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Teachers' Evidence-Based Practices for Reading Deficiencies

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Walden University
2019

Abstract

Teachers' Evidence-Based Practices for Reading Deficiencies

by

Rebecca Ann Nugen

MA, Ohio University, 2007

BS, Ohio University, 2005

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

August 2019

Abstract

The problem investigated in this study was that students at a rural elementary school in the midwestern region of the United States were not meeting achievement targets in reading on state standardized tests despite implementation of the district's evidence-based reading curriculum. With a conceptual framework based on Webb's depth-of-knowledge model and Piaget's sociocultural learning theory, the purpose of this single case study was to explore teachers' perceptions regarding the use of evidence-based teaching practices and how those practices influence students' reading skills. Using purposeful sampling to select licensed, experienced participants, the insights of 7 elementary reading teachers were collected through semistructured interviews and classroom observations of their instructional practices. Emergent themes were identified through open coding, and the findings were developed and checked for trustworthiness through triangulation and member checking. The findings revealed that teachers appropriately implemented the district's curriculum and recognized the need for evidence-based reading practices. Teachers acknowledged that the district's curriculum did not work for all students and that specialized strategies and resources were needed to reach students who were struggling with reading. A professional development project was created to assist teachers with identifying, assessing, and implementing specialized evidence-based reading strategies and resources. This study has implications for positive social change by providing a structure for teachers to build a repertoire of evidence-based strategies and resources to offer all elementary students, including struggling readers, improved reading instruction, and higher reading achievement.

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Dedication

I would like to thank my daughter for putting up with me during these last ten years. Even with life's trials and tribulations, you have been my encouragement throughout my career. Your courage while enduring and beating cancer as well as your unending desire to help others has inspired and encouraged me to continue my education. I want to be your role model like you have been for me for as long as I can remember. Thank you for standing beside me and understanding how important this degree is to me. I would not have made it this far without your support. I would also like to thank my family and friends for their encouragement and support throughout my endeavors.

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Section 1: The Problem

In the United States, standardized testing has determined how schools rank within each state Department of Education (Reading Achievement Assessment, 2016). Adverse reading outcomes have been associated with unfortunate consequences (Zakierski & Siegel, 2016). When students perform poorly, state officials may threaten school districts with loss of resources or a takeover of day-to-day operations.

Reading skills are necessary to survive in the 21st century (Wanzek & Vaughn, 2014). Reading skills are critically needed for everyday tasks, workplace success, communication with one's doctor, reading a menu or understanding directions. According to Vernon-Feagans, Bratsch-Hines, Varghese, Cutrer, and Garwood (2016), when reading skills are not obtained, people are more likely to live below the poverty level. Researchers have indicated that more resources for teachers are needed to support and improve student reading ability (Vernon-Feagans et al., 2016).

Teacher reading resources are the building block for student engagement when working with students with reading deficiencies (Zakierski & Siegel, 2016). Despite the importance of reading skills, adequate reading scores are not the norm for the state in the midwestern United States (Wanzek & Vaughn, 2014). In 2015, the Governor of Ohio signed a bill passed by the legislature based on school reading improvement. The law is called the third-grade reading guarantee, and requires all students to read and comprehend before graduating to the fourth grade. Students who do not reach proficiency on the Ohio Achievement Assessment, are retained in the third grade. The emphasis for the third-grade reading guarantee program is to provide interventions at an

early age for students who struggle in reading. Therefore, with the third-grade reading guarantee program in place reading interventions should take place in the lower grades and continue throughout a student's educational career. Administrators and teachers were on track for the implementation of the third-grade reading guarantee for the 2015—2016 academic year.

Along with this new law, teachers are also required to obtain a reading endorsement attached to their license. The implementation of the third-grade reading guarantee requires teachers to head back to school and take more classes with minimal support and then pay a stipend to attend additional required coursework.

The Local Problem

The problem in the rural school district within the midwestern United States is that elementary students in Grades 1—5 are not meeting achievement targets or goals in literacy-based interventions. In 2016, most primary students in Grades 1—5 did not meet state reading proficiency. State data indicated that approximately 69% of students in Grades 1—5 were not proficient while only 31% demonstrated reading proficiency on the state assessment (Reading Achievement Assessment, 2016). Because of the low levels of student reading proficiency, the school district is identifying students who fail the Ohio Achievement Assessment (OAA), and the schools are developing interventions to address the student reading deficiency. Despite district-wide interventions to improve reading proficiency, 69% of students continue to fail the OAA (Reading Achievement Assessment, 2016). Table 1 compares target school years 2014 to 2016, failing Reading OAA scores for Grades 1—5. Many possible factors are contributing to the reading

problem, among which is the need for additional resources, professional development, coaching and mentoring, and intervention strategies. To address these needs and contribute to the body of knowledge, this study explores the perceptions of Grade 1—5 teachers regarding the uses of reading resources in (a) knowledge of word analysis content, (b) knowledge of teaching in comprehension content, and (c) knowledge of comprehension content in Grades 1—5. Additionally, the technology training for teachers in the study school district has not evaluated for teachers' perceptions regarding additional teacher support and professional development among stakeholders. Table 1 compares years 2014—2016 reading failures in the local school for Grades 1—5.

Table 1

Comparing Years 2014—2016 Reading Failures on the Ohio Achievement Assessment for the local school in Grades 1—5

Measure	2014	2015	2016
Ohio Achievement Assessment	60%	65%	69%

Note. From Reading Achievement Assessment. (2016). *Ohio Department of Education.* Retrieved from www.success.ode.state.oh.us

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

The problem at the local level in the rural school district within the midwestern United States chosen for this study is that elementary students in Grades 1—5 are not making achievement targets or goals in literacy-based interventions. In 2016, 31% of students were proficient in the local school district within the midwestern United States passed the OAA with a *Proficient, Accelerated,* or *Advanced* score for the state report card. The results from the 2016 OAA for the rural school district indicate that 69% of the class was considered *Limited* with only 33% of the type performing in the *Proficient*

range of 700 or better (Reading Achievement Assessment, 2016). These are the scaled

scored ranges for Ohio state standardized testing. Students placed in one of five

performance areas. Table 2 describes the local school scaled score ranges for the

Reading OAA for Grades 3—5. The top level of performance is *Advanced* on the Ohio

reading assessment with a score range of 752-863. At this level, the students can evaluate

what they have read and are achieving at above grade level. The next level of the Ohio

reading assessment is *Accelerated*. On this level student score range of 725-751

determines to understand of what students have read. These students understand different

themes and patterns of multiple cultures. The middle level is *Proficient* with a score

range of 700-724. This level includes students who know what they read and can

summarize passages and interpret the meaning the author is conveying. According to the

Ohio Department of Education (2016), this level indicates that the student has

successfully met the standard necessary to move onto the next grade. The next level is

Basic with a score range of 672-699. Students at the *Basic* level do not understand all

that they read and the meaning of words that are new. The final level is *Limited* with a

score range of 545-671. The *Limited* level is the lowest level of performance, which

indicates a struggle with reading passages and answering fundamental questions about

the reading. These scores determine whether a student has gained knowledge about the

subject throughout the school year.

Table 2

Scaled Score Ranges for Reading Ohio Achievement Assessment for Grades 1—5

Test	Limited	Basic	Proficient	Accelerated	Advanced
Grade 3 ELA	545-671	672-699	700-724	725-751	752-863
Grade 4 ELA	549-673	674-699	700-724	725-752	753-846
Grade 5 ELA	552-668	669-699	700-724	725-754	755-848

Note. From Reading Achievement Assessment. (2016). Ohio *Department of Education.* Retrieved from www.success.ode.state.oh.us

A student in Grades 3—5 performing at the *Limited* and *Basic* levels demonstrates below the minimal knowledge on the OAA in Reading. When students complete *Limited* or *Basic* levels, new interventions are needed to ensure students are receiving a *Proficient* or higher score per the state requirements for each student to move on to the next grade level. Although interventions have been implemented at the study school district, the OAA scores are extremely low and have become a problem which requires further investigation into teachers' perceptions about evidence-based practices to improve reading achievement.

Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature

Literacy education should be at the forefront of the classroom to ensure that each student receive proper instruction. Students should be able to read by the time they have moved ahead from third to fourth grade. According to Savage, Carless, and Erten (2016), the achievement targets or goals in literacy is determined and measured by the opportunity to learn more about the problem by providing teachers with opportunities to empower their students to become better readers. The National Assessment of

Educational Progress (NEAP) reported that 37% of third graders in the United States were below proficient in reading achievement (Boyd, 2016). According to the NEAP, percentages were higher for nonmastery of expected reading material in other socioeconomic groups, including English as a second language, various minority groups, and low-income families. According to 2015, Every Student Succeeds Act (2015) State Report, the student scores have not reached the proficiency level (Reading Achievement Assessment, 2016).

Reading is a challenge for some young children, and this challenge can sometimes continue through to the secondary years, with 20% of current school-age students having considerable difficulties with reading comprehension, word analysis, and fluency (Therrien, Kirk, & Woods-Groves, 2014). According to Swanson et al. (2014), while children read without effort, an estimated 10% of students have difficulty with their reading skills and need additional support or individualized instruction. Individuals who remain poor readers in kindergarten continue their struggle in the upper grades. Researchers indicate that 74% of third graders read below grade level; these same struggling readers reach high school with only 27% reading at a basic third-grade level (Zentall & Lee, 2014). On average, 80% of students with learning disabilities (LD) have been recognized with a reading deficiency (Therrien et al., 2014). Without interventions, students proceed through the upper grades performing below grade level not only in reading but also in other areas of academics (Zentall & Lee, 2014). However, for at-risk children, who do not read at grade level, reading is a common area for instructional difficulty. Poor readers in the upper grades are less responsive to reading interventions

such as sight words, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension (Zentall & Lee, 2014). Researchers have supported three recommendations for intensive reading interventions: (a) using comprehension instruction strategies, (b) providing intensive interventions that individualize to the student, and (c) giving precise vocabulary instruction by a qualified specialist (Swanson et al., 2014).

Rationale

Reading students entering Grades 1—5 at the elementary rural school district within the midwestern United States are reading below the first-grade level (Reading Achievement Assessment, 2016). Students who are not learning at grade level are identified as lacking in the five elements essential for reading such as; vocabulary, reading comprehension, reading fluency, phonics, and phonemic awareness (Reading Achievement Assessment, 2016). The local problem reflects the lack of reading deficiency, as shown in Table 1, with the last three years of failing the reading Ohio achievement assessment. According to Table 1 percentages, the reading achievement at the local school district thinks there is a problem with the elementary students in Grades 1—5 who are not making achievement targets or goals in literacy-based interventions. This study addresses teachers' perceptions of reading resources to improve learning deficits.

The purpose of this exploratory case study was to investigate teachers' perceptions regarding the use of evidence-based teaching practices and how those practices are influencing students' reading skills. Tomlinson (2015), used an interpretive approach from a person who developed a constructivist theory to explore evidence-based

reading interventions. Tomlinson found that some reading resources assisted with improving student reading difficulties while other reading resources did not. In conclusion, the purpose of this exploratory case study was to investigate teachers' perceptions regarding the use of evidence-based teaching practices and how those practices are influencing students' reading skills.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms have been defined:

Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA): Valid evidence-based assessment that measures comprehension, fluency, and accuracy for a student's reading ability (Beaver & Carter, 2003).

Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test (GMRT): Used nationally to diagnose a student's level of reading achievement in comprehension and vocabulary (MacGinitie, MacGinitie, Maria, Dreyer, & Hughes, 2000).

National assessment of educational progress (NAEP): The largest national assessment of what students can do nationally. NAEP assesses third-eighth, and 12th grade student in science, mathematics, writing, and reading (National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2016).

Ohio Achievement Assessment OAA: Required tests in Ohio that measure a student's knowledge in reading, math, social studies and science (Reading Achievement Assessment, 2016).

Reading fluency: The capability to read with proper expression, accuracy, and speed (Therrien et al., 2014).

Response to Intervention (RTI): The process, which identifies students with low development after they were already in a reading intervention program (Vaughn et al., 2014)

Struggling readers: Students who attained below proficient reading scores on their previous Ohio Achievement Assessment (Reading Achievement Assessment, 2016).

Significance of the Study

Reading is the foundation for educational achievement and the basis for future academic skills and continued successes. When the foundations of reading are established in the younger years, reading can support academic success throughout all grades and can lead to future victory in the workplace (Wanzek & Roberts, 2014). Students who fail to learn reading in the lower grades have lower self-esteem and continue to lack the help they need (Vaughn, Mathes et al., 2014). When reading interventions not applied in the primary grades, students may struggle when entering into the upper classes (Wanzek & Roberts, 2014). Reading failure exists at the elementary level as district data has indicated in Table 1.

This case study explored the reading deficits at the local school presented in Table 1. The table display approximately 69% of students in Grades 1—5 were not proficient while 31% demonstrated reading proficiency on the state assessment. Inadequate reading interventions it is important to understand the implementation of interventions and their effectiveness on students' reading skills. The results of this case study explore reading teachers' perceptions about using evidence-based practices to improve student reading

achievement. General education and intervention teachers dedicated to improving the quality of students' reading skills (Wanzek & Roberts, 2014).

Elementary education geared toward accommodating academic requirements for the students (Wanzek & Roberts, 2014).

Based on current data in Table 2, the manner in which students are not meeting proficiency levels is puzzling. Therefore, having evidence-based practices is beneficial for teachers to improve student reading proficiency scores. This study was suitable to the local educational setting to explore evidence-based practices for struggling readers.

Research Questions

Researchers in reading instruction regarding reading comprehension, reading fluency, and the role of vocabulary has addressed many questions over the past 20 years (Therrien et al., 2014). In the study site rural school district in the midwestern United States, students have performed consistently below average in reading in years 2014 to 2016. The purpose of this exploratory case study was to investigate teachers' perceptions regarding the use of evidence-based teaching practices and how those practices are influencing students' reading skills. Researchers could shed light on common themes between reading interventions and below proficient OAA scores such as those in the subject rural school district. Then recommendations may be possible to suggest repairs and amendments to tested interventions and teachers' systems of delivery that provide the educational benefits their effectiveness promised. This project study may identify numerous instructional interventions intended to improve the classroom effectiveness in reading instruction. The incorporation of evidence-based practices into classrooms would

produce enhanced learning of reading skills. When evidence-based practices exist, the fact of consistently low-performance scores in reading must mean: (a) that educators (to include teachers, curriculum consultants, and the like) are not employing these interventions at all, (b) are not employing these interventions correctly or consistently, (c) there is something in the sample school context that renders the evidence-proven interventions ineffective, or (d) some combination of these factors (Therrien et al., 2014).

The way in which I have chosen to explore the rural school district problem was a case study into what was happening during reading instruction related to evidence-based practices. I then sought the perceptions of those teachers who instruct students in these classrooms. The general questions for the participants to consider included: (a) the methods and resources teachers employ to teach three dimensions of reading (reading comprehension, reading fluency, and vocabulary); (b) whether teachers know if they are using evidence-based methods; (c) when using evidence-based approaches, do teachers have confidence in these methods; and (d) in what ways, if any, do they believe that low-performance scores are related to the methods and resources they are using. This general question suggests two research questions that can be employed through a qualitative approach to evoke themes from the study's subjects (reading teachers in Grades 1 through 6) that may shed light to the issue if or how evidence-based practices may or may not be related to poor OAA scores.

Research Questions:

1. What are Grades 1—5 reading teachers' perceptions about using evidence-based practices to improve student reading achievement?

2. How are Grades 1—5 reading teachers implementing evidence-based practices to improve student reading achievement in the classroom?

Review of the Literature

The review of the literature was identified by searching for current information in educational journals, research studies, archival documents, and other peer-reviewed resources. I ensured the information included was within the last five years. The databases utilized to seek saturation of the literature on this topic were ERIC, Education Research Complete, Education from SAGE, and Google Scholar. In the process of finding the documentation, I made sure that the educational journals were peer-reviewed and from a well-known institution. The initial Boolean terms that I used were reading deficiencies in general, then narrowed it down to learning in the common core, causes, and ways to remedy reading difficulties. I continued my search by reading the abstracts so that I could use similar Booleans with hard copy reviews at the library. I also consulted educational books with insight on students with reading difficulties. My findings in the literature review have shown that there is a growing problem with students who are having reading challenges and I have cited and referenced current literature within the last five years. I was able to find peer-reviewed articles that showed commonality among reading achievement at the primary level and eventually impact reading at the secondary level.

A review of the literature identified multiple techniques and strategies for literacy. Amiryousefi and Ketabi (2014) suggested methods to recall vocabulary mnemonic instruction. Bailet et al. (2014) reported new interventions for prekindergartners that

were at risk for failing. Boyd (2016) addressed best practices for elementary students who had failed literacy achievement. Das, Stack-Cutler, and Parrila (2016) determined difficulties in reading comprehension that lead to a cognitive processing approach. Carter (2014) recognized teachers could address students reading failures by first using assessments to access students' prior knowledge. Elleman, Lindo, Morphy, and Compton (2016) reported how passage comprehension obstructed because of the lack of vocabulary. Corkett, Hatt, and Benevides (2014) maintained that reading and writing connect through teacher and student self-efficacy. Eklund, Torppa, Aro, Leppanen, and Lyytinen (2015) revealed there was a risk for children with dyslexia that started from familial traits. To have teachers continually improve on reading interventions Porche, Pallante, and Snow (2014) determined that professional development was successful in teaching strategies learned to their students with reading difficulties. Kamps and Greenwood (2014) formulated different results for reading interventions at the secondary level.

Evidence-based articles amount to more than the passive consumption of ill-digested bits and pieces of information from sources that contain uncertain information. Specifically, "evidence-based implies a critical, direct examination of the original source material, rigorous data collection completed objectively, and conceptual synthesis of what originates with what was previously known" (Carter & Wheldall, 2016, p. 5). Evidence-based articles report ways in which strategies in reading achievement have proven successful. Researchers have identified concepts that impact reading policy such as socioeconomic background, age, at risk concerns and grade level. Websites and

literature resources were referenced and documented related to this study. Including sites for national and public data. State achievement testing has confirmed that reading success is a concern at all government levels.

Data-driven evaluations, school improvement, and diverse literacy strategies have been retained at this school district to address the reading deficiency. According to Kilpatrick (2016), data-driven evaluations can be stressed but are supplementary successful when used with other strategies. School improvement continually enforced with many different ideas, but effectiveness is a concern (Nadelson, 2016). Procedures used in significant ways can result in comprehension enhancement, but only when used with many approaches to address reading difficulty (Johnson & Keier, 2016). When accomplishing goals for strategies on reading, collaboration and professional development is paramount for stakeholders (Fisher & Price, 2016).

