Walden University

College of Education and Human Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Bridgette B. Davis

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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Walden University
2023

Abstract

How Reading Teachers Select and Use Evidence-Based, Culturally Responsive Strategies

to Support Black Students

by

Bridgette B. Davis

Ed.S., Walden University, 2020

MA, University of Phoenix, 2011

BS, Georgia State University, 1987

Proposal Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Education - Reading, Literacy, Assessment, and Evaluation

Walden University

November 2023

Abstract

Literacy researchers have found that using evidence-based intervention strategies with students receiving response to intervention Tier 2 services impacted the support they receive. The problem was that researchers had not examined how elementary reading intervention teachers decided how to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. This basic qualitative study aimed to understand how elementary reading intervention teachers decided how to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. Bartlett's schema theory was the framework used in the study. The study used a basic qualitative approach. Data analysis was thematic coding of 10 reading intervention teachers' open-ended, semistructured interview questions. Findings suggested district resources guided the decision-making and implementation of reading strategies for Black students receiving Tier 2 services. Findings also purport no consideration of culture when deciding how to use effective evidence-based reading strategies. At the same time, teachers did not receive professional development to support them in this process. The implications for positive social change address the disparities between races and achievement and may help close the achievement gap and impact high school graduation rates.

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to all teachers searching for evidence-based, culturally responsive resources to meet the needs of struggling Black students. May you find the resources you need to meet the needs of your students and achieve academic growth.

Acknowledgments

Thank you and much love to my husband and children for the sacrifices and support made to ensure I accomplished my dream of becoming Dr. D. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Ellen Scales for her guidance, support, encouragement, and sharing her expertise through this process. Thank you to Dr. Billie V. Andersson for her detailed critique to ensure I developed a concise dissertation.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 was written to mandate and hold schools accountable to provide evidence-based interventions to improve student outcomes by developing and implementing a comprehensive and progressive support plan. Evidence-based practices (EBPs) or evidence-based interventions (EBIs) are strategies reinforced by researchers' findings that suggest that the practice or program works (Georgia Department of Education. 2017; Iris Center, 2020; Mahoney, 2020). The implementation of evidence-based strategies takes place within the response to intervention (RTI) process or multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) framework (Mahoney, 2020).

While literacy and reading researchers addressed the need for evidence-based interventions (Borre et al., 2019; Husband & Kang, 2020), they failed to address the use of these strategies in response to student diversity (Farmer et al., 2020). The researchers found a persistent gap throughout American schools in reading scores between Black and White students, along with a disparity in access and achievement for Black students because of their socio-economic condition and race (Hernandez, 2022; Husband & Kang, 2020; Ladson-Billings, 2018, 2022). Researchers suggested that students of culturally diverse backgrounds receive a disproportionate number of inaccurate special education referrals resulting from the lack of culturally responsive Tier 2 strategies to address their individual needs (Kourea et al., 2018; Thomas et al.; 2020, Willis, 2019). Researchers have also reported higher marginalization among African American male students academically and socially than among other ethnic groups (Paul, 2017). Studies revealed

information on the impact of reading deficits can range from primary grades to adulthood if there is no intervention, leading to more significant gaps (Vernon-Feagans et al., 2018; Volkmer et al., 2019). Researchers have addressed the need for intensive reading intervention for students with reading challenges or in danger of identification, especially in the primary grades, to diminish the need for intervention in upper elementary grades (Wanzek et al., 2018). However, further research is needed to understand how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services.

This study was needed because it addressed an under-researched area of how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use evidence-based, culturally responsive reading strategies for Black students in charter schools unresponsive to Tier 2 interventions (Sterrett et al., 2020). This project focused on racial injustice within public education by concentrating on evidence-based, culturally responsive reading strategies for Black students receiving Tier 2 services (Alvare', 2018).

Culturally responsive reading strategies derived from culturally responsive teaching, which involves teaching strategies focused on ethnically diverse students and their cultural practices, attributes, and viewpoints (Gay, 2002b). Gloria Ladson-Billings and Geneva Gay's research was pivotal in culturally responsive pedagogy and culturally responsive teaching. Culturally responsive pedagogy gained relevance in education from Gloria Ladson-Billings, theory founder of culturally relevant pedagogy (Kotluck & Kocayay, 2020; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014), and Geneva Gay (2010, 2013 a, b), theorist of culturally responsive teaching. Effective culturally responsive teaching

strategies are also evidence-based practices with supporting evidence and data for varying populations. However, there is limited research on executing culturally relevant pedagogy strategies within the classroom (Hernandez, 2022; Lambeth & Smith, 2016).

This study provided data on how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services and the teachers' preparation to meet these students' needs (Hernandez, 2022; Husband & Kang, 2020; Kainz, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 2018, 2022). Examining the background supporting this study, the problem, purpose, and research questions established the need for this study. Addressing the educational disparity in reading for Black students receiving Tier 2 services with evidence-based, culturally responsive reading strategies may help close the achievement gap and impact high school graduation rates (Hernandez, 2022; Husband & Kang, 2020; Ladson-Billings, 2022; Walker & Hutchinson, 2021).

Background

Understanding how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services may impact the educational disparity in reading for Black students, help close the academic achievement gap, and impact high school graduation rates (Hernandez, 2022; Husband & Kang, 2020; Kainz, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 2022). Research has shown a disproportionate number of black students and low- to middle-income students of color receive behavioral reprimands within schools (Aronson, 2020; Chen & Gay; 2020; Gay & Howard, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1992, 2017; Thomas et al.,

2020). Research further showed the endurance of racial disparity in education, which leads to the need to make changes to meet all students' needs through culturally responsive teaching strategies and can reduce educational disparities (Dixson & Ladson-Billings, 2017; Lopez, 2016). Willis (2019) also addressed the disproportionate number of Black male students in school disciplinary punishments. He suggested adopting an evidence-based, culturally responsive positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) framework to address this issue (Willis, 2019). Dixson and Ladson-Billings (2017) also referenced the need to continue building upon previous research. Ladson-Billings (2018) unveiled the idea of race's social funding and its impact on Black students' classroom experiences and general education. The study analyzed how funding race impacts unjust and inequitable practices that impact education. In comparison, Green and Stormont (2018) provided information on developing culturally responsive lessons utilizing evidence-based practices to prevent diverse students' inaccurate referrals to special education services (Artiles & Trent, 1994; Gay, 2002a; Green & Stormont, 2018; Kourea et al., 2018; Thomas et al., 2020).

Altin and Saracaloglu (2018) examined the impact of enhancing reading comprehension lessons with culturally responsive materials and suggested cultural resources impacted learners' vocabulary acquisition and approach toward reading materials. Farmer (2020) provided information on reforming educational research and practices to be culturally responsive to all students' needs by adapting interventions. Farmer's (2020) study aligned with Ladson-Billings' (2016) plea for the importance of literacy development among Black lives by fostering three domains for culturally

responsive pedagogy: student learning, cultural competence, and critical consciousness (Clark, 2021; Gay, 2002a, 2013b; Kotluck & Kocaya, 2020; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014, 2021; Linan- Thompson et al., 2018; Warren, 2018). Bensalah and Gueroudj (2020) investigated how cultural schemata and culturally relevant materials impact reading development in non-English speaking students. Findings suggested a connection between activating a student's prior knowledge and reading comprehension development. Cai and Wu (2020) looked at current elementary class situations compared with those implementing schema theory's effectiveness. Their findings suggested cultural schema is essential to language development. On the other hand, Hilaski (2020) explored how teachers sought to make their Reading Recovery lessons culturally responsive using their students' background knowledge. According to the study, new reading and writing material were made less complicated by connecting the student's new material to past familiar material. Kourea et al. (2018) analyzed three culturally responsive reading instruction domains for students with learning disabilities to help teachers develop culturally responsive and relevant instruction. The study also looked at teachers' strategies and teaching tools to increase relevant cultural responsiveness.

Hunt and Holmes (2018) shared how teachers can engage students with evidence-based hooks and closings within lessons. They suggested learning occurs when capturing a student's attention at the beginning of a lesson through relevant non-linguistic materials. At the same time, Linan-Thompson et al. (2018) provided observation data of evidence-based cultural and linguistic practices utilized in the classroom to address culturally diverse students' needs. The study shared the importance of integrating culturally and

linguistically responsive practices to meet struggling learners' needs. Mahoney (2020) furthered research and provided information to help implement evidence-based practices (EBP) according to the multi-tiered systems of support (MTTS) framework for secondary school inclusion students. The study suggested that teachers trained to implement EBP will better support struggling learners' needs. Braun et al. (2020) explored the MTSS Tier 2 and Tier 3 implementation process within urban elementary schools. The study sought to understand the perceptions of urban elementary school teachers using the MTSS process. At the same time, Majeika et al. (2020) provided information on an adaptive, responsive approach for implementing social behavioral Tier 2 interventions to increase student performance outcomes. The study's findings suggested making minor changes to interventions to meet student needs will lead to long-lasting and significant student behavior changes.

This study used the basic qualitative research paradigm to address the gap in research on understanding reading intervention teachers' decision-making process to address the disparity in access and achievement for Black students and may improve the assessment data for Tier 2 students (Husband & Kang, 2020; Kainz, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 2022; Same et al., 2018; Walker & Hutchinson, 2021). This study was needed because it addressed an under-researched concept of how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive reading strategies for Black students in charter schools unresponsive to Tier 2 interventions (Sterrett et al., 2020). This project addressed racial injustice within public education by

focusing on evidence-based, culturally responsive strategies for Black students receiving Tier 2 services.

Problem Statement

Extensive research supports using evidence-based intervention strategies with students receiving Tier 2 support services. The problem is that literacy research has shown little evidence on how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 mandates charter schools to provide evidence-based interventions to improve student outcomes by developing and implementing a comprehensive and progressive support plan. Evidence-based practices (EBP) or evidence-based interventions (EBI) are strategies reinforced by intense research that proves the practice or program works (Georgia Department of Education, 2017; Iris Center, 2020; Mahoney, 2020). The implementation of evidence-based strategies takes place within the response to intervention (RTI) process or multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) framework (Mahoney, 2020). RTI or MTSS frameworks comprise three levels or tiers of support (primary, secondary, or tertiary) dependent upon the student's academic or behavioral needs (Mahoney, 2020). The classroom teacher implements Tier 1 or the primary level of support (Mahoney, 2020). In contrast, Tier 2 and Tier 3, or the secondary and tertiary levels, are implemented in small groups or one-on-one by intervention teachers with students at risk of failing or requiring additional support (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2017; Mahoney, 2020).

The MTSS framework was adopted to distinguish between interventions for struggling learners and RTI interventions intermingled with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004 amendment (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2017). While literacy and reading researchers addressed the need for evidence-based interventions (Borre et al., 2019; Husband & Kang, 2020), they failed to address the use of these strategies in response to student diversity (Farmer et al., 2018). The goal of Tier 2 intervention is to bridge the gap between Tier 1 universal support and Tier 3 intensive support to improve student outcomes and prevent Tier 3 recommendations (Majeika et al., 2020; Sterrett et al., 2020). Student success and improvement depend upon identifying and implementing evidence-based interventions (Evidence-Based Practices, 2022; Graham et al., 2019; Pace Miles et al., 2019). However, evidence-based interventions are not one size fits all and do not address a student's uniqueness (Sterrett et al., 2020). Research studies examining Tier 2 Interventions have not established supporting evidence of favorable results for Black students (Same et al., 2018). Research suggests adapting or modifying evidence-based Tier 2 Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to meet student needs (Sterrett et al., 2020). However, there is a lack of research to support the need to modify Tier 2 reading interventions with culturally responsive resources for Black students.

The research has shown a persistent gap throughout American schools in reading scores between Black and White students, along with a disparity in access and achievement for Black students because of their socio-economic condition and race (Hernandez, 2022; Husband & Kang, 2020; Ladson-Billings, 2022; Walker &

Hutchinson, 2021). Research suggested students of culturally diverse backgrounds receive a disproportionate number of inaccurate special education referrals resulting from the lack of culturally responsive Tier 2 strategies to address their individual needs (Aronson, 2020; Begeny, 2019; Thomas et al., 2020, Willis, 2019). Studies also showed the impact of reading deficits can range from primary grades to adulthood if there is no intervention, leading to more significant gaps (Vernon-Feagans et al., 2018; Volkmer et al., 2019). Researchers have addressed the need for intensive reading intervention for students with reading challenges or in danger of identification, especially in the primary grades, to diminish the need for intervention in upper elementary grades (Wanzek et al., 2018). However, further research is needed to address using evidence-based, culturally responsive strategies (Farmer et al., 2018) with struggling Black readers.

Purpose of the Study

This study aimed to understand how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. The basic qualitative research paradigm was used to address the gap in research on understanding reading intervention teachers' decision-making processes to address the disparity in access and achievement for Black students and may improve the assessment data for Tier 2 students (Hernandez, 2022; Husband & Kang, 2020; Kainz, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 2022; Walker & Hutchinson, 2021). Interviews helped me understand how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services.

Research Questions

The research questions aligned with Barlett's 1932 Schema Theory by utilizing evidence-based, culturally responsive strategies and interventions. These strategies and interventions should connect familiar schemata with a new text, leading to better understanding and academic growth. Based on research, minority students made cultural connections or used cultural schemata for accurate comprehension (Bensalah & Gueroudj, 2020; Smith, 2019; Yu, 2019). Research also suggested that cultural schemata impacted how fast comprehension of new texts occurs and postulates cultural schemata are substantial to reading comprehension (Bensalah & Gueroudj, 2020; McVee et al., 2005).

RQ1: How do elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services?

RQ2: How do elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services?

Conceptual Framework

This study's conceptual framework focused on Bartlett's (1932) schema theory. This theory suggests hints of information are stored in the mind when an event happens; then, those hints are stimulated, leading to the recollection of initial information. The studyfocused on prior knowledge and the idea that responses alone have minimal meaning. Chapter 2 provides a more detailed analysis of Bartlett's schema theory.

However, when there is a relationship to successive prior responses or behaviors, they contribute to the current overall schema. Chapter 2 provides a detailed analysis of Bartlett's schema theory alignment with reading intervention teachers using evidence-based, culturally responsive strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2.

Bartlett's schema theory guided the study's basic qualitative approach. The research and interview questions guided the interviewing process of 10 reading intervention teachers to gain insight into how they decide to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. Bartlett's schema theory related to the study approach and research questions because it focused on subjects' prior knowledge and its impact on understanding information.

