñtake up, modify, reject, alter, ignore, overlook, put on pedestals or vilifyò the government directives intended to strengthen learning.

This study was conducted by way of an emic (Patton, 2002) researcher perspective; one based on my own advanced graduate studies, doctoral research, K-12 and university teaching experience (all of which have been focused on literacy). This perspective served as an ideological counter-weight to the policy authority embedded in policy artifacts. Thus, this study is neither policy research from a literacy perspective, nor literacy research with a policy perspective: It is an amalgamation of discipline-based knowledge and policy expertise called for by Valencia and Wixson (2000; 2004).

scripts (Dorn, 2007; Peters, 2007, see also Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Additionally, it is common for states to adopt policy designs from other states in a process called policy innovation diffusion (see, for example, Cohen-Vogel & McLendon, 2009). Citing the lack of previously existing policies specific to adolescent literacy, Franzak (2006) and Stevens (2006) urge caution as new policy responses are crafted. Like Elmore and McLaughlin (1988), they advise that the present time is a critical opportunity to engage *thoughtfully* about roles: of policy, teachers, and young people as they relate to adolescent literacy.

This research provides an alternative reading *and* response to Floridaôs current adolescent literacy reform policy. The study is a systematic analysis of the government-sanctioned meanings housed in adolescent literacy artifacts. It is also a proposal for reconceptualizing policy as a method for leveraging complexity at both the macro and micro levels of teaching and learning. Thus, the justification for examining Floridaôs adolescent literacy policy is warranted on both *functional* and *normative* grounds as advised by social scientist Max Weber

Wirt, 1989; Peters, 2007; Weaver-Hightower, 2008). These complexities are driven by both external and

Complexity thinking (Davis, & Sumara, 2006) offers a relatively new way to conceptualize education policy design and implementation (Honig, 2009; Mason, 2008; Stevens, 2006; Weaver

varied responseò (Davis & Sumara, 2006, p. 148). In a viable complex education system, local variab

Discourse Community- a group of people who ñengage in é similar acts,ò employ ñsimilar cognitive mechanisms,ò and ñuse é similar language to talk about thought or actionò (Yanow, 2000, p. 10).

Enabling Constraints- a complexity thinking condition necessary for individual and system-wide learning (or emergence, or adaptation to the environment), which consists of proscribed guidelines that provide ñsufficient coherence to orient agentsô actions and sufficient randomness to allow for flexible and varied responseò (Davis & Sumara, 2006, p. 148).

Literacy- Literacy encompasses the practices of reading, writing, speaking, viewing and listening as they are socially-situated and driven. I draw from the work of Moje (1996) and Alvermann (2002) to formulate this definition of literacy, which acknowledges, but goes beyond the boundaries of traditional school literacy. This perspective acknowledges the ever-evolving nature of literacy as well as the subtle and not-so-subtle variances across contexts and disciplinary domains at any given point in time.

Marginalized Adolescent Literacy Learner-I adapted this term from Franzakôs ñMarginalized Reader;ò a student who experiences ñdifficulty with school-based literacy, for a variety of reasonsò (2006, p. 211). I worked under the assumption that a marginalized literacy learner frequently struggles with and is disengaged from academic literacy (see above). These students are also often at risk of becoming school drop outs, either figuratively or literally. Like Franzak, I too acknowledged that my use of this term is socially constructed and it frames adolescents in terms of my own interpretations of schooling (Franzak, 2006, p. 212).

one who influences adolescent literacy policy through a tertiary group such as research or support organizations, foundations, or advocacy groups.

Policy Goals-Goals, along with targets and tools (below), comprise the three elements of a given policy design (Honig, 2009). Policy goals are the implicit and explicit purposes of the policy. Subsumed within a policyôs purposes is the overall scope, or breadth of change, and its ambitiousness, or depth of change, as it relates to adolescent literacy.

Policy-Practice Configuration- This term is adapted from Elmore and McLaughlin (1988), who describe policy, practice and administration as interacting spheres. It is important to stress, however, that the lines between these spheres are ambiguous. For example, a local administrator acts simultaneously as practitioner *and* policy maker as she both receives and initiates policy directives (Cohen, Mofit & Goldin, 2007). For the purposes of this study of state adolescent literacy policy, the policy-practice configuration is conceptualized as a systemic relationship of policy makers, administrators and teachers whose community of practice (Yanow, 2000) and relative influence spans to varying degrees within and across state and local levels.

Policy Research-Although the research method I used carries the moniker of interpretive policy *analysis*, I considered this study to fall within the domain of policy *research*. Policy research is related to, but distinct from the term policy analysis. As discussed by Weimer (2009) and Weimer and Vining (2005), policy research is directed toward policy actors as well as members of the disciplinary research community and is a means through which the ñextent and nature of a condition that may be worthy of public attentionò is examined (Weimer, 2009, p. 93). Policy analysis, on the other hand, is

ñclient-oriented advice relevant to public decisions,ò and is aimed at a specific person or institution, such as legislative committee members (Weimer and Vining, 2005, p. 25). While some writers use the terms interchangeably, loosely describing policy study in general as ñanalysis,ò in this study I restrict my use to ñpolicy researchò in order to demarcate it from policy analysis in the ñcanonicalò sense, which typically is understood to generate economically oriented cost-benefit studies commissioned by particular clients

Policy Targets-These are the individuals on whom a policy is focused (Valencia & Wixson, 2004); that is, the ones who are ñspecifically named in policy designs as essential to achieving policy goalsò (Honig 2009, p. 336). In this case, it is assumed these individuals are the practitioners and students at the local school level.

Policy Tools-These are the mechanisms through which government conveys policy to those who are to deliver the policy. For the purposes of this study, these tools are mandates, incentives, system changes, capacity building initiatives and symbolic or hortatory language (this last tool is also called moral suasion by Peters, 2007) (Schneider & Ingraham, 1990; McDonnell & Elmore, 1987).

Primary and Secondary Speech Genres- Bakhtin (1986) used the terms primary and secondary as anchors in the continuum of speech genres. Primary speech is simple

research is the ñthoughtful extrapolationsò and connections stakeholders from other states may make to glean lessons and ñpotential applicationsò across various state boundaries (Patton, 2002, p. 584). Thus, *transferability,* a Constructivist analogy to the traditional notion of generalizability (Lincoln and Guba, cited in Patton, 2002), was indeed a strength of this research.

Finally, I mention four assumptions that under gird this research. I took it as a given that a primary source of the tension in the policy-practice configuration stems from an inequitable distribution of knowledge in relation to the system at large. Second, I made the assumption that the aims of literacy education stretch beyond the scope of economic productivity to include humanistic benefits (see Schoenfeld, & Pearson, 2009 and Pasco County FL, 2002). Third, although others have questioned the validity of educational crisis language (e.g., Berliner & Biddle, 1995), I did not question it here. This is because I wanted to work from the supposition that there are indeed weaknesses in secondary literacy teaching and learning (although perhaps not of the type implied by the prevailing discourse of crisis). Last, because this research is policy analysis from an *organizational* rather than from a critical perspective (Floden, 2007) I worked from the assumption that the primary intent of both policy makers and practitioners is to improve the quality of teaching and learning for all students toward these ends.

Chapter II: Review of Related Literature

In this case study I construct an interpretation of the values, beliefs and feelings held by state level discourse communities as they are housed in the primary and secondary speech genres of Floridaôs adolescent literacy policy artifacts. Based on the results, I will use complexity thinking to propose a model for reconfiguring this stateôs approach to reform at both the macro and the micro levels. I will be guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the nature of the values, beliefs and feelings about adolescent literacy conveyed by state-level discourse communities as these meanings are manifested across the primary and secondary speech genres of Floridaôs adolescent literacy reform policy?
2. How can Floridaôs adolescent literacy reform policy be reconceptualized using complexity thinking
   (a) as a method for policy design?
   (b) as a goal for adolescent literacy teaching and learning?

The term *discourse community* is a group of people who ñengage in é similar acts,ò employ ñsimilar cognitive mechanisms,ò and ñuse é similar language to talk about thought or actionò (Yanow, 2000, p. 10). *Primary* and *secondary speech genres* refer respectively to informal, everyday speech and formal, more abstract speech (often in the form of written text. Each of these terms is discussed in depth in other parts of this chapter and the next.

In order to anchor my data collection, analysis and p

the industrial era on public education, whereby inquiry drew heavily on scientific efficiency and a top-down, centralized and hierarchically imposed framework of order and control (Callahan, 1964; Tyack, 1974). Relying heavily on scientific determinism, theories of complicated systems are based on the notion that a system is *reducible*

Additionally, members of complex systems interrelate locally, or across short-range spaces. They self-organize and operate, both individually and as a group, in a dynamic and open exchange with the environment (Davis & Sumara, 2006). Due to this constant interaction within and across their surroundings, complex forms are never static; rather,

Carstens and Beck (2005, p. 24) for example, explain the conditions that promote workplace learning for young adults from this generation. They include opportunities for trial and error, avoidance of ñformalò instruction, an interest in learning from peers rather than authority, the seeking of information only when it is authentically needed, risk-taking within a safe environment, and task relevance. Many of these features of instruction are not evidenced in traditional classrooms today (Gee, 2004). Could it be that the adolescent literacy crisis is the result of tipping point such as the shift in learning preferences of students? If there is indeed an ecological explanation for the crisis, the complexity thinking notion of enabling constraints may provide a useful way to reconfigure our approach to adolescent literacy teaching and learning policy.

Enabling constraints. The paradox of random coherence, as described by Stevens

As a condition necessary for a complex emergence, the virtues of enabling constraints apply both to the system at large as well as to its nested sub-groupings. Put simply, enabling constraints apply to the individual classroom level as well as throughout the policy-practice ecology. For instance, according to Stevens (2006, p. 305), participantsô self-organization prompts a learning context that cannot be remotely ñpredetermined or statically relegatedò by a distant policy makerôs purposes. By sheer necessity, it is the local participants who ñcraft, erase, recraft, and modify such purposes.ò Morrison (2008, p. 22) puts it more succinctly: ñOrder is not imposed; it emerges.ò In the following discussion, I explicate the applicability of enabling constraints as guide for teaching and learning as well as for policy design.

***Enabling constraints for teaching and learning*.** The condition of enabling constraints is a adjective-noun combination which describes a setting or condition

viable.ò They dictate the margins, not the content of agentsô behaviors. Davis and Sumara posit, for instance, that in any new class grouping, students and teachers are constantly ñnegotiating social positioning, establishing group norms, and inscribing a collective identityò (p. 146). In addition to explicit behavioral boundaries provided by individuals, groups and the setting, these tacit understandings form the very basis for individual and group emergence.

Importantly, however, the physical and conceptual boundaries of complex

When the dual conditions of contextual noise and open rules are in place, learning is allowed to occur at the group level as well as at the individual level. And, as in a symbiotic relationship, diversified individual growth stimulates productive collective growth.

> The successful collective is not just more intelligent than the smartest of its members, it also presents occasions for all of the participants to be smarter--that is, to be capable of actions, interpretations, and conclusions that they wouldnôt typically achieve on their own. (Davis, Sumara, & Luce-Kapler, 2008, p. 192).

Here, it is important to note that in a classroom, the teacher is considered as a group participant. This perspective of group learning recognizes the tension between student-centered and teacher-centered learning approaches (Davis & Sumara, 2006), because, like a camera lens that zooms in and out, the focus is simultaneously on individual *and* group emergence.

The interplay between individual and group learning points to a frequently cited mantra: ñone size does *not* fit all.ò Random coherence imposes a balance between the chaotic and the fixed, so there is adequate room for local diversity, flexibility, creativity and individual response. In curricular terms, as Davis and Sumara (2006, pp. 148-149) explain, this is ñnot a matter of everyone does the same thing,ô nor óeveryone does their own thing,ô but of óeveryone participates in a joint project.ôò

***Enabling constraints for policy making*.** Because complex systems are scale-free, the same applications can be made at the policy level. Obviously, state policy actors must operate within certain constraints, such as resource levels and election cycles that bring ideological changes in policy foci, and a milieu literally filled with multiple viewpoints

for synergy, divergence and creativity. This approach to p0( )f[3cugys

Two other concerns arise. Morrison (2008) notes that several of the characteristics of complexity already exist in educational nomenclature (and I would add policy-making as well). For example, control, learning, emergence, creativity, feedback, and diversity are all typical features of educational policy-practice discourse. Also, a relatively new term, ñnon-negotiables,ò is an administrative policy actorsô expression for those

interactions as highly situated, ñspontaneousò and ñfickle.ò And, it is precisely this tacit and extremely variable practitioner knowledge that adds local value to the resources and regulatory frameworks provided by the government (Allington, 2002; Elmore & McLaughlin, 1988).

From a policy perspective, teachers also may possess limited knowledge, which can result in distortions of policy goals designed to strengthen teaching and learning. Many have documented situations where practitioners modify or misapply instructional policy, whether intentionally or unintentionally, to the detriment of student learning (Dennis, 2008; Franzak, 2008; Kragler, Martin & Kroeger, 2008; McGill-Franzen, 2000). This misapplication of policy can occur due to limited knowledge about subject matter, ineffective pedagogical practices, beliefs, or other circumstantial factors (Valencia & Wixson, 2004). However, it must be noted that policies can also become the catalyst for practitioner incompetence when their designs are overly ambitious or when they provide inadequate implementation support (Cohen, Moffit, & Goldin, 2007; Dorn, 2007; Franzak, 2008; Hinchman & Zalewski, 1996). These findings indicate the need for a balance between overly prescriptive policy solutions and highly vague policy goals (Davis & Sumara, 2006; Stevens, 2006).

Rather than a broad, macro-view of the public education endeavor, practitioners have a laser-like focus and knowledge of the specific clients with whom they work. From this position, ñfront-line professionalsò (Knapp, Bamburg, & Ferguson, 1998) hold a limited and sometimes ambivalent view of the multi-district trends and patterns so fundamental to the goals of state policy makers and administrators (Stevens, 2006). Peters (2007, p. 109) notes that practitioners who work especially with marginalized

clients are often prone to identify and empathize with particular individuals, resulting in ñdevotion to a perceived missionò that can differ from broader goals intended by legislative and executive policy. This phenomenon is taken up by Faulkner (2005), who describes a ñback to basicsò teacher whose rigid and narrow interpretation of the writing needs of her struggling student inadvertently reinforced his own dismal assessment of his ability to be successful in school. Similarly, teachers, due to a lack of knowledge about their students, can create learning environments that actually hinder the intellectual growth of the very individuals they are intended to support (Franzak, 2008; Langer, 2004; Moje, et al., 2004).

The work of others suggests the limited impact of policy on teaching and learning may be partially a result of the deficit stance typical of policy formulation and administration. Using the language of crisis, policy entrepreneurs (advocates) propel a public problem to the forefront of the legislative agenda (Edmondson, 2000; Franzak, 2006; Kingdon, 2003; Stevens, 2008; Peters, 2007). Buoyed perhaps by ñpunctuated equilibrium,ò or ñspasmsò of activity occurring periodically across longer spans of stasis and/or gridlock (Kingdon, 2003, p. 226; see also Cohen-Vogel, & McLendon, 2009), the discourse of crisis spawns a surge of activity throughout government levels. This symbolic language enables interested parties to generate a ñcrisis mentality,ò pushing the response into a multi-layer and, for some, a politically expedient effort to eradicate an invading force (Cohen-Vogel, & McLendon, 2009; Cross, 2004; Schneider & Ingram, 1990). The response is often highly prescriptive (Davis & Sumara, 2006), and often irrespective of the solutionôs feasibility (Stone, 2002), appropriateness (Gee, 2004; Sharkansky, 2002), or negative effects (Schneider & Ingram, 1990).

For example, the powerful juxtaposition of Americaôs NAEP scores and those of other, higher-scoring nations paints a compelling image of national slippage in global economic position (Allington, 2002; Blanton, & Wood, 2009; Moore, 2009). Bolstered in part by this image of economic failure, as well as due to other, more humanistic concerns (Schoenfeld, & Pearson, 2009), various policy entrepreneurs have succeeded in bringing adolescent literacy to the forefront of the education policy agenda (Cohen-Vogel, & McLendon, 2009; Kingdon, 2003) in order to address the crisis.

Essentially blaming the policy targets (Chapin,1995), in this case what appears to be students and teachers (Alvermann, 2002; Franzak, 2006; Stevens, 2003), a deficit stance taken before and during policy design ignores the strengths of the local level, and frames teachers simply as policy conduits, who are positioned as lacking capacity and/or will (Elmore & McLaughlin, 1988; Franzak, 2006; Smit, 2005), and students who are seen as struggling or who are disengaged only in terms of the inadequacies they bring to school-sanctioned literacy practices (Alvernann, 2002; Dennis, 2008; Gee, 2004; Franzak, 2006, 2008; Mahar, 2001; Moje, 2002). Guided by these assumptions, policy designs utilize instruments that often result in highly prescriptive, yet ephemeral solutions, which come and go without making any appreciable impact (Allington, 2002; Alvermann, 2002; Elmore & McLaughlin, 1988; Franzak, 2006).

Equally troublesome is the appearance that deficit-driven policy responses spawn additional problems (Dorn, 2007; Gerstl-Pepin, & Woodside-Jiron, 2005; McLaughlin, 1987) or encourage perverse incentives; a superficial form of compliance that simultaneously mitigates the overall effectiveness of policy impact (Dorn, 2007; McGill-Franzen & Allington, 1993; Mintrop & Sunderman, 2009; Preskill & Catsambas, 2006;

Stone, 2002). Additionally, policy based on negative sanctions violates core professional teaching norms (Gerstl-Pepin & Woodside-Jiron, 2005; Mintrop & Sunderman, 2009). This in turn results in practitioner alienation (Brooks, Hughes, & Brooks, 2008). Finally, when a policy issue is approached through a deficit rather than an asset-driven stance, the unique strengths and resources specific to the local level are not officially acknowledged, included or leveraged as a way to add value to policy (Chapin, 1995; Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005; Gerstl-Pepin & Woodside-Jiron, 2005).