Conceptual Framework

According to Collinson (2014), distinctive studying may not be sufficient for societies to flourish and withstand restitution in a complicated and quickly varying world. Useful associations of the 21st century, whether in medicine, education, industry, business, or law, already signify that equally discrete studying and thoughtful, cooperative learning are essential (Snowling & Hulme, 2014). Collinson additionally stated:

> Education communities determine to a certain degree which information is
> emphasized or even allowed into the organization. Facilitators may be tempted to
> think that executive leaders bear responsibility for the work of developing

organizational capacity by creating an environment that promotes innovation,

inquiry, dissemination, and shared understanding. (Collinson, 2014, p. 3)

To develop a thriving educational community regarding reading difficulty, teacher

interventions are essential to create a theory in which to form an explanation at a

cognitive stage (Snowling & Hulme, 2014).

This study was guided by Webb's depth of knowledge model (2005) and based on

Piaget's (1954) developmental theory which supports my research questions concerning

what students know and understand at different stages of learning. Webb's model

consists of four levels, basic knowledge, application of what is learned, synthesize, and

problem-solving. Individual levels indicate a progression in the learning process

(Tomlinson, 2015). Many researchers (Dulberg, 2014; Lee, Yoo, & You, 2014; Paour &

Baileux, 2014; Tomlinson, 2015) have found that the stages of learning are like

scaffolding and building upon knowledge already learned. This concept of education was

relative to my study. A developmental theory explains how early cognitive development

changes ones' mental operation through a process. By using Piaget's developmental

theory student's knowledge of what they already know was accessed in the classroom

while the teachers provide an environment for exploration to encourage students'

knowledge of schemas through their learning process. The critical concepts of schemas

are to describe both the mental and physical actions involved in understanding and to

know (Dulberg, 2014). One idea is assimilation, the process of taking new information

into our previously existing schemas. A second concept, accommodation, involves

changing or altering our existing schemes. The final design is equilibration, the balance between assimilation and accommodation through a device.

A developmental teaching method needed for the use of Webb's depth of knowledge to scaffold a more in-depth understanding of learning (Paour & Baileux, 2014). The developmental framework applies to teach and to learn that suggests a model of learning that helps to make clear what the child brings to the educational development, what is happening in that process, and what could happen in the future under specific situation (Dulberg, 2014). Through developmental lessons, children work collaboratively with one another to construct their solutions, examine problems, and share what they have learned by using presentations (Lee et al., 2014). Developmental theorists share the idea that interaction and social negotiation is an essential factor with knowledge acquisition (Dulberg, 2014). However, new information is key to this acquisition through self-reinforcement, self-assessment, self-observation, goal setting, and self-regulated learning (Dulberg, 2014). According to Kotzee (2016), teachers should allow students to build comprehension for themselves and not inform students what is factual about reality. The teacher is no longer the authority of knowledge; instead, the student is the expert in knowledge with experience and exploration (Nikitina, 2016). When using developmental framework within this study, it guides and supports the investigation of literacy learning. Developmental learning activities are most effective when implemented at an early age and positively influence student achievement (Dulberg, 2014). Researchers concur when using increased opportunities for early interventions student literacy achievement

increase. I used developmental literacy in this study to help understand if evidence-based intervention strategies are beneficial to improve proficiency on the reading OAA.

Review of the Broader Problem

Reading difficulty has become a setback of substantial proportion. Every year the U. S. Department of Education reports millions of primary aged students with learning disabilities are receiving special education (Reading Achievement Assessment, 2016). Thousands of other students fall between the cracks and never treated or diagnosed because the student ability levels are not eligible for special education services (President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education, 2015). Teachers and staff member who identify students with a reading disability may not have the proper funding or training, and this could be a challenge in assisting students in overcoming their difficulties.

To address the learning difficulty problem in the United States, the federal government initiated Every Student Succeeds Act (2015). This law is to help students with learning disabilities to be successful in school and their community. Even though this law has helped students, many school districts are reluctant to comply with the law because the curriculums become too pricey. Teacher reading resources based on government subsidies and school budgets for special education. For children with learning difficulties to make a positive mark on society reading teachers need opportunities for professional development activates to improve their evidence-based reading resources within their classrooms (Kilpatrick, 2016). To address learning disability questions society such as researchers, educational institutions, medical

professions, and teachers need to work together to make an impact on students with reading disabilities.

There are a variety of resources used by teachers to teach reading skills (Snowling & Hulme, 2014). In the 21st century, facilitators use evidence-based technology in teaching students to access more ways to learn. Evidence-based technology can assist all learning styles: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Researchers and theorists stated that learning is a constructive, interpersonal, social, and cognitive process (Carter, 2014). With evidence-based technology at the forefront of education, students are supported by the use of technology in their classrooms (Snowling & Hulme, 2014). Teaching reading skills by using evidence-based technology is an essential educational task within all academic areas. Evidence-based technology is becoming the primary way to deliver a classroom lesson (Buzzard, Crittenden, Crittenden, & McCarty, 2014). However, graphic organizers are still used in classrooms to collect data, to read passages to students, to present lessons, and to assess prior knowledge.

Teachers use on line technology for intervention strategies to improve student reading readiness. Bippert and Harmon (2017) conducted research on computer assisted reading interventions. More and more schools are implementing technology in reading to support reading deficiencies (Bippert & Harmon, 2017). Bippert and Harmon found the need for more technology programs that would focus on student motivation on reading. The need to increase motivation for students to read is the focus for execution today (Bippert & Harmon, 2017).

Response to Intervention (RTI) is another technique a teacher can use to support struggling readers with additional assistance. According to Vaughn, Wexler et al. (2014), this process was used to identify students with low development after they were already in a reading intervention program. RTI mainly focuses on elementary students but recently has been implemented in the upper grades with students who require intensive reading intervention. Researchers have suggested using RTI by a multitier intervention (Vaughn, Wexler et al., 2014). The first tier of the RTI is the identifying process, which determines whether the child is struggling with reading. Next, the teacher starts intervention strategies for comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary. If these interventions are not successful, the teacher focuses on more intensive interventions that pinpoint the student's specific reading difficulties. According to Vaughn, Wexler et al., this multitier intervention was effective on primary grade students who were at risk for problems in reading.

In becoming an active reader, an RTI student must think critically while using interventions. Effective teachers encourage learners to think critically with skills that analyze situations and to make decisions about information that has a large or small impact on other individuals (Brookfield, 2016). When thinking critically, students become aware of the learning behaviors around them such as raising questions and solving problems (Brookfield, 2016). Instructors gather and assess information to eventually test the interventions with specific criteria and principles. Critical thinking, in short, is self-directed, self-monitored, and self- corrected thinking (Brookfield, 2016). Critical thinking skills should be the primary goal of educators today (Malamitsa,

Kokkotas, & Kasoutas, 2016). Despite the need to develop these skills, educators are discovering it hard to identify and evaluate critical thinking skills (Malamitsa et al., 2016).

Critical thinking and problem-solving skills are used to answer questions that involve real-life situations. Problem-solving is selecting the practical tools and measures among all options to arrive at the preferred targets (Wanzek, Wexler,Vaughn, & Ciullo, (2016). Problem-solving skills fluctuate based on a student's environment and level of development. Critical thinking and problem-solving skills are essential to have an unambiguous idea about the start of a student's difficulty in reading to plan an effective intervention (Snowling & Hulme, 2014). Some research has suggested that anxiety can influence poor reading achievement (Grills-Taquechel, Fletcher, Vaughn, & Stuebing, 2014). To become proficient in reading the student must have mastery over three different mechanisms: reading comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary (Das et al., 2016). The ability of these three components assisted students in the rest of their academic and workforce careers.

What are multiple intelligences? Psychologist Howard Gardener developed the theory of multiple intelligence. The nine types of intelligence that Gardener has established are visual/spatial, verbal/linguistic, logical/mathematical, bodily/kinesthetic, musical/ rhythmic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic, and existential (Gardner, 2000). These bits of intelligence are essential to know when someone has a reading difficulty. Identifying the intelligence that is dominant can assist with understanding a person's strengths and can learn more effectively. The intelligence connects to the

different learning strategies (Gardner, 2000). With visual/spatial intelligence a person

constructs pictures and thought in images. Strategies for visual/spatial learners can be

when underlining or highlighting information that is important. By using

verbal/linguistic intelligence someone would have excellent speaking and auditory skills.

Tactics may include using mnemonic devices for remembering what something means,

and they can recall quickly. Bodily/kinesthetic intelligence is when a person can control

body movements and objects. Approaches related to kinesthetic intelligence is when

actives involve moving around instead of staying in the same place. Another strategy

would be the idea of drawing or writing down vocabulary to learn it effectively.

Some causes for reading achievement. According to Nadelson (2016)

disabilities can be genetically handed down. Reading disabilities can run in families as

research has suggested (Nadelson, 2016). The different reading influences such as

comprehension and reading recognition were reported to affect siblings and parents. At

one point, researchers thought that reading, writing, and mathematics disabilities were

related to reading dysfunction but learned years later that reading, writing, and

mathematics had their learning disorders (Nadelson, 2016). More recently, researchers

have found that children and their parents may have learning disabilities but have

different disability categories (Fisher & Price, 2016). Researchers continue to explore

whether environment and familial are the most considerable influence on learning

disabilities.

Reading achievement is the leading reading dysfunction incomprehension, speed,

and accuracy falling significantly below the daily activities of reading (National Center

for Learning Disabilities, 2016). Students with reading difficulty tend to read slower than their typical aged peers when reading silently or out loud. When learning at a slower pace, this may cause the student to have trouble with the comprehension of the passage read. These reading difficulties may occur in the primary grades showing an inability to distinguish between universal phonetics and important letter recognition. Happening in the 21st-century students should be able to differentiate between common phonemes and letter recognition by the end of their kindergarten year (National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2016). If the reading difficulty caught at this grade level or earlier, then the child may slip through the cracks and show an even higher reading dysfunction in the third grade. During the third-grade at the midwestern United States school district that this study was conducted they require all third-grade students to pass a standardized test or remain in the third grade for retention. With early interventions, reading deficient students can go on to succeed in their reading achievement or the reading disability may persist into adolescence (President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education, 2015).

What does it mean to be able to read? No one is born understanding how to read. Everyone has to learn this crucial skill. Reading can be easy or hard for some people. It is just like any other kind of activity; some people can pick up on art, sports, or music quicker than others. Many steps can be confusing on how to read. There are three reasons why people read. According to Fisher and Price (2016), one purpose for reading is to complete a task. When buying an item from the store the article has instructions on how to put it together and/or install it. Another purpose is for enjoyment. Quietly sit

down and read something that is interesting and grabs your attention is gratifying to most. Ultimately, reading assists with information. Reading the newspaper and finding out what is going on around you benefit people to connect with critical issues. Reading is an ability that touches every characteristic of life.

The question remains as to why students are not successful readers. According to President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education (2015), students who struggle with reading often are frustrated, confused, and give up. They struggle with reading while their peers reading seems more natural. These students have not learned how to recognize and correct their reading errors (National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2016). In other words, students with reading disabilities are unable to construct the process of reading which leads to problem-solving and make meaning of what is read (National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2016). Another reason may be that teachers do not have proper professional development to help students to construct the process of reading (National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2016). If students with reading deficiencies are enabled to learn how to read, then teachers need to discover and search harder to find ways to assist students who struggle in reading.

Five elements essential for reading. According to Alharbi (2015) there are five areas identified that improve reading development. The five active ingredients were vocabulary, reading comprehension, reading fluency, phonics, and phonemic awareness. Vocabulary refers to words communicated daily. If a person's vocabulary is right, it predicted how well a person's reading comprehension is going to be. Reading comprehension refers to how well a person can understand what they read. There are two

types of reading comprehension inferential and literal. Inferential knowledge is when a person can conclude by using personal experiences. A literal understanding is information that is truthful in the text read. Reading fluency is the ability to read sentences and phrases with practical speed while comprehending at the same time. Decoding words is also important when looking at reading fluency. Phonics is the relationship between sounds and letters in the language. With the English language, only 80% follow the phonics rule while 20% is the exception to the rule. Phonemic awareness is the most important element when teaching reading skills and shown at an early age (Fisher & Price, 2016). This stage is the ability to identify and hear phonemes put together. It is important to use all of these strategies when teaching someone how to read (Kilpatrick, 2016).

Skills taught through literacy programs to support reading difficulties. While reading a passage on student grade level, the goal for the student is to comprehend what they read (Das et al., 2016). Wanzek, Wexler, Vaughn, et al. (2016) research suggests that students who struggle in reading may struggle with specific reading skills such as fluency and content comprehension. The lack of these necessary reading skills could influence the students' capability to recognize complex text. In the upper grades, students with reading disabilities need more instruction on understanding content area text with more independent reading. Wanzek and Roberts (2014) suggested that struggling readers in the upper grades demonstrate reading comprehension difficulties especially with text that is more complex. Difficulties with fluency can impact students' reading comprehension along with difficulties monitoring and concept knowledge. When

students can improve in these areas of deficiencies, they can read more text and include more complex ideas while reading. Most late emerging reading comprehension disabilities go unnoticed until grades four and five (Tong, Deacon, Cain, Kirby, & Parrila, 2014). These children demonstrate impairments in text comprehension and word level reading or even both (Tong et al., 2014). Tong et al. (2014) further described children with reduced comprehension and lower level reading skills may contribute to their age.

Reading comprehension is one of the five elements essential for reading. Technology innovations may play a role in improving comprehension practices for students. According to Ely, Alves, Dolenc, Sebolt, and Walton (2018) for students with disabilities and area of weakness in reading comprehension. By using simulation for comprehension strategies, disability students were able to comprehend reading through collaborative strategic reading (Ely et al., (2018).

In addition to Tong et al. (2014) research, a study conducted by Wanzek and Roberts (2014) also addresses the effects of differential instruction during an intervention, which focuses on comprehension and word recognition and has significance regarding my study. Wanzek and Roberts (2014) have focused on matching direction to students' reading needs such as reading comprehension that improve student outcomes for reading disabilities. Wanzek and Roberts (2014) used the comprehension subtest from the Gates-MacGinite Reading Test to screen students below the 25th percentile. After students categorized, they place into four study conditions: comprehension, word recognition, comparison, and responsive emphasis. The intervention was provided in 30-

minute sessions daily. After the responses completed, the students were again given the Gates-MacGinite Reading Test to compare their results from the beginning of the intervention to the end of the intervention. The results indicated that there were no differences between the students who participated in the comprehension intervention skills, but students did improve on the word recognition reading outcomes (Wanzek & Roberts, 2014). Wanzek and Roberts (2014) propose that additional research needs to be conducted to focus on fundamental skills as well as more clear instruction for higher elementary.

When learning to read intelligence is not an indicator that one learns to read (Sousa, 2016). According to Sousa (2016), three indications are evidence that proves this fact. First, children with above average IQ often have difficulty learning. Second, students in grades 1 and 2 are weakly related to IQ and reading achievement. Then it appears, intelligence is independent of learning to read (Sousa, 2016).

The ability to read is not a natural ability. The spoken language has been around for thousands of years. During this time, human genetic ability to process spoken language favored through the brain's specialized areas. Before a child's first birthday they learn words at a rate of 8 to 10 a day. By the time the child enters kindergarten, they develop an active vocabulary of 3,000 words (Sousa, 2016). While reading is not a cognitive ability, speaking is. Reading is not a survival skill that has emerged over time like speaking skills. In fact, there are millions of American adults alone who are illiterate (Sousa, 2016).

Early stages of reading acquire children to listen and then using those words in conversation. Necessary vocabulary corrections by adults assist in fine-tuning pronunciation usages. Children's beginning reading skills start with words used in their vocabulary. According to Sousa (2016), the connections between the spoken language and the brain should be a combination of written and spoken words. Reading starts by recognizing the sounds of speech and those sounds represent written letters spelled out in words. Children with reading difficulties do not understand that spoken words comprised of isolated sounds. The difference in which children learn reading is in other skills such as, building a model, playing a sport, or learning to play an instrument. Learning to understand written language is central to being sensitive to sound differences (Sousa, 2016).

Students who have reduced comprehension have trouble with learning new vocabulary. Vocabulary decreased is hard to relate new meaning to unknown words, which leads to less reading (Woolley, 2016). Direct instruction has been linked to vocabulary instruction that requires self-regulation, metacognition, and inferential reasoning (Jenkins, Schiller, Blackorby, Thayer, & Tilly, 2016). To develop reading comprehension through vocabulary development and the acquirement of innovative vocabulary is predominantly significant for advancement through school (Woolley, 2016). According to Bailet et al. (2014) comprehension development is more noticeable with reading difficulties outside the lower grades which are attributed to the complexity of learning new vocabulary.

A vocabulary approach that facilitates learning has garnered more research attention (Amiryousefi & Ketabi, 2014). The vocabulary learning approach uses the action of the learners, which in turn affects the learners' vocabulary acquisition. These actions can assist learners by consolidating and using the meaning of the word in their discovery (Amiryousefi & Ketabi, 2014). Interventions that develop children's awareness of vocabulary are vital to listening comprehension as used in kindergarten teaching and are also important in later reading comprehension (Pollard-Durodola et al., 2014). As students pass through the grades, it is the students' independent extraction of retaining information from a vocabulary that is vital to their understanding of comprehension from reading a passage (Elleman et al., 2016). According to Elleman et al. (2016), one area of intervention that assists students in reading comprehension is through vocabulary instruction.

In secondary education, students are required to know new vocabulary as well as sophisticated terminology (Wilson, Nash, & Earl, 2016). Lower levels of vocabulary acquisitions may be challenging for some students with literacy and language impairment (Wilson et al., 2016). There may be two contributing factors involved with lower vocabulary skills. First, students could have difficulty with decoding and reading comprehension, which may affect students with language impairment. Second, children with language impairment may have problems with a fluency that could affect the quality of their vocabulary and rate (Loftus, Coyne, McCoach, & Zipoli, 2016). These vocabulary difficulties are highlighted and are important for development in earlier grades.

A defining characteristic of a good reader is reading fluency (Ming & Dukes, 2014). According to Wise et al. (2016), fluency is translating words from text into a spoken language with accuracy and speed. The lack of reading fluency marks the differences between poor readers and distinguished readers. Researchers have suggested that oral reading fluency is an overall indicator of reading comprehension and reading competence (Wise et al., 2016). Researchers and teachers have been focusing on finding ways to improve necessary reading skills. When teachers place instructional focus on students becoming fluent readers, then their comprehension skills increase (Ming & Dukes, 2014).