Nature of Study

Education research often uses a basic qualitative approach when examining specific groups' experiences over time (Merriam & Grenier, 2019; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Qualitative research was consistent with understanding how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services, which was the focus of this dissertation. Focusing on how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services was consistent with Bartlett's schema theory on content and culture (An, 2013; Bartlett, 1932; Cai & Wu, 2020; & Christopher,

2017). Research suggested including students' life experiences and cultural backgrounds in their instructional materials leads to academic success (Ladson-Billings, 2016).

      The basic qualitative approach supported data collection from 10 reading intervention teachers through interviews. Collected data was analyzed through codifying to detect patterns, themes, and categories (Saldana, 2016). Codifying allows for the grouping, reorganization, and linking of data to the research phenomenon (Saldana, 2016).

Definitions

This section provides a list of terms used in this study to understand how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services.

Academic success: intellectual growth that students experience as a result of classroom instruction and learning experiences (Clark, 2021; Kotluk and Kocakaya, 2020; Ladson-Billings, 2021).

Critical consciousness / Cultural competence: the ability to help students appreciate and celebrate their cultures of origin while gaining knowledge of and fluency in at least one other culture (Clark, 2021; Kotluk and Kocakaya, 2020; Ladson-Billings, 2021).

Cultural responsiveness: provides safeguards for the learning of culturally diverse students by embracing their cultural differences (Aronson, 2020; Fetterman et al., 2020).

Culturally relevant pedagogy: a pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning will provide for all students despite their differences and disadvantages (Kotluk & Kocakaya, 2020).

Culturally relevant teaching: a pedagogy of opposition that recognizes and celebrates African and African American culture (Chou et al., 2018, Clark, 2021; Hollie, 2019; Muniz, 2020).

Culturally responsive pedagogy: an instructional component of K-12 education reform that uses ethnically diverse students' cultural backgrounds and viewpoints (Rychly & Graves, 2012; Seriki and Brown, 2017).

Culturally responsive teaching: using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant and practical for them (Gay, 2002 a, b, 2015, 2018).

Cultural schema/schemata: structured experience scaffolds specific to a unique culture (Altarriba & Forsythe, 1993; An, 2013).

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015): mandates and holds schools accountable to provide evidence-based interventions to improve student outcomes by developing and implementing a comprehensive and progressive support plan.

Evidence-based practices (EBP) or *Evidence-based interventions:* strategies reinforced by intense research that proves the practice or program works (Georgia Department of Education. 2017; Iris Center, 2020; Mahoney, 2020).

Individuals with disabilities education Act (IDEA): a law that makes available a free appropriate public education to eligible children with disabilities throughout the nation and ensures special education and related services to those children (*About IDEA*. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2022).

Multitiered systems of support (MTSS) framework: a framework established to guide schools' intervention processes across the United States (Alahmari, 2019; Berkeley et al., 2020; Al Otaiba et al., 2019).

Response to intervention (RTI) framework: two frameworks established to guide schools' intervention processes across the United States (Alahmari, 2019; Berkeley et al., 2020; Al Otaiba et al., 2019).

Schema / Schemata: considered a learning theory that focuses on storing prior knowledge in a person's long-term memory for future use (Anderson & Pearson, 1984; Bartlett, 1932; Bensalah & Gueroudj, 2020; Cai & Wu, 2020).

Sociopolitical Consciousness: the ability to take learning beyond the confines of the classroom using school knowledge and skills to identify, analyze, and solve real-world problems (Clark, 2021; Kotluk and Kocakaya, 2020; Ladson-Billings, 2021).

Tier 1: instruction to all students from the general education teacher (Kelley & Goldstein, 2018; Solari et al., 2018).

Tier 2 Intervention: interventions implemented in small groups or one-on-one by intervention teachers with students at risk of failing or requiring additional support (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2017; Mahoney, 2020).

Tier 2I Intervention: interventions implemented in small groups or one-on-one by intervention teachers with students at risk of failing or requiring additional support (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2017; Mahoney, 2020).

Assumptions

My assumptions going into this study were:

1. The participants will answer each interview question openly and honestly.

2. The participants will be vested in participating in the research to bring further understanding and clarity to the study.

3. The participant criteria will be met by each participant and ensure that each
    participant has had similar experiences with the phenomenon of this study.

Scope and Delimitations

My scope and delimitations prior to conducting this study were:

1. There will be no underlying circumstances for the reading intervention teachers to
    affect their interest and factor into their responses during the study.

2. Ten reading intervention teacher participants meet the saturation level of previous
    qualitative studies.

Limitations

My proposed limitations prior to conducting this study were:

1. The sample size of 10 participants may provide limited generalizability.

2. Recruitment of 10 reading intervention teachers may be limited. To combat this, I
    used purposeful homogenous snowball sampling to assist in accessing
    participants.

3. The qualitative synthesis may provide a limited understanding of how elementary
    reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based,
    culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2
    services.

4. Unforeseen restrictions due to COVID-19 and monkeypox may impact the
    interview settings.

Significance

This study is a significant addition to the field of literacy interventions. The study focused on how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. According to early culturally relevant teaching theorists Ladson-Billings (1992) and Gay (2002 a, b, 2013 a, b), the pedagogical foundation of culturally responsive teaching infuses learning opportunities with the cultural encounters and understanding of ethnically diverse students, specifically Black students. This project was unique because it addressed an under-researched area in southern urban schools; it concerned how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students unresponsive to Tier 2 interventions (Sterrett et al., 2020). This project focused on evidence-based, culturally responsive strategies for Black students receiving Tier 2 services when addressing racial injustice within public education (Alvare', 2018; de Silva et al., 2018).

This study provided insight into how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. Insights from this study should assist reading intervention teachers in meeting the needs of at-risk Tier 2 Black students. Social change in education is an ongoing challenge, and much work is needed to address the disparities between races and achievement (de Silva et al., 2018; Gay, 2002 a, b; Ladson-

Billings, 2017; Walker & Hutchinson, 2021; Warner, 2020). Addressing the educational

disparity in reading for at-risk Black students receiving Tier 2 services by using

evidence-based, culturally responsive reading strategies may help close the gap and may

impact high school graduation rates (Husband & Kang, 2020; Kainz, 2019; Ladson-

Billings, 2018, 2022; Walker & Hutchinson, 2021).

Summary

The 1977 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

(IDEA) guided the establishment of response to intervention (RTI) to recognize students

with learning disabilities (Bradley and Danielson, 2004). The purpose of this qualitative

study was to understand how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use

effective evidence-based, culturally responsive strategies to support Black students

receiving Tier 2 services. However, extensive research supports using evidence-based

intervention strategies with students receiving Tier 2 support services. The problem was

that literacy research has shown little evidence on how elementary reading intervention

teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive strategies to

support Black students receiving Tier 2 services.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 mandates and holds schools

accountable to provide evidence-based interventions to improve student outcomes by

developing and implementing a comprehensive and progressive support plan. The 1977

reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) led to the need

for response to intervention (RTI), a different way of identifying students with learning

disabilities (Bradley and Danielson, 2004). Implementation of response to intervention

(RTI) began with the provision of research-based interventions for all students upon
determining they were not responding to Tier 1 general education instruction (Bradley et
al., 2007).

Teacher preparation is critical to addressing this issue and meeting the needs of
Black students receiving Tier 2 support services (Hernandez, 2022; Lopez, 2016).
Research suggested a need to make culturally responsive teaching the focus of teacher
preparation programs, not just an additional course (Gay, 1997; Gay & Howard, 2000;
Karatas, 2020; Lowenstein, 2009; Zeichner et al., 1998). Meeting the needs of all learners
through a culturally relevant platform requires a unique teacher with special skills.
Research has shown that successful teachers incorporate culturally linguistically
responsive practices into all instruction (Hilaski, 2020; Linan-Thompson et al., 2018),
which could lead to academic growth.

In Chapter 2, I reviewed the literature surrounding Bartlett's 1932 Schema Theory
and Anderson's continued research on schema and reading comprehension. Barlett
addressed the connection culture has on schema. Ladson-billings and Gay further
supported the need to implement culturally responsive pedagogy into the learning process
to address the academic disparity among Black students and aid in closing the academic
gap (Hernandez, 2022; Husband & Kang, 2020; Ladson-Billings, 2022, 2018).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The problem was that literacy research provides little evidence on how
elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective, evidence-based,

culturally responsive strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. This study aimed to understand how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective, evidence-based, culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 was written as a mandate to hold schools accountable to provide evidence-based interventions to improve student outcomes by developing and implementing a comprehensive and progressive support plan. Research suggested prepared teachers can identify and implement effective evidence-based, culturally responsive interventions to diminish the academic gap (Hernandez, 2022; Husband & Kang, 2020; Ladson-Billings, 2022, 2018). Many teachers lack professional development and preparation to equip them with the necessary skills to close the academic gaps (Hernandez, 2022; Husband & Kang, 2020; Ladson-Billings, 2022, 2018). The lack of preparation is especially evident when serving struggling Black students. Understanding how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based and culturally responsive strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services may help researchers address the gap.

Examining seminal and current research in MTSS/RTI, schema theory, evidence-based strategies, cultural responsiveness, and teacher preparation provided evidence of teacher preparation and professional development's impact on student academic growth. However, further research is needed to understand how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services (Hernandez, 2022; Lew &

Smith, 2016; Lopez, 2016). The literature review provided supporting evidence of the need for further research.

Literature Search Strategy

In this literature review search, I accessed and reviewed over 300 articles related to the schema theory, RTI/MTSS frameworks, evidence-based practices, culturally responsive pedagogy, and teacher preparation. Two hundred plus articles provided a limited understanding of using effective evidence-based, culturally responsive strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 support services.

Walden University library databases and Google Scholar were the primary information sources for this literature review. The keyword search platforms utilized were: Academic Search Complete, APA PsycINFO, Education Source, ERIC, Political Science Complete, SocINDEX with full text, Teachers Reference Center, SAGE Journals, and Thoreau multi-database. Search terms used while conducting this literature review included the following: *response to intervention (RTI), multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS), evidence-based, culturally responsive, culturally responsive pedagogy, culturally responsive practices, culturally responsive interventions, culturally responsive strategies, culturally relevant, reading, reading strategies, reading interventions, Tier 2, Tier 2 students, elementary students, interventions, modifications, adaptations, African*

American students, Black students, ethnically diverse students, charter schools,

elementary charter schools, charter schools, and urban.

<div align="center">**Conceptual Framework**</div>

The lack of research indicated a gap in understanding how elementary reading

intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive

strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. Understanding this

phenomenon may provide reading intervention teachers with accountable data to inform

their decision-making for effective evidence-based, culturally responsive strategies to

support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. Ravitch and Carl (2016) suggested a

conceptual framework sets the stage for the relevance and significance of a study, as well

as how the study's design satisfies the research questions. This study used Bartlett's

(1932) schema theory as the conceptual framework.

Bartlett's Schema Theory

Bartlett's (1932) theory focused on an individual's memory based on their unique

content and culture (An, 2013; Bensalah and Gueroudj, 2020; Cai & Wu, 2020; Jaafar,

2020; Javadi & Tahmasbi, 2020; Kan et al., 2020;). Barlett utilized the term schema and

connected it to numerous memory concepts to describe memory and its cultural ideas

(An, 2013; Bartlett, 1932; Bensalah and Gueroudj, 2020; Cai & Wu, 2020; Jaafar, 2020;

Javadi & Tahmasbi, 2020).

Within this study, I applied Bartlett's theory of memory to the reading

intervention teacher's decision-making on using effective evidence-based, culturally

responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. Barlett's

theory was used to ground the analysis of the viewpoints of the reading intervention teachers. Data from this study helped me to determine if there was a need for further research to aid in closing the academic gap among Black students receiving Tier 2 support services.

The purpose of this study was to understand how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. The research questions framed the interview questions to understand how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. Through open-ended interview questions, I asked reading intervention teacher participants to reflect on how they decide how to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. Bartlett's (1932) schema theory focused on an individual's memory based on their unique content and culture. The theory was appropriate for addressing how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services because of its focus.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts

The purpose of this study was to understand how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. The literature review focused on 21st-century multitiered intervention frameworks, cultural responsiveness,

teacher preparation, and evidence-based practices. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 was written to mandate and hold schools accountable to provide evidence-based interventions to improve student outcomes by developing and implementing a comprehensive and progressive support plan. Prepared teachers can identify and implement effective evidence-based, culturally responsive interventions to diminish the academic gap (Hernandez, 2022; Husband & Kang, 2020; Kainz, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 2022). However, many teachers lack professional development and preparation to equip them with the necessary skills to close the academic gaps (Hernandez, 2022; Lew & Nelson, 2016; Lopez, 2016). Gay (2015) suggested the lack of preparation is especially evident when serving struggling Black students.

Conceptual Framework

The schema theory provided a foundation for addressing the background knowledge and cultural differences of Black students receiving Tier 2 support services and the impact on closing their academic gaps. Therefore, the theoretical framework considered for this paper was Bartlett's schema theory, which connects cultural schema to attaining new knowledge (An, 2013; Hammond, Z., 2015). The historical connection to reading and cognitive learning also led to the selection of the schema theory as the framework. Over the years, the theory has evolved immensely (Anderson, 2013; McVee, 2005). Therefore, selecting the schema theory as the theoretical framework requires an understanding of the history of the theory, the theorists associated with it, the cultural component, and the connection to reading comprehension.

Schema Theory

The schema theory is considered a learning theory that focused on storing prior knowledge in a person's long-term memory for future use (An, 2013; Anderson & Pearson, 1984; Bartlett, 1932; Bensalah and Gueroudj, 2020; Cai & Wu, 2020;). Researchers suggested that individuals retrieve schema to support their understanding of new text or situations (An, 2013; Bartlett, 1932; Bensalah & Gueroudj, 2020). Sun et al. (2011) suggested understanding schema comprehensively involves understanding the four characteristics of schema, schema change with information attainment, schema combine to form a network, schema develops from attaining information, and schema has pockets filled with stimuli (Smith, 2019).

Smith (2019) and Nurandini et al. (2017) suggested that learning occurs when new material combines with prior material from long-term memory. Smith (2019) also suggested that schemata, plural for schema, are represented by students' school, personal, and cultural experiences. Smith (2019) and Nurandini et al. (2017) also suggested that effective teachers tap into students' schemata and utilize strategies to fill learning gaps. According to Smith (2019), providing ELL and minority students with helpful information to connect with and aligning schema according to their culture to create new schemata can reduce cultural biases (Benneville. & Li, 2018).

Rumelhart and Norman (1976) referenced schemata formation as part of three kinds of learning, accretion, natural learning, tuning, adjustments to our already formed schemata, and restructuring, new constructs developed to understand new information (Neumann & Kopcha, 2018; Shen, 2008). Rumelhart later referred to schemata as "the building blocks of cognition" (Neumann & Kopcha, 2018; Spiro et al., 2019). At the

time, Shen (2008) referenced the schema theory as a collaborative relationship between the reader's prior experience and what they are reading (Bartlett, 1932; Quinlan, 2019; Sasi, 2019; Smith, 2019; Yu, 2019).

