Rural Special Educators Teaching Reading: A Case Study

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Rural Special Educators Teaching Reading: A Case Study

Sheryl Vernon

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Educational Specialist

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ABSTRACT

Rural Special Educators Teaching Reading: A Case Study

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Education in rural areas coupled with poverty is shown to be a risk factor for reading failure (Bhattacharya, 2010; Morrison et al., 2005). Students who have severe reading failure are serviced in the realm of special education. To enhance a student’s ability to read, special education teachers can use literacy interventions. Targeted reading intervention (TRI) is a literacy intervention that was developed to meet the requirements of rural elementary classroom teachers, who are often unready to provide diagnostic reading instruction for reading difficulty (Vernon-Feagans et al., 2012). Stevenson and Reed (2017) identified eight empirically supported methods for intensifying instruction when students are not responding to core instruction. The study sought to understand how, if at all, rural special educators altered reading instruction practices after receiving literacy intervention professional development.

A case study using a qualitative design was used to observe the perceptions of three special education teachers in an impoverished, rural school district. The special education teachers received instruction on the eight components of intensifying instruction and the TRI. These specific literacy interventions were then implemented by the teachers with their students. Before and after interviews were recorded and used for data analysis.

Our findings show that prior to the training the participants felt the power to teach reading resided in a formalized, commercial reading program. Following the training and implementation of these specific literacy interventions, the participants were more often able to diagnose reading difficulties and prescribe effective interventions based on the individual needs rather than relying on a scripted program. By increasing instructional match, the teachers were able to intensify instruction and could make changes to the student intervention as needed.

Findings from the data analysis in this thesis study indicated that when teachers were provided ongoing professional development, there was evidence of movement towards intensification. School district-level administrators should consider creating ongoing professional development that targets intensifying instruction, particularly for special education faculty.

Keywords: reading instruction, teacher effectiveness, instructional improvement, diagnostic teaching, rural schools
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In the United States, nearly 8.9 million students attend rural schools. Forty-three percent of all schools in the United States are located in a rural school district (Strange et al., 2012). Half of all of the public schools of 13 states are located in rural areas (Johnson et al., 2014). In the state of Utah, 24% of the public schools are located in rural areas that serve 85,000 students (Snyder & Dillow, 2012).

In rural areas, reading failure seems to be more prevalent (Snow et al., 1998; Vernon-Feagans et al., 2018). Lower readiness skills could be due in part to the disproportionately higher poverty levels in rural verses urban or other areas of the nation (Lee & Burkham, 2002). Poverty has been described as the most salient predictor of depressed literacy growth in schools (Cunningham, 2006). This finding is particularly problematic for rural children because rural areas have a higher percentage of children living in poverty than suburban children (Kena et al., 2015). To be sure, rural poverty is a risk factor for reading failure. In fact, rural children from low-wealth communities start school with lower readiness skills than peers from other areas in the country (Bhattacharya, 2010; Morrison et al., 2005).

There has been a shortage of special education teachers for many years in school systems, nationwide (Berry, 2012). Rural areas are particularly hard hit by the shortage in special education teachers (Brownell et al., 2018; McLeskey et al., 2004). Reasons rural schools have difficulty staffing and retaining special education teachers include the following: poor tax base, fewer school resources, lower pay for teachers, smaller populations of teachers, and less educated teachers (Vernon-Feagans et al., 2013).
One-fourth of the students in Utah are served in rural schools (Johnson et al., 2014; Snyder & Dillow, 2012). A high percentage of these students are dealing with intense poverty (Lee & Burkham, 2002). The combination of poverty and rurality often results in lower student reading skills and lower academic performance (Cunningham, 2006; Duncan et al., 1994; Duncan et al., 1998). In addition, many low-wealth, high-needs, rural schools have a large percentage of teachers who are not well trained in providing quality literacy instruction at high levels (Darling-Hammond, 2004). The purpose of this thesis study is to explore how special education teachers at the elementary school level, in one rural, high poverty district, perceive and implement literacy intervention.
CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Children being reared in poverty are vulnerable for lower achievement in reading, grade retention, eligibility for special education, and school dropout (Herring et al., 2007). A National Assessment of Educational Progress survey (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015) found that only 21% of children living in poverty read at a minimum level of proficiency in fourth grade compared with 52% of children not in poverty.

Students with a low socio-economic status (SES) are also more likely to attend high needs schools with higher student-to-teacher ratios and high rates of teacher turnover. Low-income students in these schools are also more likely to be taught by a teacher who is not appropriately certified and has fewer than three years teaching experience (Lupton, 2005; Nye et al., 2004; Tajalli & Opheim, 2005). Further, students from a low socio economic status (SES) demographic attending high needs schools have less opportunities to participate in literacy-related activities compared to those learners from higher SES backgrounds (Bradley et al., 2001; Pianta et al., 2002).

Nye et al. (2004) found there was more variance in teacher effects in low SES schools than in high SES schools. This study also reports that the teacher effect was larger in low SES schools than in high SES schools. Therefore, in low-SES schools, it is more important which teacher is selected for a child than it is in high-SES schools (Nye et al., 2004). Low-income students are more likely to be exposed to teachers with lower teaching skills (Krei, 1998; Lankford et al., 2002).
Education and Poverty in Rural Areas

In 2010–2011 about one third of the 100,000 public schools in the United States were located in rural areas. In fact, there are more public schools located in rural areas than there are public schools located in suburbs, cities, or towns (Snyder & Dillow, 2012). This means that in the United States more than one in six students attend a school in a rural area (Strange et al., 2012). In Utah, one in four of Utah’s schools were rural (Snyder & Dillow, 2012).

When poverty and rurality exist jointly, lower student reading skills and lower academic performance exist (Cunningham, 2006; Duncan et al., 1994; Duncan et al., 1998). Depressed reading outcomes for children attending low resourced rural schools is ascribed to multiple factors including less access to special education teachers, and less opportunities for rural teachers to receive current, effective professional development. These challenges will be discussed in the following sections.

Recruiting Special Education Teachers to Rural Areas

Research indicates that there is a shortage of special education teachers in school systems nationwide which is felt most heavily in rural schools (Brownell et al., 2018). Reasons identified for the difficulty of recruiting special education teachers to rural areas include the following:

a. Rural schools have a poorer tax base.

b. Rural schools have fewer school resources.

c. Rural school teacher salaries are lower and less competitive.

d. There are smaller populations of teachers in rural schools.

e. There is a perception that less educated teachers work in rural schools.
f. Teachers in rural areas have less access to on-going, effective, and current professional development. (Vernon-Feagans et al., 2013)

In addition to a shortage of teachers, schools have difficulty keeping high quality teachers (Darling-Hammond, 1995). Some researchers have suggested the difficulty of retaining high quality teachers in rural areas may also be related to the challenge of providing opportunities for high quality professional development for teachers in rural districts (Vernon-Feagans et al., 2018).

**Professional Development for Teachers in Rural Districts**

Teachers in rural areas have less access to high quality professional development and fewer advanced degrees than their counterparts in urban and suburban schools (Erickson et al., 2012; Provasnik et al., 2007). This is troublesome when one considers that professional development influences the actions and beliefs of teachers and affects student outcomes (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Indeed, some researchers suggest that student gains are primarily affected by highly trained, certified teachers (Gray, 2011; Hattie, 2009, 2015). For children who struggle with reading, the lack of a well-trained, highly effective teacher who provides diagnostic reading instruction skills can be catastrophic (Scanlon et al., 2008). There are, however, several examples of cost-effective in-service professional development programs for rural teachers that support high-quality reading instruction for their struggling readers. One of these is the targeted reading intervention (TRI) provided through webcam coaching (Amendum et al., 2018; Vernon-Feagans et al., 2013). A description of webcam coaching and an introduction of the TRI will be provided in the following section.
**Literacy Webcam Coaching**

Literacy coaching has been identified as an effective professional development model with the ability to facilitate meaningful and authentic professional development in the environment of the teacher (Mraz et al., 2011). Literacy coaching is also a critical element to support teachers in improving their abilities in instructional practice with struggling readers (International Reading Association [IRA], 2004). The outdated, one-shot professional development workshop model has not been effective (Joyce & Showers, 2002). Currently the IRA (2018) supports literacy coaching as a *mainstay* for teacher professional development when one wants to support teachers and promote literacy achievement. Unfortunately, most literacy coaching models are not available to rural teachers due to untrained staff and/or the distance from universities, consultants or other institutes that could provide training.

However, webcam coaching for teachers in rural areas has been shown to be cost effective. Webcam coaching has also been shown to support rural teachers’ knowledge and understanding of effective literacy instruction (Vernon-Feagans et al., 2013, 2015). These studies also pointed out that an essential feature of webcam coaching is that the content of the reading instruction must be research and evidence-based if it is to be effective. In addition, coaches must collaborate and communicate well with teachers in order for the webcam coaching sessions to be successful (Cutrer-Pàrraga et al., 2021). One reading intervention program that includes webcam coaching and has been shown to be effective with rural teachers is the targeted reading intervention (TRI).

**Targeted Reading Intervention**

The Targeted Reading Intervention (TRI) was implemented to address the needs of rural early elementary general education teachers, who are often underprepared to provide
individualized diagnostic reading instruction for readers that struggle (Vernon-Feagans et al., 2012). The TRI is a program to help teachers promote reading growth rapidly in struggling readers. Teachers implement the TRI individually for 15-minute sessions, three to five times weekly for six to eight weeks. Each teacher works one on one with identified struggling readers for a designated time period within the school year. The TRI uses training and coaching of the teacher in real time via webcam to provide the teacher evidence-based reading strategies while working with the student. TRI coaches then debrief the lesson with teachers live, after sessions are completed. The TRI strategies are used in the context of words and text that are geared to the skill level of the struggling reader. The TRI uses a web-based collaborative model with peer coaching which optimizes the intensifying instruction framework. The intensifying instruction framework aids the teacher matching instruction to the students’ most pressing needs and working on them. The eight components of intensifying instruction will be introduced and discussed in the following section.