However, a student in upper grades who have not yet master necessary reading skills such as fluency, accuracy, and word meaning did not show strengths in reading comprehension (Wanzek, Vaughn, Scammacca, Metz, Murray, Roberts, & Danielson, 2015). Continued instruction in word recognition and decoding for students with disabilities may be important since research has shown that an important contributor to reading difficulty does not understand phonological processing (Vaughn, Mathes, Linan-Thompson, et al., 2014). This evidence has suggested that students who have deficits in fluency and decoding need instruction in basic reading skills no matter how old or young they are (Swanson et al., 2014). When interventions that focus on essential reading skills are applied, then reading outcomes increase in comprehension and fluency (Wanzek, Vaughn, Scammacca, et al., 2015).

Benefits to organize assessment and intervention implications. To understand students' needs in reading difficulty a reading teacher, speech pathologist, and

psychologist can administer a battery of tests to recognize the area's in which the student is having difficulty. Assessments can be informative, ongoing, and authentic. The evaluation can be in the area of phonics awareness, comprehension strategies, and vocabulary in reading. With the assessment administered the results can assist reading teachers in a more active approach to reading interventions for the struggling reader. According to Fisher and Price (2016) ongoing assessment require close observation of student development in reading strategies and can help guide teaching decisions. Continuous assessment keeps track of progress on struggling readers and what is contributing to the difficulty. Informative assessment can be devised to give knowledge of what the struggling reader needs to assist with evidence-based intervention strategies (Fisher & Price, 2016).

Bulu and Pedersen (2016) emphasized that most students who have reading difficulty prevented by using assessments and early interventions. Johnson and Keier (2016) highlighted that assessments are in the form of informative, ongoing, and authentic for teachers to instruct children effectively. Teachers are always using assessments to help understand what readers can and cannot do. When a child's reading development has meaningful work, it is through meaningful assessment (Johnson & Keier, 2016). Information collected through assessments help with understanding students who are struggling and in what particular area should be the focal point. By keeping track of the progress that readers perform, through close observation. Teachers can be aware of the struggling readers and what can be the factors in which the reader is struggling. Kilpatrick (2016) maintained that reading students develop and demonstrate

successful behaviors by using assessment to track their success. Some actions include errors that may be self-corrected, returning to the text to check for comprehension, increased rate and fluency while reading, and using substitution centered on visual information, structure, and meaning (Kilpatrick, 2016). Teachers may use the variety of assessment tools throughout the day to collect information regarding students' ability to read effectively.

Professional development to achieve organizational goals. According to Porche et al. (2014) teachers need to be able to perfect their skills by participating in professional development activities. It is becoming more difficult for school districts to successfully provide professional development because of the decrease in state funding. The literacy rate is a problem when state legislation is demanding that third-grade teachers have a reading endorsement to teach that grade level. Students with reading deficiencies have been the focus of legislators seeking to change the percentage of students who do not have the reading skills to succeed in everyday activities. Funding for schools has decreased, and it is difficult for school districts to offer professional development. Sending teachers to professional development has substantially been eliminated due to this lack of funding. Once literacy instruction is evidence-based and incorporated into a professional development class for staff members the literacy instruction produces whole school reform (Porche et al., 2014). When implementing good practices that address skills such as vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension skills the translation is that teachers and students engage in a meaningful instruction of higher level reading skills. Since professional opportunities taken away from teachers, they are

forced to pick and choose from strategies that may or may not be evidence-based. The time, interest, and skills to incorporate evidence-based reading skills into teaching may facilitate the necessary changes to reading practices that professional development classes can make.

Furthermore, when third-grade students perform below proficient on standardized testing, students face retention in that grade. When the districts report these low achieving scores, the school district may lose accreditation and funding through No Child Left Behind (NCLB) initiated by President George W. Bush, was replaced by Every Student Succeeds Act (2015) on December 10, 2015, Congress reauthorized the law in modified form, during President Obama Presidency. It is imperative that professional development programs are not reduced or cut from school districts that are facing decreased funding. Reading and writing skills are essential for everyday communication. According to Porche et al. (2014) when administration supports teachers through professional development classes that focus on reading and writing skills, the faculty can focus on ensuring that all students are unbeaten in their learning.

Impact of reading deficiencies on high school drop outs. According to Eklund et al. (2015) throughout a student's school years difficulties in reading development can make them vulnerable to underachieving in their high school years. Demographic and social reasons combined with instructional issues may be contributing factors for students who drop out of high school. Research conducted by Mayer (2016) showed that high school dropout percentages did not take into consideration the quality of education the students received before dropping out of school. The research mainly focused on issues

about economics such as parent support and family income. However, there is evidence that in addition to social, demographics and instructional matters in secondary reading specialists are contributing factors also. Reading specialists can assist with interventions for reading deficient students and can contribute to student success. Reading specialists should be incorporated into all levels of education to ensure that student success in reading is the primary objective for educators (Mayer, 2016).

Students come to school to learn how to read and write but reading instruction and support after the elementary grades limit success because of the reduction of secondary reading specialists. According to Carlson (2014) students in secondary grades who struggle with reading, drop out of high school because of the lack of reading specialists, who can support and provide reading interventions for these students. Many reading specialists are employed in elementary schools and are limited to secondary education. The secondary reading specialists in Grades 6-12 explain that students who need a reading teacher's support may drop out of school because they cannot keep up with the challenging content of the high school curriculum (Mayer, 2016). When falling out of high school, a student is less likely to have a high paying job and a hopeful future.

Legislation that supports educational programs. In 2002, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) initiated by President George W. Bush, was replaced by Every Student Succeeds Act (2015) on December 10, 2015, Congress reauthorized the law in modified form, during President Obama Presidency. This federal law focuses on educational accountability and methods that provide results for many educational programs that protect disadvantaged and high-need students. Every Student Succeeds Act (2015)

provides opportunities for programs such as Title 1 and innovation in early learning from birth through college with career opportunities. Through these programs, children are able to start and end their education ready to succeed in life. Every Student Succeeds Act (2015) is one step in assisting with the issue of closing the achievement gap and guarantee that students can graduate with the knowledge to be ready to succeed in college and beyond.

Implications

Americans are aware that educators are preparing students in literacy skills so that United States students can become active citizens in their community, state, and the world (Marshall & Klein, 2016). This study contributes to social change by adequately addressing evidence-based practices to promote reading skills that are effective for struggling readers within the rural school district within the midwestern United States and surrounding area. Besides, students need to be informed about educational opportunities going on around them to be able to make their own informed decisions about their role within their community (Marshall & Klein, 2016). The importance for leaders, staff, and society should be committed to understand these educational needs and implement opportunities for students to become improved readers. Literacy is essential to promote social change. By providing students with literacy skills, educators challenge students to explore meaningful and vital questions about the things that go on around them. These literacy sources inspire students to become generally active, encourage a more caring society, and enhance social accountability (Marshall & Klein, 2016). Administrators, who maintain open communication with the community, may support communities and

literacy issues that come their way. With the assistance of stakeholders, educators may be able to change instructional practices that can lead to improving reading scores. Educators must know and understand the importance of reading deficiencies and be engaged with the community about the deficits (Marx, 2014).

The importance of being a reflective practitioner is to identify possible strengths and weaknesses in instructional practices. An insightful specialist assists with understanding the origins of tribulations, successes, and opportunities the teacher may see for the future (Marx, 2014). If teachers reflect upon their teaching activities, then the teacher may be able to determine which literacy intervention and strategies may be successful and which ones may not promote student success. Reflection allows them to build upon the successful issues and modify the problems that were failures.

One way for stakeholders to foster relationships with reading teacher is by having collaborative professional development meetings to address proper reading interventions lead by the administration. Administration can have collaborative conversations with individuals or email ideas and to model what they are doing to assist struggling readers with proper responses. Effective leaders are rigorous educators, anchoring their occupation on essential issues of wisdom, instruction, and school expansion (Jossey-Bass, 2010). For this reason, it became necessary for stakeholders, educators, and community members to collaborate as a team to improve the literacy abilities of the students.

Studies like this study include Phelps and Schilling (2004) and Dingle, Brownell, Leko, Boardman, and Haager (2014). In the study conducted by Phelps and Schilling

(2004) they used the mixed methods approach to understand teachers' effectiveness in teaching reading. The outcome was that the teachers did not have adequate resources to accommodate struggling readers. In research performed by Dingle et al. (2014) they investigated the impact of professional development for reading teachers. The outcome of their research concluded that the facilitators did not allow enough professional development for teachers to be proficient with the 21st-century reading resources.

A potential project that might develop based upon the study findings could be professional development workshops. The results would be the baseline for the activities used within the professional development activity. This rural school district within the midwestern United States could ask general education teachers in Grades 1—5 to communicate with their colleagues on the resources that they have found such as comprehension, word analysis, and fluency strategies that assisted with struggling readers. Once the professional development is complete, the teachers can implement the strategies in their reading lessons. One potential outcome when implementing this professional development would be that more students may be able to receive reading instruction that enhance their reading ability. Another issue might be that once the student is showing signs of a reading deficiency, the teacher was able to adjust the curriculum to suit the students reading needs.

<div align="center">**Summary**</div>

Growing up as a struggling reader can have devastating consequences. Resourceful teachers think about interventions they can use to assist their reading students who struggle in comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary skills. Since reading is

the base for all learning, reading struggles permeate all academic areas. Despite the heroic efforts of interventions, these students challenge even the best and most effective reading teachers. When consulting professional books, periodicals, and research studies, there is no simple answer to this problem.

In the United States, reading difficulties for students have been an issue for teachers at the local and state levels. Recently, the Governor of Ohio has put into law a program called the third-grade reading guarantee. According to President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education (2015) in 2002, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) initiated by President George W. Bush, was replaced by Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) on December 10, 2015, Congress reauthorized the law in modified form, during Obama's Presidency. As a nation, we have come to realize that reading instruction needs to be a priority within our school districts for our children to become successful in their school career and beyond. With these laws in place, educators provided with the necessary tools to reinforce these programs within their school districts. By giving teachers appropriate strategies in which to assess students with reading difficulty at an early age, educators can close the achievement gap for these students.

If schools are to change to meet the increasingly urgent needs in education, teachers should move from being trained or developed to become active learners. "Significant change requires educators to alter their attitudes and behaviors and use a more hands-on approach to learning new research strategies and methods for improving student achievement" (Easton, 2016, p. 755).

This study identifies teachers' perceptions in using reading resources in expectation to positively impact student performance on reading skills in a rural school district within the midwestern United States. Students within this Ohio school district are scoring limited or below average on the Ohio Achievement Test OAA in reading. Once the student reading performance is determined, a study was developed to address this problem at the local level.

The literature review addressed research on components of reading and literacy instruction when incorporated into their teachings. Hoping to ensure success and improve students' learning, teachers are delivering reading instruction using supplemental materials and evidence-based methods. In section 2, I reviewed the methodology, a justification for the design and approach, strategy for data collection and analysis, description of the population, sampling method, participant eligibility and measures taken for participant protection. Also, I provided data collection strategies, data analysis and limitations of the study.

Section 2: The Methodology

Section 2 entails a description of the procedures and methods used in conducting this study. I present the design and approach along with the identification of the setting and sample, procedures for collecting data and analysis and defining of limitations. It also includes ethical protection of participants, working relationships with participants, methods for gaining access to participants. The disposition of this study was an exploratory case study approach. According to Creswell (2014), a case study explores in depth of one or more individuals, activity, process, or program. Researchers collect information using a variety of procedures over time. This case study incorporates how the findings relate to the problem along with emerging themes. The outcomes align with the conceptual framework as it correlates to Webb's (2005) theories on learning. This section concludes with the results of the study.

Qualitative Research Design and Approach

The results of this exploratory case study were to identify teachers' perceptions in using reading resources implemented to improve students' reading difficulties at a rural school district within the midwestern United States. This exploratory case study approach uses teachers' perceptions regarding evidence-based practices that impact achievement on the reading OAA. Other qualitative designs were reviewed, considered, and excluded based on the type of study developed.

Research Questions:

1. What are Grades 1—5 reading teachers' perceptions about using evidence-based practices to improve student reading achievement?

2. How are Grades 1—5 reading teachers implementing evidence-based

practices to improve student reading achievement in the classroom?

According to Patton (2015), there are different types of qualitative research to learn how something is done, to gain in-depth knowledge, and to study a phenomenological concept. The types of qualitative research considered include phenomenological study, grounded theory, ethnography, and case studies. A phenomenological approach believes in understanding the experience of others through research (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). A grounded theory which is generated by data, ethnography which focus on the study of cultures, and case studies that document individual experiences within a specific setting (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The following paragraphs emphasize how a case study method worked for my research.

The phenomenological study emphasizes the cultural aspects of individuals. These experiences may or may not be the bases of the individual's cultural aspect. A phenomenon emphasizes the viewpoint on her or his interpretation (Corkett et al., 2014). Individual perspectives of the same experience are the intention of a phenomenological study. The emphasis of my research was not personal perspectives but emerging themes that identify teachers' perceptions in using reading resources. For that purpose, a phenomenological study was not suitable for my study.

Grounded theory is a specific approach based on confirming a method through the process of collecting data. The researcher develops a philosophy rather than applying a theory already verified. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), for the particular topic or process, a conceptual framework is provided to explain or theorize how a process

occurs. This theory is generalized to a larger population by using thematic categories and organized data to create a grounded theory. The objective in grounded theory is not to collect data linearly but instead follow a repeating cycle (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). My study on teachers' perceptions regarding evidence-based practices was based on existing theoretical framework that reading success is the academic norm for the curriculum. The purpose of this exploratory case study was to investigate teachers' perceptions regarding the use of evidence-based teaching practices and how those practices are influencing students' reading skills. Therefore, grounded theory was not the best preparation for my project study.

Ethnography mainly concentrates on understanding and analyzing a philosophy. According to Patton (2015), the study of cultures in education influenced by sociological and anthropological practices. The focus of an ethnography research explains how behavior may relate to an institution, such as a group, society, or larger setting. One feature of an ethnographic study is the researcher must gain knowledge of the participants' beliefs by getting involved as a participant and an observer. Ethnographic studies explain how a group operates over a long period or day to provide individual accounts regarding activities, beliefs, patterns, and rituals (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The reason for my study was to recognize teachers' perceptions in using reading resources in expectation to raise student performance on reading OAA and even though philosophy and culture have impacted student success, philosophy was not the emphasis of this study. For that purpose, ethnographic research was not pertinent to this study.

Case study research provides a deeper understanding and explanations. The purpose was to provide detailed knowledge of a case through in-depth description (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Case studies investigate a problem or question to understanding or work through different ways to identify a process that improves explanations of a case by using a combination of observations, interviews, reviewing records, and data collection. Many types of data provide validity to the study, cross-referencing multiple kinds of data called triangulation is essential to a case study (Patton, 2015). An exploratory case study is different from other qualitative approaches such as phenomenological, grounded theory, and ethnographic because of the time and participates limitations involved in the case study which builds a restricted technique.

I used an exploratory case study to investigate teachers' perceptions of the use of reading resources implemented to improve students' reading difficulties at a rural school district within the midwestern United States. A case study multifaceted approach provided the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of information. I used a case study approach to gain in-depth knowledge by observing reading teacher's interaction with students involving reading strategies associated with reading difficulties and influence student reading ability. Reading teacher interviews provide clarification of evidence-based intervention of instructional concepts and practices to improve student proficiency level on reading and that affect student literacy achievement.

Participants

Purposeful sampling is commonly used in a qualitative study (Patton, 2015). When participants are chosen Patton (2015) maintains that contributors have valuable

information and ideas to contribute to understanding the concept(s) or topic(s) at the heart

of the study. According to Morrell (2014), the participants can provide understanding or

knowledge related to the subject of the investigation. The participant population was

selected from the teacher population at the local school district within the midwestern

United States. The reading teachers were trained, certified classroom teachers of

elementary Grades 1—5, who implement reading lessons. Teachers were invited to

provide intervention strategies implemented that could include using state standards,

lesson objectives on reading procedures performed in the classroom, OAA scores of

previous years, and district policy related to reading strategies instructed within the

school. These participants provided a holistic view of their district practices and

methodologies that contribute to literacy success among their students (Kilpatrick, 2016).

The purpose of selecting these participants was to obtain insight into teachers'

perceptions of the use of reading resources to describe strategies believed to raise student

performance on reading OAA.

Criteria for Participant Selection

Participants in the study included 7 out of 18 eligible Grades 1—5 reading

teachers at the rural school district. The qualifications to be accepted as a participant in

this study was any reading teacher in Grades 1—5 with a reading endorsement and holds

a permanent teaching license. Additional qualifications to participate were that they had

to be employed at the specific rural school district within the midwestern United States

planned study site.

Justify the Number of Participants

Eighteen teachers were invited to participate in the study. Teachers participated in the study were seven eligible Grades 1—5 reading teachers at the rural school district. The final sample included three first grade, two second grade, and two fifth grade reading teachers. The reading teachers were interviewed to discuss their perceptions about using evidence-based practices to improve student reading achievement. The participants were also observed implementing classroom reading strategies. To justify the small number of participants Morrell (2014) stated that the fewer the participants, the thicker the inquiry is required. In qualitative research data, 15 participants allow for identification of reoccurring themes and saturation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Saturation means that you are not obtaining any new information (Patton, 2015). The study reached saturation when I have all the information needed for the case study; this could be as few as 6 participants or as many as 15 participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Saturation became apparent when the reading teachers commented on the same needs throughout the interview process. The strategies were repeated again among participants, but were used in different arrangements in the classroom observations. Saturation was evident as data is analyzed and the information became repetitive and there was not any new information developed.

The rural elementary school district within the midwestern United States is in a secluded area. The nearest local school district is about 30 miles away. Distance hinders a collaboration of similar grade level teachers. This rural school district serves 635 students in grades K-6. The population of reading teachers in Grades 1—5 to consider

was seven. I have discussed the reading issue during a monthly county teacher conference

with possible participants, and of these potential participants, they have volunteered their

participation. See chart shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Study Participant and Data Collection Proceedings

Participants	Interviews (30 minutes)	Observations (30 minutes)
Grade First	3 Teachers	3 Teachers
Grade Second	2 Teachers	2 Teachers
Grade Fifth	2 Teachers	2 Teachers
Totals	7 Interviews	7 Observations

Procedures for Gaining Access to Participants

Shown above was a contributing participant chart in Table 3. All participation

was voluntary. I emailed the principal the cooperation letter along with the teacher

invites. I obtained a letter of cooperation from the building principal to confirm consent

to perform this study and to access the district and participants. To gain access to the

participants, I met with the principal to go over the letter of cooperation form and to see if

there are any policies in place at the school district to hinder the purpose of my study.

