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Novice Kindergarten Through Second-Grade Teachers' Perspectives of Their Preparedness to Teach Students to Read

Shanell Lee-Angry
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Education and Human Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Shanell Lee-Angry

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee

Dr. Terri Edwards, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty

Dr. Mary Trube, Committee Member, Education Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost

Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University

2024

Abstract

Novice Kindergarten Through Second-Grade Teachers' Perspectives of Their
Preparedness to Teach Students to Read

by

Shanell Lee-Angry

MS, University of Phoenix, 2010

BS, Nova Southeastern University, 2008

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

Walden University

February 2024

Abstract

The majority of U.S fourth graders are not proficient in reading. With lawmakers in some U.S. states enacting “Read by Grade 3” laws, it is important for teachers to be well prepared to teach reading to their students. The purpose of this study was to explore novice kindergarten through second grade (K–2) teachers’ perspectives of their preparedness to teach students to read and their beliefs about what they needed to improve their strategies to teach reading. The conceptual framework was based on self-efficacy theory. The research questions addressed K–2 teachers’ perspectives on their preparedness to teach students to read and what they believed they needed to improve their strategies to teach reading. Data were collected by conducting semi-structured interviews with 11 teachers who taught or previously taught students to read in K–2 within the past 5 years. A six-step thematic analysis was used to analyze interview data. Data analysis yielded four emergent themes: (a) novice teachers lack reading pedagogical knowledge; (b) novice teachers are challenged to teach reading due to a lack of skills in differentiating instruction and classroom management; (c) helpful practices that support novice reading teachers are collaboration, observation, and coaching; and (d) additional resources needed to assist novice reading teachers are more support, professional development, and appropriate resources. The study findings may effect positive social change in the field of education by providing educational leaders with information that they can use when making decisions related to teacher preparation, professional development, and reading instruction in the primary grades.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Mary and Larry Walker. Thank you for being a source of strength and encouragement throughout my doctoral journey. I also dedicate this work to my husband and children, Theron, Hope, Justice, Christian, and Daryl. Thank you for believing in me and challenging me to pursue excellence; I could not have reached this milestone without your love and support. This dissertation is also dedicated to my grandchildren, Alani and Kai. Thinking of your future is what sustained me throughout this process. Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to almighty God. Thank you for giving me the strength to achieve this goal.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables	v
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study	1
Background.....	3
Problem Statement.....	5
Purpose of the Study.....	5
Research Questions.....	6
Conceptual Framework.....	6
Nature of the Study.....	8
Definitions	9
Assumptions	10
Scope and Delimitations.....	11
Limitations.....	12
Significance	13
Summary.....	14
Chapter 2: Literature Review	15
Literature Search Strategy	16
Conceptual Framework.....	17
Literature Review Related to Key Variables and Concepts	19
Teacher Preparation Programs.....	19
Reading Teachers in Elementary Schools	22
Strategies for Teaching Reading.....	23

Reciprocal Teaching Strategy for Reading Instruction	25
Phonological Awareness.....	27
Phonics and Phonetic Awareness	28
Other Reading Models and Strategies	29
Teacher Self-Efficacy for Reading Instruction.....	33
Professional Development.....	34
Summary and Conclusions	35
Chapter 3: Research Method	37
Research Design and Rationale	37
Role of the Researcher.....	40
Methodology.....	41
Participant Selection	41
Instrumentation.....	43
Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection.....	44
Data Analysis Plan.....	45
Trustworthiness	45
Ethical Procedures	47
Summary.....	48
Chapter 4: Results.....	49
Setting	49
Data Collection.....	51
Data Analysis.....	52

Step 1: Data Familiarization	52
Step 2: Code Generation.....	53
Step 3: Preliminary Theme Identification	55
Step 4: Theme Review.....	57
Step 5: Theme Naming.....	57
Step 6: Report Production.....	58
Results	58
Research Question 1	59
Research Question 2	67
Discrepant Cases.....	71
Evidence of Trustworthiness	72
Credibility.....	72
Dependability.....	73
Transferability	74
Confirmability	75
Summary.....	75
Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations.....	79
Interpretation of the Findings	79
Theme 1: Novice Teachers Lack Reading Pedagogical Knowledge.....	81
Theme 2: A Lack of Skills in Differentiating Instruction and Classroom Management Challenge Novice Reading Teachers.....	84

Theme 3: Collaboration, Observation, and Coaching Are Helpful Practices That Support Novice Reading Teachers	87
Theme 4: Additional Resources Such as More Support, Professional Development, and Appropriate Resources Are Needed to Assist Novice Reading Teachers	89
Limitations of the Study	92
Recommendations	93
Implications	94
Conclusion	96
References	99
Appendix A: Interview Questions	118
Appendix B: Interview Protocol Guide	119

List of Tables

Table 1 Participant Characteristics	51
Table 2 Participant Response Examples for Open Codes	54
Table 3 Participant Response Examples for Open Codes and Categories	56
Table 4 Alignment of Themes and Categories to the Research Questions	57

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Although there is agreement about the significance of reading education, reading proficiency levels continue to stagnate in the United States, with only 34% of fourth graders performing at or above the achievement level of proficient on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP; National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). Researchers have found that some early elementary teachers do not have the necessary skill set or knowledge to provide reading instruction to students (Curran & Kitchin, 2019; Zhu et al., 2020). In the primary grades, teachers should possess a strong understanding of subject knowledge and methods for teaching reading.

Arrow et al. (2019) and Meeks et al. (2020) found that U.S. teachers' knowledge was not adequate to provide efficient and explicit instruction to new and developing readers. Bratsch-Hines et al. (2019) demonstrated that teachers faced challenges in providing instruction to students with low reading skills. Jakobson et al. (2022) and Glover et al. (2023) extended this work, discovering that teachers lacked professional experience and the ability to provide reading learning activities to meet students' needs. Meeks et al. interviewed teachers to garner knowledge of teachers' perceived preparedness to teach early reading skills. The authors found that most of the participating teachers indicated they had less than adequate knowledge of how to teach beginning reading skills. Meeks et al. concluded that teachers should be offered opportunities to share difficulties experienced while teaching reading to improve their delivery of reading instruction.

A teacher's knowledge can influence how they provide reading instruction and directly affect student learning outcomes (Arrow et al., 2019). The well-being of both individuals and society depends on citizens possessing the ability to read and comprehend information (Snow, 2020). Miller and McCardle (2019) found that reading literacy affords access to vital societal structures and substructures such as education, health care, and general community engagement. According to the authors, the development of reading skills among elementary school students is a social justice concern because the ability to read promotes academic development and general well-being. Given teachers' influence on student learning in reading, I sought in the present study to explore novice kindergarten through second grade (K–2) teachers' perspectives of their preparedness to teach students to read. The insights gained from this study may contribute to positive social change by providing elementary education leaders with information they can use to make informed decisions related to teacher preparation and professional development in reading instruction.

Chapter 1 includes a synopsis of the research related to reading instruction and teachers' perspectives on their preparedness to teach students to read. The problem statement helps to contextualize the purpose statement, which follows it. I developed the research questions (RQs), which appear in the next section, in alignment with the problem statement. I also present the nature of the study and conceptual framework. The research assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and definitions are included to set the boundaries of the study and provide the reader with essential details relevant to the

study's design. After discussing the significance of the study, I conclude this chapter by summarizing key points and offering a transition to Chapter 2.

Background

Experts have indicated that many reading preparation programs for teachers introduce reading teaching strategies that are not supported by research (Koch & Sporer, 2017; Schwartz, 2021). The National Council on Teacher Quality (2021) recognized that many states do not validate whether elementary preservice teachers know the most effective methods to teach students how to read; the organization asserted that many U.S. elementary teachers are not prepared to teach reading in the classroom. In the United States, only 20 states use a teacher certification exam that assesses teachers' knowledge of how to effectively teach students to decode, fluently read, and comprehend a text based on the science of reading before they can be hired (Manohoran & Ramachandran, 2023; Schwartz, 2021).

Researchers have focused less on teachers' perspectives of their abilities to teach students to read and more on the deficiencies in teacher preparation programs to train preservice teachers in reading instruction. Pogorzelski et al. (2021) examined early childhood teachers' instructional practices for teaching reading in the first 2 years of school and identified the need for teachers to gain a better understanding of instructional strategies related to decodable and leveled text. Similarly, Moats (2020) postulated that teachers need better preparation and professional development to facilitate intentional instruction in reading. Hindman et al. (2020) asserted that effective reading instructional practices are exceedingly multifaceted, and teachers may need a significant amount of

support to effectively implement reading instruction. Overall, these researchers suggested that teachers require assistance with being better prepared and understanding instructional strategies they will implement. Teachers also need to receive support for classroom training in reading.

Researchers have also cited teacher preparation program type as an influential factor in teachers' ability to teach students to read (Drake & Walsh, 2020; Hikida et al., 2019; Raymond-West & Rangel, 2020). Traditional teacher preparation programs include the completion of a 4-year education program that includes coursework. Alternative paths to teacher certification include completing a nontraditional certification program, which allows individuals with a bachelor's degree in a field other than education to complete a teacher preparation program (National Council on Teacher Quality, 2021). However, as Drake and Walsh (2020) noted, nontraditional certification programs may not provide adequate reading instruction or enable teachers to obtain proficient scores on reading-specific licensing assessments. Raymond-West and Rangel (2020) found that teachers who experienced a traditional teacher preparation program reported higher levels of self-efficacy as well as significantly higher levels of exposure to literacy teaching skills across their coursework and fieldwork. Researchers have suggested that some K–2 teachers are not prepared to teach students to read, creating a gap in practice focused on teaching reading skills to K–2 students (Arrow et al., 2019; Pogorzelski et al., 2021). The results of this study may provide information for K–2 teachers to use to help them identify strategies to improve their instructional practices to teach students to read.

Problem Statement

Data from the NAEP (The Nation’s Report Card, 2022) show that approximately 52% of U.S. fourth graders in 2022 were not proficient in reading. With some states enacting new “Read by Grade 3” laws, the NAEP concluded that it is important for teachers to be well prepared to teach reading to their students. Arrow et al. (2019) and Pogorzelski et al. (2021) suggested that some K–2 teachers are not prepared to teach students to read, creating a gap in practice focused on teaching reading skills to K–2 students. There is evidence that supports the need to address this gap in teaching practice on preparedness to teach reading (Drake & Walsh, 2020; Hindman et al., 2020; Moats, 2020).

