LITERACY EXPERIENCES OF TEEN MOTHERS

by

Amanda Ann Babyak

A Master's Thesis Capstone Project
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science in Education
Department of Language, Learning and Leadership
At the State University of New York at Fredonia
Fredonia, New York

May 2014

State University of New York at Fredonia

Department of Language, Learning and Leadership

CERTIFICATION OF THESIS WORK

We the undersigned certify that this thesis by Amanda Ann Babyak,
candidate for the Degree of Master of Science in Education is acceptable in form and content and
demonstrates a satisfactory knowledge of the field covered by this thesis.

_____   _____5/16/14_____

Master's Project Advisor   Date
Dr. Jennifer Moon Ro
Department of Language, Learning, and Leadership

_____   _____5-16-2014_____

Department Chair   Date
Dr. Anna Thibodeau
Department of Language, Learning, and Leadership

_____   _____5-22-14_____

Dean of College of Education   Date
Dr. Christine Givner
SUNY Fredonia

Abstract

While teen pregnancy has declined significantly in the past two decades, only 38% of teen mothers who have a child before age 18 obtain a high school diploma. This study explores the following: (a) teen mothers' literacy education experiences, (b) how teen mothers perceive themselves within their institutional settings, and (c) educational approaches that would benefit teen mothers' literacy learning. The sociocultural theories of identity and positioning are explored in the context of teen mothers. This master's project includes a professional development workshop and researcher-created website to introduce educators to effective approaches to improve literacy experiences of teen mothers in institutional settings.

Keywords*: teen mothers, literacy experiences, drop out, positioning, website-based, professional development*

LITERACY EXPERIENCES OF TEEN MOTHERS

Table of Contents

LITERACY EXPERIENCES OF TEEN MOTHERS

List of Tables and Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of Issue

Literacy education is essential to the success of individuals in society. A good foundation in literacy leads to one becoming better informed citizen of the world. However, when education is interrupted by students' pregnancies, completing high school becomes a challenge. Without a high school diploma, employment opportunities and methods of livelihood become limited. Moreover, cycles of poverty and low literacy may result in some families due to these limitations. Therefore, literacy education of teen mothers is an important issue to investigate.

Three out of 10 teen mothers in the US who have dropped out of high school cite pregnancy or parenthood as the reason. Of those dropouts, only 38% of teen mothers who have a child before age 18 obtain a high school diploma by age 22 (National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, 2012). One reason that teen mothers decide to drop out of school may be because there are "no structural components in the mainstream high school to serve their new needs as parents, the alternative school is the only option to continue their education" (Hunter, 2007, p.90). At such a time when teen mothers need more support from the school community, teen mothers often feel marginalized by the social stigma attached to teenage pregnancy and institutional indifference. Hence, teen mothers grapple with the choice of attending an inferior alternative school rather than the main stream school that offers fewer programs and less academic support or dropping out of high school completely. It seems that teen mothers face a serious challenge to attain a literacy education that is equivalent to their teen peers who are not pregnant.

This master's thesis study seeks to identify the educational approaches that may improve teen mothers' literacy experiences and thereby, pursue successful educational trajectories, as they come to identify themselves in institutional settings (both in public and alternative schools). The research questions guiding this study are:

1. What does research say about teen mothers' literacy education experiences?

2. What does research say about how teen mothers perceive themselves within their institutional settings?

3. What are the educational approaches that would benefit teen mothers' literacy learning?

These questions will be addressed through a literature review of relevant empirical studies. Through a professional development workshop, the findings will be shared with current and future literacy professionals who will be involved in the literacy education of teen mothers.

Background and Rationale

The International Reading Association (2010) encourages graduate candidates pursuing certification as Reading Specialists and Literacy Coaches to participate locally, to advocate for change for those whose voices are unheard, and to develop professional development for colleagues. This topic was initially selected for investigation when the researcher, Amanda Babyak, researched alternative education settings in her community for employment. As she will be professionally certified to teach birth through grade 12 in several specialization areas, she hopes to support people in her community by teaching literacy skills in either public or alternative schools. Moreover, the researcher is particularly interested in the education of teen parents for a personal reason; her mother was a teen mother who emphasized education as the key to success. The researcher is the first member of her family to pursue a master's degree. The

researcher's personal sense of value and power of education to transform one's life was reinforced through her studies in the graduate program at State University of New York at Fredonia. There, she began to really understand how literacy empowers individuals. The researcher believes that schools need to help teen mothers empower themselves by providing literacy experiences that will support their identity development to participate in society.

As the researcher became interested in learning about the educational opportunities for teen mothers provided in her community (Jamestown, New York), she began to contact school districts and discovered that the community has an alternative school for teen mothers. She contacted the alternative school and arranged an informal meeting with the director of the program to learn more about the literacy experiences provided at the alternative school. Through additional research she discovered that the county in which she lives has a statistically higher teen pregnancy rate than that of the state. A local newspaper featuring an article about teen pregnancy in the area reported:

> According to recently released numbers from a 2010 National Center for Health Statistics survey, the teenage birth rate for New York State is 2.3 percent. This number has been declining since the early 1990s, when the statewide percentage was 4.6 percent. In Chautauqua County, however, the birth rate to teenage mothers was 3.6 percent in 2010. The highest averages in the county came from Jamestown, at 6.3 percent, and Dunkirk, with 8.2 percent of births to teenage mothers. (Skoczylas, 2012)

Jamestown and Dunkirk are two demographically and economically comparable cities in western New York that practice many similar methods to prevent teen pregnancy, but differ in their attempts to help teen parents. In the interview with the director of the alternative school, in Jamestown, the researcher found the differences that follow. For example, Dunkirk High School employees a school social worker who assists pregnant teens with the daily struggles they face such as, morning sickness or finding time to see a doctor. Jamestown High School has a clinic

within where teens may come for reproductive health issues and birth control. Often at the school

clinic before obtaining birth control, a pregnancy test is given and the student may possibly

discover that she is pregnant. In subsequent office visits, the teens may be referred to attend the

alternative school, a program called the TEAM (Teenage Education and Motherhood) program

in Jamestown. The TEAM Program is a project of the Young Women's Christian Association

(YWCA), which provides education, counseling, and supportive services for pregnant teens, teen

mothers, and their children. TEAM makes it possible for young women to complete their high

school education while concentrating on prenatal care and parenting education. TEAM is for

young women, 12-19 years old, married or unmarried, who are at least four months pregnant or

have a child under age 2.5, and who have a goal of completing a high school education,

while receiving help with motherhood challenges. The program is open for students throughout

the county to come to as long as tuition is paid by the school district the student attends or

attended. Of the students who choose to attend the program, some students do not choose to

complete the program and eventually drop out of school.

As previously stated, three of 10 teen girls who have dropped out of high school cite

pregnancy or parenthood as a reason and only 38% of teen girls who have a child before age 18

get a high school diploma by age 22. Chautauqua County is not alone in its high percentages of

teen mothers; though there has been a national decline in the number of teen pregnancies since

the 1990s, due to the increased comprehensive sexual education about contraception, there are

still a large number of teen pregnancies, particularly in rural areas. It is important to note that the

decline is highest in urban areas populated with more than 50,000 people. Towns in Chautauqua

County are rural because they have less than 49,999 people populating them. The National

Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy findings in 2010 about rural counties

(populations less than 49,999) claims that:

> The teen birth rate in rural counties was nearly one third higher compared to the rest of
> the country (43 rural girls per 1,000 vs. 33 other girls per 1,000 both of girls age 15 to
> 19). The teen birth rate in rural counties surpassed that in suburban counties and even that
> in major urban centers, the teen birth rate was higher in rural counties than in other areas
> of the country regardless of age or race/ethnicity. Even so, rural counties accounted for a
> minority of teen births (20%), which is not surprising given that only 16% of teen girls
> live in rural counties. Between 1990 and 2010, the birth rate among teens in rural
> counties declined by 32%, far slower than the decline in major urban centers (49%) and
> in suburban counties (40%).

Uncovering all of the reasons teen parents may struggle may be complicated. Focusing on their

literacy experiences may shed some light on the issue. Understanding the perspective of a

literacy teacher is important to understanding the way the content is taught which greatly impacts

the experience of the teen mothers. Moreover, consideration of the new Common Core State

Standards (CCSS) is important as teachers are facing the task of curriculum development which

requires a vigorous concentration of literacy experiences to complete the requirements to obtain

a high school diploma.

Therefore, the purpose of this master's thesis study is to review the literature on the

literacy educational contexts and literacy education experiences of teen mothers in order to

create a professional development resource to be disseminated to the local educational

community. This topic, literacy based educational approaches that benefit pregnant and teen

mothers within school settings, is important because research has shown that these students are

often marginalized and have higher dropout rates than that of other girls. Because the success of

an individual in society is related to the literacy education they receive, pregnant and mothering

teens that drop out of school do not receive essential literacy instruction and may struggle in life

after high school more than their counterparts. It is unfair that a teen's education should have a

greater likelihood of ceasing because she is pregnant or mothering. Though pregnant teens and teen mothers need more support than their teen peers, they should not feel marginalized and pushed into dropping out or leaving their school for a possibly inferior alternative school because her school does not provide basic structural supports for her. It is important to recognize that there are specific literacy education supports for pregnant and parenting teens within both public and alternative settings that will help teachers provide an equal opportunity for these girls to stay in school and work to obtain a high school diploma.

Although this topic is directed as professional development towards literacy professionals, all members of society may be interested because it examines what can be done to improve the dropout rate of pregnant teens and teen mothers. Pregnant and parenting teens who have obtained high school diplomas are more likely to break common stereotypes and succeed.

Theoretical Stance and Terminology

For the purpose of this study, the researcher defines literacy as the acts of reading, writing, listening speaking, and being that are essential for an individual's success in society. Barton and Hamilton's (2000) literacy as a social practice theory is applied to frame this study. Additionally, Gee's (1991, 1999) sociocultural theories of Discourse and Identity are applied to frame this study.

Barton and Hamilton (2000) view literacy as a social practice. Barton and Hamilton define the word *practices* as something more than interaction with texts. They say literacy is not just about reading print but about "what people do with literacy" in social settings and in relating to others around them (p. 7). They say that when people practice literacy they connect to the words written, and are shaped by their own values, attitudes, feelings, and social relationships. Literacy as a social practice implies that social relationships are very important because "literacy

practices are more usefully understood as existing in the relationships between people, within groups and communities, rather than as a set of properties residing in individuals" (p. 8). From this point of view, teen mothers' literacy practices are directly related to their social relationships within groups and within their communities. The relationship between teen mothers' literacy practices and their relationship with their school community will be explored further in the literature review section.