During this meeting, I discussed with the principal the requirements of the participants,

the time needed to collect the data, the procedures in which I received data, the benefits

to the district, how the data and results, and the requirements to protect the participants

was used. I provided the school district with the applicable procedures before data

collection. After the principal consents to the data collection, I emailed the aspiring

participants to obtain their motivation to participate in 30-minute classroom observation and interview. I corresponded with each participant through their preferred method of contact for consent to participate in the study. After consent forms were signed participants was asked to coordinate scheduling by setting up a mutually agreeable time for interviews and observations through their preferred method of contact. Participants decided on a standard signal or cue to use during the class observations in the event the participant chooses to withdrawal during the session. Participants decided on a neutral location for the interviews where the participant can withdraw at any time without consequence. After analyzing the data, an email with a written response regarding the results of the study was sent to all participants.

Methods of Establishing Researcher-Participant Relationship

Mutual professional connections supported current relationships that I have with participants. At the primary grade level, I have professional experiences, and similar licensure and rapport were immediately recognized. I am familiar with the district, some of its programs, and educational structure they started to maintain reading achievement. The participants and I have common goals as educators to assist students in being successful and able to move on to the next level of performance. To gain trust with the participants, I provided the purpose of the study with clear expectations. Participants were encouraged to perform as they usually would to capture the daily procedures in the natural environment. Schedules were made through email and given a 2-day window to respond with a date and time of interview and observation. I used 15 semistructured content knowledge open-ended interview questions provided see Appendix B. After

school, participants selected the location they feel comfortable for their interviews to ease

any duress and allowed them the power to renounce themselves at any time. I used a field

observation form for observation reflections so that information was not be construed see

Appendix C. With each field note I fill out, I ensured that I recorded each participant's

experiences and perspectives about reading resources. Each participant had a code

number to protect the privacy of each participant (Patton, 2015). The code number

formulated through NViro a qualitative data analysis software.

Protection of Participants

When conducting any research study, the researcher is responsible for protecting

the interest and rights of all participants (Patton, 2015). Therefore, before starting this

study, I secured the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval number 09-20-18-

0266860, ensuring I have guaranteed all moral considerations of all participants

(Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I got approval from the school principal before conducting

this study. To make sure all ethical issues were addressed, volunteers completed an

informed consent to agree to participate. Participants were voluntary and have the right to

opt out of any aspect of this study without penalty (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Confidentiality was maintained by using a code descriptor through NViro a qualitative

data analysis software for all responses within this study. A code ensures that all answers

have encryption instead of an individual's name for confidentiality purposes (Patton,

2015). The research was readily available in a PowerPoint presentation with results from

the study for all participants and reading teachers who work with students with reading

disabilities at the specific rural school district within the midwestern United States.

Rapport was developed by reassuring participants that I do not have any administration responsibility and that I am not here to critique their interviews and observations, but only to collect data to explore teachers' perceptions about using evidence-based practices to improve better selections in their practices.

Data Collection

The purpose of this exploratory case study was to investigate teachers' perceptions regarding the use of evidence-based teaching practices and how those practices are influencing students' reading skills. The general question to lay before these teachers concerns (a) the methods and resources they employ to teach three dimensions of reading (reading comprehension, reading fluency, and vocabulary); (b) whether they know if they are using evidence-based methods; (c) if teachers are using evidence-based methods, do they have confidence in these methods; and (d) in what ways, if any, do they believe that low-performance scores are related to the methods and resources they are using. This general question suggests four research questions that can be employed through a qualitative approach to evoke themes from the study's subjects (reading teacher in grades 1 through 5) that may lay bare the issue if or how evidence-based practices may or may not be related to poor OAA scores.

Research Questions:

1. What are Grades 1—5 reading teachers' perceptions about using evidence-based practices to improve student reading achievement?

2. How are Grades 1—5 reading teachers implementing evidence-based practices to improve student reading achievement in the classroom?

For this exploratory case study, my role was to examine and identify teachers' perceptions of using reading resources implemented to improve students' reading difficulties at a rural school district within the midwestern United States. Observation in the classroom provided data on literacy strategies implemented to impact student proficiency on the Reading OAA. Interviews on teachers' perceptions about using evidence-based practices provided abundant, rich data common themes between student proficiency and evidence-based practices. The qualitative research method used was an observation to provide data that influence literacy learning. This study used observations and interviews to clarify data collection and to acquire teachers' strategies implemented that impact proficiency on the Reading OAA. When the observations, have been conducted and the results of these findings established, I was able to conduct interviews with the reading teachers. The purpose of conducting the observations before interviews was to clarify data collection during classroom observation to gain insight on intervention strategies used by teachers that are associated with reading scores. Through qualitative method procedures, I analyzed the data to determine if there are any common themes between teachers' perceptions of using evidence-based practices and if interventions positively impact student proficiency on the Reading OAA. I decided this from the observations and interviews. Therefore, the use of a qualitative design contributed to the need for evidence-based practices which could allow teachers an opportunity to make better selections in their practices.

In the following subsections, I established the data collection strategies and the research design. To understand or bring to light these perspectives, the use of a

purposeful data collection method obtained through observation and interviews from reading teachers within the elementary school district. A purposeful sampling data collection was suitable for this study because it explored the difficulty that existed with students incapable of reading at the local school. In a struggle to deliver reading instruction for each student, it was vital for teachers to share their proficiencies so that they can learn from each other. I conducted individual, semistructured, open-ended interview questions with agreeable participants at approximately 30-minute intervals. The interviews were performed when the teachers were available to meet during after school hours. The discussion administered in an empty office or classroom of the participant's choice for confidentiality purposes. The interview topics consisted of teacher's need for addition reading resources, professional development activities, and student engagement strategies. When responding to the interviews, teachers responded by referring to their experiences and perceptions of school required interventions to address student difficulties in reading comprehension and fluency skills. The findings could help teachers understand the use of evidence-based practices which could then allow them an opportunity to make better selections in their practice.

Data Collection Process

In the process of planning this exploratory case study, I considered a couple of data sources that could give information to answer the research questions. I chose qualitative techniques that aligned with traditional ways of seeking to develop a rich understanding of an issue. In order to provide a description of teachers' perceptions of the use of evidence-based practices and how they are perceived to influence students'

reading. These choices supported me in gathering a large amount of detailed information that I analyzed.

In this qualitative case study, I used multiple forms of collecting data. Creswell (2014) suggests using and apply various strategies to analyze and validate qualitative research. A qualitative approach was incorporated sequentially in the form of observations and interviews. Observations provided data on literacy strategies implemented in the classroom. Interviews offer rich, thick data on teacher perspectives on interventions related to reading strategies.

Teacher Observations

I collected additional data through teacher observations. Reviewing observations of reading lessons provided insight into how reading activities were implemented when providing reading instruction. Once I collected this information I related it back to the research question to see if reading teachers were performing the same interventions in the classroom to improve student reading achievement.

Participants were sent an email to schedule a 30-minute classroom observation along with a time for the 30-minute interview. Participants scheduled an appointment within a 5-week window of time, which I provided a schedule to each participant. When participants planned for their classroom observation, I used the 3-column field observation form Appendix C. I wrote down the start and stop time of the reading lesson taught. I also wrote down on the observation form, the different components of the experience and label them with the specific strategy taught. I also ensured the reading teacher that I was not there to critique the lesson but only gathering the information

needed for my case study. I offered participants the opportunity to ask questions or

provide concerns about the lesson taught. At the end of the observation I made sure to

thank the participant for allowing me to observe their reading lesson.

Teacher Interviews

Interview questions were sent to an expert panel to ensure that the interview

protocol was appropriate for the study. An expert refers to a person of knowledge and

skill based on research with experience in a particular field of study (Wai, 2015).   My

expert panel consisted of five English Language Arts teachers who have taught English

Language Arts for more than five years and are considered highly qualified in their field

of study. The expert panel did not participate in the study. The expert panel received a

copy of the interview protocol Appendix B and the study question, what are Grades 1—5

reading teachers' perceptions about using evidence-based practices to improve student

reading achievement? After reviewing both the interview protocol and the research

question the five English teachers deemed that the interview protocol and research

question were appropriate for the participants.

In the qualitative study, the data was collected in the form of interview protocol.

In research investigated by Boyd (2016), she used a field notes recording form, because

their topic for their research investigation was best practices for a literacy teacher and the

focus was an implementation of best practices in literacy learning. The topics covered

were (a) the need for additional reading teacher resources (b) professional development

activities that foster reading strategies, and (c) student engagement strategies in reading.

An audio recorder was used to ensure the full conversation has been collected and transcribed following the interview.

The participants invited for this semistructured, open-ended interview were all reading endorsed teachers with a contract at the local elementary school within the midwestern United States. The purpose of the interview was to gather information about teacher perceptions when using evidence-based reading interventions. The seven-reading teacher's willingness to share teaching resources completed a 30-minute interview to address (a) the need for additional reading teacher resources, (b) professional development activities that foster reading strategies, and (c) student engagement strategies in reading. The interview questions were chosen regarding teachers' perceptions about using evidence-based reading interventions in the classroom that relate to student performance in reading. Interviews were transcribed into software to review for accuracy of the findings to participants. Datum were triangulated to find themes and patterns from the observations and interviews.

Gaining Access to Participants

The procedure for gaining access to participants was to obtain permission from the administration to enter the site without disruption. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016) recommend disclosure to the participants regarding the purpose and parameters of the study, confidentiality, any risk that is involved, and a discussion regarding these specifics be held with each participant prior to beginning the study. Discuss with the stakeholders about how and when the interviews originated from the participants. Be respectful to all who are attending and refrain from introducing issues that could cause

controversy within the district. Remind all volunteers were participating in this study to complete a consent form to permit to participate. I disclosed confidentiality procedures with all participants during our initial meeting.

Role of the Researcher

My enrollment in the Doctoral Program for Administration and Leadership at Walden University has given me no authority over the participants in that they may be able to make their own choices in the participation of this study. During the past three years, I participated in qualitative, quantitative and mixed method research methods classes. The knowledge that I received from this study contributed an understanding for participants on evidence-based intervention strategies to improve proficiency on the OAA. Participants received no compensation to volunteer for this research study.

As an elementary intervention teacher in a neighboring school district in the midwestern United States, our district has experienced the problem with reading deficiencies in the elementary grades. These experiences provided knowledge to relate to the participants that I interviewed. Before collecting data for this study, I have never been employed and had no professional or supervisory relationship with this district. Because of having prior teaching interactions, I have formed opinions about students with reading difficulties and have formed believes that students with reading difficulties have not had the proper instruction in the early years for students to retain their reading skills. To control for potential problems and bias due to previous relationships and opinions, I did not select a participant with whom I have previously worked. During my

observations, I was a nonparticipant. I did not interact with students, implementation of strategies, or teachers during my observations.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data was in the form of interviews and observations. The participants were seven reading endorsed teachers at the local school district within a state among the midwestern United States. The seven reading teachers completed a 30-minute interview to address the research question. The participants also were observed one time for 30-minutes while conducting a reading lesson. These overarching questions were the focal point of the interview and observations within this study.

Research Questions:

1. What are Grades 1—5 reading teachers' perceptions about using evidence-based practices to improve student reading achievement?

2. How are Grades 1—5 reading teachers implementing evidence-based practices to improve student reading achievement in the classroom?

Data analysis in the study was used to find common themes and patterns within the interviews and observations. Understanding the central phenomenon through thematic development help with the collection and review of the data. I used a comparison table or graph to create a visual image and a narrative to explain results. Reliability and validity of the findings were then be triangulated to find themes and patterns from the observations and interviews. As an intervention specialist, I took steps to reduce any bias; these included not to expose my own beliefs and opinions of the research and apply member checking for interviews (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

The purpose of this exploratory case study was to investigate teachers' perceptions regarding the use of evidence-based teaching practices and how those practices are influencing students' reading skills. This study should provide useful information for teachers on best practices acquired when teaching reading deficiencies. The objective was to observe reading interventions implemented in the classroom that enhance student performance and then apply best practices for reading deficiencies in the local school district.

This study requires that the researcher must access participants by attaining permission from the administration at the school district and a written letter of approval on official letterhead from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). After consent obtained from the school district, I then asked for volunteers to become involved with a reading deficiency study. I assured all volunteers of confidentiality during and after this study.

An overview of the data collection process was conducted in the form of observation and interviews with the specifics to follow. Before collecting data, the participating teachers received scores from the state to determine whether the school district scored limited or basic on a standardized reading test (these scores are known data points provided to the participants through public knowledge and reported through the state). What this means is that students are performing below proficient in reading and need ongoing reading interventions. The participants then implemented the strategies they usually apply to their reading interventions; I observed the participants as they perform those interventions, and then interview the participants of responses in general. I made sure to record the demographics of my participants such as years of teaching, and

how long the participant has taught reading. These demographics are relevant because they address the topic of the study. After observations, have been conducted; I then administered interviews with the teachers to cross reference the observations and interviews to reveal my results.

At the beginning of my study, through email, I sent the observation form and interview protocol to volunteer participants. The teachers had a few weeks to determine their standardized testing scores. At the beginning of each school year, staff members are given standardized testing results to look over from the previous year. The results indicated district and individual staff scores on how well their students performed on the standardized reading test. With these results, staff members can adjust their teaching methods to improve ratings for the next year's standardized test. After the reading teachers, have determined the area of reading difficulty they can change their teaching method to improve upon the area of concern. The participants then implemented the strategies they usually perform for reading deficiencies. The participants have already scheduled a day to observe for one, 30-minute observation in the classroom and then 1, 30-minute interview. I then took this information to cross-reference results. There was a minimum of fifteen questions for the interviewee with three subgroups (a) reflection of teacher instruction in reading (b) collaboration among colleagues (c) description of behavioral and academic needs of struggling reading students. Each interview was conducted after school hours and was not any more than 30-minutes in length.

Coding was formulated through NViro a qualitative data analysis software of participant responses directly after the observations and interviews. A member check of

validity notes shared with the participants through email. The member check determined the truthfulness of the qualitative findings through themes then report back to the participants to see if the material was precise (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The member check was completed and returned in about 3 days to go over and then return them to participants through email. Once results are analyzed members may be contacted through email for further information. Participants may want follow-up interviews to be able to comment on the findings.

Data Analysis Results

In this qualitative case study, I explored Grades 1—5 reading teachers' perceptions about using evidence-based practices to improve student reading achievement and reading teachers implementation of evidence-based practices to improve student reading achievement in the classroom. By using classroom observations and teacher interviews, I gathered rich data that assisted in making inferences based on merging data through multiple sources (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Data were recorded by using the study protocols. The method included the use of study documents. Documents included the Interview Protocol (Appendix B) and the Field Observation Form (Appendix C) to control impartiality and bias. Also, the study interviews were recorded on audiotaped recordings. Audiotaped recordings and field observation forms were typed into transcripts for analysis. The whole process included delivering and sending hard copies of teacher invites and consent forms to participants, scheduling, interviews, classroom observations, and member checking feedback.

Teacher invitations and consent forms were emailed, and hard copies were distributed to potential participants interested in participating in the study. When interested participants contacted me with their participation interest, I informed each participant about the purpose of the study and provided my contact information. At this point, I had five teachers respond with their contact information and preferred method of communication. After waiting an additional 2 weeks and without hearing from any other potential volunteers, I sent out a second email to invite teachers to participate. The response I received was that two more volunteers wanted to participate in the study. I now had seven participants for my study but would like to see if I could get more participants to volunteer. I then sent out a third and final email to try and obtain more participation with no avail. Once the teachers agreed to participate in the study, I emailed the Interview Protocol and Field Observation Form. Before conducting interviews, I picked up the signed consent forms from participants. The grade levels were represented with three first grade reading teachers, two second grade reading teachers, and two fifth grade reading teachers.

Once I received all the signed consent forms, I scheduled the teacher interviews and classroom observations. All the participants chose to use email to contact me as their preferred method of communication for any concerns or questions they may have about the study. By using email as the preferred method of contact, it made for a quick, easy, and convenient way to communicate with teachers which helped establish a good rapport with the participants. Participants were provided with a 5 week window to schedule their interview and classroom observation. Once participants responded with a time and date

of the interview and observation, each participant was issued a pseudonym. As pseudonyms were assigned based on who was on the schedule first, they were assigned R1, second R2, and so forth, that way each pseudonym becomes more random to protect the participants. Based on the need of the participant, some chose to do the interview and observation on the same day, and others chose to do the interview and observation on different days. During the process of gathering data, I made sure to accommodate each participant. Based on the extensive review of the teacher interviews and classroom observations I was able to build a thematic analysis. I used these themes to answer the research questions regarding Grades 1—5 reading teachers' perceptions about using evidence-based practices to improve student reading achievement and reading teachers' implementation of evidence-based practices to improve student reading achievement in the classroom.

Teacher Interviews

Participants scheduled their 30-minute audiotaped interview within the 5 weeks. Three participants chose separate interview and observation dates while four decided to be interviewed on the same day as their observation. Each participant was emailed the interview protocol questions before the interview so that they could be prepared for the interview questions in advance. To allow the participants privacy and to alleviate duress for the interview process each participant chose the location of where the interview would be conducted. Three teachers preferred their classroom, two teachers wanted to use the conference room, and two selected to use the library book room. I reminded the participants that the interview would be audiotaped and they all agreed with me

audiotaping the interview. I started each interview with the study question. The

interview questions were structured to guide Grades 1—5 reading teachers to discuss

their perceptions about using evidence-based practices to improve student reading

achievement. Also, teachers were asked to describe their experiences with teaching the

current reading program and any professional development they received in supporting

the reading program. A few of the questions focused on teachers experiences with

reading and how to improve it. The next couple of questions ask about any barriers they

had when teaching adequate reading resources and if they have support from the

administration for acceptable reading resources. The final questions focused on if the

reading program targets a diverse population of struggling readers and if the school

district allows implementation of their resources. Interview replies were coded into

themes and then categories that were receptive to the research question and equally

private (Patton, 2015).

   Interview findings. Interview findings were presented by theme. I uploaded

tables and typed files into the NVivo software to keep track of all data. Coding was

implemented in the NVivo software that was used for transcribing the interviews. Once

the coding information was performed in the NVivo software, I based themes on

categories of data. I noticed correlations of data when organizing types of data by

combining codes within the NVivo software. More than one idea emerged from these

categories, and I have listed them below. I recorded the central theme and then

categories under the issue as associated examples. I used interview findings to provide

reliability of data, clarity, and validity. Results and outcomes are related to the research

question: 1. What are Grades 1—5 reading teachers' perceptions about using evidence-based practices to improve student reading achievement? Table 4 provides a summary of the themes and categories derived from the research question.