**Eight Components of Intensifying Instruction**

Stevenson and Reed (2017) identified eight empirically supported methods for intensifying instruction when students are not responding to core instruction. The eight key elements are as follows:

a. Adjusting the amount of time (e.g., frequency, latency, and duration)

b. Reducing the size of instructional groups

c. Optimizing the fit between students’ needs and the purpose of the intervention

d. Increasing students’ opportunities to respond (OTRs)

e. Increasing student motivation to learn

f. Increasing feedback (frequency and specificity)
g. Changing methods (program, intervention, modality)

h. Considering students’ cultural norms and values

A sample form to evaluate the eight components of intensifying instruction is found in Appendix A. Teachers’ adjusting the amount of student practice time (frequency, latency, and duration) has demonstrated improved retention of skills and produced substantial gains in learning. This includes shorter, distributed practices (Schutte et al., 2015), lengthening intervals between sessions (Pavlik et al., 2008; Swehla et al., 2016), or requiring multiple years of intervention (Kamps et al., 2008; Vaughn et al., 2011).

Reducing the size of instructional groups makes it more likely that the instruction will be individualized for each student (Manset-Williamson & Nelson, 2005; Risko et al., 2008). Making the ratio of teacher to student lower, especially when students are struggling, has been associated with favorable outcomes (Fuchs et al., 2014). Torgensen (2006) recommends the best small group to work with is three to five students. Others recommend groups ranging in size from one to three students, showing statistically that outcomes are the same whether working one to one or up three students (Helf et al., 2009; Vaughn et al., 2003). Knowing that working with three students is statistically the same relative to outcomes as working with one student can be beneficial for teachers in rural schools because it is more cost effective.

Optimizing the fit between the needs of the student and the intervention purpose will provide an ongoing understanding of the changes in a student’s ability. As such, it is necessary to continually assess the student as the intervention is implemented (Kamps et al., 2008). In addition, when the learning objective is achieved, the student needs to be moved on. This is done in highly focused groups for shorter durations of time with the teacher focused on current data rather than tracking students on previous performance (Tieso, 2003). Stevenson and Reed (2017)
suggested that the unique needs of each student and the goals of the specific instructional lesson must be considered when deciding to instruct students in heterogeneous or homogeneous intervention groups.

Increasing the rate of opportunities to respond (OTRs) leads to increased engagement and achievement (MacSuga-Gage & Simonsen, 2015). Stevenson and Reed (2017) pose that OTRs should be actively tracked. OTRs can be calculated by dividing the total number of observed OTRs by the total observation time in minutes.

Increasing motivation to learn increases engagement and provides confidence (León et al., 2015). Students who struggle will likely avoid task might employ tasks they believe they are not capable of understanding or completing (Fredricks et al., 2004). To facilitate students’ motivation and engagement with learning, teachers can assign tasks relative to the students’ current level of ability (Brophy, 2013). Teachers can also provide students with perceived choice, assigned authentic learning experiences and help students set meaningful goals that are directly tied to the new learning (Hruska, 2011). When students are motivated and engage in learning and set meaningful goals, academic and behavioral performance has improved (Hruska, 2011; Stevenson, 2016).

Increasing the frequency and specificity of performance feedback can help improve students’ behavior. Student understanding about what needs to be done or changed increases student outcomes (Simonsen et al., 2008).

Changing the method of the program, intervention, or modality of the intervention when is important when it becomes clear it is not working. Care must be taken to ensure the intervention has been implemented with fidelity, and that the child was actively participating in the intervention before considering a change (Johnson et al., 2006; Stevenson & Reed, 2017).
Considering students’ cultural norms and values can increase students’ willingness to engage in instruction, improve motivation, and increase achievement and is integral to student growth (Gay, 2000, 2002). However, teachers may lack knowledge on how to operationalize culturally relevant practices for specific students (Barnes, 2006). Teachers can start by getting to know the student’s family to understand cultural capital the student can use to leverage strengths in the classroom. Additionally, teachers can actively work towards recognizing and reduce any inherit biases towards the student’s specific school, home or learning culture (Fallon et al., 2012; Swain-Bradway et al., 2014).
CHAPTER 3

Method

Using a case study approach, the primary researcher carried out a qualitative inquiry to explore the perceptions of three rural, elementary school, special education teachers as they learned and implemented a literacy intervention, TRI, in three different schools in a rural school district in Central Utah. The study sought to understand how, if at all, rural special educators altered reading instruction practices after receiving literacy intervention professional development.

Qualitative Approach Rationale

Within the qualitative research approach, many designs could potentially have been used in this study, such as narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study. Each design offered a different focus for collecting, organizing and analyzing data. Elements from several of these approaches were considered in order to address the research question however, the approach used for this thesis study was case study.

Bromley and Basil (1986) outline the components of a case study as: “All case study research starts from the same compelling feature: The desire to derive an up-close or otherwise in-depth understanding of a single or small number of “cases” set in their real-world contexts” (Bromley & Basil, 1986, p. 1). The understanding gained aims to produce an irreplaceable and an insightful comprehension of the “case(s)”—hopefully bring about new insights regarding behaviors in the real-world and their significance. “The distinctiveness of the case study, therefore, also serves as its abbreviated definition: An empirical inquiry into a contemporary phenomenon (e.g., a “case”), set within its real-world context especially when the boundaries of phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2009, p. 18). Thus, amid the features,
case study research undertakes to examine the framework and other complicated situation related to the case(s) being studied are vital to comprehending the case(s).

The in-depth focus on the case(s), as well as the desire to cover a broader range of contextual and other complex conditions, produce a wide range of topics to be covered by any given case study. In this sense, case study research goes beyond the study of isolated variables. As a by-product, and as a final feature in appreciating case study research, the relevant case study data are likely to come from multiple and not singular sources of evidence. (Yin, 2012, p. 4)

Yin (2012) indicates that a case study should provide an in-depth understanding set in real-world contexts. Yin (2012) also explained a case study is appropriate when the research addresses a question that is descriptive or explanatory. Using a case study design allowed the researcher to address the research question in an explanatory way using naturalistic data from three teachers as they learned and implemented the same intervention. With this research, we hoped to gain insight as each teacher experienced the same phenomena. We explored patterns to account for similarities and differences both within and across each teachers’ lived experiences.

Feagin et al. (1991, p. 2) described case study inquiry as an “in depth, multifaceted investigation” of an individual phenomenon. These researchers suggested that case studies rely on several sources of data. To that end, this study incorporated timed point interviews before, during and after the intervention. The researcher also observed individual teachers implementing literacy intervention. Further, a focus group interview was conducted post intervention in order to understand how the teacher participants as a group made meaning of literacy intervention in their rural school district. The focus group interview was conducted by a different member of the research team to help limit bias and ensure trustworthiness of the data. In short, by conducting a
case study, the primary researcher gained an in-depth, multifaceted look at what occurred before, during and after the literacy intervention professional development.

Participants

After receiving Brigham Young University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, as well as school district approval (see Appendices B, C, D, and E), the participants in this study were recruited using purposeful sampling. Study participants included all of the elementary special education teachers \((n=3)\) currently working in one rural, high poverty district in central Utah. All of the participants were white females within the ages of 44 and 65. All of the teachers had master’s degrees. Two of the teachers received their graduate degrees from online programs and one of the teachers received her graduate degree from a four-year program at a major university. The average years teaching for these participants was 20 years with a span of 8–36 years. Two of the teachers held a level 2 license which is a considered a professional educator license in the state of Utah. See Appendix F, G, H, and I for interview questions and consent forms.

Setting

This thesis study took place within three rural elementary schools in a rural district in Central Utah. There was one special education teacher participant at each of the schools. Each of the teachers worked in their assigned classroom and administered the intervention in an everyday setting. The three schools (school names were changed to ensure confidentiality) included the following:


3. Eleanor Roosevelt Elementary School. A K–5 school with an Enrollment of 523 students. Race/Ethnic Minority 18%, English Learners 12%, Low Socio-Economic 54%, and Students with Disabilities 19%.

Measures

The primary researcher incorporated observations, time point interviews and focus group interviews in order to gather data about the phenomena being studied (see Figure 1 below). Specifically, the primary researcher observed classroom literacy instruction prior to literacy intervention professional development, during implementation of the literacy intervention and at the end of literacy intervention implementation. In addition, the primary researcher conducted in-depth individual interviews with each teacher prior to and mid intervention implementation. A different member of the research team conducted a focus group interview post intervention.

Figure 1

Data Collection Tools
Professional Development Literacy Intervention Training

After the initial interview and observation data were collected, the three special educator participants were trained in a literacy intervention called the targeted reading intervention (TRI; Vernon-Feagans et al., 2018). Participant teachers were also provided training on how to intensify the TRI according to individual students’ needs (Stevenson & Reed, 2017).

The Targeted Reading Intervention (TRI)

The TRI is a professional development program that was developed to give teachers support in offering multi-component literacy instruction (MCLI) that encourages reading growth quickly with struggling readers. The TRI is implemented by trained teacher in 15-minute session that are one-on-one MCLI session with students three to five times per week. TRI diagnostic maps are used (see Appendix J) to support teachers in tracking students’ progress and plan next lessons that will match students’ reading needs.

The TRI is made up of levels reading instruction that progress in complexity. The teachers in the current study focused primarily on the TRI pink and TRI blue levels. At these levels, the foci are on defining, segmenting, and blending two and three sound (Pink level) or four or more sound (blue level), regular short vowel words. Words at these levels may also include digraphs (two letters that represent one sound: sh; pink level) and/or consonant blends (words such as splint; blue level). At the TRI pink and TRI blue levels, the student also engages in oral language development, phonemic awareness practice, fluent reading, guided oral reading and interactive writing activities. Each 15-minute TRI lesson is comprised of four main activities: re-reading for fluency, word work, guided oral reading and pocket phrases (see Appendix K for TRI activity teacher guides for the pink and blue levels and Appendix L for the pink and blue observation forms).
Vernon-Feagan’s research utilized a series of random controlled trials (RCT) on the TRI to show significant gains in reading for students who were struggling (Vernon-Feagans et al., 2018). Reading gains for those with a learning disability in reading and English learners have also been observed in research (Amendum et al., 2018). In addition, the TRI has been used successfully with students with Intellectual Disability (ID; Cutrer-Pàrraga et al., under review). For a more detailed explanation on the TRI, refer to this website: www.targetedreadingintervention.org.