James Paul Gee's (1999) work in Discourse analysis (1999) informed the educational community on the importance of attending to communication in various settings. Over the past twenty years, he has stressed the importance of an individual's identities across different settings and their role in society. He expressed in his own Discourse and Identity Theory that individuals learn to "be" a certain way in each of their contexts. A pregnant or teen mother's contexts may be at home as a mom, and at school as a student. Both contexts require her to act upon different ways of being; in other words, at school, teen mothers are not merely students but are certain types of students. Gee defines Discourse as, "a socially accepted association among ways of using language, of thinking, and of acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or social network" (p. 3). This means that the ways individuals talk, read, look, act, and believe are manifestation of an aspect of their identity that are produced and reinforced within each of their communicative settings. Gee explains that part of this social network is made when individuals go to "secondary institutions," places such as schools, workplaces, stores, government offices, businesses, or churches. When a pregnant or teen mother leaves her home environment to enact a Discourse beyond her primary discourse, she develops an association with, and has access to, and practice with that secondary institution. The educational environment, whether in a public or alternative school is part of the pregnant or teen

mothers' "secondary discourses." Gee explains that the school builds on, and extends, the literacy acquired as part of a primary discourse so it is of course a great advantage when the secondary discourse is compatible with the primary one.

The closer the students' primary discourse environment is to school, the easier the connection is between their existing schema and the new information they come across. Sometimes the switch between the primary discourse and the secondary discourse of school is hard for some students to make. The teacher can help create a connection for the student between the two discourses by getting to know the student so she may understand the student's primary discourse and switch to it, so connections to existing knowledge can be made to academic texts more easily for the student. When the teacher helps the student, by understanding her own and her students' primary discourses, it is like she meets the student half way so that the student can make connections from existing schema to the new knowledge the teacher is presenting. As the student gets more familiar with the secondary discourse of school, the teacher can let the student take more control of making the connections independently.

Teachers who are reflective of students' schema or prior knowledge are able to make connections between their home experiences and school experiences, therefore creating an environment where students can learn. When knowledge of students' schema is used to create authentic lessons, the lessons are usually socially responsive to the needs of the student and the community. Lessons that students are able to engage with because of their personal connection to the topic create greater learning outcomes than those that are not. Following is a literature review of the literacy experiences of teen mothers. It will examine how some educators are examining their own social discourse and how they can help students switch discourses during the school day for successful literacy experiences so they gain new knowledge.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This literature review examines descriptive research to find how pregnant teens and teen mothers (hereinafter, the term, *teen mothers*, is used for this student population) perceive themselves within their formal school settings and how they experience literacy education. It also aims to identify literacy-based educational approaches that may be supportive and effective for teen mothers. Research on literacy education of teen mothers is under-researched and scant; however, this chapter reviews the available research along three components. The first reviews the educational attainment and educational contexts of teen mothers. The second reviews research that depicts how teen mothers perceive themselves within their institutional settings through positioning and how teachers talk about sex in the classroom. The third reviews research that portrays teen mothers' experiences in literacy education within institutional settings. The literature review reveals themes that indicate that teen mothers benefit from positioning themselves in specific ways during literacy events structured through planned educational approaches.

Teen Mothers and Educational Attainment

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy and Centers for Disease Control (2012) provide many statistics about teen mothers and educational attainment. One in 10 mothers in the US is a teen mother. Teen pregnancy is closely related to education as it is the number one reason teen girls drop out of high school. About 50% of teen mothers have a high school diploma compared with 90% of girls who did not have a teen pregnancy. Moreover, fewer than 2% of teens who have a baby before the age of 18 obtain a college degree by age 30.

Sullivan, Clark, Castrucci, Samsel, Fonseca, and Garcia (2010) say the negative consequences of births by adolescents are not inevitable. The researchers used the Panel Study of

Income Dynamics (PSID) and Child Development Supplement (CDS) to investigate how

maternal age at first birth and educational attainment impact children's home environments for

learning. The researchers wanted to conduct an observational measure of cognitive and

emotional support parents provided for children; they used the Home Observation for

Measurement of the Environment (HOME) Scale. The HOME Scale is based on observations

and interviews conducted at the family's home. The home environment was assessed for specific

conditions, facilities, and the social and emotional tone of the mother based on her age at first

birth, in three categories: younger than 18, 18-19, and 20 years and older. The teen mother's

education level was based on her grade level at the time the first child was born and the highest

grade level achieved when their children participated in the CDS-I in 1997. The researchers

wanted to know if the first births that occurred while women were younger than 18 determines if

continuing education made up for the disparity in the family home environment. Mothers who

had not graduated from high school had the lowest mean HOME scores. Further, the researchers

studied whether continuing education following an adolescent birth mitigates the negative

consequences associated with being an adolescent at first birth. While there was no significant

difference in HOME scores by teen mothers' ages; mothers who never graduated high school had

the lowest HOME scores. These mothers were at the greatest risk for negative home

environments while more educated mothers' received higher scores on home environment. Teen

mothers who returned to school had higher HOME scores than teen mothers who did not return

to school.

Sullivan et al. (2010) concludes that the age that the teen mothers' first birth did not have

an influence upon HOME scores compared to the teen mothers' educational attainment. Teen

mothers' educational attainment is the greater indicator that they will provide healthy and

supportive home environments for their children. Helping adolescent mothers form a safe, healthy, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate home and family environment for children may depend on educational attainment so it is important that teen mothers return to school after the birth of their children.

Zachry (2005) examined how teen mothers experience school and how their beliefs about school are affected by their pregnancy and motherhood. Nine young mothers in a teen parents' program reflected on their educational experience both before and after their pregnancy and on how having a child affected their self-understanding in relation to their schooling. Zachry found having a child substantially influenced teens perspectives of both their schooling and their future. Most of the teens stated that her pregnancy led her to drop out of school, but that ironically, having a child increased her interest in education and pushed her to see how education would help provide a better future her child, increase her employment opportunities, and help her get off public assistance. This study refutes previous research which argued that teen motherhood puts women at a greater risk for school difficulties; this study actually suggests that motherhood may help women reevaluate their perspective of school and school's importance for their lives.

There is a connection between teenage pregnancy and low educational achievement and often use this research as a platform to predict teen mothers' future engagement with school (Zachry, 2005). The current research says that the teen dropout rate is difficult to calculate and that teen mothers' earnings average at about half of the poverty level. Luker (1996) critiques the claim that pregnancy is the leading cause of teen mothers' educational and financial difficulties and said that teen mothers' decisions to leave school have more to do with school policy involving pregnant teens or their previous experiences in school than with solely their pregnancies. The policies were outlawed with Title IX in 1975 that required these teens to be

expelled from school. However, many personal accounts published still show that schools

pressure pregnant teens to leave, to attend special schools, or they are made to feel that they do

not belong in the public school so, many eventually drop out. Luker also says that teen mothers'

level of involvement in their education before they become pregnant may be more to blame for

their dropping out of school than becoming pregnant; women who become pregnant are often

from a population academically disadvantaged and already less involved in school. Women who

succeed in school and view education as a means to adult success are more likely to not become

pregnant in their teen years. Manlove (1998) discovered that high school dropouts were more

likely to become teen mothers than were those who remained in school. Musick (1993) said teens

in her studies welcomed pregnancy as a means of escaping bad school experiences and saw

motherhood as a means to adult success. For teens who find little value in school, pregnancy may

be viewed as an option for gaining adult status and stability. Zachry argues that teen pregnancy

and school involvement are highly associated.

Zachry (2005) found that the teens' perspectives of school and themselves differed after

having a child. She found three themes in her research: (a) I don't want to be in school (before

motherhood), (b) School is important to me (after motherhood), and (c) My child has made all

the difference (the impact her child had on her view of education and self). Before motherhood,

the girls identified with Zachry's first theme, *I don't want to be in school*. Participants felt

school wasn't for them because of lack of interest and little emphasis of importance on school

from family was made so they felt like going to school was not important. These girls also felt

like they were more interested in skipping class to see their friends at school than school work

itself, and that often, the disorganization of the school environment or teachers who were unable

to reach out and engage them in learning were the reasons they did not want to be in school before pregnancy.

After becoming mothers, the girls reflected that school was important to them. One reason was that the students identified a negative perspective of welfare and a desire to not be on public assistance as a reason to return to school. A second reason wasthat the students realize they cannot get a good paying job without a high school diploma or education. A third reason wasthat they saw the school and teachers as more positive than in the past, or the atmosphere has changed and they wanted to stay in school. The fourth reason by the teens was that students felt they were doing something with life.

Zachry's (2005) third theme identified in her research was *My child has made all the difference*. The participants realized that their children had made an impact on their self-perception and education. Participants identified that they are now busy caring for an infant and that continuing in school is hard because they are mothers. The teen mothers identified reasons for wanting to return to or continue in school. Some reasons include wanting to provide a better future for her child and to be a good role model for her child. The participants also said a reason their perceptions changed is because their "kids make them grow up" causing them to feel more mature and responsible.

Zachry (2005) argues that teenage pregnancy has been framed in policy and education debates that reveal new commentary on how identity and educational beliefs are reconstruction through the process of becoming a mother. As teen mothers reassess their feelings and attitudes toward school, they have different reasons for attending school after having a child. Teen mothers focus on how motherhood has forced them to view their lives (and themselves) in new

ways as they think about how they will provide and care for their children. Teen mothers expressed the need to be economically stable and a good model for their children. Researchers found that teen mothers' evaluation of schools' importance may shift as individuals become enmeshed in new life experiences (Leadbeater, 1996; Polit & Kahn, 1987). Their lack of attendance after becoming mothers stem from issues entirely different from those of earlier adolescence. Teens that had little interest in education may still have difficulties attending school after having a child, but the difficulty may have less to do with lack of interest than with other issues that make it difficult to stay in school. This leads Zachry to question whether previous researchers were identifying students' attitudes toward school or inferring such attitudes from students' attendance or performance. Zachry points to the importance of a positive school environment. The teens said that the support and encouragement they receive from teachers is an important factor helping them to remain in school. When programs are designed to help teen mothers with the difficulties of caring for a child and to continue in school, they are able to have a new commitment to education once again. These themes discussed above provide valuable information for those involved in education debates in the school about to make positive choices to help teen mothers' educational attainment levels. Therefore, it can be surmised that attending especially to improving the educational experiences of teen mothers and teens who may be at a higher risk for teen pregnancy is a sound institutional practice.

