Tier 2 Reading Interventions, K-2nd Grade

Practices and Processes

by

Tamara Alice Allison

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Graduate Supervisory Committee:

Nicholas A. Appleton, Chair
Dee Ann Spencer
Margaret Hotchkiss

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ABSTRACT

Due to variation that exists in providing Tier 2 reading intervention instruction, the

purpose of the study was to identify processes and instructional strategies currently being

utilized by K to 2 teachers of the Gallup, New Mexico elementary schools. Seventeen

teachers from 9 of the 10 elementary schools participated in the study. A survey

instrument was designed and administered using Survey Monkey as the tool to collect

data on the components that make up a Tier 2 reading intervention program, namely the

structure/processes, lesson planning, collaboration, and professional development. The

highest percentages of teachers reported the following: one additional staff assisting

grade level teachers, group sizes of four to six students, progress monitoring six or more

times a year, using DIBELS scores for student placement, utilizing ability groups within

the grade level with each having its own instructors, and instruction being provided five

days a week for 30 to 35 minutes. A majority of teachers also agreed to using all

available staff, that accelerated learning opportunities were being provided to students

performing at the benchmark level, and that meetings were occurring frequently and were

useful. Answers to open-ended questions provided insight as to what practitioners felt

were effective practices and offered recommendations for improving instruction and

professional development. Effective practices that teachers reported included using

phonics, decoding, and fluency; small group instruction; multi-sensory instruction or

hands-on activities; Linda-Mood Bell programs; data analysis to group students; the

Project Read program; word family/patterns; sight words; comprehension; materials and

curriculum provided; and consistency with holding interventions daily. Though all

reported feeling moderately to very confident in their ability to teach reading, they

recommended that they learned more current, non-traditional strategies as well as received more training in familiar approaches like ELL strategies, differentiated instruction, learning centers, and identification of reading difficulties. After a review of the data, the researcher recommends training teachers to conduct their own research to seek out strategies, programs, and resources; investing in and implementing an effective commercially produced Tier 2 program; and for teams to devote more time in developing, sharing, and revising lesson plans.

To my sources of inspiration:

Grandma Alice McCabe, Uncle Tony McCabe,

My parents Arthur and Emily Allison,

and my two children, Tyisha and Bronson Mitchell

These individuals are my conscience, voices that inspire me.
Because of their belief in me, it is important that I do right by them and myself.
During times of challenge, they are my refuge and greatest motivators.

To work as an educator, to be a parent,

and to be surrounded by the love and support of family,

makes life beautiful and full of purpose.

To my Grandmother Alice McCabe

Grandma Alice experienced lived from the 1920's to 1995. As the youngest child, her family decided that they would not send her to be educated at a boarding school and instead would be the one to carry on a traditional Navajo lifestyle. Despite not having a formal education, she was self-sufficient throughout her life and was able to provide for her 14 children. The work she did was physically demanding. She and Grandpa Franklin work the fields on the Colorado River Indian reservation, where they and their children would live away from family on the Navajo Nation and become adopted members. They also raised sheep and chickens, which was their primary means of food for their family. During her life, she experienced her husband taking part in World War II, and at the age of 50 on, she lived as widow. Even without Grandpa Franklin, she continues to find ways to make living, working as cafeteria worker at an elementary school and running a Navajo taco stand. I admire her hard working spirit and ability to overcome life's challenges as a Navajo woman and widow. I think of her and her example, and she gives me the courage and inspiration to keep living and loving life.

To my children, Tyisha and Bronson Mitchell

My most cherished moments are those spent with my two children. When my kids were young, life was busy as I was a high school English teacher, part time graduate student, and parent. But these parental duties made me feel needed and put me at ease. It was therapeutic to help my son with his homework, attend school events, and to enjoy a story together. And it was my daughter who did a job search for me after I received my masters in Educational Leadership and encouraged me to apply for my first principal position at Washington Elementary School with the Gallup McKinley Schools. I took her advice and

spent 9 wonderful years with staff and students as principal of the school. She was also the one at my graduation ceremony, who yelled, "Good job, Mom!" as I received my master degree diploma. I love working in the education field but being a parent has made life even more meaningful and special. My children are both grown and living their own lives, but I continue to feel their unconditional love and support. There love has saved me in my darkest moments and has inspired me to be the better and best version of myself.

<div align="center">To my fellow cohort member, Henrietta Smith</div>

When the thought of finishing my dissertation came to mind, I instantly though of Henrietta. I contacted her out of the blue 3 years ago and learned that she too was yearning to finish as well. That first year we started meeting, we had a slogan, "No more a time a wasted" that used to make us laugh and remind us of our purpose. She quickly caught up with me and even surpassed me as far the progress she was making. I actually had a draft of my survey before she did. She develop her survey, was able to administer it to the parents of the elementary school I was principal at, manually entered the data and develop her own data tables, and write the chapters of her dissertation. Seeing her accomplish so much in a short time inspired me, and I finally took the steps to get my study reapproved by the Gallup McKinley County Schools and obtain the data I needed for my study. Working 11 hour days an elementary school principal and later 13 hour days as high school principal often made me feel it was not possible; however, Henrietta's phone calls and text messages where she checked on my progress and offered encouraging words would get me back on track.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The history of reading has passed through many stages. In the colonial period, students were taught the alphabetic code, reading from the Bible, patriotic essays, and the New England Primer. McGuffey Readers, published in 1836, became popular readers, and were followed by a sequential reading program of phonics instruction with reading and spelling books and a teacher's manual, developed in the middle 19th century by Rebecca Smith Pollard. From the 1890s to 1910, publishing companies developed simplified classic books for young readers. After the 1930s, a phonics based-approach to teaching reading shifted to one where students where taught to read words by sight and memorization. This approach was challenged in the 1950s in Rudolf Flesch's book, *Why Johnny Can't Read,* where he argued for a return of using phonics to teach reading. In the 1980s and 1990s, the whole language reading philosophy, which placed less emphasis on the teaching of phonics, was the dominate way reading was taught. The method was later criticized for not providing students with the ability to sound out new, unfamiliar words.

Studies in the 1980s and 1990s showed that in order for students to learn to read, they must make the connection between sounds and letters. The National Reading Panel, created in 1997, reviewed the findings of the National Research Council report, Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children (Snow, Burns, & Griffen, 1998), which identified alphabetic, fluency, and comprehension as areas important to teaching reading. The NRP provided further recommendations in its own report, in a report titled National Reading Panel: Report of the Subgroups, which then influenced the first Reading First legislation within Title I of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. This

national reading policy legislation mandated the use of scientific research-based reading programs that included the essential components of reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, and reading comprehension strategies.

Because NCLB textbook companies have developed Core reading programs that meet these criteria, using lessons from a research-based reading program or textbook series with students in the regular classroom became a way of providing Tier 1 level of instruction of the Response to Intervention approach. If a teacher is providing effective instruction, students should be able to meet grade level standards. Students who are not performing at the expected level are then provided Tier 2 level of instruction, instruction that is targeted at improving identified student learning deficiencies. In the state of New Mexico, students who continue to perform below the expected level after receiving Tier 2 level of instruction are then referred to the special education program where they receive intensive targeted instruction or Tier 3 level of instruction. The 2004 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act endorses RtI as an acceptable way of identifying students with learning disabilities. RtI instruction, in particular Tier 2 level of instruction, involves implementing research-based instruction and interventions, regularly monitoring progress, and using data-informed instruction.

Statement of Problem

The essential components required for reading were identified in the 1990s when legislation was enacted with NCLB, requiring that Core reading programs or Tier 1 level of instruction be scientifically and researched based. Though teachers have been implementing research-based Core reading programs since the enactment of NCLB in

2001 and have been providing Tier 2 level of instruction since 2004 to address student learning gap areas, students continue to struggle to read at grade level and perform at proficient levels on required assessments. This problem is far from simple being that teachers have no control of the learning that occurred from birth to 3 or 5 years old, time crucial for language development. Teachers are also impacted by limited funds available to their districts and sites for purchasing Core reading and reading intervention programs and materials. And being that these textbooks and programs were commercially developed, they can lack certain aspects needed for teaching reading to one's unique student population. The pendulum has swung both ways in regards to textbooks because NCLB with some educators opt to implement the Core reading textbook lessons with fidelity whereas others believe it to be a resource. Though the federal and state governments have mandated that Core reading programs be research based and that Tier 2 level of instruction be provided, there are numerous ways to carry out this instruction.

Purpose Statement

Due to variation that exists in providing Tier 2 reading intervention instruction, the purpose of the study was to identify processes and instructional strategies currently being utilized by K-2 teachers of the 10 in-town elementary schools in Gallup, New Mexico. Secondly, it was to identify what these teachers as direct practitioners feel can be done to better improve the Tier 2 reading instruction.

Research Questions/Hypotheses

Research Question 1 asked, *"How are teachers of the Gallup schools currently implementing Tier 2 reading interventions as far as structure/processes, lesson planning, and collaboration?"*

Research Question 2 asked, *"What are teachers' opinions as to using all available staff and instruction for benchmark students, and amount and usefulness of meetings?"*

Research Question 3 asked, *"What practices and processes do teachers feel are effective and what recommendations do they have for improving instruction and for professional development?"*

Significance of Study

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 is a law that mandates equity of services to students with disabilities and endorses the use of RtI as an appropriate way for providing early intervention to address student learning deficiencies and for identifying students in need of special education services. Since IDEA was enacted in 2004, teachers have been implementing RtI and Tier 2 reading interventions. Tier 2 level of instruction has been described in more general terms as a process that uses baseline assessments, frequent monitoring of progress, and targeted instruction to address learning gap areas. These actions, however, can be implemented in various ways. Now that Tier 2 reading interventions are common practice at schools, including the Gallup McKinley County Schools, teachers have learned from their own action research and from other teachers they collaborate with. The questions asked in this survey seek to extract these practices that teachers have developed and collected their ideas for next-step actions and for future professional development. More importantly, the survey allows teachers to share these practices and recommendations with each other. Teachers usually meet in grade level teams but have fewer opportunities to meet with other grade levels and teachers from other schools.

Delimitations

The delimitations of this study included the following:

1. The response rate of the survey was low; 17, K-2 teachers from 10 in-town elementary schools participated in the survey.

2. Participation was limited to teachers from the 10 in-town elementary schools due there not being enough time to obtain approval from the Navajo Nation Human Research Review Board.

3. Participation was limited to regular classroom or grade level teachers and did not include principals and other additional staff who may assist with Tier 2 reading intervention instruction.

4. The demographic questions that could lead to the identification of teachers could have kept teachers from participating or affected their responses. Teachers were asked as to the school they were employed at and the number of years they had worked in their current position.

5. An advanced statistical analysis was not conducted. The Survey Monkey program converted the numbers and percentages of the multiple choice and Likert scale questions to graphs and data tables. Survey Monkey also listed responses to open-ended questions, which was categorized by the researcher. Student performance data would be needed in order to conduct an advance statistical analysis.

Definition of Terms

Core reading program: A Core reading program is a research-based, primary curriculum resource that is to use to provide the required grade level instruction, aligned to the Common Core State Standards.

Response to Intervention: Response to Intervention is an approach where all students are provided Tier 1 level of instruction or required grade level instruction, where students struggling with Tier 1 instruction are provided Tier 2 level of instruction to address learning gap areas, and where Tier 3 level of instruction or special education services are provided to students properly identified with learning disabilities.

Ability level grouping: Ability level grouping is the practice of placing students of the same ability level together for instructional purposes.

DIBELS, SCA, and CBMs: Assessments utilized by schools for tracking student progress are the (a) Dynamic Indicator of Basic Early Literacy Skills or DIBELS, which are used at schools nationwide to monitor the development of reading skills; (b) Short Cycle Assessments or SCA that districts either develop for themselves or select from a choice of state-approved testing companies; and (c) Curriculum Based Measures or CBMs that are short, teacher-developed tests aligned with the classroom instruction.

Benchmark students: Students performing at the benchmark level are students who are performing at a proficient or higher level on grade level assessments and who do not need Tier 2 reading intervention instruction.

Accelerated learning opportunities: Accelerated learning opportunities are instructional strategies and activities that can advance the learning of students who are performing at a proficient or higher level with grade-level standards.

Pacing guides: Pacing guides, which are developed by school districts, are instructional guides for grade-level teachers that list time frames and standards that should be taught.

Curriculum maps: Curriculum maps are documents developed by teachers who list standards, skills, and concepts to be taught; who initiate activities that will be used; and who determine how instruction will be assessed and incorporate resources that will be utilized.

Action research: Action research is a learning-by-doing approach where teachers design and implement instruction, analyze student performance data to gauge the instruction provided (can include student work or performances), and develop and implement next-step actions to improve the instructional practice and student performance results.