**Teacher Training**

The three special education teachers participated in three, eight-hour training sessions over three months at their local district office, instructed by members of the research staff. Two of the on-site trainings were completed prior to the teachers starting the literacy intervention. One of the on-site trainings was completed after the teachers started the literacy intervention and were receiving real-time literacy coaching.

The purpose of the trainings was to scaffold participants’ skill in providing and intensifying appropriate TRI instruction for students who struggle in reading. Specifically, the trainings provided the participants opportunities to learn about and practice MCLI using the TRI, provide diagnostic instruction matched to students’ most pressing need and learn how to intensify MCLI instruction using the TRI framework.

**Literacy Coaching**

In addition to the literacy trainings described above, each participant teacher also received individual literacy coaching support each week for 10 weeks. The webcam literacy coaching sessions were delivered in real-time by the primary researcher via webcam technology. The literacy coach observed the teachers as they were working with a student using the TRI.
After the lesson, the coach provided feedback according to each teacher’s specific needs. During the coaching sessions, the literacy coach would ask for feedback on how the lesson went, provide emotional and instruction support for the teacher participant, and encourage participant teachers to think diagnostically about each of their student’s reading needs.

Data Collection

Classroom observations lasted 20–60 minutes. Each observation was video recorded and transcribed verbatim. The individual interviews were conducted in person by the primary researcher. Individual interviews completed prior to the literacy intervention professional development in each teacher participant’s classroom. Individual interviews completed during literacy intervention implementation were conducted in the office of each teacher participant’s individual school site. The focus group interview was completed post-intervention and was conducted by a different member of the research team online via Zoom technology.

All of the interviews lasted between 60–90 minutes. Interviews were audio-recorded, then transcribed verbatim. After all of the interviews were transcribed, (including the focus group interview) the transcriptions were sent to the participants for review. After the transcriptions were approved by the participants, the updated transcripts were deidentified and uploaded to a secure server. These updated transcripts of the interviews as well as the observation transcripts were used for analysis of the current study.

Data Analysis

Transcriptions of the interviews and observations were downloaded to a word document which acted as an organizational tool while the data were read, coded and analyzed for meaning. The researcher used a qualitative analysis methodology called Sort and Sift, Think and Shift (Maietta, 2006; Maietta & Mihas, 2017). As such, the analysis encompassed three distinct phases.
to identify the most notable themes emerging from the data from the observations and the interviews. During data analysis, the researcher was guided through these three distinct phases of the Sort and Sift, Think and Shift approach by her committee chair. Specific strategies that were incorporated to support the data analysis included data inventory, diagramming, memoing as written reflection, episodic profiling, topic monitoring, mining, and bridging (Curry et al., 2006; Maietta, 2006). To allow the researcher to link emerging discoveries and perceptions, the primary researcher moved iteratively back and forth between phases. Each core phase of the Sort and Sift, Think and Shift method took place as follows:

In phase one, each transcript was analyzed as an individual case in an iterative phase. The researcher read through each case and created reflective memos directly on the transcripts. The primary researcher also used open coding during this within-case analysis to uncover other important features of the teacher’s individual experiences in the context literacy intervention.

Most often, open coding is a process a researcher uses as they examine evidence in the data to answer a question such as, “How did the teacher feel supported— if at all?” (Charmaz, 2014). Typically, open codes start out as a broad idea like coaching, then categories within that idea are also coded such as support from coaching, support from training, etc. Open codes that were particularly helpful in the within-case analysis were: coaching and training in intensifying instruction. During this phase, the researcher also used visual diagraming and memo writing to contemplate the connections within transcripts and start to sort the codes into key ideas in the analysis. This process was completed for each participant. The researcher then located significant quotations as she began to monitor key ideas within each transcript. Next, the researcher created an initial report and developed initial data portraits for each participant. The researcher focused on how each rural special educator participant altered reading instruction practices (if at all) after
receiving literacy intervention professional development. The key ideas that emerged through this phase of the analysis included Opportunities or Lack of Opportunities to respond (OTRs/LOTRs); Instructional Match; Diagnostic Instruction vs. Adherence to Program Only; Specific Praise vs. Correction; Teacher Efficacy vs. Teacher Insecurity; Barriers to Literacy Instruction; Coaching and Training; Fidelity to the Intervention; Pacing; Student Engagement and Motivation; Teacher Engagement and Motivation; and Progress Monitoring.

The second phase of the data analyses included comparing and contrasting the in-depth portraits of each teacher which were created during phase one of the data analyses. Each portrait represented a case. This cross-case analyses allowed the researcher to notice the differences in how each teacher experienced the literacy intervention process. For example, during phase one open coding, the researcher discovered that rather than talk about the specific literacy needs of individual children, the participants spoke of general literacy programs that would ‘fix’ students. During a rereading of individual teacher’s data profiles, the researcher started noticing the context of each participant’s literacy instruction history that created the idea that a specific program, followed strictly, would solve students’ literacy challenges. In phase two, as the researcher was comparing and contrasting intervention perception across participants, it was discovered that all of the teachers bought into the power of the program— but they each bought into the power of the program in different ways.

In phase two, the researcher grouped data from the phase one analysis to cluster key ideas into topics and then into initial themes based on related data episodes. During this phase the researcher included phase one memos from each participant. During this phase, the researcher noticed three overarching themes that appeared consistent within and across cases. These themes were (a) the power of the program prior to professional development; (b) movement towards
instructional match during and post professional development; (c) movement towards intensifying instruction during and post professional development. Phase two, cross-case analysis yielded a more thorough understanding of the similarities and differences in each teachers’ experiences.

In phase three analysis, the researcher worked to discern shared meaning across developing ideas. Specifically, the researcher worked back through the data to monitor both convergent and divergent patterns across participants’ data episodes and portraits. This work back through the data resulted in the emergence of salient subthemes. These subthemes will be discussed in the findings section below. Finally, the themes and subthemes were integrated and synthesized into a narrative that formed the final report of the findings as noted below.

This sort of in-depth fusion in three phases incorporating analysis within then across cases resulted in a more robust understanding of the experiences of each of the participants as well as the group of participants. This type of understanding was necessary in answering the research question.

**Trustworthiness**

Brantlinger et al. (2005) encouraged qualitative researchers to confirm that the data collected is reliable and trustworthy. Also, Lincoln and Guba (1985) established that trustworthiness is essential in establishing a qualitative study’s value. Trustworthy outcomes are grounded on the ethical evaluations and study practices presented by the investigator during data collection, analysis, and presentation of data results. There are four criteria for qualitative research advocated by Lincoln and Guba (1985): credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These four components work together to establish trustworthiness in qualitative inquiry. To ensure trustworthiness in this study, the researcher used triangulation, member
checking, peer debriefing, clarifying up front biases and, fair and sensitive representation of the participants. Further, the research incorporated thick descriptions from participant’s own lived experiences (Tracy, 2020)

_Triangulation_

Triangulation is the use of many different methods or data as a validating procedure (Martella et al., 2013). Triangulation is used as a tool that allows the researcher to systematically sort through data collected in different ways to find common themes or categories and eliminate overlapping areas (Creswell & Miller, 2000). This practice also facilitates the researcher to interpret meaning from the data by utilizing different sources of data to generate understanding (Brantlinger et al., 2005). Triangulation in this study was represented by incorporating data collected in different formats by different researchers at different times in the study such as the observations, individual interviews conducted by the primary researcher and the focus group interview conducted by another member of the research team.

_Member Checking_

Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that member checking is the most fundamental procedure in determining credibility. Member checking transpires informally and formally when the data from a study is confirmed with participants (Merriam, 2009). Member checking decreases the chance of misrepresentation. Member checking was incorporated by the researcher in this study by sending all transcribed interviews to participants for review. All of the interview and observation transcripts used as data in the study were approved by the participants.
Peer Debriefing

Peer debriefing is when a peer reviews the data and research process. Peer debriefing provides a second level of support that will look at the researcher’s assumption made during the research process and ask question about methods and interpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Peer debriefing is a collaborative work between an external reviewer who is familiar with the work and the qualitative researcher. Creswell and Miller (2000) state that this practice helps establish credibility from someone outside the study. The researcher incorporated peer debriefing by having members of a research team who are familiar with the work, review the data.

Clarifying Up-Front Biases

“Qualitative research typically begins and ends with the biography and self of the researcher” (Denzin, 1989, p. 12). Therefore, it is essential that the researcher clarifies upfront biases. Clarifying up-front biases consists of the investigator being honest and up-front in her attitudes by consistently evaluating individual perspectives and personal biases (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). One way to deal with observer bias is to document through analytic memos how the researcher is feeling when collecting data such as observations and interviews (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). In this study the researcher documented thoughts through writing a positionality statement reflexing journaling and ongoing analytic memos.

Researcher Positionality

Effective ways to teach students with learning disabilities how to read has been an ongoing interest of mine. I am trained as a special educator. My background includes time spent as a special educator working with readers who struggled. I understand the pressure to find that magic curriculum that will work to teach all students who struggle to read. In addition, I am interested in this topic because I am a school psychology student. In this capacity, I am expected
to help teachers implement effective reading intervention. Further, in my current role in serving rural school districts, I support special education teachers who work with readers who struggle.

Therefore, my role in this thesis study was as a participant observer. During this study, I coached each of the participants to implement the TRI. Because of this, the teachers knew me well, and were open about their experiences. On the other hand, because of my closeness with the teachers, I worried that they may not be able to share negative experiences as readily. Consequently, a different researcher conducted the final interview with the participants.

**Sensitive and Fair Representation of Participants**

One essential element in rigorous qualitative inquiry, is to sensitively and fairly represent participants’ voices and experiences. This includes researcher consideration for beneficence and justice without inflicting harm (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012). In this study, the welfare of the participants was a high priority. Fair representation of the participants was ensured through a thick description with rich accounts as evidence from the participants provided context and allowed the participants to speak for themselves.
CHAPTER 4

Results

This study sought to understand how, if at all, rural special educators altered reading instruction practices after receiving literacy intervention professional development. Findings from the data analysis suggested three overarching themes with connected subthemes (see Figure 2). The findings of themes and subthemes are discussed below along with the naturalistic data and quotations from each participant. Out of respect for the participants in striving to tell the participants’ stories in a fair and sensitive manner (Tracy, 2020), the researcher used thick descriptions and quotes from the participants’ own words in order to weave the findings narrative below. As requested by participants, the researcher used the pseudonyms Grace, Reagan, and Laney to represent the teachers throughout the results and discussion chapters.