Teen Mothers and Educational Contexts

The institutional supports teen mothers receive are often from alternative schools they are recommended to attend once their public school learns about their pregnancy. A teen mother should be able to choose to attend either a traditional public school or an alternative school. It seems unfair and not in the best interest of the teen mothers' educational attainment should miss

out on the embedded benefits her traditional school would have provide for her. This practice

was not always the case, until the enactment of Title IX of the 1972 Educational Amendment Act

that prohibits removing students from school due to pregnancy; teen mothers were typically

removed from a public school setting. Although public schools are legally obligated to educate

teen mothers, schools often do not offer the best educational context for teen mothers who are

dealing with the practicalities of being a young mother while attending school. Hunter (2007)

examined the educational options presented in public and alternative schools for rural teen

mothers, and found that:

> the alternative school program is seen as less of a 'choice' by the individual woman and more of a 'decision' made by the institution. The women's perceptions of the mainstream high school and their subsequent treatment once pregnant suggest that they hold contentious views toward their schooling. (p. 90)

This contentious relationship may be one of the factors why many teen mothers are not obtaining

a high school diploma. Currently, teen mothers appear to have limited choices and supports from

school institutions.

There has been a move toward legislation to address the limited educational choices of

teen mothers. As of this writing, the pending Pregnant and Parenting Students Access to

Education Act (H.R. 2617) may create more opportunities for teen mothers and the professionals

interested in working with teen mothers. If passed, it will ensure that teen mothers have equal

access to educational services and that school personnel receive professional development and

technical assistance about working with them. Its purpose is to help with the coordination with

relevant state agencies and school district liaisons for educating teen parents. Moreover, it will

provide assistance such as access to affordable childcare and better access to early childhood

education. The specifics about how the funds will allow for professional development for school

personnel are unclear. Policies will be revised to remove educational barriers and encourage pregnant and teen mothers to continue their education. The bill addresses school climate issues, such as discrimination and stigmatization of teen mothers. It requires that data be collected and analyzed on educational outcomes, and school programs will be evaluated to ensure compliance with Title IX nondiscrimination policy.

The researcher wanted to collect information onhow her own community helps teen mothers. To understand the types of services provided in local schools in Chautauqua County, New York, the researcher began by conducting a Google search on the Internet. The search showed that the public schools offered a variety of courses supplemental to the traditional academic subjects including, Regents and Advanced Regents Diplomas, focus on college preparation, individualized programs of study, online and distance learning courses, many sports and afterschool activities, and college courses. Public schools are institutions considered to be the mainstream schools that all students are entitled to attend. Alternative schools are yet another form of educational services. Alternative schooling takes place in a different place; usually, it is located in a site away from the mainstream school, or in a separate section within the mainstream school. Students who enroll in alternative schools have additional or different needs than that of the mainstream school students. In the researchers' interview at the local alternative school for teen mothers, the TEAM (Teenage Education and Motherhood) program, the teacher emphasized the values of small class size, close relationships between students and teachers and a strong sense of community. The researcher was told many students in the program struggle to simply graduate with a high school diploma , and would need substantial support to engage in many of the opportunities that their public school would have provided for them.

While the alternative schooling for teen mothers may address the minimal educational needs of new mothers, it may not adequately address other needs necessary for success. For example, the academic curriculum for students in such programs may be inferior in quality of content . In addition, a physical separation from their mainstream peers may result in negative social outcomes such as stigma, low self-esteem, and isolation. After a review of research, it seems that teen mothers benefit most from education that is responsive to their particular needs as students and as mothers. Moreover, such education should follow the requirements of the law not to separate teen mothers from the mainstream educational settings.

Teen Mothers and Positioning

Schools that are responsive to teen mothers' needs as a student and her needs as a mother act to position her in a positive and empowering light that may lead her to success in educational attainment. A teen mother's identity, her perception of self within institutional settings is often characterized by the many problems faced in both the home and school environment. The following studies reviewed explain how school policy and teachers can recognize their own positions in the classroom as well as the student's position as a teen mother and her identity and use it to positively influence students. Klein (2005) describes the major current trends and issues of adolescent pregnancy, he says teen mothers face many psychosocial problems such as school interruption, persistent poverty, limited vocational opportunities, and separation from the child's father, divorce, and repeat pregnancy. When education is interrupted, a history of poor academic performance usually exists. The teen mother faces many issues both in and out of the classroom that teachers should be aware of in order to help keep the teen mother from facing school interruption.

The Positioning Theory was first introduced by Rom Harré (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999) and more recently been explored in educational institutions by McVee, Baldassarre, and Baileys (2004). McVee et al. explains positioning theory this way: once someone takes a position, the person sees the world from that point of view. That person sees all images, metaphors, story lines, and concepts to be relevant to the particular position they are in. Teachers can be analyzed through positioning theory because what teachers say, write, do, value and believe is influential in the classroom. McVee explained Davies and Harré's (1990) types of the positioning theory by describing three teachers discourses. The types of positioning described in this theory for McVee's study are: (a) inter-textual, (b) role based, (c) self-other, (d) static, and (e) tacit. The exploration of these teachers' experiences sheds light onto how much of a role positioning by teachers of themselves and their students plays in the classroom. Their study provided a way for three very engaged teachers to understand and explore their own positions as they learned about literacy and culture. Educators of teen mothers may find it beneficial to understand and explore their own positions and those of their students as they teach them literacy and culture. McVee, Baldassarre, & Bailey (2004) explain the necessity for literacy teachers to explore language and culture. She says most teachers are from the typical mainstream culture because they are dominantly white, middle class, and speak English. Teachers often avoid openly drawing attention to differences in language and culture to avoid potentially uncomfortable topics. Moreover, teachers often associate culture superficially with holidays or festivals, or experiences traveling or socializing with those that speak a language other than English. McVee et al. explains that it is important for literacy teachers to better understand the role of culture because they are responsible for sharing cultural beliefs, ideals, and values with implications for identity. McVee et. al. suggest teachers understand how their own culture differs from that of

their students. She says "the ways in which knowledge is transferred, reproduced, and transformed are inseparable from the discourses of power that govern what counts as knowledge and how it is constructed" (p. 53). It is important that teachers understand and position themselves mindfully in regard to literacy and culture.

Relatedly, Barton and Hamilton (2000) explored ways in which people use literacy in their everyday lives. Teachers, who follow their research, recognize and incorporate students' out-of-school ways of practicing literacy to find ways to make literacy instruction meaningful and relevant. This leads to closing an achievement gap and building a connection for students whose families and communities practice literacy differently from mainstream schools. Just like in the community, teen social groups within a school carry their own literate discourses. Some teens may feel marginalized based upon on their physical appearance, socioeconomic status, academic achievement or other factors. Teachers' reactions about how these social groups form and understanding which students who have been marginalized are important. In the following studies, teachers act as agents to empower marginalized students by understanding the social group and creating connections with a positive literacy experience in that area, enabling students to open up and get involved. The teachers come to understand that students must be comfortable enough in their social groups at school or they will not engage with literacy events. The teachers discern what discrimination and marginalization students face, and what social group students positively fit into.

Mahar (2001) examined positioning of teen mothers in a middle school culture in terms of gender, race, social class, and power. In her research she first gives a snapshot of the environment and social context of her "at-risk" students. She explains how the school environment, peer relationships, and home influences of the student all influence the position a

student is in over the course of a school year. She shares that some of her students are

marginalized. Teen parents are often marginalized students. A writer and advocate for youth,

Vianna (2008) describes how teen moms are bullied every day. Teen mothers are often faced

with the challenging stereotypes and stigma such as "being children themselves," "dropout,"

"neglectful parents," and "accomplishing nothing to be proud of." They too often deal with

stares, negative comments, mistreatment, and bullying from peers on a day to day basis. They

also face discrimination and judgment by teachers who have low expectations of them. Vianna's

work focuses on stories where pregnant teens become victims of discrimination and they feel

unwanted and become outcasts in their own school. In one story, a girl was not allowed to use

the bathroom to breast pump and she was humiliated in front of the class for leaking breast milk.

Other stories include when teens are told that they chose to be a teen mother and they deserve no

special treatment. These stories of overt discrimination support Mahar's (2001) research which

suggests:

> Adolescents have discourse patterns that are often established outside of the classroom
> that can illuminate the stance they take toward academic and social activities occurring
> during the school day. The literacies they bring to school will have a definite impact on
> how students respond to teachers and other students. (p. 208)

Teachers who are aware of the patterns of discourse that positions the teen mother within

the school can help teen mothers succeed academically and socially. They can help the teen

mothers become "literate in the adolescent social codes of behavior as well as socially

appropriate modes of self-expression before the classroom could become a comfortable place to

experiment with personal literacies and power" (Mahar, 2001 p. 207). Teachers can do this the

same way Mahar helped her at risk students come to identify themselves as writers. She made

her at risk students feel they were capable writers by creating a positive experience for her

students and by having their writing published, thereby guiding them to take the lead and be in a position of power. In this way teen mothers could engage positively in writing personal narratives to construct her identity as a student.

Hallman (2007, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c) conducted research at Eastview School for Pregnant and Parenting Teens, and described how the school personnel positioned the teens as both mothers and students. Although research suggests separate schools for teen mothers are most often characterized by a "remedial" approach to learning, Eastview focuses on positioning students for success. Eastview reassigns the identity of teen mothers as individuals who are multifaceted; they are learners, mothers, and adolescents. Reassignment of identity is a critical component of recognizing how school like Eastview can be effective learning places for their students. Eastview's curriculum is directly tied to understanding that students' identities which helps better serve the 'at risk' student population.

Looking closely at programs for teen mothers and evaluating curriculum at their schools is critical. These schools are often viewed as places that "teach teens to be mothers." At Eastview, educators promote positive identity development of the student through learning opportunities. Eastview reassigns the teen mother's identity, to break some of the negative stereotypes the US society assigns to this population. Hallman's study provides an example of how schools can create a powerfully effective curriculum that is responsive to this population of teen mothers and that leads to positive identity development.