Organization of Study

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the study. Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature of Tier 2 reading intervention programs. Chapter 3 explains the study's research design and methodology. Chapter 4 presents an analysis of the data and discussion of the findings. Finally, Chapter 5, presents the summary, conclusion, and recommendations of the study. A reference list and appendices are provided.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW THE OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Both a phonics-based and a whole word and meaning approach to teaching reading have their shortcomings. Key studies conducted in the 1980s and 1990s lead to the evolution of the balanced literacy approach that is used today. Early readers included the Bible, patriotic essay, New England Primer, and the McGuffey readers, and simplified classic books. In 1889, the first phonics-based, sequential reading program was developed by Rebecca Smith Pollard that included reading and spelling books and a teacher's manual. In the 1930s and 1940s, students were taught to read words by sight and memorization; and in the 1980s and 1990s, the whole language reading philosophy, which placed less emphasis on the teaching of phonics, was how reading was taught. The whole language approach has received criticism for not providing students with the ability to sound out new, unfamiliar words.

The National Reading Panel, created in 1997, was charged with the task of reviewing all available research on how children learned to read, determining the most effective evidence-based methods for teaching reading, recommending ways of getting this information into schools, and suggesting a plan for additional research (www.reading.uoregon.edu). A significant study was the National Research Council's report, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (Snow, Burns, & Griffen, 1998), where the NRP identified alphabetics, fluency, and comprehension as areas important to teaching reading. The NRP provided further recommendations in its own report, *Report of the National Reading Panel: Report of the Subgroups,* where it

contended that reading instruction should incorporate explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, systematic phonics instruction, methods to improve fluency, ways to enhance comprehension (including vocabulary instruction), computer technology, teacher preparation and comprehension strategies, and teacher education in reading instruction.

Response to Intervention

Textbook companies continue to develop Core reading programs that use these essential components or research-based criteria of NCLB. Of course, there is now a demand for texts that are also aligned to the federally developed Common Core State Standards and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers. As stated in Chapter 1, utilizing a research-based reading program to provide instruction to all students is considered a Tier 1 level of instruction of the Response to Intervention approach. Students not performing at the expected grade level are then provided Tier 2 level of instruction that targets identified student learning deficiencies. In the state of New Mexico, students who continue to perform below the expected level are then provided special education services or Tier 3 level of instruction. RtI is endorsed by the 2004 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act as an acceptable way of identifying students with learning disabilities. RtI instruction involves implementing research-based and data-informed instruction and interventions and regular progress monitoring.

Tier 2 Reading Intervention Instruction

Though students are receiving Tier 1 level of instruction that incorporates the essential components to reading, learning to read is a complex, challenging process where students continue to struggle with learning to read, reading at grade level, and performing

at a proficient level on required assessments. To assist students in improving their reading, it is, therefore, important to screen and accurately identify the specific reading problem. For instance, if the problem is with phonemic awareness, the problem lies in struggling to identify and manipulate individual sounds in words. Tier 2 reading intervention instruction could include providing activities where students identify and categorize sounds, blend sounds and form words, and manipulate sounds by deleting, adding, and substituting sounds to form words. If students struggle with phonics, they have a difficult time with understanding the connection between sounds and printed letters, which is needed for spelling as well as reading. The NRP report recommends that explicit phonics instruction be provided from kindergarten to 6th grade. A problem in the area of fluency is one where students have a difficult time reading with speed, accuracy, and expression and in understanding what was read. Remediation would include practicing reading aloud while being corrected and practice in silent reading. Last, to address problems in comprehending what is read, the NPR recommends that teachers use cooperative learning strategies, having students create and answer questions, and help students in understanding words.

The goal of RtI is to provide instruction that allows all students to learn essential standards, which can be contradictory to the common goal of school districts, which is to stay on pace with a pacing guide and raise test scores. The quickest way schools are achieving this is by working more with the "bubble kids" or students that are slightly below the proficiency level rather than working with all students, especially the lowest achieving students. The authors of *Simplifying Response to Intervention, Four Essential Guiding Principles* reminds us that students learn at different speeds and in different

ways and may need additional time to learn essential standards than are given by the pacing guide, which is designed to cover required standards before the high stakes test (Buffum, Mattos, & Weber, 2012, p. 3). Rather than provide a one-size fits all approach, it is urged that sites be given the autonomy to meet individual student needs and implement practices that are practical and doable (p. 9). It is recommended that Tier 2 interventions be led by collaborative teacher teams like a grade-level team at the elementary level that ensures students master critical grade level standards and designs intensive interventions for students.

In addition, a school-wide collaborative team like a building leadership team, is recommended to coordinate Core instruction and interventions across the grade levels and school. Implementing an effective Tier 2 instructional program can be accomplished through a collaborative approach where teachers ensure all students learn the essential grade-level standards. Intervention teams are to spend time determining the rigor level, prior skills, learning targets, and common assessments for each standard. They are also to utilize assessments to determine foundational skills and learning gap areas, provide progress monitoring, evaluate the effectiveness of instruction, and provide corrective feedback (pp. 169-170).

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Reading Intervention Program Reviews

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Because the problems students experience with reading vary, it is important to accurately access the problem and use an appropriate intervention, either teacher made or packaged intervention programs. The *Best Evidence Encyclopedia* provides reviews of packed Tier 2 reading intervention programs. In a summative review, nine programs are listed that addresses phonemic awareness, 13 that addresses phonics, eight that address

fluency, eight that address comprehension, and eight that address vocabulary. They were not given ratings as to their effectiveness. Instead, information was given as to what tier of instruction they provided the grade levels they are to be used with, instructor-to-student ratio, if a non-teacher could provide the instruction if instructional technology is offered, and if an embedded assessment piece is provided.

There were some familiar program names mentioned like Voyager Passport, Waterford, Reading Recovery, and Saxon Phonics. The program that covered all areas was Voyager Passport. It included instruction that could be provided by a paraprofessional or volunteer, use of instructional technology, and an embedded assessment piece. However, it lacked small group tutorials. As indicated later in this chapter, there are no studies of its effectiveness. Given the realities of not enough available staff to assist with interventions and the usefulness of technology for instruction, it would be beneficial to use a program where instruction could be delivered by a less experienced staff member and where technology was utilized.

All programs listed in the review included different features as to what they offered. For instance, phonemic awareness is addressed in the FOCUS program; phonics is addressed with Project Read and Read Well; fluency is addressed with Read Well and Voyager Universal Literacy System; comprehension is addressed with Comprehension Plus, Harcourt Accelerated Reading Instruction, and Voyager Passport; and vocabulary with Read Well. It would take a thorough examination of these programs before one were to be selected.

Popular Tier 2 reading intervention programs continue to be reviewed by the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) of the Florida Center for Reading Research. A

program that received the best review was the Reading Recovery program, which was found to have "a significant positive impact on the general reading achievement of struggling readers of first grade" and "in the general reading achievement and reading comprehension domains" (What Works Clearinghouse, 2011-2012, p. 2). Read Naturally, another popular program, was found to have "no discernible effects on alphabetics and comprehension, mixed effects on reading fluency, and potentially positive effects on general reading achievement for beginning readers" (2013, p. 2). There is no review on Voyager Passport's effectiveness due to the lack of studies that meet the evidence standards of the WWC (2010). The Lindamood Phonemic Sequencing (LiPS), which teaches the skills to decode, encode, identify individual sounds, and blend words, was found to have potentially positive effects on reading comprehension and mixed effects on alphabetics for beginning readers (What Works Clearinghouse, 2015). A program designed to be delivered by tutors, Sound Partners (What Works Clearinghouse, 2010a), provides scripted lessons in letter-sound correspondences, phoneme blending, decoding and encoding, irregular high-frequency words, and phonics practice through oral reading. It was found to have positive effects in alphabetics, fluency, and comprehension but no effect as to general reading achievement for beginning readers.

Findings of Research Studies of Tier 2 Reading Intervention Instruction

In the study, A *Randomized Controlled Trial of a Response-to-Intervention (RTI) Tier 2 Literacy Program: Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI*; Ransford-Kaldon, Sutton Flynt, & Cristin Ross, 2011)*,* it was found that kindergarten to second grade students who received Tier 2 reading intervention experienced gain in their literacy achievement. Out of 427 students from nine elementary schools from a district in Georgia and New York

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received instruction in Leveled Literacy Intervention that emphasized instruction in phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension, oral language skills, and vocabulary. This instruction was received 30 minutes daily for 18 weeks. Students of kindergarten, first, and second grade scored higher than a control group of students on the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System. Kindergarten and first grade students also scored higher on DIBELS than the control group.

Another study, "Intensifying Reading Instruction for Students Within a Three-Tier Model: Standard-Protocol and Problem Solving Approaches within a Response-to-Intervention RTI System" (Marchand-Martella, Ruby, & Martella, 2007) found utilizing one program across the tiers effective in improving student reading abilities. At an elementary school, located in the Pacific Northwest, 327 K-3 students were provided instruction at the three tiers using the Reading Mastery Plus reading program, a program that uses scientifically based instructional strategies. Students were provided 30-40 minutes of daily, small group instruction. To ensure fidelity to the program's implementation, teachers received training by an educational consultant in the use of the program and were observed and provided feedback twice during the school year. It was found there was significant improvement in students; DIBELS scores. The researcher pointed out that utilizing one program across the tiers allowed for alignment and consistency of instruction. This study also pointed out the importance of training teachers to effectively implement the instructional programs.

In fact, a study, *An Examination of the Effectiveness of Emergent Literacy Intervention for Pre-Kindergartens at Risk for Reading Delays* (DeLucca, Bailet, Zettler-Greeley, & Murphy, 2015) concluded that reading intervention instruction should begin

at the preschool level and can prevent future reading problems in later elementary grades. While in preschool 374 students were provided Tier 2 reading intervention instruction to improve emergent literacy skills of letter names and sounds, syllable counting and segmentation, rhyming, alliteration, blending, and onset-rime. Instruction was provided for 30 minutes daily for nine weeks by a highly trained teacher. In a follow-up study of 276 of the 374 original students who received the prekindergarten Tier 2 reading intervention instruction, the students "were performing in the developmentally appropriate range in kindergarten with scores indicative of low-risk for future reading delay" and "performed comparably to both the state and district norms when developmental scale scores and achievement levels were considered" (SREE Spring 2015 Conference Abstract Template, 2015).

Instructional practice was the focus of a study conducted by Johns Hopkins researchers (Slavin, Lake, Chambers, Cheug, & Davis, 2009), who wrote "Effective Reading Programs for Elementary Grades: A Best-Evidence Synthesis." This study reviewed 63 studies of beginning reading programs and 79 studies of upper elementary programs that have shown to be effective in narrowing the achievement gap between high poverty, disadvantaged students, and middle class students. An effective instructional approach noted in the study was the use of cooperative learning or structured peer-to-peer interactions, where individual learning transfers due to the success of the team. It also warned against relying on merely phonics-based instruction because it was not enough to increase reading achievement. It recommended the use of strategies that "strengthens phonic skills," as well as "maximizes students' participation and engagement" and teaches "effective metacognitive strategies for comprehending text." Last, it

recommended that teachers be provided extensive professional development in specific

classroom strategies that involved "students in well-structured cooperative groups within

which they help each other master and apply metacognitive learning" (Slaven et al., 2009,

p. 30).

Instructional practices by teachers more experienced in implementing Tier 2

interventions was noted in, *Evaluation of Response to Intervention Practices for*

Elementary School Reading: Executive Summary (Balu, 2015). In the summary, it states

that since 1999, studies support "that well-designed and closely monitored small-group

reading interventions" could be beneficial in improving the skills of early readers, in

particular first grade students (Balu, p. 2). The study looked at the impact instruction was

having with students who were performing slightly at grade level standards. Secondly, it

made comparisons among 146 schools that had implemented Tier 2 instruction for three

or more years with a 100 schools with less than three years of implementation history. A

research team collected survey data from reading teachers and other staff who provided

Tier 2 reading intervention instruction. To determine the effect instruction had on these

students, researchers compared the fall screening test results of students who performed

slightly below grade level with those of students who performed slightly above the

expected level for needing Tier 2 instruction.

The study found that schools with longer history of Tier 2 implementation

provided instruction more often, five days a week versus three days of a week, and were

more likely to provide additional staff to assist with intervention instruction. Other

differences noted was that more experienced schools were more consistent with

conducting universal screening at least twice a year and were more likely to follow a

"prescribed sequence of steps" with implementing Tier 2 instruction. It was noted that student movement in Tier 2 indicated that teachers from schools with more experience were making data-informed decisions as to placement. It was also found that at 45% of these schools, additional reading instruction was being provided to students reading at and above grade level, and that 69% of them were offering Tier 2 instruction during Core instruction time as well. Teachers at the more experienced schools kept groups smaller for students with more intensive needs and provided instruction in phonics and phonemic awareness. As far as the effect of instruction on reading outcomes, it was found the effect varied significantly across schools and was not statistically significant for Grades 2 and 3.