Adolescent literacy. In this section of the literature review, I turn to the heart of this study: adolescent literacy. While the meaning of this term is still emerging (Bean & Readence, 2002; Draper, 2002; Franzak, 2006; Moje, Overby, Tysvaer, & Morris, 2008; Stevens, 2006), most interested parties would agree that adolescent literacy encompasses the socio-cultural nature of communication amongst adolescents and reaches more deeply and stretches more broadly than early literacy and traditional conceptions of secondary school literacy (Alvermann, 2002; Moje, 2002).

early adolescent readers generally begin to use their literacy skills to a) attain content knowledge and b) perform certain tasks related to schooling, such as project work or laboratory experiments (Moore, Readence, & Rickelman, 1983). This emphasis on subject-related reading and writing continues throughout the m1 108.05 tescgenator td wrs gsa subjhoolicrl

Moore, Readence and Rickelman (1983) report renewed attention to content area reading in the 1970ôs with the advent of the cognitive psychology revolution and the publication of Herberôs (1970) *Teaching Reading in the Content Areas*. In their review, these authors identified five long-standing ñissuesò concerning the teaching and learning of content-related reading. Most of these concerns centered on instructional matters: locus of instruction (reading teacher or content teacher), subject-area demands, study-skills and reading materials. Only one of these issues was related to the students themselves. However, even this component of content area reading seemed to be a surface concern, as it focused on defining the ages at which content area reading was of import. In relation to this issue, the authors cautioned their audience that content area reading was not just a concern associated with secondary students (see also Draper, 2008; Jacobs, 2008). In their brief historical account of adolescent literacy, however, Bean and Harper (2009, p. 40) keep the focus of the content area literacy discussion on ñteenagers.ò

In the late 1990ôs, a post-modern, socio-cultural shift in conceptions of both literacy (Alvermann, 2002; Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, & Cammack, 2006; New London Group, 1996; Street, 2005) and adolescence (Bean & Harper, 2009) prompted a conceptual move from content area reading to what is currently known as adolescent literacy. According to Bean and colleagues (Bean & Harper, 2009; Bean & Readence, 2002), Donna Alvermann and others solidified the shift via two primary events, which propelled adolescent literacy to the forefront of the literacy research agenda: a) the establishment in 1997 of the International Reading Associationôs Commission on Adolescent Literacy and b) the 1998 publication of *Reconceptualizing the Literacies in Adolescents' Lives* (Alvermann, Hinchman, Moore, Phelps, & Waff, 2006).

Since then, numerous voices have joined the initial call for policy attention to literacy instruction and literacy learning of adolescents (Bean & Readence, 2002; Biancarosa & Snow, 2004; Franzak, 2006; Ivey, 1999; Kamil, 2003; Moje, 1996; National Council of Teachers of English, 2006). As in earlier conversations related to content area literacy at the secondary level, a review of the current adolescent literacy literature reveals various foci. Now, however, there appears to be an additional locus of

of the interaction of literacy and the content-driven discourse of teacher educators. Although my concern in this study is with teaching and learning, I wanted to narrow my focus to research related to adolescents themselves; the direct recipients of education policy.

Commensurate with the conception of language and literacy as a social construction, the vast majority of adolescent literacy research is qualitative in order to capture the socially-situated nature of literacy as it occurs in a natural context. In general, the review suggests the failure of current policy (Cohen, Moffit & Goldin, 2007) to affect the teaching and learning of adolescents is related to two overarching findings: The first appears to be an autonomous and decontextualized approach to literacy instruction (Gee, 2004; Street, 2005). The second finding is the system-wide neglect of adolescentsô agency and identity, both on an individual and collective basis (see, for example, Moore & Cunningham, 2006). Within and across these two major findings, four sub categories emerged from the literature: In-School/Out-of-School Literacies, Adolescentsô Values, Adolescentsô Social Nature, and Multiliteracies. Usually, more than one of these themes was woven throughout any given study. In particular, the influence of adolescentsô out-of

thinking can be applied to the findings. At the end of each subcategory, I address these connections to complexity thinking.

In-school/out-of-school literacies. It appears that a major contribution to the understanding of adolescent literacy is the acknowledgement of literate practices not in sync with the traditional views of literacy that depend on ñpage-bound, official, standard forms of the national languageò (The New London Group, 1996, p. 1). In the findings and

social navigations an African American adolescent orchestrated in order to fit in at a virtually all-white middle school.

Regardless of how it is labeled, the question is whether or not this rich, individual and often highly applicable knowledge is invited in to school-sanctioned literacy practices. Moje, Overby, Tysvaer and Morris (2008) found that it was not. In their qualitative study of 30 Latino/a adolescents from working class or low income homes, this research team described the science-related knowledge emanating from studentsô out-of-school lives. (For instance, in an after school focus group interview, one student revealed the impact of water use on her fatherôs work as a landscaper, which directly related to her classroom study of environmental issues). What emerged from the observations, surveys, interviews and document analysis was the fact that students used many funds of knowledge and Discourses, but primarily outside of the school setting; they rarely displayed their everyday knowledge in class. Instead, they made these connections in private, or in ways they felt were strategic, and in line with tacitly governed institutional constraints. In general, their first space literacies seemed not to be privileged by the school-sanctioned, second space literacies. Similarly, in compelling accounts of marginalized studentsô struggles with rigid English Language/Arts policies, Faulkner (2005) and Franzak (2008) document the resignation, disengagement, disdain, and superficiality by which students responded to classroom requirements that ignored their personal knowledge, interests and literate strengths. In both studies, the outcome resulted in these studentsô further marginalization by the institutional culture.

On the other hand, Maher (2001, p. 201) in an ethnographic study of marginalized seventh graders found that when she provided openings for students to read, write and

Young, Green, and Wisenbaker (2004) found that three of the four groups elected to have members individually choose the reading material they would discuss in their meetings (rather than using a common text). As the adolescents self-organized and negotiated the exact nuances of how they would maintain group cohesiveness despite each memberôs individual choice in texts, they consistently noted the value of and appreciation for the autonomy to make their own decisions about reading material. Moreover, despite several instances of disequilibrium, these three groups followed through with their decision to choose individual texts throughout the 15 week study.

In an in-school setting, Ivey (1999) investigated possible complexities in middle school studentsô performances and dispositions for reading by closely following three adolescent participants for a five month period. She chose participants purposively for their apparent diversity regarding in-school literacy practices. Ivey noted the studentsô reading performance and dispositions varied according to school context. She concludes these studentsô capacity and will to read was dependent on whether or not the task met

(Street, 2005). That is, as a whole, the students were motivated toward school success as it fit within the institutionalized definition of literacy. They, like their teacher, held the same cultural perspective about the value of school achievement and college attendance. These students were not i

occurs both individually and collectively. Adolescents, in their emerging independence, seek what I will call ñgroup-ness;ò a desire to belong as they negotiate their own identity

respond to the multiplicity of cultural, linguistic and multiple text forms (Behrman, 2003; Lam, 2009; Moje, Overby, Tysvaer, & Morris, 2008; Pearson, Ferdig, Blomeyer, & Moran; 2005).

As noted above, Behrman (2003) found that students selected non-traditional text types to help them solve community-based and science-related problems. In essence, these students utilized a variety of literacies to engage in purposeful learning. Behrman

study was concerned not with policy content per se, but with influences on state policy formulation (Song & Miskel, 2005). It appears that no scholarly literacy policy research has been conducted from an organizational perspective (Floden, 2007).

Public education has indeed had its share of critics across history, and these voices have been disparate and wide-

2003; New London Group, 1996; Stevens, 2003). Most pertinent

Chapter III: Methods

In this case study, I examined the meanings (or values, beliefs and feelings) conveyed in the language, actions and objects of Floridaôs adolescent literacy reform policy. I merged the findings with complexity thinking principles towards the goal of suggesting ways in which Floridaôs adolescent literacy reform initiatives might be reconceptualized toward strengthening teaching and learning for marginalized adolescents (Franzak, 2006; 2008). In essence, I clarified and defined the policy as it currently existed and reconfigured it from a complexity perspective (Davis & Sumara 2006). This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the nature of the values, beliefs and feelings about adolescent literacy conveyed by state-level discourse communities as these meanings are manifested across the primary and secondary speech genres of Floridaôs adolescent literacy reform policy?
2. How can Floridaôs adolescent literacy reform policy be reconceptualized using co[(to)-21(wa)6(r)-6(ds)9( )10(t)-21(h)20(e)4( )-9(g)20(o)-Tin hcd

(Yanow, 2000, p. 10). *Primary and secondary speech genres* referred respectively to everyday, informal speech and formal, more abstract speech (often in the form of written text). *Policy* is defined as the collection of language, acts, and objects used by persons in government to communicate their intent.

Design

Because I was interested in the nature, or the language, actions and objects that produce and house policy meanings, qualitative analysis was the overarching method for this study. Qualitative inquiry is an approach to problems that ñproduces a wealth of detailed informationò about a particular unit of analysis (Patton, 2002, p. 14). In this study, the unit of analysis was the features of Floridaôs adolescent literacy reform policy as it was manifested in the language, actions and objects policy actors created and disseminated throughout the system.

The case study is a particular genre of research common to qualitative inquiry that examines the relationship between specific details and overarching phenomena. It is particularly concerned with the context-dependent production of meaning (Dyson & Genishi, 2005), and, as is characteristic of all rigorous qualitative study, it openly and ethically relies on the researcher herself as an instrument for the collection, analysis and interpretation of data (Davis & Sumara, 2006; Patton, 2002). Augmented by a keen propensity for pattern recognition and informed by her own identity and knowledge of related inquiry, new insights are generated as the case study researcher engages in explorations of collected data (Patton, 2002; Saldana, 2009). In essence, then, the case study allows the researcher to ñconstruct interpretations of other peopleôs interpretationsò (Dyson & Genishi, 2005, p. 18). In this study, I constructed interpretations of state level

certain modifications to better meet the goals of this investigation. In the following section, I briefly describe the phases and explain the alterations applied to Yanowôs IPA methods. Then, I provide an overview of the study.

Modifications to IPA framework and study overview. IPA (Yanow, 2000) is intended for a broad sampling of actors across a given public policy ecology, from policy makers to implementers to recipients. In this case, however, I imposed a tighter limit on the participant sample than Yanow proposes: I was interested in a relatively small group of policy actors within the larger policy-practice configuration, who, because of their positions, exert a heavy influence on the design of Floridaôs adolescent literacy policy. For this reason, I applied a criterion-related, pre-study sampling of initial participants (Patton, 2002) in order to focus my inquiry (see

groups and their conceptual sourcesò (Yanow, 2000, p. 20). My emphasis here was a combination of the *who* of these communities, along with the *what* of their shared ideas, both tacit and explicit. The goal of Phase 5 was to *explain and move toward intervention*. Here, I sought to explain the conflicting interpretations, and, based on the findings and adolescent literacy research, I explored the reconceptualization of adolescent literacy policy design in terms of complexity thinking.

Figure 1 depicts an overview of the phases of data collection and analysis. The first two phases represented data sources and data collection; the third and fourth corresponded with the data analysis and findings; and the fifth represented the discussion and recommendations.

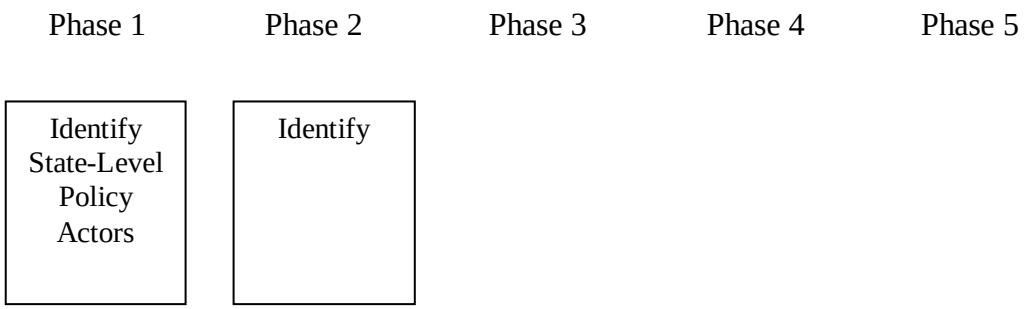

Figure 1. Phases of the study.

The double-headed arrows indicate the recursive nature of the first two phases, as well as the third and fourth phases. This reciprocity blurred the conceptual and temporal boundaries between more traditional notions of sample selection and data collection, as well as between data analysis and findings. The third and fourth phases were primarily driven by research question one: *What is the nature of the values, beliefs and feelings*

on Pre-K-12 Education, and the House Pre-K-12 Education Committee. These individuals play a major role in drafting, introducing

Yanow (2000) labels these unities ñartifacts.ò This information was collected through three methods: interviews with policy actors, observations of public meetings pertaining to middle and high school reform and retrieval of policy documents cited by participants in the interviews and meetings. In each case, I collected both explicit and implicit data pertaining to the research questions. Figure 2 depicts the intermediate steps between Phases 1 and 2, which led from the selection of potential interview and meeting policy actors to the identification of policy artifacts. The feedback loops show that the accumulation of artifacts (language, actions and objects) generated the identification of additional policy actors to interview and observe. The double arrows indicate the recursivity of these intermediate steps; new interviews, meetings and documents arose from earlier interviews and meetings. The entire figure represents the totality of the data collection process.

Figure 2. Data collection process. Intermediate steps leading from identification of policy actors (Phase 1) to the identification of policy documents (Phase 2).

Data collection began on March 20, 2010 and ended July 30th, 2010. This four and a half-month window was broad enough to accommodate scheduling and travel to interviews and public meetings. Also, it included more than half of the 60-day legislative session. In the case of legislators, this four and a half-month period facilitated the scheduling of interviews, because it included several weeks after the closing of the busy legislative session. Archival video and/or audio of public meetings dated from January 12, 2010 to May 18, 2010. I attended four legislative committee meetings prior to university Institutional Review Board approval, but I did not interact with any participants until the official start of data collection (March 20).

Appointments were scheduled according to the method indicated by the participant. In the case of one agency official and all legislators, staff members handled scheduling. Rather than communicating by post, participants and staff members preferred

supports and constraints (or policy instruments) participants saw as necessary for reform (McDonnell & Elmore, 1987; Schneider & Ingram, 1997).

The remainder of the interview questions (questions eight and nine) were the means by which the process of chain sampling took place (Patton, 2002). At this point in the interview, I requested that participants share the names of prospective individuals and upcoming public meetings that would be helpful to my inquiry.

beyond interviews, to observe and document

One of the tertiary reports was published by the

categories and then the three overarching findings which are reported in the following chapter. In the next sections, I describe the analytic process.

Analytic memos (journal). After each interview and during and after my analysis of recorded public meetings I composed journal notes on a spreadsheet by recording my immediate reactions as a researcher, citizen and former classroom teacher. I included my anecdotal remembrances from the interviews or meetings such as demeanor or overarching assessment of the interview (Saldana, 2009). As for documents, I recorded my thoughts directly on the pages. These thoughts represented the early stages of the identification of communities of meaning concerning adolescent literacy reform. I continued

took place after the data collection period due to the time involved in scheduling, interviewing, travel and interview/meeting transcription.

First cycle coding. Once all data were collected and I reached saturation with the early coding process, first cycle coding commenced. This process consisted of converting the pre-codes into more abstract terms and phrases that pointed toward the research questions. This was the point at which I loaded the electronic versions of the policy documents as well as the highlighted interview and meeting transcripts into the Atlas.ti6 text coding program.

Focusing on the pre-coded highlighted areas, I primarily used *structural* and *descriptive* coding strategies for first cycle coding. Structural coding is the assignment of codes specifically in relation to the researcherôs questions (Saldana, 2009). In this case, I looked for segments of meaning related to adolescent literacy and associated initiatives. Descriptive coding is the assignment of codes by the topic cited by informants or authors. The final count of codes reached over 1,600 identified units of meaning.

While this meta-coding process resulted in a clarification and reorganization of the earlier codes, I found I needed to physically manipulate the codes so I printed a code list in large font and cut each of the codes into strips. At this point, I was able to physically group the codes and see a more holistic view of the emerging categories.

Third cycle coding. Through this highly iterative process of evaluation and synthesis, I began to crystallize my understanding of the nature of policy actorsô perceptions about adolescent literacy and the policy problems and solutions they valued. However, because the data set was so large, I found the second cycle coding to be insufficient. Larger categories were forming, but the patterns were still nebulous. At this point I used the Atlas.ti6 frequency count function, or *magnitude coding*, to determine the relative weight of the categories as they were represented in the overall data set (Saldana, 2009). I took the top ten percent of the reoccurring categories and filtered them according to the ñfamiliesò of the two knowledge tiers and speech genres. At this point, I began to see patterns across the speech genres and knowledge tiers; however, they were isolated to policy problems and solutions surrounding the enactment of literacy policy. This was indeed meaningful (as it laid the groundwork for one of my three overarching findings), but I found that literacy-specific information did not emerge here.

It was at this point that I realized I had initially over-grouped the literacy codes under the name ñnuances of reading and reading instruction.ò Here, I began a ñside analysisò of this one category to determine the specifics of Floridaôs approach to literacy. While I saw patterns here, the Atlas.ti6 view of the policy documents (some consisting of over 100 pages) was restricted to one page at a time and once again, I felt I needed a more holistic approach. In order to be more certain about the overarching flavor of each

document, I shifted back to the hard copies and my time-tested method of summarizing key ideas in margins and combining these ideas by making ñgistò statements on the first page of each document. In addition to the electronically-derived literacy codes, this process yielded a more definitive set of patterns for Research Question 1, as well as a second critical finding in this study.

Later, during the writing of the results, an unexpected finding emerged from the data; one that revealed policy actorsô perceptions about various student profiles. This theme became a third and critical piece of the overall results. I mention this here, because while this finding was not a result of my intentional a-priori methods as described above, it occurred as a result of my ñopennessò during the writing up of the data (Saldana, 2009, p. 47). This notion of openness to data is also taken up by complexity theorists Davis and Sumara (2006)This

versions of literacy). Saldana (2009) states that occasionally, unfinished results seem ñuninspiringò and superficial. For me, this was the case not only with the literacy-specific results, but with the problem/solution results as well.