Hunter (2007) described how pregnant and teen mothers navigate their education and how they perceive themselves within the overall institutional setting of the school. For one full school year, she followed five teen mothers, and gathered data through observation, individual interviews, and focus group interviews. In her study, Hunter found that the public school

systematically prevented the teen mothers from mainstream education and community. She

found that the teen mothers were physically moved during school events such as pep rallies and

photo opportunities, and encouraged to move to the alternative school. She calls the alternative

school a "liminal space" (p.89), a place between school and dropping out of school. She claims

the alternative school is "much like an educational verdict for pregnancy, being sentenced to

attend a term of confinement for social wrong doing" (p. 90) where students can then no longer

return to the mainstream high school because there are no structural components in place there

for their new needs as parents. Hunter concluded the following:

> The women's perceptions of the mainstream high school and their subsequent treatment
> once pregnant suggest that school programs outside of the mainstream school building,
> especially in rural communities may be further contributing to reinforcing the stigma of
> teen pregnancy and further isolating teen mothers from their communities. (p. 90)

She posited that further research needs to be done to determine how schools respond to the

educational needs of teen mothers.

Other researchers have also found educational approaches that help teen mothers in

literacy. Mapes (2011) views reading and writing assignments as an opportunity for at risk

students to "resist, oppose, and internalize social positioning" (p. 523). Mapes has students take

on meaningful roles that are shaped by the social dynamics of the classroom within her reading

and writing assignments. For example, Mapes research is about how a young minority girl takes

a class with a lot of boys and she finds that she is quite different from them. Mapes gives her the

ability to express herself in her projects. She sees "active and social interaction as part of literate

activity" (p.523) and thinks it is important that the texts used engage with daily life in popular

culture, music, and digital technologies. She designs assignments with the "space to improvise

and play with genre and form through self-directed activity such as blogs or personal portfolios"

(p.523). She supports students by first reviewing these assignments and paying attention to representation the student makes of their own identity in the project and then giving supportive feedback. In so doing, she provides an opportunity that a teen mother could take on a meaningful role.

Ripple (1994) reviewed a program for teen mothers and their families at a high school in Georgia. At the time, a nationwide survey in 125 cities found that the primary problem for young mothers was insufficient child care. When mothers do not have access to child care with which they feel safe, they are unlikely to return to school after they give birth, and are more likely to drop out to care for their children. The program aims to end the 'cycle of poverty' by incorporating all three generations in the program, the teen mother, the baby, and the grandmother or main supporting family member acting as the child care provider. The program brings the child care provider to the school so that day care is provided on campus close to the mother. Moreover, the child care provider is paid and is given formal child care training classes. This program was highly successful, every teen enrolled in the rural Georgia program completed school.

Teachers who understand the position they hold and how they position their students can help influence their school policy and program to better support teen mothers. Teen mothers not only have lives as teen mothers but often as marginalized teenage students. Many programs and successful programs have been reviewed in this section that help teachers and school personnel create a more positive school environment for teen mothers.

Discourses: Talking about Sex in Schools

Teachers who are comfortable with positioning in the classroom can then take the next step to promoting educational attainment of teen mothers. They can do this by helping prevent

pregnancy in the first place by talking about sex education and the marginalization and

addressing stereotypes and stigmas often attached to teen mothers. Talking about what seems to

be taboo to teach and talk about in the classroom can open the door for students to become

engaged in conversation without the stigma attached.

Ashcraft (2009) says that literacy and sexuality are intimately connected for adolescents.

She explains that this connection is often ignored by curriculum. An adolescent has experiences

with literacy and sexuality in what they write, read, text, or blog both in school and out of school

in both traditional and digital literacy experiences. Ashcraft says that educators repress this area

of student identity and that literacy educators are reluctant to consider how their classrooms

might harness the powerful potential of addressing connections between literacy and sexuality.

She states that teen sexuality is feared in education, the media, and in public policy and that it

faces two significant limitations.

The first limitation she cites is that addressing sexuality is seen primarily as a public

health matter. Teen sexuality is taught mostly in biology and public health classrooms focusing

on the reduction of disease and pregnancy; when it could be taught in other subjects focusing on

emotional and relational aspects. Students making healthy sexual decisions requires more than

simply having necessary scientific information and when students are not taught sexuality

outside of health and biology classes, the relational aspects of sexuality consistently interfere

with teens' ability to make healthy sexual decisions, even when they have the clinical

information they need. Ashcraft supports this idea and references her own work (2008) that

shows how students who had once resisted literacy practices, engaged in them after they engaged

in content related to sexuality (2008). She concludes by referencing more research (Ashcraft,

2006; Luttrell, 2003; Michie, 2005) that provided examples of how teen sexuality can promote youth literacy development and academic success.

The second limitation is, addressing teen sexuality is controversial. Approximately 93% of the U.S. population favors comprehensive approaches to sex education over abstinence-only approaches (Boonstra, 2004). Ashcraft suggests, that "when 93% of the U.S. public and all relevant scientific evidence support comprehensive approaches, continuing to characterize this debate as controversial is simply inaccurate, if not disingenuous (p. 638)". By challenging both of these limitations, society can question the school communities' assumption that teen sexuality is controversial. Ashcraft states it is foolish to talk about teen sexuality as if it is "separate from, rather than integral to, teens' literacy development, academic achievement, and future life chances" (p.638). She wants the public to view teen sexuality more than in terms "disease, pregnancy, and sexual health and instead find ways to frame sexuality in terms of the whole child, adolescent, or person" (p.638). Ashcraft believes understanding sexuality in multiple contexts, including literacy instruction is important for public health and for students' literacy development and academic achievement. It seems that educating the whole person instead of separating academic and sexual education is effective.

Finders (1997) references that teen girls are often thought of as "just girls" a label which dismisses and diminishes girls' positions in the classroom (p. 130). Finders stands for justice for girls in schools and society. Finders (2000) article explores her time at an alternative school in which she taught a middle school language arts class, through the use of popular culture texts. She tells the story of her relationship with Angel, a teen mother who was labeled a juvenile delinquent at the school. Much of the mantra of the students at the alternative middle school for court placed youth was "we gotta be worse," a statement that suggests the students need to

display resistant behaviors to the educational program. Angel showed that she had multiple

identities at the school. She asserted power over her peers saying she wanted her fights to be

dramatic as fights are in the movies, and said she desired a police bracelet on her ankle to

monitor her whereabouts, as well as the desire to wear really short skirts to prove how bad she

could be. Finders stated all of these identity marks line up with the mentality of the school that

"you gotta be worse." A more positive identity shown is where Angel claimed her identity as a

'She-Ra Mom.' This is a status that gave her power and responsibility for her peers. Conflicting

with that identity were boys who identified with 'gangsta' images of using drugs, drinking, and

committing violent acts, especially against women. Angel proved some of her so called 'bad

identity' came from pop culture. Angel took the role of She-Ra, rather than the images the boys

sought in women that embraced powerlessness often seen on MTV and in magazines. This

contrast made the researcher uncomfortable about how to address references to women's bodies

and she often wanted to silence discussions of sexuality even though it was so prevalent in

popular culture and in the adolescents' lives of her students. Finders stated that popular culture

influenced the relationship between the boys and girls in the literacy classroom and created

versions of sexuality that "render girls powerlessness and boys powerful" (p. 147).

Finders says that when teachers have "no language with which to address sexuality,

teacher's critical approaches to popular culture are silenced, and we are left only to ignore or

celebrate the norms and values such popular culture promotes (p. 147)". Literacy teachers must

take a "critical stance that deepens understanding of the influence of both language and culture

upon lives and classrooms". The critical stance Finders took was informed by Alvermann, Moon,

and Hagood (1999) to teaching using popular culture texts. The approach recognizes several

points: "the expertise that students bring to the classroom, the pleasures that popular culture

produces for the students and the multiple meanings that students produce from popular culture"

(p. 148). Finders then explored texts with the teens by the way they might be read by different

audiences; she focused discussions about characters of popular culture texts on their implicit

values, actions and judgments. She engaged the students in many critical stances on popular

culture texts and media. She found that the pleasure that the popular culture texts and media

produced for students was not easily accepted by all students. There was still a divide between

the boys and girls about sexuality, and Angel, felt she wanted to silence the boys pleasure in the

popular culture texts and media because it made her feel uncomfortable. Finders concludes that

her students for the most part were more engaged in literacy events once popular culture was

introduced in literacy classes even though their ideas of sexuality being discussed made her and

other students uncomfortable. Finders warns that "critical literacy involves understanding both

how to use and how one is used by popular culture" (p. 148). She states that sexuality is central

to both, and that it cannot be denied, that teachers must find a way to talk about sexuality,

without an immediate link to deviance.

Finders suggests teachers find a way to talk about sexuality without a link to deviance,

and one way is for teen mothers to tell their own stories. Finders suggests that the teacher's goal

should be to keep teen girls from becoming pregnant but also be sensitive to the population of

teen mothers. Some teachers may have teen mothers educate their peers about sex. Chabot,

Shoveller, Johnson, and Prkachin (2010) documented two case studies, one about a teen mother

(Amy) and one about a caregiver (Erica). Their stories draw attention to the ways that teen

mothers' stories can be constructed as parables (i.e. examples of how youth can learn from the

sexual 'mistakes' of others). The study concludes that these parables can further separate them

from their peers. Teen mothers are less subject to further stigmatization and more empowered if they share the way their lives are enriched and challenged through the experience.

Bragg (2006) and Ashcraft (2003) have a better pedagogical recommendation. They suggest using media as a resource in sexual education. Young mothers and teachers could work together to develop learning strategies to analyze mainstream media and their messages and use discussion rubrics to highlight the language, intended audiences, producers and distributors as well as other key characteristics of media representation to combat stereotypes about teen motherhood. This way they share the multifaceted faces of teen pregnancy within peer-led sexual education classes.

The message presented in public schools often has an 'anti sex rhetoric' which controls the controversies around sexual education. Fine (1988) argues that there is a missing discourse taught to students, the 'discourse of desire.' She gives an example where female students are asked why they should look at their bodies in the mirror and why it is important to know what your body looks like. One student replied, "You should like your body," and the teacher replied, "You should know what it looks like when it's healthy, so you can recognize problems like vaginal warts" (p. 38). Fine explains that the discourse of desire is initiated by the student but is only regarded as an interruption, and is faded into the 'discourse of disease- warning about the dangers of sexuality'. She says that the attitude towards sexual education within public schools may lead to risk of victimization, particularly of low income females. She says those students without supports from the educational environment are subject to problems such as pregnancy, disease, violence, or harassment towards female students. Fine recommends public schools should provide education, counseling, contraception, and abortion referrals, as well as meaningful educational and vocational opportunities that support young women, giving them an

experience of empowerment. Fine says that when young women are given these experiences they are able to have "positions of social critique and experience entitlement rather than victimization, and autonomy rather than terror" (p. 50).