Summary

Literature on the teaching of reading and Tier 2 reading intervention instruction was reviewed and presented in this chapter to provide the context of the study. Reviews for Tier 2 programs provided general information as to program features and areas of effectiveness. A few studies that were found attested to how students who were performing at the expected level benefitted from being provided Tier 2 reading intervention instruction. It was, however, difficult to find studies that examined Tier 2 reading intervention program components like structure and processes, lesson planning, collaboration, and professional development. A valuable source the researcher did come across that provided information in these areas was the publication titled *Simplifying Response to Intervention: Four Essential Guiding Principles.* Information from the publication about teachers collaborating to work with essential standards and mapping out their instruction was incorporated into the survey instrument. It was also interesting to find a large-scale study that used a survey instrument to identify structures and processes

being implemented at 146 schools from 13 different states (Balu, 2015). Like this survey, there were similarities as to the structure and process part of this study designed to elicit information about the amount of instruction, frequency of assessments, and group sizes.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter identifies the research design, population and sample, sampling procedures, instrumentation, data collection procedures, data analysis, and limitations of the study.

A survey was administered to kindergarten, first, and second grade teachers of the 10 in-town elementary schools of the Gallup McKinley County Schools to obtain answers for three main research questions. The first asked, *"How are teachers of the Gallup schools currently implementing Tier 2 reading interventions as far as structure/processes, lesson planning, and collaboration?"* The second question asked, *"What are teachers' opinions as to using all available staff, instruction for benchmark students, and the amount and usefulness of meetings?"* The third research question asked, *"What practices and processes do teachers feel are effective and what recommendations do they have for improving instruction and for professional development?"*

Research Design

The study used a quantitative approach, where data were collected from teachers regarding the implementation of Tier 2 reading instruction through a 31-question survey. The questions were reviewed by an instructional coach and three elementary school principals. The feedback received resulted in no changes were needed; however, there were several words that needed to be corrected, a few answer choices needed to be revised, the structure and processes section was to be omitted, and that all sections should remain as is.

This input was considered, and the researcher decided that the survey would be kept comprehensive in its scope, covering the major areas of the Tier 2 reading intervention program: demographics, structure and processes, lesson planning, collaboration, and professional development. Questions included multiple choices, Likert scale, and some open-ended questions. It was estimated to take 20 minutes to complete. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, and could be exited at any time. The survey was run from September 3 through the month of October, 2015.

The first section, Questions 1 through 3, elicited basic demographic information of the 17 participants, in particular the school one was employed at, the number of years at one's current position, and the grade levels worked with. Other common categories, like age, gender, ethnicity, and educational levels, were not identified due to the study being focused on the Tier 2 processes and instructional strategies.

Questions 4 through 14 of the structures and processes section were designed to identify the intervention team staff, student instructional group sizes, student placement in groups and reassignment, types of groups being utilized, and the amount of instruction received. In the lesson planning section, Questions 15 through 21, covered questions about how skills and concepts were being targeted, the amount of time devoted to planning, and the extent of agreement on the standards in regards to the prerequisites needed, rigor, importance, and pacing. Next, how teachers were collaborating was the focus of Section 4, Questions 22 through 25. Information was obtained as to the frequency of meetings and the extent that collaborative actions were occurring, like data analysis, problem solving, action planning, curriculum mapping, lesson planning, and the sharing of strategies and activities. The final section of the survey, Questions 26 through

31, was to elicit information on the amount of professional development teachers received, sources they found helpful for professional development, and the amount of time they spent each week for personal study of reading instruction.

Opinion-based and open-ended questions were included in these sections. Opinion-based questions included if teachers agreed that all available staff should be used to assist with Tier 2 reading interventions, the extent that students at the benchmark level were being provided with accelerated learning opportunities, if intervention teachers met enough and the meetings were useful, and the extent of confidence they had in their own ability to teach reading. They were also given the opportunity in several open-ended questions to list practices they felt were effective for improving student reading abilities, list next-step actions for improving Tier 2 reading intervention instruction, and list recommendations for professional development that could help them improve as reading instructors. More participants, five to eight, skipped the open-ended questions, in particular the ones that asked for recommendations for next-step actions and professional development. However, only one to three participants skipped answering the multiple choice and Likert-scale questions.

Population and Sample

The participants of the study were kindergarten, first, and second grade teachers employed at 10 elementary schools within the town of Gallup, NM. These schools are part of the Gallup McKinley School district, which is located in northwest New Mexico. The district is comprised of 10 in-town elementary schools and nine county elementary schools, where 8 or 9 of the latter are located on Indian reservation land. The 17 participants were represented by the following schools: 3 or 17.65% were from

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Washington Elementary, 3 or 17.65% from Red Rock Elementary, 3 or 17.65% from

Juan De Onate Elementary, 2 or 11.76% from Turpen Elementary, 2 or 11.76% from

Roosevelt Elementary, 1 or 5.88 % from Stage Coach Elementary, 1 or 5.88% from

Rocky View Elementary, 1 or 5.88% from Lincoln Elementary, 1 or 5.88% from Indian

Hills Elementary, and 0 or 0% from Jefferson Elementary (Table 1). Teachers of these 10

schools were emailed an invitation to take the survey through the district email system,

which contained a link to access the survey via Survey Monkey. Of the 17 participants, 6

or 35.29% were kindergarten teachers, 7 or 41.18% were first grade teachers, and 4 or

23.53% were second grade teachers (Table 3). Participants were more experienced

teachers, for 15 or 88.23% of them had been employed at their current position more than

four years and nine or 52.94% of them had been at their current position for eight or more

years. There were no first-year teachers who took the survey (Table 2). Being at the

same position for four or more years, these teachers were familiar with district and site-

based mandates, initiatives, and processes, including those of the Tier 2 reading

intervention program.

Selection Criteria and Rationale

To participate in the study, teachers needed to meet three basic criteria: be

employed at one of the 10 in-town, Gallup elementary schools; be a regular classroom or

grade-level teacher; and teach kindergarten, first, or second grade. All kindergarten, first,

and second grade teachers of the 10 in-town schools were invited to participate in the

voluntary survey from September 3 through the month of October 2015.

The rationale for limiting the participation to K-2, grade-level teachers was to

focus in on the ideas brought to light by the direct practitioners of Tier 2 reading

intervention instruction. The New Mexico Public Education Department holds grade level teachers accountable for providing Tier 1 instruction or the required grade level instruction in reading and math, as well as for providing Tier 2 intervention instruction in reading and math. In the state of New Mexico, if more intervention is needed beyond Tier 2, students received Tier 3 level of instruction or special education services. Principals and other additional staff at elementary schools are familiar with Tier 2 reading intervention instruction, but many lack the experience or no longer worked directly with students teaching them to read. It is important that information, opinions, and recommendations obtained from the survey be captured and shared with other teachers, who on a daily basis are in charge of teaching students to read and are being held accountable for student test results, so that adjustments can be made to improve their Tier 2 reading intervention instruction.

Secondly, the rational for the criteria was to select teachers who actually taught reading from the most beginning stages. From third grade on, it is expected that students know how to read and begin using reading as way to learn the standards of the different subject areas. In the early grades, teachers provide instruction in various areas needed for reading like phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency. Though Tier 2 reading interventions can and should be provided from kindergarten to the 12th grade, the purpose of this study was to focus on the foundational grades of kindergarten, first, and second grade where students were learning to read.

A third rational for the criteria was to select teachers that were employed at the 10 in-town elementary schools, so that the study and dissertation could be completed in a timely manner. If teachers of the nine county schools, in which eight are located on

Indian reservation land, had been invited to participate, approval would have been needed by the Navajo Nation Human Research Review Board. All research studies that involve participants within the boundaries of the Navajo Nation are to be approved by the NNHRRB. Given the time it took to obtain approval by GMCS Board of Education and to arrange for the invitation and survey link to be emailed to teachers via the district email system, there was not enough time to include the county schools.

Instrumentation

A survey instrument, administered through Survey Monkey, was the tool used to collect data on how teachers were implementing Tier 2 reading intervention instruction as well as their opinions and recommendations. It was made available to participants from September 3 through the month of October 2015. The 31 survey questions covered basic demographics and the components of Tier 2 reading intervention instruction, structure and processes, lesson planning, collaboration, and professional development. Many were of multiple choice and Likert-scale format, with some questions allowing for explanation of the answers. It also included open-ended questions where participants could list their responses. The advantage of collecting data through Survey Monkey was that the researcher was not directly involved and was unable to influence the responses. Instead individual participants read and responded to questions of a set, unchanging survey. The results obtained were reliable and valid being that the Survey Monkey program completed the data analysis where responses to multiple choice and Likert-scale questions were converted to data tables. For the open-ended questions, the program listed the responses, which the researcher then categorized.

Data Collection Procedures

Kindergarten, first, and second grade teachers of the 10 in-town elementary schools were emailed an invitation to participate in the survey, which contained a link to access the survey from Survey Monkey. It was estimated to take 20 minutes to complete. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, and could be exited at any time.

The first invitation was emailed on September 3 and was resent two more times. In an effort to improve the response rate, the researcher introduce herself as a former principal of the Gallup McKinley County Schools, listed the topics the survey would cover, and informed teachers how the results would be shared with them. The second and third time it was emailed to teachers, in which the wording of the invitations was changed to be more upbeat and inviting. In fact, in the third invitation, teachers were informed they still had time to take part in the survey to inform each other's practice. The email headings were descriptive and catchy, so that teachers would be less likely to pass by as they checked their email. The researcher also sent a couple of emails and called or left voice mails for the principals at the 10 elementary schools to encourage the participation of their teachers.

The response rate continued to be low after the second invitation, so the researcher took time off from work and on the morning of September 17, 2015 presented the survey at a district principals' seminar. She also reached out to principals in late September and was able to present the survey to K-2 teachers at Turpen Elementary, Washington Elementary, Red Rock Elementary, and Indian Hills Elementary. These presentations occurred on October 2, 5, and 12th. It was hoped that an in-person meeting would increase interest in the survey. At one particular school, Indian Hills Elementary

School, seven teachers met with the researcher, but only one person actually took the survey. Overall, the in-person meetings helped increase the response rate from 7 to 17.

Data Analysis

After teachers completed the survey, the Survey Monkey program updated the data analysis and results. Responses to the multiple choice and Likert questions were converted to charts and data tables. Some of these questions also allowed for an explanation or other responses. For the open-ended questions, the program showed the number of teachers who responded and listed the responses. The researcher then reviewed the responses and categorized them.

For instance, in Question 15, where 12 of 17 teachers responded to the type of instruction being provided to students performing at the benchmark level, the two main categories of responses were enrichment instruction (3 responses) and independent work (3 responses). With Question 20, where 11 teachers listed one to three effective practices for Tier 2 reading instruction, the top categories of the 27 responses were phonics and decoding (6 responses), fluency (3 responses), Lindamood-Bell programs for phonics and phonemic awareness (2 responses), data analysis to group students (2 responses), and the Project Read program (2 responses). In Question 21, where nine teachers listed actions that could be taken to improve Tier 2 reading intervention instruction, the main categories of the 20 responses were more staff to help (3 responses), assessment and identifying reading needs (2 responses), consistent and uninterrupted Tier 2 instruction (2 responses), provide professional development (2 responses), small groups (2 responses), and high interest leveled books (2 responses). The last open-ended question, Question 31, asked for one to three recommendations for professional development that could help one

improve as a reading instructor. The 21 responses of the nine teachers fell within four main categories: current strategies (7 responses), comprehension skills (4 responses), sharing ideas (2 responses), and Project Read (2 responses). There were individual responses in these open-ended questions that did not fall within the categories. They were still, however, part of the data analysis that was conducted and are reported in Chapter 4.

Though the Survey Monkey program developed graphs, it was decided that only the tables would be used in Chapters 4 and 5. The tables are easier to read, as one could readily read the number of responses and the percentages. The actual numbers and percentages were more difficult to read within the graphs.

The researcher reviewed the responses and followed the sequential order of the questions for the most part when writing Chapter 4. There were times that the researcher added numbers from two sections of the Likert scale. This was done with Question 19, where teachers were asked the extent they agreed with other grade-level teachers on the prerequisite, rigor, the importance, and pacing of standards. It was also done with Question 24, which asked how often collaborative actions occurred at Tier 2 reading intervention meetings. Combining the moderate and large extent numbers and the small extent and not at all numbers helped clarify the amount of agreement and disagreement for Question 19 and what actions were occurring more and less frequently for Question 24.