Research shows that teachers need better preparation and professional development to facilitate intentional instruction in reading (Moats, 2020). Drake and Walsh (2020) noted that many nonconventional certification programs have been negligent in providing adequate reading instruction or proficient scores on reading-specific licensing assessments for teachers. Hindman et al. (2020) asserted that effective reading instructional practices are multifaceted, and teachers may need a significant amount of support to effectively implement reading instruction. Research on how K–2 teachers perceive their preparation to teach reading may provide insight on the training and professional development they need to best educate aspiring readers.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore novice K–2 teachers’ perspectives of their preparedness to teach students to read and their beliefs about what they needed to

improve their strategies to teach reading. This study may help address the gap in practice of educators not being able to effectively teach students to read in K–2. Exploring primary teachers’ perspectives may provide information on what resources teachers need for K–2 reading instruction.

Research Questions

The study addressed the following two overarching RQs:

RQ1: What are K–2 teachers’ perspectives on their preparedness to teach students to read?

RQ2: What do K–2 teachers believe they need to improve their strategies to teach reading?

Conceptual Framework

I explored novice K–2 teachers’ perspectives of their preparedness to teach students to read and their beliefs about what they needed to improve their strategies to teach reading. I used Bandura’s (1977) self-efficacy theory as the conceptual framework for the study. Bandura (1977) contended that individuals believe in their capacities to perform specific tasks, referred to as self-efficacy, which influences their thoughts, motivation, and actions. According to Bandura (1993, 1994), self-efficacy is an individual’s confidence about their ability to perform and accomplish specific tasks. The four tenets of self-efficacy theory are mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and emotional and physiological states (Bandura, 1977). In the context of teaching, the self-efficacy belief is that teachers can significantly impact their performance and instructional practices in the classroom setting (see Bandura, 1993,

1994; Ozyilmaz et al., 2018). Therefore, it is important to understand teachers' self-efficacy concerning their preparedness to teach reading and what they believe they need to improve their strategies to teach reading. With this knowledge, educational leaders may be able to provide resources to help teachers improve reading instruction in early education.

Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory provides a conceptual framework that helps explain how teachers' beliefs and perspectives affect the instructional practices they employ. Pogorzelski et al. (2021) contended that it is essential to explore the interaction between the self-efficacy of teachers, their perceptions in terms of preparedness, and the strategies that may improve teaching and reading. In doing so, the study may provide information on how prepared K–2 teachers believe they are to teach students to read and what they believe is needed to improve their strategies to teach reading (Drake & Walsh, 2020).

My use of self-efficacy theory aligned with my use of interviews to collect data for the study. Qualitative researchers conduct interviews to explore individuals' subjective experiences of a phenomenon, including how they construct understandings from their experiences (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Bandura's (1977) theory related to the current study approach and questions, as self-efficacy is developed through experiences and observation. I designed the interview questions using the four tenets of self-efficacy theory (mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and emotional and physiological states) to assist me with eliciting information regarding

novice K–2 teachers’ perspectives of their preparedness to teach students to read and their beliefs about what they needed to improve their strategies to teach reading.

Drawing from the four tenets of self-efficacy theory, I used thematic analysis to explore how participating teachers constructed a sense of their preparedness to teach reading to students in Grades K–2. I first identified open codes, then axial codes, and finally emergent themes to answer the RQs. In Chapter 2, I engage with the peer-reviewed literature to provide a more detailed explanation of Bandura’s (1977) self-efficacy theory as it relates to K–2 teachers’ perspectives of their preparedness.

Nature of the Study

I used qualitative methodology to explore novice K–2 teachers’ perspectives of their preparedness to teach students to read and their beliefs about what they needed to improve their strategies to teach reading. A qualitative methodology was most appropriate for an in-depth understanding of the experience of participants. Researchers using a qualitative methodology examine the subjective experiences and perspectives of individuals regarding a phenomenon (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The phenomenon in this study was novice K–2 teachers’ preparedness to teach students to read. In this study, I focused on how K–2 teachers perceived their preparedness and what they perceived they needed to improve their teaching strategies; as such, a qualitative methodology was appropriate.

I collected data by conducting semi-structured interviews with 11 teachers who taught or previously taught students to read in K–2 within the past 5 years. Certified teachers who met these criteria were invited to participate in the study. Participants were

recruited through the Walden University Research Participant Pool and early childhood teacher groups on various social media platforms. I also used snowball sampling to obtain additional participants who met the study requirements. Snowball sampling is a recruitment method where research participants are asked to assist the researcher in identifying other potential participants for the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I conducted audio recorded, semi-structured interviews using an open-ended question protocol with study participants. Using open-ended questions allowed respondents to provide authentic answers. Follow-up questions were used to prompt more information. I used the six-step thematic analysis protocol devised by Braun et al. (2014) to analyze interview data and yield themes regarding participants' perspectives on their preparedness to teach students to read. Once the interviews were completed, I transcribed and analyzed the interviews in search of repetitive words, phrases, and key concepts to help answer the RQs. Open coding and axial coding were employed as methods for analyzing the data collected from participant interviews. A two-page summary of the study findings was shared with participants with a request for them to share comments or questions regarding the findings. The study participants did not share any questions or comments.

Definitions

Certificated teachers: Teachers who possess licensure from a state department of education or other state-level certification body after fulfilling a series of requirements to document qualified status to teach (All Education Schools, n.d.).

Novice teacher: Teachers with less than 5 years of teaching experience (Hasanah, 2020).

Nontraditional teacher certification program: Teacher preparation programs that do not follow the traditional model of colleges and universities (National Council on Teacher Quality, 2021).

Professional development: Activities, either formal (e.g., classes and workshops) or informal (e.g., collaboration with colleagues), that aid in the development of an individual's skills, knowledge, and expertise (Cooc, 2019).

Self-efficacy: The belief held by an individual that oneself have the capacity to perform in the necessary manner to produce specific performance attainments (Bandura, 1977).

Traditional teacher certification program: Teacher preparation programs that assist undergraduate students who have no previous teaching experience in earning a bachelor's degree; some programs may also lead to the earning of teaching credentials (Whitford et al., 2018).

Assumptions

There were many assumptions in this study on how teachers perceived their preparedness to teach students to read and what they believed they needed to improve their strategies to teach reading. I assumed that the teachers in this study would answer the interview questions honestly and to the best of their ability. I assumed participants' responses were reflective of their experiences teaching reading in a kindergarten, first-, or second-grade classroom and not based on the experiences of other teachers or other grade

levels. A third assumption was that participants would respond to interview questions without any fear of retaliation. These assumptions were relevant because the study was designed to explore novice K–2 teachers' perspectives of their preparedness to teach students to read and their beliefs about what they needed to improve their strategies to teach reading; however, there was no definitive method to validate if participant responses were authentic, reflective of their own experience, or free of outside influence.

Scope and Delimitations

I interviewed novice teachers with 1 to 5 years of teaching experience who taught or previously taught reading to students in K–2 within the past 5 years. I excluded teachers who had taught for less than 1 year because they might have insufficient experience teaching students to read and limited insight on what they would need to improve their instructional practices. By including teachers with at least 1 year of experience teaching K–2, I increased the likelihood of recruiting participants who had adequate experience with teaching reading in K–2. The upper limit of teaching experience was 5 years. The upper limit was set to ensure that participants were still novice and not veteran teachers. Also, Curry et al. (2016) stated that novice teachers are teachers who have 5 or fewer years of experience. Third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade elementary teachers were also excluded from this study because I was interested in the perspectives of novice K–2 teachers. Reading instruction during that time frame is pivotal. If students do not build a strong reading foundation during those years, matriculating through subsequent grades may be hindered. This study was also delimited to participants who were certified teachers recruited through the Walden University

Research Participant Pool and social media early childhood teacher groups, as well as those participants who were obtained through snowball sampling.

Limitations

There were several potential limitations to this study. First, the sample size for this qualitative study was a minimum of 10 to 12 novice K–2 teachers. Reaching data saturation with the interviews minimized this limitation. I minimized the limitations of a small sample size by ensuring that data from the participants were robust enough to enable the development of thick descriptions. Another limitation of the study was that interviews were based on self-disclosure. Participants might have been inclined to share desirable answers or have been reluctant to share their honest experiences with teaching students to read. To address these limitations, I was welcoming and friendly during the interviews to allow participants to relax and feel comfortable. I explained what was expected throughout the interview process and reminded participants that their responses were confidential. I also addressed this challenge by providing potential participants with a summary of the interview questions, offering a variety of times for the interviews, and assuring that the time commitment was 45–60 min.

There was potential for my personal bias to influence the study. As an experienced teacher, I had personal biases that I recognized and ensured did not affect the study. In my roles as a reading specialist and instructional coach, I have encountered colleagues who were inadequately prepared to teach reading to their students in the primary grades; their limited preparation directly affected teaching and learning. I did not include any teachers in the study with whom I currently or previously worked, nor those

with whom I had a personal relationship. I used reflexivity by recording my thoughts in a reflective journal to address biases as I conducted the study.

Significance

The present study includes perspectives from teachers with experience teaching beginning reading skills to kindergarten, first-, or second-grade students. Teachers' preparedness to teach reading has strong implications for how they deliver instruction and students' reading achievement. If teachers are inadequately prepared to teach reading to students in K–2, the quality of learning in the classroom will be significantly impacted (Meeks et al., 2020). If teachers are unprepared to teach students to read, their students may experience significant setbacks in reading comprehension and writing. Students who struggle to read in primary grades may continue to struggle in the upper grades; these difficulties may affect student achievement on formative and summative state assessments in Grades 3–12 (Goldhaber et al., 2022). The ramifications of poor reading skills can be extensive, affecting student achievement during their formative years and in the future as it relates to career options and social experiences (Castles et al., 2018). Goldhaber et al. (2022) concurred, noting how individuals who lack proficient reading skills in Grade 3 experience diminished future success. The information gained from this study may effect positive social change in the field of education by providing educational leaders with information that they can use when making decisions related to teacher preparation, professional development, and reading instruction in the primary grades. The study findings may enable primary grade teachers to identify what they can do to improve their reading instructional strategies.

Summary

In this chapter, I provided an overview of the context for the proposed study. According to prior research, two thirds of U.S. fourth-grade students are not proficient in reading (The Nation's Report Card, 2022). The lack of reading proficiency among elementary students may indicate that teachers are not prepared to teach students to read (Arrow et al., 2019). The purpose of this study was to explore novice K-2 teachers' perspectives of their preparedness to teach students to read and their beliefs about what they needed to improve their strategies to teach reading. The theoretical framework for this basic qualitative study was Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory. I defined key terms related to the study, as well as discussed, the study's assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and significance.