Figure 2

Findings
Finding One: Power of the Program

The first finding suggested that prior to literacy reading intervention professional development, as a group, special education teacher participants perceived that the power to teach reading to students vulnerable to reading failure resided outside of themselves. Specifically, participants felt the power to teach reading resided in a formalized, commercial reading program.

All of the participants agreed with the following comment from Grace, “Now remember I am in Special Ed., so I know that programs work.” Laney added that the most important resource for a new special education teacher’s success was a good reading program. “For a new special education teacher to be successful I would say they need to look at the reading program that the school has and I probably would give her some strategies about behavior management as well.”

Participants believed so strongly in programs to teach reading, they suggested they could not change the program, even if it did not seem to fit the students’ needs:

One of the concerns I’ve had about the [Reading Program 1] is I think that it goes too slow. [Reading Program 1] moves too slowly and reviewing sounds everyday becomes monotonous. We will see how it goes. I’m also trained in [Reading Program 2]. [Reading Program 3] has not worked for me. It, you know is also slower paced, they have to do a lot of phonics and all that – it doesn’t work on fluency – it’s just slow. I mean, there are some kids that need that slower pace. It really is just kind of drills that part. So, I’m going to do [Reading Program 3]. But I’m really concerned about one of the students that I’m going to do it with, I’m just feeling that maybe he needs a little bit more?

[Reagan]

Similarly, the following quotation from Grace suggests she also felt powerless to change the reading program if it did not fit a student’s instructional need. She noted,
Uh, sometimes it feels like [Reading Program 1] not very effective but you just keep plugging away, plugging away with the program and you realize they're not progressing like you want them to and so you feel like maybe that's some wasted time. But then we also say, well it's not wasted. They’re still practicing their reading; they just aren't really showing it yet.

In addition to continuing with a reading program if it did not fit students’ needs, teacher participants would also continue with a reading program even when they personally disliked it:

Sometimes I get tired of [Reading Program 1] Hopefully when you repeat something ALL THE TIME, hopefully that sinks in to where it’s more automatic for them. So, I have to make sure I don’t let my, you know, negative thoughts of it influence the student’s feelings for it. [Reagan]

Commercial reading programs seemed to hold such high power for the participants; participants shared they would recycle students through the same program, hoping for better results.

My principal said we’re going to teach [Reading Program 4]. So, we bought that as well as [Reading Program 5]. I had a day training for it, and I implemented it and of course I thought we were doing great. Then at the end of the year, what happened is the kids would go to summer and they wouldn’t retain it. So therefore, we would have to go back through a whole program or at least half the program and go through it again. [Laney]

Or the teacher participants would try and make the student fit the program. For example, Reagan observed, “Sometimes it feels like [Reading Program 3] is just - is a little bit too slow pace. I guess you’ve just got to get the right student for it.”
In addition, to the above, the teacher participants described an ongoing search for the right program. Grace commented, “If it doesn't look like they're moving up in reading levels or in fluency then we'll switch programs.”

Reagan also spoke of switching programs.

*If it doesn’t work, you know you just keep trying. Like I said- you try a different reading program. I tried the [Reading Program 1] and it didn’t work, I tried the [Reading Program 5] and it didn’t work. Then I tried the [Reading Program 6] and that didn’t work. You just have to keep trying a different reading program.*

Grace continues switching programs and after she has tried multiple programs unsuccessfully, she will consider switching teachers. It is interesting to note that these teachers seemed to really care for their students. They spent countless hours trying to find the right program or teacher fit. Yet prior to the literacy intervention training, none of the participants spoke about matching instruction to the student’s individual needs. Notice how Grace talks about changing programs and even teachers. She also mentions changing the parent volunteer who works with the student.

*After we change the program and that doesn’t work, we will switch around the person they've been working with because sometimes you just don't always click with a certain teacher or parent volunteer. Yeah. We sometimes feel like, “oh my gosh, we’ve tried everything! What else can we do?’ You know?*

Laney continued this idea of powerlessness in her ability to teach reading if a specific reading program did not seem to work as indicated by students’ outcomes:

*I feel well prepared to teach kids to read. I’ve been trained in lots of reading programs. Still, I wish I could help them or if I could figure out what's stopping them from reading,*
especially when I like exhausted all the programs that I know. So, I guess that's what I really want to know is when you get these really tough kids- what do they see? Or what do they hear? Or what isn't making the connections? I wished I knew that. [Laney]

In summary, prior to the literacy intervention training, participants seemed to feel they were on an endless quest to find the perfect program that would teach their students to read.

I feel confident in teaching a kid how to read! But for some reason, there’s still those kids that just aren’t getting it. So, then you feel like, like I said, there’s gotta be something else out there to help these other kids that, for some reason, can’t get it. If there was just like a different, a different approach. A different reading program that maybe takes a different approach. I don’t know there’s gotta be another reading program out there. I don’t know there’s gotta be something. [Reagan]

Further, when students did not make progress in reading, even after being exposed to multiple reading programs, the teachers seem to allow the reading program the power to judge their effectiveness as teachers. “So, when I am teaching [Reading Program 4] with fidelity and I teach each level, then the students get tested and if they don’t improve, then I know it’s not the program, it’s my fault. It’s something I did.” [Laney]

**Finding Two: Movement Towards Instructional Match**

The second finding suggested that as special education teacher participants received literacy professional development, including on-going literacy coaching, the participants more often starting matching reading instruction to students’ needs instead of routinely following scripts from specific curricular programs.

Prior to the literacy intervention training, the participants focused on programs rather than noticing how students were responding to said program. Notice how Reagan describes
learning how to focus on what an individual student needs instructionally versus applying an entire new reading program. She commented, “I’ve liked the aspect where you find the thing the student is struggling with and seeing if you could focus on that.”

One of the first steps towards instructional match described by the participants was to learn to start to notice how students were responding to literacy instruction versus focusing on specific program steps or scripts. This seemed to be especially important when the learning needs of the students did not seem to map onto previous reading programs. For the first time participants started recounting specific ways that individual students responded to literacy instruction instead of white-knuckling through instruction that did not seem to work for students. Laney shared,

\[ I \text{ think the writing- when we were being trained on it. We were learning to have students practice a word then reread the sentence and add the next word, I thought, ‘Oh my gosh, this is so long and so boring!’ But after using it with the kids, I saw that the kids got really excited about it. They just loved the fact that they’re writing a 12-word sentence and um, so I thought that was really helpful for me to see. } \]

Reagan seemed to agree. She commented,

\[ \text{Okay, it was surprising just how excited the kids got to just add a couple of things that the kids really needed, like adding pictures there or adding stickies to support their comprehension. It was just those little different things that added a kind of excitement to the students. And also learning to use books that have the components they need but that are of more high interest to a student rather than reading a program book that just didn’t pique their interest. I noticed when the kids were more excited about reading, I think it helped them to be more motivated.} \]
From starting to notice how students were responding, the participants were able to move on to more diagnostic teaching. The following is an interaction that took place between Lane and her literacy coach during a live literacy session with a student. It becomes evident that Laney is starting to become more diagnostic and better able to match instruction to the student’s literacy need:

Coach: How do you think [student name] is doing today?

Laney: I think [student name] is starting to get the word meanings. I’m finding that I have to use several days on the same words, or we review them because one and done is not good for her.

Coach: I like how you are working to be diagnostic there. That’s good.

Laney: Yes – so you can see [student name] can now do three sound CVC words. She really can blend any of those. It’s just with words like scat. Right now, her brain isn’t ready for that. So, we are going to get this really solid.

Coach: Okay, I really like how you’re using the diagnostic piece to match what she really needs so she can start to move to the next level. Rather than just doing one and done and moving on.

Another way the participants started making movement towards matching instruction to their students’ literacy needs is that they started using assessments instead of assuming the commercial reading program was covering what students needed. Grace explained: “Now I start with an assessment and I see where they are at first. I might compare that to another [assessment] and then I start.” Ironically, Laney shares that prior to the literacy intervention training, she would use assessments, but did not know how to be diagnostic with the results.
Okay I'll tell you what I liked. I’ve been using [literacy assessment] for several years and didn’t know exactly what to do with it. It was really nice to be able to use that as diagnostic tool and then know what to do next.

Prior to the literacy intervention training, all three participants spoke about implementing whole programs, even if there were indications it did not quite fit students’ needs. Contrastingly, after the literacy intervention training and on-going literacy coaching, all of the participants started sharing ways they were tweaking literacy components to fit the instructional needs of their students. In the focus group interview Grace shared how she did not like the slow pace of TRI writing but explained she now knew she could “tweak it.” Reagan added,

I had a hard time with TRI writing too. So, with one little girl, I would let her draw pictures afterwards. I just let her take a few minutes and draw a picture of what she wanted. And then I noticed she started wanting to go back and reread her writing. She couldn’t always read them all, but I thought that was pretty cool that she wanted to! So, what I did was make all those little writings she did into a little book. She can take it home and do some of that frequent reading. I think maybe she’s probably excited to go home and read that you know, to somebody. I know I think sometimes my other kids like writing. Some of my kids have liked making up their own sentences and being able to try and read them also.

Laney also shared how she tweaked components of reading instruction to meet her students’ needs

So, for me, I actually am surprised how well teaching reading like this has worked. Um, ‘cause I thought, ‘Ohhh yeah, we’ll see.’ I’ve really learned to like the writing because I’m able to kind of direct the kids to write words that fit with what I know they need to do
now like their blends or their digraphs. Then they are so excited to take that home and read it. So, we’re using the writing not necessarily like a pocket phrase but kind of? Because they get excited that they wrote those words that we’ve been working on into stories about the reading. They take it home then they re-read their writing.

Instead of assuming a program held all of the power to fix a child’s reading, teacher participants started talking about using data to match instruction to individual students’ needs.

So now myself, I’m kind of coupling parts of the TRI and I’m adding progress monitoring. I like to go just a little bit longer in the guided oral reading so I can get that data too about how they are doing. [Reagan]

Finding Three: Intensifying Instruction

The third finding indicated that as special education teacher participants received literacy professional development and took part in on-going literacy coaching, the participants began making observable decisions to intensify literacy instruction for individual students. Over time these teacher views seemed to start to transition away from a belief that a single program held the power to teach students to read. Originally, the teachers positioned themselves first as onlookers and the reading program the center mechanism for improved reading outcomes for students. After the professional development, there begin to be a noticeable shift in the participants as they began to learn to collect data and plan for effective reading instruction rather than hoping or assuming the program would take care of it.