Through a two-pronged process of ñshop talkingò with trusted individuals and reflexive thinking across several days about the emerging results, I stepped away from and ñrose above the dataò (Saldana, 2009, p. 187) to see a clearer meaning residing in the literacy-specific and policy-specific data. Given that different individuals and communities assign different meanings to policy, one way to conceptualize and contrast these meanings is through the mechanism of *framing* (Coburn, 2006; Yanow, 2000). While I was not overtly aware of it at the time, I used framing as interpretive device for determining what aspects of the literacy-specific patterns were brought to the foreground,

constructs of complexity thinking (Davis, & Sumara, 2006; Davis, Sumara, & Luce-Kapler, 2008; Stevens, 2006) more directly in this phase to examine how policy actors frame the targets, goals and instruments of adolescent literacy reform.

tertiary. In addition to assured anonymity within the three group labels, participants were given the opportunity to review and modify the typed notes after the interview as well as the freedom to withdraw from the study at any time. Finally, interview data were stored on a personal computer with a password and fingerprint log in.

Because of the nature of public meetings as described in Floridaôs Sunshine Law (Office of the Attorney General of Florida, 2009), I did not need consent for meeting observations. Each of these meetings were open to the public and audio- and video-versions of the meetings were available by request or online.

Dependability and Credibility

Mechanically speaking, this study was strengthened by a design that included several processes to

interview and meeting notes across Floridaôs macro- education ecology in order to capture the meanings conveyed by state-level policy actors.

The procedure for this study included a highly systematic process for data collection and analysis. All procedures were carefully followed and documented throughout the course of the study through the use of data analysis tools and plans discussed throughout this chapter. As for interview data, I asked participants to engage in the process of member-checking whereby they reviewed the transcripts to revise and confirm for accuracy (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007). This member-checking feature of the study design added to the trustworthiness of the findings (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Also, by allowing several weeks to elapse between the interview and the member-checking task, each participant was able to engage in reflexive thinking; a feature of dependability in qualitative inquiry (Patton, 2002). The data analysis process was strengthened by ongoing attempts to cross-check for, report, and explain negative cases which did not fit emerging patterns (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In fact, the act of looking for alternate discourse communities enabled and augmented the search for negative cases. Additionally, while I was the sole analyst, I engaged in discussions with mentors and other trusted individuals in order to check for transparency and confirmability of the data analysis and conclusions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Finally,sparen1

Chapter V. I conducted this study with a stated awareness of the critical perspective I brought as an advanced graduate scholar, literacy researcher, instructor and experienced educator. Yet, I also brought an appreciation for a likely very different set of perspectives held by state level policy actors. This understanding of socially constructed meanings was well suited for the goal of exploring the meanings conveyed by macro-level actors to those individuals at the micro-level of the policy-practice configuration (students and teachers).

Chapter IV: Results

Using data from three sources, I examined the meanings housed in the state-level language of and surrounding Floridaôs adolescent literacy initiative. In this chapter, I present the findings of the analysis. I was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the nature of the beliefs about adolescent literacy conveyed by state-level discourse communities as these meanings are manifested across the primary and secondary speech genres of Floridaôs adolescent literacy reform?
2. How can Floridaôs adolescent literacy reform policy be reconceptualized using complexity thinking
   (a) as a model for policy design?
   (b) as a goal for adolescent literacy teaching and learning?

These questions are conceptually hierarchical, meaning the results from Research Question 1(RQ1) are necessary for a response to Research Question 2 (RQ2). The direct results from the first question are presented in this chapter. The second question is evaluative in nature, and although there are indicators throughout this chapter pointing toward a response to RQ2, this question is directly addressed in Chapter VI.

Categorizing the Data

There were two heuristic frameworks embedded in Question 1: speech genres and discourse communities. However, during data collection and analysis, a clear division in the data emerged: knowledge of literacy and literacy instruction. One group of

data sources were simply grounded in a more sophisticated understanding of literacy than

I did not place any of the data at the far left end of this continuum. However, certain forms of data were less formal and/or well-developed than others, leading to a relative placement for the data sources across the continuum.

Interviews. I placed the interview transcripts closer to the primary end, because all interviews except one were conducted in a casual manner. (One participant declined to participate in the audio-recorded interview, but agreed to type her responses to the interview questions. While the more formal nature of her language and close control of ideas was markedly different from the audio-recorded interviews, I placed this document with the interview data because, unlike the meetings, the participant knew this would not be a part of public record, and unlike the policy documents, it was not an official or expert publication disseminated to policy actors, districts or schools). A review of the interview transcripts shows that participantsô language and discourse was not informal, but it was less so than that of meeting transcripts or policy documents. Interview transcripts reflected a free-flowing range of ideas within the general parameter of the interview questions. Often, a participant would amend his or her comments, share a personal anecdote, interject spontaneous humor, insert new ideas within sentences or thoughts, or would reveal his or her personal doubts or frustrations about certain issues.

Meetings. Data from meetings were more formal. This is because the meetings in most cases were conducted with a strong sense of organizational decorum. Committee or board chairs governed the pace and length of time for each speaker. Also, meetings were audio- or video-recorded for public record, and this no doubt added to the more formal nature of participantsô language and discourse. In legislative committee meetings, members would occasionally reveal frustration with the direction of a given process;

knowledge of reading and/or reading instruction. For instance, rather than exhibiting a general understanding as above, these participants frequently referenced the structural and conceptual shifts in texts across subject domains as a distinction of secondary reading tasks and the

Table 2

Documents Listed by Knowledge Tiers

Tier	Source	Document
Tier I		
	Center on Instruction	*Adolescent Literacy Walk Through for Principals*
		Academic Literacy Instruction for Adolescents
		Assessments to Guide Adolescent Literacy Instruction
		Effective Instruction for Adolescent Struggling Readers
	Senate Committee on Education Pre-K-12	*Senate Interim Report 2010-111*: *Review of Practices for Reading Intervention in Middle and High Schools*
	Southern Regional	

K

In retrospect, this division in knowledge specificity seemed natural given the fact that legislative representatives typically do not have expertise in a given policy area. As a consequence they frequently consult with advisors they believe to be more

unclear if this conflict was indicative of differences in knowledge or of discourse, further analysis revealed knowledge specificity (Tiers) provided a better explanation than did differences in discourse. A detailed discussion of each of these instances is provided later in this chapter.

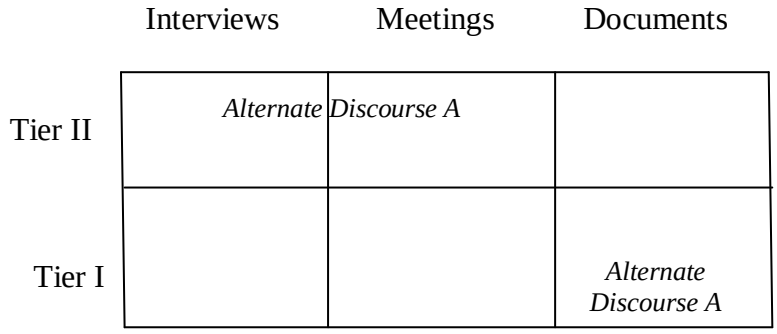

Figure 5. Discourses across the speech types and knowledge tiers. Alternate Discourse A was dispersed throughout Tier I and Tier II data. Alternate Discourse B was found only in Tier II data.

Question 1: Overview of Results

Now, I move to a brief overview of the results of RQ 1. Following this overview, I provide a detailed description of the data that supported these results.

Research Question 1 asked: *What is the nature of the values, beliefs and feelings about adolescent literacy conveyed by state-level discourse communities as these meanings are manifested across the primary and secondary speech genres of Florida's adolescent literacy reform policy?* Three overarching findings resulted from the analysis: (a) Reading as Literacy; (b) Institutionally Imposed Student Profiles; and (c) Policy Solutions and Problems. In this section, I provide a wide-angle, albeit brief view of the overall results. In the following section, I provide a detailed description of each of these

Policy solutions and problems. Because my inquiry of adolescent literacy was comprised of both Tier I and Tier II data sources, the data provided for a wide range of perspectives. This broad scope of beliefs resulted in a third finding: solutions and problems as they related to students who were not meeting institutional expectations. Solutions dominated this discourse and were comprised of System-Based, People-Based, and Resource-Based remedies. Problems were related to studentsô academic and agentive diversity as well as the belief that they in general were not prepared for college and/or the workplace. Some solutions and problems were valued across both tiers of knowledge and all speech genres; others were differentiated by knowledge tiers and/or the speech genres. Additionally, the second set of conflicting results (Alternative Discourse B) arose within

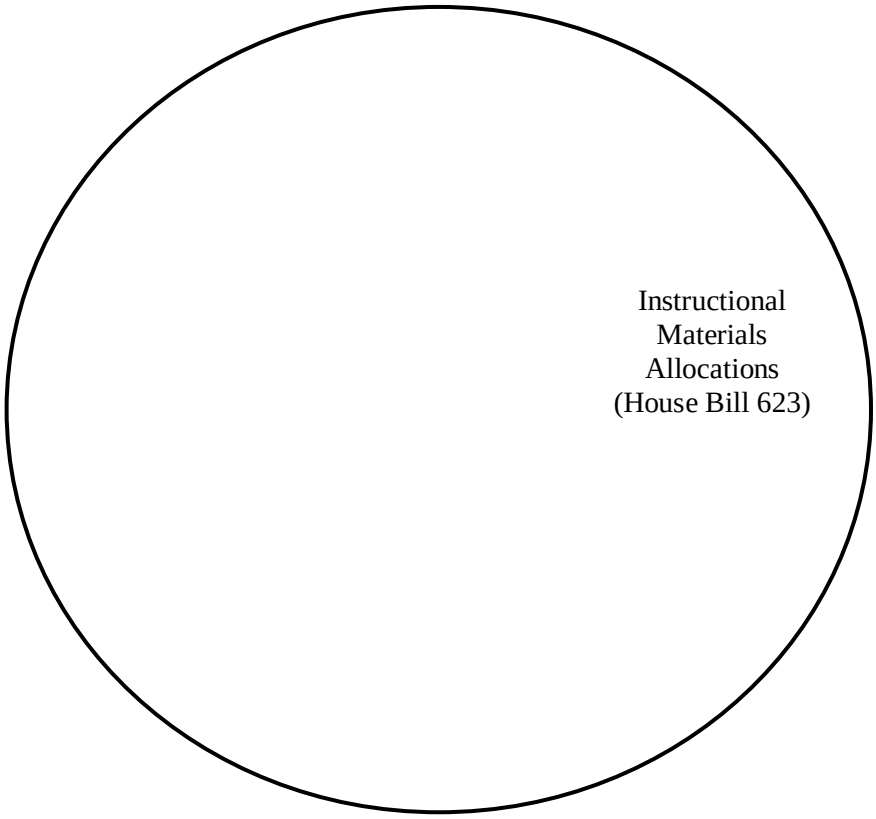

Figure 6. Data topics and conversations in meetings. These surrounded and permeated interview data and the content of policy documents.

In large part, the literacy-specific information resulted from interviews and the policy documents, however, the broken inner line represents the way literacy-specific information was both explicitly and implicitly gleaned from peripheral conversations and topics in the public meetings. Interviews were highly focused on secondary level literacy policy, as I used an interview guide with questions aimed toward this end. Additionally,

under girded by the idea that readers actively bring their own purposes, efficacy, identity, culture and history to the text (Alvermann, 2002; Gee, 2004), as well as the notion that traditional page-bound texts are just one of many text types, including computer and visual texts (Alvermann, 2001; Gee, 2004; New London Group, 1996). Further, this broader view acknowledges the socio-political nature of literacy; it attends to questions of whose form of literacy is privileged as well as the underlying reasons for that deference (Alvermann, 2002; Street, 2005).

The deep/broad conception of literacy for adolescents was infrequently represented in the data collected for this study. Instead, as noted above, Floridaôs state-level approach to literacy was focused almost exclusively on academic reading and the demonstration of studentsô reading ability as measured by standardized tests. While this description calls to mind Alvermannôs (2001, p. 4) conception of academic literacy (which is concerned with reading, writing and other ñmodes of symbolic communicationò across the various text structures typically found in school curricula), Floridaôs approach was more focused than Alvermannôs notion of academic literacy in that it appeared to be restricted to reading, or the *receptive* aspects of literacy. In general, receptive literacy skills consist of reading and listening, whereas expressive literacy skills involve writing and speaking.

It is important to explain that aspects of adolescent literacy as described above *were* found in the data, but they were limited in comparison to the description above. For instance, Floridaôs K-12 Reading and Language Arts *Next Generation Sunshine State Standards* evidenced a broader, and hence, more balanced view of the receptive and expressive aspects of literacy than was found in the entirety of the interviews, meetings

and policy documents. Also, many participants and documents indicated attention to motivation and student engagement; aspects associated with the notion of agency as it is described in adolescent literacy literature (Alvermann, 2002; Moore & Cunningham, 2006). Finally, legislators and tertiary participants in particular were mindful of the digital literacies and their role in preparing students for the 21st century workplace as well as their potential for helping students engage with learning tasks. However, in general, Florida appeared to espouse a view of literacy that foregrounds reading and thinking skills associated with understanding academic texts.

Reading as tool. Within the parameters of Floridaôs focus on reading academic texts, there were copious instances where policy actors indicated their belief that reading was an enabling tool necessary for the acquisition of content knowledge. For example, an official from the Department of Education used FCAT test scores to illustrate how an increase in reading scores (or by proxy, reading growth) had brought about a positive change in math scores: ñ é Even our math scores are up *wonderfully*. A lot of that has to do with the fact that they can *read* the math problemsò (Interview, 5/18/2010). Because students were reading better, they were better at math. Similarly, consider this legislatorôs description of the challenges faced by struggling readers:

> é a *student* that is in high school, and still has not learned to read é maybe that child é would understand the science problems, and the math problems if he could *just* read them. So these are not students é that are not *smart*, they just havenôt been able to é totally understand é They havenôt *learned how to read.*

Floridaôs education reform: ñ é the State of Florida has defined as its primary objective the enhancement of a studentôs performance on the FCATò (p. 61).

Alternate Discourse A : Multiple versions of literacy. A close analysis of the data revealed a set of fine-grained definitional variations that signaled the existence of alternate literacy discourses. Couched within the discourse of literacy as reading were four distinct varieties of reading that were advocated at the state level. I labeled them: (a) FCAT Reading, (b) Standards Reading, (c) Academic Reading and (d) Academic Literacy. In some cases, the differences were subtle (e.g., between Standards Reading and Academic Reading), and in others they were more distinct (e.g., between FCAT Reading and Standards Reading). Variation existed nonetheless, and given the capability of seemingly minor discourses for creating large impacts across time and space (Blommaert, 2005; see also Gleick, 1987; Taleb, 2007), these differences necessitate further consideration.

The first and most heavily weighted version, FCAT Reading, was concerned with a portion (approximately half) of the reading competencies (or benchmarks) the state had identified as important for students to know and be able to do. Because of the high stakes nature of the test, this view was highly dependent on the text as authority. Students needed to read and provide a sufficient number of correct answers in order to exceed the designated cut-score, which designated acceptable proficiency with the benchmarks included on the test. If they did not, students were provided with instructional intervention support aimed at increasing performance on the assessment the following year. Depending on additional diagnostic assessments these students would be provided with an array of instructional interventions by individuals who had been trained

according to the stateôs guidelines. While these interventions included oral language, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension, they appeared to be intended for all students across the K-12 spectrum. Secondly, FCAT Reading was demonstrated exclusively through product-related means. Proficiency here assumed students had developed the process-related skills necessary for determining enough correct answers on the test to warrant graduation. While the results of FCAT Reading provided the state with a snapshot view of studentsô growth from previous years, the high stakes nature of this summative test seemed not quite congruent with the stateôs stance that reading development was an ongoing process and was highly contingent on studentsô experiential knowledge.

A second version, Standards Reading, was comprised of the broader range of reading- related benchmarks that were not measured on the annual summative assessment. Examples here were: the ability to listen to, read, and discuss familiar and conceptually challenging text; the ability to analyze and evaluate similar themes or topics by different authors across a variety of fiction and nonfiction selections; or the ability to select a topic for inquiry, formulate a search plan, apply evaluative criteria and select appropriate resources (*Florida K-12 Next Generation Reading and Language Arts Standards*, Grade 6).

A third view, Academic Reading, was highly valued by state level policy actors. This version was closely affiliated with the totality of the skills found in Standards Reading above; however, a heavy focus on two particular aspects of Standards Reading rendered this version conceptually separate. First and foremost, this version drew heavily on studentsô prior knowledge of content in order for them to be successful in various

primary and secondary sources, personal interests and prior knowledge, as well as revising and editing for clarity by using peer-review or rubrics, and sharing the end product with the intended audience). Here, the locus of control included text as authority, but it clearly also included the potential for shared authority in the form of discussion, composition, production and presentation. Other than the Reading and Language Arts Standards, however, this more comprehensive view of literacy was quite limited in the overall results. One of these limited instances was located in the draft of the revised *Reading Endorsement Competencies* (Florida Department of Education, 2010). Here, writing, a text-based form of communication, was valued as a way to enhance studentsô development of other components of reading, such as oral language, phonics and comprehension.

***Summary*.** The state level version of literacy at the secondary level fore-grounded reading and understanding content-related texts. Reading development involved two key goals: (a) the acquisition of content-related knowledge, and (b) the demonstration of this ability by performing at expected levels on state and national accountability measures. In general, literacy (reading, composing, speaking, listening) was represented as a process in the literacy-related standards (task authenticity, use of a variety of tools, emphasis on the phases of project completion, collaborative revision), but state level interviews and statutory documents revealed a value primarily for the product-related aspects of reading; that is the types of knowledge represented on standardized tests.