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

The primary limitation was the low response rate of the survey. To increase the rate, the researcher would have liked to have met with teachers at all 10 schools but was unable to take more days off from work to do so and not all principals responded to her

two emails and phone calls. If the researcher had been provided the email addresses of the teachers, more follow-up could have occurred. A district employee with the technology department served as the point of contact with the teachers. Three invitations were sent to this person and were then emailed to the teachers through the district email system. The researcher would have preferred to email teachers an invitation each week but did not want to put too much pressure on this particular employee. Despite presenting to elementary principals, emailing and calling principals, meeting with teachers at four schools during their staff meeting, and having the survey emailed to teachers three times, only 17 teachers from 9 of the 10 schools completed the survey.

Another limitation was only the teachers who were employed at the 10 in-town schools of Gallup, New Mexico were invited to participate. There was not enough time to complete all the steps for approval by the Navajo Nation Human Research Review Board. Including the teachers at the nine county elementary schools would have increased the response rate. This would have provided more insight as to the demographic make-up and implementation of Tier 2 instruction at a district level.

Other non-grade level staff that assisted with Tier 2 reading interventions and principals were not invited to take the survey, which was a third limitation. The focus was to obtain information from regular classroom or grade level teachers because they were the ones most responsible for providing Tier 2 instruction. Once again this would have increased the response rate and provided information from other perspectives if they had been included.

The demographic questions could be perceived as a limitation as well because they could provide the information needed for identifying teachers. Teachers were asked

what school they were employed at, the grade level they taught, and the number of years they had been in their position. With this information, administrators could determine who answered in particular ways. The purpose of the study was to share ideas and improve upon one's implementation of Tier 2 reading interventions; however, there were answers that could be viewed as concerning and possibly used as a starting point for disciplinary action.

Finally, an advanced statistical analysis was not conducted and was a limitation. The Survey Monkey program reported the number of responses and percentages of the multiple choice and Likert scale questions and converted these responses to graphs and data tables. It also listed teacher comments, which the researcher then categorized. In order for statistical calculations to have been done, the survey would have needed to contain questions where teachers reported student performance data.

Summary

In this chapter, the study's methodology, the research design, population and sample, instrumentation, data collection procedures, data analysis, and limitations were presented. The survey design included 31 questions, which used multiple choice, Likert scale, and open-ended question formats. Teachers who taught grades K-2 of the 10 in-town elementary schools of the Gallup McKinley Schools were the selected sample population invited to take the survey. The results were then converted to graphs, tables, and response lists by the Survey Monkey program. The researcher made efforts to increase the response rate by presenting the survey to principals, following up with a couple of emails and a phone call to principals, scheduling meetings with teachers at their sites, and having the survey sent out to teachers three times from September 3 through the

month of October. These actions helped increase the response rate of the survey from 7 to 17 teachers. The questions—which covered the areas of structure and processes, lesson planning, collaboration, and professional development—fulfilled the purpose of the study of providing information as to how teachers were currently implementing Tier 2 reading instruction, what they deemed as effective practices, and what recommendations they have for next-step actions and professional development.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The purpose of the study was to identify processes and instructional strategies being utilized by K-2 teachers of the Gallup, New Mexico schools. Secondly, it was to identify what these teachers as direct practitioners felt could be done to better improve the Tier 2 reading instruction students receive.

Demographics

The first part of the survey, Questions 1 through 3 provided basic demographic information of the 17 participants, in particular, asking the school one was employed at, years at one's current position, and grade levels one worked with. Other common categories like age, gender, ethnicity, and educational levels were not identified due to the study being focused on the processes and instructional strategies of the Tier 2 reading intervention program.

School Site

Of the 10 Gallup elementary schools included in the study, three or 17.65% were from Washington Elementary; three or 17.65% from Red Rock Elementary; three or 17.65% from Juan De Onate Elementary; two or 11.76% from Turpen Elementary; two or 11.76% from Roosevelt Elementary; one or 5.88 % from Stage Coach Elementary; one or 5.88% from Rocky View Elementary; one or 5.88% from Lincoln Elementary; and one or 5.88% from Indian Hills Elementary; and 0 or 0% from Jefferson Elementary (Table 1).

Table 1

Years Currently Employed

At which Gallup elementary school are you currently employed?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Indian Hills	5.9%	1
Jefferson	0.0%	0
Juan De Onate	17.6%	3
Lincoln	5.9%	1
Red Rock	17.6%	3
Rocky View	5.9%	1
Roosevelt	11.8%	2
Stagecoach	5.9%	1
Turpen	11.8%	2
Washington	17.6%	3
answered question		17
skipped question		0

Years and Grade Levels

The number of years at one's current position varied but revealed that more teachers, 15 or 88.23%, have been employed at their current position for more than four years. There were no first-year teachers who took the survey. Two teachers or 11.76% worked in their current position for one to three years; 6 or 35.29% for four to seven years; 3 or 17.65% for 8 to 11 years; 0 or 0% for 12 to15 years; and 6 or 35.29% for 15 or more years. Being that 9 or 52.94% of the teachers had been at their current position for eight or more years, the responses to the questions represent those from more experienced teachers who were familiar and were long-time practitioners of Tier 2 instruction at their schools (Table 2). Of the 17 teachers, 6 or 35.29% were kindergarten teachers, 7 or 41.18% were first grade teachers, and 4 or 23.53% were second grade teachers (Table 3).

Table 2

Years Working in Current Position

How many years have you been working in your current position?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I just began in my current position.	0.0%	0
1-3 years	11.8%	2
4-7 years	35.3%	6
8-11 years	17.6%	3
12-15 years	0.0%	0
15 or more years	35.3%	6
answered question		17
skipped question		0

Table 3

Years Working in Grade Levels

As a tier 2 reading intervention instructor, with what grade level(s) do you work? Check all that apply.		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
K	35.3%	6
1	41.2%	7
2	23.5%	4
answered question		17
skipped question		0

Structure and Processes

After the basic demographic information was obtained, questions were asked to identify the structures and processes of the Tier 2 reading intervention programs being provided at the Gallup elementary schools. There were differences in opinion as to what type of instructional staff were best equipped to provide reading instruction. On one hand, instruction was best provided by staff who were trained and had the experience in

teaching reading. On the other hand, in order to decrease the student-to-staff ratio with instructional groups, more staff at the site were utilized.

Teachers responded to Question 4 about what additional staff were utilized to provide Tier 2 reading instruction. Responses from higher to lower numbers and percentages were as follows: kindergarten assistants: 13 or 86.67%; special education teachers: 12 or 75%; fine arts teachers: 10 or 66.67%; physical education teachers: 9 or 60%; Navajo language teachers: nine or 60%; library assistants: 9 or 56.25%; special education assistants: 9 or 56.25%; instructional coaches: 8 or 50%; computer lab/technology assistants: 6 or 37.50%; reading specialists/facilitators: 5 or 35.71%; intervention teachers: 5 or 31.25%; librarians: 4 or 26.67%; intervention assistants (three or 20%); and Spanish language teachers and Spanish translators: 0 or 0%. These numbers are listed in Table 4.

Table 4

Staff Who Provide Reading Intervention Instruction

Does the staff below provide tier 2 reading intervention instruction?					
Answer Options	Yes	No	I don't know.	My school doesn't have this.	Response Count
Grade level teachers	17	0	0	0	17
Fine arts teacher	10	2	3	0	15
Physical education teacher	9	2	4	0	15
Librarian	4	3	3	5	15
Navajo language and culture teacher	9	1	5	0	15
Spanish language/bilingual teacher	0	0	0	15	15
Intervention teacher	5	1	2	8	16
Special education teacher	12	1	3	0	16
Reading specialist/facilitator	5	1	1	7	14
Instructional coach	8	1	2	5	16
Kindergarten assistants	13	1	1	0	15
Library assistant	9	3	1	3	16
Intervention assistant	3	1	1	10	15
Computer lab/technology assistant	6	3	4	3	16
Special education assistant	9	1	4	2	16
Spanish translator	0	1	0	14	15
Other (please specify)					0
				answered question	17
				skipped question	0

These numbers were affected by the type of specialty positions provided at the specific school. For instance, there were requirements a school must meet in order to be provided a Spanish translator and a Spanish teacher. The district budget determined whether an instructional coach and a librarian or library assistant were provided. A school's site budget, namely its Title I budget, determined whether positions like an intervention teacher, intervention assistant, reading specialist/facilitator, instructional coach, and computer lab/technology assistant were provided. Only one teacher reported having a Spanish translator at his or her school and that this person did not provide Tier 2 reading intervention instruction. Ten or 66.67% of the teachers reported not having an intervention assistant at their school, and eight or 50% of them reported not having an intervention teacher. Teachers also reported not having the following specialty positions at their schools (Table 4): reading specialist/facilitator: 7 or 50%; librarian: 5 or 33.3%; library assistant: 3 or 18.75%; instructional coach: 5 or 31.25%; computer lab/technology assistant: 3 or 18.75%; and special education assistant: 2 or 12.50%.

All teachers reported that their schools did have the following specialty staff at their sites and that these individuals did assist with Tier 2 reading interventions (Table 4): fine arts teachers: 10 or 66.67%; physical education teachers: 9 or 60%; Navajo language teachers: 9 or 60%; special education teachers: 12 or 75%; and kindergarten assistants: 13 or 86.67%.. With exception to Navajo language teachers, it was interesting that a 100% of these staff members were not used. Fine arts and physical education teachers can have times of non-student contact where they are available to assist. Kindergarten assistants were assigned to work with kindergarten teachers and therefore could be assisting with Tier 2 reading instruction.

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As mentioned earlier, part of the decision as to what additional staff were utilized rested on the teachers' belief about who was best equipped to provide reading instruction. To obtain an understanding of the staffing composition of a Tier 2 reading intervention team, Question 5 asked teachers, "Do you agree that all available staff, even non-grade level teachers, should be used to provide Tier 2 reading intervention instruction?" More teachers, 12 or 70.59% *agreed,* 3 or 17.65% *somewhat agreed,* and 2 or 11.76% disagreed. Nine of the 17 teachers explained their answers. Three teachers agreed if available staff were under the supervision of certified teachers; two teachers agree because it allowed for smaller groups of students; and one teacher agreed because more students could be helped (Table 5). Another teacher seemed to make a comment leaning toward agreeing when he/she stated, "Reading is the foundation of first grade learning" (Table 5). There was one teacher who made a statement in disagreement, stating, "We are already spread very thin, to be pulled for another thing makes all instruction disjointed" (Table 5).

Table 5

All Available Staff Provide Reading Intervention Instruction

Do you agree that all available staff, even non-grade level teachers, should be used to provide tier 2 reading intervention instruction?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I agree.	70.6%	12
I somewhat agree.	17.6%	3
I disagree.	11.8%	2
Please explain your answer.		9
answered question		17
skipped question		0

Being that many non-grade level teachers do provide Tier 2 reading intervention instruction, teachers were asked how many additional staff members assisted grade level teachers and the size of the student intervention groups. Eleven teachers or 68.75% reported that one additional staff member assisted the grade level teachers, and 5 or 31.25% stated two additional staff members assisted. No teachers reported having more than two additional staff assisting (Table 6).

Table 6

How Many Staff Members Assist Grade Level Teachers

At each grade level, how many staff members assist grade level teachers with tier 2 reading interventions?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
One additional staff member	68.8%	11
Two additional staff members	31.3%	5
Three additional staff members	0.0%	0
More than three additional staff members	0.0%	0
answered question		16
skipped question		1

As far as group size, more teachers, 11 or 64.71%, reported having groups with four to six students, followed by 4 or 23.53% reporting having groups with 10 or more students and 2 or 11.76% reporting groups with seven to 10 students. No teachers reported having groups with one to three students (Table 7). Schools that had one or two additional staff were able to provide instruction to students in smaller groups. To explain their responses, two teachers commented that students were grouped according to tests; one stated that intensive groups had five to six students, and strategic groups had no more than 10 students. One stated, "Only kindergarten and Special ED teachers had extra help because of the assistants" (Table 7). At the Gallup elementary schools, it was rare that other grade levels had assistants because the district paid for and provided kindergarten

and special education assistants. Other assistants would need to be paid with site funds,

for example, the Title I budget.

Table 7

How Many Students Typically in a Tier 2 Reading Intervention Group

How many students are typically in a tier 2 reading intervention group?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1-3	0.0%	0
4-6	64.7%	11
7-10	11.8%	2
10 or more	23.5%	4
Explanation (optional):		4
	answered question	17
	skipped question	0

Students who had been placed in groups were progress monitored throughout the

year. More teachers, 12 or 70.59%, reported that students were assessed for purposes of

reading interventions six or more times a year, 4 or 23.53% of them reported students

were assessed three times a year, and one or 5.88% of them reported, "I don't know"

(Table 8).