History and Theorists of Schema Theory

McVee et al. (2005) suggested that the term schema dates back to ancient Greek philosophers Aristotle and Plato. Marshall (2007) further suggested that Greek philosophers Socrates and Meno were vital in introducing the term schema and influenced Kant's schema account. Historical researchers reported the term schema originates from the Greek language, first referenced by Plato and Aristotle (Marshall, 2007; McVee et al., 2005). Translation of Plato's schema account focused on structure and makeup (Marshall, 2007; Quinlan, 2019). When Aristotle and Plato examined schema, they postulated schema influences our interpretation of the concrete things we see in the world (Marshall, 2007; McVee et al., 2005). Socrates and Meno's discussion of schema went a step further to suggest these structures must be categorized (Marshall, 2007). The Greek philosophers also used schema descriptors for items and ideas (Marshall, 2007).

Seminal Theorists

Although history credits Greek philosophers with the introduction of the term schema, seminal theorists Immanuel Kant, Sir Frederic Bartlett, and Jean Piaget laid the foundation for the schema theory (Marshall, 2007; McVee et al., 2005Sasi, A.S., 2019; Smith, 2019; Spiro et al., 2019). Kant viewed schema as an entity manipulated by and manipulating our experiences while impacting our worldview (McVee, 2005). Bartlett

suggested schema emphasized an exchange between memory and culture and was necessary to make sense of one's experiences (McVee, 2005). Piaget suggested schema was vital to cognitive development and led to new experiences being assimilated or accommodated with the current schema (McVee, 2005).

Kant believed the mind consists of classifications or groupings. Barlett dedicated his work to studying how individuals remember, and Piaget's connection to the schema theory focused on the development and transformation of schema.

Immanuel Kant. The concept of schema was associated with Kant, who the Greek philosophers influenced, and his 1787 account of how we store information and how it impacts our interpretation of current knowledge (An, 2013; Bartlett, 1932; Bensalah and Gueroudj, 2020; Cai & Wu, 2020; Javadi, and Tahmasbi, 2020; Kan et al., 2020). Kant believed the mind housed thoughts independent of any external experiences, and the schema connected those independent concepts and thoughts with the person's external encounters (Marshall, 2007; McVee et al., 2005). Kant believed in "pure concepts of understanding" that homogeneously connected categories to appearance, intellect, and sensibility leading to what he referred to as transcendental schema (Kant, 1998). He postulated schemata grounded our untainted rational thoughts and not images of objects (Kant, 1998, Marshall, 2007), unlike the Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle, who believed schema described an item or idea (Marshall, 2007). Kant's schema account is critical to psychologists' current understanding of schema (Marshall, 2007; Neumann & Kopcha, 2018).

Sir Frederic Bartlett. Although Kant was pivotal in laying the foundation of the schema for psychologists, research linked schema and the schema theory to the field of Psychology through British Psychologist Sir Frederic Bartlett and his 1932 seminal work on "reconstructive memory." Bartlett utilized the term schema and connected it to numerous memory concepts to describe memory and its cultural ideas (An, 2013; Bartlett, 1932). His work revolved around how and what individuals remember (An, 2013; Bartlett, 1932; Bensalah & Gueroudj, 2020). According to Smith (2019), Barlett's work showed that personal experiences impact schemata's evolution and prevent long-term memories from remaining stagnant. Bartlett (1932) further suggested a connection between a person's cultural practices and schema (Altarriba & Forsythe, 1993; An, 2013; Dabrowska, 2019; Hunzaker & Valentino, 2019; Javadi & Tahmasbi, 2020). According to McVee (2005), the main conversation of the schema construct revolved around understanding how intricately rooted a person's thoughts are in their cultural experiences. Further research by Sir Frederic Bartlett and Swiss biologist and epistemologist Jean Piaget was critical in re-surfacing the concept schema (Marshall, 2007; Paul & Christopher, 2017).

Jean Piaget. Jean Piaget is known for the Theory of Cognitive Development, the twentieth century's most significant developmental theory (DeWolfe, 2021). The theory of cognitive development focused on four stages of development: sensorimotor (infancy), preoperational (preschool), concrete operational (school-age), and formal operational (adolescence to adulthood) (DeWolfe, 2021). Piaget's main contribution to understanding schemata is how they occur and shift (Marshall, 2007; McVee et al., 2005). He

considered human development a continuous process with existing schemata adapting or adjusting to fit new experiences (McVee et al., 2005).

20th Century Theorists

Theorists cited in 1975 with the resurrection of the schema theory include Marvin Minsky, Roger Schank, and David Rumelhart (Marshall, 2007). Minsky focused on schema and artificial intelligence, referred to as the frame. Schank and Abelson focused on a specific data formation called a script. Rumelhart focused on the schema's landscape and maintained using the term schema (Marshall, 2007). Rumelhart later joined forces with Andrew Ortony to continue research and formulated four schema characteristics (Marshall, 2007). Brewer and Treyens followed Rumelhart and Ortony, focusing on accidental memory (Brewer & Treyens, 1981). Alba and Hasher (1983) later worked to synthesize the research of previous theorists. Finally, one of the most known 20th-century theorists for schema research, Richard C. Anderson, connected schema to the reading process and comprehension (Marshall, 2007; McVee, 2005).

Marvin Minsky. In 1974 Minsky presented the development of a new theory focused on frames. He hypothesized that an individual retrieves information, a frame, from their memory when confronted with a new circumstance to make a change. Minsky (1974) stated that a frame is a data structure with related information to signify a specific situation. Marshall (2007) referred to Minsky's theory as "anticipatory knowledge in the knowledge structure." He also introduced schema as stationary and flexible (Marshall, 2007). Minsky's focus on remembering connects with Barlett's schema theory but differs by incorporating artificial intelligence (Marshall, 2007).

Roger Schank. In 1975 Roger Schank introduced another data structure referred to as a script (Marshall, 2007). Schank and Abelson approached the schema theory from an artificial intelligence perspective through computers, as Minsky did (Marshall, 2007). They also followed Bartlett's perspective of storytelling through scripts. According to Schank and Abelson (1977), a script is a pattern describing a series of events in a particular context, consisting of openings and constraints on what can occupy those openings. They further described the script as a recognizable condition defined by a categorized series of actions (Schank & Abelson, 1977).

David Rumelhart and Andrew Ortony. Minsky and Schank continued to build on the seminal theorists' schema ideas from an artificial intelligence perspective, whereas Rumelhart's contributions focused on our present knowledge of schemata (Marshall, 2007). Rumelhart (1981) described schemata as representative data structures of common beliefs stored in the memory (Marshall, 2007). Unlike Minsky's use of the term frame and Schank and Abelson's use of the term script, Rumelhart maintained the term schema (Anderson et al., 1976; Marshall, 2007; Rumelhart, 1977). Rumelhart's research focused on story comprehension, leading to his development of story grammar (Rumelhart, 1981). According to Rumelhart and Ortony (1977), schemata have four attributes: (1) schemata have variables; (2) schemata can embed one within the other; (3) schemata represent generic concepts, which, taken all together, vary in their levels of abstraction: and (4) schemata represent knowledge, rather than definitions (McVee, 2005).

Brewer and Treyens. Unlike previous schema theorists, Bartlett, Piaget, Minsky, and others focused more on rote memory activities; Brewer and Treyens focused on

everyday accidental memory occurring naturally (Brewer & Treyens, 1981). They used

schemata to encompass references to frames, scripts, plans, and prototypes of other

theorists. Brewer and Treyens (1981) suggested schemata could impact memory activity

in five different ways: (1) schemata can determine what objects are viewed and recorded

in memory; (2) schemata can act as a blueprint for new data; (3) schemata can provide

schema-based data which combines with occasional material; (4) schemata can lead the

recovery process; (5) schemata can control what information is shared. Based on Brewer

and Treyens' (1981) research, a schema is not easily defined or stagnant (Alba & Hasher,

1983).

Alba and Hasher. Alba and Hasher (1983) attempted to synthesize information

from previous schema theorists to develop a cohesive concept understanding. Their initial

goal was to bring order to the established research literature. They also purported four

schema characteristics as Rumelhart and Ortony (1977) and Brewer and Treyens (1981)

had; selection, abstraction, interpretation, and integration. According to Alba and Hasher

(1983), the semantic subject matter of selected information will be abstracted with the

unnecessary information discarded. Interpretation of the sematic subject matter will lead

to integrating the remaining information. These actions take place during the encoding

process. Alba and Hasher's research also brought forth other schema theory questions,

leading to further research.

Cultural Schema

Understanding the theorists associated with the schema theory laid the historical

foundation for overall understanding. However, further understanding of the schema

theory and its connection to this research study requires an understanding of the cultural aspect of the schema theory.

Rentsch et al. (2009) researched cultural schema in a military environment to identify a schema related to cultural awareness to equip Army leaders for operating in culturally diverse settings. The aim was to use these findings to train soldiers before deployment to foreign lands. They obtained information by interviewing two groups of soldiers and found three critical traits of cultural understanding: values and beliefs, traditions or customs, and religion. Although this study focused on soldiers, the findings were consistent with understanding cultural differences in education.

Smith (2019) connected cultural schema and its impact on reading comprehension (Altarriba & Forsythe, 1993; Yu, 2019). Cultural schemata are structured experience scaffolds specific to a unique culture (Altarriba & Forsythe, 1993; An, 2013). Dabrowska (2019) described cultural awareness as principles and ideals associated with a specific culture (An, 2013; Hunzaker & Valentino, 2019). Smith's (2019) conclusion was built on Altarriba and Forsythe's (1993) findings that cultural connections to text produce better comprehension and story recall (An, 2013; Smith, 2019; Yu, 2019). Research also suggested cultural connections to the text influence the values and mindsets of readers (Altarriba & Forsythe, 1993).

Beansalah and Gueroudj (2020) also maintained that cultural schemata impacted the fast comprehension of new texts and improved reading among ELL populations. Based on findings in their study, they postulated cultural schemata were substantial to reading comprehension, impacted the reading process, and activated a learner's prior

knowledge as the first step in comprehension (Bensalah & Gueroudj, 2020; McVee et al., 2005). Shen (2008) suggested culture plays a significant role in the reading process and a reader's understanding of the text and what it means. These findings purported the need for teachers to stimulate cultural understanding (Cai & Wu, 2020) in daily instruction to comprehend new text.

The migration of the schema theory from the Greek philosophers to Richard Anderson showed the impact it continues to make in reading, reading comprehension, and other areas of education. Incorporating schema with a learner's cultural background can decrease learning gaps among the ELL and minority populations and lead to academic growth and success (Hernandez, 2022; Husband & Kang, 2020; Ladson-Billings, 2022). Adding cultural responsiveness further enhances learning and may lead to more significant academic growth and success (Hernandez, 2022; Husband & Kang, 2020; Ladson-Billings, 2022).

Schema and Reading Comprehension

Bartlett introduced the term schema into psychology in 1932 (Bartlett, 1932; Bensalah & Gueroudj, 2020; Cai & Wu, 2020; Jaafar, 2020). The 1970s conversation among reading researchers pivoted towards the work of cognitive scientists and the connection between reading and schema (Anderson & Pearson, 1984; McVee et al., 2005; Paul & Christopher, 2017), while Rumelhart presented the term to the reading community in 1980 (Bensalah & Gueroudj, 2020; Spiro et al., 2019). Based on research, the relationship between reading comprehension and schema or schemata continues (Altarriba & Forsythe, 1993; Nurandini et al., 2017; Yu, 2019).

According to An (2013), the premise between text and the schema theory was that written text has no meaning without a person's schemata (Bensalah & Gueroudj, 2020; Paul & Christopher, 2017; Smith, 2019). An (2013) also postulated schemata must be activated (Bensalah & Gueroudj, 2020), which happens with single words, groups of words, phrases, or text titles. Nurandini (2017) referred to this as a collaborative procedure between the reader's schema and the text (An, 2013; Anderson, 2013; Paul & Christopher, 2017; Smith, 2019). Bensalah and Gueroudj (2020) referenced the importance of activating schema in developing and increasing reading comprehension (Fahriany, 2015; Shen, 2008). Fahriany (2015) suggested readers need schemata for text to have meaning (An, 2013; Smith, 2019). Smith (2019) connected schema and reading comprehension to a teacher's ability to close learning gaps using strategies that draw information from the student's background knowledge. Smith (2019) also addressed the need for ELL and minority students to make cultural connections or use cultural

schemata for accurate comprehension (Altarriba & Forsythe, 1993; Bensalah & Gueroudj, 2020; Yu, 2019).

Over the years, the progression of the schema theory became connected to reading comprehension. Theorist Richard C. Anderson was vital in making that connection. Exploration of reading pedagogy provides more detailed information on the connection of the schema theory to reading comprehension.

Reading Pedagogy

Reading Comprehension

When considering reading pedagogy and its connection to how reading teachers select and use evidence-based, culturally responsive strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 support services, it begins with understanding reading comprehension and its role in the schema theory. One of the most recognized schema theorists of the twentieth century is Richard C. Anderson (Marshall, 2007). According to McVee (2005), Anderson presented trailblazing research on the connection of schema to the reading process and stories. Marshall (2007) referenced Anderson's request for reading materials to stimulate a student's background knowledge. According to Anderson (1977), a schema denotes the basic understanding and truth of categories, circumstances, and experiences. In their 1976 study, Frameworks for Comprehending Discourse, Anderson et al. (1976) purported that the reader's knowledge structures are more significant than basic constructs. Anderson and his associates continued to build on the work and ideas of Sir Frederic Bartlett (1932), Immanuel Kant (1781), Minsky (1975), and Schank and Abelson (1975).

Anderson et al. (1976) proposed schemata symbolized general constructs representing activities, experiences, and entities. According to Anderson (1977), the schemata accommodate incoming information through openings. These schemata adapt to address the current knowledge structure (Anderson et al., 1976). Comprehension occurs when new information fills the gaps in applicable schemata (Anderson et al., 1976). On the other hand, there is no comprehension when the gaps remain empty (Anderson et al., 1976).

Anderson et al. (1976) experimented to understand the influence background differences have on their text interpretation. They predicted the participant's "high-level schemata" would impact their understanding. Findings backed the hypothesis that "high-level schemata" impact a person's interpretive comprehension. The study concluded that what people know impacts what they gain from reading new information (Anderson et al., 1976; Anderson, 1977). This conclusion aligns with the schema theory.