Using critical literacy in the classroom with social media materials to open the dialogue about sex outside of the biology or health class is a great way to support teen mothers at the school. It seems it would give teen girls a sense of empowerment to talk about sex in a positive way all while being engaged in a literacy event that helps teen mothers share their accomplishments and struggles.

Educational Approaches for Teen Mothers and Literacy

To further assist teachers in supporting teen mothers' needs in the classroom, the next section reviews many educational approaches that are effective.

Eastview, as mentioned in previous sections, is an exemplary school that has made their educational policy responsive to teen mothers' needs. As mentioned, Hallman (2007) explained how the Eastview school administration and teachers positively positioned the teens as mothers and students. Eastview personnel encourage the teen mothers to view the school as both a place of learning and a place of community for moral support. Moreover, the teen mothers positioned their young children as both the hope for society's future and the hope for their parents' future in three ways facilitated by an English Language Arts teacher. Students first responded to 'baby journal' prompts in an English class. Secondly, students engaged in a book talk with the librarian about sharing reading with children. These both helped the teen students to view the school as both a place of learning and a place of community. Thirdly, students wrote to the editor of the paper to defend Eastview School because it was negatively represented in an article in the local

paper. In each of the literacy activities, Hallman showed how the school successfully

incorporated literacy and life experiences to allow the teen mothers the safe space to become

students and mothers.

Bussert-Webb (2001), a researcher at an urban high school has had both successful and

unsuccessful attempts to have teen parents engage in authentic literacy activities. An

unsuccessful assignment given was for students to interview and write biography of their mother.

Students viewed the task as too self-revealing because interviewing their mothers would lead to

conflict between the home and school environment. The students resisted this assignment and did

not feel comfortable opening up to the teacher in this way. Because Bussert-Webb believed her

activities to be "holistic and socially constructed because students were engaged in small-group

and whole-class discussions and activities" (p. 512) she reflected on the lesson and shares how

she created a better way for the students to engage in an authentic literacy event through art. She

shares how artwork in response to literature provides a medium through which a group of young,

pregnant, middle school students connected their reading and writing to their lives. Bussert-

Webb explains that, "the opportunity to draw rather than write their interpretations of short

stories helped these young women overcome their reticence to personally connect with

classroom literacy experiences" (p. 518). Bussert-Webb's study concluded that traditional

literacy experiences such as reading and writing in a journal with a holistic approach may not

appease a sensitive population, but there are still other ways for these students to engage with

text, she states

> It is important that we create a common basis for understanding between students and
> teachers, especially in cross-cultural settings. In this particular study, art bridged some of
> the cross-cultural and communication obstacles. Although we used language to read short
> stories and to discuss our artistic interpretations, art took over as a sign system and
> transcended language. (p. 518)

The students were able to engage in the text with their own drawings and ideas in mind in response to a text. Bussert-Webb explains the two scenarios she did because while students couldn't relate to her literacy event of the ability to easily have an interview with her mother, they could relate to a literacy event that was cross-cultural such as responding to a text through drawing. They were able to apply what they thought the texts meant through art, a medium both the teacher and student could communicate through about the literacy events. This educational approach would help teachers bridge the gap between their culture and their students' culture.

Baptiste Jr. and Walker (2005) teach at The Teen Parent Academy, an alternative school for teen mothers. Their daily instruction provides many authentic experiences throughout the curriculum to engage teen mothers' literacy learning experiences. Their work highlights activities for science classes at The Teen Parent Academy that were taken from several regular high school courses and modified to be more practical and relevant to the daily lives of teen mothers. Importance of water and water treatment, environmental safety, nutrition and hygiene, and using science tools were some topics that were made relevant to the teens lives through inquiry based instruction. Following is an example of one lesson they conducted:

> Students learned to accurately measure mass and volume while they made their own baby wipes out of baby oil, shampoo, and paper towels. Dimensional analysis was used to calculate the cost of name-brand baby wipes and the ones made in class. Students determined the volume required in the school or at home to store the diapers used by one baby from birth until diapers are no longer required. Discussion involved the implications of the trash humans generate and what will be done when there is no place left for disposal. The financial and environmental savings of cloth diapers versus paper and plastic diapers were examined, along with issues involving the use and washing of cloth diapers. (p. 43)

The teens responded to this lesson well. They felt they could engage in authentic literacy tasks across the curriculum and overcome some of the problems they face.

According to Musick (1993), a developmental psychologist, who is the vice chairman of the Ounce of Prevention Fund (a public-private initiative for disadvantaged youth and their families since 1981), a common place for troubled adolescents to seek support, is in a school setting. Musick writes:

> When parents are not able or willing to help, a good-quality school, with caring, involved teachers and guidance counselors can be lifesaving, literally as well as figuratively, for an adolescent who is troubled or in crisis. As an external support system, the school can serve as a model, encouraging and reinforcing an adolescent's coping efforts and demonstrating positive values (Rutter, 1979). Those who have studied stress resistance in adolescence find that resilient adolescents usually have extensive contacts outside their immediate families, with concerned and caring teachers, ministers, and older friends (Hauser et al., 1985; Werner & Smith, 1982). (cited in Musick, 1993, p. 57)

In this section, the examples of caring and informed teachers and school personnel have developed and implemented content appropriate curriculum to be responsive to the needs of teen mothers. They created supportive environments that had positive impact on their education and personhood.

Roxas (2008) examined what the Rosa Parks Academy alternative school does to meet the educational needs of its student population. The school is in a large city in the Midwest with predominantly African American pregnant teens and teen mothers. The school has a highly successful retention and graduation rate at 90%, compared to other schools with similar student populations at state and national levels at about 50%. Roxas explains that economic and academic opportunities for Black youth and extreme poverty of inner city life that contributes to a sense of despair is never discussed in the mainstream school discourse and that it needs to be in order to reach the needs of teen mothers. Research conducted by Roxas shows that teen mothers' poverty rate is very high. This connection is supported by Pardini (2003) who states, "The correlation between poverty and pregnancy is striking when one considers that the poverty rate

of children born to unmarried teenage, high school drop outs is 80 percent, compared to eight percent for children whose mothers are married high school graduates over the age of 20" (cited in Roxas, 2008, p. 2). The study Roxas wrote is based on Gay's (2000) conception of culturally receptive teaching which says, when academic knowledge and skills are situated within the lived experiences of students, they are more meaningful, have higher interest appeal, and are learned more easily and thoroughly. Roxas interviewed six culturally responsive teachers in the school and observed a minimum of one lesson in each teacher's classroom. Roxas describes what he found in the interview in three themes presented in Gay's (2000) research: comprehensive teaching, empowerment, and emancipatory pedagogy. The comprehensive teacher brought together students in his homeroom classroom who once had felt like outsiders in their public schools as a team for morning discussions about topics that overlapped between school and home. From those discussions the teacher assigned tasks that led the students to become involved in their community.

The second theme to the culturally receptive teaching is empowerment. A dance teacher sought to empower teen mothers by taking students camping each summer to help students see places that they've talked about and believe in themselves. Another project that aimed to empower students was working to build homes with Habitat for Humanity in California. All of these trips allowed parents to bring their children along. Children went on the trips because the teacher felt that "By expanding their (teen mothers) experiences and knowledge of the world beyond Acme City, Gordon gave her students rich opportunities to broaden their conceptions of where they could live and what they could do in their lives" (p. 7). This teacher is a source of empowerment for students whose "self confidence is often shaken by the negative attitudes and stereotypes they encounter almost daily in society at large and in their schools" (p. 7).

The third theme is emancipatory pedagogy. Roxas (2008) describes how a special education teacher helped students to find their own voices and be engaged in more ways of knowing because they are not only struggling as pregnant and parenting teens but also as students with learning disabilities. She taught other teachers to meet the needs of special education students by running workshops, organizing professional development days, and personally coaching teachers. The special education teacher hones in on the direct needs of her students and provides opportunities for them to have leadership roles in the classroom and have other students rely on them for their strengths.

Overall, the faculty has supported "the schools mission of meeting the needs of the student population and are committed to working together to devise school wide policies that take into consideration the special needs of students who are in the midst of their pregnancy or already the parent of a young child" (pp. 8-9). This article aimed to provide "avenues to imagine how the oppression of young, poor, and Black pregnant and parenting teens can begin to be lifted (p. 9)". The article explained how some of these avenues of reform can be changed with minimal financial resources but instead "rely upon the creativity and inventiveness of the instructors in their lesson planning and use of local resources and community agencies" (p. 9) and the "foresight of teachers to reach out to community members to get involved with the school for both local and national field trips, and the personal dedication of each teacher to seeing the students in their classes succeed." (p. 9)

Kelly (2006) presents strategies for teachers to use so that students can produce and circulate youth self-representations in the media. She first references her own ethnographic study (2000) and describes experiences of two teen mothers who felt those in power would not take them seriously if they had tried to counter the stigmatizing representations of teen mothers that

are often in the media. She then presents four strategies for producing and circulating youth self-representations. Teen mothers could use these strategies to advocate for themselves and respond in public mediums to combat negative stereotypes cast upon them.

Teachers can support youth participation in organizations so that they can cultivate media production skills and get their self-representation into the alternative and wider media. They can do this in 'zines (self-published, do-it-yourself alternatives to commercial magazines), websites, and other alternative media sources. For example, *YO!* (Youth Outlook) is designed to serve disadvantaged youth ages 15 to 21. In the program youth meet weekly to develop story ideas based on their own life experiences. There they determine the paper's content, make assignments and get updates on stories in progress. Writers are paid and given free lunches and workshops with working print and radio journalists. Another example is *WireTap*, an independent information source written by and for socially conscious youth. WireTap uses a web portal for youth to use as a platform to challenge stereotypes, inspire creativity, and foster dialogue as writers, artists, and activists in a web space to come together and have a voice in the media.

The second approach is for educational researchers to involve youth as co-researchers. Kelly (1993) found that "student researchers sometimes used racial, gender, and social class differences to gain power and display undemocratic behavior within the group" (p. 8). The strategy is that adult researchers should, create moments where their authority is shared with students by placing young people in temporary research roles and then reflecting with them on what they learned.