First steps to intensifying instruction seemed to include a phase wherein the participants began to talk broadly about intensifying instruction. Notice how Laney begins to talk about intensifying instruction for individual students instead of relying on a program.
So, when I meet with the team about the first graders. We go over all their reading records. And we say, “What are we doing cause we’re not seeing growth?” Well – it’s no longer ‘This kid isn’t reading.’ So um, and we usually just do intensifying. We do these things to show we are upping instruction.

One of the first components of intensifying instruction is dosage. Dosage is the amount an intervention is delivered at one time as well as the intervals at which it is delivered across specific periods of time (Stevenson & Reed, 2017). Soon after the participants started talking about intensifying instruction in broad terms, they began to talk about dosage. For example, Grace started noticing that the students seemed more motivated in reading instruction when the dosage was changed.

This way to me is much more motivating for kids. I am seeing that I am accomplishing what used to take an hour in 20 mins or so. Also, instead of seeing students one time a day for an hour or 45 mins, it was much easier to get the gen ed teachers to let me see them for like two 15- or 20-minute periods if I need to. I’ve just really loved that part. That’s what I know now is I have a better way to help the students to improve their reading that’s more motivating and takes shorter amounts of time.

Reagan agreed. “This way gives the option to just pull the students for a small amount of time rather than blocking 45 minutes or an hour. Then you can just like go from there – do we need more time or what?”

In addition to dosage, as the literacy coaching continued, the participants started speaking more specifically about other intensifying instruction components such as instructional group size and opportunities for students to respond (Stevenson & Reed, 2017). Laney explained how she started thinking about group size.
We can do all sorts of things. We can make the group smaller. For some, if they need it, we’ve even started putting kids in groups of one or two or three. In really small groups if that is necessary. So now we put them in smaller groups, or we add time, or we give them stronger instruction like the TRI. We are just trying to be very diagnostic. We are just trying to do that.

In addition to changing group size, Laney goes on to explain the one of the reasons group size for her students was reduced was to add another specific intensifying instruction component. That is to say, to provide each student with more opportunities to respond.

Yeah, we put them into small groups so they can do more opportunities to respond (OTRs). So, they’re reading the whole time, it’s not teacher talking. It’s those students reading, answering, reading and so on.

In addition to talking about OTRs in the interviews, there was observational evidence from live coaching sessions that teachers made progress with providing their students more OTRs. Notice the change from the first example where the teacher does much of the work to the second example taken later after the teacher had received more instruction where she provides the student more OTRs.

Example One (Student is practicing segmenting and blending sounds in words. The teacher writes the word verse on a white board. This literacy activity done correctly would entail the student underlining and saying the sounds as follows: v er s e. Then the student would read the entire word independently. Notice how the teacher does the work for the student, limiting the OTRs for the student:

Teacher: Okay. Let’s try another one. Read this word (the teacher shows the whiteboard with the word verse written on it.)
Student: Verse.

Teacher: Okay now underline this one like this **ver se** (the teacher underlines the sounds first for the student and does not ask the student to say the sounds aloud as he underlines them)

Student: (Copies teacher and underlines **v-er-se**. Student does not say sounds aloud as he underlines them.)

Teacher: And that’s it, huh? Now put it together.

Student: says /v/

Teacher: says /erse/

Student: says verse

Example Two (Student is working to build and read the word chick from sound tiles).

Notice how the same teacher carefully scaffolds the student to do the work, resulting in more OTRs for the student:

Teacher: Okay, let's lay it down

Student: (student pulls down the the /ch/ /i/ /ck/ tiles.) Chi...it has two h’s!

Teacher: Is that an /h/?

Student: No, it's a /k/!

Teacher: /k/. So let's...can you fix that? Say each sound.

Student: (Says) /Ch/ /ki/ /ck/. Kitch. Kitch!

Teacher: Say each sound.

Student: /K/ /ick/

Teacher: But say each sound now.

Student: Kick!
Teacher: Ok, put your finger here and start here (teacher points to ch tile)

Student: /Ch/ /i/ /ick/. Chick!

Teacher: You got it!

Perhaps one of the most interesting sub-findings within was that as the participants started dialoging more about intensifying instruction, they seemed to change their view about the importance of professional development. This was true not only for themselves, but also for the paraprofessionals with whom they worked. For example, prior to the literacy intervention training and coaching, teachers more often spoke about feeling well trained and confident in teaching reading. After the literacy professional development, teachers spoke about the importance of on-going professional development.

Further, prior to the literacy intervention professional development and coaching, teacher participants spoke about how their paraprofessionals also taught programs. However, after the literacy intervention professional development and coaching, each participant spoke about the importance of their paraprofessionals also receiving the training and coaching.

Grace shared, “Now that I’ve been trained, I want my paras to be trained as well because they do so much to help with reading with the students.”

Reagan also wanted the paraprofessionals with whom she worked to be trained. “The paras know the other [reading programs]. But I know that my paras were really excited about this. I would like more training and more support for them.”

Laney acknowledged she also wanted the same for the paraprofessionals who worked in her classroom. She commented,
I think as teachers, we’re pretty good at feeling when kids are ready to move now. Our paras, they just don’t have that experience. I think that’s really- it’s hard for them to know, “Oh, do I move them up? So, they need training.
CHAPTER 5

Discussion

Given the quantity of the findings, an entire discussion could commence relative to each finding. However, the researcher will not discuss each finding at length in this chapter. Rather, the discussion will focus primarily on the finding that during intervention implementation, and with coaching support, special educator participants started moving towards learning to intensify instruction for individual students, according to students’ individual needs instead of routinely following program scripts.

As discussed in the findings, at the beginning of the study, the special educator participants in the study seemed to yield to the power of commercial reading programs. The teachers had a desire to meet the students’ needs but could not or did not vary from the outlined curriculum scripted in the program. Part of this hesitancy could derive from the training the teachers received. They had received instruction on how to effectively implement a program that resulted in learning gains for the majority of students but did not understand how to intensify their teaching when a student didn’t make progress. In lieu of adapting the program to intensify instruction, the teachers replaced the curriculum with another program.

These teachers’ experiences are not novel. VanDerHeyden et al. (2016) found that implementing supplemental interventions is not easily feasible nor simple. Appropriate methods for intensifying instruction may not be clearly understood, especially when staff have not had training. Thus, teachers and the paraprofessionals they supervise, may exclusively utilize small group tutoring (Fuchs et al., 2014).

While research indicates that teachers should use professional judgements to establish the best outcomes for students’ individual circumstances (Stevenson & Reed, 2017), the teachers in
this study indicated that they either didn’t understand or didn’t utilize diagnostic tools to adapt instruction to meet the needs of their students. Scanlon et al. (2008) concluded that “importantly, instructional improvements were not accomplished via the implementation of a highly prescriptive program nor by the adoption of entirely new curricula but rather by encouraging teachers to analyze and respond to the instructional needs of their lower achieving students,” (p. 359). Scripted programs indicated when to progress a child to a higher level but did not provide resources or instruction on what to do if a student was not making adequate progress.

As teachers received ongoing coaching, they began to understand the diagnostic process and started intensifying instruction. Instead of being program focused, the teachers shifted their focus to individual student’s needs. The intensifications began with adjusting dosage, increasing the number of OTRs by adjusting the size of the instructional group, the duration of the instruction, and the number of sessions each week (Fuchs et al., 2017). Working one on one empowered teachers to individualize instruction (Fuchs et al., 2017) and monitor student performance (Thurlow et al., 1993). The students received increased OTRs and received corrective and positive feedback (Hattie & Timperley, 2007), the cumulative effect being improved outcomes for students with learning challenges (Wanzek & Vaughn, 2007, 2008).

Next, the teachers learned how to align program content to leverage existing skill sets and adequately target the spectrum of skill deficits (Fuchs et al., 2017). Tools like diagnostic maps permitted study participants to see and address student needs instead of repeating sections of a program or relying on the next prescribed worksheet (Vernon-Feagans et al., 2018). Teacher participants began to individualize instruction based on students’ needs and then to intensify instruction.
Individualization, a signature feature of special education (Fuchs et al., 2017, p. 41), began to be more utilized as the teacher participants began to systematically modify interventions to account for the individual student’s progression and complex needs (Fuchs et al., 2017). When teachers received more training in intensifying instruction, they were better able to fulfill IDEA’s mandate for students in their care, and they began to recognize the importance of their own professional development and the growth of skills for the paraprofessionals as well. The teachers also began to believe they could adapt a program to fit the unique strengths and weakness of each child.

**Teacher Efficacy**

Teacher efficacy in teaching reading has been directly tied to improved student outcomes (Woolfolk et al., 1990). Conversely, teachers who lack training and believe they may not succeed in teaching reading have lower expectations of their students’ ability to learn to read (Carlisle & Berebitsky, 2011). As these teacher participants received professional development and ongoing coaching, they became fluid and confident in delivering reading instruction. This could explain why the teacher participants began movement towards instructional match and intensifying instruction after the professional development and while receiving ongoing coaching, rather than relying on a program. Teacher efficacy could have been a key factor in explaining why the participants began to appropriate power back from reading programs. Only when they believed themselves to be capable of teaching reading effectively, did they set forward to do so.

**Literacy Coaching**

In addition to teacher efficacy, another mechanism for change in the participants’ teacher practices could have been their access to ongoing literacy coaching. Each teacher participant received 10 weeks of individual literacy coach as described in the methods section.
The robustness of literacy coaching as an effective teacher professional development tool has been affirmed when essential elements are existent (Artman-Meeder et al., 2015). For example, Desimone and Pak (2017) found that five essential elements are necessary for literacy coaching to be effective in increasing student learning outcomes. These five elements include: a strong content focus, active learning components, sustained duration, coherence among programs and policies and collective participation. Each of the teacher participants in this study expressed awareness of and appreciation for the above essential elements which were embedded as part of their coaching sessions. This type of support from the literacy coaching component of the study could explain the teacher participants’ movement away from prescriptive programs towards focusing on students’ individual literacy needs by intensifying instruction.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

In this thesis study there were only three participants. Rigorous qualitative research includes a rationale for the number of participants studied. Typically, the closer the study is to the participant’s own lived experiences, the lower the participant number becomes because the researcher is able to gain enough information power (Malterud et al., 2016). Still, future research could focus on studies with higher participants, participants who were paraprofessionals, or studies that combined looking at the perceptions of the special educators with the paraprofessionals, such as in an Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (Smith, 2019).