In Chapter 2, I provide additional context for the study by reviewing prior research. I explain the search strategy I employed to find the sources included in the literature review. I describe the conceptual framework of the study in further detail. I explain current related research on teachers' perceptions regarding their preparedness to teach students to read, as well as studies related to teacher preparation that include school system support and preparation programs for primary teachers. The review of the literature crystallizes the gap in the literature that I addressed by conducting this study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Inadequate knowledge and skill impede many early childhood teachers' efforts to help their students learn to read. Past research has shown that some early childhood teachers do not have the skill set or knowledge necessary to successfully provide reading instruction to students (Asri et al., 2021; Curran & Kitchin, 2019; Jakobson et al., 2022). U.S. state and federal mandates in education require early childhood teachers to have this knowledge. In 2021, only 20 U.S. states required preservice teachers to be assessed on their reading instruction knowledge before hiring (Schwartz, 2021). Other states continue to require that only a content licensure exam be given to reading teachers (National Council on Teacher Quality, 2021). The content of teacher preparation programs is also an issue. Researchers have shown that many reading preparation programs include teaching strategies that are unsupported by research (Elleman & Oslund, 2019; National Council on Teacher Quality, 2021; Schwartz, 2021). Inadequate or nonexistent training may be factors in the quality of reading instruction provided to students in K–2.

The purpose of the study was to explore novice K–2 teachers' perspectives of their preparedness to teach students to read and what they believed was needed to improve their strategies to teach reading. The study provided information on how prepared novice K–2 teachers believed they were to teach students to read and what they believed was needed to improve their strategies to teach reading.

Chapter 2 includes the reviewed literature related to teacher preparation programs for reading instruction, school support systems for teacher reading instruction, instructional practices (e.g., sound-focused learning activities), and reading

comprehension instructional strategies. I describe the literature search strategy employed to conduct the literature review and an explanation of the conceptual framework. The literature review also includes a discussion of teacher preparation programs for reading instruction, school support systems for reading instruction, and instructional practices. In the chapter, I also synthesize studies on teacher preparedness and self-efficacy related to teaching reading. The literature review ends with an identification of the gap in the literature and a discussion of why research on teachers' preparedness to teach reading is important.

Literature Search Strategy

I used databases and search engines to identify current scholarly and peer-reviewed current literature for this review. These databases and search engines included Educational Resource Information Center, Google Scholar, J-Gate, JSTOR, ORCID, Research Gate, Science Direct, Scopus, and Springer Link. The search terms and phrases included *college preparation for teaching reading, improvement of strategies for teaching reading, preparation programs for teachers who teach reading, preparedness to teach reading, problems with teaching students to read, school district support systems for reading teachers, strategies for teaching reading, teacher preparedness programs, and teaching reading.*

Using these search terms and phrases, I found over 500 articles on the topic of interest. I applied the following inclusion criteria to narrow the search. Articles needed to be published in a peer-reviewed journal, in English, and within the past 5 years. I did include some seminal works to account for important theoretical works. Still, 85% of the

selected works were published after 2018. Over 130 articles were found after narrowing the search.

Conceptual Framework

The framework for this study was Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory. Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory is focused on one key determinant of human behavior. Self-efficacy can be described as an individual's belief in their capability to perform a behavior (Bandura, 1977). According to Bandura (1986, 1995, 2005), focusing on the construct of self-efficacy may be predictive of certain intentions and therefore behaviors. As such, improving levels of self-efficacy may result in stronger intentions of performing a certain task (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997).

According to Bandura (1997, 2001, 2005), self-efficacy is best understood in terms of the interaction between an individual's internal motivation and their environment. Moreover, Bandura (1986) claimed that there is a reciprocal deterministic relationship between three components: personal, behavioral, and environmental. This interaction forms the basis for determining and predicting one's behavior and their self-efficacy regarding enactment of that behavior (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 2001).

Bandura (1977) highlighted the four tenets of self-efficacy theory, which includes mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and emotional and physiological states. Qualitative research methods allow for the in-depth exploration of these tenets and how they influence an individual's self-efficacy. In the case of education, Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory applies to confidence in applying new knowledge

coming from the interaction of these three components: the individual's behavior, and the individual's environment.

Bandura's (1993, 1994) self-efficacy theory has been utilized to understand and develop teaching methods in education. That is, self-efficacy theory can help guide the development of teachers' instructional practices, as it impacts how confident teachers are when completing work tasks related to teaching. For instance, Czerniak and Chiarelott (1990) examined teacher education for effective science instruction in terms of self-efficacy and other determinants of teachers' classroom behaviors. More recent researchers have also used Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory in examining classroom and teaching outcomes among teachers (Granziera & Perera, 2019; Marschall & Watson, 2019). Granziera and Perera (2019) examined teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, engagement, and work satisfaction. The findings of their study showed that self-efficacy beliefs and engagement were significantly linked, as well as engagement and satisfaction. The findings also revealed that self-efficacy beliefs are linked with satisfaction through teachers' engagement levels (Granziera & Perera, 2019).

In a recent study, researchers have also used Bandura's (1993, 1994) self-efficacy theory as a formative theory of mathematics teachers' professional learning (Marschall & Watson, 2019). The findings of their study showed that teachers' professional learning is a combined treatment of both acquisitionist and participatory learning, along with affective processes of learning, including self-efficacy (Marschall & Watson, 2019).

Literature Review Related to Key Variables and Concepts

Teacher Preparation Programs

Higher education institutions preparing teachers for teaching careers in reading instruction are required to follow specific federal and state guidelines (Robertson et al., 2020). Pre-service teachers are trained for their future classrooms so they can provide the highest quality teaching experiences to their students. Researchers examined different preparation programs for reading with educational leaders often focusing on all aspects of reading teachers' preparation suggesting that preservice teachers must learn about the component processes of reading before entering the classroom (Hikida et al., 2019; Robertson et al., 2020). According to Ellis et al. (2023) the National Council on Teacher Quality reported how only a quarter of teacher preparation programs comprehensively cover each of the five components of scientifically based reading instruction. Of greater concern is another 25% of preparation programs fail to appropriately address any of the five components (Ellis et al., 2023).

Researchers identified findings related to reading processes and initial teacher preparation include the researchers observing significant gaps in teachers' foundational knowledge of reading instruction after formal educational training (Ellis et al., 2023; Hindman et al., 2020; Robertson et al., 2020). Robertson et al. (2020) agreed with Hindman et al. (2020) that teachers should be educated to teach students reading. Both studies found support from district leaders was lacking and suggested that district leaders address the need for students' hands-on learning, provide teacher training on distance learning, and provide technology for students (Hikida et al., 2019; Hindman et al., 2020).

Teachers expressed a need to motivate and engage students, address the loss of hands-on learning opportunities, and assess and support students' social and emotional well-being.

Teachers need better preparation and professional development to facilitate instructing reading at the elementary school level (Moats, 2020). Researchers agreed that most nonconventional certification programs may have been negligent in providing adequate reading instruction to achieve proficient scores on reading-specific licensing assessments for teachers (Drake & Walsh, 2020; Moats, 2020). Effective reading instructional practices are multifaceted; thus, teachers may need a significant amount of support to implement reading instruction effectively (Hindman et al., 2020).

Experts in higher education instruction do not agree on the best preparation method for teaching primary school teachers reading (Hill et al., 2019; Zhu et al., 2020). Some experts suggested that college professors should train preservice teachers on how to teach reading, while others have suggested the necessity of postgraduate programs for learning methods on reading instruction (Hill et al., 2019; Zhu et al., 2020). The latter experts have also expressed that a preservice teacher only benefitted from teaching instruction after having hands-on teaching experiences (Hill et al., 2019; Zhu et al., 2020). Based on such research, educational leaders have developed multiple teacher preparation programs for reading instruction for teachers to take during and after college. Some program professors promote preservice teacher efficacy in reading (Bratsch-Hines et al., 2019; Meeks et al., 2020). Researchers have suggested the necessity of teaching specific programs for reading instruction, such as with systematic phonics instruction (Bowers, 2020; Fletcher et al., 2021).

Although the task of delivering reading instruction is expected of elementary teachers, the methods in preparing these teachers to provide instruction differ, making their expertise varied (Bratsch-Hines et al., 2019; Pogorzelski et al., 2021; Suarez et al., 2020). Studies showed that differences in how teachers taught reading courses created challenges for determining best practices in reading education (Pogorzelski et al., 2021; Suarez et al., 2020). Preservice teachers were taught methods of reading instruction, but not all higher educational institution teachers introduced the same methods. Studies showed that college education did not guarantee exemplary practices when teachers entered the classroom, nor were those teachers found to increase reading learning with their students (Bratsch-Hines et al., 2019; Pogorzelski et al., 2021; Suarez et al., 2020).

Researchers observed those elementary school educators who are not well-versed in reading teaching methods often will significantly depress student academic achievement (Catts, 2022; Suarez et al., 2020). Fundamentally, all elementary educators should have a solid understanding of the constructs that make up the five reading skills. These constructs (phonics, vocabulary, reading comprehension, phonological awareness, and reading fluency) first must be taught to the teachers so they can pass the knowledge onto their students. Habibi and Dehghani (2022) and Catts (2022) recognized that teaching students to read was not always a focus in education degree programs. However, it was suggested that there is a distinct need for teachers to concentrate on these instructional practices first before turning their learning attention to other facets of their education (Desta, 2020; Suarez et al., 2020).

Reading Teachers in Elementary Schools

Some teachers may enter primary classrooms made up of students with various instructional needs that require knowledge of a variety of effective teaching methods in reading (Merga, 2019). Teachers may learn effective instructional practices from professional development sessions offered by their respective school districts. Professional development leaders of such instruction and interventions may provide reading teachers with new instructional practices (Nilvius et al., 2021; Sandberg & Norling, 2018). Reading practices change with time, with researchers noting that reading teachers are more confident when they receive continued education on new teaching methods.

The new Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2001 (ESEA) enacted a new policy to ensure the success of reading learning outcomes for students (Skinner, 2022). The goal included administering yearly assessments to determine student achievement levels in reading and mathematics to ensure that students show mastery of the set grade-level standards. Three factors were established as essential that mandated that all teachers be fully qualified to teach reading (Skinner, 2022). The first factor was that teachers who exhibited high-quality reading instruction were mandated to provide all primary-grade students with the needed tools for reading while focusing on struggling readers (Skinner, 2022).

Researchers have further noted that instructional strategies must be included in reading instruction and must be scientifically based (Glover et al., 2023). Scientifically based reading instructional strategies and programs were shown effective through “(a) the

use of rigorous, systematic, and empirical methods, (b) adequate data analyses, (c) reliance on measurements that provide valid data across evaluators and observers and across multiple measurements and observations, and (d) acceptance in peer-refereed journals” (Head Start Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center, 2020, para. 4).