Like the re-emergence of content area reading in the 1970ôs (Moore, Readence & Rickelman, 1983), Floridaôs view of adolescent literacy was concerned almost

exclusively with matters of curriculum and instruction with a focus on the reading of subject-area texts. The primary authority resided in text. As in this earlier version of content-area literacy, the use of the term ñadolescentò served as a mark of the readerôs age and his or her location within the K-12 progression structure. In the broader version of adolescent literacy found in the scholarly literature, the term adolescent refers to *more* than age; it is a consideration of the adolescentôs individual identity, including interests and out-of-school literate practices as a key aspect and influence on those matters of curriculum and instruction. Authority is shared between student and text.

Thus, Floridaôs understanding was not the same ñadolescent literacyò as defined by Alvermann and others in the late 1990ôs when they established the International Reading Associationôs Commission on Adolescent Literacy. It was not the same as Alvermannôs (2002) conception of ñacademic literacy,ò which includes a balance of the receptive and expressive aspects of academic communication. If word order is taken in to consideration, Floridaôs version of adolescent literacy also di nt v t ɣ onslmt ^

c teracy ò m ɹ c

measured by standardized tests appeared to be more suited to the label ñacademic reading for adolescents.ò

According to Davis & Sumara (2006) constraints serve the function of providing ñsufficient coherence to orient agentôs actionsò (p. 148). In complexity terms, Floridaôs restricted view of literacy as academic reading for adolescents could clearly be considered a policy constraint; that is, it was designed to focus Floridaôs districts, schools, teachers and students on an arguably critical aspect of literacy acquisition: content area reading. Delineating the standards and benchmarks indicative of content-area reading and thinking ability and assessing those standards would be a logical means for providing a form of coherence for local level efforts toward this end. Yet, according to the national discourse of crisis (see Moore, 2009; Stevens, 2008) as well as the data in this study, many adolescents were not making test score gains (see also Peterson, 2007).

Aiming Floridaôs literacy focus primarily at receptive literacy skills (which are undoubtedly amenable to standardized tests and data systems), appeared to be a logical

Institutionally imposed student profiles. Based on policy actorsô beliefs, a second finding revealed a typology of four different categories of adolescents in terms of their academic fit within the institution. I pieced these profiles together based on bits of data across all the tiers and genres.

The first student profile consisted of students who are progressing academically and are engaged in meeting institutional expectations. The other three categories were of students who did not fit within institutional expectations: students who are capable of progress but are not engaged in the system, struggling students who are not progressing but are engaged, and lastly, struggling students who are disengaged. This last type of student was seen as being farthest away from the expectations of the institution.

Students who were distanced from the institution did not perform as well as others, and, as seen in the following section, considerable policy effort was aimed at resolving this distance. Similar to the reciprocity between policy and practice (Coburn, 2001; Franzak, 2006; McDonnell, 2009; Yanow, 2000), the distance between various students and institutional expectations resulted in a demonstration of how policy influences targets and how targets influence policy (Schneider & Ingram 1997).

Because the student profiles above were woven throughout policy language related to the subtopics in the next section, I call specific attention to them there, rather than using certain quotes here and again as they applied in the next section. An extensive discussion of the student profile finding is provided in Chapter VI.

In the next section, I present the policy-oriented beliefs about adolescent literacy reform. First is a discussion of four universally-valued solutions and problems. This is

designations that hinged on test scores. Typically, the coterminous nature of reading and summative test scores was revealed through the use of terms such as ñreading performanceò or ñreading ability.ò These words, used repeatedly by state policy actors, took on a tacit and accepted status as a way of talking about reading.

The data clearly indicated that policy actors believed an increase in summative scores was synonymous with student learning. They believed that when scores increased, this meant that policies, teachers and students were making progress. The numbers generated by state and national assessments were cause for celebration, comparison and consternation. They were also tightly coupled with accountability mechanisms and future initiatives. At a State Board of Education meeting, the Education Commissioner offered

kind of acknowledgement, that in Florida, for Hispanic children, we surpassed or equaled the performance of é 30 other state averages for all children é For African American children we equaled or surpassed eight other states. Dramatic é our little 4th grade babies, African American babies that are out there reading in Florida surpassed the average performance in Alaska, Arizona, California,

H-5(s)9(,)-w8(if30( )-2( )-2(C)7(a)-15L)1120(t)8(tn)20(g-194(,)-9,)-9( ) bCa,4(,)-9s(,)-9,4(,)-9s(,

average; the national averageò (Interview, 5/18/2010). From this perspective, summative test scores collected and reported by the federal government were actually seen by state-level participants as a formative evaluation of Floridaôs progress toward the goal of increasing its national standing. In other words, while the NAEP appeared to be an accountability tool from the perspective of the federal government, it simultaneously served as a formative tool for Florida, as the scores allowed policy actors to mark growth and gauge the success of policy initiatives.

Summative test scores were also viewed as a method for holding the local level (i.e., students, teachers, schools and districts) accountable for progress. The notion of accountability in the form of the 1999 A+ Plan frequently co-occurred with statewide summative assessment. While I describe the notion of accountability and the A+ Plan briefly here, these topics are discussed in detail in the Tier II differentiated beliefs section. Instituted by then Governor Jeb Bush and the Florida Legislature in 1999, the A+ plan is centered on the statewide administration of the FCAT. The plan requires the state Department of Education to grade schools based on studentsô test scores and their improvement on the test scores across time, as well as on high schoolsô graduation rates,

As described above, the use of state-wide summative assessments and the scores they generate were woven throughout existing state policy. For instance, student test scores were a primary consideration for the allocation of reading coaches in the Department of Education K-12 Reading Plan and they were a key basis for determining studentsô reading intervention needs in the Board of Educationôs K-12 Student Reading Intervention Rule requirements. Of course, these and other state-wide measures were buttressed by requirements of the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act (U S Department of Education, 2004), which increased test-

were met with assurance from various actors that students would benefit from this approach. In one meeting, an agency official clearly articulated the underlying belief of the logic of test-driven policy: ñYou will see low scores that quickly become much higher a couple of years after the test is given. You will see much higher quality instruction at that pointò (House Committee Meeting, 1/20/2010). A visiti

In these three instances, the presence of secondary level high stakes tests was viewed as a pathway to higher scores, improved instruction, stronger standards and better learning by students. Note also the reoccurrence of the notion of score comparisons to those of other states and nations.

Summative test scores were also the center-piece of state-level efforts to strengthen the quality of teachers, and this was evidenced directly in meetings where the federal Race to the Top program grant was a topic. Stevens and Wikstrom (2007) contend that the bulk of the intergovernmental conversation is related to fiscal matters, and this notion was evidenced quite prominently in the meeting data. In many ways, the Race to the Top grant was a centerpiece of the 2010 legislative session. Much time and conversation was devoted to the promise of being awarded millions of federal dollars to fund state and local efforts for education reform and the changes that would need to occur in order for Florida to receive this revenue. For instance, in a Senate meeting where this grant application was being discussed, a legislator cynically observed, ñWeôre chasing dollars as usual (1/12/ 2010).ò Pertinent to this study is the fact that the use of test scores as an evaluation of teacher effectiveness was a primary component of the grant application. State-wide assessment scores were viewed as a means for making teacher evaluation more objective. In the words of an agency official,

> é the issue of teacher quality is the number one point getter for scoring these grants é the clear message from the US Department of Education is that they expect a successful grant from the state to aggressively deal with the issue of teacher quality and they expect that issue to link student performance in a

role in order to help gauge policy effectiveness. This observation (summative assessments used as formative assessment) warrants further consideration, as it leads to a discussion of two features of complex systems: nestedness and system feedback.

Complex systems are nested. They are ñcomposed of and often comprise other unities that might be properly identified as complexò (Davis & Sumara, 2006, p. 5). Additionally, complex systems are scale-free; that is, they are comprised of parts that also resemble the system at large. Floridaôs state-level emphasis on standardized assessments was not unlike an English teacherôs emphasis on an end-of-the-unit test on Shakespeare. Both measures point to the extent to which the ñtest takersò prepared for the exam. At the classroom level, students are accountable for interacting with and integrating the concepts into their existing knowledge and then demonstrating that knowledge on the exam. The state of Florida used the FCAT similarly to hold districts, schools and teachers accountable for their responsibility to interact with and integrate the reading components of the *Next Generation Sunshine State Standards* into their work with students. However, summative tests are also an indicator of instructional effectiveness (Caldwell, 2007). Carrying the nestedness analogy further, the test scores were simultaneously a formative indicator of state policy effectiveness.

Building on the idea of nestedness, statewide summative tests also serve as a form of feedback throughout various layers of the system (Davis & Sumara, 2006; Morrison, 2008). In other words, school administrators, district and state officials used the data generated from summative tests as a form of feedback about the effectiveness of state policy. Subsequently, they make organizational adjustments according to overarching

oriented, in that they were viewed as obstacles to overcome in order to increase test scores. In this sense, these three findings appeared to simultaneously serve as statewide goals.

. A second area of convergence across the data configurations (albeit not as ubiquitous as that of state tests) was a keen awareness across all groups regarding adolescentsô agency. The term *agency* represents a coupling of oneôs inner self with the act of asserting that self through behavioral expressions, which are guided by self-direction and free will (Moore & Cunningham, 2006). In relation to literacy, an adolescentôs agency both permeates and transcends literacy learning (Moore & Cunningham, 2006). In this section, I discuss policy actorsô perceptions of the adolescents themselves, as they were perceived both in and out of the school context. During data analysis, this meant looking underneath topical discussions (e.g., teacher quality, literacy instruction, instructional materials allocations or graduation requirements) to see how adolescents were characterized in terms of their identity or fit within school structures as well as how they were viewed as individuals in their own right. In most cases these two distinctions (in- and out-of-school characterizations) were subtle and often intertwined. In general, adolescents were characterized by policy actors as self-determined agents who define relevance in their own terms and act on it accordingly. An important sub-component of w † a }

word and notion of ñrelevanceò to make their point; if structures and provisions werenôt seen as relevant by students, policy actors believed students would not engage, learn or perform. These statements were most often couched either within the context of preparation for college and the workforce or more specifically within the context of curriculum, instruction or assessment. For instance, a legislator, speaking hypothetically to a struggling student, juxtaposed the role of student agency against the eventuality of post-secondary employment and the seemingly unrealistic requirement to study classical texts:

> So, young man, let me tell you. Letôs look at what you *want* to do and what you have capabilities of *doing* and desire to do, and letôs see how we can do that. Rather than say, ñLook Pal, youôre going to have to take Chaucer, and in fact, weôre going to do *Old English* in Chaucer, and we want you to be able to recite at least the first page in Old English because itôs really going to help you.ò And theyôll look at you é again, they go, ñOh, man, you know é youôre in *space*.ò (Interview, 6/16/2010)

Another legislator invoked the notion of individual agency more generally by linking it to reading instruction, materials and programs. Again, there was a sense that studentsô proclivity for certain activities or career interests was a key macro/micro-consideration.

> I also believe [that] to encourage reading, the materials used must be relevant to the lives of the students. A successful reading program is one that is tied to some highly motivating experience, such as job preparation, an internship, a special student interest or some other real-world activity. Here the student learns the

importance of reading in the context of some other activity that they value. (Typed interview response, 6/10/2010)

An allusion to individual agency also appears in the text of the 2006 *Florida Secondary School Redesign Act*, also known as the A++ Plan (Crocco, Linder & McClamma, 2007). The purpose of this statute is to ensure that ninth grade students are prepared for success throughout their high school years and subsequently for college and/or the workplace. The following principle, which captures a key essence of the statute, is one of ten guidelines required for annual school improvement plans: ñSchool is

well these kids didnôt *blend*, they didnôt *perform* the way we expected them to and weôre writing them *off*. Maybe theyôre *good* at something *else*. I donôt know. I

Indeed, a state-level concern related to studentsô agency was the numbers generated by students who collectively chose to take an early exit from the school system. Speaking in a legislative meeting, a representative from Achieve, an ñeducation reform organizationò (Achieve, 2010), called attention to Floridaôs comparatively low rank across the nation with regards to drop outs: ñFlorida ranks behind the national average in almW0(a)4(t)-41ranks

dropping out (and, by assumption, student agency), by taking this line of logic a step farther:

> é We know that if students are not reading in third grade or fourth grade, the chances of them becoming a drop out é [inaudible] speaking very frankly, is very, very high. And so, you know, how can we as a *society* .

could somehow rise to fit better within system expectations for reading. Put simply, if he could become better at reading, he would choose to stay in school. The following excerpt from a Tier I tertiary participant provides a more detailed description of this type of adolescent. Here, the participant spoke directly about student agency and the classroom measures that might prevent struggling readers from remaining disengaged:

> é the other thing about interventions at the secondary level is that you have to engage students and motivate them, and I donôt mean making them just *feel good* about themselves because success breeds them feeling good about themselves and when you provide high-quality direct instruction, they can see the progress theyôre making and [in] my personal experience é students donôt *need* a lot of motivation beyond that; once they begin to experience success and believe in themselves, then theyôll work even harder for you, but that needs to be an issue thatôs considered at high school, because theyôve had a lot of experience with lack of success in reading and so they need a lot of encouragement in the beginning to take that chance in reading. (Interview, 4/19/2010)

In this instance, the policy actor described a student who, like the ones above, was disengaged precisely because he struggled with reading. She believed that if students could somehow be externally motivated by their reading success, this motivation would produce a positive influence on their previously limited level of engagement. This in turn would result in the studentôs hard work

what to do for struggling readers before they drop out: Someone close to the situation, presumably a teacher, would need to bridge the interstices between the studentôs agency and institutional expectations in order to connect these two aspects of academic literacy development.

Digital natives. A subcomponent of adolescentsô agency surfaced in the data. This finding was so prominent that it warranted a separate section in the results. In meetings and interviews, participants emphasized the way digital technology was woven into adolescentsô identities. Drawing a metaphorical distinction between studentsô out-of-school identities and their in-school lives, one policy actor stated: ñ é these kids é literally, they live in an iPod world and our classrooms are a *record* playerò (Interview, 6/8/2010). The impetus for this and many other similar comments was House Bill 623, which was intended to authorize flexibility for categorical expenditures for instructional content. In essence, this bill allowed school districts to use a portion of their Florida Education Finance Program funds for instructional hardware, such as iPads,

based practice, she described the impact of this change on children and adolescents in negative terms:

> Well, we have *moved* to...almost a completely visual society é Our culture, the *dominant* é delivery of information is now visual é children are raised from the time they are *born* to é to be stimulated *mentally*, *intellectually*.…from a visual delivery, and so é I think itôs changed their *brain patterns,* and é it has changed their *appetite* for a é particular method of entertainment. Itôs extremely, *extremely* stimulating, the type of entertainment that children are receiving. So by the time they reach middle school and high school é the ability for them to é as a *whole* é to derive the kind of *entertainment* that *previous* kids have been able to derive from reading, it is é at an *extreme disadvantage* é because of the dominant culture. (Interview, 6/1/2010)

Finally, digital literacy was not considered as an aspect of adolescent identity for all students. This was evidenced in discussions about students who did not have access to the Internet or computers at home. This distinction in the discourse was often referred to as the ñdigital divide.ò As one tertiary interview participant put it, ñ é thereôs a *huge* sensitivity about the gap é weôre trying to level the *playing* fieldò (Interview, 7/8/2010). A legislative committee member stated it thusly: ñChildren cannot compete without the hardware. The *reality* is that teachers and children who are the *least* likely to have acc

engagement in school. The extent of studentsô school engagement was contingent upon their individual determination about whether or not school activities were relevant to their own identity, or inner self. Policy actors also believed most adolescentsô literate identities were infused with the influence of rapid technological changes in information delivery.

In general, the priority state policy actors placed on studentsô agency appeared to serve as a counterweight to the hegemonic influence of institutional structures such as time frames for school participation, locations for learning and the determination of curricular foci. Stated differently, the success of the system was contingent upon studentsô agency. If the goals were to prepare students to meet graduation, post-secondary education or work-place requirements, system structures needed to be flexible in order to accommodate studentsô interests, motivations and identities including their propensity for digital learning. Also

An important aspect of these findings was policy actorsô portrayal of certain categories of students in terms of their agentive fit within institutional structures. Policy actors believed that some students were capable of system-defined success, but that they exercised their agency by disengaging cognitively and/or physically due to lack of interest in institutional goals or instructional delivery. Other students were struggling, but were seen as willing to engage insofar as they could be convinced of their progress toward system expectations. If these students could somehow be persuaded to perceive their potential for school success, they would more likely see the relevance of and be motivated by school-related tasks. Lastly, some struggling students were so distanced from the system they left school. Thus, the data related to adolescentsô agency revealed four types of adolescents in terms of their fit within the academic system. The first type, students who are progressing and engaged, was not mentioned directly, rather, the existence of these students was implied. The other three types were indicated more directly: students who are capable but are not engaged in the system, struggling students who are not progressing but are engaged, and lastly, struggling students who are not engaged.

Focus on struggling learners/readers. The third and fourth areas of convergence (focus on struggling learners/readers and academic diversity) were closely related to one another. Initially, this pattern m в š ∖ T iar

by proxy, the struggling students who were enrolled in them. The 2002 *Implementation of the State System of School Improvement and Education Accountability,* the 2002 *Authority to Enforce Public School Improvement,* and the 2002 *School Grading System, School Report Cards, and District Grade* statutes each placed a heavy emphasis on the improvement of low performing schools as defined by school-wide scores on the FCAT. Clearly, as found in Florida law, standardized assessments were seen as the central element of Floridaôs focus on struggling readers.

Other, non-statutory policy documents revealed a prominent focus on struggling learners/readers as well. A large portion of *Academic Literacy Instruction for Adolescents* (Torgesen, et al. 2007) was devoted to students reading below grade level, and the SREB advised states to ñestablish statewide reading intervention programs that schools can use to assist struggling readers in the middle grades and high schoolò (2009a, p. 7).

*Rationale***.** The rationale given for Floridaôs focus on struggling readers was varied. Occasionally, this rationale was centered on the needs of the individual student, and in other instances it was aimed at the collective. Economic and fiscal concerns were cited most often, but societal issues were named as well.