Implications for Practice

Research states that few educators know how to change and provide intensive intervention different from Tier 2 small tutoring groups (Fuchs et al., 2014). Findings from the data analysis in this thesis study indicated that when teachers were provided ongoing professional development, there was evidence of movement towards intensification such as
initial uses of dosage and instructional group size. School district-level administrators should consider creating ongoing professional development that targets intensifying instruction particularly for faculty who are special educators. In addition, school district-level administrators should consider professional development in aligning commercial programs with individual student fit.

Allington (2013) points out that many times school districts expect those with the least amount of training to teach reading to those students with the highest needs in reading. Studies indicate that paraprofessionals, usually with less training and expertise, devote significant time serving students with special needs (Lemons et al., 2018). This is especially the case in lower resource rural schools. Providing training and professional development focused on intensifying instruction for both special educators and paraprofessionals would close the gap in education and allow students to “access to a full continuum of services” (Lemons et al., 2018, p. 131). School district level administrators should consider providing on-going literacy professional development not only to special education faculty but also to the paraprofessionals with whom the teachers work.

Conclusion

Poverty has been described as the most prominent predictor of poor literacy growth in rural schools (Cunningham, 2006). This study was grounded in a high poverty rural school district. We studied the perceptions of elementary rural special education teachers relative to reading intervention. The special educators in this study taught us that ongoing professional development is essential in supporting teachers to intensify reading instruction for students. As the special educator participants received individual coaching, the teachers’ seemed better able to diagnose reading difficulties and prescribe effective intervention. As the teachers gained
confidence, they each began to reappropriate power from prescribed reading programs back to
themselves to match, then intensify instruction to meet each student's most pressing reading
need.
REFERENCES


https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446212165.n27


https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9620.2004.00422.x


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https://doi.org/10.1177/00224669040380010201


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Lajoie (Eds.), *International conference on intelligent tutoring systems* (pp. 593–602). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-540-69132-7_62


development program for rural classroom teachers: The targeted reading intervention.


http://file.snnu.net/res/20126/18/018526a6-3cbf-4e9d-ac0f-a0740094aa75.pdf


https://doi.org/10.1080/02796015.2007.12087917


https://doi.org/10.1016/0742-051x(90)90031-y


https://doi.org/10.33524/cjar.v14i1.73

APPENDIX A

Eight Parts of Intensifying Reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Current Instruction</th>
<th>Intensive Instruction</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latency (time b/w sessions)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reduce Group size</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rate of opportunities to Respond</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quantitative Factors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Optimize fit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instructional focus</td>
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<td>Students’ primary needs</td>
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<td>Motivational Strategies in use</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Cultural Relevance</td>
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</table>

Date _________________________

Interventionist _______________________

Supervisor _______________________

APPENDIX B

IRB Approval

Memorandum

To: Elizabeth Cutrer-Párraga, Ph.D.
Department: CP&SE
College: EDUC
From: Sandee Aina, MPA, HRPP Manager
Wayne Larsen, MAcc, IRB Administrator
Date: September 23, 2019
IRB#: E19-266

Title: Rural Special Educators Teaching Reading: A Case Study

Brigham Young University’s IRB has approved the research study referenced in the subject heading as exempt, categories 1, 2(i)(ii). This category does not require and annual continuing review. Each year near the anniversary of the approval date, you will receive an email reminding you of your obligations as a researcher and to check the status of the study. You will receive this email each year until you close the study.

The is approved as of September 23, 2019. Please reference your assigned IRB identification number in any correspondence with the IRB.

Continued approval is conditional upon your compliance with the following requirements:

1. A copy of the informed consent statement is attached. No other consent statement should be used. Each research subject must be provided with a copy or a way to access the consent statement unless the IRB has approved to waive parts or all of these requirements.
2. Any modifications to the approved protocol must be submitted, reviewed, and approved by the IRB before modifications are incorporated in the study.
3. All recruiting tools must be submitted and approved by the IRB prior to use.
4. In addition, serious adverse events must be reported to the IRB immediately, with a written report by the PI within 24 hours of the PI's becoming aware of the event.
5. All other non-serious unanticipated problems should be reported to the IRB within 2 weeks of the first awareness of the problem by the PI. Prompt reporting is important, as unanticipated problems often require some modification of study procedures, protocols, and/or informed consent processes. Such modifications require the review and approval of the IRB. Please refer to the IRB website for more information.

Respectfully,

Sandee M.P. Aina, MPA
Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects, Administrator
Office of Research & Creative Activities
Brigham Young University
A-285 ASB Campus Drive
Provo, UT 84602
Ph: 801-422-1461 | http://orca.byu.edu/irb/

BYU
APPENDIX C

IRB Amendment

Memorandum

To: Professor Elizabeth Cutrer-Parraga
Department: CP&SE
College: EDUC
From: Sandee Aina, MPA, IRB Administrator
Bob Ridge, PhD, IRB Chair
Date: December 11, 2019
IRB#: E19286
Title: Rural Special Educators Teaching Reading: A Case Study

Brigham Young University's IRB has reviewed the amendment submitted on December 10, 2019. The IRB determined that the amendment does not increase risks to the research subject and the aims of the study remain as originally approved. The amendment has been approved.

All conditions for continued approval period remain in effect. Any modifications to the approved protocol must be submitted, reviewed and approved by the IRB before modifications are incorporated in the study.

Stephanie Coyne
IRB Secretary
A 285 ASB
Brigham Young University
801-422-3606
APPENDIX D

[Redacted] School District Recruiting Email

May 1, 2019

My name is Sheryl Vernon. I am a graduate student in school psychology in the Counseling Psychology and Special Education (CPSE) department at Brigham Young University. I am currently studying reading professional development for special education teachers in rural districts.

For my thesis study, I would like to work with the three elementary (mild/moderate) special education teachers in [redacted], as well as the district literacy specialist, special education program coordinator and the district reading curriculum specialist.

Research Activities would be conducted in the following ways:

Special Education Teachers:

1. Special Education teacher participants will be formally observed 3x in total. Sheryl Vernon, will invite the special education teachers to submit a video of themselves teaching a regular reading lesson. For this observation, Sheryl would ask that no children be filmed and that the teacher angles the camera to capture her teaching only. Sheryl would then observe the teachers 2 more times. The 2nd observation would be at the beginning of the reading intervention. The 3rd and last observation would be at the end of the reading intervention.

2. Special Education Teachers who participate in the study will receive formal literacy intervention training on the Targeted Reading Intervention (TRI) (1 day -6 hours). Special Education Teachers who participate in the study will receive reading intervention materials.

3. Special Education Teacher participants will also be interviewed prior to implementing the TRI and they will also be interviewed midway through the intervention and then as a group at the end of the intervention.

4. Special Education Teachers will also receive coaching 1x per week for 30 minutes for 12 weeks.

District specialists

1. District specialists will be interviewed 1x during the course of the intervention.

I would be more than happy to hold an information meeting at the [redacted] to answer any questions anyone will have. All study participants (the special education teachers and the district leaders) will have the opportunity to learn about the study, read over consent forms, then accept or decline participating in the study.

I would be more than happy to hold an information meeting at the [redacted] to answer any questions anyone will have. All study participants (the special education teachers and the district leaders) will have the opportunity to learn about the study, read over consent forms, then accept or decline participating in the study.

Thank you for your support in this research.

Sincerely,

Sheryl Vernon,
School Psychology Graduate Student
Brigham Young University
APPENDIX E

Memorandum of Understanding

By and Between the
[Redacted] District
and
Sheryl Vernon

This agreement is entered into by the [Redacted] ("[Redacted]") and Sheryl Vernon and Elizabeth A. Cutrer-Párraga, PhD ("Researchers") for the purpose of sharing information between the parties in a manner consistent with the Family Education Records Privacy Act of 1974 ("FERPA"). The information will be used by researchers at Brigham Young University to conduct evaluative studies designed to improve instruction for children in [REDACTED].

Topics of these studies will include (or project title):
Rural Special Educators Teaching Reading: A Case Study

In order to complete these studies and in order to have a positive impact on the instruction of children, the Researchers require the use of student data from the [REDACTED].

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Acts Statute (FERPA) describes circumstances under which Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) are authorized to release data from an education record. This information can be disclosed to organizations conducting studies on behalf of LEAs, provided that Federal, State or local law authorizes the evaluation in question.

I. PARTIES. The [REDACTED] is an LEA that receives and maintains student information subject to FERPA. Researcher desires to conduct studies on behalf of [REDACTED] for the purpose of improving instruction in [REDACTED] schools in accordance with the Scope of Work Agreement attached hereto as Appendix A. The parties wish to share data collected by the [REDACTED] regarding the education of students attending [REDACTED]. Any data requested that requires the sharing of personally identifiable data shall require the express permission of the student’s legal guardian, or the student in the case of students over the age of eighteen.

II. COMPLIANCE WITH FERPA. To effect the transfer of data subject to FERPA, Researcher agrees to:

1. In all respects comply with the provisions of FERPA. For purposes of this agreement, “FERPA” includes any amendments or other relevant provisions of federal law, as well as all requirements of [REDACTED] policies. Nothing in this agreement may be construed to allow either party to maintain, use, disclose or share student information in a manner not allowed by federal law or regulation.

2. Use the data shared under this agreement for no purpose other than research authorized under Section 99.31(a)(3)(iv) or 99.31(a)(6) of Title 34 of the [REDACTED] of Federal Regulations. Researcher further agrees not to share data received under this
MOU with any other entity without [REDACTED]’s approval. Researcher agrees to allow the Office of the State Auditor, subject to FERPA restrictions, access to data shared under this agreement and any relevant records of Researcher for purposes of completing authorized audits of the parties. Researcher shall be liable for any audit exception that results solely from its acts or omissions in the performance of this agreement.