Strategies for Teaching Reading

Experts found teachers lacking in professional experience had deficits in providing learning activities to meet students’ needs in reading instruction (Abualzain, 2020; Poole, 2019). Experts recognized that primary school teachers faced many challenges when providing reading and writing instruction based on their perceptions of reading education (Gündoğmuş, 2018; Poole, 2019). Abualzain (2020) investigated challenges faced by primary school teachers when providing reading and writing instruction. Similar findings from these studies exhibited how participants were consistent when describing difficulties with teaching these two subjects (Abualzain, 2020; Poole, 2019). Poole (2019) and Solikhah (2018) all cited difficulties as parental indifference, lack of readiness and motivation with their students, high rates of student absenteeism, and a lack of confidence in their professional experiences and instructional methods. The results revealed that teachers lacked professional expertise in providing learning activities to meet students’ needs (Solikhah, 2018). Other researchers examined teaching roles and methods of teaching education (Abualzain, 2020; Meeks et al., 2020). Meeks et al. (2020) and Abualzain (2020) noted that teachers who adjusted their instructional methods when navigating unpredictable situations were more likely to

promote an innovative nature of literacy instruction. Such teachers were more likely to teach students reading skills successfully (Abualzain, 2020; Meeks et al., 2020).

Meeks et al. (2020) and Abualzain (2020) aimed to gain knowledge of the teachers' perceived preparedness to teach early reading skills. The participants were in-service teachers or teachers seeking employment. In both studies, the participants had less than adequate knowledge of beginning reading skills. This evidence showed the need for further research, indicating a need for understanding teachers' perspectives of their preparedness to teach students reading (Meeks et al., 2020; S Solikhah, 2018). Over the years, the U.S. educators have witnessed reading disagreements. Teachers and administrators have disagreed on the best methods and strategies for teaching children reading (Raymond-West & Rangel, 2020). Researchers compared traditional and alternative teaching strategies related to various levels of preparedness of reading teachers (Raymond-West & Rangel, 2020).

Practices of mentoring teachers in systemic phonics instruction were examined by Ehri and Flugman (2018) and Flynn et al. (2021). Both sets of researchers recognized there was little research showing outcomes from such training of these teachers for beginning reading practices. Ehri and Flugman noted that implementing such mentoring in phonics instruction increased reading abilities taught to students with lower reading achievement. Flynn et al. (2021), by contrast, felt that the mentoring practices were necessary and professional development with in-service training for phonics teaching was only beneficial when teachers and mentors were closely partnered and provided integration of old and new teaching strategies, thus giving the teachers feeling of

empowerment as they make the needed changes in their teaching practices. Others claimed that employing the 3-2-1 strategy worked the best, with others preferring the inference method (Price-Mohr & Price, 2019). Structured literacy, another combined strategy, was shown as a highly effective instruction method for struggling readers (Campbell, 2018). Studies showed structured literacy as successful because it was guided by the main principles of instruction being a cumulative process (Duarte, 2020; Mudrak et al., 2020). This process may encompass teaching educators how to teach an abstract concept based on a student's concrete knowledge. Teaching reading should be implemented through a systematic approach. Thus, researchers have found that the teacher should adapt instruction to meet students' needs (Capodieci et al., 2020; Sun et al., 2021).

Reciprocal Teaching Strategy for Reading Instruction

One type of reading instruction is a reciprocal teaching strategy. Capodieci et al. (2020) studied a control group, where members were not taught to teach strategic reading instructional methods, and an experimental group, with members taught such methods. The students of participants in both groups took a pretest and posttest based on the Standardized Reading Speed Test and Reading Comprehension Test. Sun et al. (2021) compared how well the students developed the ability for reading instruction. Sun et al.'s (2021) outcome of their analysis presented evidence showing reciprocal teaching strategies follow the principles of scaffolding, modeling, and repeated practice. These practices were shown as significantly more robust reading instructional strategies than others. The authors reported that this method was usable for university students' learning

processes and would benefit from psychological research, as reading skills improved after the intervention (Sun et al., 2021).

Carson and Bayetto (2018) and Okkinga et al. (2018) demonstrated outcomes showing the relevance of interventions, such as reciprocal teaching strategies. Okkinga et al. found that using reciprocal teaching for low-achieving adolescents improved reading and comprehension skills in a whole-class versus small-group setting. Concurring, Carson and Bayetto recognized that teachers agreed that reciprocal education offered positive guidance for learners in reading comprehension. However, both Carson and Bayetto and Okkinga et al. showed an increase in reading scores after 1 year of implementing reciprocal teaching of reading instruction. However, Carson and Bayetto found that teachers could not deliver detailed directions and guidance to their students working in small groups through implementing instructional principles. One reason for this difficulty was that modeling a reciprocal teaching strategy required the teacher to have more experience and theoretical insight than with the use and nature of other reading strategies (Okkinga et al., 2018). Further, Asress (2020) and Navaie (2018) agreed with Okkinga et al.'s findings, suggesting that extensive education and training were required for teachers to become experts in reciprocal teaching. The use of reciprocal teaching requires teachers to have hands-on tools, the time, and the ability to guide students in their collaborative group work, allowing for more individual self-regulation by students (Asress, 2020; Navaie, 2018).

Phonological Awareness

Primary grade teachers use the phonological awareness assessment practices of early childhood teachers. This necessitates an understanding of self-reported knowledge of phonological awareness (Brevik, 2019). Researchers have shown that phonetic instruction implemented through online platforms improves students' phonological awareness and orthographic knowledge (Mather & Jaffe, 2021; Paige et al., 2022). However, some experts have disagreed with the use of phonics for the teaching of reading and the use of phonological awareness for assessment (Bowers, 2020; Moats, 2020). Bowers (2020) examined 12 studies that showed that using synthetic phonics as a method for reading instruction was not any more effective than other phonetic methods. Teachers who support phonological awareness as an implemented strategy for reading instruction contend that written words correspond to spoken words and that manipulation of spoken word is needed to develop strong word reading skills (Paige et al., 2022). Phonological awareness requires the ability for a teacher to teach their students how to identify and manipulate the sounds within words. Phonological awareness is a key indicator for proficient reading learning, thus providing the means to observe word structure.

Campbell (2018) and Price-Mohr and Price (2019) showed teachers' and administrators' disagreements about phonics practices, literacy ideas, and reasons for using a packaged phonics program. Teaching phonics was noted as part of a school district's mandated policy, which positively impacted the success rate for reading scores (Campbell, 2018; Price-Mohr & Price, 2019). Even so, Campbell (2018) found that using

packaged phonics programs did not produce higher reading rates nor did demanding the use of phonics instruction for reading. Additionally, Campbell and Price-Mohr and Price (2019) did find a significant relationship between early childhood teachers who disagreed with using phonics programs, their beliefs that children learned letters and sounds indirectly, and higher reading rates in prekindergarten, kindergarten, and first-grade students.

Phonics and Phonetic Awareness

Elementary school teachers who use phonics instruction when teaching reading provide students with the ability to hear and manipulate sounds in spoken words. Students may better understand that spoken words and syllables are made up of sequences of speech sounds (Bradley & Noell, 2018; McNeill, 2018). Researchers found that teachers' perceptions were primarily positive, with a significant number of teachers claiming that synthetic phonics instruction was a foremost strategy used in the classroom (Bradley & Noell, 2018; McNeill, 2018). Studies showed significant implications for the effectiveness of using the phonetic system for teaching reading (Carson & Bayetto, 2018; McNeill, 2018).

There are different methods for teaching phonics, including synthetic phonics, analytical phonics, embedded phonics, and analogy phonics. The most used of these methods is synthetic phonics. However, experts claimed that no single method of phonics was superior to another; all methods had merit (Glazzard & Stones, 2020). Although school leaders in England mandated the practice of using synthetic phonics, some researchers disagreed that synthetic phonics instruction was the most successful method

to increase academic achievement (Glazzard & Stones, 2020; Price-Mohr & Price, 2019). These experts also disagreed that synthetic phonics was the best way for teachers to instruct reading. According to Glazzard and Stones (2020), the policy mandating teachers' use of synthetic phonics for reading instruction allowed educational leaders to monitor and inspect teachers based on set standards.

Other Reading Models and Strategies

Teachers recognized the value of using cross-age peer learning programs before the pandemic created significant changes in reading instruction (Tullis & Goldstone, 2020). Researchers claimed that a reading buddy program had high success, showing increased reading rates for elementary students (Christ et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2019). Experts showed how the reading development model entailed implementing text-based, regulatory processes to demand an interleaved, individualized focus in reading instruction (Hindman et al., 2020; Suarez et al., 2020). However, other teachers believed that this process was overly complex and highly time-consuming (Hudson et al., 2021). Experts also believed that the more widespread science of learning elementary teachers possibly required focused, classroom-based occasions for careful practices with teachers providing feedback (Jian & Logan, 2019; Meyer et al., 2018). Because most teachers learn as generalists over just 2 or 3 years, systematic methods in reading were less likely available. New teachers were unaware of compelling reading instructional techniques (Castles et al., 2018). Therefore, they understood the more fundamental issue was that these techniques were incredibly complex to implement well, and teacher candidates would likely need substantial scaffolding to use them (Suarez et al., 2020).

Other experts explored a promising solution of embedding preservice training with focused, targeted reading instruction interventions to support experienced teachers (Adelstein & Barbour, 2018; McNeill, 2018). As examples, the Assessment-to Instruction and Story Talk programs would offer teachers precise, practical guidance, bridging the research on reading and real-world classroom practices. Design principles that infused the science of learning into preservice reading education were also considered valid instructional methods (Adelstein & Barbour, 2018).

During the pandemic, with the changes to instruction environments and moving students into an online class, findings from expert studies showed that initially at-risk students were found to learn less in an online environment than those in traditional classrooms (Adelstein & Barbour, 2018; Martin, 2019). Many authors attributed this discrepancy to the text-based communication and course content that demand self-discipline at-risk students lack (Adelstein & Barbour, 2018; Martin, 2019). However, other experts suggested that even though the online educational atmosphere was considered untraditional, with minimal interactions among students and teachers compared to brick-and-mortar settings, the teacher's self-efficacy in their preparedness for teaching in the online environment also caused poor achievement results in student populations (Elleman & Oslund, 2019; Merga, 2019).