Table 8

Number of Times Students Assessed for Purposes of Reading

How often are students assessed for the purposes of reading interventions?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 3 times a year	0.0%	0
3 times a year	23.5%	4
4-5 times a year	0.0%	0
6 or more times a year	70.6%	12
I don't know	5.9%	1
	answered question	17
	skipped question	0

Assessments that were used to determine a student's placement into specific groups fell in this order: 16 or 94.12% teachers reported DIBELS scores; 12 or 70.59% reported performance on teacher-made CBMs, tests, and quizzes; eight or 47.06% reported performance on tests and quizzes from the CORE reading program; eight or 47.06% reported performance on classwork; 4 or 23.53% reported SCA scores; and 2 or 11.76% reported other (Table 9). DIBELS is not only required by the Gallup McKinley County School District but is a comprehensive assessment testing area needed for reading. Being that teachers teach to the district pacing guide that is aligned to the PARCC test, it makes sense that teacher-made assessments versus those of a Core textbook reading program would be more readily be used. Unless a school district implements its own Short Cycle Assessment approved by the New Mexico Public Education Department, it adopts an outside, commercially developed SCA, that was not developed to align directly with a district pacing guide, PARCC test, and the Core textbook. Being that the SCA, PARCC test, textbook, and a pacing guide were independent of each other, it was up to the teacher to creatively use all resources to develop and implement instruction that follows the pacing guide and ensure that students were equipped with the skills to be successful on the SCA and PARCC.

Table 9

Factors Determining a Student's Placement Into a Specific Tier 2 Reading Intervention Group

What determines a student's placement into a specific tier 2 reading intervention group?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
DIBELS scores	94.1%	16
SCA scores	23.5%	4
performance on tests and quizzes from the CORE	47.1%	8
performance on teacher made CBMs, tests, and	70.6%	12
performance on classwork and activities	47.1%	8
Other (please specify):	11.8%	2
answered question		17
skipped question		0

Question 10 sought to find out the type of student grouping being utilized by asking, "Students are placed into Tier 2 reading intervention groups according to which conditions below." From most used to least used, teachers reported the following: 16 or 94.12% reported that students were divided into ability level groups within the grade level, where each group had its own instructors; 11 or 68.75% reported that students were divided into an intervention group and non-intervention group within the grade level, with each group having its own instructors; 10 or 62.50% reported students in a class stay with their grade level teacher, and instruction is provided to the different ability groups; 10 or 62.50% reported students in a class stay with their grade level teacher, and instruction is provided to an intervention group and non-intervention group; 6 or 37.50% reported students in a class stay with their grade level teacher and receive the same instruction; and 5 or 31.25% reported students were divided into ability groups across the grade levels with each group having its own instructors. Some teachers reported two to three different grouping styles being used at their schools (Table 10). Being that there were often different numbers of available staff to different grade levels and the different

philosophies and teaching styles of the teachers, it was not unusual that teachers of a

particular grade level implement different grouping styles. One teacher explained by

stating, "Each grade level uses a different system according the grade level's needs."

Another teacher stated Tier 2 instruction should occur: "During the Tier 2 time as well as

within the classroom instruction time." Two other teachers stated that the Project Read

program was used for Tier 2 reading intervention instruction (Table 10).

Table 10

Students Placed Into Tier 2 Reading Intervention Groups According to Conditions

Students are placed into tier 2 reading intervention groups according to which conditions below. Check the correct response for each condition.				
Answer Options	Yes	No	I don't know	Response Count
Students are divided into an intervention and non-	11	5	0	16
Students are divided into ability level groups within the	16	1	0	17
Students are divided into ability level groups across	5	9	2	16
Students in a class stay with their grade level teacher,	10	6	0	16
Students in a class stay with their grade level teacher,	10	6	0	16
Students in a class stay with their grade level teacher	6	10	0	16
Other (please specify)				4
			answered question	17
			skipped question	0

As teachers moved through teaching the skills and concepts of the pacing guide,

students who were struggling were identified and provided targeted Tier 2 reading

instruction to address student learning gap areas. As the targeted skills and concepts

changed, so could the students that made up the groups. Question 11 was asked to

determine "How often students are being assigned and reassigned to specific Tier 2

reading intervention groups?" Teachers reported the following: 6 or 35.29% reported that

this was done quarterly; 5 or 29.41% reported every one to three weeks; 2 or 11.76%

reported monthly; 2 or 11.76% reported less than three times a year; 1 or 5.88% reported

three times a year; and 1 or 5.88% reported, "I don't know" (Table 11). The frequency of

assigning and reassigning students was dependent on the tool being used for progress monitoring. If a teacher is using teacher-made assessments aligned to the pacing guide then progress monitoring would be more frequent, like every one to three weeks or monthly. If non-teacher made assessments like Dibels and the district SCA were the determining factor then it would be less frequent, like quarterly or three times a year. The Dibels assessment itself supported more frequent progress monitoring, which would result in more frequent student assignments and reassignments.

Table 11

How Often Students Are Assigned and Reassigned to Specific Tier 2 Reading Intervention Groups

How often are students assigned and reassigned to specific tier 2 reading intervention groups?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 3 times a year	11.8%	2
3 times a year	5.9%	1
quarterly	35.3%	6
monthly	11.8%	2
Every 1-3 weeks	29.4%	5
I don't know	5.9%	1
	answered question	17
	skipped question	0

The amount, in terms of the number of days and minutes per day, that students received Tier 2 reading intervention instruction was the focus of the last two questions of the Structure and Processes section. The following was reported: 11 or 68.75% of teachers reported five days; 5 or 31.25% reported four days; none reported three days; and none reported one to two days (Table 12). As far as the number of minutes received daily, teachers answered the following: nine or 56.25% reported 30 to 35 minutes; five or 31.25% reported 40 to 45 minutes; 2 or 12.50% reported 15 to 20 minutes; none reported

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50 to 60 minutes; and none more than 60 minutes (Table 13). Schools must work within the confines of their bus schedules and state and district requirements for reading and math block, physical education and fine arts grants, Navajo language, specials classes, and teacher planning time. All of these areas are scheduled into the school day, along with times for calendar, science, and social studies, and leave less time for Tier 2 reading interventions. Every minute counts, which is why elementary teachers develop efficient processes for every transition.

Table 12

Days in a Week Students Usually Receive Instruction in Tier 2 Reading Interventions

How many days in a week do students usually receive instruction in tier 2 reading interventions?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1-2 days	0.0%	0
3 days	0.0%	0
4 days	31.3%	5
5 days	68.8%	11
answered question		16
skipped question		1

Table 13

Minutes in a Week Students Usually Receive Instruction in Tier 2 Reading Interventions

How many minutes of tier 2 reading intervention instruction do students usually receive a day?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
15-20 minutes	12.5%	2
30-35 minutes	56.3%	9
40-45 minutes	31.3%	5
50-60 minutes	0.0%	0
more than 60 minutes	0.0%	0
answered question		16
skipped question		1

Lesson Planning

Tier 2 is about providing targeted instruction to address student learning gap areas. Like mentioned before, these targeted skills and concepts can be determined by various assessments, including student work. Question 14 was asked to identify how teachers were determining the targeted skills and concepts to be taught. The highest to lowest responses were as follows: 16 or 100% of teachers reported Dibels scores; 12 or 85.71% reported performance on teacher made CBMs, tests, and quizzes; 12 or 85.71% reported performance on classwork and activities; 11 or 78.57% reported performance on tests and quizzes from the Core reading program; and 8 or 57.14% reported SCA scores (Table 14). It was noted before how the SCA assessment is utilized less by teachers being that it is commercially produced by an outside company and is not intentionally designed to be aligned to a school district's pacing guide. The companies do contend that they have aligned them to PARCC; however, similar to responses to Question 9 about determining a student's group placement, many teachers reported (Table 9) that the skills and concepts being targeted are determined from DIBELS scores (16 or 94.12%), teacher-made assessments (12 or 70.59%), student work and performance (3 or 47.06%), assessments from the Core reading program (8 or 47.06%), and SCA scores (4 or 23.53%). These numbers suggested that teachers are making decisions with a triangular data approach in mind where they are using multiple measures, including actual student work and performance to inform Tier 2 reading intervention instructions.

Table 14

Skills and Concepts Taught in Tier 2 Reading Interventions

Which of the following help determine what skills and concepts will be taught in tier 2 reading interventions? Check the correct response for each item.				
Answer Options	Yes	No	I don't know	Response Count
Dibels scores	16	0	0	16
SCA scores	8	3	3	14
performance on tests and quizzes from the Core	11	3	0	14
performance on teacher made CBMs, tests, and	12	2	0	14
performance on classwork and activities	12	2	0	14
Other (please specify)				1
			answered question	16
			skipped question	1

Because there were students who were performing at and above the benchmark level, the researcher wanted to know what type of instruction non-intervention students were receiving. Teachers were first asked in Question 16, "To what extent are students who are not in need of Tier 2 interventions being provided accelerated learning opportunities in reading and language arts?" More teachers, 13 or 81.25% of them, indicated that accelerated learning opportunities were being provided to students. Other responses were 7 or 43.75% answered to a *large extent;* 6 or 37.50% answered to a *moderate extent;* 2 or 12.50% answered to a *small extent;* and 1 or 6.25% answered *not at all* (Table 16). Teachers explained (Table 16) that the accelerated learning included independent reading using the Accelerated Reader program (2 teachers), improving reading comprehension and fluency (2 teachers), more critical thinking skills (1 teacher), and the Success for All Reading program (1 teacher). Teachers explained the accelerated learning being provided in Question 15 as well. Answers included the following (Table 15): enrichment instruction or advanced studies (3 teachers), independent work or individual challenge instruction (3 teachers), AR reading (1 teacher), above grade level phonics (1 teacher), the next set of goals/standards (1 teacher), 113 frequency words

45

versus 41 required program words as well as reading passages and answer comprehension

questions of a higher grade level (1 teacher), and using the Success For All Reading

program at a higher level (1 teacher). Certain Gallup elementary schools used to

implement the Success For All Reading Program rather than the current adopted Core

reading program, which means materials could be available at these schools. Using

different program material from the current or past text series and programs would save

time of having to locate, gather, and create new instructional materials. The responses of

Question 14 and 15 can provide teachers with ideas for ways of accelerating instruction

for benchmark students.

Table 15

Type of Instruction Provided to Students in Need of Tier 2 Interventions and Are at the Benchmark

What type of instruction is provided to students who are not in need of tier 2 interventions and who are at the benchmark	
Answer Options	Response Count
	12
answered question	12
skipped question	5
What type of instruction is provided to students who are not in need of tier 2 interventions and who are at the benchmark	
Answer Options	Response Count
	12
answered question	12
skipped question	5

Table 16

Extent Students Are Being Provided Tier 2 Reading Interventions

To what extend are students who are not in need of tier 2 reading interventions being provided accelerated learning opportunities in reading		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Not at all	6.3%	1
Small extent	12.5%	2
Moderate extent	37.5%	6
Large extent	43.8%	7
Please explain your answer.		9
answered question		16
skipped question		1

It takes additional time for teachers to plan learning activities for intervention and nonintervention students. Teachers varied in the amount of time they reported spending "each week in planning for Tier 2 reading intervention instruction," with 8 or 53% of teachers reporting spending one to two hours a week; three or 20% of teachers reporting spending three to four hours week; 2 or 13.33% of teachers spend less than an hour a week; and 2 or 13.33% of teachers reporting spending five or more hours a week (Table 17).

Table 17

Time Spent Each Week Planning for Tier 2 Reading Intervention Instruction

How much time do you spend each week in planning for tier 2 reading intervention instruction?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than an hour	13.3%	2
1-2 hours	53.3%	8
3-4 hours	20.0%	3
5 or more hours	13.3%	2
Other (please specify or explain):		1
answered question		15
skipped question		2

There are many factors that can contribute to this variation, for example, the number of years in the same position; familiarity with the pacing guide, assessments, and Core text; level of interest in engaging in research; and other commitments at school or in one's personal life. To find out more about lesson planning, Question 18, asked who was actually developing "the lessons plans and activities for Tier 2 reading intervention instruction?" A large portion, 13 or 81.25%, of teachers reported that it was the grade level teachers. Fewer teachers, 2 or 12.50%, reported that each intervention instructor developed his/her own lesson plans and 1 or 6.25% reported that they were provided as part of a program or text series. No teachers answered that they were developed by a reading coach/facilitator or consultant (Table 18).