Anderson et al. (1976) and Anderson (1977) further suggested many challenges associated with reading comprehension may result from knowledge deficits rather than a lack of language development. They also suggested a person's level of understanding correlates to the knowledge they acquire from reading. In contrast, the assimilation of new text will differ based on a person's education level, cultural background, experiences, age, interests, and beliefs or values (Anderson et al., 1976; Anderson & Pearson, 1984).

Anderson (1977) believed three possible effects were associated with schema retrieval and encoding: the retrieval plan hypothesis, the output editing hypothesis, and the inferential reconstruction hypothesis. The first possible effect was the "retrieval plan"

hypothesis which considers new schemata that provide indirect signals based on text data. The "output editing" hypothesis was the second possible effect, suggesting a hierarchy within schemata. Finally, the third possible effect purported by Anderson (1977) is the "inferential reconstruction" hypothesis. This hypothesis suggested that new schemata guide inferencing when information is not available.

Anderson (1977) reiterated that differences in high-level schemata might impact reading comprehension (Anderson et al., 1976) but noted it was too soon to make a definitive statement that it will always determine good or struggling readers. Anderson et al. (1983) continued research on schemata and reading because they understood the reader's dilemma in discovering the schema for comprehension. They referenced two forms of schemata that could impact reading, textual schemata: understanding the text format, and content schemata: the reader's current understanding of real and imaginary (Anderson et al., 1983). Of the two forms of schemata, Anderson et al. (1983) considered content schemata vital to reading comprehension. Two findings from research on content schemata surfaced. First, the inferences readers make align with their schemata. Secondly, they recollect more content vital to their schemata.

Anderson and Pearson (1984) continued their research in schema and reading comprehension, suggesting that comprehension's foundation is a reader's systematic understanding of humanity. According to Anderson and Pearson (1984), a reader's culture, nationality, career choice, religion, age, and sex guide the schema that surfaces when reading a text (Anderson et al., 1976). He claimed that comprehension manifested

when a schema revealed the entire thought or idea (Anderson, 2013; Anderson & Pearson, 1984).

Anderson (2013, p. 598) concluded reading is a collaborative practice impacted by schemata that influence remembering and learning. He provided six purposes for schemata in the *Role of the Reader's Schema in Comprehension, Learning, and Memory*. First, "a schema provides ideational scaffolding for assimilating text information." In other words, schemata have specific openings for specific information. According to Anderson (2013, p. 598), the second purpose of a schema is that "schema facilitates selective allocation of attention." This purpose suggests that schemata create a hierarchy for text. Anderson's (2013, p. 599) third purpose of schemata is that "a schema enables inferential elaboration." Schemata lay the foundation for making inferences. The fourth purpose is that "a schema allows orderly memory searches" (Anderson, 2013, p. 599). The hierarchal aspect of schemata referenced in the second purpose supports this orderly search. The fifth purpose suggests that "a schema facilitates editing and summarizing" (Anderson, 2013, p. 599). Again, the second purpose of schemata creating a hierarchy is to provide a starting point for distinguishing information for summarization. Finally, according to Anderson (2013, p. 599), the sixth purpose of schemata is "a schema permits inferential reconstruction." In other words, inferences can fill the holes when information is lacking.

Finally, Anderson and Pearson (1984) presented three implications for further research concerning schema, reading, and comprehension: (1) challenged readers could have faults in learning; (2) challenged readers could lack understanding of the

connections to facts and what they know; and (3) challenged readers may not make inferences to bring information together. They also inferred that minority students might appear to lack the same level of comprehension of their school reading material based on the schema theory due to cultural differences in schemata from that of the majority students (Anderson & Pearson, 1984). Finally, they proposed that children of subcultures experience text differently based on their cultural schemata (Anderson & Pearson, 1984).

The schema theory has evolved from ancient Greek philosophers Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, and Meno to Sir Frederic Bartlett (1932) and Richard C. Anderson and Pearson (1984). From its start in structure and makeup to cognitive psychology and finally settling in reading comprehension, the schema theory remains a vital component of our developmental process. Much research surrounding the schema theory was available, but there remains room for continued research as we dig deeper into its impact on reading comprehension and development. Anderson and Pearson (1984) provided the foundation for further research as we studied culture's impact on a person's schema. In alignment with Anderson and Pearson's (1984) research, this research sought to understand the connection cultural schema has on reading development.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Reading pedagogy development continued through researchers Gloria Ladson-Billings and Geneva Gay's research on cultural responsiveness, culturally responsive pedagogy, and teacher preparation. In 1992, Ladson-Billings reported a change in educational demographics and a disparity among students of color and low socioeconomic status, especially African American students, resulting in an achievement

gap (Aronson, 2020; Chernoff et al.,2007; Gay, 1997; Hernandez, 2022; Walker & Hutchinson, 2021). To address the disparity among Black students, Gloria Ladson-Billings (1992) and Geneva Gay (2002 a, b) began research on implementing culturally responsive pedagogy to close the academic gap (Hernandez, 2022; Lopez, 2016).

According to Gay (2002 a, b), cultural responsiveness safeguards the learning of culturally diverse students by embracing their cultural differences (Aronson, 2020; Fetterman et al., 2020). Embedded in culturally relevant teaching or pedagogy is cultural responsiveness. Culturally responsive pedagogy gained relevance in education from Gloria Ladson-Billings, theory founder of culturally relevant pedagogy (Kotluck and Kocayay, 2020; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014), and Geneva Gay (2010, 2013 a, b), theorist of culturally responsive teaching.

Ladson-Billings (1992, p. 314) defined culturally relevant teaching as "a pedagogy of opposition that recognizes and celebrates African and African-American culture" (Aronson. 2020; Clark, 2021; Gay, 2015; Hollie, 2019; Warren, 2018). Ladson-Billings (1992) further explained culturally relevant teaching as a form of teaching developed to bring school culture and student culture together to meet the needs of individual students and aid them in understanding the culture of others. In an interview with Gloria Ladson-Billings, Clark (2021) recorded her description of culturally relevant pedagogy twenty-five years later as a teaching method used in any subject area to enhance learning but still requiring a change in pedagogy. In the de Silva et al. (2018) narrative study, they shared Ladson-Billings' beliefs that culturally relevant teaching is a method to aid students in connecting their real-world problems to academic learning.

Seriki and Brown (2017) referred to culturally responsive pedagogy as an instructional component of K-12 education reform attempts.

Three domains were associated with culturally relevant pedagogy: academic success, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness (Gay, 2002a; 2013a, b; Gay and Kirkland, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014, 2016, 2017, 2021). Academic success (student learning) referred to the academic growth students attain from learning opportunities and direct instruction (Clark, 2021; Gay; 2013 a, b; Gay and Kirkland, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014, 2016, 2017, 2021). Cultural competence referred to the students understanding and appreciation for their culture while also becoming fluent in another culture (Clark, 2021; Gay; 2013 a, b; Gay and Kirkland, 2003; Kotluk and Kocakaya, 2020; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014, 2016, 2017, 2021). Finally, sociopolitical consciousness referred to the real-world application of the things learned through academic success (Clark, 2021; Gay; 2013 a, b; Kotluk and Kocakaya, 2020; Ladson-Billings, 2021; Seriki and Brown, 2017; Linan-Thompson et al., 2018; Warren, 2018).

As the cultural divide grows, implementing the three components of culturally responsive teaching becomes more complex (Gay, 2015, Lambeth & Smith, 2016). The demographic representation of teachers dramatically differs from the student population: ethnically, racially, culturally, socially, educationally, economically, residentially, and their prior knowledge (Gay, 2002a). Middle-class, monolingual, European-American, suburban women comprise most of the teacher population (Gay, 2002a; Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Krasnoff, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2005). In contrast, the student population is vastly urban, poor, multilingual, and ethnic groups of color (Gay, 2018; Gay & Howard,

2000; Hilaski, 2020). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2020), 54.2% of students were students of color, and 62.6% of Georgia's students were students of color. 79.3% of teachers were White, and 20.7% were teachers of color (US Department of Education, 2018). The data validated the demographic divide.

Teacher Preparation

Meeting the needs of all learners through a culturally relevant platform requires a unique teacher with special skills (Ladson-Billings, 1991). Researchers reported that successful teachers incorporate culturally linguistically responsive practices into all instruction (Hilaski, 2020; Linan-Thompson et al., 2018). Researchers have also shown that teachers' opinions and knowledge surrounding cultural diversity are strong indicators of diverse students' learning possibilities and academic outcomes, facilitating or hindering learning (Gay, 2002a). Teacher biases can also lead to erroneous opinions and below-level expectations of students of color (Gay, 2002 a, b, 2013 a, b; Hernandez, 2022; Hilaski, 2020; Karatas, 2020). Teacher preparation is necessary to counter the formation of erroneous opinions and improve the academic achievement of students of color (Gay, 2003, 2005).

Although the theories of culturally responsive pedagogy and culturally relevant teaching surfaced in the early '90s, they remain relevant to education in the 21st century. The disparities African American students and students of color face remain prevalent in the 21st century, as does the achievement gap between African American and white students. There must remain an attempt to combat these challenges in education as we

move forward. That begins with educating the teachers of today and tomorrow on implementing cultural responsiveness.

Ladson-Billings and Gay realized prepared teachers were necessary for the implementation of effective reading pedagogy and culturally responsive pedagogy. Hence the need to further address the needs of teacher preparation programs. One major challenge was the need to bring commonality to the "cultural mismatch" between students of color and the current teacher population. (Gay, 1997, 2002b; Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Owens & Weigel, 2018). Teacher preparation programs must address the mismatch by incorporating culturally responsive pedagogy (Rychly & Graves, 2012). Researchers described the largest population of teachers as European-American, monolingual women. This mismatch requires a change in the teacher preparation process (Ladson-Billings, 2005; Lowenstein, 2009; Owens & Weigel, 2018; Pierce, 2005). According to Grant et al. (2021), English Language Learner (ELL) students reported a lack of prepared teachers to support their needs adequately (Hoover & Soltero-Gonzalez, 2018). At the same time, researchers have reported that teacher preparation programs fought to prepare teachers to meet the needs of students of color (Allen et al., 2017).

Researchers suggested a need to make culturally responsive teaching the focus of teacher preparation programs, not just an additional course (Allen et al., 2017; Gay, 1997; Gay & Howard, 2000; Karatas, 2020; Lowenstein, 2009; Owens & Weigel, 2018; Zeicher et al., 1998). According to Banks et al. (2001), effective teacher preparation programs should assist teachers in 1) revealing their personal racial, language, ethnic, and cultural biases; 2) attaining an understanding of the cultural backgrounds of students in their

schools; 3) gaining insight into the diversity within cultural and ethnic communities; 4) understanding institutions can disseminate racial and ethnic biases, and 5) attaining the understanding and abilities to develop and implement culturally responsive pedagogy.

According to Karatas (2020), undergraduate Education students should take practical and theoretical courses focused on cultural responsiveness. In contrast, researchers suggested that preservice teachers observe students in their family and community settings to understand where they may encounter success (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Lambeth & Smith, 2016). Researchers have shown that teachers' instructional methods make a difference in student learning (Milner, 2014). Current research suggested training teachers for entry into the K-12 setting through teacher preparation programs focusing on culturally responsive pedagogy (Ramsay-Jordan, 2020). According to Zeicher et al. (1998), quality teacher education requires a multicultural basis.

21st Century classrooms are overflowing with diverse ethnicities, cultures, languages, economic statuses, races, personalities, and mindsets. The challenge we encounter is the teacher population is not reflective of the student population, causing a great divide within our classrooms (Lambeth & Smith, 2016; Milner & Laughter, 2015). Impacting this great divide requires an evaluation of our teacher preparation programs and extensive recruitment of more diverse educators (Lambeth & Smith, 2016; Milner, 2006). Until teachers accurately understand culturally relevant pedagogy and teaching, our classrooms will not be culturally responsive or prepared to provide intervention to Black students and students of color.

Intervention Pedagogy

21st-Century Multitiered Intervention Frameworks

Students across the United States are identified daily to receive additional support

to close academic gaps. Numerous initiatives have been put in place to address closing

these gaps. Response to Intervention (RTI) and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

are two frameworks established to guide schools' intervention processes across the United

States (Al Otaiba et al., 2019; Alahmari, 2019; Berkeley et al., 2020). Much research

exists around the RTI/MTSS framework processes with expectations of addressing the

needs of all learners.

RTI / MTSS Frameworks

Many districts and schools alternate between RTI and MTSS frameworks' when

referring to Multi-Tiered Supports (Austin et al., 2017; Orosco & Klingner, 2010). RTI

and MTSS frameworks were developed to address struggling students' needs through

early detection and intervention (Al Otaiba et al., 2019; Hendricks & Fuchs, 2020; Kelley

et al., 2018; Orosco & Klingner, 2010). The focus is on providing tiered support to all

students based on their individual needs (Alahmari, 2019; Hendricks & Fuchs, 2020;

Kelley et al., 2018). The 1977 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities

Education Act (IDEA) led to the need for response to intervention (RTI), a different way

of identifying students with learning disabilities (Bradley and Danielson, 2004).

Response to intervention (RTI) continued to emerge during the 2004 reauthorization of

IDEA (Preston et al., 2016). The 2004 reauthorization concentrated on recognizing and

remediating students with learning disabilities (LD) (Preston et al., 2016). Further

implementation of response to intervention (RTI) proceeded with research-based interventions provided for all students as soon as they are not responding to Tier 1 general education instruction (Bradley et al., 2007).

According to Foorman et al. (2018), implementation of the frameworks involved tiered intervention with the delivery of Tier 1 instruction to all students from the general education teacher (Kelley & Goldstein, 2018; Solari et al., 2018). An intervention teacher or specialist generally delivers Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions. Tier 2 interventions provide students with additional support in a small group setting (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2017; Vess et al., 2018) and consistent progress monitoring (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2017) when Tier 1 instruction fails to produce expected growth (Sterrett et al., 2020). Tier 3 intervention is more intensive and delivered to students when Tier 2 interventions are ineffective in meeting the student's needs (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2017; Sterrett et al., 2020). Researchers suggested this can eliminate the over-identification of students requiring Tier 3 support leading to special education services (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2017; Sterrett et al., 2020).

According to Majeika et al. (2020) and Solari et al. (2018), implementing interventions with fidelity produced positive results. However, ensuring the fidelity of implementation can prove challenging. Coyne et al. (2018) suggested integrating or combining evidence-based interventions and increasing intensity and implementation fidelity to attain positive outcomes (Majeika et al., 2020; Sterrett et al., 2020; Vess et al., 2018). On the other hand, Berkeley et al. (2020) reported a significant implementation of disparity across states.