Teachers recognize that some students struggle with reading more than their peers. Many teachers feel the need to request help for these students by accessing specific materials available to support them (Merga, 2019). Researchers claimed that most reading teachers could use seven strategies of highly effective readers: activating,

inferring, monitoring-clarifying, questioning, searching-selecting, summarizing, and visualizing-organizing (Elleman & Oslund, 2019; Merga, 2019). Inferring relates to bringing together the spoken and unspoken or the written with the implied. By combining inferring and activating a reader engages the information with information they already know, and extracts constructed meaning from reading. Monitoring and clarifying consists of the student thinking about how and what is read-only to determine if they comprehend what they are reading; many teachers find this is a struggle for those students who have lower reading test scores (Virinkoski et al., 2022)

Strategies of effective readership also relate to questioning, which involves engaging in learning dialogues and questioning facets of the text (Elleman & Oslund, 2019). Searching and selecting entails reading complicated texts using a supplementary text to answer one's questions that may develop when reading. It may also include internet searches to analyze better thoughts that come up when reading (Elleman & Oslund, 2019). Summarizing consists of restating the meaning of the text using one's own words and basing the ideas of the text on an understanding of the material read. Visualizing and organizing focus on constructing a mental image to extract a construct of meaning from the ideas read (Virinkoski et al., 2022).

Basilaia and Kvavadze (2020) studied strategies for reading using a technology-need assessment and found that teachers would benefit from having an in-house technology coach to assist with their technological teaching and learning needs, specific to their classroom settings. Although face-to-face technological training might seem ideal, Pak et al. (2020) suggested using a pedagogical shift toward on-demand learning

due to emerging information-sharing networks, contradicting Basilaia and Kvavadze's (2020) idea on in-house technology coaching. Online communities provide real-time resources and support a teacher's need to keep up with their students coming to school primed as creators, makers, and designers of digital products. These same scholars also claimed teachers should identify elements of professional development to support early elementary teachers in adopting and implementing digital learning tools in classroom settings (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020; Pak et al., 2020).

Questions arose from experts asking if reading instruction was evidence-based and, if so, would primary education teachers use such pedagogical instruction methods for teaching (Suarez et al., 2020; Whaley et al., 2019). Suarez et al. (2020) analyzed the use of evidence-based reading instruction in primary schools. The authors recruited six teachers to first determine what teaching practices were most frequently used and which practices were used the longest (Suarez et al., 2020). The results showed that the most used teaching practices with the longest intervals consisted of feedback, fluency in individual and group reading, and both aloud and silent reading skills. These findings were followed by the following teaching practices with and without intonation, literal or inference comprehension exercises, and the use of educational resources (Suarez et al., 2020). Although Suarez et al. claimed teachers familiar with teaching methods were more likely to gain success in teaching, others believed that successful instructional reading practices were based on their self-efficacy in teaching skills (Raymond-West & Rangel, 2020; Shahzad & Naureen, 2019).

In summary, despite research yielding insights about effective reading instructional strategies, implementation of these strategies is hampered by the difficulty that teachers report in enacting them in the classroom (Hudson et al., 2021). Additionally, researchers have questioned whether some teachers possess the knowledge, skill, or instructional self-efficacy to use effective teaching practices in reading (Castles et al., 2018; Raymond-West & Rangel, 2020; Shahzad & Naureen, 2019; Suarez et al., 2020). The next section further highlights teacher self-efficacy as a key driver of practices in reading instruction.

Teacher Self-Efficacy for Reading Instruction

The fundamental building blocks to all learning begin with reading education. Researchers focused on fostering self-efficacy in novice teachers to explore such issues of navigating the disconnect between theory and practice (Raymond-West & Rangel, 2020; Shahzad & Naureen, 2019). However, Raymond-West and Rangel (2020) and Shahzad and Naureen (2019) disagreed on teaching teachers' instructional practices for reading, with some agreeing the largest part of reading instruction came from teachers' self-confidence. Such disagreements created challenges in determining the methods most appropriate for teaching small children how to read (Raymond-West & Rangel, 2020).

Raymond-West and Rangel found that early literacy teachers' responses to discover how traditional and alternative teacher preparation programs differed from Shahzad and Naureen's examination concerning the program's components. Findings from Raymond-West and Range, however, were similar to Shahzad and Naureen's (2019) findings indicating that teachers who experienced a traditional teacher preparation

program reported significantly higher levels of exposure to literacy teaching skills across their coursework and fieldwork. In comparison, Shahzad and Naureen found that higher levels of self-efficacy were more prominent with the significant relationship between teachers' levels of self-efficacy and literacy exposure encountered during teacher preparation programs. Both research groups found that such impact of teacher preparation programs was vital to reading teachers' self-efficacy and explained the strategies needed to improve (Raymond-West & Rangel, 2020; Shahzad & Naureen, 2019). Part of teacher preparatory programs is to enhance and increase teachers' self-efficacy when teaching reading. Researchers examined fostering self-efficacy in novice teachers to address such issues of how to navigate the disconnect between theory and practice (Raymond-West & Rangel, 2020; Shahzad & Naureen, 2019).

Teachers should believe in their abilities to teach reading (Bratsch-Hines et al., 2019; Pogorzelski et al., 2021; Suarez et al., 2020). Suarez et al. (2020) recognized the importance of a relationship between teachers' beliefs about reading, teaching practices, and discourse. Suarez et al. aimed to determine if a relationship between self-efficacy, opinions, practices, and discourse regarding reading instruction in the classroom was more effective than other teaching strategies. The results also indicated teachers consistently maintained eclectic approaches; therefore, not one method for preparing teachers to teach reading was significantly more appropriate (Suarez et al., 2020).

Professional Development

Teachers in early elementary classes necessitating stronger and more effective teaching methods in reading instruction than before may find methods of improvement

from professional development sessions offered by their respective school districts. Such instruction and interventions may provide reading teachers with new reading instructional practices (Sandberg & Norling, 2018). Reading practices change, with school district leaders reporting that reading teachers are more confident when they receive continued education on new methods (Campbell, 2018). A series of professional development programs help teachers to engage in learning activities, which are essential in learning complex strategies. These complex strategies enable teachers to foster effective reading proficiency for students in the K–2 level (Kalinowski et al., 2019). Professional development is important for ensuring high-quality instructions from teachers including the reading achievement in students (Didion et al., 2020).

Summary and Conclusions

Researchers found changes in reading specialists' roles over the past several decades (Robinson, 2018; Sandberg et al., 2015). Many teachers in reading found that as school reforms were implemented, they needed new roles as reading specialists. This role was necessary for school districts showing large numbers of struggling readers. The reading specialist's role changed with the enactment of ESEA in 2001; reading teachers transitioned from coaching students in phonics and other reading methods to teaching reading through paradigms and specific reading practices (Wrabel et al., 2018).

Some researchers emphasized the changes in reading preparation established in the ESEA (Hill et al., 2019; Wrabel et al., 2018; Zhu et al., 2020). Researchers found a gap between what teachers knew about reading and what they learned to prepare for reading instruction in the classroom (Drake & Walsh, 2020; Hindman et al., 2020; Ho &

Lau, 2018; Moats, 2020; Raymond-West & Rangel, 2020; Rogde et al., 2019). Studies further showed teachers were lacking in professional experience and did not have the appropriate abilities to provide learning activities to meet students' reading needs (Abualzain, 2020; Poole, 2019).

Researchers also focused on the changes to teaching environments and reading instruction methods due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Bhamani et al., 2020; Chamberlain et al., 2020; Ferri et al., 2020). Many studies showed a lack of preparation for teachers with using the online platforms required for teaching (DeCoito & Estaiteyeh, 2022; Sucena et al., 2022). Researchers posited that such platforms discouraged teachers' self-efficacy and did not provide the necessary instructions to their students (Azevedo et al., 2021; Bao et al., 2020; Hamilton et al., 2020; Poulain et al., 2021). Researchers also discussed teaching strategies successful in reading instruction, such as reciprocal teaching, phonetic learning, and cross-grade reading buddies (Ehri & Flugman, 2018; Nevenglosky et al., 2019). Chapter 3 includes the research methodology and design that outlines how the data are collected and analyzed to answer the RQs. This chapter includes what techniques used for selection of the sample, for data collection, and for analysis of the collected data.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of the study was to explore novice K–2 teachers’ perspectives of their preparedness to teach students to read and what they believed was needed to improve their strategies to teach reading. K–2 teachers are centrally important to students’ early literacy development and their ability to reach important reading benchmarks that predict future academic outcomes. Exploring the perspectives of these teachers regarding their preparedness to teach students to read may inform efforts to ensure that K–2 teachers are adequately prepared to provide reading instruction.

This chapter addresses the research design for the study and the rationale for the chosen study design. The role of the researcher is also discussed. In addition, the chapter includes information on participant recruitment and selection, the researcher-developed interview protocol, data collection methods, and analysis procedures. The chapter concludes with a summary of the trustworthiness and ethical procedures of the study.

Research Design and Rationale

I sought to answer the following two RQs:

RQ1. What are novice K–2 teachers’ perspectives on their preparedness to teach students to read?

RQ2. What do novice K–2 teachers believe they need to improve their strategies to teach reading?

To answer the RQs, I used the qualitative method; specifically, I conducted a basic qualitative study in which I conducted semi-structured interviews on Zoom. Qualitative researchers focus on understanding how people view their experiences, as well as specific

phenomena within them (Hamilton & Finley, 2019). In qualitative research, data sources include observations, interviews, questionnaires, focus groups, documents, artifacts, or recordings made in the participants' natural settings. A qualitative methodology was most appropriate for gaining an in-depth understanding of RQs. In this study, I explored the central concept of novice K–2 teachers' perspectives on their preparedness to teach students to read, and what they believed they needed to improve their strategies to teach reading. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) believed a qualitative methodology is best used in the exploration of individuals' perspectives of lived experiences within a phenomenon, and for examining in-depth information.

I considered but did not select quantitative or mixed methods for the study. Quantitative studies often proceed deductively, examining if relationships hypothesized in advance exist (Apuke, 2017). To test hypotheses, quantitative researchers use numerical data and conduct statistical analyses with those data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019). The present study did not include testing of any predefined variables or relationships. Instead, the focus regarded individuals' experiences with a phenomenon, and I aimed to remain open to the experiences and perceptions that emerged from data collection. A mixed methods approach combines qualitative and quantitative approaches, using them together or one after the other to answer a series of RQs (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Because quantitative methods were inappropriate for this study, an approach that combined quantitative methods with qualitative methods was also inappropriate.

I chose a basic qualitative research design for this study because this approach was the most suitable method to answer the RQs posed in this study. A basic qualitative

design is appropriate in situations where researchers are concerned with people's individual perceptions and experiences (Kim et al., 2017). Given this focus, basic qualitative studies are flexible, enabling researchers to adopt practical approaches to data collection and analysis that reflect access to data and the direct focus of the research (Percy et al., 2015). My goal was to gain an understanding of the perspectives of novice K–2 teachers on their preparedness to teach students to read and what they believed they needed to improve their strategies to teach reading. By employing a qualitative method, I interacted directly with study participants during interviews to gain their perspectives on their preparedness to teach students to read.