The third approach is for teachers to nurture private safe places for groups initiated and run by youth, such as in school-sponsored programs and extracurricular activities. The groups

should be linked to networks outside the school, where members of groups can" explore who

they are and what they want to become and prepare to voice their needs, concerns, and issues in

wider public realms" (p. 41). One example is The Coalition for Positive Sexuality, which was

formed in part by high-school students in the United States. It distributes its Just Say Yes

pamphlet directly to teenagers.

The fourth is for educational researchers who are sought out by the news media to offer

their full views and not allow their viewpoints to be edited into short sound clips. She asks

researchers to ask the reporter or editor if they are truly interested in an alternative point of view

and whether they have seriously sought out the voices of their subjects. She also asks that

researchers ask them if they have taken youth seriously who might provide a counterintuitively

affirming exploration of their values, thinking, and behavior.

Conclusion

Literacy educators can respond to the needs of teen mothers in educational settings by

coming to understand the influence of teen mothers' educational attainment, educational

contexts, positioning within the school, how to talk about sex in the classroom, and current

successful educational approaches for teen mothers in literacy classrooms. Even though teen

pregnancy rates have reduced, currently 30% of teen girls who drop out of high school cite

pregnancy and parenthood as the main reason. Research has shown that teen mothers, regardless

of age at their first child's birth who have ample support from educational institutions are more

likely to obtain a high school diploma than those who are not as well supported by their

educational institutions.

The educational option of alternative schooling is often suggested for a teen mother; however, this is problematic as it is usually less of a 'choice' by the teen mother and more of a 'decision' made by the institution. While the alternative schooling for teen mothers may address the minimal educational needs of new mothers, it may not adequately address other associated needs. Teen mothers are protected under the Title IX of the Educational Amendment Act of 1972 which forbids the school from moving teen mothers out of their public educational institution. Currently, the new Pregnant and Parenting Students Access to Education Act (H.R. 2617) says little about how funding for teen mothers will allow for professional development for school personnel but gives money for policies to be revised to remove educational barriers and encourage pregnant and teen mothers to continue their education.

Teachers who understand the position they hold and how they position their students can help influence their school policy and program to better support teen mothers. Teen mothers not only have lives as teen mothers but often as marginalized teenage students. Many successful programs help teachers and school personnel create a more positive school environment for teen mothers.

Using critical literacy in the classroom with social media materials to open the dialogue about sex outside of the biology or health class is a great way to support teen mothers at the school. It seems it would give teen girls a sense of empowerment to talk about sex in a positive way all while being engaged in a literacy event that helps teen mothers share their accomplishments and struggles.

Many types of educational approaches can be used within a positive school framework to help teen mothers' educational attainment. Literacy is taught across the content areas while

promoting the identity of the teen mother as a student and as a teen mother. The examples

provided described a reflection of the researchers' approaches that worked and those that did not.

The researcher suggests that these findings be shared within a professional development

workshop for educators of teen mothers. In Chapter 4, the researcher shares an outline of a

website-based professional development workshop she would like to present at the TEAM

program.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Empirical studies were collected and reviewed to guide research questions of this project addressing teen mothers' perceptions of self, experience of education, and educational approaches that are beneficial to their literacy development. The research collection was conducted through the search of many databases and search engines to locate research relevant to this project.

The databases accessed are EBSCOHOST, ERIC, Educational Research Complete, Academic Search Complete, and Google Scholar. The researcher also used the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy (2012) website to locate resources.

Journals were then searched through for data collection of peer reviewed resources. These journals are *American Secondary Education, Early Child Development & Care, Education Journal*, *English Journal, Equity & Excellence in Education, Ethnography & Education, International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, Journal of Family Psychology, Language Arts, Multicultural Education, Pediatrics, Reading Research Quarterly, Reading Today, Teachers College Record, and Young Adult Library Services.* The search was narrowed for peer-reviewed sources.

Keywords and phrases were used to obtain relevant results in the journals just named. Some keywords used were *adolescent, pregnancy*, *literacy*, *teen mother*, *teen mom*, *alternative school*, *positioning*, *discrimination*, *identity*, *development*, *authentic*, *curriculum*, *writing and identity*, *reading*, *culturally responsive*, *parent*, *drop outs*, *motherhood*, *education*, *marginalization*, *title IX*, *gender positioning*, *teen sexuality*, *workshops*, *afterschool programs*, *advocacy*, *programs*, and *expectant mother*. Phrases that were used to search for data and sources were: *teen moms and literacy, positioning teen mothers, alternative literacy programs, education*

of teen parents, professional development of teachers, literacy professionals, and *workshop style professional development.*

Certain studies were not included in the articles collected for this research. If the searches generated studies that focused on teen fathers they were not included because the main focus is on teen mothers. Non-empirical studies were also dismissed unless they could be used for information about the statistics on this topic, history, or theory. Studies that focused on teen pregnancy prevention were mostly discarded as well. If the searches came up with studies that focused on teen mother's experiences with no mention of literacy they were not included in the literature review either.

The researcher took the relevant studies and read, organized and highlighted important sections that pertained to the research questions. The studies were then saved into an electronic folder and sorted into subfolders: introduction, theory, literacy experiences, professional development, and resources. The studies were closely examined and common themes emerged such as identity and development, narratives and interviews, and professional development resources. These became the basis for the development of three themes. The first is about the context of the identity and development of a teen mother, the second is about the experience the teen mother has within educational institutions, and third, the professional development and approaches that seem to benefit teen mothers.

Chapter 4: Professional Development Project

Through reviewing and analyzing the available research, the researcher has gained

knowledge on the topic of literacy education of teen mothers. She plans to implement and share

the findings by creating a Professional Development (PD) Workshop as well as a website to

coach teachers who work with teen mothers. The researcher created a Weebly webpage, named

Literacy Experiences of Teen Mothers at www.adolescentliteracyteacher.weebly.com, to make

available the results of the literature review to be used during professional development

workshops. Participants of the workshops can view all of the key research on the website. The

contents of the website are shown on Table 1.

Table 1: **Website Content**

Headings	Contents
Welcome	Slide Show Workshop Handouts
Section I	Theory Educational Attainment Educational Contexts
Section II	Positioning Talking About Sex
Section III	Educational Approaches Lesson Plans
Communication Board	Blog Evaluation of Workshop Contact Form

After the participants review the materials on the website they are directed to a page of

resources and a webpage where they can share their lesson plans with other teachers. The lesson

plans that are submitted to the "Lesson Plan" section of the site will then be available to be

downloaded for perusal. The participant is able to use a contact form and blog on the website if

there are any questions about the lesson plans before she teaches them. She may then teach the

lesson and participate in the online blog where other teachers reflect upon their lessons and discuss the topic of teaching teen mothers.

There are several reasons why the researcher chose a website as part of the professional development workshop. It is accessible to the intended audience and for wider use for sharing by workshop participants with their institutional constituents. Another advantage of using a website is that the participants can access all of the materials online at any time and go to the blog or contact form for help or to reflect on their lesson. The researcher has chosen to use both forms of professional development (i.e., face-to-face and website) because teachers will be able to access the website from anywhere, anytime and have a chance to talk to the researcher in person and become familiar with the website and its use upon first learning of its existence. The workshop and website will be based on the research presented in the literature review. The literature review showed that there are five key areas that literacy professionals can learn to better teach teen mothers. One goal the researcher has is for teachers to be more familiar with the student population of teen mothers and their current educational attainment as well as understand the educational contexts this student population faces yesterday and today. A second goal the researcher has for teachers is to learn about positioning, D/discourse, and identity while working with teen mothers, as well as become more conscious of how teachers talk about sex and teen mothers in the classroom affects teens. The third goal the researcher has is that the teacher uses various educational approaches as well as learning educational approaches that were presented to teach to teen mothers directly.

The Professional Development Workshop

The interactive workshop will take place after classes are finished at the TEAM program in Jamestown, New York. Two hours are planned to present the information and website to the

teachers, and then there will be a half an hour for teachers to ask additional questions and ask about the use of the website.

The researcher will introduce herself and begin by passing out a handout presented as guided notes to take during the presentation of the website. The handout will have information about how to navigate the website to access the resources and blog where teachers of teen mothers can communicate with one another. The handout will act as a guide for notes while navigating the website and for discussion about teachers' experiences and responses to the information presented while reviewing the website. As the researcher presents the website to the teachers, the researcher will ask teachers to work in small groups to answer some discussion questions. The questions will be aimed at asking teachers how the information presented relates to the teen mothers they teach and responses will be recorded on the notes page as the teachers move through the workshop.

The first section of information presented will be about the educational attainment and educational contexts of teen mothers. The discussion will follow about how students at the TEAM program have had similar experiences and or challenges within their lives that are similar or different from the research presented. The small groups will share the main points of their discussion with the entire group. The researcher will conclude the first section by asking each small group to share some of the most significant challenges teen mothers face and how the TEAM program has helped to address it, and what still may need to be changed to help teen mothers more.

In the second section of the workshop, teachers will be directed to think about positioning and how they talk about sex in the classroom. Before any research is presented, teachers will be presented with a scenario where teens are talking about sex in the classroom. Teachers will be

asked to respond in their small groups, how they would respond to the students' conversation. The researcher will then present the information from the literature review using the website and show teachers how teachers' views about sexuality in the classroom can effect teen mothers' identity development. Each group will then be asked to discuss how they might positively make a change in their teaching to reinforce the identity development of the teen mothers they work with.

The third section of the workshop will focus on educational approaches that help teen mothers. The researcher will present this section of the literature review on the website to the teachers and have the entire group of participants come up with a list of educational approaches that help teen mothers. A T-chart will be made of approaches that work at different levels: school wide, in the classroom, and in small group settings before and after school. The researcher will then redirect the group to conclude the workshop. The researcher will present the last parts of the website, the lesson plans section, the blog, and the contact page. Teachers will then be encouraged to go to website and see that they can upload their lesson plans so others can see how they have implemented what they have learned into their plans. They will see that what others post may be used in their own classrooms, and use the blog to reflect on their experiences teaching using the plans. The teachers will also be shown where they can evaluate the PD workshop on the webpage. The researcher will ask if there are any questions and stay for a while after the PD to talk one on one with teachers.