Table 18

Who Develops Lesson Plans and Activities for Tier 2 Reading Intervention Instruction

Who develops the lesson plans and activities for tier 2 reading intervention instruction?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
grade level teachers	81.3%	13
each intervention instructor develops his/her own	12.5%	2
are provided as part of a program or text series	6.3%	1
a reading coach or faciliator	0.0%	0
a consultant	0.0%	0
I don't know	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)		0
answered question		16
skipped question		1

The second aspect to planning lessons and activities was coordinating with the Tier 2 reading intervention team. More were reported and discussed in the collaboration section that occurs in the next section, Questions 22 through 25. Question 19 asked teachers to what extent they and other same grade-level teachers agreed as to the

prerequisite skills needed for students to master standards, the level of rigor of the standards, the importance of each standard, and the pacing of instruction around standards. Teachers reported the extent of agreement on the prerequisite skills needed for students to master the standards as follows: 12 or 75% of teachers answered to a large extent, 3 or 18.75% of teachers answered to a moderate extent, 1 or 6.25% of teachers answered to a small extent, and none answered not at all (Table 19). As to the level of rigor of the standards, 9 or 60% of teachers answered they agreed to a large extent; 4 or 26.67% of teachers answered to a moderate extent; 2 or 13.33% of teachers answered to a small extent; and none answered not at all (Table 19). Next, teachers reported on the level of agreement with the importance of each standard. Teachers reported the following: 8 or 53.33% of teachers answered to a large extent; 6 or 40 % of teachers answered to a moderate extent; 1 or 6.67% of teachers answered to a small extent; and none reported not at all (Table 19). Last, as to the pacing of instruction around standards, 9 or 60% of teachers answered to a large extent; 6 or 40% of teachers answered to a moderate extent; one or 6.67% of teachers answered to a small extent; and none answered not at all (Table 19). Teachers from 86.67% to 93.75% answered there was moderate to more agreement in these areas (Table 19). This is important to consider being that instructional planning involves interpreting the standards students are expected to master; designing a more specific pacing guide, scope, or sequence; and developing and adjusting high rigor instruction that will be tested by non-teacher made assessment like Dibels, SCA, and PARCC. Instruction is strengthened through collaboration with other teachers and is continually refined to adjust to changes in required assessments and student needs.

Table 19

Extent Same Grade Level Teachers Agree on Different Areas

To what extent do you and other same grade level teachers agree on each area below? Check the correct response for each.						
Answer Options	Not at all	Small extent	Moderate extent	Large extent	I don't know	Response Count
the prerequisite skills needed for students to master	0	1	3	12	0	16
the level of rigor of the standards	0	2	4	9	0	15
the importance of each standard	0	1	6	8	0	15
the pacing of instruction around standards	0	1	5	9	0	15
					answered question	16
					skipped question	1

It was important for the researcher to identify current practices and processes "that have been effective for providing reading intervention instruction and improving student reading abilities"; so that they can be shared with other teachers, duplicated, and refined. There were 13 responses to Question 20, which included the following: six teachers listed phonics and decoding; three teachers listed fluency; three listed small group instruction; three listed multi-sensory instruction, hands-on activities, and games; two teachers listed the Linda-Mood Bell programs for phonics and phonemic awareness; two listed data analysis to group students; two listed the Project Read Program; one listed word family/patterns; one listed sight words; one listed comprehension; one listed materials and curriculum provided; and one listed consistency with holding interventions daily (Table 20).

Table 20

Practices or Processes Effective for Providing Reading Intervention Instruction and Improving Reading Abilities

List 1-3 practices or processes that have been effective for providing reading intervention instruction and improving student reading abilities.		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Practice/process 1	100.0%	11
Practice/process 2	72.7%	8
Practice/process 3	63.6%	7
	answered question	11
	skipped question	6

Phonics instruction was listed most. Linda-Mood Bell and Project Read are reading programs that address phonics, word patterns, sight words, and comprehension. Other responses most listed were fluency, which is assessed by Dibels; small group instruction; and multi-sensory/hands on instruction. To follow up with what teachers felt was working, teachers were asked in Question 21 to provide, "1-3 actions that can be taken to improve the reading intervention instruction provided and student reading abilities." The following next-step actions were suggested: three teachers listed additional staff to help, two teachers listed professional development, two teachers listed assessment and identifying reading needs, two listed consistent/uninterrupted Tier 2 instruction, two listed more and high interest leveled books, two listed smaller group size, one listed the Project Read program, one listed parental reading, one listed smaller class sizes, one listed vertical alignment, one listed the Accelerated Reader program, one listed regular grade-level meetings addressing reading needs, and one listed reading to the teacher (Table 21). Next steps like more staffing, professional development, implementing Project Read and Accelerated Reader, more leveled books, and smaller class sizes were subject to funds at the site and district level, which require site and district administrator

level support. The rest are steps that can be implemented by Tier 2 reading intervention

teams.

Table 21

Practices or Processes Effective for Providing Reading Intervention Instruction and Improving Student Reading Abilities

List 1-3 practices or processes that have been effective for providing reading intervention instruction and improving student reading abilities.		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Practice/process 1	100.0%	11
Practice/process 2	72.7%	8
Practice/process 3	63.6%	7
	answered question	11
	skipped question	6

Collaboration

Next, the survey asked questions to identify the collaborative process involved in

implementing targeted small group Tier 2 reading intervention instructions. When asked

Question 22, "How often do you meet with other intervention teachers?" 7 or 50% of the

teachers answered one to three times a week, 3 or 21.43% of teachers answered more

than three times a week, 2 or 14.29% of teachers answered once a month, 1 or 7.14% of

teachers answered two to times each quarter, and 1 or 7.14% of teachers answered never,

and none answered once a quarter or once a month (Table 22). This indicated that more

teachers, 10 or 71.43%, were meeting once a week or more with the Tier 2 reading

intervention team. A similar number, 11 or 73.33% of teachers agreed with Question 23

that intervention instructors met often enough; whereas, fewer teachers, 4 or 26.67% of

them disagreed that they met often enough (Table 23). Though more agreed, two teachers

made comments about the need for meeting more, "specifically for interventions," for

their prep was used for other purposes or types of meetings, and three other teachers stated they needed more meeting time to "help each other" "to discuss plans and instructions for groups," and "to discuss trends I see with students and get information from them on my students as well" (Table 23). Another teacher offered a different view point when she stated, "If I'm held accountable for student progress in my classroom (i.e. through evaluation) I am not comfortable with allowing others outside my influence or control take on that responsibility in my stead" (Table 23). Though teachers were encouraged to collaborate for planning and delivering instruction, this teacher brought up a good point about trusting other teachers and available staff, who varied in their level of training and experience in teaching reading, to instruct students whom they will be evaluated on.

Table 22

How Often Intervention Instructors Met

How often do you meet with other intervention instructors?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
never	7.1%	1
once a quarter	0.0%	0
2-3 times each quarter	7.1%	1
bimonthly	0.0%	0
once a month	14.3%	2
1-3 times a week	50.0%	7
more than 3 times a week	21.4%	3
	answered question	14
	skipped question	3

Table 23

How Often Met With Other Intervention Instructors

How often do you meet with other intervention instructors?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
never	7.1%	1
once a quarter	0.0%	0
2-3 times each quarter	7.1%	1
bimonthly	0.0%	0
once a month	14.3%	2
1-3 times a week	50.0%	7
more than 3 times a week	21.4%	3
	answered question	14
	skipped question	3

As far as the type of collaborative actions that occurred at the intervention team meetings (Question 24), 7 or 50% of teachers reported that data were analyzed to a large extent, 3 or 21.43% of teachers reported to a moderate extent, 3 or 21.43% to a small extent, and 1 or 7.14% not at all (Table 24). When it comes to discussing concerns and issues, 11 or 78.57% of teachers reported this occurred to a large extent, 2 or 14.29% of teachers reported a moderate extent, 1 or 7.14% of teachers reported to a small extent, and 0 or 0% reported not at all (Table 24). With developing solutions, 7 or 50% of teachers reported this occurred to a large extent, 4 or 28.57% of teachers reported to a small extent, 3 or 21.43% of teachers reported to a moderate extent, and 0 or 0% reported not at all (Table 24). The fourth collaborative action teachers were asked about developing action plans, whereas 7 or 50% of teachers reported this occurred to a large extent, 4 or 28.57% of teachers reported to a moderate extent, 2 or 14.29% of teachers reported to a small extent, and 1 or 7.14% of teachers reported not at all (Table 24). With the fifth action, mapping out the skills and concepts to be targeted, 8 or 57.14% of

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teachers reported this occurred to a large extent, 2 or 14.29% of teachers reported to a moderate extent, 2 or 14.29% of teachers reported to a small extent, and 2 or 14.29% reported not at all (Table 24). The sixth action teachers were asked about developing lesson plans: 5 or 35.71% of teachers reported this occurred to a large extent, 4 or 28.57% of teachers reported to a moderate extent, 4 or 12.29% of teacher reported to a small extent, and 3 or 21.43% of teachers reported not at all (Table 24). The last collaborative action teachers were asked about what was the extent of sharing instructional strategies, lessons, and activities, where 6 or 42.86% of teachers reported this occurred to a large extent, 4 or 28.57% of teachers reported to a moderate extent, 4 or 28.57% of teachers reported to a small extent, and 0 or 0% of teachers reported not at all (Table 24).

Teachers reported that the collaborative actions occurred in the following order: discuss concerns and issues (13 or 92.86%), develop action plans (11 or 78.57%), analyze data/develop solutions/share instructional practices (10 or 71.43%), and develop lesson plans (9 or 64.28%). Based on this data, more teachers were engaging in these team actions. It is important to also note, however, the numbers of teachers who reported that these actions were occurring at a small extent or not at all. Viewed from this angle, the following was reported as occurring at a small extent or not at all: developing lesson plans (5 or 35.72%); analyzing data (4 or 28.57%); developing solutions (4 or 28.57%); mapping out skills and concepts (4 or 28.57%); sharing instructional strategies, lessons, and activities (4 or 28.57%); developing action plans (3 or 21.43%); and discussing issues and concerns (1 or 7.14%). Though these numbers were in the minority, they were

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problematic and needed to be improved, especially given the fact that there were plenty

of experienced teachers to help with this.

Table 24

Actions Occurring at Meetings With Other Reading Intervention Instructions

How often do the following actions occur at meetings with other reading intervention instructors? Check the correct response for each action.						
Answer Options	Not at all	Small extent	Moderate extent	Large extent	I don't know	Response Count
Analyze data	1	3	3	7	0	14
Discuss concerns and issues	0	1	2	11	0	14
Develop solutions	0	4	3	7	0	14
Develop action plans	1	2	4	7	0	14
Map out the skills and concepts to be targeted	2	2	2	8	0	14
Develop lesson plans	3	2	4	5	0	14
Share instructional strategies, lessons, and activities	0	4	4	6	0	14
					answered question	14
					skipped question	3

To follow up with questions about the frequency of meetings and the

collaborative actions that occurred at the meetings, teachers were asked Question 25,

"How useful are the meetings you have with other Tier 2 reading intervention

instructors?" More teachers, 11 or 78.57%, found them useful, 5 or 35.71% found them

to be very useful, and 6 or 42.86% found them to be moderately useful (Table 25). Fewer

teachers found them not useful, with 3 or 21.43% of them reporting them as somewhat

useful and 0 or 0% reporting them as not useful (Table 25). There were two main

categories of comments for Question 25. One category was two teachers reported that

there were not enough meetings specifically for interventions (Table 25). This was

similar to comments made in Question 23 where two teachers stated that meeting time

was being used for other purposes. The other category was about how teachers valued the

sharing that occurred as far as what works, outcomes, ideas, and materials (Table 25).

Three teachers made this comment, which was also expressed by three teachers in

Question 23 but stated in terms of teachers needing more time to work together. A

teacher made a comment outside these two categories when he or she said, "It would be

helpful to have a process lined out" (Table 25). Though this would require further

explanation, it brings up the point of the need for learning better and more efficient

collaborative processes.

Table 25

How Useful Meetings Were With Other Tier 2 Reading Intervention Instructors

How useful are the meetings you have with other tier 2 reading intervention instructors?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Not useful	0.0%	0
Somewhat useful	21.4%	3
Moderately useful	42.9%	6
Very useful	35.7%	5
Please explain your answer.		6
answered question		14
skipped question		3

Professional Development

The last section of the survey was about identifying the type of professional

development teachers had already undergone and the professional development teachers

feel is still needed in order to improve the Tier 2 reading intervention instruction they

provide. Question 26 asked, "How confident are you in your ability to teach students to

read or to improve their reading abilities?" Teachers were reportedly confident in their

abilities to teach reading, for 7 or 50% of them reported they were very confident and 7

or 50% of them reported that they were moderately confident (Table 26). No one reported

that they were somewhat confident and none reported that they had a low level of

confidence (Table 26). Teachers who took this survey have been in their current positions

for longer periods of time, which could be a factor as to why 100% of them reported to

being confident in teaching reading. A second factor is the amount of training and professional development teachers reported as receiving in teaching reading; and on Tier 2 reading interventions (Question 27), 7 or 50% of teachers reported receiving a moderate amount of training or professional development, 4 or 28.57% of teachers reported receiving a lot, 2 or 14.29% of teachers reported to receiving some, and 1 or 7.14% of teachers reported to receiving very little (Table 27). Though teachers reported being confident and having received training, 7 or 50% of them reported wanting to a large extent to receive more training in teaching reading and on Tier 2 reading interventions, 5 or 35.71% of them reported wanting additional training to a moderate extent, 2 or 14.29% of them reported to a small extent, and 0 or 0% reported not at all (Table 28).