I considered but rejected other qualitative designs for the present study. One such design was phenomenology, which involved the study of people's lived experiences related to a phenomenon, including the ways that they made sense of their experiences (Moustakas, 1994). My study was focused on the common threads that came from individuals' experiences, not with the narrow and personal way that each participant makes sense of their experiences related to K–2 reading instruction. I also considered but rejected a case study design. Case study researchers are concerned with phenomena as they are expressed in contexts bounded by time and/or place (Yin, 2018). Even though I was sampling teachers situated in a specific time and place, my interest in the study was not bounded by time and space. Finally, narrative inquiry is a qualitative design researchers use to explore how individuals construct meaning of their lives and experiences through narratives (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). My study was focused on K–2 teachers' experiences with reading instruction and their perceived needs related to

reading instruction. I was not focused on the deeper ways that teachers narrativized or created stories from their experiences.

Role of the Researcher

As the researcher, I was responsible for conducting the study, which included developing the interview protocol and collecting data using online interviews on the Zoom platform. I was an active participant in the interviews with research participants by facilitating the interviews, asking interview questions, listening to responses, and asking clarifying questions as needed. Interviews were conducted with participants solicited through the Walden University Research Participant Pool and social media early childhood groups. It was unlikely I would have any personal relationships or supervisory relationships with participants. However, if an individual whom I had a past personal or supervisory relationship with shared their interest in participating, I thanked them for their interest and explained they would not be able to participate because of the potential effects of a dual relationship on the research results.

I served as a prekindergarten through fifth-grade literacy coach at an elementary school, and previously served as a reading specialist working explicitly with K–2 students, and a classroom teacher. Each of my professional experiences led to my interest in teachers' perspectives on their ability to teach reading. As an experienced teacher, I had a personal bias regarding the best strategies for teaching reading and how these strategies should be employed. I recognized and managed my potential bias to ensure this bias did not affect the study. Researchers recognize and control for potential sources of bias through reflexivity (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I achieved reflexivity by recording my

thoughts in what Merriam and Tisdell (2016) described as a reflective journal. Recording my thoughts and feelings during each stage of the data collection and analysis process helped me to acknowledge my bias, particularly my expectations regarding the eventual results of the study, as I moved throughout the study process.

Methodology

Participant Selection

The population for this study was novice teachers who taught reading to kindergarten, first-, or second-grade students. I used a purposive sampling technique to obtain a sample from the population. Purposive sampling is a non-probability technique that researchers use to purposely select a sample of individuals who are known to know about of experience with the phenomenon of interest (Campbell et al., 2020). The sample included 10-12 individuals from the population. However, the final sample size was determined by saturation, which was the point at which no new information was gained from the interviews (Campbell et al., 2020). According to Hennink and Kaiser (2022), data saturation is typically reached with 5-24 participants.

For inclusion in this study, teachers must be certified and have 1 to 5 years of teaching experience and taught or have previously taught, reading to students in K–2 within the past 5 years. I excluded teachers who had taught for less than 1 year because they might have insufficient experience teaching students to read and limited insight on what they needed to improve their instructional practices. By including teachers with at least 1 year of experience teaching K–2, I increased the likelihood of recruiting participants with adequate experience with teaching reading in K–2. The upper limit of

teaching experience was 5 years. The upper limit was set to ensure participants are more novice and not veteran teachers. Also, Curry et al. (2016) stated that novice teachers are teachers who have 5 or fewer years of experience. Third, fourth, and fifth-grade elementary teachers were also excluded from this study because I was interested in the perspectives of K–2 teachers, whose role was to help students achieve foundational literacy development that predicted future achievement for students (Arrow et al., 2019; Miller & McCardle, 2019). K–2 teachers must have taught reading in the last 5 years. Initial screening questions were used to ensure interested individuals were eligible for participation.

To recruit individuals who met the inclusion criteria for the present study, I used Walden University's research participant pool and social media site groups that have K–2 teachers as members. After receiving approval to conduct the study from Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB), I posted a recruitment invitation on the research participant pool site and early childhood media sites describing the purpose of the study, my role as the researcher, the nature of participation, and inclusion criteria. I emailed the potential participant to ask interested individuals who met the inclusion criteria to review the consent form asking them to send an email reply to me expressing their interest. After receiving approval to conduct the study, I also requested permission from the administrators of specific early childhood social media groups that had K–2 teachers as members to post invitations to participate in the study. With receipt of this approval, I posted a social media recruitment invitation on the main page of each group, again describing the study and the inclusion criteria. In the invitation, I asked individuals

to email me if they met the inclusion criteria and were interested in participating in the study.

Instrumentation

The sole data collection instrument for this study was a semi-structured interview protocol. I developed the interview questions based on the literature with the aim of aligning them to the RQs (see Appendix A for the interview questions and Appendix B for the interview protocol). For instance, interview questions that were related to strategies to teach reading were supported by the work of Meeks et al. (2020), Elleman and Oslund (2019), and Virinkoski et al. (2022). Interview questions that were related to teacher preparation programs were guided by Robertson et al. (2020) and Hikida et al. (2019), and interview questions related to teachers' self-efficacy for reading instruction were guided by Raymond-West and Rangel (2020) and Shahzad and Naureen (2019). The semi-structured interviews were conducted using the web-based videoconferencing platform Zoom. The semi-structured interviews lasted no more than 60 min. All interviews were audio recorded.

I selected three experts who have experience in qualitative or educational research to be included in the review panel. An expert panel review can enhance the content validity of the interview questions (Roberts, 2020). An expert panel review was used to ensure the interview questions are concise, clear, bias-free, and align with the study's purpose (Roberts, 2020). During the expert panel review, I asked experts to evaluate the interview questions and provide me with feedback. Once all experts provided feedback, I made changes to the interview questions to reflect the feedback.

As potential participants agreed to participate in the study, they received a letter by way of email thanking them for their interest and asking them to schedule the interview. Semi-structured interviews were conducted until enough data has been collected to reach data saturation. If data saturation was not reached after interviews with 10 teachers, I recruited more participants from the same research sites. This process continued until no new information emerged from the interviews.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Participants were recruited through the Walden University Research Participant Pool and social media early childhood teacher groups. I sought and gained approval from Walden University's IRB to conduct this study. After approval was granted, I contacted potential participants by posting an invitation on the Walden University Participant Pool website and early childhood teacher groups found on Facebook and LinkedIn. The invitation provided information about the study and who was eligible to participate. The invitation also included my contact information so that interested individuals could contact me directly if they would like to participate.

I conducted an initial screening with each interested individual to see if they were eligible during the initial correspondence. Those who met the eligibility criteria were able to schedule a Zoom interview with me at that time. I also explained the conditions of informed consent during the initial correspondence and asked them to share an email address where they would like to receive the informed consent document.

I conducted the interviews using the web-based videoconferencing platform Zoom and followed an interview protocol that I developed. The interviews lasted no more

than 60 min and were audio recorded. After each interview, I explained to the participants that they would have the opportunity to read a 2-page summary of the study findings and they could share comments or questions regarding the findings.

Data Analysis Plan

I analyzed the interview data following Braun et al.'s (2014) six-step thematic analysis. In the first step, I prepared the data for analysis by transcribing the interview responses by using a service called Temi and listening to the audio recordings of the interviews. After receiving and reviewing the transcribed interviews for accuracy, I became familiar with the data by reading and rereading transcripts. During the second step, I conducted first-cycle coding to highlight words and phrases directly aligned with the RQs using open coding (see Saldaña, 2016). During the next step, I conducted second cycle coding using a method called axial coding to organize my initial codes into categories based on their similarity (see Saldaña, 2016). Then, I evaluated the themes that emerged in the third step by collapsing and expanding them to assess their relevance to answering the RQs. This process included eliminating themes that were irrelevant or combining smaller themes that were similar (see Braun et al., 2014). After this, I named the themes, establishing how themes were both related to and discreet from the other themes (see Braun et al., 2014). In the final step, I wrote up the results and presented them using supporting excerpts from the transcripts (see Braun et al., 2014).

Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, validity, reliability, and objectivity are evaluated based on the trustworthiness of the results. The criteria for trustworthiness are credibility,

dependability, transferability, and confirmability. Credibility refers to how accurately a study's results represent the participants' experiences and is closely related to the concept of internal validity (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The credibility of this study was addressed by using member checking. A 2-page summary of the study findings was shared with participants with a request to share comments or questions regarding the findings.

Transferability relates to external validity and is concerned with how well a study's findings can be applied to policy and practice or other settings, populations, or contexts (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). To address transferability in this study, I provided a thick description of participants' experiences and the context in which these experiences occurred. Furthermore, I recruited participants from several sources including the Walden University participant pool website and early childhood teacher groups found on Facebook and LinkedIn. Recruiting participants from multiple sources ensured that individuals varied in their backgrounds and experiences. Recruiting from a single source could have failed to generate a sample that is heterogeneous enough to ensure that findings would be transferable.

Dependability relates to reliability and is concerned with how consistent findings are across time and how well procedures are followed and documented (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). To address dependability in this study, I kept an audit trail and reflexive journal. An audit trail is a detailed record of all the research decisions made and steps taken throughout the research process (Forero et al., 2018).

Confirmability relates to objectivity and is concerned with how well a study's findings can be verified by other researchers (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The audit trail also addressed confirmability in this study. According to Korstjens and Moser (2018), an audit trail provides other researchers with the information necessary for replicating a study. Furthermore, the confirmability of this study was addressed through researcher reflexivity, which involved me acknowledging and documenting my experiences, opinions, attitudes, beliefs, or worldviews that could have influenced the research process in a reflective journal.

Ethical Procedures

Researchers who conduct human subjects research need to follow the ethical principles outlined in the *Belmont Report* (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979), which include respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. I implemented several measures to ensure that these principles were followed throughout the research process. First, I obtained approval from Walden University's IRB before collecting any data or engaging with any potential participants in my study (approval no. 07-10-23-0633884). Additionally, I obtained written permission from the administrators of early childhood teacher groups found on Facebook and LinkedIn.

Another ethical consideration was the informed consent process. I reviewed the informed consent process with each participant and collected signed informed consent forms via email before conducting interviews. The informed consent process was used to verify that participants were voluntarily participating and that they understood their rights

as a participant, including the right to withdraw at any time during the study without consequence.

I tried to avoid asking questions that could provoke an emotional response or that could be distressing, which Moser and Korstjens (2018) described as an appropriate step to limit the adverse effects of participating in an interview. In terms of confidentiality and identity protection, I used pseudonyms (i.e., Participant 1) for each participant, rather than collecting personally identifiable information. All research materials and data will be kept on a password-protected hard drive only accessible to me. After 5 years, I will permanently delete all content on the hard drive.