Table 4

Summary of Themes and Categories derived from the Research Question

Theme	Categories	Number of Occurrences	Percentage of Occurrences
T1 Teachers perceive use of evidence-based practices (Fountas and Pinnell) implemented for, but not effective for all students.	**Preassessment**-Are preplanned by district.	7	100%
	Leveled Literacy-Curriculum levels developed through Fountas & Pinnell.	7	100%
	Intervention-Provided early to close gaps for reading failure.	7	100%
T2 Expanding teacher repertoire for evidence-based practices in reading.	**PD**-More PD training needed on strategies in reading for all learners.	7	100%
	Supplemental Instruction- Lack of reading strategies other than online.	7	100%
	Student Centered Instruction-Curriculum revolves around individual reading needs.	5	71%
	Hands on Activities-Beneficial when learning is active.	6	86%

Theme 1: Teachers Perceive Use of Evidence-based Practices (Fountas and Pinnell) Implemented for, but Not Effective, for All Students.

To address research question one, I asked participants to discuss the experiences they had with the district reading program which was based on Fountas and Pinell (2016). **Category: Preassessments.** Overall, teachers articulated that they used the critical components and understood the rationale behind the use of each component of Fountas and Pinnell (2016). Teachers also noted they understood the Fountas and Pinnell strategies were evidence-based practices (EBPs). The teachers expanded their responses by discussing the specific components used and the value observed related to the use of each component.

Assessments are performed in this district directly in planning and teaching reading lessons. All seven participants were encouraged through the district to use the literacy program called Fountas and Pinnell (2016). This supplementary reading intervention system is short term and is to assist struggling readers with improving literacy achievement (Fountas & Pinnell, 2016).

Six of the seven participants stated that it was essential to know where the students are to teach reading lessons successfully. Participant R7 specified, "I determine what level the student is performing and then focus on that level for the student to be successful." "Each diagnostic is different depending on the grade level the student is enrolled in." Participant R5 described, "Once the preassessment has been proctored I would then put the student in the appropriate learning group." Participant R3, stated, "I use the assessment results to be able to have a starting point or reading level and then

trace the progress through the standards."

Category: Leveled Literacy. Reading levels focusing on individualization by Fountas and Pinnell (2016) are used to classify which level the student should start for each grade level. Each grade level has a wide dispersal of reading skills. For example, kindergarten has a recommended instructional level of A, B, C, and D. While grade 6 has a recommended instructional level of W, X, and Y.

About leveled literacy, all seven participants start the year with an entry level test to determine what book level each student would start. Participant R6 described level literacy as "being able to decide what level the student needed to start to get what they need to be accomplished." Another participant, R4, talked specifically about the importance of level testing. She stated that students need to be able "to read at or above grade level mid-way through the year."

The participants credited their understanding of reading levels by Fountas and Pinnell (2016) to be helpful and somewhat easy to implement these evidence-based practices when working with this program. Participant R1 stated, "When I first started using this program I used some supplemental resources that assisted with the program." Another participant R3 talked particularly about how her training was important when facilitating this leveled program. She stated, "The reading teachers went on a two-day professional development to understand how the program worked."

Category: Intervention. During the interviews, the participants discussed how the school district had set goals to provide interventions for reading students who are not meeting benchmark requirements. The participants also stated that there were specific

dates throughout the year the district would want students to be performing proficiently to move to the next level in their reading. The participants then stated the goal of the district is to identify student needs and then perform intensive interventions to the struggling reader. All participants agreed that the district believes if they provide interventions early, they can close the gaps to prevent a student from falling further behind in their reading.

In particular Participant R4 believed, "I would like more time to teach basic skills at the beginning of the year for students who have lost reading skills during the summer months." Participant R2 declared, "I use interventions such as goal setting and asking students to set goals that would be easily achieved throughout the year." Another participant R6 stated, "I find ways to peak student interest on a topic." Participant R5 replied, "I use graphic organizers for the students to fill in after the instructional level book has been read to check for understanding." To allow for student processing and active engagement participant R7 indicated, "I chunk their lesson into 5 to 7-minute spurts of instruction." Participant R3 replied, "I get students up and moving by incorporating activities such as an inside-outside circle, stand-up, hand-up, pair-up." All participants indicated, although they use creative ways of incorporating reading strategies, they were unsure whether their techniques for reading interventions were working.

Theme 2: Expanding Teacher Repertoire for Evidence-based Practices in Reading

To address research question two, I asked participants to discuss the need to expand repertoire for evidence-based practices in reading.

Category: Professional Development. Professional development is ongoing throughout the school year. Once a month the teachers have a reading specialist come in and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the reading program from the month before. During the professional development discussions, the reading teachers are to report the results of their data charts the students have in their reading class. Five of the seven participants felt that they have enough training on the current reading curriculum Fountas and Pinnell (2016) which focuses on struggling reading students. In contrast, one teacher specifically stated that she felt there should be more training within the reading curriculum.

The reading curriculum from Fountas and Pinnell (2016) incorporates some writing related to the reading to improve reading comprehension for making connections. Participant R4 mentioned, "That reading and writing go hand and hand and should be a professional development to incorporate more writing skills with the reading interventions." For instance, three participants demonstrated using schema to improve comprehension. The schema was outlined as using connections related to the topic. Participant R2 verbalized, "I use schema to link together familiar ideas to a poem." Another participant R1 stated, "I use schema to practice prior knowledge while reading a passage."

Category: Supplemental Instruction. In addition to the evidence-based district-wide curriculum, all the teachers reported that they have to find additional resources to supplement the current curriculum. Participants indicated using online resources for their supplemental supply. Some of these online resources for reading were; Reading A-to-Z

printable books, Brain Pop, Raz-Kids, Spelling City, Frye sight words, edHelper, and Study Island.

Participant R1 indicated that she used learning stations: "each student will get on the computer and access Raz-kids to track their level." Another participant R2 explained, "That the students used Achieve 3000 to answer comprehension questions." Participant R5 specified, "The students use Study Island on Friday's to assist with state standards and to give the students a break from the regular activities of the week." When teaching a new concept Participant, R4 explained, "I use Brain Pop videos to introduce a new concept or genre to the students." Another Participant R7 reported using edHelper worksheets to assist with concepts, "If I need more activities to help reinforce a concept, I will print off worksheets from edHelper."

Category: Student-Centered Instruction. Student centered instruction emphasizes individualized instruction through the use of differential instruction. The leveled literacy intervention curriculum founded by Fountas and Pinnell (2016) revolves around meeting students' individual needs. The curriculum focuses on reinforcing students' current levels and assisting them in moving to the next level gradually to make gains in reading achievement. The participants confirmed that, after giving the reading assessment to determine students' reading levels, all the participants then took that information to determine the students' needs.

All participants addressed using guided reading as one of their differential instruction strategies. Guided reading is when students on the same reading level are in a

small group with the teacher leading the group. This practice is done on a daily bases until students can move to the next level in the reading curriculum.

Category: Hands-on Activities. Based on the environment and experiences students learn in different ways, and hands-on activities let minds grow. Multi-sensory exposure and hands on learning is evidence-based and a beneficial practice overall (Bulu & Pedersen, 2016). During participant interviews, six of the seven participants committed that students benefit when learning is active. Another participant referred to not having enough time to incorporate hands-on activities. The participants indicated that the events they include after the lesson reinforce the lesson and support the concepts being taught.

Participant R3 used word recognition cards, "I have the student make their cards with the word on one side and the picture on the other." Participant R6 replied, "I have the students make a string story necklace that incorporated the sequence of events about the story." Another Participant R5 said, "I have an alphabet hunt where the students find as many items in the room that represented the letter of the day…. they then put their findings in their daily journals."

Field Observations

In combination with interviewing participants, I also observed participant classrooms during a reading lesson. Participants scheduled their 30-minute reading lesson observation within the five weeks. Each participant was emailed the Field Observation Forms (Appendix C) before the observation so they could be prepared for my note taking form in advance. I reminded the participants that the observations would

be conducted in their classrooms when the participant was performing a reading lesson. The observation questions were structured to see how Grades 1—5 reading teachers are implementing evidence-based practices to improve student reading achievement in the classroom.

Field observation findings. I used a Field Observation Form (Appendix C) to collect data about the reading lesson. I coded and analyzed field observations notes by using a coding process to identify recurring reading activities among classroom observations. I coded each set of field notes by hand using process coding to classify repetitive procedures or actions among reading strategies. I associated codes with teacher repetitive procedures and measures used during the reading lessons. These actions were then grouped into patterns. By using my detailed observational notes, I noticed patterns in the teachings and then coded and organized the strategies the participants were using by how often they were used. The teachers' most repetitive procedures during the classroom observation are presented from least to most significant. Findings and outcomes are related to the study question: 2. How are Grades 1—5 reading teachers implementing evidence-based practices to improve student reading achievement in the classroom? Table 5 provides a summary of the most used strategies and the teacher pseudonym who performed the procedure.

Table 5

Summary of Teacher Most Used Strategies and Teacher Pseudonym Who Performed the Strategy

Summary of Teacher Most Used Strategies	Teacher Pseudonym Who Used the Strategy
1 Running Records	R1, R3, R4, R7
2 Whole Group	R2, R3, R4, R5, R6
3 Introducing the Text	R2, R3, R4, R5, R6
4 Give Readers the Basics	R2, R3, R4, R5, R6
5 Brief Opening Statement	R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7
6 Support Guided Reading	R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7
7 Hands-on Activities	R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7
8 Set a Purpose for Reading	R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7
9 Discussing and Revisiting the Text	R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7
10 Independent Reading	R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7

The district administrators expect the reading curriculum by Fountas and Pinnell (2016) to be used. All seven participants began their lessons by using a brief opening statement that included the state standard being taught and an "I Can" statement about the experience. Each participant talked about the book with unique aspects of the text. As the participants moved through the lesson, they would ask the question that connected the overall message or theme of the text. Participants were always reminding students about

the purpose of reading (genre, proper nouns, setting, etc.). Participants would continuously revisit the book by asking questions and having students turn back to previous pages, including vocabulary, and working with context clues. All participants concluded with independent reading and hands-on activities about the lesson taught. Five of the seven teachers used the whole group instruction at a semicircular table. These five teachers also gave the readers the basics such as the title and genre of the book and the illustrator's job. Four of the seven participants started with two students and performed a running records assessment to document student accuracy, fluency, and comprehension of a short text.

While observing R6, the students started with an instructional level B; this was an informational book. The students were learning how print works, firming up voice-print match, and developing left to right directionality. Participant R4's students were reading a level F, which is a non-fiction book. During the guided reading portion on page 85, the students were instructed to notice characteristics of text and supporting behaviors of those characters. In participant R1's classroom, the students were using instructional level X. This book was a fiction book, and the teacher focused on using note taking to write a natural conversation supported by the purpose of the reading.

Participant R1's class showed the use of several learning stations. Before each group started, R1 reviewed what the students were to do at the stations. R1 explained the computer station and that the students were to get on the website, www.dolchsightwords.org, to practice high-frequency words, to read a passage from Achieve 3000, and to answer the comprehension questions. R1 described another group

that was to work on decodable books along with spelling practice in the individual student folders. R1 explained this is the small group, teacher facilitated reading. Learning stations in the school district are used to enhance reading learning and to provide a review.

The reading strategies and procedures completed by the participants were the same. Reading instruction included higher-level thinking activities and age-appropriate strategies. Although the approach was not unique, the phenomena that were observed was the level of consistent delivery among the participants.

Discrepant Cases

During data analysis, several themes surfaced such as teachers experiences with the reading program, barriers with the reading program, and implementation of own teacher resources. One discrepant case materialized. To explain the discrepancy, I asked the teacher for a second interview to clarify why the participant felt she needed more professional development compared to the other participants who thought they did not need any. During the second interview, I asked in more detail about the barriers with the reading program, specifically those focusing on professional development. After the second interview, this case fit within the two categories of professional development and supplemental instruction. The initial meeting showed a discrepancy of professional development that this participant experienced compared to the professional development of participants who had been at this district for more than 5 years.

For example, the teachers said they have enough general professional development and professional development about the implementation of the reading

program, but they need a different kind of professional development to meet the needs of struggling readers. One teacher specified that she would like for the reading teachers to focus more on students with disabilities in professional development activity. This teacher is an established reading teacher who has been teaching for 12 years but has only been at this district for a couple of years. During the second interview, I found out that the district was going to start a district-wide initiative "Level Up" to address this need.

Evidence of Quality and Accuracy

During the conventional qualitative methods of this doctoral project study, I followed the plans for accuracy and quality. I continued to support the Walden Institutional Review Board (IRB) policy for ethical research. According to Marshall and Rossman (2016), more than one source of evidence is necessary to augment the accuracy of results. I used triangulation through multiple sources when gathering my information to cross verify the data. For example, I used both reading teacher interviews along with the data from the classroom observation to analysis my data.

I used qualitative software NVivo to transcribe the interviews to investigate themes associated with the research questions. Once I transcribed the interviews within the NVivo software and returned them to the participants to review for accuracy, I then used member checking to enhance quality by having participants review the findings by providing each participant the opportunity to discuss the findings with me. I concentrated on efficiency and quality using unbiassed narratives while recording the classroom field observations and during the audio recorded interviews (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

I analyzed reading teacher classroom observations built on the use of a standard protocol. I examined interviews created with the use of standard protocols across participants. When clarifying an original response, I asked additional questions. To further explain an initial reaction, I suggested to that participant to participate in a second interview. I consistently used a field observation and interview protocol document to increase the quality of research and to allow me to detect themes reliably.

Outcome of Results

The problem in the rural school district within the midwest United States chosen for this study is that elementary students in Grades 1—5 are not making achievement targets or goals in literacy-based interventions. It is essential to know what is happening during reading instruction related to evidence-based practices. This study addressed the problem by exploring Grades 1—5 reading teachers' perceptions about using evidence-based practices to improve student reading achievement and reading teachers implementation of evidence-based practices to improve student reading achievement in the classroom. I used thematic coding to analyze the data from participant interviews and classroom observations. I triangulated the data by using interviews and observations. Overall, the teachers indicated they know how to use what they have been given, but when those things do not work they are unsure if they are identifying and implementing other evidence-based strategies effectively. I expected and found that the teachers would want more professional development related to how to identify evidence-based reading resources and the implementation of these resources. Participants wanted professional development for additional evidence-based practices in reading because they think more

reading strategies for intervention can be effective. Furthermore, the participants wanted professional development to implement the evidence-based practices so they are more confident when teaching these reading strategies. I gathered thick, rich data from participants to answer the following research questions and to develop the project for this study. The outcomes of the findings are addressed as they relate to the study questions and are followed by a connection to Webb's depth of knowledge model (2005).

Research question 1: **What are Grades 1—5 reading teachers' perceptions about using evidence-based practices to improve student reading achievement?** Participants generally believed that students are not prepared for the independent learning that is expected of them as they move to the upper levels of school. Overall, the participants felt the district leaders should include teacher input and focus on the importance of evidence-based practices and how they effectively support student reading improvement. Research guided by Webb's depth of knowledge (2005) supports developmental teaching progression in the learning process.

Research question 2: **How are Grades 1—5 reading teachers implementing evidence-based practices to improve student reading achievement in the classroom?** Data collection indicated that the reading teachers felt that they needed more resources to supplement the current curriculum based on Fountas and Pinnell (2016). The teachers perceived they needed more professional development that supports evidence-based practices to meet the needs of struggling readers. Webb's depth of knowledge (2005) supports the evidence-based practices for this investigation of literacy. They also implied that they needed more time to teach the five basic reading skills that were lost during the

summer months at the beginning of the school year. Also, the participants expressed they require different strategies to assist students who are still struggling with reading with the current interventions in place. The findings contribute to social change by sufficiently addressing evidence-based practices to promote reading skills that are effective for struggling readers.

Each participant was well trained in the Fountas and Pinnell (2016) curriculum, and the same terminology was used in their reading instruction. The district staff are united in the methods in which they teach their reading strategies. Regardless of grade level, teachers individualize the basic components of the recommended district program of Fountas and Pinnell (2016). Participants were performing the Fountas and Pinnell (2016) curriculum which they discussed in the interviews and demonstrated in the classroom procedures during observation. No matter the grade level, the students were receiving consistent instruction throughout the reading program. Participants used consistent approaches to practice higher order of questioning for each grade level which according to Webb's depth of knowledge model (2005) is the foundation of the cognitive processes. Webb's depth of knowledge model (2005) is a framework of learning which is divided into four levels: recall, skills/concept, strategic thinking, and extended thinking. Each domain has a set of questioning that requires higher cognitive demands than the previous level. The ideology is that learning occurs in developmental stages, where each level scaffolds on the previous level and higher cognition occurs (Piaget, 1954). All four levels build upon each other to influence developing learners.

Conclusion

In this case study, I interviewed Grade 1-5 reading teachers regarding teachers' perceptions about using evidence-based practices to improve student reading achievement. Participants were protected, as outlined by the Walden Institutional Review Board guidelines, which included confidentiality, protect from harm, and informed consent (Walden, 2018). I observed Grades 1—5 reading teachers' implementation of evidence-based practices to improve student reading achievement in the classroom. Interviews and observations were coded to analyze themes and categories related to teachers' perceptions about using evidence-based practices to improve student reading achievement.

In section 3, this study provided insight into Grades 1—5 reading teachers' perceptions about using evidence-based practices to improve student reading achievement and reading teachers implementation of evidence-based practices to improve student reading achievement in the classroom. I used these results to design a project that was founded on my consideration of the teachers in the local setting. I established the plan for this study on the explicit needs of the local reading teachers, including professional development related to evidence-based reading resources, to evidence-based reading resource identification, and to the implementation of these resources.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

Section 3 provides an examination of the study project. Based on research findings, I created a professional development with specific activities as the project (see Appendix A). This section includes the rationale for choosing this specific project genre. A review of the literature is provided related to professional development as a means of change. A project description and evaluation plan are expressed. Finally, the project implications are defined reviewing the possibility of encouraging social change.

Based on the case study findings, teachers established they have a reading intervention curriculum in place that is beneficial; however, the reading teachers felt they needed more resources and different strategies to supplement the current curriculum. The reading teachers were concerned with increasing student reading achievement with supplemental resources, different strategies, and finding time to teach these skills. This professional development project was designed to address the concerns of the local rural school district elementary reading teachers in Grades 1—5 related to supplemental reading resources, different reading strategies, and the time constraints within the current curriculum.

Rationale

Four genre options were provided for project selections: a policy recommendation, curriculum plan, evaluation report, and professional development. The case study conducted identified reading teacher resources as a significant factor that influences students' reading achievement. Understanding the perceptions and

experiences of reading teachers can assist administrators in addressing the needs for more specific evidence-based resources and reading strategies. Based on the findings of the case study, professional development was the best genre to support the existing curriculum and to improve reading teachers' abilities to make better selections related to evidence-based resources and reading strategies.