3. Require all employees, contractors and agents of any kind to comply with all applicable provisions of FERPA and other federal laws with respect to the data shared under this agreement. Researcher agrees to require and maintain an appropriate confidentiality agreement from each employee, contractor or agent with access to data pursuant to this agreement. Nothing in this paragraph authorizes sharing data provided under this Agreement with any other entity for any purpose other than completing Researcher’s work authorized under this Agreement.

4. Maintain all data obtained pursuant to this agreement in a secure computer environment and not copy, reproduce or transmit data obtained pursuant to this agreement except as necessary to fulfill the purpose of the original request. All copies of data of any type, including any modifications or additions to data from any source that contains information regarding students, are subject to the provisions of this agreement in the same manner as the original data. The ability to access or maintain data under this agreement shall not under any circumstances transfer from Researcher to any other institution or entity.

5. Not to disclose any data obtained under this agreement in a manner that could identify an individual student to any other entity in published results of studies as authorized by this agreement, nor attempt to infer or deduce the identity of any student or teacher based on data provided by [REDACTED], nor claim to have identified or deduced the identity of any student based on data provided by [REDACTED].

6. Not to provide any data obtained under this agreement to any party ineligible to receive data protected by FERPA or prohibited from receiving data from any entity.

7. Provide to the [REDACTED] a list of specific research studies, updated annually, for which the data are being used, and to notify the [REDACTED] in advance of any new project or research question researcher proposes to address. This list of research studies will identify linkages of all data possessed by researcher under this agreement and covered by FERPA to specific research studies. Further, it will include the fixed ending date for use of all data linked to each project.

8. Provide to the [REDACTED] any materials designed for public dissemination, based in whole or in part on data obtained under this agreement, at least ten days prior to public release.

9. Destroy all data obtained under this agreement, within the time frame established in Appendix A, Section II, when it is no longer needed for the purpose for which it was
obtained. Nothing in this agreement authorizes either party to maintain data beyond
the time period reasonably needed to complete the purpose of the request. All data no
longer needed shall be destroyed or returned to the [REDACTED] in compliance with
34 CFR Section 99.35(b)(2). Researcher agrees to require all employees, contractors,
or agents of any kind to comply with this provision.

III. DATA REQUESTS.

1. The [REDACTED] may decline to comply with a request if it determines that pro-
viding the data in the manner requested would violate FERPA and/or would not be in
the best interest of current or former students in [REDACTED]. All requests shall
include a statement of the purpose for which it is requested and an estimation of the
time needed to complete the project for which the data is requested. Data requests may
be submitted by post, electronic mail or facsimile.

2. Researcher agrees that [REDACTED] makes no warranty concerning the accuracy of
the student data provided.

IV. AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE. Researcher shall designate in writing a single
authorized representative able to request data under this agreement. The authorized
representative shall be responsible for transmitting all data requests and maintaining a log
or other record of all data requested and received pursuant to this agreement, including
confirmation of the completion of any projects and the return or destruction data as
required by this agreement. The [REDACTED] or its agents may upon request review the
records required to be kept under this section.

RELATED PARTIES. Researcher represents that it is authorized to bind to the terms of this
contract, including confidentiality and destruction or return of student data, all related or
associated institutions, individuals, employees or contractors who may have access to the data
or may own, lease or control equipment or facilities of any kind where the data is stored,
maintained or used in any way by Researcher. This Agreement takes effect only upon
acceptance by an authorized representative of
Brigham Young University, by which that institution agrees to abide by its terms and return or
destroy all student data upon completion of the research for which it was intended or upon the
termination of its current relationship with Researcher.

TERM. This agreement takes effect upon signature by the authorized representative of each
party and will remain in effect until research is completed. The parties further understand that the
[REDACTED] may cancel this agreement at any time for reasonable cause, upon thirty-day
written notice. Notice of such cancellation shall be sent or otherwise delivered to the persons
signing this agreement. The [REDACTED] specifically reserves the right to immediately cancel
this agreement upon discovery of non-compliance with any applicable federal or state laws,
rules or regulations. Further, the [REDACTED] specifically reserves the right to immediately
cancel this agreement should the [REDACTED], in its sole discretion, determine that student
information has been released in a manner inconsistent with this agreement, has not been
maintained in a secure manner, or that substantially similar data access has become generally
available for research purposes through any other mechanism approved by the [REDACTED].
In the event of immediate cancellation, a notice specifying the reasons for cancellation shall be sent as soon as possible after the cancellation to the persons signing the agreement.

breach or default is not a waiver of such subsequent occurrences, and the parties retain the right to exercise all remedies mentioned herein.

VI. AMENDMENT. This agreement may be modified or amended provided that any such modification or amendment is in writing and is signed by the parties to this agreement. It is agreed, however, that any amendments to laws, rules, or regulations cited herein will result in the correlative modification of this agreement, without the necessity for executing written amendment.

VII. ASSIGNMENT OF RIGHTS. Neither this agreement, nor any rights, duties, or obligations described herein shall be assigned by Researcher without the prior express written consent of

VIII. ENTIRETY OF AGREEMENT. All terms and conditions of this agreement are embodied herein and in the Scope of Work Agreement attached hereto as Appendix A. No other terms and conditions will be considered a part of this agreement unless expressly agreed upon in writing and signed by both parties.

Entered into by: Sheryl Vernon and

[Printed Name and Title] Director of Special Education

Date 7 Aug 2019

Sheryl Vernon
[Researcher Signature]

[Printed Name and Title] School Psychologist

Date 7 Aug 2019
APPENDIX F

Individual Interview Protocol

The purpose of this interview is to examine your experiences with professional development in reading.

Protocols:

a. Welcome the participant
b. Ask permission to videotape interview
c. Ask Interview Questions

Interview Questions:

1. Please share with me your experiences with professional development related to reading?
   a. What has worked or been worth your time?
   b. What has not worked or not worth your time?
   c. What surprised you?

2. Describe what types of professional development you have received in reading? Probe:
   How long do the trainings typically last? Were materials provided? Did you feel like you understood the training?

3. Was there any follow up or coaching with the professional development? Was it doable in the classroom in real life? Why or why not?

4. In a perfect world – what would you imagine or wish you could receive for professional development in teaching students to read?

5. Talk to me about any training you received in your teacher preparation program. Did you have a chance to practice with real students? How long? Did you understand it? Did you find it effective with students? Did you use the training when you started teaching in your own classroom?

6. Describe any training in reading you received as a new teacher?

7. What do you do when the strategies you have for reading do not work with a child? What do you try next?

8. How confident do you feel in your ability to teach your students to read?
   a. Probe why do you feel that way? What might make you feel more ________?

9. What do you wish you knew about teaching students to read?

10. What do you think is the biggest barrier to teaching kids to read? Is there anything else you would like to share?
APPENDIX G

Focus Group Interview Protocol

The purpose of this interview is to examine your experiences with the use of stories with the children you work with.

Protocols:

a. Welcome the participant
b. Ask permission to videotape interview
c. Ask Interview Questions

Interview Questions:

1. Talk to me about your experience with the TRI professional development in reading.
2. What worked? Did not work? Worth your time? Not worth your time?
3. What did you think it was going to be like? Did anything surprise you?
4. Compare this training to other professional development in reading. How is it the same how is it different?
5. Was it doable? Please share more.
6. What do you do when you have a child who does not seem to be progressing in reading now?
7. What do you think you’ve learned? Is there anything else you wish you would have learned or received in the training?
8. Is there anything else you would like to share?
APPENDIX H

Focus Group Consent

Introduction
This research study is being conducted by Elizabeth Cutrer-Párraga, (PhD), and Sheryl Vernon, Graduate student in the Educational Psychology Program at Brigham Young University. We are seeking to determine, through your knowledge and experience effective literacy professional development for special education teachers in rural school districts. You were invited to participate because you are a special educator who teaches reading in a rural school district.

Procedures
If you agree to participate in this research study, and you are a district specialist, the following will occur:
You will participate in a focus group interview with other participants for approximately 60-90 minutes discussing your experiences with professional development relative to reading.
The focus group will be audio and video recorded to ensure accuracy in reporting your statements.
A research assistant will take notes during the focus group to assist the data analysis process.
You will be given the opportunity to review the transcripts of the focus group.
The total approximated time for the focus group and the completion of the forms is 90 minutes total, and if you choose to review the transcripts, your total participation time will be 2 hours.

Risks/Discomforts
Because focus groups include discussion of personal opinions, extra measures will be taken to protect your privacy. The researcher will begin the focus group by asking the participants to agree to the importance of keeping information discussed in the focus group confidential. She will then ask each participant to verbally agree to keep everything discussed in the room confidential and will remind them at the end of the group not to discuss the material outside.

Confidentiality
Only the researcher team (primary researchers, research assistants) will have access to the data collected. The audio and video recordings will be deleted after all participants have been given the opportunity to check for accuracy (within three months of the audio recordings being transcribed.) Hard copies of the data (transcripts of the focus group) will be destroyed after three years.

Benefits
We do not estimate that there will be any direct benefit to you as a participant. However, as a direct result of this research, you will have been exposed to reading professional development that could possibly be used with the children you work with directly.

Participation
Participation in this research study is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any time or refuse to participate entirely without any impact to you or your career.
Questions about the Research
If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Elizabeth Cutrer-Pàrraga at (801) 422-7603 or elizabethcutrer@byu.edu Melissa_heath@byu.edu for further information.

Questions about Your Rights as Research Participants
If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant contact IRB Administrator at (801) 422-1461; A-285,ASB, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602; irb@byu.edu.

Statement of Consent
I have read, understood, and received a copy of the above consent and desire of my own free will to participate in this study.
Name (Printed): ______________________ Signature:___________________
Date:_________

(Initial)
I agree to participate in a focus group
I agree to be audio & video recorded
APPENDIX I

Consent to be a Research Subject

Introduction
This research study is being conducted by Elizabeth Cutrer-Pàrraga, (PhD), and Sheryl Vernon, who is a graduate student in the Educational Psychology program at Brigham Young University. We are seeking to determine, through your knowledge and experiences effective professional development in reading for special education teachers in rural school districts. You were invited to participate because you are a special education teacher, or a district level specialist in the area of literacy or special education in a rural school district.