Summary

In this chapter, I described my use of a basic qualitative methodology, featuring interviews, to explore novice K–2 teachers' perspectives of their preparedness to teach students to read and what they believed they needed to improve their strategies to teach reading. Using a basic qualitative design, I explained data collection using semi-structured interviews with a minimum of 10 to 12 current or former teachers teaching reading in kindergarten, first, or second grade. To have been included in this study, teachers must be certified and taught or previously taught reading to students in K–2 within the past 5 years. The semi-structured interviews with study participants were recorded, transcribed, coded, and then analyzed in search of common themes to answer the RQs. Chapter 4 includes the results that have emerged from the qualitative analysis.

Chapter 4: Results

The results of this study are aimed at adding to the literature on the problem of a lack in reading proficiency among fourth grade students. Researchers suggested that preservice teachers are not prepared to teach students to read during the pivotal formative years of K–2 (Arrow et al., 2019; Pogorzelski et al., 2021). The purpose of the study was to explore novice K–2 teachers’ perspectives of their preparedness to teach students to read and what they believed is needed to improve their strategies to teach reading. For the purposes of this study, novice teachers were defined according to Curry et al.’s (2016) definition of in-service teachers with 5 years or fewer of classroom experience. The RQs for this study were:

RQ1. What are novice K–2 teachers’ perspectives on their preparedness to teach students to read?

RQ2. What do novice K–2 teachers believe they need to improve their strategies to teach reading?

This chapter contains a description of the study setting and the sample. Descriptions of the data collection and data analysis procedures are also included in this chapter. The inductive coding, categorization, and theme development processes are reported in detail. The results section contains the themes that emerged from the data. The trustworthiness techniques applied to the study are also presented in this chapter.

Setting

This study was conducted in an online setting. Eleven novice K–2 teachers were purposively selected through the following online platforms: the Walden University

Participant Pool website and early childhood teacher groups found on Facebook and LinkedIn. Apart from Walden University's IRB, no other approvals were required to recruit participants for this study. Initial correspondence with the potential participants involved an introduction to the nature and purpose of the study as well as a screening for the eligibility of their participation. The eligibility criteria was that participants be a certified teacher for 1 to 3 years with experience in teaching reading to K–2 students within the past 3 years. The plan was to recruit 10–12 participants, but as recruitments, interviews, and preliminary coding were conducted simultaneously, I determined that data saturation was reached by the 11th participant.

Of the sample of 11 participants, 10 were current teachers, while one was a former teacher who left the field at the end of the previous school year. The participants' years of teaching experience and teaching reading experience ranged from 1 to 3 with an average of 2.27 years. Seven participants had experience teaching a single grade level with three teaching in kindergarten, two in first grade, and two in second grade. Four participants had experience teaching two grade levels with three teaching first and second grades, and one teaching in kindergarten and first grade. The participants' descriptive information is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1*Participant Characteristics*

Research participant	Education major	Years of teaching experience	Grade taught	Years of teaching reading	Current (C) or former (F) teacher
T1	Yes	3	K	3	C
T2	Yes	3	1	3	C
T3	Yes	3	K	3	C
T4	Yes	2	1, 2	2	C
T5	Yes	2	1, 2	2	C
T6	Yes	1	2	1	C
T7	Yes	3	K	3	C
T8	No	2	1	2	C
T9	Yes	2	1, 2	2	C
T10	Yes	2	K, 1	2	F
T11	Yes	2	2	2	C

Note. K = kindergarten.

Data Collection

The data collection method was one-on-one, semi-structured interviews. The 11 eligible participants were contacted for their preferred interview schedule over the web-based videoconferencing platform Zoom and for the discussion of the terms and conditions of their participation as indicated and documented in the informed consent form. The terms and conditions involved the scope of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and the protection of the participants. The participants were asked to sign a digital copy of the informed consent form once they understood and agreed to its contents. Only participants who signed the consent form were allowed to participate in this study.

At the beginning of each interview, the contents of the informed consent form were reviewed. Additionally, the participants' permission for the recording of the session

was obtained. The interviews were guided by the researcher-developed using the interview protocol, but the semi-structured nature allowed for the flexibility to ask probing and follow-up questions. Overall, the duration of each interview was between 45 and 60 min. At the end of each the interview, the participants were informed that they would receive a two-page copy of the final study summary for their review and feedback as part of establishing the trustworthiness of the data. The participants were then thanked for their time and contributions to the study. The interview recordings were transcribed immediately after each interview using Temi transcription service. The transcription was verbatim in order to remain as accurate to the participants' words as possible. The data analysis process progressed without encountering any unusual situations.

Data Analysis

The study's conceptual framework and literature review were used to analyze the data. Open coding was used to identify repetitive words, phrases, and key concepts to help answer the RQs. During the coding process, I kept a code book in an excel spreadsheet, and I defined the codes based on the quotes from the participants' interviews. This helped me code accurately and apply the same code consistently for related words across the transcripts. Next, I engaged in several rounds of organizing the codes into categories. The categories were utilized to complete a second coding cycle, commonly referred to as axial coding.

Step 1: Data Familiarization

I compared each audio recording with the written transcript to ensure it was accurate. I analyzed all interviews in the order they were completed. I assigned each

participant alphanumeric code (e.g., T1, T2) to ensure confidentiality. The transcripts were carefully reviewed through several readings to gain a comprehensive understanding of the data. During this process, I took detailed notes. Subsequently, I uploaded the transcripts into an Excel spreadsheet, allocating an individual sheet to each transcript. Within each sheet, the transcript was organized into columns containing a narrative excerpt, open code, the code source, and a brief definition of the code.

Step 2: Code Generation

Open coding and axial coding were employed as methods for analyzing the data collected from participant interviews. During the round of open coding, I read each transcript thoroughly, taking notes along the way. Then, I cautiously reviewed the transcripts line by line, identifying notable keywords, phrases, and concepts pertinent to the conceptual framework and RQS. These extracted excerpts were compiled in a specific column labeled "excerpts" within an Excel sheet. For each extracted term, I assigned a corresponding code, recording them in a separate column labeled "code/label." Once the codes were generated, I organized them in an Excel-based codebook template, including details such as the code itself, participant identifier, example excerpt, and the cycle of coding. As new codes emerged, extra rows were added to the Excel sheet. Through this process, a total of 114 open codes were identified. An example of eight open codes, participant identifiers, and excerpts from the data validating the code origins is presented in Table 2.

Table 2*Participant Response Examples for Open Codes*

Code	Participant	Response excerpt
Professional development	T3	"I would say continuously having professional development in regard to teaching students reading."
	T11	"Workshops and continuous support to help improve reading instruction."
Colleague encouragement	T3	"My colleagues have really encouraged me with regards to teaching students reading. We plan, we talk about different activities that we're going to use..."
	T2	"I do have some colleagues that have encouraged me to use some of their center materials."
Colleague support	T6	"She gave me a book that her program provided her"
	T8	"I'm surrounded by a group of teachers that that lend information and that helps and say, this is what you can do better, or I wouldn't do it quite this way."
Field experience	T2	"That was probably the best part was to do my field hours."
	T7	"Through the field experience. It was kind of just like hitting those check boxes."
Lack of preparedness	T4	"Coming out of college I didn't really feel prepared to teach."
	T5	"Really don't think they prepared us as well as I thought they did."
Instructional coach	T3	"My school administration provides instructional coaches that we meet with weekly."
	T5	"We have, um, instructional coaches that come in and help us...every day."
Limited support	T9	"I need more support in teaching reading."
	T4	"There was limited support when I first started teaching."
Field experience	T7	"Through the field experience. It was kind of just like hitting those check boxes."
	T2	"That was probably the best part, um, was to do my field hours."
Challenges in phonics instruction	T9	"So, I'll start with the phonic awareness. I still struggle with [instruction]."
	T11	"The lack of the basic, the phonics, the alphabet knowledge, phonemic awareness makes instruction difficult."
Student challenges	T4	"Students coming in who didn't necessarily know how to read...kind of like a lot of backtracking."
	T6	"We have a lot of kids in foster care. So it was, you know, a lot of other things that we were a lot... We had to kind of, you know, work around everything."
Team	T1	"So, my colleagues, we work as a team as far as teaching our instructional strategies."
	T3	"I just feel... and make sure that I meet with my team as well as my paraprofessional."

Step 3: Preliminary Theme Identification

The second-cycle coding process entailed the use of axial coding in which the initial codes were grouped into categories or preliminary themes. Table 3 shows how the codes were categorized based on the similarities in characteristics.

Table 3*Participant Response Examples for Open Codes and Categories*

Category	Code	Participant	Response excerpt
Collaborative work	Collaborative planning	T10	"I feel like if I taught at a more traditional school and I had a grade level team, and if there was more collaborative planning, I feel like that I would've had more self-efficacy in teaching reading."
	Colleague encouragement	T3	"My colleagues have really encouraged me with regards to teaching students reading. We plan, we talk about different activities that we're going to use."
Instructional coaching helpful	Instructional coaches	T5	"We have instructional coaches that come in and help us...every day."
	Coach helpful	T9	"I think that our PLCs that I have with my reading coach is very helpful."
Lack of reading pedagogy	Not enough experience	T7	"I don't think I got enough experience in the science behind reading."
	No phonics instruction	T10	"I would say I don't really think I got any instruction on how to teach phonics."
Professional development	Professional development	T6	"A lot of professional development to feel more confident."
	Continuous professional development	T3	"I would say continuously having professional development in regard to teaching students reading."
Lack of confidence	Felt stuck	T9	"I would say I have felt stuck when it has come to teaching a student how to read due to no progression... so the negativity was from within."
	Not best reading teacher	T5	"I don't consider myself the best teacher in reading and writing."
Lack of preparedness	No phonics pedagogy	T10	"I would say I don't really think I got any instruction on how to teach phonics."
	Not enough experience	T7	"I didn't get much. Truly, I don't think I got enough experience in kind of the science behind reading."
Resources needed	Technology-based reading programs	T2	"Computers are definitely taking over, and if we're going to use computers, why not use them effectively with reading programs?"
	Online reading program	T1	"A reading program that they can do online, that helps build their reading skills or that builds off of what we teach in, in the classroom."
Reading pedagogy challenges	Teaching wrong	T10	"I realized I was teaching it completely wrong."
	Challenges in phonemic awareness	T9	"So I'll start with the phonemic awareness. I still struggle."