A policy recommendation is to inform practice that elicits effective changes to increase student achievement. Characteristics of policy recommendations include the background of existing policy or problem and a summary of analysis and findings. It also presents core evidence from both literature and research that outlines recommendations that connect to the suggestions. Because I was recommending more strategies with reading resources, a policy recommendation was not appropriate for the project.

A curriculum plan project is the authentic expansion of a curriculum. A plan features the purpose, level, learners, scope, and the sequence besides the materials, units, and lessons in detail. These lessons include objectives, activities, assessments, and evaluations. Because I was advocating more professional learning, a curriculum plan is not a suitable project.

An evaluation report is a genre suitable for an evaluation study. The report addresses the local needs and associated with program evaluation ideals. It also includes the main outcomes, the criteria, and the purpose of the evaluation. Because the goal of this study was not to evaluate a program but investigate teachers' perceptions on using reading resources, an evaluation report is not a proper project. The goal of professional development is to expand instruction to progress student learning.

Professional development is the appropriate genre for this project because the goal is to investigate teachers' perceptions on using reading resources implemented to improve students' reading difficulties. Therefore, distinctive characteristics of professional development are specialized training intended for the reading teachers to set goals, strategies, and outcomes of their learning (Easton, 2016). Professional development that focuses on developing a common definition, including the influence of evidence-based reading resources and strategies, can assist teachers in the beginning to consistently teach reading skills to their students with reading deficiency (D'Agostino, Rodgers, Harmey, & Brownfield, 2016). The benefits of professional development may be the following: increased retention, greater confidence, credibility, improved productivity, sequenced planning easier for reading teachers. The findings of this study are addressed through the content of this professional development workshop.

Review of the Literature

The literature review that follows separates into three segments. In the first segment, I review the recent literature related to professional development and how the professional development will address the local problem. In the second segment, I examine recent evidence-based reading strategies supplemented with the current curriculum. In the third segment, I discuss how the reading strategies support the theory related to Webb's depth of knowledge. Investigation of the existing research in these areas was significant in developing an evidence-based project for this study.

The project literature review was conducted using search words related to professional development in education, reading curriculum, connecting practice to theory,

and reading strategies. Search engines consisted of broad investigation in educational research databases from the Walden Library that included ProQuest publications, ERIC, SAGE publications, Google Scholar, and EBSCO Host. Search foundations included peer-reviewed, full text, and original articles from the last five years.

Professional Development

Professional development (PD) training is based on different theories on how teachers learn. PD programs foster learning according to their underlying methods of action. Evidence-based exercises can positively influence academic achievement (Browell et al., 2017; Hardin & Koppenhaver, 2016; Karabay, Kusdemir, & Isik, 2015; Kennedy, 2016; Lipp & Helfrich, 2016; MacPhee & Sanden, 2016; Wood, Goodnight, Bethune, Preston, & Cleaver, 2016). Teachers participate in PD to foster improvements in their teaching. Data-driven decisions for PD training can have far more success when the effects result in student achievement (Browell et al., 2017). However, the PD training used to assist in presenting differ in their effectiveness. Research and experience assist in identifying high-quality ongoing PD that broadens teachers' pedagogical skills and content knowledge (Kennedy, 2016). PD provides collaborative, sustained, job-embedded practices to reflect upon and incorporate into the teachers own practice. PD is especially important in reading because it is the foundation ensuring that all kids become proficient readers (Wood et al., 2016). PDs are established to improve teacher performance and to accomplish goals and objectives within the district. Hardin and Koppenhaver (2016) discussed the PD activities must be created on scientifically based research and should include instructional strategies, materials, and approaches that align

with performance and state standards. If research supports PD initiatives, results should be applied. This case study is about teacher perceptions about using resources to teach reading. The findings were that teachers need more resources to supplement the current curriculum and require different reading strategies to assist students who are still struggling with reading.

Professional development is often used to tackle specific educational needs. PD can address the needs of the teachers at this rural school district in introducing supplemental resources to be used in congruence with the current curriculum. To solve the local problem, this PD incorporates the additional reading strategies that will work cooperatively with the current reading curriculum that may enable students to be successful in reading classes. According to Wood et al. (2016), evidence-based practices have shown that teachers are taught methods to use during PD training that demonstrates effectiveness in the classroom. Teachers want to support students with disabilities and at risk by improving their instruction through PD training (Karabay et al., 2015). The purpose of the PD training is to support teachers with supplemental reading strategies within their classrooms.

Reading Strategies

Reading material can be challenging and complicated if the content is unfamiliar. Effective reading strategies are essential to improve reading and learning from text (McNamara, 2017). Deep comprehension of sentences allow the reader to identify the plot, the different characters, genre, the author's attitude, and story point of view. Many strategies can be used to assist with teaching any of the five elements of reading

(D'Agostino et al., 2016). One of the five aspects of reading is comprehension. The reading element comprehension can use strategies such as; sticky notes, sentence frames, chunking, interactive notetaking, oral presentation, and sentence starters. Another reading element used in PD training is vocabulary. Vocabulary strategies can include highlighting, paired reading, picture choices, and rubric. Students can highlight while reading a passage to assist with the new vocabulary words. Pair reading is a strategy that is used when students can work together in pairs to identify an unknown vocabulary word. During picture choice, a student can use their picture by the vocabulary word to aid them when remembering the word. Rubrics are used for students while following along in the passage to assist them with the meaning of the vocabulary word while reading. The last component of reading discussed during the PD training is informational text. Strategies that support informational text is visual aids, reading prompts, interactive note taking, partner reading, open notes. Teaching reading strategies to struggling readers may increase comprehension, build vocabulary, and expand the ability for students to understand difficult text (McNamara, 2017). Active professional development in reading skills is supported in the desires of the local teachers. Teachers are more likely to make changes to their teaching practices when professional development training is relevant (MacPhee, & Sanden, 2016; Wood et al., 2016). The current study focused on how reading teachers can benefit from supplemental reading strategies through professional development training.

Strategies for comprehension. The teachers have the most difficulty with providing practical strategies to increase student reading skills. Teachers want students to

be successful in reading-related instruction. The primary purpose of all reading related

academics is to assist students in understanding passages. Teaching comprehension

instruction strategies can be explained with explicit instruction. Explicit instruction is

associated to effective teaching practices. The reader can build comprehension through

inferring, predicting, and answering questions during reading. According to Alharbi

(2015), cooperative learning instruction may be used to teach reading comprehension.

Cooperative learning is used for students with or without reading disabilities to increase

academic achievement. Cooperative learning is a strategy used when a small group of

students work together on a task. Cooperative learning instruction includes direct

explanation, modeling, guided practice, and application. The first strategy is an

immediate explanation. A straightforward explanation is when the teacher is directly

explaining when to apply the strategy and why the comprehension strategy benefits

comprehension. The next approach is modeling. Modeling is when the teacher is

exhibiting the plan used while reading out loud the reading passage. The third strategy is

guided practice. Guided practice is when the teacher supports students when and how to

apply the strategy as they learn. The final approach is an application. An application is

when the teacher practices the strategy with the students until they can use the procedure

independently.

Comprehension instructional strategies assist students in becoming active,

purposeful readers who are in control of their reading. Meniado's (2016) research used

six evidence-based strategies for improving passage comprehension. The six evidence-

based strategies to improve reading comprehension are monitoring comprehension,

graphic organizers, metacognition, recognizing story structure, answering questions, and summarizing (Meniado, 2016).

Monitoring comprehension is a strategy to fix problems in understanding as they arise. Researchers indicated when using these strategies during the primary years, students can monitor their comprehension (D'Agostino et al., 2016). Related procedures are story maps, think-alouds, and summarizing a passage. Monitoring comprehension teaches students to identify what they are confused. It also will bring attention to what they do comprehend and resolve problems by using the appropriate strategies.

Metacognition strategies are used to have control over and think about reading. Students would have control over reading before they start by asking what the purpose of the text is. Researchers explained when students are learning; they monitor understanding by adjusting how fast they are reading and when students are finished reading, they can check their reading by reflecting on what they read (MacPhee & Sanden, 2016). Comprehension monitoring strategies to watch for are the following: where did the struggle identifying understanding occur, restate the passage by using your own words, what was the complication with the text, look forward in the passage, or look back through the passage to resolve the trouble.

While illustrating models in a text, a graphic organizer used. Graphic organizers are used in showing relationships of one concept to another. Graphic organizers assist students when writing a summary about the text. They also support differences between nonfiction and fiction text structure. Some examples of graphic organizers illustrated and

used in research are story maps, Venn-diagrams, cause and effect, storyboards and chain of events (Gurses & Bouvet, 2016).

Answering questions is another comprehension strategy that can be used effectively. Answering questions assists students to focus on monitoring their purpose for reading. It also promotes students to review what they know versus what they learned. Meniado (2016) used four different types of questions in his research. The first type of question is one that probes for the student's prior knowledge. Another kind of enquiry is a think and search question. This type of enquiry is where students have to go back into their reading to find the answer. The third type of question is in the passage question. An in the passage question is when the student can find the answer which is located right in the text. The last kind of question is called "own your own" in which students have to use their own experiences and prior knowledge to answer the questions.

Recognizing story structure is essential for comprehension strategies. When using story structure, students learn characters, settings, events, problems, and resolutions (McElvain, 2016). Story maps may assist students to recognize the story structure.

Summarizing is another comprehension strategy. This strategy requires students to determine what happened in the story by using their own words. According to Alharbi (2015) summarizing a story supports students by remembering what they read and connecting the central ideas back to the primary purpose of the text. Vocabulary is another comprehension strategy.

Strategies for vocabulary. Students who possess extensive knowledge of vocabulary are likely to understand comprehension mainly because they know the

meaning of the words contained in the reading passage (Wright & Cevetti, 2016).

According to Diaz (2015), vocabulary knowledge continues to develop throughout one's

entire life. Key concepts are reading words through understanding while incorporating

vocabulary into writing and speaking. A child learns to talk through listening to indirect

vocabulary. Vocabulary awareness varies among learning students. Diaz suggested that

there are two vocabulary stages: incidental and intentional. During the incidental

vocabulary stage, vocabulary may be learned through indirect exposure. While the

intentional vocabulary stage refers to vocabulary instruction, Diaz implied that students

should be provided with multiple and repetitive exposures to vocabulary in rich contexts.

Intentional vocabulary includes using wordplay activities to engage students in studying

new words. Another deliberate vocabulary concept is using specific words to support the

reading passages taught. The final intentional vocabulary strategy is teaching students

multiple strategies that they can use while they are independently reading.

Researcher supported vocabulary strategies can engage students to think about

relationships among words, about word meanings, and about how words are used in

different situations (Bjork & Kroll, 2015; Diaz, 2015; Feng, 2015; Naeimi & Chow Voon

Foo, 2015). Independent word learning strategies are taught by using a wide range of

activities. When influencing vocabulary strategies, teachers should include in-depth, rich

instruction. Vocabulary strategies include student-friendly definitions, using context

clues, defining the word within the context, analyzing word parts, and using concept

mapping.

Student-friendly definitions should be explained to students before students are asked to provide a dictionary definition. According to Naeimi and Chow Voon Foo (2015), there are two principles followed when explaining definitions to students. The first principle is to characterize the word in its typical usage. The next principle is to describe the word in everyday language.

Context clues are a familiar concept used by Bjork and Kroll (2015), who showed that looking at the meaning of a word will infer the meaning inside the immediate text passage. Bjork and Kroll presented vocabulary growth in long term goals when developing student capability to use context clues. Researchers trust that even a small improvement will result in long-term vocabulary growth (Bjork & Kroll, 2015).

Feng (2015) rationalized defining the word within the text in an easy to understand explanation. When the word was introduced this way knowledge of the term is improved. The most effective approach to assist with comprehension is to get the meaning of the word at the time the word was introduced while reading the passage.

Analyzing word parts is defined as applying the target words to other word meaning to understand the concept of the word (Naeimi & Chow Voon Foo, 2015). This strategy deals with knowing the meanings of affixes, prefixes, suffixes and root words. If students can understand and make sense of the word parts by using the affixes, they are more likely able to define the word meaning. When instructing word parts teachers teach by using the beginning, middle, and end of the word (Naeimi & Chow Voon Foo, 2015).

When using concept mapping with vocabulary, students may be assisted in connecting with these words and increasing their vocabulary skills (Feng, 2015).

According to Feng's (2015) example, the vocabulary word was placed in the middle of the concept map. Then the students had to demonstrate understanding of the vocabulary word by using the word in a sentence, writing the word as an antonym and synonym, and then draw a picture of something that would remind them of the word.

Reading strategies guided by Webb's depth of knowledge model (2005).

Webb (2005) described an educational objective that connects student's prior knowledge when using comprehensive forms of thinking in order to produce an idea that describes the foundational levels of higher order of thinking skills (Duesbery & Justice, 2015; McPherson & Panero, 2016; Murphy & Haller, 2015; Reiska, Soika, Mollits, Rannikmac, & Soobard, 2015; Sforza, Kim, & Tienken, 2016). With these ideas emerge the context in which a higher depth of thinking is required for each level of the hierarchy. According to Reiska et al. (2015), a learner who remains at Webb's Level 1 and 2 is at risk since this is the recall and application level and only a basic level of thinking. Thinking should not stop at the recall and application levels. Higher order thinking should move through Level 3 and 4 to the more experienced levels as we build upon our prior knowledge (Reiska et al., 2015). In the four levels of Webb's framework, Webb describes a certain type of thinking and demonstrates the connection to complex mental awareness.

Webb's depth of knowledge attributes keywords for each content area. The higher the metal complexity of a strategy the more creative thinking is inserted in it (McPherson & Panero, 2016). Higher order thinking skills have become essential when teaching students to think analytically. Learning standards have long emphasized higher

order thinking skills and are crucial when using evidence-based reading strategies in making sure these skills are learned. When incorporating Webb's depth of knowledge to reading, there are strategies associated with each level.

In Webb's level 1, students are required to use simple skills or recite facts. According to Duesbery and Justice (2015) they used basic comprehension with oral reading strategies to ask questions verbatim recall and questioning strategies. In this study, Duesbery and Justice also used specific details from the text for students to recall specific reading comprehension strategies. During this activity, the researchers used an activity for students to copy notes and brainstorm basic ideas and write facts from memory. Level 2 of Webb's theory is a slightly higher level of thinking.

In Level 2 of Webb's depth of knowledge, it involves mental processing that goes beyond memory. It requires subsequent administration and comprehension of text. Questions at this level might include explaining or summarizing the evidence of the text. According to research performed by Sforza et al. (2016), they used reading strategies like fact and opinion. Sforza et al. used a graphic organizer during a reading lesson to decide if the story the students were reading was a fact or an opinion. In the study, the researchers wanted the students to stress the main idea of the text. The next level in Webb's depth of knowledge is Level 3.

There is a greater emphasis on knowledge in Webb's Level 3. Students are encouraged to make more in-depth connections with understanding ideas. Level 3 also involves planning and reasoning strategies to interpret and support their conclusions of a text. Murphy and Haller (2015) suggested using questioning that involved abstract

thinking skills. To form a generalization of a text, Murphy and Haller asked students to support their conclusion by inferring what would happen next. The students would have to support their inference with prior knowledge to assist with connecting beyond the text. Once students accomplished Level 3, they could move on to a more advanced higher level of thinking in Webb's Level 4.

Higher order thinking and deep understanding are necessary at Webb's Level 4. Divergent thinking and conceptual knowledge are essential at this standard of the level. Students are asked to support and create original inferences and explanations at this level. In research by McPherson and Panero (2016) students were asked to take the information they learned about the Constitution and develop new ideas about the Constitution. Once the students made connections among the text, they were to analyze and hypothesis what it would be like if parts of the Constitution were missing. After the researchers employed this strategy, the students wrote an informational paper to support their inferences about their thoughts. McPherson and Panero explained that the students had difficulty in Level 4 of Webb's depth of knowledge and suggested the students needed more scaffolding in the future.

Project Description

The study project is a 3-day professional development to disseminate research findings that identify supplemental reading strategies for teacher best practices. On the first day of professional development, I will include more evidence-based reading resources. I will help the teachers in identifying evidence-based practices and provide them with a plethora of evidence-based practices for their personal toolkits. Also,

provide website and resources for their independent research to further their learning and share during campus professional learning meetings. Day two will focus on teachers developing lesson plans which they could use for specific selected evidence-based practices. On the final day, teachers will model the evidence-based practices for their colleagues providing their resources and a copy of the lesson plan. By identifying and implementing evidence-based reading resources, this project will facilitate the teachers' need to better address the problem that elementary students in Grades 1—5 are not making achievement targets or goals in literacy-based interventions. The goal of this professional development is to identify evidence-based practices for teachers, design lessons on how to use them and match them with the condition in which they might use the evidence-based practices, and demonstrate or model the evidence-based practices for their colleagues. Professional development of this significance could ultimately improve reading teachers' evidence-based practices supported by research to make better selections in their practice.

Potential Resources and Existing Supports

To successfully implement the proposed project in the local elementary school it will be imperative to consider and apply current supports and resources. Administrators support reading teachers at this school by listening to what they need to be successful in their content. The district-wide initiative is to encourage students to be successful through their learning careers. The proposed project should be well received since the administrators already focus on improving student achievement.

The elementary school has ongoing weekly department meetings and monthly professional development meetings. The curriculum director leads the conferences at the district. Since these meeting times are scheduled into the districts monthly plan, it is recommended that the teams incorporate training related to evidence-based reading resources and strategies. Given the needs of the local reading teachers for more professional development linked to evidence-based reading resources, how to identify evidence-based reading resources and the implementation of these resources, they may be receptive to participate in evidence-based professional development.

Another potential support at the local school is experienced teachers who can support the reading teachers. One need the participants reported was the lack of a plethora of strategies to use with struggling readers. Through collaboration discussions, teachers help one another as role models or leaders for other teachers during professional development activities. Using the multitude of experiences these teachers can support collaborative discussions during professional development.

Potential Barriers

The project for this study was aimed to assist the needs communicated by the participating reading teachers. Considering that the whole population of teachers at this elementary school did not interview, it is possible that some teachers may not feel that they need to learn how to identify evidence-based reading resources and the implementation of these resources. To overcome the potential barriers, the beginning of the professional development will review the importance of reading resources and strategies to supplement the current curriculum.

Another potential barrier is that reading teachers may feel additional pressures beyond the need to address supplemental reading resources and reading strategies. Currently, reading teachers at this elementary school are faced with the implementation of state standards. Teachers are being assessed based on student's year's growth towards the state standards. Teachers may feel these pressures of curriculum specific instruction rather than teaching supplemental reading strategies to suppress potential barrier. Collaborative, evidence-based professional development will concentrate on how teachers can enrich their curriculum specific instruction, by integrating supplemental reading strategies into everyday exercises.