The ability to read well was valued as a skill necessary for studentsô future success and the achievement of personal ambitions. Headlining the ñAbout Usò page of the The Just Read Florida! division of the Florida Department of Education (2005a) was a

In this quote, reading is seen as a critical component for learning without which students are unable to succeed according to their personal ambitions. Another example of concern for individual students is seen in the following statement from a legislator who drew from her prior experience teaching high school. In a meeting where members were discussing the merits of increasing graduation requirements, this legislator revealed her concern for struggling learners by indicating her interest in providing students with an opportunity to opt-out of college prep courses:

> é I know that there are some kids that you can é just encourage them and tell them, ñYou can do it,ò and raise their expectations and é they will fling themselves against the wall and still not be able to do it. So I want to make sure that we give those kids some place to go so that they can have a future and a hope and have a great life also in good blue collar fields, if thatôs where they want to go and where their interests are, so Iôm interested in the opt-out provisions. (Senate Committee Meeting, 1/12/2010)

Here, the legislator drew a characterization of students who do not fit within the traditional academic expectations. She appealed to the idea that policies should afford struggling students the opportunity to find success outside of the realm of college-track coursework that lined up with their interests and goals. She also subtly indicated the role of policy and studentsô earning potential, and this connection was repeated elsewhere. For

> The concept is that if you donôt have those basic skills in literacy é .you will not be successful in a global market é what we see in the job market is, the way itôs developing is, if you donôt have those *basic literacy skills*, your ability to problem solve, your ability to understand, your ability to function *independently* and collectively (because weôre becoming more of an *independent* worker too, weôre not working in a *factory* any more, theyôre assigned a job and they never come in to the actual workplace, and theyôll have to follow instructions) that if they donôt have those *basic literacy* skills é they wonôt be competitive. So thatôs more of an *economic* incentive, I guess. (Interview, 5/26/2010)

In the report *A Critical Mission: Making Adolescent Literacy an Immediate Priority in SREB States*, the Southern Regional Education Board (2009a) explained the matter thusly, (bold text included):

> Education researchers are not the only ones citing reading deficienciesa

ongoing efforts to narrow the gap in test scores between African American and Hispanic students and their White counterparts (noted earlier in this chapter). Another belief was related to the societal impact of low literacy skills and its effects on class structure. While reflecting on the recently passed Senate Bill 4, which increased Floridaôs graduation requirements, a legislator stated, ñ é Weôre going to have a *serious underclass* that is *permanent,* and/or é we will not have enough space in the *prisons* to put themò (Interview, 6/16/2010). In a meeting, this same participant bridged the societal concern (large underclass and prison population) with fiscal matters related to grade retention. Here, he questioned the direction of policy and the unintended consequences for struggling students as well as for public expenditures:

> ñMy concern is the 111,000 kids who have failed two or more times right now, which costs us about 1.7 billion. What do we do, with that cohort of kids--young people who are destined to be permanent underclass in the state of Florida? How do we deal with that? And I just keep thinking about how we deal with that with getting them a career or getting them some kind of job when right now é theyôre not going to pass. And we have 152,000 kids in detention centers right now. I am concerned about that group of young people so that we donôt pay for them in our societal miss. Now, I donôt know how to do that é ò (Senate Committee Meeting, 3/10/2010)

Fiscal concerns were also voiced more directly. An interview participant stated, ñ55 percent of the students entering Floridaôs colleges and universities require remediation in reading, writing and math, costing $130 million in 2005-2006. This is because schools

are not adequately preparing students for collegeò (Typed Interview Response, 6/10/2010).

Finally, and most prevalent, were concerns relating the cumulative effects of struggling learners/readers to matters of the stateôs private economy. According to the SREB (2009a),

> Low reading levels also cost states money more directly. The Alliance for Excellent Education and others have shown strong links between poor reading skills, low graduation rates in high schools and the economy. High school dropouts in America from the Class of 2008 alone will lose an estimated **$319.6 billion in lifetime income** because of low education levels. The potential economic benefits for the SREB region of helping more students graduate, earn higher wages and pay taxes run into the **tens of billions of dollars** (p. 3, bold text included).

Notice here the subtle indication of reading levels, which appeared to reference standardized test scores. Also, the report blended the individual and the societal impact of limited reading ability by first indicating the loss of income, then connecting that loss to the failure to generate tax revenue. In a legislative committee meeting, a representative from the Consortium of Florida Education Foundations (an association for local education foundations) called membersô attention to the following quote from the meeting packet (handout). Again, the argument is based on ñachievement levelsò as measured by standardized tests:

> ñIf the United States had in recent years closed the gap between its educational achievement levels and those of better-performing nations such as Finland and

concerns about class structure and the relation between drop-outs and incarceration, the increase in fiscal costs for college remediation courses, the link between school achievement and earning potential, and the cumulative effects of a non-competitive workforce resulting in loss of tax revenue and a diminished gross domestic product.

Like the notion of adolescent agency, Floridaôs focus on struggling learners/readers is best represented by the complexity construct of interdependency (Page, 2007). The effectiveness of the system as determined by NCLB (2001) was contingent on the extent to which struggling readers showed Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Struggling readers needed the system to help them overcome their weaknesses with reading in order to increase their post-secondary opportunities, but the system needed their gains as well: to improve its status vis a vis progress toward issues of equity, and to increase inter-state rankings. Studentsô reading success was linked even more broadly to revenue expenditures and the overall social and economic health of the state.

s. In complex systems, whether social or otherwise, diversity does not ñhappenò in the way that bottom-up emergence or system feedback do. Rather, diversity is an attribute (Page, 2007). Put simply, diversity *is.* In confirmation of this principle, the last area of convergence across the tiers and speech genres was a belief that students have distinct and diverse academic needs. Academic diversity is similar to (but not the same as) Pageôs (2007) description of cognitive diversity, or ñwho we are inside our headsò (p. xxviii). The data showed policy actors held an awareness of studentsô academic individuality and its implications for policy and practice. This was evidenced in both general and reading-specific terms. It included students who did and did not struggle with academic expectations as well as those who

were and were not engaged in institutional goals and objectives. The antithesis of diversity was sameness, and aside from the focus on raising the test scores of all

151 that everybody learns in the same fashion is not true, and there are technologies out there that very quickly LGHOWLIKRZ

product for your struggling *reader*, hereôs a product for your *AP*

readers, but lacking in comprehension abilities, or (b) they were not fluent and had word-

state-wide summative test scores in Floridaôs adolescent literacy policy. Also, students assigned to reading intervention courses were required to be taught by teachers who had earned the Florida Reading Endorsement or who had a certification in K-12 Reading.

The data collected in this study revealed that differentiated instruction was valued as a way to meet studentsô diverse reading needs. Differentiated instruction is described as a set of individualized or ñpersonalizedò learning opportunities that lead all students in a given classroom, regardless of their academic differences, to the same end-goals (Tomlinson, 1999, p. 12). This notion is similar to the complexity thinking condition of enabling constraints. According to Davis & Sumara (2006), enabling constraints provide ñsufficient coherence to orient agentsô actions and sufficient randomness to allow for flexible and varied responseò (p. 148). In essence, differentiated instruction both enables

Not all of the differentiated findings were solution-based, however. In Tier II meetings an additional problem arose: The belief that Florida students were not being prepared adequately for college or the workplace. Table 3 depicts these differentiated, yet prominently represented solutions for reform as well as the additional problem of college/workplace preparation.

Table 3

Policy Solutions and Problem: Differentiated Beliefs

Genre	Tier I	Tier II
Interviews	Professional Development Formative Assessment Instructional Leadership	Accountability System Instructional Materials Technology for Teaching
Meetings	N/A	Accountability System Teacher Quality *College/Workplace Preparation*
Documents	Professional Development Formative Assessment Instructional Materials	Accountability System Formative Assessment Technology for Teaching

Note: College/Workplace Preparation was viewed as a problem/goal rather than as a sor81.58 Tm2 nstructiBT1 0 0

Also é we developed in association with the Florida Center for Reading Research an assessment tool, the Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading é that is é very valuable especially to our secondary folks who have *not* had an

FAIR assessments for secondary students were comprised of three components: (a) reading comprehension passages and questions, (b) a maze task (students read short passages and supplies a choice of three missing words), and (c) a word analysis (or spelling) assessment (Florida Center for Reading Research, 2009). Depending on the

At their outer edges, the nested unities of complex systems resist predictability, top-down hierarchical control, and thus, imposed order (Davis, Sumara, & Luce-Kapler, 2008, Morrison, 2006; Stevens, 2006). Consistent with the complexity thinking notions of short-range relationships, interdependency and on-going system feedback, formative assessment (when used in a non-evaluative context of collaboration and rich discussion),

students who had trouble comprehending subject-area texts. For instance, in the *Senate Interim Report 2010-111* (2009) which reviewed the reading intervention practices of Florida middle and high schools, the authors concluded:

> In the past, it was widely accepted that the teaching of reading was primarily the task of elementary teachers. Based on this accepted practice, coupled with the rapidly accelerating literacy demands at the secondary level, it was not unusual to find that secondary teachers feel inadequately prepared to support studentsô literacy skills within their academic content areas (p. 2).

A tertiary interview participant, indicating the influence of pre-service education, stated the concern thusly:

> Content area teachers are typically not trained in how to help their students access their texts. There are unique things about each subject area, and so content area teachers are challenged with how to *address* those unique areas, but yet help their students access information from texts that theyôre required to read, and so I think thatôs an area that *really* needs to be strengthened. (Interview, 4/19/2010)

Perhaps because content area teachers were perceived to be inadequately

s

development courses. Also, ñIntervention Academiesò were held in various locations across the state during the summer, where content teachers worked together with their reading coaches to develop their skills in meeting the needs of students in reading intervention courses.

In particular, reading or literacy coaches were highly valued as a means for professional development. Based on the work of Joyce and Showers (2002), Florida and other districts across the country have embraced the idea of coaching in order to provide on-going, internal support for teachers in the K-12 setting. Joyce and Showers demonstrated the profound differences between various teacher training models and the amount of transfer to practice. In particular, they differentiated between theory-driven training delivered through (a) lectures, readings and discussions and (b) training that adds job-embedded coaching to the initial theoretical format. The latter method, they contended, is remarkably more effective in producing transfer of learning to classroom practice. Job-embedded professional development is more effective than ñone-shot workshops provided by external trainersò because it enables the on-going construction of a teacherôs skills and knowledge through the social support of a peer (Duessen, Coskie, Robinson & Autio, 2007, p.1). In the following excerpt, an agency official described the value the state placed on professional development. In particular, she noted Floridaôs organizational shift toward coaching as a method of teacher professional development in contrast to the traditional work-shop type sessions that typically take place out of the classroom context.

> é the *most* important thing around *all* of that, is your professional development, and your training and your reading endorsements and the coaches that come in

and do the training é So, weôre trying to move professional development out of

those as much as they can. And Iôve seen some *very effective*

required of the state for reading program implementation. In general, at least two primary forms of resources emerged: pre-designed reading programs approved by the state and purchased by districts; and classroom libraries, with an emphasis on texts leveled by difficulty.

The use of Floridaôs instructional reading materials was regulated by the ñpartial

comprehensive intervention reading programs) are implemented with fidelityò (p. 5). This attention to program adherence was very different from the job-embedded professional development as described by Joyce & Showers (2002).

Clearly, the term ñresearch-

become literacy experts able to provide high-quality literacy instruction on the basis of their personal knowledge of important literacy goals and instructional practices. Another approach emphasizes the selection of curriculum

regards to their contents. The Board of Education rule for the *K-12 Comprehensive Research-Based Reading Plan* (Florida Department of Education, 2008) required districts to show evidence of the provision of classroom libraries by content area teachers in order to ñextend and build discussions of text in order to deepen understandingò (p. 3). Further, the rule stated that districts ñmust include a description of the utilization of leveled classroom libraries and independent reading practiceò (p. 3). That leveled libraries were written in to the reading plan is evidence of the belief found in all subcategories of the data that students brought a diversity of academic needs to the classroom. In this case, a given classroom library needed to contain materials across a range of difficulty levels. A different example of the emphasis on classroom libraries was evidenced in the June 3rd 2010 draft of the revised *Reading Endorsement Competencies*. Delineated as a performance indicator in the second of five competencies required for teachers earning a reading endorsement was the use of ñresources and research-based practices that create information intensive environments (e.g., diverse classroom libraries, inquiry reading)ò (p. 5).

Texts in classroom libraries were intended more for studentsô independent reading practice rather than for direct instruction. The provision of a variety of materials, including motivational texts, was frequently cited as a catalyst for facilitating student engagement through individual choice. This stipulation was in agreement with the focus on studentsô agency as described earlier in this chapter, as well as studies reviewed in Chapter II (Behrman, 2003; Moje, 1996; Franzak, 2008). Mandated time for daily independent reading practice through the use of classroom library materials was required in the State Board of Education *K-12 Student Reading Intervention Rule* (2008), both for

middle and high schools (for students scoring at Level I or II on the FCAT with evidence

differed from Tier I solutions slightly in that these priorities tended toward Systems-Based solutions. Notably, however, the perceived importance of the accountability system occurred as a valued solution across each of the three Tier II genres. There was however, an emphasis on People-Based and Resource-Based solutions as well. As found

capacity building measures and symbolic language use (Schneider & Ingram, 1990). The A+ Plan was centered on the statewide administration of the FCAT (a mandate). It required the state Department of Education to publically grade (symbolic language) and compensate schools based on studentsô test scores and their improvement on the test across time as well as on high schoolsô graduation rates, student participation in Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses, college dual enrollment and Advanced Certificate of Education courses (incentives). Schools, districts or school boards requesting or designated as needing improvement were given support (capacity building) in the form of training and technical assistance in ñconducting needs assessments, (learning tools) developing and implementing school improvement plans, or implementing other components of school improvement and accountability. The Koret Task Force, in an independent evaluation of Floridaôs A+ Plan states that it was a ñbold, innovative é pace-setter for the nation.ò Moreover, this group describes this plan as a suitable model for NCLB (Peterson, 2006. p. 49).

The 2006 A++ Plan appeared to be a fine-tuning of the A+ Plan for secondary grades. Among many provisions, it included an increase in requirements for middle school promotion and high school graduation, along with mandated interventions for students scoring below expectations on the FCAT reading assessment (Florida Department of Education, 2006). Together, these initiatives formed the backbone of Floridaôs reform.

The key role of the accountability system was articulated by the Education Commissioner: ñWeôve addressed the importance of what students should know and be able to do. Weôve done that through one--standards, two--through accountability, three--

types of things that are pretty standard and *clear*, I think has been a *benefit* to

As described earlier in the chapter, improved test scores were associated with social equity issues, such as in efforts to narrow the achievement gap between Minorities and White students. Consider the use of ñall studentsò in this statement by a legislator: ñ é the FCAT has served a great purpose in *raising* the level of accountability, and weôve seen test score s go up. We é have. And é from *all* studentsò (Interview, 6/7/2010). In this

I sure hope my grandsonôs elementary school decides to adopt this series, because I would have all the confidence in the world that that childôs being taught the content that they need to be taught and will be held accountable for. And, the teacher will have in her hands a tool that she will also be held accountable for. And-we have a very strong accountability system in Florida-everyone should be held accountable. Therefore, the student and the teacher should have a tool in their hand-17(i)18(540(e)-15(i)38(-6(e)4(,)-9( )10(t)-2.p(h)20(e)4( )] TJ)-29(in)18( )-9b-9(s)9(t)-2

Certainly the accountability system can be considered as a constraint within the realm of the enabling-constraints framework. However, Davis & Sumara (2006) warn that the condition of enabling constraints is predicated upon a ñdelicate balanceò between constraining and enabling features (p. 148). In carrying this logic a bit further, I shift to the complexity notion of system nestedness, beginning at the micro-level. As Black and Wiliam (1998) argue, a classroom culture predicated on rewards, competition and grades forces students to ñspend their time and energy looking for clues to the óright answerôò (p. 142). This situation relates to the notion of students who are driven by a performance approach to goals, as opposed to a mastery, or learning approach (Jetton & Alexander, 2004). In other words, students who are driven by a performance goal orientation are motivated by competition and/or their image in relation to what others think about them.

which are ñquite unlike those of everyday performanceò encourage a culture of grade grubbing (Black & Wiliam, 1998, p. 148)? Would it encourage a rich instructional repertoire of receptive and expressive literacy activities for all students as represented in the Sunshine State Standards or in the adolescent literacy approach to teaching and learning? Contrast this possibility to a more internally-driven system where mastery is the primary goal and a collaborative, process-driven work ethic is the norm. These questions and others like them appeared to be the impetus for Alternate Discourse ñB.ò

Alternate discourse "B": Opposition to the accountability system. Even though the accountability system was codified in law, it was not universally embraced by Tier II participants. A limited set of negative beliefs about the test-driven aspects of the accountability system arose from a relatively small community of individuals. This dissonance became the second of only two competing discourses found in the data. The existence of this alternate discourse was not found in any of the formal texts reviewed in this study; nor was it found in State Board of Education meetings. Rather, these beliefs were suggested in interviews, and were revealed most prominently in legislative meetings. Thus, it is important to emphasize the relative placement of this alternate perspective within the overall discourse about the test-driven aspects of accountability: While disconfirming evidence for the value of test-driven accountability was present in the data, it was eclipsed by the dominant beliefs described above in the previous section. In other words, the accountability system as a policy mechanism was so valued that even with the existence of a set of negative beliefs, it remained as a prominent policy solution across all three of the Tier II genres. In effect, it was quite limited in comparison to the dominant discourse.

While not directly agreeing with the alternative discourse outright, one legislator acknowledged the existence of an alternate perspective relating to the FCAT. She described this summative test as somewhat of a necessary evil, which had served the purpose of strengthening instruction and subsequently reading ability, including that of minority students.