Majeika et al. (2020) suggested improving intervention effectiveness by adapting portions of Tier 2 interventions. Sterrett et al. (2020) went a step further and suggested culturally responsive modifications to Tier 2 behavior interventions when they do not meet the student's needs instead of progressing to Tier 3. Majeika et al. (2020) also suggested adjustments to evidence-based Tier 2 interventions and vertical (made during implementation) and horizontal (made before implementation) modifications.

It is essential to understand how teacher preparation affects implementation fidelity and know when and how to adapt and modify interventions. Shepley and Grisham-Brown (2019) reported that MTSS intervention impacts preschoolers' social-emotional performance when teachers receive professional development and training. Vess et al. (2018) suggested combining evidence-based practices, implementation fidelity, and qualified interventionists will produce positive results. Whereas Alahmari (2019), Hoover and Soltero-Gonzalez (2018), and Orosco and Klingner (2010) reported the lack of teacher preparation leads to the inability to meet learners' needs of other languages and cultures and make the necessary modifications. Interventionist preparation is vital to the RIT framework accomplishment (Orosco & Klingner, 2010; Vess et al., 2018). On the other hand, a lack of teacher preparation and understanding of RTI and MTSS best practices leads to ineffective delivery of interventions (Braun et al., 2020; Hoover & Soltero-Gonzalez, 2018, Nagro et al., 2019).

There is a need to bring about cohesiveness in implementing MTSS across states, school districts, and schools to meet the needs of all students. There is also a need to consider the cultural, linguistic, and social-emotional needs of a student identified to

receive additional support services through MTSS. Ensuring teachers receive professional development in serving students identified to receive support services through MTSS with evidence-based, culturally responsive interventions will impact their services and the outcome of closing academic gaps (Hernandez, 2022; Husband & Kang, 2020; Ladson-Billings, 2022, 2018; Same et al., 2018).

Evidence-Based Practices

Again, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 was written to hold schools accountable for providing evidence-based interventions to improve student outcomes (Beal & Small, 2020; Georgia Department of Education, 2017; Evidence-Based Practices, 2022; Iris Center, 2020; Mahoney, 2020; Slavin, 2018, 2020; and Slavin & Chambers, 2017). Evidence-based practices (EBPs) or evidence-based interventions (EBIs) are strategies reinforced by intense research that proves the practice or program works (Beal & Small, 2020; Ciullo et al., 2016; Georgia Department of Education, 2017; Evidence-Based Practices, 2018; Iris Center, 2020; Mahoney, 2020). Researchers have reported that to address student needs and implement evidence-based practices with fidelity, EBPs are scripted (Farmer, 2020; Farmer et al., 2018; McCollow & Hoffman, 2020).

Researchers have also shown that African American male students experiencing challenges in writing showed improvement when combining writing processes with evidence-based practices (Graham et al., 2019). In contrast, selecting appropriate evidence-based practices remains a challenge for teachers due to a lack of training and professional development in the selection and implementation of EBPs (Farmer et al.,

2018; Graham et al., 2019; Mahoney, 2020; McCollow & Hoffman, 2020; Pas et al., 2020). Although the ESSA mandate proposed three standards: strong evidence, moderate evidence, or promising evidence to determine if programs and resources met the expectations of evidence-based practices (Slavin, 2018, 2020; Slavin & Chambers, 2017), not all teachers have received training or professional development in the area.

As with culturally responsive pedagogy and culturally relevant teaching, evidence-based practices are another area where teachers lack sufficient preparation. The field of education continuously changes and evolves, but the evolution does not always include professional development and preparation. Lack of preparation and cultural responsiveness perpetuates the achievement gap, as does the lack of understanding of evidence-based practices.

Summary and Conclusions

The literature highlighted that access to evidence-based, culturally responsive interventions is critical to academic achievement and reading development for Black students receiving Tier 2 support services. Reading intervention teachers must be trained to implement evidence-based, culturally responsive interventions. With this background knowledge, the reading intervention teacher will be better prepared to decide which effective evidence-based, culturally responsive intervention to use with Black students receiving Tier 2 support services.

I accessed and reviewed over 300 articles related to the schema theory, RTI/MTSS frameworks, evidence-based practices, culturally responsive pedagogy, and teacher preparation. Two hundred plus articles provided a limited understanding of using

effective evidence-based, culturally responsive strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 support services. Chapter 3 provides a detailed discussion of the methodology used in this research study to explore reading intervention teachers' intervention strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 support services. While there are numerous research studies on interventions, there are limited studies on understanding the reading intervention teachers' decision-making process when working with Black students receiving Tier 2 support services. This study aimed to provide data relevant to understanding how reading intervention teachers decide when selecting and implementing literacy teaching for social equities.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 mandates and holds schools accountable to provide evidence-based interventions to improve student outcomes by developing and implementing a comprehensive and progressive support plan. The problem was that literacy research has shown little evidence on how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. The questions that guided this study provided insight into how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. This basic qualitative study with thematic analysis provided themes associated with how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. In this chapter, I (a) described the research design; (b) described my role as the researcher; (c) explained the methodology approach as it relates to the participant selection, instrumentation, and data collection; and (d) provided transparency to components of ethical practices for this study.

Research Design and Rationale

This study explored how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive strategies to support Black students

receiving Tier 2 services. This basic qualitative approach study explored the research questions: RQ1: How are elementary reading intervention teachers deciding how to use evidence-based reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services? RQ2: How are elementary reading intervention teachers deciding how to use culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services?

The rationale behind selecting a qualitative rather than a quantitative study was to increase the amount of data gathered from the research questions while recording the lived experiences and insights of the reading intervention teachers (Britten, 1995; Charuel et al., 2022). According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), a qualitative approach focuses on data collection in the participant's natural setting to gain meaning in perspective, with the researcher serving as the apparatus for data collection. Researchers also seek to understand people's explanations of their experiences in a qualitative study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Furthermore, qualitative studies utilize words, whereas quantitative studies focus on quantity, and data is presented numerically through statistical procedures (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Qualitative and quantitative studies differ further in their characteristics. Qualitative studies focus on quality with roots in phenomenology and constructivism (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

In contrast, quantitative studies focus on quantity having roots in positivism and realism (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Terms associated with qualitative research are fieldwork, naturalistic, and ethnographic, whereas terms associated with quantitative research are experimental and statistical (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The goal of qualitative research is generally discovery, and quantitative research is usually

hypothetical. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), qualitative design is generally flexible and evolving with small, nonrandom sample sizes, whereas quantitative designs are structured with large random sample sizes. Qualitative research is elaborately descriptive, and quantitative research is numerically accurate (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

There are numerous qualitative research designs, but Merriam and Tisdell (2016) and Merriam and Grenier (2019) focus on six common designs: basic qualitative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, narrative analysis, and qualitative case studies. In education, basic qualitative research studies are regarded as the most common form of qualitative research, with interviews, observations, and document evaluation as the data collection sources (Merriam & Grenier, 2019; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Phenomenology, another qualitative research design, studied the soul or composition of people's life experiences (Merriam & Grenier, 2019; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Phenomenology was not selected for this study because it aimed to gather information from the teachers based on their lived experiences with their students and not necessarily their personal lives. Ethnography focused on culture and human civilization (Merriam & Grenier, 2019; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Although the study has a cultural component, ethnography was not selected because the phenomenon being studied is not seen through the eyes of the culture (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016).

Grounded theory, another qualitative research design, results when a theory manifests from the data (Merriam & Grenier, 2019; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Grounded theory design was not selected because the desire is not to develop another theory from the data but to gain insight from the lived experiences of the reading intervention

teachers. The narrative inquiry design, one of the oldest and most common qualitative research designs, analyzes people's stories (Merriam & Grenier, 2019; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The narrative inquiry design was not chosen because it was less about telling a story or writing a narrative. Again, the study aimed to gain insight into how reading intervention teachers decide how to use evidence-based, culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 support services. The final qualitative research design examined by Merriam and Tisdell (2016) was case studies. Case studies comprehensively explain and evaluate an entity within specific boundaries (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Case studies were not selected because the study focused on the decision-making process of the teachers and not the teachers or students, as well as the time required to conduct a case study.

The applied social sciences, such as education, social services, and healthcare, utilize qualitative research for data collection (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Therefore, a basic qualitative approach study was selected based on the nature of the study and the fact that only one data source, interviews, will be utilized. This study intended to contribute to the understanding of how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use evidence-based, culturally responsive reading interventions to support Black students receiving Tier 2 support services. This study aimed to provide obtained data for other reading intervention teachers serving similar populations to possibly close the academic gap and move students from Tier 2 back to Tier 1 general classroom instruction. This study also aimed to provide needed data for further research.

The uncertainty of the Covid-19 pandemic was vital in selecting interviews rather than observations, focus groups, or case studies due to the need for social distancing. Ensuring the safety of all involved parties also impacted the decision to implement a basic qualitative study through interviews. Obtaining and recording information directly from the participants in a safe and secure setting was also considered. Hence the selection of the basic qualitative approach, according to Merriam and Greiner (2019), focused on realizing and understanding people's experiences in their world at specific times and in certain situations.

Again, this qualitative research explored how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. The 10 reading intervention teachers provided a representative perspective to examine the phenomenon of evidence-based, culturally responsive interventions. As a basic qualitative approach study, the subjective view and method are central to understanding the lived experiences of each reading intervention teacher, enabling the qualitative patterns of experiences of the phenomenon to emerge through descriptive thematic analysis (Patton, 2015; Saldana, 2016). This study incorporated in-depth interviewing to go beyond the isolated reading intervention teacher experience to develop a perspective of how they decide how to use evidence-based, culturally responsive strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services.

Role of the Researcher

As the researcher, my responsibility was to be a non-biased observer and listener to ensure precise documentation of each participant's viewpoint. My role as a researcher required careful documentation of interviews as research data. This detailed documentation guided the interpretation of inductive evaluation (Paton, 2015; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). As the researcher in this basic qualitative study, it was my responsibility to remain subjective to ensure the participant perspectives are represented and not the objective data interpretation of the researcher (Saldana, 2016). According to Patton (2015), as a natural study, basic qualitative research permits the researcher to observe, collect, and document detailed participant insights and perspectives with vivid descriptions as experienced within complicated phenomenon conditions. Throughout the study, I remained conscious of my role as the researcher and did not interject my perceptions of the phenomenon as a teacher or instructional coach. There was no professional or personal relationships between myself and the participants.

Methodology

The goal of this basic qualitative study with thematic analysis was to understand how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. Data collection was through semistructured, face-to-face interviews with 10 reading intervention teachers, as most data collection takes place in qualitative research (Merrian & Tisdell, 2015). Merriam and Tisdell (2015) described semistructured interviews as

consisting of flexible questioning, flexible interview question structure, and flexible wording of the interview questions.

Participant Selection Logic

Purposeful Homogenous Snowball Sampling Data Collection Process

Participant selection for 10 reading intervention teachers occurred through purposeful homogenous snowball sampling. Snowball or chain sampling involves the recruitment of significant interviewees who provide other contacts who can provide valuable perspectives on the research focus (Patton, M., 2015).

Participant Selection Criteria

This basic qualitative approach study was designed to gain insight into the participant's decision-making process for using evidence-based, culturally responsive strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. The goal was for the 10 participants to provide substantial data to meet saturation. The participants met the following criteria: (a) clear renewable teacher certification through Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC), (b) currently serve as reading intervention teachers, and (c) currently serve Black students through the Tier 2 MTSS support program.

Recruitment and Contact Procedures

Upon receiving permission from IRB to proceed with the research, contact was made with three to five reading intervention teachers who met the selection criteria. I asked chosen participants to provide contact information for additional potential participants. Precautions were taken to protect and minimize the privacy of referred participants by extending a research invitation to each prospective participant, informing

them of the research purpose and process, and allowing them to contact me. This process

was repeated until the participant selection of 10 reading intervention teachers met the

required criteria. I provided potential participants expressing interest in participating with

an electronic copy of the interview informed consent form for their approval. The consent

form provided the ethical and procedural process for participation. To ensure the study's

credibility, I followed up with selected participants to schedule interviews upon receiving

their signed informed consent form in Appendix C. The snowball sampling provided the

needed number of participants to attain saturation.

Instrumentation

Interview Guide

The interview guide approach outlined questions aligning with the purpose and

research questions. The design of the questions and the follow-up probes provided in-

depth insights from the reading intervention teacher's perspective and informed the study

(Patton, 2015). The basic qualitative approach study developed insight and understanding

of the phenomenon through open-ended interview questions in Appendix D. The

interviews required well-designed, data-supported questions to elicit data-emersed insight

from the reading intervention teachers (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The interview guide

served as a framework to stimulate informal conversation to produce and capture the

lived experiences of the reading intervention teacher's understanding. The interview

guide included multiple probe questions to determine the path of the conversation and

probe for a more in-depth understanding or detailed explanation. I provided participants

with a follow-up transcript within one month after their interview, allowing them to

clarify and ensure the accurate representation of their statements, and add credibility to the study.

The interview guide included a checklist of legal and ethical procedures for review at the beginning and end of the interview. The checklist ensured that all procedures were followed and met according to research guidelines. The overall procedure included ensuring the interview participation was voluntary throughout the entire process, with confidentiality, informed consent, risk-free interviews and interactions, and transcript approval.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

The basic qualitative approach study used interviews for data collection with reading intervention teachers that occurred through a synchronous communication format according to the following implementation timeline (see Table 1).

Table 1

Data Collection Timeline

Timeframe	Data Collection Task
Weeks 1 – 2	- Researcher recruitment of participants with inquiry letter or email to each potential participant - Upon communicated consensus agreement of each participant, an informed consent form will be provided for documented signature and agreement - The participants will be asked to provide names of additional participants that meet the criteria for the study - Follow-up inquiries will be sent to each potential recruited study participant with an informational flyer - Follow-up with the informed consent form to interested participants
Week 2	- Collection of informed consent forms and scheduling of interviews - Possible continuation of recruitment of study participants - Interview in person or via Zoom based on participant preference
Weeks 3 – 5	- Interview in person or via Zoom based on participant preference - Preparations of interview transcripts for approval and clarifications - Data analysis - Possible continuation of recruitment of study participants - Possible continuation of additional interviews via participant format preference
Week 6	- Possible continuation of data analysis - Possible continuation of interview meetings - Possible continuation of preparations of interview transcripts for approval and clarifications
Weeks 7-8	- Data analysis - Debriefing and closure with participants, reminding each of data privacy, anonymous participation in the research analysis and reporting, and security of all documents, with the shredding of all data collection after completion - Mail out a stipend of participation appreciation to each participant

I conducted 45-60-minute interviews with a pre-interview questionnaire either in person or via Zoom due to Covid 19 stipulations. The conversations were audiotaped to ensure accuracy when transcribing and authenticated by the participant to ensure that the transcript had been accurately documented (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Alignment of the interview and research questions was vital to attaining informed insight and data from the study. The interview guide was used as the data collection through data analysis to promote an in-depth understanding of each participant's perspective on deciding how to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive interventions with Black students receiving Tier 2 support services.