Website and Blog

The researcher will post messages on the blog about each part of the PD workshop, the lesson plans, and resources on how to help teen mothers. The blogs will be designed with the intent of helping teachers implement what knowledge was gained from the workshop. The blog

will provide teachers with a community atmosphere where they can approach the researcher and

other teachers for help creating an environment for success of a teen mother.

Each blog will first review the concepts discussed in the PD workshop. It will remind the

teacher to refer to the research presented, and her own notes from the discussion in the

workshop. On the blog the researcher will ask teachers to reflect on their current experiences in

the classroom. The researcher will then review the comments on the blog and help the teacher

identify and reflect on what she is doing in her classroom that works well and address challenge

areas by referring the teacher to what research says about that topic. The researcher will refer the

teacher to make use of the materials presented on the website as well.

This PD workshop supports the teachers before, during, and after instruction. The PD

workshop allows the researcher to provide information about teen mothers and guide the teachers

before they use the approaches that are presented on the website. The website provides a chance

to share lesson plans and the feedback from peers' comments, and blogs supports teachers during

instruction. The blog supports teachers reflection after their instruction as the researcher and

other participants respond to teaching experiences in the comments section. In each blog, the

researcher will respond to the teachers' comments and ask for feedback of how the instruction is

going based upon the suggestions made to her. Teachers are asked to evaluate each portion of the

workshop on the evaluation page of the website.

International Reading Association Standards

Table details the connections between the International Reading Association (IRA)

standards for Reading Specialists and Literacy Coaches and this professional development

project.

LITERACY EXPERIENCES OF TEEN MOTHERS

Table 2. **Connection to the International Reading Association Standards**

International Reading Association Standards (2010)	Ways in which the standards were met through this professional development project.
IRA Standard 1: Foundational Knowledge *Candidates understand the theoretical and evidence-based foundations of reading and writing processes and instruction.*	• The theoretical framework of Barton and Hamilton's (2000) literacy as a social practice theory and Gee's (1991, 1999) sociocultural theories of Discourse and Identity are demonstrated applied to frame this study.
IRA Standard 2 : Curriculum and Instruction *Candidates use instructional approaches, materials, and an integrated, comprehensive, balanced curriculum to support student learning in reading and writing.*	• In a portion of the PD workshop, educators discuss and list strategies to use in their classrooms. • The importance of literacy education is stressed throughout the workshop to improve the education of teen mothers. • The PD provides teachers with support when working with their students which gives students support as well.
IRA Standard 3: Assessment and Evaluation *Candidates use a variety of assessment tools and practices to plan and evaluate effective reading and writing instruction.*	• Use of an evaluation form on a website enables the teacher to ask the candidate for help evaluating effective reading and writing instruction with teen mothers.
IRA Standard 4: Diversity *Candidates create and engage their students in literacy practices that develop awareness, understanding, respect, and a valuing of differences in our society.*	• The literature review reviews the educational contexts and educational attainment of teen mothers and how these affect their literacy experiences and completion of high school. • Diversity of teen mothers' backgrounds, education levels, ages, and race is discussed in the literature review as well. • In the workshop and literature review the relationship between students and teachers created in instruction is stressed in the positioning and talking about sex portions. Talking about marginalization and positioning enables teachers to reflect upon their current practice and create a better school environment.
Standard 5: Literate Environment *Candidates create a literate environment that fosters reading and writing by integrating foundational knowledge, instructional practices, approaches and methods, curriculum materials, and the appropriate use of assessments.*	• The candidate helps create a literate environment that fosters reading and writing in the literature review section of educational approaches that work with teen mothers. • The candidate also provides lesson plans presented on the professional development website for teachers to use in their classrooms.
IRA Standard 6: Professional Learning and Leadership *Candidates recognize the importance of, demonstrate, and facilitate professional learning and leadership as a career-long effort and responsibility.*	• This project is for the PD of the candidate, and other literacy professionals, as well as those working with teen mothers. The candidate shows leadership because she will be leading the workshop and coaching teachers on the blog while they are working directly with teen mothers.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This masters' project revealed several aspects about the teen mothers and their educational experiences: (a) the current effective and ineffective practices of schools in meeting the needs of teen mothers, (b) school community's positioning of teen mothers and its effect on identity development, and finally, (c) reviewed approaches educators can use to help teen mothers stay in school.   The research questions were:

1. What does research say about teen mothers' literacy education experiences?

2. What does research say about how teen mothers perceive themselves within their institutional settings?

3. What are the educational approaches that would benefit teen mothers' literacy learning?

A literature review on relevant, empirical research studies answered these questions and the researcher developed a website to be used during and after a PD workshop to present the findings.

The findings to the first research question are that teen mothers' literacy experiences vary based upon their educational attainment and contexts. Literacy education has positive effects on their lives and the well-being of their children. Research says that teen mothers who complete their high school education have a better chance of success in providing a positive home environment for their children. The findings to the second research question are that teen mothers identify themselves as both mothers and students in institutional settings. This is significant in that a successful educational context lessens the struggle of teen mothers torn between the demands of being a mother and a student. The studies showed that schools that embraced the role of positioning teen mothers as such were able to meet the needs of their

students and students were able to stay in school longer, and complete their education. The findings to the third question, are that educational approaches that benefit teen mothers' literacy learning are those that directly relate to the students' lives are most beneficial and that positive relationships between teachers and students are essential to success.

The findings of these three research questions impact the education field in both alternative and public schools. The PD workshop, website, and blog were specifically developed for teachers at the TEAM program but could be used in both types of settings. The PD is designed to inform teachers about this project and its findings through best practices for adolescent girls. The researcher created this project to impact teachers' instruction of teen mothers and show the significance the topic is of teen mothers' educational attainment and literacy instruction.

Significance of Findings

Teachers and literacy professionals can benefit from these findings because they reinforce that education is the key to success in life. Contrary to popular belief, teen mothers have the motivation and reason to continue their education but often too few educational support systems are in place to keep them in school. With only 38% obtaining a high school diploma, the findings show that using evidence- and research-based educational approaches to help teen mothers stay in school is important for teen mothers, their children, the educational community, and society.

These findings are also significant for teachers and literacy professionals, who are seeking nontraditional ways to teaching when there are limited career opportunities in the field of education. Another benefit for teachers and their careers is the ability to make a difference in their community and in their students' lives by working with this population. Using lessons

designed by educators informed by empirical research that is effective with teen mothers can result in teen mothers being supported and having a higher chance of obtaining a high school diploma. This topic has many positive implications for society as a whole because of this. The findings of this project are significant because they identify a few educational approaches that affect the success of teen mothers educational attainment. If literacy professional and teachers use these findings (understanding the contexts of teen mothers, positioning teen mothers as students and mothers, talking about sex positively, and using proven educational approaches), they will likely be able to create a positive learning environment for their students. In doing so, the teen mothers may have more supports from their educational institution and will likely complete their high school education.

Limitations

There are some limitations in the research supporting these findings. One of them is that there were few empirical research studies available about the topic. Another limitation of these findings is that there were no large-scale studies that provided quantitative and statistical information about how many alternative schools for teen mothers there are and what their demographic is like, nationally or internationally. It would have been provided a comprehensive understanding to know the number of teen mothers who stay in public school or went to the alternative school and learned the number of students who drop out from each type of institution. Such comparative information was not available. Another limitation to these findings are that there are few measures to determine how participants who presented the lessons in the described studies actually contribute to a teen mothers' success in school compared to those teen mothers who do not participate in the lessons. As all of these studies that involved teaching were

descriptive in nature, no experimental research was part of the literature review. These limitations influenced the researcher's recommendations for future research.

Opportunities for Future Research

The researcher recommends that more research, especially quantitative inquires, be conducted that measures the effects these types of instruction has on the graduation rate of teen mothers. This would require longitudinal studies over several years. The topic could also benefit from having more research conducted about these types of instruction being taught on a larger scale as many of the studies were about small schools, after school groups, or individual students. The researcher would like to teach and observe a few classes at the TEAM program to research the effect her professional development workshop has influenced the teachers lessons and the influence the suggestions has made on the teen mothers. The researcher also believes educators would benefit if more research was available in the Common Core Standards.

Conclusion

This master's project presents research based evidence about the literacy education of teen mothers within public and alternative schools and how it effects teen mothers' educational attainment. Schools that have a supportive framework for teen mothers often have higher graduation rates of the teen mothering population than those who do not consider the needs of teen mothers. A high school diploma makes life easier for teen mothers who need to support their children, which has a good impact on society as a whole. In order for schools to give teen mothers the supports they need, schools need to take a few factors into consideration. These include, understanding the educational contexts of teen mothers, positioning teen mothers as students and mothers in the classroom, talking about sex in a positive way, and using evidence

based teaching approaches. Knowledge about the topic of literacy and teen mothers and

positively affect the education field, teen mother, and society as a whole.

References

Ashcraft, C. (2003). Adolescent ambiguities in "American Pie": Popular culture as a resource for sex education. *Youth & Society, 35*(1), 37-70.

Ashcraft, C. (2009). Literacy and sexuality: What's the connection?. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 52*(7), 636-638. doi:10.1598/JAAL.52.7.9

Barton,, D. & Hamilton, M. (2000). Literacy practices. In D. Barton, M. Hamilton, & R. Ivanič (Eds.)., *Situated literacies: Reading and writing in context* (pp. 7-15). London: Routledge.

Baptiste Jr., H., & Walker, D. (2005). The teen parent academy. *Science Teacher*, *72*(3), 40-43.

Boonstra, H. (2004). Comprehensive approach needed to combat sexually transmitted infections among youth. *The Guttmacher Report on Public Policy*, *7*(1), 3-4, 13.

Bragg, S. (2006). 'Having a real debate': using media as a resource in sex education. *Sex Education, 6*(4), 317-331. doi:10.1080/14681810600981830

Bussert-Webb, K. (2001). I won't tell you about myself, but I will draw my story. *Language Arts, 78*(6), 511-519. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/196847652?accountid=28748

Chabot, C., Shoveller, J., Johnson, J., & Prkachin, K. (2010). Morally problematic: young mothers' lives as parables about the dangers of sex. *Sex Education, 10(2),* 201-215. doi:10.1080/14681811003666283

Davies, B., & Harré, R. (1990). Positioning : The discursive production of selves. *Journal for the Thory of Social Behaviour, 20*, 43-63.

Finders, M.J. (1997). *Just girls: Hidden literacies and life in junior high*. New York: Teachers

   College Press.