Proposal for Implementation and Timetable

When implementing this project, the first step is to discuss the research findings with the administrators. While presenting the findings, I will provide the administrators with a hard copy of the PowerPoint that summarizes the results and suggestions. I will also include a summary of the literature review which supports supplemental reading strategies that encourage teachers to make better selections in their practice. Once administrators are provided with the basis and outcomes of the study, we will discuss the most appropriate way to conduct the professional development training to exhibit the best possible outcome for supplemental reading strategies to support the current curriculum.

Next, I will plan with the curriculum director a good time and date to implement the 3-day professional development. Currently, the district has the curriculum director decide on the dates and time to conduct professional development activities. By collaborating on a date and time with the curriculum director, I will ensure to provide the

training during days that do not conflict with other events scheduled during the school

year.

Once I have scheduled the time and date for the professional development

training, I will work with the curriculum director to make sure that it would be okay if I

deliver the professional development training or if they want someone else to deliver the

training. I will explain to the curriculum director that I would prefer to deliver the

training since I was the one who initially planned the professional development, but will

not dispute it if someone else would like to provide the training. We will work together

to make sure that the exercise will be most useful to the teachers at the district.

The professional development training will be taught on three separate days.

These training sessions are currently performed once a month. Educators and

administration attend professional development as a whole group once a month on the

second Wednesday of the month. Working together as a group will assist with

supplemental reading strategies taught across all academic classes.

Roles and Responsibilities of Student and Others

To implement this project successfully the teachers, the curriculum director, the

administrators, and I will need to work collaboratively. Everyone involved will need to

work together to ensure the project is fully supported, professionally delivered, and

planned carefully.

The teachers will be responsible for making sure to attend all the professional

development training, teaching a supplemental reading strategy, and completing a

valuable survey. Teachers will also be expected to participate in professional

development training by joining in the discussion and sharing their familiarity with teaching supplemental reading strategies.

The curriculum director will work with me to collaborate on the most suitable time and date for delivering professional development training. Then, we will collaboratively decide if I will distribute the professional development or if someone of their choosing will distribute the practice. Lastly, I will make sure that the curriculum director will have the proper equipment such as a projector and chrome books needed for the professional development training.

The administrators will be responsible for meeting with me to discuss the research results and the significance of this project. It is imperative to have their full support for the project so that they can convey to the teachers how this professional development training will contribute to the needs of the students. Occasionally teachers will not attend professional development training for one reason or another. The administrators will be responsible for encouraging all staff to participate in the entire 3-day professional development training.

My responsibilities in this project involve creating the professional development training, giving a hard copy of the PowerPoint that summarizes the results with suggestions to administrators and meeting with the curriculum director to schedule the dates to dispense the professional development training. I will collaboratively decide with the curriculum director if they want me or someone else to deliver the professional development training. Finally, at the end of the professional development training, I will

summarize the surveys and present the results to the curriculum director and administrators.

Project Evaluation Plan

At the end of the 3-day professional development training, teachers will be asked to fill out a survey that will be anonymous to evaluate the training. This study addresses the goals of professional development and if the goal achieved a satisfying outcome. A Likert scale will be used to ask several questions. Here are some examples: (a) Was experience valuable; (b) Were their interests and opinions valued in the experience; (c) Can you apply what you learned (d) Was the presentation facilitated in a clear and understandable way; (e) Would you repeat the experience and recommend it to a colleague; (f) and Did the experience leave you excited about trying new things. Open-ended questions will also be built-in for teachers to provide remarks regarding what they learned and which part of the experience they felt were more or less engaging. The survey is on a link on a form included in Appendix A.

The surveys will be used to determine if the teachers thought the professional development training was useful to help benefit best practices. The survey results will be shared with the curriculum director and administrators. The surveys will be anonymous so that the teachers can express their thoughts about the weaknesses and strengths of professional development training. Through collaborative endeavors, the teachers' requests will be valued and focused between the curriculum director, administrators, and me.

Project Implications

Local Community

The professional development training is vital to the local community because it provides essential reading strategies to the continuing difficulty for failure in reading. It includes reading strategies to point the district in the right direction with proficient literacy outcomes. The growth in focusing on reading strategies may see an increase in reading skills for students with reading disabilities. At the local level, students may be able to surpass the state standardized test that would influence the districts yearly improvement. The achievement of every student considers the school's performance and closing this achievement gap will assist students, teachers, and administrators in the local school district.

Far-Reaching

The implications of social change are far-reaching. Being able to read is vital for life skills and school. Reading at a steady level can promote lifelong learners, encourage problem-solving skills, and raise critical thinking skills. In the broader context, literacy performance at the local level can exceed proficiency starting at the state and moving up to the federal standards. Reading at a proficient level can ultimately boost the U. S. ratings internationally on academic performance. Lastly, the goal is to improve student reading skills while making them productive citizens.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Project Strengths and Limitations

The main strength of this project was that it was grounded in the literature review and articulated by the needs stated by the reading teaches at the rural school district. By reviewing the literature, I discovered that supplemental reading resources are critical to improving students' reading difficulties, that the teachers lack evidence-based additional reading resources, and that teachers seldom have time to research supplemental reading strategies. I based the teacher observations and interview protocol on the findings of the primary literature review. Because of this, I was able to use the data collected to design evidence-based professional development training to address the reading problem at the local school district.

Another strength of the project was the creation of professional development. The professional development used, evidence-based reading strategies to address student reading failures (D'Agostino et al., 2016). The project provides a chance to employ best practices to address the need for additional reading resources that can encourage achievement past the local level and influence national level results (D'Agostino et al., 2016). Realizing the importance to improve students' reading difficulties is a strength of this project, teachers will understand the value of the additional reading resources to increase academic achievement.

Project limitations extend from teachers reporting difficulty in getting more things done in a small amount of time. The fact that this professional development gives

resources to incorporate reading strategies into core academic subjects may increase the number of teachers who apply these strategies into their lesson planning. Therefore, I based the professional development training on the results of the needs specified by the reading teaches at the rural school district.

Another limitation of this project may be that teachers feel more pressure in the 21st-century requirements from state and local governments for every student to master the standards at their learning level. Even though this professional development was intended to provide provisions through supplemental reading strategies, collaboration among colleagues, and tools to access these strategies, teachers may feel this is too challenging to implement the additional reading strategies into their teaching. Therefore, without the support from stakeholders, teachers may not want to apply the reading strategies.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

The professional development provides teachers with support in regard to reading strategies, but there are always other ways that could be better to address the problem. One potential approach to the problem would be to provide professional development with an online, autonomous learning presentation. With technology being more and more in the forefront of learning, teachers could observe videos, read the segments, and work together with their colleagues on the college blackboard website. Teachers would most likely appreciate the option of completing an online training at their leisure since most teachers are overwhelmed with their teaching demands and planning their lessons. This

online training may be an alternative for a continuation professional development activity associated with supplemental reading strategies.

Another alternative approach would be to find teachers in the local school district who already teach supplemental reading strategies and encourage them to consider being an expert on the matter. When peer teachers work together, they benefit from one another in learning new skills from someone who is an expert in the field. These local experts are leading discussions and acting as a mentor for other teachers. Then the target of learning becomes a collective obligation by all stakeholders.

Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change

Scholarship is an essential characteristic of any research study. Scholarship speaks to the audience in a specific academic type. Scholarship supports a basic structure through language, tone, and voice in which a research study should be organized. More aspects of scholarship include accurate focus and writing on the study goals. Research studies use a consistent format, like the scientific method used in quantitative and qualitative research. This research format assists with presenting data in sequential order and an organized structure. For example, the components used in a research study include an abstract, the problem, significance of the study, the research questions, the review of the literature, data collection, and the conclusion of the study based on the results. By preparing a project based on my findings, I can validate my research.

Project Development and Evaluation

It is imperative to let research results guide the project development as a way to distribute outcomes. Outcomes and findings can be unpredictable, so it is essential to

accept the findings as they appear and not influence the data to be a certain way at the end of the research. It is only at the end of the study that the project type could be recognized. It took several rounds of imputing data into NVivo to determine the correct classifications that would progress into the themes. Project development took time and effort to make sure to incorporate the many insights and perspective that were possible.

Thoroughly assessing any problem before developing the solution has educated me through the development of this project. I learned through the development of this project that there should be a process and that process must be finished in sequential order. First, I decided on the problem and provided evidence of the problem. Next, I gathered information regarding current research that considered the appropriate information regarding the problem. Then I took the information that I acquired through my research and implemented it into the project. The final process will be evaluating the outcomes of the project.

Leadership and Change

While completing this doctoral project study, I learned that leadership is a skill that is developing continuously. When talking with the administrator to request permission to conduct this study I had to use my leadership skills. I had to justify the need and identify the problem by defending the necessity for the research in the district. Classically, the administrator will address the faculty with the problem and the need for professional development. In my situation, I had to use my leadership skills to approach the administrator with the request for the needed professional development that was identified in my study.

Instructive stakeholders should supervise school achievement. Change is occurring in society at a rapid pace. I learned that change is a necessity and can be somewhat uncomfortable at times. More and more technology is emerging and being used in the classroom. To keep updated in the 21st-century, educators must stay informed with new practices and adapt to the current evidence-based strategies. To prepare students for future success, educators must be engaging and innovating. Case studies can be used to identify evidence-based practices in guiding student learning. Boyd (2016) maintained that leadership is significant in guiding educators in using best practices when improving student results. Even though the administrator may require advice for a change, the teacher is the expert when it comes to what the students need to be successful.

Analysis of Self as Scholar

As a scholar, I have increased my knowledge of personal growth and learning. Personal change is not a one-step process but a several year voyage. The evolution of my personal goals is to obtain my doctorate in administration. My main focus was in literacy achievement for everyone involved for the success of our students. Through this emphasis on the designed problem, I may assist teachers with educational outcomes for best practices. Personal learning involves understanding that scholarly research is orderly and analytical exercise. As a scholar-practitioner, I feel a sense of fulfillment with the capability to perform research and come to a deduction that could enrich teaching.

Analysis of Self as Practitioner

As a practitioner, leading a case study research delivered a great deal of knowledge for me. Gaining insight into how literature reviews occur amongst other experts in the field was exhilarating. I was able to link theory to practice. The conceptual framework established the foundation of my study and formed a basis upon which higher order of thinking skills can be built (Webb, 2005). It is evident in the findings that Webb's (2005) concepts are still valid, as each grade level developed on learning it builds upon the previous level. The positive outcome of my study led to the project used and promoted in the form of professional development training. Positive social change was created to support student achievement, and that was my goal as a practitioner.

Analysis of Self as Project Developer

As a project developer, it was essential to make a significant influence. The stability for professional development was to connect the evidence to practice. To achieve the purpose of leading this case study, I was able to support my case study findings to influence practice that is used currently in the literature. As a result of my professional development, I was able to see outcomes that improve reading strategies, and that is the ultimate desire as a project developer. A residual effect would include becoming a passing district on the reading state assessment and making adequate yearly progress. By conducting this professional development project, the results generate far-reaching implications that could encourage positive social change for years to come at the local district and beyond.

Reflection on Importance of the Work

This study is important because there is an identified gap in reading achievement. In life, literacy is in academics and promotes learning success. An individual's quality of life can have far-reaching effects when acquiring reading achievement. In the U. S., the regression and deficiency of literacy is a severe problem. Literacy can lay the foundation for a higher level of learning across the curriculum (Webb, 2005). For this study, I chose to focus on teachers' perceptions about using evidence-based practices to improve student reading achievement. In the area of literacy, researchers have documented a positive impact on using reading strategies to help with reading difficulties.

My learning process has grown in many areas. I have learned the difference between qualitative and quantitative research and the sections of both. Also, I have learned how to develop a project in the form of professional development training. Finally, I will continue to gain knowledge in research and use these skills to improve my work in my qualified occupation.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

Implications for this case study are that reading strategies may increase reading achievement (McNamara, 2017) and that teachers need more access to supplemental reading strategies (Diaz, 2015). This project has the potential to influence the education of elementary students in general. The results of the study confirmed that the local teachers have been rarely provided with supplemental reading strategies to assist with the current curriculum. Centered on the analysis of the research and the data explored during

the study, I devised a professional development project to address the needs of the local teachers.

Applications of best practices identified through the case study findings are applied to the professional development training and benefit the needs of the local district experiencing insufficient supplemental reading strategies. Teachers may be motivated to use strategies with the current curriculum presented to them in professional development training. When supporting students with reading difficulties, teachers may be able to close the reading achievement gap and bring their state testing scores up to proficient.

The resulting professional development and current research may be valuable for other schools. Future professional development could likely assist other teachers in combining new reading strategies with the curriculum that they already have in place. This professional development could potentially help other school districts to improve reading achievement by using the prescribed supplemental reading strategies.

Future research can continue to refine literacy learning and combine this with new reading strategies. Current research can be continually analyzed along with issues that influence reading deficiencies. Educators can continue to find ways to impact society with new technology and innovative ways to teach reading strategies. By supporting reading strategies across the curriculum, this can affect student possibilities and the next initiation of learners.

In the future, research should continue to address reading strategies that are taught during professional development. More information is needed regarding the outcome of teaching reading strategies during professional development experiences. Another

possibility for meeting the needs of students with reading deficiency is more research regarding professional development that is focused on how teachers can easily demonstrate reading strategies along with the current curriculum.

Conclusion

Literacy achievement is essential and involves academics throughout content bands. Reading achievement can have far-reading consequences. Reading teachers in the local district expressed a need for more reading strategies to go along the current curriculum. The teachers also expressed an interest in explicitly teaching these strategies throughout academic contents. When teachers are provided with the tools to effectively teach reading, they will be able to support students who are below proficient in their reading skills. Through cooperative actions and data motivated initiatives, teachers can construct an environment for positive change in the area of reading achievement.

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Appendix A: The Project

Reading Strategies

Purpose: This collaborative, inquiry-based professional development was created to address the needs of the local school district reading teachers regarding ways to increase student reading skills by using supplemental reading strategies during daily practice. The purpose of this professional development is to provide teachers with evidence-based information about supplemental reading strategies, practice in teaching these reading strategies, and time to reflect on and discuss how they can successfully teach these skills.

Learning Outcome: The learning outcome were developed based on the expressed needs of the local school district reading teachers. This professional development is designed to accomplish the following learning outcomes:

1. Develop common reading strategies across core academic classes.
2. Increase teacher knowledge of different strategies to teach during core academic classes.
3. Engage in collaborative, evidence-based learning experiences.

Target Audience: This professional development was created to address the needs of general and reading teachers at the school district.

Timeline: This professional development will consist of three, 6-hour sessions. Teachers will meet once a month during regularly scheduled professional development.

Format: This professional development will be structured as a collaborative, inquiry-based learning experience. Teachers will receive informative instruction supported by PowerPoints. They will also engage in collaborative discussions and variation of investigation.

Evaluation: Teachers will be expected to complete an anonymous evaluation survey at the end of the last professional development session.

Day 1: How to Apply Reading Strategies

2018-2019 school year

Audience

- Teachers Grade 1-5
- Administration
- Support personnel

Goal

How to acquire information, concepts and ideas to communicate in a variety of formats.

How to apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections.

How to apply Reading Strategies to improve understanding.

Materials

- Chrome book
- Paper
- Pencil
- KWL chart
- BINGO board
- Reading Planning Tool

Day 1 Agenda

Getting to know colleagues BINGO game activity.

KWL chart-Reading Strategies: What reading strategies have you used.

Overview of Reading Groups

- o Station 1-Read and Comprehension Literature
    - Teach Engagement-After reading a lesson: have students draw their own inference about the main character.
    - Teach Representation-use sticky notes during reading to help transfer and connect ideas between text.
    - Teach Expression-create an extemporaneous story circle time. Begin telling the story then have student add their own line.

Day 1 Agenda

- Station 2-Word Meaning
- Teach Engagement-Students work together to determine the context clues in the text and highlight as they go along.
- Teach Representation-Teacher can highlight key information in the text and provide graphic organizers highlighted in corresponding colors for the student to record information.
- Teach Expression-Students read short paragraphs on cards and try to figure our the meaning of a designated word using context clues.

Day 1 Agenda

- Station 3-Identify the main purpose of the text.
- Teach Engagement-Allow students to choose preferred text to work with, or complete a group brainstorm of possible topics.
- Teach Representation-Use guided questions to help students notice features of an overarching concept rather than specific procedural task (How does your narrative sound when you read it aloud?)
- Teach Expression-Provide an example of a few sentences written about the author's purpose like, Do Bears sleep all winter?

Day 1 Agenda

- Station 4-Collaborative Planning
- In small groups, determine a model you would like to try in the classroom.
- Play magical chairs!

  - Question 1: Share 1 thing about yourself.

  - Question 2: Share 1 thing about yourself as an educator.

  - Question 3: Share 1 thing about yourself as a blended learning educator.

  - Question 4: Share 1 of your strengths as an educator.

  - Question 5: Share 1 thing you would like to improve as an educator.

Day 1 Agenda

- Lunch
- Kahoot-reading strategies learned.
- Reflection-finish KWL chart.