Procedures
If you agree to participate in this research study, the following will occur:
- you will be interviewed for approximately forty-five (45) minutes about your experiences with literacy professional development.
- the interview will be audio recorded to ensure accuracy in reporting your statements.
- you will be given the opportunity to review the transcripts of the interview.
- the interview will take place in the district offices or it will take place at a time and location convenient for you.
- the researcher may contact you later to clarify your interview answers for approximately fifteen (15) minutes.
- the total approximated time for the interview and the completion of the forms is 60 minutes total, and if you choose to review the transcripts, your total participation time will be 1 hour and fifteen minutes.

Risks/Discomforts
Some individual questions may make you uncomfortable. You do not have to answer any question that you do not want to answer for any reason. You may also discontinue participation in this study, at any time without penalty.
The audio recordings of interviews will be deleted after all the participants have been given the opportunity to check for accuracy (within three months of the recordings being transcribed). Hard copies and electronic copies of the transcripts and all other data will be kept in a locked office (340-R MCKB) inside a suite of locked office (340 Suite- MCKB). Any typed transcripts of the interview and all other data will be destroyed after three years.

Benefits
We do not estimate that there will be any direct benefit to you as a participant. However, as a direct result of this research, you will have been exposed to professional development resources in literacy that could possibly be used with the children or teachers you work with directly.

Participation
Participation in this research study is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any time or refuse to participate entirely without any impact to you or your career.

Questions about the Research
If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Elizabeth Cutrer-Pàrraga at (801) 422-7603 or elizabethcutrer@byu.edu for further information.
Questions about Your Rights as Research Participants
If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant contact IRB Administrator at (801) 422-1461; A-285 ASB, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602; irb@byu.edu.

Statement of Consent
I have read, understood, and received a copy of the above consent and desire of my own free will to participate in this study.

Name (Printed): ________________     Signature: ________________   Date: ________________

I agree to participate in an individual interview ______________ (initial)
I agree to be recorded auditorily ______________ (initial)
### APPENDIX J

**Diagnostic Map – Pink/Blue Methods**

#### TRI PINK/BLUE DIAGNOSTIC MAP

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<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
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<tr>
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<td>□</td>
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<table>
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<td>3 sound words:</td>
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<table>
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<th>Notes for Next Time</th>
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<td>Words/Sounds to review:</td>
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<td>Implement IR? Y/N Same text? Y/N</td>
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<td>Words/Sounds to review:</td>
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<td>Implement IR? Y/N Same text? Y/N</td>
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<th>Continue working on:</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

Δ = define word; O = use in sentence; □ = teacher provided scaffolding; • = novel word (first time practicing this word in TRI)
## APPENDIX K

### Activity Teacher – Pink/Blue TRI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student _____________________</th>
<th>Observer _____________________</th>
<th>Date _____________________</th>
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<table>
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<td>GOR words</td>
<td>GOR words</td>
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Re-read for Fluency (RFF)  
Change one Sound (C1S)  
Sight Words (sight-W)  
Pocket Phrase (PP)  
Segmenting Words (SW)  
Read, Write, and Say (RWS)  
Guided Oral Reading (GOR)  
TRI Writing (TRI-W)
## APPENDIX L

### TRI Observation Form – Pink/Blue

Student _____________________     Observer_____________________     Date___________

### PINK/BLUE

**Re-Reading for Fluency**

<p>| | | | | | |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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- ___ Re-reading a book read recently
- ___ Teacher providing specific positive feedback
- ___ Book at child’s independent reading level
- ___ Teacher models rate and phrasing if necessary
- ___ Diagnostic Map marked appropriately

Corrective feedback expectations: Teacher models rate and phrasing if necessary. Teacher uses echo reading, choral reading or fluency pyramids.

Comments:

---

**Word Work in PINK/BLUE**

**Segmenting Words**

<p>| | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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- ___ Targets sound tiles ready before lesson starts
- ___ Teacher guides child in Strive for Five
- ___ Teacher has visual of word and shares with student
- ___ Teacher gives specific positive feedback
- ___ Student segments each word
- ___ Student checks each sound
- ___ Diagnostic Map marked appropriately

Corrective feedback expectations: Teacher models how to form a sentence with new word. Teacher may model how to say sounds and move sounds. Teacher may elaborate on word meaning if necessary, Teacher may stretch out a word but refrains from segmenting the word. If necessary, teacher may give student the sound but only after providing progressive scaffolding for the student.

Comments:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change One Sound</th>
<th>Appropriate level of words:</th>
<th>SW</th>
<th>C1S</th>
<th>R, W &amp; S</th>
<th>PP</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>___ Targets sound tiles ready before lesson starts</td>
<td>___ Target sounds laid out on board</td>
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<tr>
<td>___ Teacher guides child in Strive for Five</td>
<td>___ Students uses new word in a sentence</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Teacher has visual of word and shares with student</td>
<td>___ Teacher responds to student’s response.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Teacher gives specific positive feedback</td>
<td>___ Student says sounds as she moves it down</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Student segments each word</td>
<td>___ Student Blends word together at the end</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Student checks each sound</td>
<td>___ Teacher moves quickly between words</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Diagnostic Map marked appropriately</td>
<td>___ Teacher prompts student to change _____ to _____</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Corrective feedback expectations: Teacher models how to form a sentence with new word. Teacher may model how to say sounds and move sounds. Teacher may elaborate on word meaning if necessary. Teacher may need to break down the steps to scaffold the child:

1. What sound can we get rid of if we change bat to cat?” Teacher may stretch out a word but refrain from segmenting the word. Once the student recognizes the /b/ is no longer needed the teacher says:

2. Yes – that is right, we no longer need the /b/, so push it up. (Student pushes up the /b/ tile).

3. Teacher says: Now which sound do we need to change bat to cat? Have the student say the sound as s/he brings down the sound tile. Then have student check and blend. Teacher may repeat but do not automatically give the sound to the student.

4. If necessary, teacher may give student the sound but only after providing progressive scaffolding for the student.

Comments:
### Read Write and Say

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>___ Target word is written on the work board</td>
<td>___ Teacher asks student to read word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Teacher guides child in Strive for Five</td>
<td>___ Students uses new word in a sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Teacher has visual of word and shares with student</td>
<td>___ Teacher responds to student’s response.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Teacher leaves word if student struggles</td>
<td>___ Teacher erases word if student reads word fluently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Student writes word</td>
<td>___ Student says each sound as s/he writes it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Teacher gives specific positive feedback</td>
<td>___ Teacher guides student to use Blend as You Go to read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Teacher moves quickly between words</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Corrective feedback expectations: Teacher models how to form a sentence with new word. Teacher may model how to use “Blend As You Go” to read new word. Teacher may elaborate on word meaning if necessary. Teacher may leave word on board if needed as a template for student when writing word. If needed, the teacher can model writing the word and saying each sound as s/he writes it. Proper handwriting is not the objective here – so be accepting of student’s handwriting.

Comments:

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
**Sight Words**

| __ Materials ready prior to lesson | ___ Teacher chooses 1-3 sight words to practice |
| ___ Teacher guides child in Strive for Five sentence | ___ Students uses new word in a sentence |
| ___ Teacher engages student in one of the following activities: | ___ Teacher gives specific positive feedback |
| ___ Read it, Shape it, Write it, Say it | ___ Student says sounds as she moves it down |
| ___ Dry Erase Races | ___ Diagnostic Map marked appropriately |
| ___ Sight Word Walks | ___ Teacher moves quickly between words |
| ___ Flash Words | ___ Sight Word Bags |
| ___ Sight Word Catch | ___ Sight Word Catch |

Corrective feedback expectations: Remember that students do not sound out sight words. Rather, students spell the sight word then say the word. For example, if the sight word is were, students would spell W – E – R – E then say WERE.

Comments:

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
**Guided Oral Reading**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher introduces the book</td>
<td>Teacher asks “I wonder questions”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher records prediction with sticky</td>
<td>Teacher sets purpose for reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book is at student’s correct level</td>
<td>Student reads aloud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student is engaged with text</td>
<td>Teacher responds to student’s response.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher gives specific positive feedback</td>
<td>Diagnostic Map marked appropriately</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Corrective feedback expectations:** Teacher offers word-level feedback where appropriate:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback Type</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phonemic manipulation feedback, if needed</td>
<td>Phonics knowledge feedback, if needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using context feedback, if needed</td>
<td>Using Blend As You Go with a tile</td>
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</table>

**Teacher coaches and scaffolds comprehension:**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Making predictions while reading</td>
<td>Summarizing (teacher can help by asking good questions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making connections</td>
<td>Making Inferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher elaborates on word’s meaning, if needed</td>
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**Teacher scaffolds to respond after reading:**

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<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child retells story or information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child provides personal response</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child synthesizes story or information</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Comments:**

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
## WRITING

### TRI WRITING

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<tbody>
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<td>___ Teacher asks students to summarize the book</td>
<td>___ Teacher uses text from previous day’s reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>___ Teacher has students rehearse story</td>
<td>___ Teacher writes story on chart paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>___ Students write story in notebooks</td>
<td>___ Student reread story as it is being written multiple x</td>
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<tr>
<td>___ Students accountable for Pink/Blue &amp; Green words</td>
<td>___ Teacher responds to student’s response.</td>
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<tr>
<td>___ Teacher gives specific positive feedback</td>
<td>___ Students use a “practice page or board”</td>
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<tr>
<td>___ Teacher counts words with students</td>
<td>___ Teacher draws a line for each word in the story</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Corrective feedback expectations: Teacher offers word-level feedback where appropriate:

___ Have students say sounds as they write, if needed
___ Teacher supports students’ summary of previously read text, if needed
___ Teacher scaffolds conventions and punctuation “What do we need at beginning of sentence?” “At the end?”

Comments:

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

## AFTER READING

### Pocket Phrases

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<td>___ Teacher provides student with highlighter tape</td>
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<td>___ Teacher asks student to mark the spelling of the sound pattern</td>
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<tr>
<td>___ Teacher responds to student’s response.</td>
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<td>___ Teacher gives specific positive feedback</td>
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<td>___ Teacher emphasizes sound pattern of the word not the letter names</td>
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Corrective feedback expectations: Teacher may remind student of focus pattern, if needed. Teacher may remind student to use “Blend As You Go” if needed.

Comments:

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

Total Points   /50