Table 26

Confidence in Ability to Teach Students to Read or Improve Reading Abilities

How confident are you in your ability to teach students to read or to improve their reading abilities?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
low level of confidence	0.0%	0
Somewhat confident	0.0%	0
Moderately confident	50.0%	7
Very confident	50.0%	7
	answered question	14
	skipped question	3

Table 27

Training and Professional Development Received in Teaching Reading on Tier 2 Reading Interventions

How much training and professional development have you received in teaching reading and on tier 2 reading interventions?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
None	0.0%	0
Very little	7.1%	1
Some	14.3%	2
Moderate amount	50.0%	7
A lot	28.6%	4
answered question		14
skipped question		3

Table 28

Extent to Receive More Training and Professional Development in Teaching Reading

To what exent would you like to receive more training and professional development in teaching reading and on tier 2 reading interventions?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Not at all	0.0%	0
Small extent	14.3%	2
Moderate extent	35.7%	5
Large extent	50.0%	7
answered question		14
skipped question		3

In Question 29, teachers were asked what sources of professional development have been helpful in keeping them current in teaching reading. The top four reported as most helpful (Table 29) were educational workshops (13 or 86.67%), educational conferences (11 or 78.57%), learning from other teachers/colleagues (11 or 73.33%), and action research/own experience (9 or 60%). Tied for fifth place (8 or 53.33%) were college method courses, district training, site training, and program consultants (Table 29). Fewer teachers reported online methods courses (7 or 46.67%), educational websites (5 or 33.33%), professional books (4 or 26.67%) and textbook consultants (3 or 20%) as

helpful sources. There was one teacher or 6.67% who reported his or her own action research as being unhelpful. Action research, however, did rank fourth overall. With the internet being the primary research tool today, it was surprising that educational websites where lesson and unit plans can be found were not deemed more helpful. This could be partly due to the age of the teachers, their experiences in using internet sources, and restrictions for accessing program materials. Attending workshops and conferences were the top two sources but required using site funds like Title 1 to pay for registration fees, meals, lodging, mileage, and substitute teachers. Learning from colleagues and their own action research were among the top sources that required no funds to benefit from.

Table 29

Sources of Professional Development to Keep Current in Teaching Reading

Have the following sources of professional development been helpful in keeping you current in teaching reading? Check the correct response for each item.					
Answer Options	Not helpful	Somewhat helpful	Helpful	Not applicable	Response Count
College methods courses	2	3	8	2	15
Online methods courses	1	5	7	2	15
District training	0	7	8	0	15
School site training	1	6	8	0	15
Educational conferences	0	3	11	0	14
Educational workshops	0	1	13	1	15
Textbook consultants	7	3	3	2	15
Program consultants	3	4	8	0	15
Learning from other teachers/colleagues	0	3	11	1	15
Educational websites	0	8	5	2	15
Professional books	2	8	4	1	15
Action research/own experience	1	4	9	1	15
				answered question	15
				skipped question	2

Besides the sources of professional development teachers deemed most helpful to improving their practice, they were asked Question 10, "How much time do you spend each week in your own personal study of reading instruction?" Most teachers, 8 or 53.33%, reported less than one hour a week. One teacher even reported none. Six teachers reported spending more time to personal study, with three teachers reporting one

to two hours a week and three reporting more than two hours a week. Personal study is part of the action research process and a case can be made for it being part of the Systems Approach's Plan-Do-Study-Act process implemented by the Gallup schools. As you Plan, you devote time to personal research and study to inform instructional planning.

The last question, Question 31, asked teachers to list one to three specific types of training/professional development they would like to receive to improve as reading instructors. There were nine different categories of answers that teachers provided (Table 31). Seven teachers suggested learning new, more current, non-traditional, and engaging strategies. Four teachers recommended receiving further training of ways to improve student comprehension skills, including main ideas and details. Two teachers recommended sharing ideas and strategies with other teachers. Two teachers recommended training on the Project Read program. Other types of training that were recommended by one teacher each were ELL strategies, identifying reading difficulties, Saxon phonics, differentiated instruction, learning centers, and parent involvement with reading (Table 30). Teachers wanted to learn non-traditional strategies that were more current and engaging to students, while at the same time recommended further training in areas that were more familiar like ELL strategies, differentiated instruction, learning centers, and the Project Read and Saxon phonics programs. Some of these areas like ELL strategies and differentiated instruction were broad in scope and included a host of specific strategies and methods that were ever evolving and required continual study, application, and refinement. Though teachers were familiar with learning centers, they are numerous ways to implement them for various purposes. It would be helpful for teachers to understand the types of centers and how different practitioners have structured

them. Programs like Project Read and Saxon Phonics are more specific in the strategies

and methods that are used and are useful in that the lessons, activities, assessments, and

materials have been already pre-developed by the company and can readily be pulled

from and used with students. Textbooks and programs are not necessarily developed with

the backward planning approach of starting with the standards encouraged by school

districts, where the standards, skills, and concepts of the district's pacing guide are the

heart of instruction. This is difficult for companies to do being that pacing guides of

school districts vary from each other, which is why they are referred to as resources for

instruction. Their value lies, however, in that they allow for a consistent program across

the grade levels and the school district and take less time for teachers to implement due to

the pre-developed materials.

Table 30

Time Spent Each Week in Personal Study of Reading Instruction

How much time do you spend each week in your own personal study of reading instruction?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
None	6.7%	1
Less than 1 hour	53.3%	8
1-2 hours	20.0%	3
More than 2 hours	20.0%	3
	answered question	15
	skipped question	2

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this final chapter, a summary of the research study, conclusions, and recommendations for further study are provided. One cannot improve his or her practice in a vacuum. Instead, it is a life-long pursuit. And who best to learn from but from other practitioners themselves. The purpose of this research was to identify how teachers of the Gallup elementary schools were currently implementing Tier 2 reading interventions, collaborating with other intervention teachers, and developing professionally. With this information, teachers can learn from their colleagues, direct other practitioners, and make adjustments as needed to current processes and practices to improve student reading abilities.

To identify more specific practices and processes and to collect opinions and recommendations, the researcher developed a survey to be administered to K-2 teachers of 10 Gallup, New Mexico schools. Teachers were emailed an invitation through the district email system with a link to access the survey on Survey Monkey. The survey was available from September 3 to the end of October, 2015. The survey was composed of 31 questions that covered the areas of structures/processes, lesson planning, collaboration, and professional development as related to the implementation of Tier 2 reading interventions. The questions were composed of multiple choice, Likert scale, and open-ended questions. A total of 17 teachers participated in the survey. Teacher responses to the 31 survey questions were analyzed and presented.

Summary of Findings

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 asked, *How are teachers of Gallup schools currently implementing Tier 2 reading interventions as far as structure/processes, lesson planning, and collaboration?* Teacher responses revealed how Tier 2 reading intervention instruction was currently being implemented. More teachers (11 or 68.75%) reported to having one additional staff member assisting the grade levels with Tier 2 reading intervention instruction. There were 5 or 31.25% teachers who reported to having two additional staff members assisting. In regards to the type of additional staff providing assistance, 5-10 teachers reported to not having an intervention teacher, intervention assistant, reading specialist/facilitator, and instructional coach. They did report that the following additional staff were providing assistance: fine arts teacher (10 or 66.67%), physical education teacher (9 or 60%), Navajo language teacher (9 or 60%), special education teacher (12 or 75%), and kindergarten assistants (13 or 86.67%).

As far as the instructional group size, 11 or 64.71% of teachers reported having groups with 4 to 6 students. Other teachers reported larger group sizes of 10 or more (4 or 23.53%) and 7 to 10 students (2 or 11.76%). Students were assessed for purposes of reading interventions either six or more times a year (12 or 70.59%) or three times a year (4 or 23.53%). They were then assigned and reassigned quarterly (6 or 35.29%), every one to three weeks (5 or 29.41%), monthly (2 or 11.76%), less than 3 times a year (2 or 11.76%), or 3 times a year (1 or 5.88%). Assessments that were used to determine group placement are DIBELS (16 or 94.12%); teacher made CBMs, tests, and quizzes (12 or

70.59%); performance on tests and quizzes from the CORE reading program (8 or 47.06%); performance on classwork (8 or 47.06%); and SCA scores (4 or 23.53%).

The instructional grouping types being implemented varied. Teachers reported that students were divided into ability level groups within the grade level:

- Each group had its own instructors (16 or 94.12%).

- Students were divided between an intervention group and non-intervention group within the grade level (11 or 68.75%).

- Each group had its own instructors, stayed with their grade-level teacher, and instruction was provided according to the different ability groups (10 or 62.50%).

- Each group stayed with their grade level teacher, and instruction was provided to an intervention group and non-intervention group (10 or 62.50%).

- Each group stayed with their grade level teacher and received the same instruction (6 or 37.50%).

- Students were divided into ability groups across the grade levels with each group having its own instructors (5 or 31.25%).

Within these instructional groups, students received five days of intervention instruction (11 or 68.75%) or four days of intervention instruction (5 or 31.25%). The amount of instruction received a day were reported as follows: 9 or 56.25% of teachers reported that students received 30 to 35 minutes of daily instruction, 5 or 31.25% reported 40 to 45 minutes, and 2 or 12.50% reported 15 to 20 minutes.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 asked, *What are teachers' opinions as to using all available staff, instruction for benchmark students, and amount and usefulness of meetings?* When

it comes to using all available staff for assisting with Tier 2 reading intervention instruction, more teachers, 12 or 70.59% agreed, 3 or 17.65% somewhat agreed, and 2 or 11.76 disagreed. Teachers commented that help from non-grade level teachers was fine as long as available staff and under the supervision of certified teachers and that it would allow for smaller groups and more student help. Of the teachers, 13 or 81.25% also agreed that students performing at the benchmark level were being provided accelerated learning opportunities and commented that this instruction involved providing challenging or enrichment activities, independent work and reading, and higher level work in various reading activities with phonics, comprehension and fluency, reading passages, and questions.

Teachers provided insight of the collaboration occurring among the Tier 2 reading intervention team. Teachers reported they met frequently enough (11 or 73.33%) and deemed their meetings as being useful (11 or 78.57%). Half of the teachers at 7 or 50% reported to meeting one to three times a week, and 3 or 21.43% reported to meeting more than three times a week. Fewer reported to meeting once a month (2 or 14.29%), two to three times a quarter (1 or 7.14%), and never (1 or 7.14%). At the meetings, teachers reported that the following collaborative actions were occurring: discuss concerns and issues (13 or 92.86%), develop action plans (11 or 78.57%), analyze data/develop solutions/share instructional practices (10 or 71.43%), and develop lessons plans (9 or 64.28%). Though these are high numbers, one must keep in mind the numbers of teachers reported that these actions were occurring at a small extent or not at all. The following collaborative actions were reported as occurring at a small extent or not at all: developing lesson plans (5 or 35.72%); analyzing data (4 or 28.57%); developing solutions (4 or

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28.57%); mapping out skills and concepts (4 or 28.57%); sharing instructional strategies, lessons and activities (4 or 28.57%); and developing action plans (3 or 21.43%).

Teachers indicated that the meetings could improve by meeting more "specifically for interventions" (4 teachers), so that the time could be taken to "help each other," "discuss plans and instruction for groups," and "discuss trends." Teachers expressed that the sharing of ideas was the greatest benefit of meeting (3 teachers) but that "It would be helpful to have a process lined out." In response to the question if intervention teachers were meeting enough, one teacher offered a different perspective, stating, "If I'm held accountable for student progress in my classroom (i.e., through evaluation) I am not comfortable with allowing others outside my influence or control take on that responsibility in my stead." Though teachers were encouraged to collaborate for planning and delivering instruction, this teacher brought up a good point about trusting other teachers and available staff, who varied in their level of training and experience in teaching reading, to instruct students for whom they would be evaluated on.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asked, *What practices and processes do teachers feel are effective and what recommendations do they have for improving instruction and for professional development?* Teachers reported the following current practices as being effective for improving student reading abilities: phonics and decoding (6 teachers); fluency (3 teachers); small group instruction (3 teachers); multi-sensory instruction, hands-on activities, and games (3 teachers); Linda-Mood Bell programs for phonics and phonemic awareness (2 teachers); data analysis to group students (2 teachers); Project Read program (2 teachers); word family/patterns (1 teacher); sight words (1 teacher);

comprehension (1 teacher); materials and curriculum provided (1 teacher); and consistency with holding interventions daily (1 teacher). Other than purchasing a specific program like Lindamood-Bell and Project Read, these current practices could be implemented by all teachers but would require some research in obtaining actual specific activities for the listed areas like phonics, decoding, phonemic awareness, word families, sight words, comprehension, and multi-sensory instruction.