Data Analysis Plan

This basic qualitative study approach with thematic analysis was utilized to understand how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. Through thematic data analysis, this study sought to answer the research questions of how elementary reading intervention teachers are deciding how to use effective evidence-based reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services and how elementary reading intervention teachers are deciding how to use effective culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. Embedding these research questions into open-ended interview questions provided the framework for establishing unique themes and categories in the coding process of the collected data (Saldana, 2016). According to Saldana (2016), data collected from the interviews will be coded and encoded to establish patterns. The patterns provided evidence of the research findings' trustworthiness and strengthened the collected data's confidence (Saldana, 2016). Data collection and analysis coincided by transcribing audiotapes of the interview data to determine themes and patterns and for analysis and synthesis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). According to Merriam and Grenier

(2019), concurrent thematic data comparative analysis allows themes and patterns to emerge and evolve, producing synthesized data from each question.

Issues of Trustworthiness

The design of this basic qualitative approach study provided insight into how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services through in-depth interviews. Ensuring trustworthiness in a qualitative study requires credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) further purported there must be documentation and substantiation of the interview process in qualitative research to yield trustworthiness.

Ethical Procedures

From participant selection to data collection, ethical procedures were in place to ensure participant confidentiality, privacy, and safety. Any concerns will be addressed immediately. Protocol and procedures of voluntary participation and the option to withdraw from the study at any time were reiterated throughout the process. Participant data and demographic information were stored through password-protected procedures to ensure participant anonymity and confidentiality. I also adhered to Walden University's requirements to maintain and store participant data for a minimum of five years.

Summary

The problem was that literacy research has shown little evidence on how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. This

basic qualitative approach study aimed to understand how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. Transparency of each component of the study occurred during data collection, along with continuous attention to the alignment of each research question in the interview research guide. Recruited participants were provided detailed information and signed consent forms to ensure participant privacy. All information was documented throughout the data collection, interviewing, coding, and debriefing with a clear audit trail to ensure trustworthiness. The details of the research study provided an in-depth analysis of how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

This study aimed to understand how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. Two research questions were used to explore this phenomenon.

RQ1: How do elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services?

RQ2: How do elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services?

In this chapter, I describe the research setting, participant demographics, and the data collection and analysis process. I also provide evidence of trustworthiness within the research. Finally, I present the research results and chapter summary.

Setting

I invited elementary reading intervention teachers who served Black students receiving Tier 2 support to participate in the study, which could have led to a possible limitation of this study. I conducted the interviews virtually using Zoom. Ten elementary reading intervention teachers consented to participate in the study. All participants met the established criteria of being a Georgia-certified elementary kindergarten through fifth-grade reading intervention teacher serving or previously served Black students

receiving Tier 2 support services. Each participant reviewed and gave consent digitally

before the interview was conducted. I scheduled interview times through email.

Demographics

Ten educators agreed to participate in my study. Nine were female, and one was

male. Seven were early intervention program (EIP) teachers, which provided small group

and one-on-one reading intervention instruction, two were instructional coaches, and one

was a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) coordinator serving as the lead over the

MTSS department. Their teaching experience ranged from 8 to 44 years, and their

experience as a reading teacher ranged from four to 23 years. Each participant was given

a code to maintain confidentiality: Teacher 1, Teacher 2, Teacher 3, Teacher 4, Teacher

5, Teacher 6, Teacher 7, Teacher 8, Teacher 9, and Teacher 10.

Data Collection

The interviews lasted between 45 and 60 minutes each. The data collection

process took approximately one week, April 1-8, 2023. I conducted interviews via Zoom

and audio-recorded all one-to-one interviews using a digital audio recording app on my

securely locked iPhone. Before each interview, I asked participants to permit the

interview to be audio recorded. All participants agreed to be audio recorded. I transcribed

each interview verbatim from the recorded audio using Microsoft Word transcribe. To

check for accuracy, I listened to each recording after transcription to correct grammatical

errors, misspellings, additions, or omissions and edited as needed. I emailed each

encrypted transcript to the participant for corrections or approval. Nine participants

replied with approval emails. One participant who could not provide clear and concise

responses during the interview replied with corrections. I will store the data collected for this research study for five years per Walden University's research guidelines. At the end of the five-year window, I will delete the data from my hard drive and personal computer and will no longer have access.

The interviews began with introducing myself and reviewing the process and protocol. I reminded each participant of the consent form they signed before the interview. Then I reviewed the study's purpose and research questions. Next, I asked the participants for any beginning questions/concerns. I asked the participants questions based on the research questions (see Appendix D). I used reflective journaling to reflect on thoughts and key details during and after each interview (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). At the end of the interview, I informed participants they would receive a copy of our conversation transcript, to ensure that I had accurately documented our conversation and to clarify my understanding of their experiences and insights for participant validation or member checking (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). I further explained if participants had any questions or concerns before I reached out to them, they could reach me by email. I thanked each interviewee for their participation and offered them a $25 Amazon gift card for their time and participation. I followed all steps in the data collection plan in Chapter 3. Data collection went as planned without any unexpected circumstances.

I conducted a practice interview with a family member before recruiting participants. The family member was able to provide feedback on my performance as the interviewer and the flow and clarity of the questions. I recorded and transcribed the practice interview allowing me to gain feedback from my committee chair. I was also

able to anticipate responses and ensure I used appropriate follow-up responses to obtain valuable and insightful information about the teacher's selection and use of effective evidence-based, culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students. Using the interview decorum with prepared research questions and follow-up probing questions allowed data saturation and lessened the possibility of research bias.

Data Analysis

I designed this basic qualitative study to understand how reading teachers select and use evidence-based, culturally responsive strategies to support Black students. I obtained data for this study from semistructured interviews with ten participants. The interviews were conducted via Zoom and audio-recorded using a digital audio recording app on my securely locked iPhone and transcribed with Microsoft Word transcribe. I saved individual interview transcripts as encrypted Word documents and listened to each recording after transcription to correct grammatical errors, misspellings, additions, or omissions and edited as needed. I emailed transcripts to participants for member checking and data analysis approval. No unusual circumstances occurred during data collection.

Coding Preparation

When I completed the interviews, I transcribed each interview using Microsoft Word transcribe and saved each transcript into an encrypted Microsoft Word document. Before I began thematic data analysis, I created a coding template with columns to organize the data by participant numbers and responses, coding patterns, categories, and themes for each research and probe question. This template simplified data retrieval and analysis. I separated the questions by participant numbers and transferred their responses

into the coding template. I followed each question with participant responses with columns incorporated for participant number, participant response, and coding labels: pattern, categories, and themes.

I highlighted passages in yellow when discovering patterns and quotes during the first coding cycle. Second-cycle coding included themes, and the final cycle produced the categories. The pattern coding method (Saldana, 2016) aided me in discovering the frequent codes across participants. For example, four participants reported not considering culture when deciding on effective culturally responsive reading strategies to support black students receiving Tier 2 services. This data suggests that six of the ten reading intervention teachers considered their student's culture when deciding what reading intervention strategies to use with Black students. The other four reading intervention teachers did not consider culture when deciding what reading intervention strategies to use with Black students.

<div align="center">**First-Level Coding**</div>

Data Familiarization

Familiarization with the data and data collection required numerous phases. It also required familiarization with the participant's roles and levels of experience in those roles (see Table 2) to ensure they met the required criteria. Phase 1 was familiarization with the data. Phase 2 was data analysis for patterns. Phase 3 was data analysis for categories, and the final phase was data analysis for themes. To begin familiarization with the data, I began hand coding and transferring data from the transcripts into the synonymous

columns. Then I applied pre-coding highlighting (Saldana, 2016) or open coding (Ravitch

& Carl, 2016) to participant passages and quotes relevant to the research questions.

Table 2

Participant Teaching Experience

Participant	**School Type** District (D) Or Charter (C)	Number of Years in Education	Current Position	Number of Years in Current Position	Number of Years in Elementary Reading	Grades Taught Reading
1	D	23	EIP Teacher	2	23	3rd-5th
2	C	18	Instructional Coach	1	15	K, 1, 4
3	C	10	EIP Reading Teacher	2	10	4th, 5th
4	C	11	ELA Instructional Coach	New	11	Pre-k 1st, 2nd, 3rd
5	C	8	EIP Teacher	2	5	K-5
6	C	20	EIP Teacher	4	4	4th-8th
7	C	17	MTSS Coordinator	2	17	K-3rd
8	D	26	EIP Teacher	2	16	1st, 2nd, 4th, 6th
9	C	44	EIP	8	10	K-6th
10	D	14	Early Intervention Program (EIP) teacher	5	14	Pre-K, 1ST, 2ND, 3RD

I also applied lumper coding by identifying excerpts from participants' transcripts and

applying In Vivo Coding to encapsulate and exemplify the heart of the excerpt (Saldana,

2016). I reviewed the transcripts and journal notes while highlighting and tabulating the

frequency of passages and quotes aligned to the research questions and conceptual

framework of schema theory.

Second-Level Coding

Data Analysis for Patterns

Further review of the interview transcripts revealed participant patterns and the frequency of patterns for the particular questions. I highlighted the quotes and passages from the participant responses relevant to the research questions. I identified patterns from the highlighted quotes and passages and copied them into the patterns column of the coding template. Table 3 represents a sample of the coding template used to organize the research questions data. It shows selections from the data, participant identifiers, patterns, categories, and themes corresponding to the two research questions.

Table 3

Coding Template to Organize Data from Interview Questions

RESARCH QUESTION #1: *How do you decide how to use effective evidence-based reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services?*				
Teacher #	**Participant Response**	**Codes**		
		Patterns	**Categories**	**Themes**
T6	Well, um I start by doing basically pretest with them to meet them where they are and um I review the data for the back, the past data on GMAS, on MAP scores i-Ready scores and see where their strengths and weaknesses are. And then I start partitioning the kids into different groups, you know as to see ok I know that these two or these three students are on first grade reading level, I will pull those together. Some students are about second grade reading level, they're a little bit better you know and, and I just decide which groups to set up that way. After I've of course had some time with them reviewing all of the data, giving them pretests and basically you know just talking with them. Trying to motivate them to see where they are.	"I start by doing basically pretest with them to meet them where they are and um I review the data for the back, the past data on GMAS, on MAP scores i-Ready scores and see where their strengths and weaknesses are."	**Data Collection** *Universal screeners -3 times/year *End of year-Summative *Progress Monitoring *Classroom assessments *Pre-test *Program assessments – every 4 weeks	Data analysis
RESEARCH QUESTION #2: *How do you decide how to use effective culturally responsive reading strategies to support black students receiving Tier 2 services?*				
Teacher #	**Participant Response**	**Codes**		
		Patterns	**Categories**	**Themes**
T1	Um, when you say you know culturally responsive and Black students, I don't know that I do anything different for my students based on their background. I do have some students who are not American. They have come from other countries or they speak other languages as a first language. They also receive a different service from a different teacher for that, but with my students I don't do anything different for them that I do for the Caucasian student, or a Hispanic student, or a French-Canadian student that comes. Um I think that I treat all of my students the same with the same you know love and respect, I don't do anything I don't think that there's anything that I do different for one set of kids than another set of kids. It's just about student need for me. Um I hug them all, I high five them all, I speak to them all about you know sometimes what's going at home, you know what's going on at home, you know, how can I support you at home? Are there things that you need? Like to feel that all of my students are very comfortable. In the role that I work in now I do like that I get to work with for multiple years if they stay at the school. Relationship that maybe I've developed with them in 3rd grade. I am familiar to them if they've been at the school for a number of years. And I just think that familiar face, that comfortable you know voice, I feel like I am trusted. if there are a student needs. But I don't know that I do anything specific, differently for my African American students that I do that I don't do for anybody else.	"when you say you know culturally responsive and Black students, I don't know that I do anything different for my students based on their background."	"I don't know that I do anything different for my students based on their background." (||||)	I don't (||||)

I implemented this coding phase over seven days to ensure alignment with the research questions and conceptual framework. Many codes reflected direct quotes and highlighted passages. As codes emerged, I re-read responses to tabulate pattern occurrences. The process produced over 300 codes among all 10 participants.

Data Analysis for Categories

As I continued the iterative process, comprehensive headings or categories emerged as I organized and grouped similar and identical patterns. The categories allowed me to condense and further synthesize the 300-plus patterns. I also tabulated the patterns under categories to gain a more concise image of their frequency. This process allowed me to minimize the 300-plus patterns to 71 categories for RQ1 and 103 for RQ2. I reiterated this process numerous times to ensure I considered all patterns and correctly organized them among categories (see Table 3).

Data Analysis for Themes

Embarking on a more extensive review of the data collected from the interviews for this basic qualitative study on how reading teachers select and use evidence-based, culturally responsive strategies to support Black students produced unambiguous themes. Unearthing these themes required continuous review of the raw data, patterns, and categories to produce concise themes. This iterative process required a clear grasp of the raw data, forming accurate patterns, constructing more specific categories, and emerging themes. According to Ravitch and Carl (2016), themes arise from continuous engagement with the data and the correlation of codes as they develop.

Discrepant Cases

Ravitch and Carl (2016) suggest looking for data that does not conform or align with most data collected to increase validity. They refer to this data as outliers or discrepant cases (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Analysis and coding of the data produced two discrepancies. Three of the ten participants are not currently in EIP teacher positions. Although they do not currently hold the position of EIP teacher, it did not directly impact the data collected; they previously held the position and answered research questions based on experience.

Another discrepant case that surfaced during data analysis and coding was using evidence-based websites to identify effective evidence-based reading strategies to support black students receiving Tier 2 services. One participant referenced utilizing the web-based site What Works Clearinghouse to identify evidence-based resources. Other participants referenced school or district resources required for use without the autonomy to select other resources.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), trustworthiness is the level of certainty in a study's results. Trustworthiness also consists of four criteria, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As stated in Chapter 3, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) imply there must be documentation and substantiation of the interview process in qualitative research to yield trustworthiness. I followed Walden University guidelines before the study, during data collection, and after collection to ensure trustworthiness. Trustworthiness was further evident in the study through member

checks, reflexive journaling, and prolonged engagement (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, & Tisdell, 2016).