> é We can just take a minute to hate on the FCAT for a second. So weôll all hate on it, you know, simultaneously, we hate it, okay, but é the *truth* of the matter is...the second *part* of that is that FCAT has contributed to a whole host of motivation for *reading*. And I look at the statistics across the board and we have seen, you know, a *dramatic* increase in reading, in *percentages* é of kids reading *on level* as a result of the *intensive*

deliver l b ʂ ƶ ы ы i l rl l q l m q l r ђ ᴋ ᴟ r

Policy actors also noted the necessity of preparing students for the technological aspects of the workplace, and the crucial role of technology as an important aspect of obtaining a high school education. Consider the following statement by a legislator:

> Technology is a critical element. And it is not a complete menu of education and academic delivery without that critical element. You will not receive a complete education without digital delivery today, period. You will not be considered an educated individual without that key component (Senate Meeting, 3/2/2010)

Perhaps because of the belief articulated above, the potential of the Florida Virtual School, a public online K-12 learning school, was frequently mentioned. This system was seen as a means for meeting the demands of technological learning as well as a way to compensate for weaknesses in ñtraditionalò delivery methods. Here, a legislator explained the concept of virtual education:

> Thereô ᴗ 1 ᴗ ˛ .

for Performanceò) was also a key component of the federal Race to the Top grant application, I labeled this component as a policy solution. Driven by efforts to win the competitive grant funding, state leaders used the testing mandate to design a bill-related proposal for evaluating the effectiveness of teachers (Senate Bill 6). In essence, half of a teacherôs salary would be based on the results of the learning gains of his or her students. This plan generated considerable consternation outside of the state policy circle, and resulted in a groundswell of unrest throughout the stateôs cadre of teachers, several of whom came to speak at committee meetings. This bill was also the site for revealing many of the opposing viewpoints about the accountability system from within the legislature. However, these voices were never enough to turn the momentum of the legislation.

Buoyed by research presented in pre-session legislative meetings and the primary emphasis on test scores and teacher quality in the Race to the Top grant, legislators and speakers articulated their belief about the critical role of test scores in the determination of a given teacherôs effectiveness. Arguing for the use of test scores as a way to connect student performance (test scores) to teacher evaluations before members of the House Pre-K-12 committee, the agency official expanded his rationale:

> The next critical piece for Florida in addressing these issues [of what students should know and be able to do] is the issue of teacher quality. Currently, we have 99% of our teachers across the state evaluated as being satisfactory. We donôt have the ability to differentiate between teachers that are high performers and those that need additional support, and those that perhaps need to be exited out of the profession. Of the 71 lowest performing schools in the state, 66 of those

> schools have 100% of their faculty evaluated as satisfactory. In the bottom 10 schools in the state, 100% satisfactory faculty; reading proficiency ranges between 9% proficient and 16% proficient. We must find a way to have high expectations for every child from every background, but we must find policies and practices that require us to put effective teachers in front of every classroom in front of every group of children. (House Committee Meeting, 3/25/2010)

In this excerpt, the Commissioner criticized the present teacher evaluation system due to

improvement, Tier II data preferred a revision of the teacher evaluation system using test scores as a means to the same end. The difference between these two groups was a formative, developmental approach (through ongoing professional development and reflection) versus a more summative, definitive approach (through standardized summative test scores).

There was some discussion (albeit limited) of teacher quality that occurred outside the realm of test scores. Often, as in this legislatorôs comment, there was a sense that good teachers were ñin it for the kids:ò

> And é you know, there are just all these kind of societal kind of things going on in these young peopleôs lives é and é if you get a poor *teacher* é who é isnôt you know, isnôt in there for the right *reasons* é then [it] causes young people to lose interest and become disinterested in the subject matter and whatôs going on.

were highly supportive of the summative assessment scores solution. *Thus, any differences discussed below must be tempered by the fact that all data sources placed a*

Table 4

Systems, People and Resources: Solution Types

Genre	Tier I	Tier II
Interviews	P-Professional Development P-Formative Assessment P Instructional Leadership	S-Accountability System R-Instructional Materials R-Technology for Teaching
Meetings	N/A	S-Accountability System P-Teacher Quality
Documents	P-Professional Development P-Formative Assessment R-Instructional Materials	S-Accountability System P-Formative Assessment R-Technology for Teaching

S=Systems-Based Solution; P=People-Based Solution; R=Resource-Based Solution

The Tier II sources showed a higher value for System-Based solutions, with a secondary emphasis on Resource- and People Based solutions. This preference was revealed in the priority placed on the accountability system, which occurred across all levels of text formality. Complexity thinking would designate the heavy presence of both Floridaôs emphasis on summative test scores as well as the accountability system in general as an example of a system constraint. Other solutions were varied across the speech genres. Interestingly, there was a noticeable emphasis on Resource-Based solutions as well as an absence of People-Based solutions in Tier II interview data.

Obviously some of these solutions could arguable be assigned to another of the three types (for instance Technology for Teaching might also be considered a People-Based Solution if there was ample interaction between a teacher and student. However, for this analysis, I selected the solution type that seemed most prominent based on the data.

One explanation for the Tier II emphasis on the accountability system as a solution may simply be that these data sources, unlike Tier I sources, were simply not as knowledgeable about the nature of reading and reading instruction. Individualsô roles as policy actors were dispersed across a range of responsibilities across the broader institutional context. Indeed, a survey of Legislative committee and School Board agenda revealed a wide array of issues from teen suicide prevention to funding allocations to charter school hearings. Thus, Tier II poÜ ᵉ cho } I r ٧ol. $ aЫa

made possible by system feedback through Floridaôs digital data collection and warehousing capabilities.

Summary of Results

Research Question 1 asked: *What is the nature of the values, beliefs and feelings about adolescent literacy conveyed by state-level discourse communities as these meanings are manifested across the primary and secondary speech genres of Florida's adolescent literacy reform policy?* Three overarching findings resulted from the analysis: (a) Reading as Literacy; (b) Institutionally Imposed Student Profiles; and (c) Policy Solutions and Problems.

In Florida, literacy was seen as a combination of various versions of reading. The most narrow version, FCAT Reading, was restricted to the kinds of reading skills amenable to standardized tests. Other versions grew progressively broader and more balanced across the receptive/expressive continuum. Secondly, policy actors revealed the existence of four student profiles in relation to their ñfitò to institutional expectations. A given studentôs profile varied based on her or his academic skills, progress, and level of academic engagement. Finally, policy actors believed strongly in the value of standardized summative tests as both a means and outcome for adolescent literacy reform. At the same time, the data showed a concern for students who were not meeting the test-driven expectations due to their academic diversity, their individual agency or their status as a struggling learner. Policy actors proposed various solutions for increasing test scores with Tier II actors placing a high value on maintaining and strengthening the authority of the test-driven accountability system. Tier I actors preferred People-Based solutions. Each of these results is discussed more fully in Chapter VI.

Chapter V: Research Journal

I have thus far reported the results of my inquiry of state level adolescent literacy policy, which was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the nature of the beliefs about adolescent literacy conveyed by state-level discourse communities as these meanings are manifested across the primary and secondary speech genres of Floridaôs adolescent literacy reform?
2. How can Floridaôs adolescent literacy reform policy be reconceptualized using complexity thinking
   (a) as a model for policy design?
   (b) as a goal for adolescent literacy teaching and learning?

Using the genre of formal speech, I described the results of the three forms of data I collected during a window of time in a particular setting. Yet, no researcher is ever fully objective or completely removed from the unit of analysis. Nor do these results exist simply as a set of stand-alone facts, disparate and separated from the researcher (see for example, Dyson & Genishi, 2005; Patton, 2002). Research and researcher are intimately intertwined. In this section, I turn my discussion inward to describe the results of this study as it relates to my ñlived experienceò during data collection and analysis (Patton, 2002).

The purpose of this section is two-fold and these two purposes are tightly woven and interdependent. Both are related to standards of quality. First, in addition to

describing the *outward* results, it is equally important to explicate the *internally* ñlived throughò results as they became a part of my thinking throughout the data collection and analysis phase of this study. Secondly, this section is a description of my ever-present efforts to acknowledge my own biases as I entered into the culture of state policy. In a sense, this chapter serves as a description of the internal fabric through with the data filtered as I wrote Chapter IV.

Heteroglossia

I wanted to come to this research with an etic perspective (Patton, 2002). In Trekkie terms, I wanted to be the Spock-like analyst, who would be unfazed by emotion in my observations and examinations. I failed on both counts. Instead, I experienced the data collection and analysis through a bricolage of my own values, beliefs and feelings, shaded by the values, beliefs and feelings of others that swirled within the data. Each perspective in this multifarious blend served to counteract others, effectively placing me not quite as the impartial observer, but more like the impassioned insider, open to anything and everything. Ideas that might just make things better for marginalized students during their last few years in school (or that might even alleviate the idea of marginalized students). In so do-21( )-9(f).i 1 142.61tg20(o)-19(-21( )-9(f).i 1 14e.o(a)-15(n)27.5,74 322

listening to bits and pieces of the state policy culture. It was tempting to just stay at home and use the audio/video recordings of the meetings, but I needed to get an up-close feel for the folks Iôd be interviewing; to hear in real-time their reactions to the agenda items; to see their faces first-hand and watch how they interacted with one another. All of these opportunities fell outside of the offerings of the audio/video recordings. I attended as many meetings as I could from February to June; a total of seven. My observation notes during the meetings were limited; I spent my time mostly just watching, listening and

much more they can fit into the day for teachers to do without taking something out.

assessment terminology was simply amazing to me: ñStudentsô proficiency; studentsô performance; studentsô ability; studentsô gains; teachersô performance; teachersô quality é All code words for test scores. I wondered how (or if) their language might differ if their *own* effectiveness were evaluated based on a similar accountability mechanism. Yes. A committee of citizens could determine a cut-score for the number of bills introduced and passed each session, by each legislator. Then, an objective determination could be made about which legislators were and were not proficient. Would they ask for exceptions based on ñexternal circumstances beyond their control?ò Or, from a completely different angle, how might the football fans in this group feel if they were somehow sequestered from watching or listening to a yearôs worth of their favorite teamôs games in lieu of a receiving a brief list of statistics at seasonôs end: Final scores, yards rushing, yards passing, turnovers and sacks? Would these numbers sufficiently represent the richness of the experience of watching each game? Of the totality of each one of their teamôs performances? At the most, they would enable a rudimentary description of the teamôs productivity and the ability to compare their team to others. Thatôs *something*, I supposed.

Soon, I started lingering a bit after meetings were adjourned. I watched the patterns of social interaction. A few times I approached individuals and asked questions related to their comments or presentations. All was in order. I slowly but purposely built up to the next challenge ð requesting interviews.

After blitzing the Senate and House office buildings, and contacting some tertiary participants, I found people were actually interested in meeting with me. I was relieved. I needed their perspectives. The communicating, scheduling and interviewing were

incredibly time-intensive. Many days were consumed with some or all of these tasks, but in the process I built up a comfort level for contacting and interacting with people who make decisions that affect the experiences of teachers and students. I knew if I was going to pursue the goal of working at the interstices of policy and practice I needed to feel at ease initiating contact and communicating with these folks. I truly did not think I would land many interviews, and of course there were individuals I didnôt get to talk with who no doubt would have provided excellent input, but in general, I was energized by the overall response. I ended up conducting 17 interviews out of a total of 32 requests. And, I found I really liked these folks. Well, most of them.

Some of the participants came across as arrogant, some were nervous, some were reserved and others were incredibly forthcoming with their opinions and beliefs. There were times when I wondered if they were pandering to my persona as an educator. (ñI know we should have done things differently with Senate Bill 6 é ò). But most of them seemed to care about kids in their own way. And, no matter their perspective (traditional, progressive, pragmatist, institutional-minded, pro- or negative-accountability), I could usually see their point. I suppose thatôs one way of understanding what Lindblom and Woodhouse (1993) mean about the complexities of public policy. Although I rarely inserted my own opinions (if I did, it was after the interview), I occasionally found myself nodding my head in agreement; I know this is a good interview technique, but it made me feel uncomfortable when my head nodded in spite of my personal beliefs. On these occasions, I felt I was being duplicitous. Did they see me as an ally? Deep down, I hoped they did. Perhaps some day they might listen and consider my perspective as sincerely as I was considering theirs.

presented his organizationôs "Talent Supply Chain" model as a way to represent the entirety of the educational system, from pre-K to college graduation. In his terms, education was simply a resource delivery system that, when operating properly would keep the economy strong (Floridaôs wasnôt, he claimed). The system was divided into zones that would respond to market demands. ñAre you kidding me?ò Reveling in my judgment, I wrote, ñZones?ò ñMarket-driven education?ò This was incredible. Whatever happened to learning for the sake of learning; the liberal arts é ? His voice was monotonous but authoritative; he seemed to be reading the report. Before long, I saw little pre-K boys with their spritzed hair parted on the side and girls with ribbon-tied pig tails and light-up sneakers. They lined up eagerly. Smiling, wiggling é .and stepped on to a moving conveyer belt. Like little Lemmings, they moved through the zones. Knowledge was poured into their heads along the way by faceless technicians until they were ready to step off the Talent Supply conveyer belt and into the economy and a different conveyor belt.

But, wait-- In flew that pesky gad-fly of a question: the one that always seems to interfere with my self-righteous indignation when people start talking of education in economic terms. The one that even had the audacity to appear all dressed up in the proposal for this research: ñIs it unjust for public policy to be concerned with economic prosperity given its relation to our national stability?ò I shifted, as I always do when it

economically (and otherwise) with other countries (tribes) who would like gain control over us? How can we secure and maintain our space (resources, democracy é .) unless we can compete on the global stage? Shouldnôt someone be monitoring large trends in our educational system in relation to those of other nations? With the best tools we have at a given point in time? And reacting when there is a downward shift? In that instant, the adolescent literacy crisis made sense. The monotonous voice had accomplished its mission.

Iôm fairly certain one of the committee members noticed I had gone into a trance, because after the Talent Supply Chain presentation, she publicly questioned the assumption that all people are motivated by future earnings. I was grateful for her comments and shifted to a more comfortable place in my mind.

On a different occasion my personal biases surfaced again. This occurred during the contentious Senate Bill 6 deliberations, when I twice witnessed a lock-step vote against various amendments aimed at softening the ñTeacher Pay for Performanceò bill.

U.S. government? To dissuade chemistry teachers from engaging in a nationally respected and rigorous process of self-reflection and professional effort in order to strengthen their pedagogical skills? I got the feeling that some authoritative voice had dictated a mandatory unified front in order to push the bill through. Independent decision making was clearly absent from this group of legislators. Later, in interviews, I sensed that some participants regretted the way the bill had been handled. I wondered again about a possible hidden pressure that was placed on them and how these people managed to reconcile the fact that they appeared to have voted against their personal beliefs. Not knowing for certain, I came to one sure conclusion: politics was *not* for me.

While my experiences with conflict were many, three interviews were especially pertinent to my lived experience with the data. Two of these were instrumental in providing balance to my thinking about standardized tests. It was not *what* these individuals said; it was *how* they said it. Unfortunately, due to consent stipulations, I cannot share either comment. And, perhaps even if I could, a transcription would not carry the impact these statements had for me as I sat there in the interviews and later listened to the recordings. In each case, however, these individuals poignantly described the impact testing had made for children from economically disadvantaged homes. Suffice it to say, they each made a compelling and convincing case. Throughout data analysis and the writing of the results, it was these comments that served as an ideological counter-weight to my concerns about standardized testing: Each time I found myself feasting on a cogently presented critique of test-driven accountability, their voices would sound, and rein me back in.

development. My work would be read by at least one policy actor who was interested in my results. Yeah, baby. The ultimate reward would be to see this work being used to directly influence Floridaôs education policy. I thought about incrementalism as the typical means of policy change (Lindblom & Woodhouse, 1993). I thought about the self-serving side of policy actors who knew little about the complexities of teaching and learning but inserted their hegemonic influence anyway. I thought about advice I had received from members of the education policy research community about not being overly critical. I thought about all the perspectives I had heard in the meetings and interviews and policy documents. I thought so much I froze.

I began data collection and analysis with certain experiences, opinions and ideas. I encountered others during the process. Sometimes, I stood *with* these ideas; sometimes I stood *against* them. Yet, throughout the process, I found myself striving to see other sides and understand rationales I previously had not fully explored. As I wrote, I came to rely heavily on the act of moving from stance to stance to achieve a feeling that I was doing justice to each perspective, including my own as a literacy researcher. The constructions and interpretations in the following chapters are a result of these multifarious stances.