Finders, M. J. (2000). "Gotta be worse": Negotiating the pleasurable and the popular. *Journal Of*

   Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 44(2), 146-149.

Fine, M. (1988). Sexuality, schooling, and adolescent females: The missing discourse of desire.

   Harvard Educational Review, 58(1), 29-53.

Gee, J. P. (1991). What is literacy? In Mitchell & K. Weiler (Eds.). *Rewriting literacy:Culture*

   and the discourse of the other. (pp.3-11). New York: Bergin & Garvey.

Gee, J. P. (1999). *An introduction to discourse analysis theory and method (2nd ed.)*. New York,

   NY: Routledge.

Hallman, H. L. (2007). Reassigning the identity of the pregnant and parenting student. *American*

   Secondary Education, *36*(1), 80-98.

Hallman, H. L. (2009a). Authentic, dialogic writing: The case of a letter to the editor. *English*

   Journal, 98(5), 43-47. Retrieved from

   http://search.proquest.com/docview/237320909?accountid=28748

Hallman, H. L. (2009b). "Dear Tupac, you speak to me": Recruiting hip hop as curriculum at a

   school for pregnant and parenting teens. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, *42*(1), 36-51.

   doi:10.1080/10665680802612642

Hallman, H. L. (2009c). Novel roles for books: Promoting the use of young adult literature with

students at a school for pregnant and parenting teens. *ALAN Review, 36*(2), 18-26.

Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/212217451?accountid=28748

Harré, R., & van Langenhove, L. (1999). *Positioning theory*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Hunter, C. (2007). On the outskirts of education: the liminal space of rural teen pregnancy.

Ethnography & Education, 2(1), 75-92. doi:10.1080/17457820601159109

International Reading Association (2010). *Standards for reading professionals A reference for

the preparation of educators in the United States*. Newark, DE: International Reading

Association.

Kelly, D. M. (1993). Secondary power source: High school students as participatory researchers.

The American Sociologist, 24(1), 8-26.

Kelly, D.M. (2000). *Pregnant with meaning: Teen mothers and the politics of inclusive

schooling.* New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing Inc.

Kelly, D. M. (2006). Frame work: Helping youth counter their misrepresentations in media.

Canadian Journal of Education, 29(1), 27-48. doi:10.2307/20054145

Klein, J.D. (2005). Adolescent pregnancy: Current trends and issues. *Pediatrics*, *116* (1), 281-

286. doi: 10.1542/peds.2005-0999

Leadbeater, B. (1996). School outcomes for minority-group adolescent mothers at 28 to 36

months postpartum: A longitudinal follow-up. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *6*,

629–648.

Luker, K. (1996). *Dubious conceptions*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Mahar, D. (2001). Positioning in a middle school culture: Gender, race, social class, and power. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 45*(3), 200-209.

Manlove, J. (1998). The influence of high school dropout and school disengagement on the risk of school-age pregnancy. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 8*, 187–220.

Mapes, A. C. (2011). You need to realize it in yourself: Positioning, improvisation, and literacy. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 54*(7), 515-524. doi:10.1598/JAAL.54.7.5

McVee, M.B., Baldassarre, M., & Bailey, N. (2004). Positioning theory as lens to explore teachers' beliefs about literacy and culture. In C. M. Fairbanks, J. Worthy, B. Maloch, J. V. Hoffman, & D. L. Schallert (Eds.). *53rd National Reading Conference Yearbook* (pp. 281-295). Oak Creek, WI: National Reading Conference.

Musick, J. (1993). Young, poor, and pregnant: The psychology of teenage motherhood. Yale University Press New Haven and London.

National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, (2012). Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db89.htm

Ripple, R. P. (1994). Intergenerational education: Breaking the downward achievement spiral of teen mothers. *Clearing House, 67*(3), 143-145.

Roxas, K. (2008). Keepin' It real and relevant: Providing a culturally responsive education to pregnant and parenting teens. *Multicultural Education, 15*(3), 2-9.

Sullivan, K., Clark, J., Castrucci, B., Samsel, R., Fonseca, V., & Garcia, I. (2010). Continuing

education mitigates the negative consequences of adolescent childbearing. *Maternal &*

Child Health Journal, 15(3), 360-366. doi:10.1007/s10995-010-0585-8

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy. National data. Washington,

DC: The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. Available from:

http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/national-data/default.aspx [Accessed 3/28/14].

Vianna, N. (2008). Advocates for youth: Teen moms are bullied every day. Retrieved from

http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/blogs-main/advocates-blog/2143-teen-moms-are-

bullied-everyday-

Zachry, E. M. (2005). Getting my education: Teen mothers' experiences in school before and

after motherhood. *Teachers College Record, 107*(12), 2566-2598.

Appendix A
Website

Access at: http://adolescentliteracyteacher.weebly.com/

Example 1: Welcome Page

Literacy Experiences of Teen Mothers

Catch up with me on...   f   in   P   a

WELCOME!   SECTION I   SECTION II   SECTION III   COMMUNICATION BOARD

This professional development workshop is intended for literacy professionals, teachers, and school administrators.

Click here to obtain the handout that goes along with this workshop.

I've already had experience with the TEAM program before...

The TEAM (Teenage Education and Motherhood) program in Jamestown. is a project of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), which provides education, counseling, and supportive services for pregnant teens, teen mothers, and their children. TEAM makes it possible for young women to complete their high school education while concentrating on prenatal care and parenting education.

My mom always emphasized that education is the key to success. Here we are when she was a student in the TEAM program.

Example 2: Section Heading / Discussion Questions Page

Literacy Experiences of Teen Mothers

Catch up with me on...   f   in   P   ▦

WELCOME!   SECTION I   SECTION II   SECTION III   COMMUNICATION BOARD

Discussion Questions:

Positioning

Talking About Sex

1. What is positioning?

2. How do you position yourself, and your students in the classroom?

3. How you talk about sex in the classroom?

4. View this scenario where teens are talking about sex in the classroom. How would you respond to the students' conversation?

5. How can a teachers' views about sexuality in the classroom effect teen mothers' identity development?

6. How might you positively make a change in your instruction to reinforce the identity development of the teen mothers you work with?

Let's Start Section II

Create a free website with weebly

Example 3: Subheading Page

Literacy Experiences of Teen Mothers

Catch up with me on...   f in p m

WELCOME!   SECTION I   SECTION II   SECTION III   COMMUNICATION BOARD

Theory

Section I: Theory

Barton and Hamilton (2000)
Literacy as a Social Practice Theory

Gee (1991, 1999)
Sociocultural Theories of Discourse and Identity

Photos from Lancaster University

Photo from http://blogwalker.edublogs.org/

Literacy as a social practice implies that social relationships are very important because "literacy practices are more usefully understood as existing in the relationships between people, within groups and communities, rather than as a set of properties residing in individuals" (p. 8). From this point of view, teen mothers' literacy practices are directly related to their social relationships within groups and within their communities.

Teachers who are reflective of students' schema make connections between students' home experiences and school experiences, therefore creating a learning environment. When knowledge of students' schema is used in lessons, lessons are socially responsive to the needs of the student. This creates greater learning outcomes. Gee also suggests that educators examine their own discourses so that they can help students understand the academic discourse better.

Barton and Hamilton:
Literacy as a Social Practice Theory (2000)

Barton and Hamilton (2000) view literacy as a social practice. Barton and Hamilton say literacy is not just about reading print but about "what people do with literacy" in social settings and in relating to others around them (p. 7). They say that when people practice literacy they connect to the words written, and are shaped by their own values, attitudes, feelings, and social relationships. Literacy as a social practice implies that social relationships are very important because "literacy practices are more usefully understood as existing in the relationships between people, within groups and communities, rather than as a set of properties residing in individuals" (p. 8). From this point of view, teen mothers' literacy practices are directly related to their social relationships within groups and within their communities.

Gee:
Sociocultural Theories of Discourse and Identity (1991, 1999)

James Paul Gee (1999) expressed that individuals learn to "be" a certain way in each of their contexts. A pregnant or teen mother's contexts may be at home as a mom, and at school as a student. Both contexts require her to act upon different ways of being; in other words, at school, teen mothers are not merely students but are certain types of students. Gee explains that these contexts are called primary Discourses

Example 4: Contact Page

Literacy Experiences of Teen Mothers

Catch up with me on...   f   in   P   뭐

WELCOME!   SECTION I   SECTION II   SECTION III   COMMUNICATION BOARD

Contact Me

Name *

First   Last

Email *

Comment *

Submit

Please take a moment to tell me who you are....

Who are you? *
○ School Administrator
○ Teacher
○ Researcher
○ Other

If Other please specify:

What is your age? *
○ Less than 13
○ 13-18
○ 19-25
○ 26-35
○ 36-50
○ Over 50
○ Prefer not to say

Submit

Let's Do This Again!

Appendix B

Workshop Handout

Can be downloaded from http://adolescentliteracyteacher.weebly.com/

Section I:

1. How have students at the TEAM program had similar experiences and or challenges within their lives that are similar or different from the research presented?

2. What are some of the most significant challenges teen mothers face?

3. How has the TEAM program helped to address these challenges?

4. What still may need to be changed to help teen mothers more?

LITERACY EXPERIENCES OF TEEN MOTHERS

Section II:

1. What is positioning?

2. How do you position yourself, and your students in the classroom?

3. How you talk about sex in the classroom?

4. View this scenario where teens are talking about sex in the classroom. How would you respond to the students' conversation?

5. How can a teacher's view about sexuality in the classroom effect teen mothers' identity development?

6. How might you positively make a change in your instruction to reinforce the identity development of the teen mothers you work with?

LITERACY EXPERIENCES OF TEEN MOTHERS

Section III:

Educational Approaches That Help Teen Mothers		
School Wide	In The Classroom	In Small Group Settings Before and After School
•	•	•

LITERACY EXPERIENCES OF TEEN MOTHERS

Appendix C

Professional Development Evaluation

Can be submitted by going to:

http://adolescentliteracyteacher.weebly.com/evaluation.html

1. Was the website and information organized well? (Why or why not?)

2. Was the website and information helpful to plan lessons with your students? (Why or why not?)

3. Do you feel more comfortable addressing sex in your classroom from participating in this workshop? (Why or why not?)

4. How were your new lessons received as you taught them?

5. Do you feel that the suggestions easily align with your school's curriculum?

6. Other Comments?