Credibility

According to Ravitch and Carl (2016), credibility connects to the researcher's instruments, the research design, and the collected data. Guba (1981) suggests credibility requires considering the difficulties and exploring unusual patterns that arise in the study. Member checks and reflexive journaling were crucial to establishing the study's credibility and eliminating researcher bias. I recruited participants that met the required criteria and had prior knowledge and experience working with Tier 2 Black students in reading. Interview questions aligned with the research questions and were conducted in a safe and secure environment. I also included the discrepant data in the results section to ensure the data is unbiased and provides accurate participant experiences. Readers can review and assess the findings to ensure credibility and conclude from the results.

Transferability

In qualitative research, transferability refers to taking data from one source and applying it to a previous source (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Detailed descriptions and contextual data are included in the results section to ensure transferability (Guba, 1981). To further ensure transferability in this study, I provided thick description of the ten participants' lived experiences. I also provided extensive details of the finding in the results section to ensure that transferability is possible for future research.

Dependability

Dependability in qualitative research involves building a solid and consistent argument for the data collection research process (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The data collection and research process are explicitly detailed in the results section to ensure dependability within this study. I provided a step-by-step account of the semistructured interview data collection procedure and the analysis and data coding process. I also conducted member checks to solidify dependability and followed ethical procedures throughout the research.

Confirmability

The final stage in building trustworthiness in qualitative research is confirmability. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), confirmability involves authenticating the research study's data, findings, understandings, and suggestions free of the researcher's views. Paton (2015) suggests utilizing member checks and reflexive journaling to maintain objectivity. I used direct dictation of participants' interview responses and reflexive journaling to prevent biased reflection in interpreting the data (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Results

Research questions organize the results of this study presented in this section. Two research questions guided the collection and analysis of the data used in the study. Research question one examined how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. Research question two examined how elementary reading

intervention teachers decide how to use effective culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. Probing questions followed each research question, yielding numerous themes.

Results for Research Question 1

Research question 1 examined how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. Results yielded numerous themes. Nine participants reported their districts and schools provided and assigned specific resources for the reading teachers to utilize when providing services to Black students receiving Tier 2 services. Teacher one (T1), T2, T3, T4, T6, and T8 reported using data analysis to decide how to use effective evidence-based reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. T1, T2, and T3 utilized cut scores to decide how to use effective evidence-based reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. At the same time, T1 and T7 report using evidence-based resource websites to decide how to use effective evidence-based reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. T3 used Tier placement, and T5 used teacher feedback and cultural relatability to decide how to use effective evidence-based reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services.

Results for Question 1A

Question 1A addressed how reading intervention teachers include effective evidence-based reading strategies in lesson planning. 11 themes arose from the data analysis. T1 reported including effective evidence-based reading strategies in their lesson

planning based on student needs, pacing guides, scripted lesson plans, implementation

processes, computer-based programs, and read-alouds. T2 and T4 reported putting

evidence-based strategies in their lesson plans. Teachers 3, 6, and 7 included

interventions in their lesson plans. T5, T6, and T10 also included computer-based

programs in lesson planning. T10 also included the implementation process and the

progression in their lesson planning. T8 and T10 were the only participants who

mentioned standards as effective evidence-based reading strategies in lesson planning.

Results for Probe A

Three themes surfaced regarding Research Question 1: Probe A, addressing how

reading teachers identify effective evidence-based reading strategies - district resources,

research, and team collaboration. Teachers 1, 2, 8, and 10 reported district resources as

effective evidence-based reading strategies. Another theme that arose concerning how

reading teachers identify effective evidence-based reading strategies was research.

Teachers 2, 3, 5, 6, and 8 also referenced using research to identify effective evidence-

based reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. The final

theme that surfaced concerning how reading teachers identify effective evidence-based

reading strategies is team collaboration, which teachers 3, 5, and 8 reported.

Results for Probe B

Research Question 1: Probe B sought to understand how reading intervention

teachers select effective evidence-based reading strategies. Results revealed numerous

themes: district resources, web-based programs/apps, informal interventions, team

collaboration, data analysis, personal research, and trial and error. Teachers 1, 3, 4, 5, 6,

7, 8, and 10 reported that the district selected effective evidence-based reading strategies. Teachers 2 and 7 utilized web-based programs/apps to assist in selecting evidence-based reading strategies. Only one participant, T9, reported selecting informal interventions as evidence-based reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. T2 was the only participant reporting team collaboration as a selection process for evidence-based reading strategies. Whereas T5 and T6 reported using data analysis to select effective evidence-based reading strategies. One participant, T3, used personal research to select effective evidence-based reading strategies. Finally, T3 and T4 reported trial and error as a selection process for effective evidence-based reading strategies.

Results for Probe C

Research Question 1: Probe C addressed how reading intervention teachers implement effective evidence-based strategies in their teaching. Three themes surfaced regarding this question: allotted time, implementation model, and instructional model. T1 reported implementing effective evidence-based strategies in their teaching based on the allotted time. Teachers 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, and 9 referenced implementing effective evidence-based strategies in their teaching based on the subscribed implementation model (push-in, pull-out, small group, one-on-one). Finally, Teachers 2 and 4 reported implementing effective evidence-based strategies in their teaching based on the instructional model (asking questions or modeling).

Results for Probe D

Research Question 1: Probe D referenced how the implementation process changes for each grade level. Teachers 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, and 10 reported no changes based on

grade level. Whereas T2 and 8 reported changes based on grade level or grade bands. Teachers 6 and 9 only teach one grade, and T5 reported changes from grade level were dependent upon the school model. T7 was unclear about whether it changes from grade level or not.

Results for Probe E

Research Question 1: Probe E addressed how students display their understanding of evidence-based strategies. Teachers 1, 2, 4, 7, and 10 referenced assessments as a way students displayed their understanding of evidence-based strategies. Teacher 2 also referenced presentations as a way students displayed their understanding of evidence-based strategies. While T3 reported students using evidence-based strategies in their general education (gen ed) classroom to display their understanding. Teachers 4 and 5 asked students higher-level questions and checked for understanding to allow them to display their understanding of evidence-based strategies. At the same time, T4 and T6 used independent assignments for students to display their understanding of evidence-based strategies. Teacher 5 also referenced sentence stems and making real-world connections as other ways students displayed their understanding of evidence-based strategies. Finally, T6 reported using dialogue, and T9 referenced sight word concentration displayed their understanding of evidence-based strategies.

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Results for Research Question 2

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Research question two examined how reading teachers decide how to use effective culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. Teachers 1, 3, 7, 8, and 10 referenced not using culturally responsive reading

strategies to support black students receiving Tier 2 services. Teacher 2 referred to using students' prior knowledge to decide how to use effective culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. Teachers 2 and 3 also referenced using teacher/team collaboration to decide how to use effective culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. Finally, Teachers 2, 4, 5, 6, and 9 reported using student interest.

Results for Question 2A

Question 2A addressed how reading teachers include effective culturally responsive reading strategies in their lesson planning. Teachers 1, 2, and 3 referenced including effective culturally responsive reading strategies in their lesson planning through reading. Teachers 2, 4, 5, 6, and 7 referenced knowing their audience aided them in including effective culturally responsive reading strategies in their lesson planning. In contrast, Teachers 9 and 10 referenced using standards to include effective culturally responsive reading strategies in their lesson planning. Teacher 10 also referenced using data analysis and teacher collaboration to decide how to include effective culturally responsive reading strategies in lesson planning.

Results for Probe A

Research Question 2: Probe A addressed how reading teachers identified effective culturally responsive reading strategies. Teachers 1 and 3 reported not looking for culturally responsive reading strategies. Teachers 1, 5, and 6 reported identifying effective culturally responsive reading strategies through teacher collaboration. Teacher 6 also used research/best practices to identify effective culturally responsive reading

strategies. Teacher 2 referenced using data analysis to identify effective culturally responsive reading strategies. Teacher 7 used evidence-based computer websites, progress monitoring, and district resources to identify effective culturally responsive reading strategies. Whereas teacher 8 reported using observation and teacher 10 district resources to identify effective culturally responsive reading strategies.

Results for Probe B

Research Question 2: Probe B addressed how reading teachers select effective culturally responsive reading strategies. Teachers 1 and 3 reported not selecting effective culturally responsive reading strategies. Teachers 2 and 7 referenced using web-based resources to select effective culturally responsive reading strategies. Teachers 2, 5, and 6 reported using team collaboration to select effective culturally responsive reading strategies. Teacher 9 referenced using previously used resources to select effective culturally responsive reading strategies.

On the other hand, Teachers 7, 8, and 10 referenced using district resources to select effective culturally responsive reading strategies. Teacher 4 reported using best practices and professional development to select effective culturally responsive reading strategies. Finally, Teacher 5 referenced using scaffolding and differentiation to select effective culturally responsive reading strategies.

Results for Probe C

Research Question 2: Probe C addressed how reading teachers implement effective culturally responsive strategies in their teaching. Numerous themes arose from the interviews and yielded the following findings. Teachers 1 and 2 referenced

implementing effective culturally responsive strategies in their teaching by connecting

instruction to their students' background or prior knowledge. Teacher 3 referenced no

resources available to assist in choosing strategies based on a student's culture. Teacher 4

reported that implementing effective culturally responsive strategies in their teaching

involved keeping it simple. Teachers 5 and 8 referenced implementing effective

culturally responsive strategies in their teaching through educational expectations

(academic language and learning targets). The themes of instructional model and teaching

model arose again in the themes for implementing effective culturally responsive

strategies in their teaching.

Results for Probe D

Research Question 2: Probe D explored how the implementation of effective

culturally responsive strategies changed for each grade level. Teachers 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and

10 reported that it did not change from grade level to grade level. Teachers 2, 4, and 8

referenced changes in the instructional and implementation models based on the grade

level. The instructional models ranged from gradual release and modeling. The

implantation models ranged from hands-on to performance-based. Finally, Teacher 6

referenced teaching only one grade level.

Results for Probe E

Research Question 2: Probe E addressed how the implementation process of

effective culturally responsive strategies changes for different cultures. Teachers 1, 2, 3,

4, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 10 reported it doesn't change for different cultures. Teacher 7 referenced

the implementation process of effective culturally responsive strategies changes for ESOL students through district resources (Lexia Reading program).

Results for Probe F

Research Question 2: Probe F addressed how their students display their understanding of culturally responsive strategies. Teachers 1, 3, and 8 referenced their students did not display an understanding of culturally responsive strategies. Teachers 2 and 4 reported their students displayed their understanding of culturally responsive strategies through school norms. Teachers 6, 7, and 9 referenced interaction/participation as how their students displayed their understanding of culturally responsive strategies. On the other hand, Teachers 5 and 10 reported home life connection as how their students displayed their understanding of culturally responsive strategies. Finally, Teachers 6 and 7 reported their students displayed their understanding of culturally responsive strategies through assessments.

Results for Probe G

Research Question 2: Probe G referenced what professional development, if any, the teachers received to support them in their process. Teachers 1, 3, 6, 8, 9, and 10 reported no professional development. Teacher 2 received endorsements. to support them in their process. Teacher 4 received professional development on Thinking Maps, and Teacher 5 received training on Educating the Whole Girl. Teachers 6 and 7 received MTSS professional development, Teacher 8 received professional development in understanding the dynamics and diversity, and Teacher 10 received support from their college program.

Results from Final Thoughts

In conclusion, the interview participants had the opportunity to share their final thoughts. Final thoughts are listed below by participant number.

T1

"It's just students as individuals."

T2

"This interview has provoked me to think more deeply about the processes we have in place to address cultural responsiveness in reading. We need to be more intentional about identifying and implementing these strategies in reading so that we can better serve our Tier 2 Black students. We must become more intentional about meeting needs of Tier 2 Black students."

T3

"You know, my thought now is now I can see why we have probably, have so many students in um the MTSS process and not really leaving it, going back into gen ed. You know um instead they're leaving it going on to further in the system. You know because we, we as teachers are not getting what we need. Umph."

T4

"I think it's important for a teacher, a reading interventionist teacher to be able to um feel comfortable in their workspace to be able to have culturally based conversations with children. Because it's a possibility that they may not understand you know exactly where they're going or the the the struggles that will come behind um those particular deficits that they have.Reading intervention teachers must feel comfortable to have culturally related conversations with students."

T5

"I think we have to be more proactive um cause sometimes we catch em on the back end instead of the front-end um and so we have to learn how not to pass the buck."

T6

"It's really got me thinking, thinking about you know um their culture. I, I basically I, I don't know. You know I I'm, I'm, I'm focusing on what's appealing to them. That they can see themselves in what they, what I'm teaching you know and see how that will help them."

T7

"I'm interested to know with what we are using the What Works, the Intervention Central all of that as our selective process how, how are we utilizing that for our Black students?"

T8

"I think when you know research like what you're doing now and interviewing various teachers who are actually using some culturally responsible strategies it's not written down for us. It's not out there anywhere that says if you're teaching a demographic of Black students, these are some things that would really be helpful to reach those students. I think especially where we are right now in our in America in education there's so many things that we're trying to keep away from the classroom and trying to keep us from teaching that we're not focused on how to reach them where they are.

You don't want us to talk about those things and you really don't want us to bring a whole lot of our culture to the classroom, if we were to bring all of our culture to the classroom

that's always looked at as oh that's the radical teacher. I don't know that there's, there's anything professionally available for an African American teacher to tap into and say I need some ways to reach my babies. The truth is my students are not like everybody else, like not like some other students. That's the real truth. We say we want differentiation, and we want diversity, and we want all these things but only to a degree because we can't be too different we can't be too diverse, because then we're going to be labeled as too radical."

T9

"Kids like to identify with themselves. And if you find books that on the cover and the students and the, the child looks like them that grabs their attention."

T10

"What I wish is that more districts would actually have conversations with some of those EIP teachers or teachers who are performing the interventions. I think a lot of times it's people at top who think what it's best or they actually go and do research but they're not sitting in the classroom with these students and seeing what they're going through or understanding the strides of what some of the teachers might be going through what may be most effective in this classroom or that classroom. And also understanding that it's not a one-size-fits-all. Every student, every classroom is different. So, just getting more input from teachers themselves about what could work and actually keeping in mind that there are different cultures within different systems and students are different. And how at one school things might work for certain students and at this school it may not. So just keeping those type of things in mind."

Summary

In this section, I presented the data analysis and the research results. Two research questions guided this study to understand how reading teachers select and use evidence-based, culturally responsive strategies to support black students. I collected data from ten participants: 7 Early Intervention Program (EIP) teachers, two instructional coaches, and one MTSS coordinator through semistructured interviews conducted via Zoom. Data analysis occurred over three iterative cycles (Saldana, 2016), resulting in three key themes.