Chapter VI: Discussion, Recommendations, Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to determine the meanings housed in the state-level language, actions and objects of Floridaôs adolescent literacy reform. I was guided

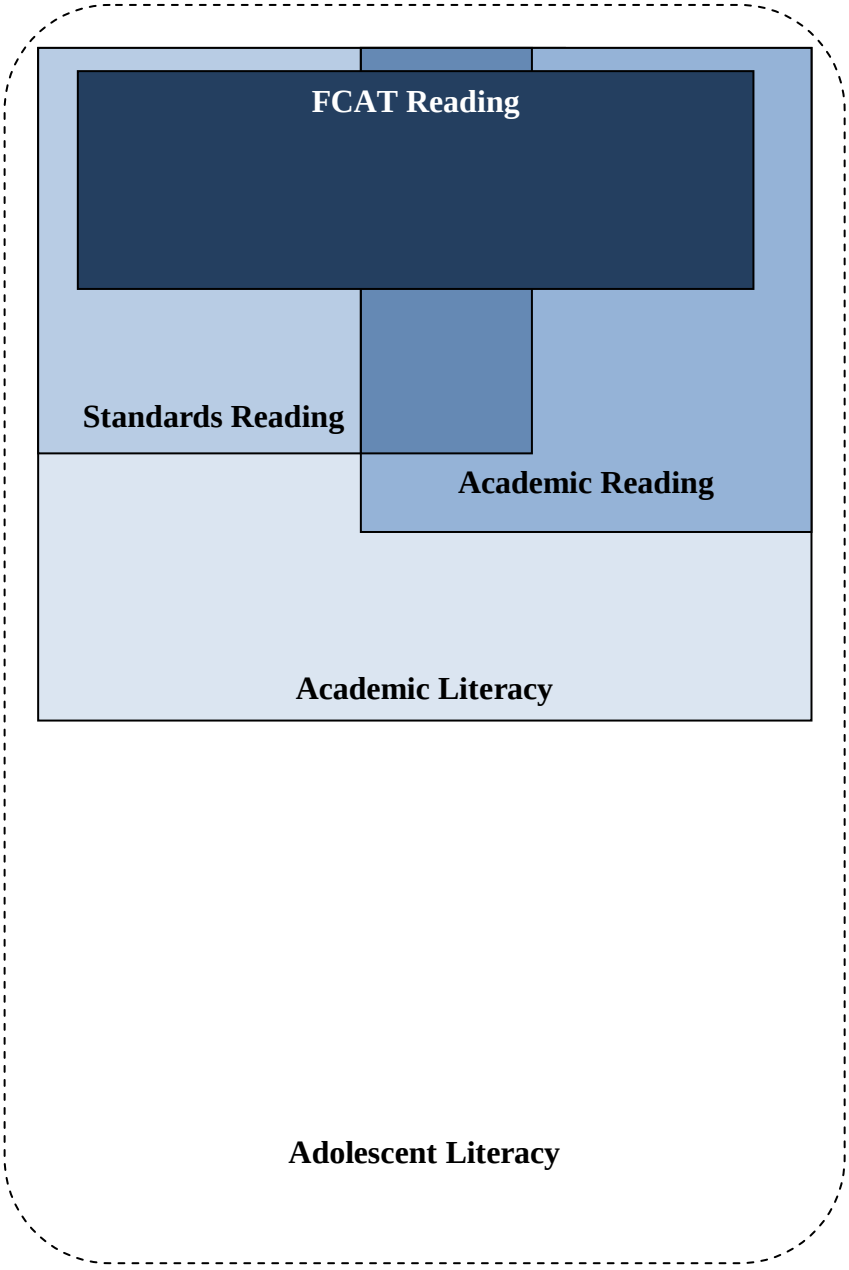

Figure 8. Four versions of literacy with authority continuum.

test seemed not quite congruent with the stateôs stance that reading development was an ongoing process and was highly contingent on studentsô experiential knowledge.

While Academic Reading was not associated with a single annual score that led to modifications in course schedules or graduation, it was highly impactf-6( )-9(g)2h7

this angle, several concerns come to light that should be recognized as sources for unintended policy consequences, especially in relation to students who do not meet institutional expectations. Like Lorenzôs innocuous flutter of butterfly wings that serve as a catalyst for storm systems half a globe away (see Gleick, 1987), this narrowed, test-driven approach to literacy might well be a contributing factor to the adolescent literacy crisis mentioned in the opening chapter of this report (Allington & Dennis, 2007; Salinger, 2007). In particular, Floridaôs approach seemed at odds with stated concerns for meeting the diverse needs of students who do not fit within institutional expectations. As well, it appeared to be an over-reach of Systems-Based policy solutions resulting in a source of possible confusion and/or tension at the micro-level.

Marginalized Readers: Distanced from the Institution

In this study, policy actors portrayed adolescents as possessing certain institutionally imposed profiles in relation to their academic and agentive fit with institutional structures. Each student appeared to possess four characteristics that positioned him or her in relation to the institutional expectations for grades 6-12. Figure 9 depicts a possible configuration of the four struggling student profiles and their distance from institutional expectations. This figure shows the institutional expectations as a solid line, which represents the definitive nature of the cut-score on a high stakes exam, whether an FCAT or End of Course Exam. Within this box is student-type ña.ò This adolescent is generally academically equipped, engaged and is meeting expectations such as minimum test score expectations and classroom-based criteria. According to some participants in this study, she or he may or may not be prepared for college or workplace success due to the disconnect between K-12 and post-secondary expectations.

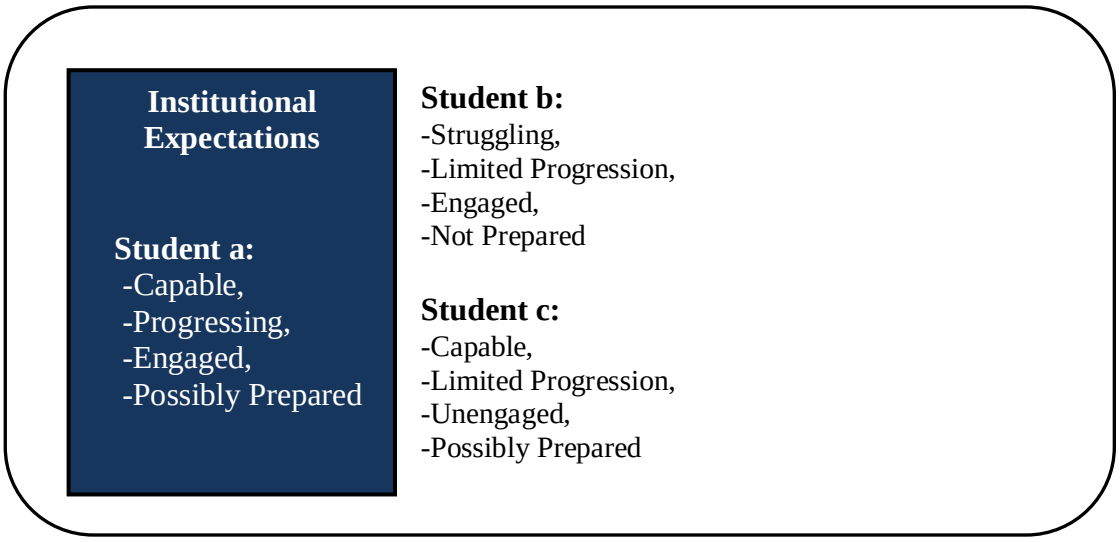

Figure 9. Policy actorsô perceptions about studentsô academic and agentive profiles in relation to institutional expectations.

Student ñb,ò while struggling academically, is generally engaged in trying to meld to institutional expectations (e.g. attending well to interventions in preparation for the FCAT, completing homework and classroom assignments). Student ñcò is academically equipped, but is generally uninterested in institutional versions of literacy. This student may be an avid reader and/or composer in her or his out of school life, but for various reasons, she or he is not cognitively engaged with school-related tasks. (This type of

the institution at all. These studentsô agentive goals, values, interests and abilities would most likely be at

identity and values aside and adopt these institutional values as determined by the state (e.g., Wickens & Sandlin, 2007).

On the other hand, a different view of literacy would be one that is more amenable to perhaps all student profiles, but especially those who may be at odds with institutional expectations. This approach would position students as both consumers and producers of text, allowing for more of a balance in literate authority. Students would not only be required to read, but *do* something with what they read: through discussion, presentation or defense, either in writing or orally; thus taking them beyond the one-

identity, values and abilities are important; let's work together to connect them to institutional values and develop them through engaging in literacy practices.

Certainly, the reader might argue that the best teachers make just these types of provisions for their students. Another might say that elements of Floridaôs policy encourage this kind of teaching (for instance, consider the requirement to use leveled texts and high-interest classroom libraries). Both arguments are justified. Yet, a reminder is in order.

The data from this study indicated that policy actors universally valued summative assessment scores first and foremost as an indicator of quality teaching and learning at the micro-level. They believed that excellent instruction would yield excellent test scores and that the mere presence of the test would generate better teaching. Yet, this belief appears to be duplicitous: If excellent teachers are those who make the provisions for their students as described in the paragraphs above, *these would be teachers who were enacting a belief in a broader and deeper version of literacy than FCAT Reading and Academic Reading for Adolescents.* Thus, excellent instruction as might be delivered by a high quality teacher was not in agreement with the version of literacy it so highly valued.

Continuing with this logic, districts, schools and teachers might hear this message as it relates to students ñbò ñcò and ñd:ò *Provide high quality intervention instruction to the extent that it is revealed on summative high stakes tests.* This message, supported by the authoritative mandate of the accountability plan, appeared to indicate that shared teacher-text-student authority across the activities, types and uses of resources and classroom interactions were luxuries that might only be designated for those students who fit within institutional expectations and were expected to exceed the minimum cut score

on the test. In other words, the ñliteracy habitatò (Guthrie, cited in Torgesen, et al., 2007, p. 120) for struggling readers would by necessity need to be aimed specifically at the more narrow, receptive version of literacy measured by high stakes tests in order to prepare these students for the next test administration; an event that had significant impact on students as well as the reputations of teachers, principals and districts.

Solutions and Problems

Aside from Floridaôs beliefs about literacy and adolescentsô profiles, several policy solutions along with a fewer number of problems surfaced. Based on the orientation of the specific quotes, these results were mostly characterized as solutions to the problem of low test scores, the diversity of academic needs, the fact that students exercised their individual agency, and were often not prepared for college and/or the workplace.

Systems, people, resources. A deeper analysis of the solutions offered by policy actors revealed that they placed their strongest priority on Systems-Based Solutions in the form of summative standardized tests, and their role within the larger accountability system. A secondary solution type was what I called People-Based Solutions, and these were valued primarily in the Tier I data by those participants and documents that were linked specifically to secondary literacy policy. People-Based Solutions were manifested in discussions about weaving formative assessment results into instruction, professional development by way of reading or literacy coaching or the instructional leadership offered by principals who established and actively maintained a literacy-focused school environment. A third approach was through the provision of certain tangible resources, or Resource-Based Solutions. In this study, I considered these to be primarily the allocations

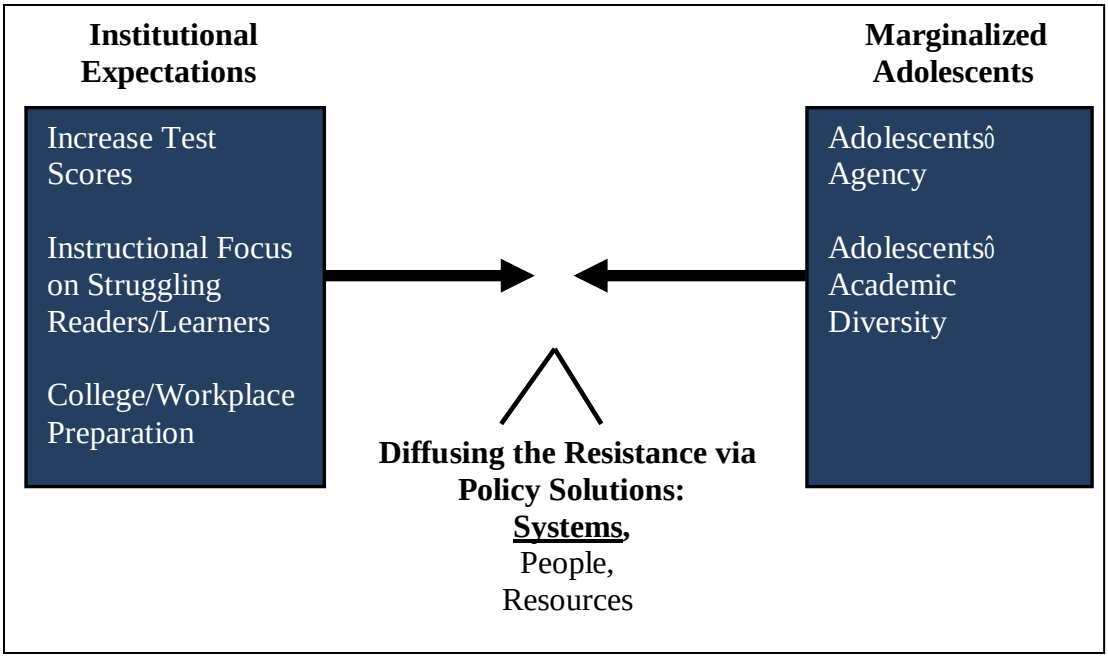

Figure 10. Perceptions about the resistance between institutional and marginalized adolescents.

The joint emphasis on increasing test scores of struggling readers/learners and preparing them for college and the workplace conflicted with the variation in adolescentsô agency and academic abilities. Student agency, especially in its most extreme form (the choice to drop out), appeared to be a counter-weight to the hegemonic pressure of the institution. Like the competing voices of Bakhtinôs heteroglossia (1986), policy actors were keenly aware of studentsô agency, but seemed torn between honoring studentsô individuality and setting standards that required a certain uniformity in order to be deemed successful by the institution. Additionally, this notion of resistance confirms the aforementioned conflict in state policy actorsô value of both academic reading for adolescents (as a way

to achieve higher test scores), and one more compatible with adolescent literacy (as a way to honor studentsô identity and agency in literacy instruction).

In general, there were two dynamics at play with regard to the problems and goals identified in the values, beliefs and feelings of Floridaôs adolescent literacy policy. One was *distance*, which was represented by the gap between institutional expectations and adolescentsô various profiles. The second dynamic, resistance, was created by differences in values, goals, interests and abilities as they were represented across the system. While the data did not delineate an interaction between certain student profiles and the notion of resistance, it was clear that what some adolescents could or would do on one hand, and what the institution wanted on the other hand was frequently a source of conflict. The bottom of the figure shows that the primary method for mitigating this resistance was a System-Based solution: the mandated use of standardized tests embedded in an accountability mandate. People-Based and Resource-Based solutions were valued as

and who exhibit unpredictable behavior. These qualities keep membersô actions and the activities within the system in an ongoing state of disequilibrium. Rather than responding to top-

assessment; a highly situated interplay of assessment, instruction, positive feedback and collaboration toward mutually shared goals (Torgesen & Miller, 2009).

Given policy actorsô version of literacy that appeared to deemphasize the individuality of marginalized students, along with the distance and resistance that characterized the relationship between many students and the institution, the potential for People-Based Solutions to mitigate these tensions seems especially valuable. For instance, a potential drop-out might choose to remain (even engage) in school if someone close to the situation were able to bridge the interstices between her or his agency/identity and the institutional expectations

individuals to adjust for and l*everage* unpredictability and academic diversity, to build short-range collaborative relationships, provide critically important positive feedback, focus on process above product, and integrate cross-disciplinary concepts. Like the chemical transfer that occurs across the intersticies between brain synapses, people solutions provide the context-specific impetus for bottom-up emergence, thus allowing individuals and groups to flourish, learn, and generate system-wide synergy. Yet, policy cannot just assume that people (teachers) will fill in the blanks at the local level, because the bureaucratic policy press is indeed real (e.g., Hinchman & Zalewski, 1996; Kroeger, 2008). Policy constraints are only helpful to the extent that they enable the elements of complexity nts omhxi4(c)4(ur)-6(s)9( )-9(a136(e)4( )2pe)24(o)-19(p)-3(o)4( )-9(e)-120(e)4( )-9(e)4(xt)-

authority structure must be fundamentally changed in order to achieve the desired outcomes. *Hortatory or symbolic tools* are aimed at encouraging certain values by way of rhetorically persuasive symbols and language. Stigmatizing is but one of several hortatory methods used for this purpose (Schneider & Ingram, 1997). Finally, *learning tools* are mechanisms used when policy actors are not sure how to solve a given problem (Schneider & Ingram, 1990). They rely on local agents to engage in questioning, reflection, research and collaboration, and in general, these policy instruments honor the formative experiences and choices of micro-level system members (Schneider & Ingram, 1997). In pedagogical terms, learning tools are based on the concepts of inquiry and discovery; and because they are aimed at bottom-up emergence, they are highly situational.

In terms of Floridaôs adolescent literacy reform, one need not look farther than the test-driven accountability system to see a multi-faceted example of the aforementioned policy instruments. The requirement to administer the FCAT or End of Course Exams and use these assessments as high stakes tools for determining promotion and graduation is mandated by the state. This mandate prompts a degree of uniformity, intended to

relates to adolescentsô reading. The data show Florida is moving toward a definition of adolescent reading that is separate and distinct from the nature of early literacy. From a complexity thinking perspective, the state is enacting several important policy foci that, with time for development should make a difference in the quality of literacy teaching and learning at the secondary level. These efforts should continue to receive priority in the way of funding, guidance and technical assistance. In particular, the state should continue:

> refining the difference between early literacy and middle literacy at the secondary level. This work (h)20(e)49f 12 Tf1 0 0 121( )10(t)-2tnt

discouraging blanket scheduling of reading intervention courses that remove

learners. In the

Systems-Based/Central Authority solutions. In order to facilitate each of these moves, the following suggestions should be considered:

1. Literacy-specific policy recommendations: The state should consider that by advocating multiple versions of literacy, it is likely sending mixed messages to agents and policy recipients.

A state-level emphasis on expressive forms of literacy such as those delineated in the *Next Generation Sunshine State Standards* would promote better gains (Langer, 2004; Mahar, 2001) because this more comprehensive approach to literacy makes room for studentsô identity, agency, and self-direction (Behrman, 2003; Ivey, 1999; Moore & Cunningham, 2006).

The state should embed literacy standards within content standards (Southern Regional Education Board, 2009a) to help facilitate the idea that literacy practices are a cross-curricular endeavor.

Literacy-related terms should be used with fidelity to their established meaning. If policy documents advocate ñFCAT Readingò or ñAcademic Reading for Adolescentsò and not ñAdolescent Literacy,ò the latter term should not be used as a moniker for policy initiatives.

2. Policy-design recommendations. Florida should make room in policy designs for capacity-building and learning tools that depend on and honor local knowledge (Preskill & Catsambus, 2006; Schneider & Ingram, 1990; Stevens, 2006), and recognize that these mechanisms enable the enactment of highly situated problem-solving relevant to given localities. In particular, the state should promote, through funding, guidance and technical support, the use of *learning tools*. These mechanisms are highly appropriate policy tools for enabling emergence because they rely on local problem solving instead of centralized control (Schneider & Ingram, 1997). This shift would address the gap in knowledge across the policy-practice configuration (Cohen, Moffit, and Goldin, 2007). Additionally, it would ñtransform interpretation of a policy from an exercise in obedience and/or resistance to one that is more participatory and holds potent9(a)4(n)20(c[(l)18(vi)18h)2d1nd hTJE

state should shift its fiscal investment of public funds to providing resources and

teaching teams and thematic units) should be supported by the stateôs provision of research-based approaches or models from other states.