Welcome! Getting to know you BINGO

Combined Strategies and tools to impact reading success (30 min Per Station)

Closing

Survey

| 30 mins | 1 hour | 2 hours | 1 hour | 30 mins |

Whole Group Engagement: Learning in Different Ways

Shared Vision Exercise.
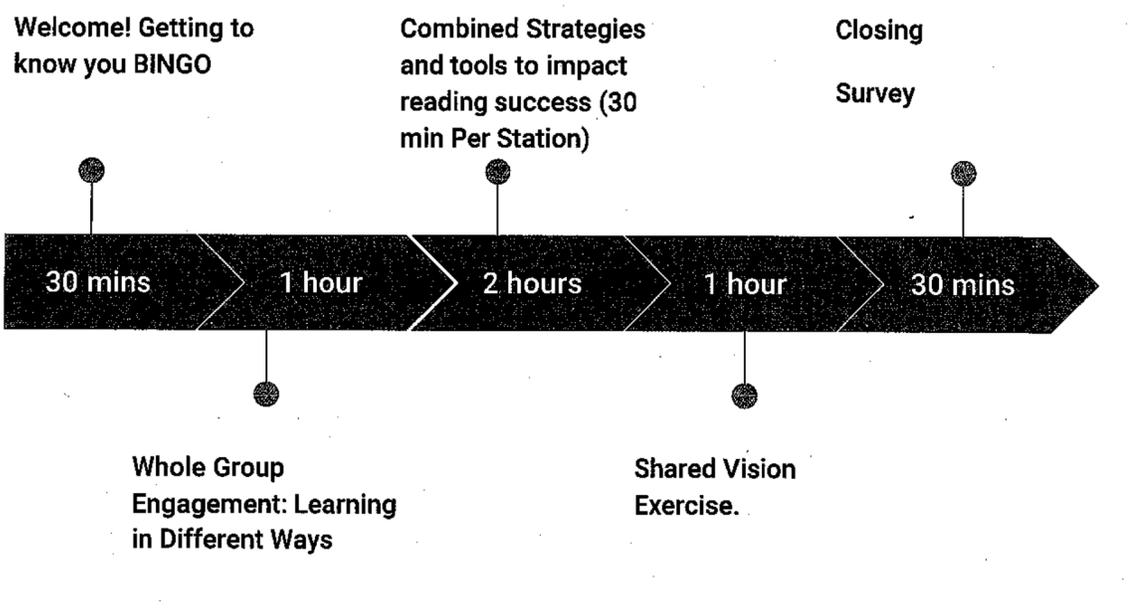
Homework

1. **Decide which reading strategy you would like to work on during our next meeting.**

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Reading Resource Workshop
Day 1
Designing Your 21C Reading Classroom

Section	Learning Objective	Resources
Welcome! **Getting to Know You Bingo** **30 mins.**	Get to know your colleagues and have some fun with ordinary BINGO: rules, while mingling in the classroom you will be looking for specific "people" characteristics. Find a person with a characteristic on your card and mark it or write their name down.	Bingo board
1hr. **Whole Group Engage** **Learning in Different Ways**	● Set context of Broad challenge and urgency of 21C learning ● KWL chart for Reading Resources padlet.com ● Overview of selected Reading Resources	KWL chart padlet.com

2 hr. (30 min. Per station)
Combined strategies and tools to impact reading success.
	4 Small Groups to choose from:
	
	Station 1-Read and Comprehend Literature
	● Watch
	● Strategies for
	    ○ Engagement
	    ○ Representation
	    ○ Expression
	● Explore
	
	Station 2 -Word Meaning
	● Watch
	● Strategies for:
	    ○ Engagement
	    ○ Representation
	    ○ Expression
	● Explore
	
	Station 3 - Identifying The Main Purpose	

| | of the text
● [Watch](#)
● Strategies for:
   ○ [Engagement](#)
   ○ [Representation](#)
   ○ [Expression](#)
● Explore

Station 4 - [Collaborative Planning](#)
● In small groups, determine a model you would like to try in your classroom. (10 min)
(20 min) Play Magical Chairs! Set up circle with less seat than players. One person starts in the middle and states something about themselves. Whoever is sitting at that time, if that thing is ALSO true for you, you have to stand up and find a new seat. The person left standing with no seat goes to the middle to share a statement. Try each question for 3-4 rounds:

● Question Round 1: Share one (1) thing about yourself personally
● Question Round 2: Share one (1) thing about yourself at an educator
● Question Round 3: Share one (1) thing about yourself as a blended learning educator
● Question Round 4: Share one (1) of your strengths as an educator
● Question Round 5: Share one (1) thing you would like to improve as an educator

If you finish, discuss as a group what you learned from this experience. How was this beneficial? | |
| **Lunch**
1 hour | | |

Shared Vision Exercise 1 hr.	Reading Planning Tool Activity	Reading Planning Tool
Closing 20 min	Let's Play Kahoot! Reflection on the Day	
10 min. Survey	Complete the Survey!	
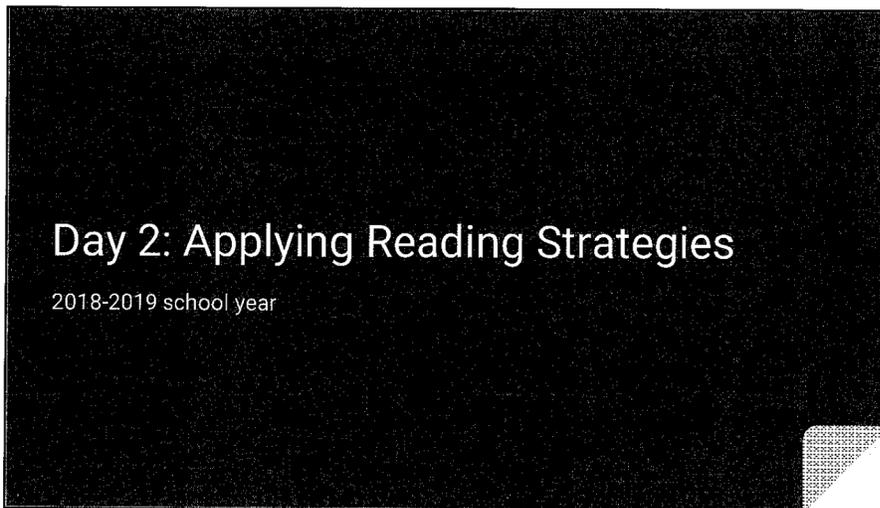
Day 2: Applying Reading Strategies

2018-2019 school year
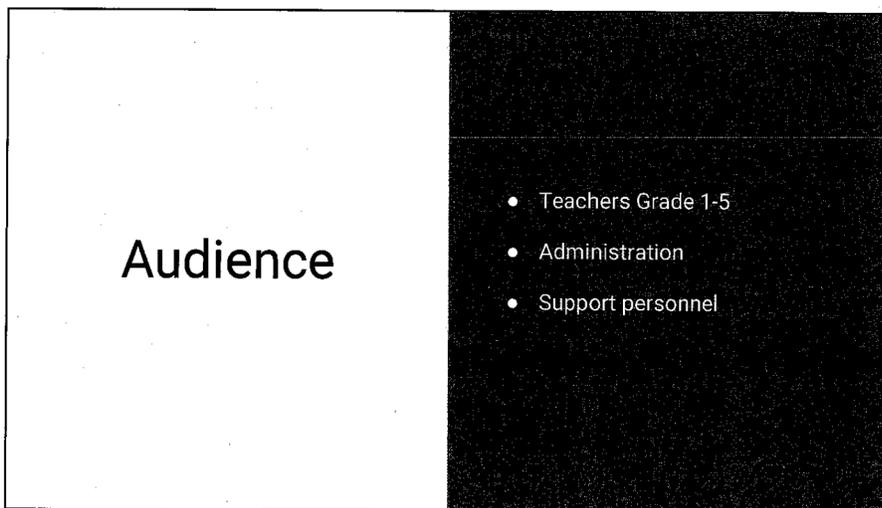
Audience

- Teachers Grade 1-5
- Administration
- Support personnel

5/6/2019

Goals

Appling acquired information, concepts and ideas to communicate in a variety of formats.

Appling word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections.

Appling Reading Strategies to improve understanding.

Materials

- KWL chart
- Lesson Planning Tool
- WOOP Template
- Survey

Day 2 Agenda

Review of Day 1
KWL chart-Reading Resources
Overview of selected Resources
Digital Creativity tools
     Use free online creativity tools to combine strategies to impact reading success.
Collaborate and share using Google sheet gallery
Get into stations 1-4, create a lesson from each group.

Day 2 Agenda

Station 1-Read and Comprehension Literature
- Teach Engagement-After reading a lesson: have students draw their own inference about the main character.
- Teach Representation-use sticky notes during reading to help transfer and connect ideas between text.
- Teach Expression-create an extemporaneous story circle time. Begin telling the story then have student add their own line.

Day 2 Agenda

Station 2-Word Meaning
- Teach Engagement-Students work together to determine the context clues in the text and highlight as they go along.
- Teach Representation-Teacher can highlight key information in the text and provide graphic organizers highlighted in corresponding colors for the student to record information.
- Teach Expression-Students read short paragraphs on cards and try to figure our the meaning of a designated word using context clues.

Day 2 Agenda

Station 3-Identify the main purpose of the text.
- Teach Engagement-Allow students to choose preferred text to work with, or complete a group brainstorm of possible topics.
- Teach Representation-Use guided questions to help students notice features of an overarching concept rather than specific procedural task (How does your narrative sound when you read it aloud?)
- Teach Expression-Provide an example of a few sentences written about the author's purpose like, Do Bears sleep all winter?

Day 2 Agenda

- Station 4-Collaborative Planning
- In small groups, determine a model you would like to try in the classroom.
- Play magical chairs!

  ○ Question 1: Share 1 thing about yourself.

  ○ Question 2: Share 1 thing about yourself as an educator.

  ○ Question 3: Share 1 thing about yourself as a blended learning educator.

  ○ Question 4: Share 1 of your strengths as an educator.

  ○ Question 5: Share 1 thing you would like to improve as an educator.

Day 2 Agenda

Lunch
Overview of Reading strategies
Individual Goal for sustaining reading strategies WOOP template
Survey

Whole group rotation

KWL

Lesson Planning

(30 min per station)

Closing

Survey

| 30 mins | 1 hour | 2 hours | 1 hour | 30 mins |

Combined strategies
and tools impact
reading success.

Goal setting
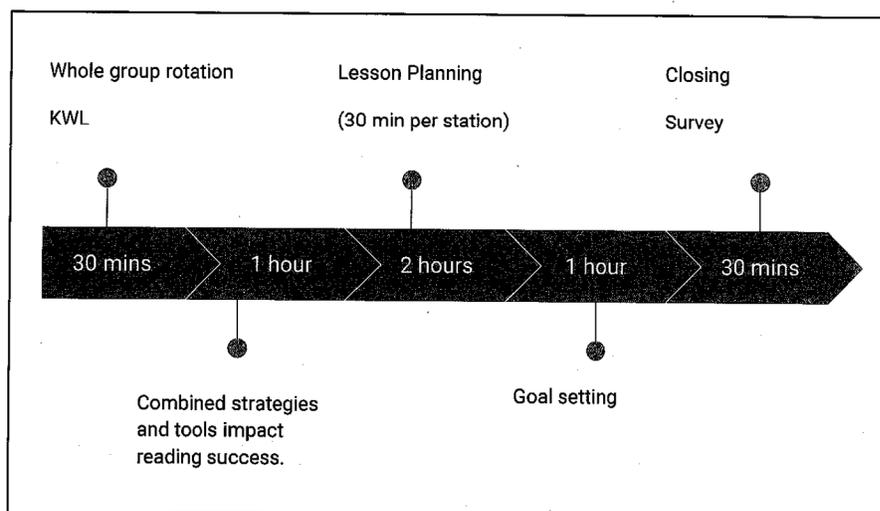
Homework

1. Pick one of your reading lessons to share with your department for our next meeting.

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Reading Resource Workshop
Day 2
Designing Your 21C Reading Classroom

Section	Learning Objective	Resources
30 min. **Whole Group Rotation**	- Set context of Broad challenge and urgency of 21C learning - KWL chart for Reading Resources padlet.com - Overview of selected Resources	
1 hr. Combined strategies and tools to impact reading success. Reinventing Lesson Plans	Digital Creativity Tools https://www.google.com/slides/about https://www.powtoon.com/home/ https://prezi.com https://piktochart.com/ http://showme.com/ http://storybird.com/ http://padlet.com/ Collaborate and share using google sheet Gallery walk and share within the document	
2 hrs. (30 min. Per Station)	4 Small Groups to choose from: Station 1-Read and Comprehend Literature - Watch - Strategies for - Engagement - Representation - Expression - Explore Station 2 -Word Meaning - Watch - Strategies for:	

	○ Engagement
	○ Representation
	○ Expression
	● Explore
	
	Station 3 - Identifying The Main Purpose of the text
	    ● Watch
	    ● Strategies for:
	        ○ Engagement
	        ○ Representation
	        ○ Expression
	    ● Explore
	
	Station 4 - Collaborative Planning
	    ● In small groups, determine a model you would like to try in your classroom.	

Lunch 1 hr.		
Goal Setting 1 hr.	Overview of Reading Strategies (10 min) Which strategies will you try in your classroom for the next time to share with your groups? More Strategies to try: **Comprehension** 321 Summary Character Map Chunking Graphic Organizers Jigsaw **Vocabulary** Context Clues Concept Mapping Mnemonics Reading Prompts Songs, Raps, and Chants **Decoding** Book Buddies Exit Ticket Individual Reading Conference	

	Partner Reading Repeated Readings	
Closing 20 min.	Individual goals for sustaining reading strategies WOOP Template	
10 min. Survey	Complete the Survey!	

Day 3: Sharing Reading Strategies

2018-2019 school year

Audience

- 4th grade
- Advanced curriculum
- 18 students

Goals

Sharing acquired information, concepts and ideas to communicate in a variety of formats.

Sharing word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections.

Sharing Reading Strategies to improve understanding.

Materials

- KWL chart
- Paper
- Pencil
- WDoK template
- Survey

5/6/2019

Day 3 Agenda

Review of Day 1 and 2.
KWL chart-Reading Strategies
Each Department share wins and ask burning questions
        What issues I am facing regarding implementing reading strategies.
Station 1-4, Sharing lesson plan to be taught.
Department teams: Analyze a lesson that has reading strategy using WDoK framework.
Reflection of the day.
Schedule dates and time for observation of reading strategy.
Survey

Whole Group Rotation	Share strategies and tools used in reading lesson	Goal Setting: Schedule dates and times for observation of reading strategies.
Share Wins		

30 mins	1 hour	2 hours	1 hour	30 mins

Whole Group

Solution Generator

Whole Group Lesson Strategies. WDoK Model Framework
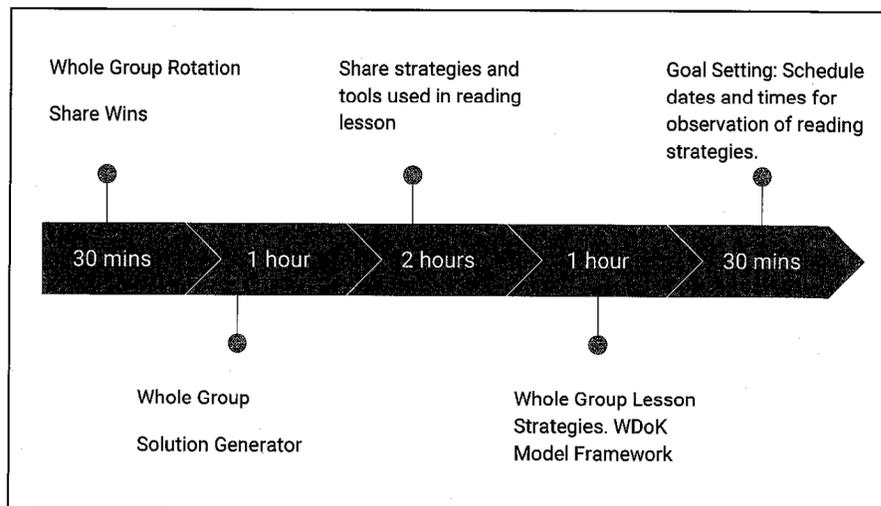
5/6/2019

Homework

1. Schedule a time and date to be observed while using supplemental reading strategies.

References

Alharbi, M. (2015). Reading strategies, learning styles, and reading comprehension: A correlation study. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 6*(6), 1257-1268. doi: 10.17507/jltr.0606.13

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5/6/2019

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Reading Resource Workshop
Day 3
Designing Your 21C Reading Classroom

Section	Learning Objective	Resources
10 min. **Whole Group Rotation**	● Set context of Broad challenge and urgency of 21C learning ● KWL chart for Reading Resources padlet.com ● Overview of selected Resources	www.padlet.com
20 min. **Share Win (Whole Group)**	Each Department Share wins and ask burning questions.	
1 hr. Solution Generator **Whole Group**	**What issues am I facing regarding implementing reading strategies?** 1. **Each person reflects on a dilemma or issue they are facing in their classroom regarding implementing reading strategies**. 2. Each person will fold a paper into thirds (tic-tac-toe board) and be in a group of 5 - 6 people. 3. Each person writes their dilemma or issue in the middle of the tic-tac-toe board. 4. Each person will pass their "board" to the right and their neighbor will make suggestions on how to help with the dilemma or issue. 5. Each attendee will get their "board" back and read through and reflect on feedback: **What do you want to act on? How can this be adapted to use with students?**	Paper
2 hrs. (30 min per station) **Share strategies and tools used in reading lesson.**	3 Small Groups to Review the lesson chosen to incorporate in the classroom:	Group Work

	Station 1- Independent Reading and Literature study, Independent Literacy work stations.
	    ● Complete pre-work - small groups (as needed)
	    ● Share/ask clarifying questions
	    ● Reading group work
	    ● Reading lesson planning
	    ● Share
	
	Station 2 - Guided Reading small group
	    ● Complete pre-work - small groups (as needed)
	    ● Share/ask clarifying questions
	    ● Reading group work
	    ● Reading lesson planning
	    ● Share
	
	Station 3 - Guided Reading Stations structure
	    ● Complete pre-work - small groups (as needed)
	    ● Share/ask clarifying questions
	    ● Reading group work
	    ● Reading lesson planning
	    ● Share	

Lunch 1 hour		

**Share Whole Group Lesson Strategies
1 hr.**
	In Department teams:
	    ● Analyze a lesson that has reading strategies as a part of the lesson through the lens of the WDoK Model Framework.
	    ● WDoK
	Let's go back to the lessons created earlier. Are there modifications that can be made?
		WDoK template

Closing 20 min. Goal Setting	Reflection of the day. Individual goals for sustaining reading strategies learned. Schedule dates and times for observation of reading strategies.	
10 min. Survey	Complete the Survey!	

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

1. How many years with this reading program have you taught elementary reading skills at this school?
2. What are the strengths of the reading program being used at this school to develop literacy at Grades 1—5 ?
3. How has this reading program impacted the curriculum?
4. What are some specific ways the reading program could be improved for teachers' best practices?
5. How would you describe the reading readiness skills of students entering your school?
6. In your opinion, describe the administration leadership in regard to resources that support the reading program as it relates to students " literacy development".
7. How effective is the reading program when improving literacy in Grades 1—5 ?
8. Are there barriers when teaching adequate resources to effectively increase literacy performance?
9. What strategies do you implement outside of the reading program?
10. How do your students respond to the strategies you use that are related to the reading program?
11. In your opinion, how has participation in the reading professional development workshops impacted your instructional planning and delivery of the reading program?
12. In your opinion, how important were the resources to effectively teach reading through the early literacy program?
13. How does this reading program impact your instructional delivery?
14. Do you think the reading program targets a diverse population of struggling readers in your class? Explain your answer.
15. In your opinion, how have the teachers at this school responded to the reading program?

Appendix C: Field Observation Form

Role of Observer: Nonparticipant
Observer: RAN
Observer Date and Time:
Length of Observation:
Observation/Field Notes Literacy Strategies Setting:

Date/Time	Description	Reflection Notes/Questions