These themes captured the diverse experiences of the participants based on their lived encounters. They resulted in overarching findings suggesting district resources guide the decision-making and implementation of reading strategies for Black students receiving Tier 2 services. Findings also purport no consideration of culture when deciding how to use effective evidence-based reading strategies to support black students receiving Tier 2 services. At the same time, teachers are not receiving professional development to support them in this process.

Research Question 1 addressed how reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based reading strategies to support black students receiving Tier 2 services. Overall findings for research question one suggest:

1. District resources are significant in teachers' decisions when using effective evidence-based reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services.

Research Question 2 addressed how reading teachers decide how to use effective culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. Findings revealed two themes for research question two:

2. Half the participants reported they did not consider culture when deciding how to use effective culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. In contrast, the other half considers student interests.

3. 60 % of participants reported they received no professional development to support them in deciding how to use effective culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services.

In Chapter 5, I present my interpretation of the research findings. I substantiate these interpretations by comparing them to the literature reviewed in Chapter Two and the conceptual framework for this study. I also offer limitations of the study, propose recommendations for further research, and share implications for social change.

Chapter 5: Interpretation of the Findings, Limitations, and Recommendations

Introduction

This study aimed to understand how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. I used a basic qualitative research paradigm to address the gap in research on understanding reading intervention teachers' decision-making processes to address the disparity in access and achievement for Black students and how it might improve the assessment data for Tier 2 students (Hernandez, 2022; Husband & Kang, 2020; Kainz, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 2022; Walker & Hutchinson, 2021). Ten reading intervention teachers shared their lived experiences through semistructured interviews.

I developed two research questions to understand the phenomenon from the viewpoint of the reading teachers. Three overarching themes arose from the findings. Theme one: District resources are significant in teachers' decisions when using effective evidence-based reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. Theme two: Half the participants don't consider culture when deciding how to use effective culturally responsive reading strategies to support black students receiving Tier 2 services. Theme three: 60 % of participants reported they received no professional development to support them in deciding how to use effective culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. Below, I analyze the findings based on the existing literature and this study's conceptual framework.

Interpretation of the Findings

Analyzing and Interpreting Findings in the Peer-Reviewed Literature

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 mandates and holds schools accountable to provide evidence-based interventions to improve student outcomes by developing and implementing a comprehensive and progressive support plan. Evidence-based practices (EBPs) or evidence-based interventions (EBIs) are strategies reinforced by intense research that proves the practice or program works (Beal & Small, 2020; Ciullo et al., 2016; Georgia Department of Education, 2017; Evidence-Based Practices, 2018; Iris Center, 2020; Mahoney, 2020). Implementing this mandate suggests teachers are prepared and equipped to meet the needs of all learners. However, as with culturally responsive pedagogy and culturally relevant teaching, evidence-based practices are another area where teachers lack sufficient preparation. The field of education continuously changes and evolves, but the evolution does not always include professional development and preparation. Selecting appropriate evidence-based practices remains a challenge for teachers due to a lack of training and professional development in the selection and implementation of EBPs (Farmer et al., 2018; Graham et al., 2019; Mahoney, 2020; McCollow & Hoffman, 2020; Pas et al., 2020). Lack of preparation and cultural responsiveness perpetuates the achievement gap, as does the lack of understanding of evidence-based, culturally responsive practices.

In 1992, Ladson-Billings reported a change in educational demographics and a disparity among students of color and low socioeconomic status, especially African American students, resulting in an achievement gap (Aronson, 2020; Chernoff et

al.,2007; Gay, 1997; Hernandez, 2022; Walker & Hutchinson, 2021). To address the disparity among Black students, Gloria Ladson-Billings (1992) and Geneva Gay (2002 a, b) began research on implementing culturally responsive pedagogy to close the academic gap (Hernandez, 2022; Lopez, 2016). The gap remains, as does the need for teacher preparation programs that adequately prepare teachers to meet the needs of all learners. Anderson et al. (1976) and Anderson (1977) suggested many challenges associated with reading comprehension may result from knowledge deficits. Meeting the needs of all learners through a culturally relevant platform requires a unique teacher with special skills (Ladson-Billings, 1991). Researchers report that successful teachers incorporate culturally linguistically responsive practices into all instruction (Hilaski, 2020; Linan-Thompson et al., 2018).

The findings of this study indicated that there is still a lack of knowledge concerning selecting and using evidence-based, culturally responsive strategies to address the needs of Black students receiving Tier 2 services in reading. First, the data showed nine of the ten participants, or 90%, reported their school district selected the strategies used to meet the needs of all learners, suggesting teachers have little to no input on reading strategies. According to Anderson et al. (1976) and Anderson & Pearson (1984), the assimilation of new text will differ based on a person's education level, cultural background, experiences, age, interests, and beliefs or values. Researchers also inferred that minority students might appear to lack the same level of comprehension of their school reading material based on the schema theory due to cultural differences in schemata from that of the majority students (Anderson & Pearson, 1984). Researchers

further offered that children of subcultures experience text differently based on their cultural schemata (Anderson & Pearson, 1984). We must consider the population for which we use the strategy and realize there is no one-size-fits-all in evidence-based, culturally responsive strategies.

Secondly, the data indicated that 50%, or five of the 10 participants, don't consider culture when deciding how to use effective culturally responsive reading strategies to support black students receiving Tier 2 services (Anderson & Pearson, 1984). Beansalah and Gueroudj (2020) maintained that cultural schemata impacted the fast comprehension of new texts and improved reading among ELL populations. Based on findings in their study, they also postulated cultural schemata were substantial to reading comprehension, impacted the reading process, and activated a learner's prior knowledge as the first step in comprehension (Bensalah & Gueroudj, 2020; McVee et al., 2005).

Ladson-billings and Gay further support the need to implement culturally responsive pedagogy into the learning process to address the academic disparity among Black students and aid in closing the academic gap (Hernandez, 2022; Husband & Kang, 2020; Ladson-Billings, 2022, 2018). To address the disparity among Black students, Gloria Ladson-Billings (1992) and Geneva Gay (2002 a, b) began research on implementing culturally responsive pedagogy to close the academic gap (Hernandez, 2022; Lopez, 2016). According to Gay (2002 a, b), cultural responsiveness safeguards the learning of culturally diverse students by embracing their cultural differences (Aronson, 2020; Fetterman et al., 2020). Therefore, addressing the educational disparity in reading

for at-risk Black students receiving Tier 2 services by using evidence-based, culturally responsive reading strategies may help close the gap and may impact high school graduation rates (Husband & Kang, 2020; Kainz, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 2018, 2022; Walker & Hutchinson, 2021).

The findings further indicate that 60 % of participants reported they received no professional development to support them in deciding how to use effective culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. Researchers have shown that teachers' opinions and knowledge surrounding cultural diversity are strong indicators of diverse students' learning possibilities and academic outcomes, facilitating or hindering learning (Gay, 2002a). According to Hernandez (2022) and Lopez (2016), teacher preparation is critical to addressing this issue and meeting the needs of Black students receiving Tier 2 support services.

Researchers also suggest a need to make culturally responsive teaching the focus of teacher preparation programs, not just an additional course (Gay, 1997; Gay & Howard, 2000; Karatas, 2020; Lowenstein, 2009; Zeichner et al., 1998). According to Banks et al. (2001), effective teacher preparation programs should assist teachers in attaining an understanding of the cultural backgrounds of students in their schools, gaining insight into the diversity within cultural and ethnic communities, and attaining the understanding and abilities to develop and implement culturally responsive pedagogy. Research indicates successful teachers incorporate culturally linguistically responsive practices into all instruction (Hilaski, 2020; Linan-Thompson et al., 2018). Therefore,

teacher preparation is necessary to counter the formation of erroneous opinions and improve the academic achievement of students of color (Gay, 2003, 2005).

Prepared teachers can identify and implement effective, evidence-based, culturally responsive interventions to diminish the academic gap (Hernandez, 2022; Husband & Kang, 2020; Kainz, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 2022). However, many teachers lack professional development and preparation to equip them with the necessary skills to close the academic gaps (Hernandez, 2022; Lew & Nelson, 2016; Lopez, 2016). Gay (2015) suggested the lack of preparation is especially evident when serving struggling Black students. Meeting the needs of all learners through a culturally relevant platform requires a unique teacher with special skills.

Analyzing and Interpreting Findings in the Context of the Conceptual Framework

Understanding how reading teachers select and use evidence-based, culturally responsive strategies to support Black students is a complex phenomenon in isolation, but when looked at in connection with the conceptual framework, it grounds the phenomenon. The findings contend there is a connection to the number of teachers selecting culturally responsive strategies and the number of teachers receiving professional development in the area. The schema theory provides a foundation for addressing the background knowledge and cultural differences of Black students receiving Tier 2 support services and the impact on closing their academic gaps. Therefore, the theoretical framework used for this paper is Sir Frederick Bartlett's 1932 schema theory, which connects cultural schema to attaining new knowledge (An, 2013; Hammond, Z., 2015).

This theory suggested hints of information are stored in the mind when an event happens; then, stimulation of the hints leads to the recollection of initial information. It focused on prior knowledge and the idea that responses alone have minimal meaning. According to Shen (2008) the schema theory is a collaborative relationship between the reader's prior experience and what they are reading (Bartlett, 1932; Quinlan, 2019; Sasi, 2019; Smith, 2019; Yu, 2019). Smith (2019) suggests that schemata are represented by students' school, personal, and cultural experiences. Smith (2019) and Nurandini et al. (2017) also suggest that learning occurs when new material combines with prior material from long-term memory.

Bartlett suggested schema emphasized an exchange between memory and culture and was necessary to make sense of one's experiences (McVee, 2005). Bartlett (1932) earlier suggested a connection between a person's cultural practices and schema (Altarriba & Forsythe, 1993; An, 2013; Dabrowska, 2019; Hunzaker & Valentino, 2019; Javadi & Tahmasbi, 2020). According to Anderson and Pearson (1984), a reader's culture, nationality, career choice, religion, age, and sex guide the schema that surfaces when reading a text (Anderson et al., 1976).

Researchers also suggested that individuals retrieve schema to support their understanding of new text or situations (An, 2013; Bartlett, 1932; Bensalah & Gueroudj, 2020). Bensalah and Gueroudi (2020) and McVee et al. (2005) postulated cultural schemata were substantial to reading comprehension, impacted the reading process, and activated a learner's prior knowledge as the first step in comprehension. According to

Smith (2019) and Nurandini et al. (2017), effective teachers tap into students' schemata and utilize strategies to fill learning gaps.

Limitations of the Study

A potential limitation of this study relates to sampling. I interviewed ten consenting participants who were experts in their field and provided extensive and valuable data relating to the two research questions. The sample size proved sufficient to achieve data saturation (Merriam & Tisdaell, 2016). However, the small sample size and confined geographic location could impact the findings.

No other limitations arose during the study. Virtual interviews took place over Zoom as scheduled. There were some connectivity challenges, but we corrected them before starting the interviews. The recordings were clear and concise, which made transcription seamless and led to untainted findings.

Recommendations

This study aimed to understand how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective evidence-based, culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. The study's findings showed that district resources play a significant role in teachers' decisions when using effective evidence-based reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. Findings also suggest that half of the participants reported they did not consider culture when deciding how to use effective culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. In contrast, the other half considers student interests. Finally, findings also showed that 60 % of participants reported they received

no professional development to support them in deciding how to use effective culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services.

The first recommendation is replicating the study in a different regional area a few years after publication. The more knowledgeable school districts' reading teachers and teacher preparation programs become with evidence-based, culturally responsive strategies, the more significant the impact in addressing the disparity in education towards Black students and meeting the needs of diverse learners.

The second recommendation is for teachers to receive professional development in evidence-based strategies and resources. Deciding how to select and use effective evidence-based strategies requires understanding evidence-based resources. School districts and schools must ensure teachers receive proper training to address those needs.

The final recommendation is for teacher preparation programs to re-evaluate their implementation of culturally responsive pedagogy. Teacher preparation programs must make this an extensive part of the program to meet the needs of diverse learners and not a one-hour or one-day session. The challenge we face is the teacher population is not reflective of the student population, causing a great divide within our classrooms (Lambeth & Smith, 2016; Milner & Laughter, 2015). Impacting this great divide requires an evaluation of our teacher preparation programs and extensive recruitment of more diverse educators (Lambeth & Smith, 2016; Milner, 2006). Until teachers accurately understand culturally relevant pedagogy and teaching, our classrooms will not be culturally responsive or prepared to intervene with Black students and students of color.

Implications

This study aimed to understand how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective, evidence-based, culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. The findings provided insight into school districts' roles in teachers' selection and decision-making process of strategies. These findings have implications for teacher preparation programs and professional development.

The findings from this study can guide the reformation of teacher preparation programs. Programs must re-evaluate their courses to meet the needs of teachers and address the great divide between teachers and students. Cultural responsiveness must be at the forefront of course development to prepare teachers to meet diverse learners' needs.

The findings also imply the need for school districts to provide teachers with the professional development needed to make informed decisions based on student needs and not based on one-size-fits-all all district-assigned resources. Equipping teachers to make culturally responsive decisions based on student needs will positively impact the disparity among Black students. The implications for social change will address the disparities between races and achievement and may help close the achievement gap and impact the high school graduation rate.

Collaboration among stakeholders is critical to enacting social change based on this research. School districts, administrators, and teachers must join forces, giving all parties equal input in meeting the needs of diverse students. The voice of teachers who work directly with the students must be respected. Teachers should be able to voice their

needs for professional development, and districts must work to address those needs. Re-educating those who have been in the field for years is also necessary to meet the needs of all learners.

Because the findings of this study only represent a single data collection source, it may not provide an ample representation of the phenomenon from a methodological perspective. Semistructured interviews were the data collection source to explore specific aspects of the phenomenon. Also, there was no triangulation of the data for validation. Further research to delve deeper into the phenomenon would be beneficial in closing the disparity gap.

Conclusion

This study aimed to understand how elementary reading intervention teachers decide how to use effective, evidence-based, culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. The findings showed that district resources are significant in teachers' decisions when using effective evidence-based reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. Findings also showed that half the participants reported they did not consider culture when deciding how to use effective culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. In contrast, the other half considers student interests. Finally, the findings showed that 60 % of participants reported they received no professional development to support them in deciding how to use effective culturally responsive reading strategies to support Black students receiving Tier 2 services. Overall, the findings indicate a need for further research to explore the needs of teachers serving our

schools' diverse population of students. Findings also indicate that as the face of our

classrooms evolves and becomes more diverse, teacher preparation programs must evolve

as well. Otherwise, the great divide will only become more extensive.

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