Legislation and regulation cannot continue adding to micro-level requirements without taking others away. Time must be preserved for instructional staff to engage in collaboration, reflection and adjustment (e.g., professional learning communities). The state should provide research and guidance to districts toward breaking traditional conceptions of school scheduling in order to facilitate collaborative decision making and integrated learning opportunities for students.

State policy actors should encourage university-school partnerships to leverage the literacy-specific knowledge of teacher educators and literacy experts.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is underpinned by the knowledge and influence inequities built into the policy-practice relationship. In many ways, it offers distinct contributions that overlap the boundaries of theory, policy and practice. This research was an external evaluation/analysis conducted from an organizational perspective, meaning I examined the policy in terms of the organizationôs overall purpose of improving the teaching and learning in Floridaôs secondary classrooms. A major benefit of this study is that it bends the light of accountability back toward the state level structures from whence literacy policy comes (Stevens, 2006).

As it currently exists, this studyôs contribution to theory, practice and policy is

of certain students through its line in-the-sand definition of success. This approach deems a large portion of Floridaôs students as less than successful by virtue of the principles of central tendency (Allington & Dennis 2007).

Adolescent literacy is an emerging field in a climate of high stakes testing. This might be seen as unfortunate timing; or it could be seen as coming just in time. According to Schneider and Ingram (1997), authority tools are often used to bring outliers ñinto compliance (p. 96). Now that a testing system is in place and schools and teachers have a clear baseline from which to build, state policy actors should recognize that coercive approaches may well be constraining bottom-up emergence, especially as it relates to marginalized adolescents. Learning theory suggests it is time to move beyond a performance orientation based on external rewards and toward a mastery-orientation that encourages a genuine embrace of learning for the sake of learning (Guthrie, Wigfield, Metsala, & Cox, 2006; Jetton & Alexander, 2004). In the future, perhaps we will look back on this phase of public education as a transitional period of ñgrade-grubbing,ò as we progressed toward more authentic methods of measuring quality teaching and learning.

00523>90057>21004B2004440 1 484.27 1 274.2 3266 377.8u274.ton GX@03VòWKSLRSDVpfHVS0pRWRIW@0PÀOr

R

Bates, L., Breslow, N., & Hupert, N. (2009). *Five states' efforts to improve adolescent literacy: Summary* (Issues & Answers Report, REL 2009-No. 067). Washington, DC: U. S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northeast and Islands. Retrieved from: http://ies .ed .gov/ncee /edlabs/regions/northeast/pdf/REL_2009067_sum.pdf

Bean, T. W., & Harper, H. (2009). The ñadolescentò in adolescent literacy: A preliminary review. In K. D. Wood and W. E. Blanton, *Literacy Instruction for Adolescents* (pp. 37-53). NY: Guilford Press.

Bean, T. W. & Readence, J. E. (2002). Adolescent literacy: Charting a course for successful futures as lifelong learners. *Reading Research and Instruction, 41*, 203-210.

Bear, D., Invernizzi, M., Templeton, S., & Johnston, F. (2008). *Words their way: Word study for phonics, vocabulary, and spelling instruction*. (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.

Behrman, E. H. (2003). Reconciling content literacy with adolescent literacy: Expanding literacy opportunities in a community-focused biology class. *Reading Research and Instruction, 43*(1), 1-30.

Berliner, D. C., & Biddle, B. J. (1995). *The manufactured crisis: Myths, fraud, and the attack on America's public schools.* Cambridge, MA: Perseus Books.

Berman, I. M. (2008). *The rise and adoption of middle grades literacy policy in the state of Florida* . (Doctoral Dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Information and Learning Company. (UMI No. 3296826).

Biancarosa, G., & Snow, C. E. (2006). *Reading next-A vision for action and research in middle and high school literacy: A report to Carnegie Corporation of New York* (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.

Black, P. & Wiliam, D. (1998). Inside the black box: Raising standards through classroom assessment. *Phi Delta Kappan, 80*(2), 139-148.

Blanton, K. D., & Wood, W. E. (2009). The case for improving adolescent literacy instruction. In, K. E. Wood, & W. E. Blanton, (Eds.), *Literacy Instruction for Adolescents: Research-Based Practice*. (pp. 1-12). NY: The Guilford Press.

Blommaert, J. (2005). *Discourse*. NY: Cambridge University Press.

Brabham, E. G. & Villaume, S. K. (2002) Leveled text: The good news and the bad news. *The Reading Teacher, 55*(5), 438-441.

Brooks, J. S., Hughes, R. M., & Brooks, M. C. (2008). Fear and trembling in the American high school: Educational reform and teacher alienation. *Educational Policy, 22*, 45-62.

Buly, M. R., & Valencia, S. W. (2002). Below the bar: Profiles of students who fail state Reading assessments. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 24*, 219-239.

Caldwell, J. (2007). *Reading Assessment: A Primer for Teachers and Tutors*. NY: Guilford.

Callahan, R. E. (1964). *Education and the cult of efficiency*: *A study of the forces that have shaped the administration of the public schools.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Carrouth, & Matthews. (2010, March 10). Committee substitute/Senate bill 4: High school graduation requirements. *Bill analysis and fiscal impact statement*. Tallahassee, FL: The Florida Senate.

Carstens, A. & Beck, J. (2005). Get ready for the gamer generation. *TechTrends. 49*(3), 22-25.

Center for Labor Market Studies. (2009). *Left behind in America: The nation's dropout crisis.* A Report by the Center for Labor Market Studies. Boston: Center for Labor Market Studies.

Center on Instruction. (2010). *About us*. Retrieved from http: //www.centeroninstruction.org /about.cfm

Chall, J. S. (1996). *Stages of reading development* (2nd ed.). Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace.

Chapin, R. K. (1995). Social policy development: The strengths perspective. *Social Work, 40*, 506-514.

Christie, K. (2007). Mission possible: States take on adolescent literacy. *Phi Delta Kappan, 88*(6), 421-422.

Christie, K. (2008, May). Can those tweens and teens read yet? *Phi Delta Kappan, 89,* 629-703.

Coburn, C. E. (2001). Collective sensemaking about reading: How teachers mediate reading policy in their professional communities. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 23,* 145-170.

Coburn, C. E. (2006). Framing the problem of reading instruction: Using frame analysis ot uncover the microprocesses of policy implementation. *American Educational Research Journal, 43*, 343-379.

Cohen, Moffit, & Goldin (2007). Policy and practice: The dilemma. *American Journal of Education, 113*, 515-548.

Cohen-Vogel & McLendon, M. K. (2009). New approaches to understanding federal involvement in education. In G. Sykes, B. Schneider, D. N. Plank (Eds.), *Handbook of Education Policy Research*. (pp. 735-748). NY: Routledge.

Colebatch, H. K. (2006). What work makes policy? *Policy Sciences, 39*(4), 309-321.

Conley, M. W., & Hinchman, K. A. (2004). No Child Left Behind: What it means for

Davis, B., Sumara, D., & Luce-

Florida Center for Reading Research. (n.d.). *Florida center for reading research: A Florida State University center*. [Brochure]. Tallahassee, FL: Copy Editor. Retrieved October 20, 2009 from http://www.fcrr.org/about/pdf/researchBrochure.pdf

Florida Center for Reading Research. (2007). *Improving literacy instruction in middle and high schools: A guide for principals.* Retrieved from http://www.centeroninstruction.org/files/Principal%20s%20Guc2009

Florida Department of Education (2007). *Next Generation Sunshine State Standards: Reading/Language Arts.* http://etc.usf.edu/flstandards/la/index.html

Florida Department of Eduation. (2008a). *K-12 Student reading intervention requirements. Retrieved from: https://www.flrules.org/gateway/ruleno.asp?id=6A-6.054*

Florida Department of Education (2008b). *K-12 Comprehensive Research Based Reading Plan Rule*. Retrieved from https://www.flrules.org/gateway/ruleno.asp?id=6A-6.053

Florida Department of Education. (2009a). *Just Read, Florida! Office: Frequently asked questions, 2009 Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading – General.* Retrieved from: http://www.fldoe.org/faq/default.asp?Dept=4&ID=1281#Q1281

Florida Department of Education. (2009b). *Just Read, Florida! Office: Frequently asked questions, 2009 Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading – General.* Retrieved from: http://www.fldoe.org/faq/default.asp?Dept=4&ID=1294#Q1294

Florida Department of Education. (2010). *2010-11 K-12 Comprehensive Research-Based Reading Plan Guidance.* Retrieved from: https://app1.fldoe.org/Reading_Plans /Examples/Reading_Plan_guidance_2010.pdf

Florida Department of Education. (2010). *Reading Endorsement Rule Competencies.* Retrieved from http://www.justreadflorida.com/docs/6A-4-0163.pdf

Foundation for Floridaôs Future. (2010). *Florida formula for student achievement.* Retrieved from http://www.foundationforfloridasfuture.org /Pages/Florida_Formula.aspx

Fowler, F. C. (2009). *Policy studies for educational leaders: An introduction* (3rd ed.). Boston, Allyn and Bacon.

Kragler, S. Martin, L. & Kroeger, D. C. (2008). Money down the drain: Mandated professiosnal development. *Journal of School Leadership,18*, 528-550.

Kroeger, D. C. (2008). Literacy teachers as critical bureaucrats. *Journal of Reading Education, 34*(1), 46-50.

Kozal, J. (1991). *Savage inequalities: Children in America's schools*. NY: HarperCollins.

Lincoln, Y.S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

McDonnell, L. M. (2009). Repositioning politics in educationôs circle of knowledge. *Educational Researcher, 38*, 417-427.

McDonnell, L. M., & Elmore, R. F. (1987). Getting the job done: Alternative policy instruments. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 9,* 133-152.

McGill-Franzen, A. (2000). Policy and instruction: What is the relationship? In M. L. Kamil, P. B. Mosenthal, P. D. Pearson, & R. Barr (Eds.), *Handbook of Reading Research: Vol. 3.* (pp. 889-908). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

McGill-Franzen, A., & Allington, R. L. (1993). Flunk óem or get them classified: The contamination of primary grade accountability data. *Educational Researcher, 22,* 19-22.

McLaren, P. (2007). *Life in schools*. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

McLaughlin, M. W. (1987). Learning from experience: Lessons from policy implementation. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 19*, 171-178.

McLendon, M. K., & Cohen-Vogel, L. (2008). Understanding education policy change in the American states: Lessons from political science. In J. G. Cibulka, L. D. Fusarelli, and B. S. Cooper, *Handbook of education politics and policy* (pp. 30-51). NY: Routledge.

Mintrop, H., & Sunderman, G. L. (2009). Predictable failure of federal sanctions-driven accountability for school improvement-and why we may retain it anyway. *Educational Researcher, 38*, 353-364.

Moje, E. B. (1996). ñI teach students, not subjectsò: Teacher-student relationships as contexts for secondary literacy. *Reading Research Quarterly, 31*, 172-195.

Rissman, L. M., Miller, D. H., & Torgesen, J. K. (2009). *Adolescent literacy walk-through for principals: A guide for instructional leaders*. Portsmouth, NH: RMC Research Corporation, Center on Instruction.

Rowe, S. (2004). Discourse in activity and activity as discourse. In R. Rogers (Ed.). *An introduction to critical discourse analysis in education* (pp. 79-96). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Sabatier, P. A., & Jenkins-Smith, H. C. (1993). *Policy change and learning: An advocacy coalition approach*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Saldana, J. (2009). *The coding manual for researchers*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Salinger, T. (2007). Setting the agenda for adolescent literacy. In J. Lewis, & G. Moorman (Eds.), *Adolescent literacy instruction: Policies and promising practices* (pp. 3-19). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Schneider, A., & Ingram, H. (1990). Behavioral assumptions of policy tools. *The Journal of Politics, 52*, 510-529.

Schneider, A., & Ingram, H. (1997). *Policy design for democracy*. Lawrence, KA: University Press of Kansas.

Smit, B. (2005). Teachers, local knowledge, and policy implementation: A qualitative policy-practice inquiry. *Education and Urban Society 37,* 292-306.

Snow, Martin, & Berman (2008). State literacy plans: Incorporating adolescent literacy. *Harvard Educational Review, 78,* 211-230.

Song, M., & Miskel, C. G. (2005). Who are the influentials? A cross-state social network analysis of the reading policy domain. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 41,* 7-48.

Song, M., & Young, T. V. (2008). *Reading: Policy, politics, and processes.* Charlotte, NC: New Age Publishing, Inc.

Southern Regional Education Board (2009a). *A critical mission: Making adolescent reading an immediate priority in SREB states.* Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.

Southern Regional Education Board (2009b). *The next generation of school accountability: A blueprint for raising high school achievement and graduation rates in SREB states.* Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.

Southern Regional Education Board. (2010). *About SREB*

Stein, S. J. (2001). ótheseare your Title I studentsô: Policy language in educational practice. *Policy Sciences, 34*, 135-156.

Stevens, L. P. (2003). Reading first: A critical policy analysis. *Reading Teacher, 56*, 662-668.

Stevens, L. P. (2006). Reconceptualizing adolescent literacy policyôs role: Productive ambiguity. In D. E. Alvermann, K. A. Hinchman, D. W. Moore, S. F. Phelps, & D. R. Waff (Eds.), *Reconceptualizing the literacies in adolescents' lives* (2nd ed., pp. 297-309). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Stevens, L. P. (2008). (Re)framing policy analysis. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 52*,(1), 70-73.

Stevens, R. and Wikstrom, N. (2007). *American intergovernmental relations: A fragmented federal polity*. NY: Oxford University Press.

Stone, D. (2002). *Policy paradox: The art of political decision making* (Rev. ed.). NY: W.W. S.1(mak)6(ing)]aaR0044>1560048 Tm[( )] TJETBT1 0 0 1(ma.(,) TJET580055>600003.JETp

Vacca, R. T., & Alvermann, D. (1998). The crisis in adolescent literacy: Is it real or imagined?

Appendices

Appendix A: Initial Interview Request

Project: Dissertation Research: Floridaôs Adolescent Literacy Policy (University of South Florida, IRB # 00000131)
Investigator: Diane C. Kroeger, Doctoral Candidate, University of South Florida
Date: March 30, 2010

Dear -------,

With the enactment of the Middle Grades Reform Act in 2004, along with agency initiatives both pre- and post-dating this legislation, the state of Florida has emerged as a national front-runner in addressing the literacy needs of secondary students. As a doctoral candidate in Reading/Language Arts, I am interested in current and future policy responses designed to impact the literacy development of Floridaôs adolescents.

The purpose of this letter is to request your participation in a university-approved dissertation study of Floridaôs state adolescent literacy policy. Specifically, I would like to know your thoughts about current literacy policy and possible future solutions for meeting secondary school literacy challenges. To help assemble a clear understanding of Floridaôs current adolescent literacy reform structure, I will be interviewing approximately 25 individuals from three sources of state leadership: (a) Executive, (b) Legislative and (c) Tertiary, or non-

Appendix B: Interview Request Email Follow-Up

Project: Dissertation Research: Floridaôs Adolescent Literacy Policy (University of South Florida, IRB # 00000131)
Investigator: Diane C. Kroeger, Doctoral Candidate, University of South Florida
Date: April 13, 2010

Dear -------,

Greetings. By now, you should have received a letter requesting your participation in my dissertation study of Floridaôs adolescent literacy policy (approved by the University of South Florida). I have attached the letter here for your immediate reference.

The purpose of my study is to clarify Floridaôs response to the literacy challenges at the secondary level of schooling and propose recommendations based on my study findings, existing theory and (o)-19(p)rr

Appendix C: Preferred Level of Participant Identification

Project: Dissertation Research: Floridaôs Adolescent Literacy Policy (University of South Florida, IRB # 00000131)
Investigator: Diane C. Kroeger, Doctoral Candidate, University of South Florida
Date: _____

Level I: I hereby agree that my statements recorded today concerning Floridaôs adolescent literacy policy may be associated with my name and/or position within my organization.

Signature _____ Date _____

Level II: Other than the category of _____, I prefer that my statements recorded today are de-identified for this study of Floridaôs adolescent literacy policy. Further, I prefer that my statements are held confidential in all aspects related to this study.

Signature _____ Date _____

3. With what key supports and constraints (or tools) have you worked most directly in your role as an (Executive, Legislative, Nongovernmental policy actor) that strengthen Floridaôs adolescent literacy reform?

4. What key supports and constraints (or tools) are not in place that you believe

Appendix E: Supplemental Tables and Figures

Group _____
Name, if applicable_____
Date _____
Interview Mode _____

Figure 11.

Table 5

Interview Participant List

Group	Position and Name
Legislative (n = 11)	Members of the Senate Committee on Pre-K-12 Education Senator Nancy Detert Senator Ronda Storms Senator Stephen Wise Members of the House Pre-K-12 Committee Representative Dwight Bullard Representative Rachel Burgin Representative Marti Coley Representative John Legg Representative Anitere Flores Representative Erik Fresen Representative Kelli Stargel Member of the House Education Policy Council Representative Marlene OôToole
Executive/ (n = 3) Agency	Florida Department of Education Frances Haithcock, K-12 Public Schools Chancellor Kevin Smith, High School Reading Specialist Laurie Lee, Middle School Reading Specialist
Tertiary (n = 6)	Individuals from three different organizations who requested anonymity

T

Table 6

Meetings Analyzed

Group	Meeting and Dates
Legislative (n = 13)	Senate Committee on Pre-K-12 Education
	1-12-2010*
	2-16-2010
	3-2-2010
	3-10-2010*
	4-6-2010
	4-20-2010
	House Pre-K-12 Committee
	1-13-2010*
	1-20-2010
	2-17-2010
	3-3-2010
	3-10-2010*
	3-17-2010
	3-25-2010*
Executive/Agency (n = 2)	Florida Board of Education
	3-26-2010*
	5-18-2010*
Total: 15	

** Attended these meetings in person.*

Table 7

Documents Analyzed

Source	Document
Center on Instruction	*Adolescent Literacy Walk Through for Principals*