All teachers reported being moderately to very confident in their ability to teach reading. This is understandable given that participants have been in their current positions for longer periods of time. They reported that the most helpful sources of professional development were educational workshops (13 or 86.67%), educational conferences (11 or 78.57%), learning from other teachers/colleagues (11 or 73.33%), and action research/own experience (9 or 60%). The latter two were readily available sources and were of little to no cost; therefore, it was surprising to find that most teachers, 8 or 53.33%, reported spending less than one hour a week to personal study of the teaching of reading. Other teacher, however, reported spending more time for personal study, from one to two hours a week (3 or 20%), and more than two hours a week (3 or 20%).

As to how instruction could be improved and what professional development was needed, the following were recommended: more current, non-traditional, and engaging strategies (7 teachers); ways to improve student comprehension skills (4 teachers); sharing ideas and strategies with other teachers (2 teachers); and the Project Read program (2 teachers). Other familiar training recommended were ELL strategies, differentiated instruction, learning centers, identifying reading difficulties, Saxon Phonics, and parent involvement with reading. With there being countless ways to

implement ELL strategies, differentiated instruction, and learning centers, all should be revisited and continually refined. Teachers felt that the following actions could improve student reading abilities: more staff to help (3 teachers), smaller groups (2 teacher), provision of professional development (2 teachers), assessments (2 teachers), consistent/uninterrupted Tier 2 instruction (2 teachers), high interest leveled books (2 teachers), regular grade level meetings addressing reading needs (1 teacher), smaller class sizes (1 teacher), vertical alignment (1 teacher), reading to the teacher (1 teacher), parental reading (1 teacher), Project Read program (1 teacher), and the Accelerated Reader program (1 teacher). Those that required purchasing site licenses, supplies, materials, and services were subject to site and district level funds and administrative support. Other steps like consistent/uninterrupted instruction, regular grade level meetings, vertical alignment, reading to the teacher, and parental reading required little to no funds and could be implemented right away.

Conclusion

It was reported that current structure and processes of Tier 2 reading intervention program have 1 additional staff member assisting the grade level intervention team, students are assessed for the purposes of reading interventions 6 or more times a year using DIBELS scores and teacher made assessments, different grouping types are utilized, grade level teachers are ones primarily developing lessons, and instruction is provided 5 days a week for at least 30 minutes a day. Teachers reported that accelerated learning opportunities are being provided to students performing at the benchmark level and reported to meeting once a week (10 or 71.43%), where they discuss concerns and issues, develop action plans, analyze data/develop solutions/share instructional practices,

and develop lesson plans. All reported feeling moderately to very confident in their ability to teach reading.

Surprises in the Findings

As the data were reviewed and analyzed, there were several surprises. First, though there were high numbers of kindergarten assistants (13 or 86.67%), fine arts teachers (10 or 66.67%), and physical education teachers (9 or 60%) assisting with Tier 2 reading instruction, these numbers seemed like they should be higher. Kindergarten assistants work directly with kindergarten teachers, so this number could be 100%. If not shared between sites, fine arts and physical education teachers can have larger blocks of non-contact time with students, time which could be used to assist with Tier 2 reading interventions. More information would be needed to find out why not all sites were utilizing these particular staff members. Moreover, administrators could be asked how to obtain the funds needed to hire at least one intervention teacher or assistant.

Secondly, though it is understandable that different grouping types were being used, it was surprising that there were grade level teachers who have provided Tier 2 reading intervention instruction to students from their regular classroom. They reported providing instruction to two or three ability groups. This brings to mind the teacher comment about how if students were going to count toward regular classroom teachers' evaluation, then he or she would prefer to be completely in charge of his/her own students' Tier 2 reading intervention instruction. More information is needed as to how they are implementing this type of grouping type. Likewise, more information is needed as to why providing intervention instruction across the K through 2 grade levels, especially with Grades 1 and 2, is least used (5 or 31.5%). This approach would seem to

allow for small ability groups while being able to use existing grade level staff. Perhaps, there are some barriers as far as scheduling, pacing guides, assessments, and developmental factors. It would be interesting to find out how students are performing in these two grouping styles as compared to the more popular grouping type of grade level, ability groups taught by different instructors.

Last, teachers either reassigned students to groups frequently or not as frequently. I would like to understand the reason for the disparity of teachers either reassigning students to groups one to three times a week (5 or 29.41%) or reassign them quarterly (6 or 35.29%) or less. Students possess different strengths and weaknesses that become apparent as the teacher moves through the pacing guide; so the researcher is wondering if reassigning less is due to time restraints, the lack of help or resources, or due to a more static view of a student's ability level.

<div align="center">**Recommendation for Further Study**</div>

The main recommendation for further study would be to complete follow-up interviews with the teachers who participated in the survey to obtain clarification and more specific information as to their responses from open-ended questions, for example, the type of accelerated instruction being provided to benchmark students, current effective Tier 2 instructional practices, next-step suggestions for Tier 2 instruction, and professional development recommendations. Teachers' responses are insightful but need to be more specific in order to be helpful within the classroom.

For instance, when teachers answered that benchmark students engaged in independent work and enrichment activities, obvious follow-up questions would be inquiring as to what type and how are they developed. And when teachers stated they

want to learn non-traditional and more current strategies, the researcher would like to know what type and for what specific purposes. Other important follow-up questions would be the following. Besides DIBELS, are there any suggested assessments that will help better identify reading needs? What features of the Saxon Phonics and Project Read program should be implemented in Tier 2 reading instruction? What leveled books should schools order? What programs are other schools using to promote parents reading with their children? What are the plus, delta, and next steps for implementation of familiar best practices like ELL strategies, differentiation, and learning centers?

It is interesting that though teachers expressed a desire to learn more current strategies, half of them are spending less than an hour a week in their own personal study of reading instruction. As stated previously, factors like previous experience, level of interest in conducting research, and the extent of other commitments can influence the time available for personal study. Follow-up questions the researcher would like answers to are as follows:

- Is the time you are putting forth to researching and planning for Tier 2 yielding the response you want?

- What amount of researching and planning time would produce the results you want?

- What barriers do you face putting forth more time for personal study and planning?

As a researcher, I would like to know the optimal research and planning time needed for producing effective Tier 2 instruction. It would be beneficial for an expert to be brought in and guide teachers in their own professional development, showing them

more current sources, in particular on-line sources and how to conduct their own research for instructional methods. It is apparent from survey data that teachers could benefit from seeking out helpful online sources, for only 5 or 33.33% of teachers reported that educational websites were helpful and only 7 or 46.67% of teachers reported that online methods courses were helpful.

In addition, there is a need to improve on collaborative actions. Teachers report that collaborative actions are occurring at meetings, but more information is needed as to how they are occurring or the specific processes being employed, how effectively each is being carried out, and the quality of products being produced as a result. The teacher who commented about the need for a process to be laid out alludes to this need. Gallup schools have long used the Plan-Do-Study-Act process of the Systems Approach to guide collaborative work within the leadership team, goal teams or grade level teams, and classrooms. These steps are broad, and teachers could benefit from learning about and implementing more specific collaborative processes and actions.

In addition to interviewing teachers, another recommendation for further study would be to analyze the student performance data of the 10 schools. Follow up interviews could include questions on how students performed on required assessments like DIBELS, the SCA, and PARCC. Teachers could be asked,

- How did students score on the beginning of year and most recent assessments?
- What do these scores reveal as far as the major strengths and weaknesses of students?
- How much instruction and type of instruction did students receive in these areas?
- What changes in instruction need to occur to address these gap areas?

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The information provided by teachers throughout the survey could then be reviewed against the student performance data.

Teachers who took this survey were more experienced teachers, which shows in their responses about the current structures and processes and the collaborative actions that were occurring. In any process, there is a constant need for guidance and refinement. It was noted that they have an understanding of the various components of reading and of best instructional practices like ELL strategies, differentiation, and learning centers. With a strong knowledge base and experience in teaching reading, teachers seemed to indicate that it was a matter of learning more current, non-traditional strategies and going to the next level as reading teachers.

Implications for Action

After conducting a data analysis, the researcher recommends the following actions be taken to improve Tier 2 reading intervention instruction.

1. Administrators need to devise a way via scheduling, available funds, or alternate funds to provide at least one additional staff member to assist the reading intervention teams. It would be better that this person is already an experienced reading teacher or specialist, so that he or she can facilitate further research and the implementation of effective strategies by the teams.

2. Grade level teachers need to be sure to take the lead in designing specific instruction to be implemented by support staff. If the staff member being utilized lacks the experience and training in teaching reading at the early grades, he or she must receive training in assessing and progress monitoring and in designing lesson activities that target and address learning gap areas. To obtain their

teaching degrees, elementary teachers spent an entire semester or longer learning how to teach reading, gaining further experiences and on-the-job training. Teaching reading is a complex, specialized science and field of study. Therefore, it is very important that support staff continue to receive training and support and always be guided by grade level teachers. Grade level teachers are needed to take the lead in identifying deficiencies in reading, designing lesson activities that address learning gap areas, progress monitoring, data analysis, problem solving, and action planning. A specific, effective teacher cannot directly teach all students of a grade level or all K-2 students but can provide the specific guidance and support to the rest of the team. Effective teachers taking the lead to design specific instruction to be implemented by support staff can improve the results of all intervention and benchmark students, results that one teacher pointed out, individual grade level teachers are held accountable for.

3. Principals can assist in designating time during shared planning periods or staff meeting time for groups to delve deeper and fine tune the collaborative actions of developing solutions and action plans; curriculum mapping; developing lesson plans; sharing strategies, lessons, and activities; and analyzing data. Teachers indicated they were already engaging frequently in discussing concerns and issues. Intervention teams design collaborative processes as they continue to work together. But teaming and collaboration make up a science and field of study in itself just as the teaching of reading. Specific strategies, processes, and artifacts must be studied and continually refined. Teams from across the district would

benefit from sharing their collaborative strategies, processes, and artifacts as well as seeking out those of other schools from other districts.

4. Reading experts or a group of exemplary teachers need to be brought in to show teachers how to conduct their own research and find online resources, programs, methods, and strategies. Certain online resources may need to be purchased by the site or district. Experts who are on the cutting of edge of the science of teaching reading can make recommendations, conduct professional development, and provide coaching. These practices and processes that are designed and implemented need to be written down and preserved by lead grade level teachers and administrators, so that implementation can continue and be improved. This is especially important for schools that experience high staff turn-over.

5. In schools and districts with shortages and who experience high staff turn-over, it may be better to invest in purchasing effective, commercially produced programs for Tier 2 instruction. Teachers in this study recommended the Project Read program and Saxon Phonics. Of course, it is also important that effective Tier 1 and Tier 3 programs are purchased and implemented as well. Teachers can design their own instruction but not all will implement instruction at the same level of effectiveness. With the trend of teacher shortages, high staff turnover, and less experienced teachers being employed with alternate licenses, high-quality programs for Tiers 1-3 are needed resources for ensuring consistent, more effective instruction.

6. If additional staffing for small group instruction continues to be sparse or not provided, which is most likely going to be the case with current budget

limitations, administrators and teachers may need to explore grouping types where Tier 2 instruction is taught by the same grade level teacher or where it is taught across the grade levels.

These recommended actions boil down to providing more expert direction to teachers and support staff in cutting edge strategies and methods as well as utilizing effective, commercially produced programs at Tier 2 as well as at Tier 1 and Tier 3. Past research has indicated that it is the individual teacher's level of effectiveness that allows students to access the required curriculum and enables student learning of ability levels. This being the case, it is important to ensure that all teachers in the school and district obtain this level of effectiveness. This has always been the primary goal, especially after the NCLB legislation. It is equally important, however, to bear in mind that the workforce has become more mobile and that schools, particularly in rural areas, have and continue experience a high turnover of teachers from year to year or every few years. If the study had a higher response rate for the teachers of the 10 schools and had included the county schools, located on Indian reservation land, this trend may have been more apparent. In the face of workforce trends, evident by the number of teacher vacancies at various districts across the state, teachers and administrators need to design ways to keep instruction intact and systemic.

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