Step 4: Theme Review

Developing themes was a process of identifying the essence of the data (Corbin & Strauss, 1999). The essence refers to a recurring narrative that is specific to the context of the phenomenon under investigation (Corbin & Strauss, 1999). The categories were combined to determine the meanings of the recurring narrative. The themes that emerged from the categories to answer RQ1 and RQ2 are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Alignment of Themes and Categories to the Research Questions

Category	Theme	Corresponding research question (RQ)
Lack of preparedness Lack of confidence Lack of reading pedagogy Reading pedagogy challenges Curriculum challenges	Theme 1: Novice Teachers Lack Reading Pedagogical Knowledge.	RQ1
Challenges to differentiate Classroom management challenges	Theme 2: Novice Teachers Are Challenged to Teach Reading Due to a Lack of Skills in Differentiating Instruction and Classroom Management.	
Collaborative work Learning by observation/experience Instructional coaching helpful	Theme 3: Helpful Practices That Support Novice Reading Teachers are Collaboration, Observation, and Coaching.	
Lack of support Need more support Professional development/improvement Resources needed	Theme 4: Additional Resources Needed to Assist Novice Reading Teachers Are More Support, Professional Development, and Appropriate Resources.	RQ2

Step 5: Theme Naming

The themes were finalized at this point and no changes were made. The themes were also aligned with the RQs. The four final themes were (a) novice teachers lack reading pedagogical knowledge, (b) novice teachers are challenged to teach reading due to a lack of skills in differentiating instruction and classroom management, (c) helpful

practices that support novice reading teachers are collaboration, observation, and coaching, and (d) additional resources needed to assist novice reading teachers are more support, professional development, and appropriate resources.

Step 6: Report Production

The results are reported according to the theme recurrences. Excerpts from the data were carefully selected to create logical evidence supporting the results. The themes and supporting evidence are reported in the next section.

Results

I explored novice K–2 teachers' perspectives of their preparedness to teach students to read and what they believed was needed to improve their strategies to teach reading using a basic qualitative study with semi-structured interviews. For each interview, I asked 10 interview questions. The interview questions were developed using Bandura's self-efficacy theory and the literature review. The analysis resulted in the development of four themes. The themes were (a) novice teachers lack reading pedagogical knowledge; (b) novice teachers are challenged to teach reading due to a lack of skills in differentiating instruction and classroom management; (c) helpful practices that support novice reading teachers are collaboration, observation, and coaching; and (d) additional resources needed to assist novice reading teachers are more support, professional development, and appropriate resources.

The participants' perspectives on their preparedness to teach K–2 students to read were generated from their accounts of experiences related to being supported and guided by their colleagues, veteran teachers, administrators, and instructional coaches, as well as

developing a comfort in teaching as a result of their experiences. The participants generally believed that they lacked the preparedness, confidence, and pedagogical knowledge especially in phonemic awareness. In addition, they perceived a lack of exposure to actual classroom settings to put their theoretical knowledge into practice. Thus, the participants generally perceived that in order to improve their strategies to teach students to read, they needed to have a supportive work environment along with having suitable resources for their current students.

Research Question 1

RQ1 was, What are K–2 teachers' perspectives on their preparedness to teach students to read? The participants shared three main perspectives about their preparedness to teach reading. The first was that novice teachers did not have sufficient foundational reading pedagogical knowledge despite undergoing the teacher preparedness program. The second was that novice teachers did not have adequate experiences of managing a classroom of students with diverse needs and differentiating instructions. The third was that novice teachers received support from the administration, instructional coaches, and co-teachers to increase their feeling of preparedness to teach reading.

Theme 1: Novice Teachers Lack Reading Pedagogical Knowledge

Nine participants shared their perspectives that novice teachers' college and pre-service experiences were not sufficient to build pedagogical knowledge to teach reading. The participants shared that they lacked preparedness especially in terms of lacking teaching experience, lacking the development of practical skills, and lacking an extensive preparedness program. T9 stated, "Honestly, I feel like my higher education, um, gives

you basic skill knowledge. I don't think it goes into depth, um, as, as far as the reality of, you know, what the job would be." T10 shared the experiences of applying their knowledge in an actual classroom:

I felt like I was somewhat prepared. Um, I felt like in, in college we kind of got like a piecemeal, uh, information about different curriculums, like not curriculums per se, but different like thoughts about reading. There was a lot of, uh, theory about reading, but I didn't have a lot of practical resources to pull from.

T8 is not an education major and was going through an alternative program. T8 shared that the course on reading was helpful in learning the “foundations” of teaching students to read. T10 similarly perceived that their teacher preparation program offered sufficient theoretical knowledge but lacked in providing opportunities for novice teachers to have field experience for practice teaching. T4 gained relevant pedagogical knowledge, but the participant shared that their practicum experience was focused on learning restorative justice classroom management more than instruction delivery. T6 perceived the self-paced preparedness program lacked comprehensiveness. T6 stated, "I went to a school that was, you know, uh, kind of self, uh, paced...A lot of stuff that I could've studied more, I kind of like skimmed through to get through class." T6, along with T4, T5, T7, T9, and T10 perceived that they did not get enough field practice in college before becoming an in-service teacher. T4 stated, "Coming out of college, um, I didn't really feel prepared to teach." T7 stated, "I didn't get much. Truly, I don't think I got enough experience in kind of the science behind reading." T7 also perceived that the experience

of the preparedness program was “like hitting check boxes” to fulfill the requirements rather than to gain skills needed to teach reading.

Six participants shared that their comfort and confidence in teaching increased from seeing the progress that their students made. T2, T3, and T9 shared that they periodically checked for gaps in their students’ learning, set goals for them to achieve, and helped their students achieve their goals. Seeing students achieve their goals was affirming for the participants. T9 described:

I taught one of my student's phonics, reading skills and we worked diligently throughout the weeks...As a team, me and the student's commitment and dedication to excelling has been reflected in the student passing the unit 1 phonics test with minor mistakes and errors. The situation has taught me that consistency and dedication will be shown eventually. It was so rewarding to see.

Five participants shared that they experienced challenges in reading pedagogy as novice teachers, and four participants reported a lack of reading pedagogy despite going through the teacher preparedness program. From the experience of the program, T6 perceived a lack of acquisition of prerequisite skills to teach reading. T6 stated, “Not a lot... prerequisite skills that students need outside of just knowing the alphabet and phonetics.” T7, T9, and T10 shared that they learned about reading pedagogy in one course during their teacher preparedness program, but the course was insufficient. T7 stated, "It was really the only one course that kind of taught me about phonemic awareness." T8 and T11 shared that students tended to struggle with the basics of reading

and they as novice teachers were challenged in reading pedagogy. T8 shared, "What I do struggle with is teaching them, I guess, fluency."

T1 and T3 stated that they struggled with helping students understand reading and to stay on schedule. T5 stated, " I don't consider myself the best teacher in reading and writing." Despite some knowledge and little experience, three participants felt a lack of preparedness to teach reading because of their unfamiliarity with the curriculum. T1 stated, "I wasn't familiar with the curriculums, the different curriculums that they used for reading." T10 perceived that the curriculum was contradictory to what they knew about reading pedagogy. T10 shared, "I really struggled teaching that curriculum for my reading mini lessons...it felt like they were kind of like contradictory of each other." T8 felt challenged in understanding and learning the curriculum.

Two participants expressed that they lacked the confidence to teach reading because of their perceived lack of foundational knowledge and skills. T5 described oneself, "I don't consider myself the best teacher in reading and writing." Despite gaining some teaching experience after a year in service, T9 reported lacking the confidence to teach effectively. T9 stated, "I don't think that I feel a hundred percent fully prepared, um, considering that this is my second year."

This theme emerged from the participants' experiences of the lack of foundational knowledge and skills gained from the teacher preparation program. College experienced provided some foundational knowledge about pedagogy, but opportunities for practical classroom experiences were lacking. As the participants first experienced being in the classroom, they found a lack of understanding for reading pedagogy and experienced

unexpected challenges related to pedagogy and the curriculum. The participants also experienced a lack of confidence in teaching due to their lacking foundational knowledge and skills.

Theme 2: Novice Teachers Are Challenged to Teach Reading Due to a Lack of Skills in Differentiating Instruction and Classroom Management

Seven participants that the challenges they experienced as novice teachers included the difficulties of differentiated instructions and classroom management. Codes pertaining to challenges novice teachers face in differentiated instructions and classroom management emerged 17 times in the data. The participants shared their struggles in feeling unprepared to differentiate their instructions. T3 specified that teaching diversified students was challenging in terms of differentiating instructions and pacing lessons, "We talked about moving them [proficient students] on and not keeping them on the same pace as the other students who may still be progressing." T5 acknowledged the lack of differentiation skills in a class with students having diversified needs. T5 shared, "Each student is different. So, one way of teaching them might be different for another student." T5 also stated, "It is difficult. It is because you never know what can walk into your room...one student never held a pencil, so I was teaching them how to hold a pencil while some other students were already reading." T6 also shared lacking readiness to teach students with different backgrounds:

We weren't prepared for students with certain disabilities or...some students that spoke a different language or a different accent at home. It was a lot in my first year that I felt made me feel like I wasn't prepared for that.

Five participants shared the challenges they experienced in managing their class. The participants reported that their students were from different backgrounds and had diverse priorities. T5 stated:

I always believed in like classroom management...It is difficult. It is because you never know what can walk into your room...one student never held a pencil, so I was teaching them how to hold a pencil while some other students were already reading.

Students did not always focus on learning to read. T4 shared, "School isn't looked at as a priority...if I don't know how to read, then you know it, it's okay." T6 explained that some students might have troubles outside of school that take their time away from learning to read. T6 explained, "It was very challenging to try to manage certain behaviors in my class when...you're still trying to basically get your classroom management procedures down...it was sometimes struggle." T7, who taught kindergarten, shared that the class was difficult to manage as young children generally have short attention span. The participants shared their experiences of difficulties in classroom management.

Theme 3: Helpful Practices That Support Novice Reading Teachers Are Collaboration, Observation, and Coaching

All 11 participants perceived that as novice teachers, their preparedness to teach reading was influenced by the coaching, training, and collaboration they received. Nine participants shared that they could approach their co-teachers for collaborative work and support. Coaching was coded multiple times amongst 10 of the participants. Moreover,

one participant stated that they approached the students' parents for additional support in teaching students to read. The participants' co-teachers provided support through giving professional advice, sharing ideas and resources, and sharing words of encouragement.

The participants also stated that they worked as a team. T1 elaborated:

So, my colleagues, we work as a team as far as teaching our instructional strategies. And so, we really, it's a, it works at our advantage because some things that I may suggest she may not know or something she may suggest, and it works for our students. So, we work closely together, and we meet every day just to make sure that we're on the same page and that we can effectively teach the students.

Six participants reported that they perceived their instructional coach as well as the administrators, veteran teachers, and their mentors as their role models in teaching reading. The participants disclosed that their preparedness in teaching increased with approaching their role models and learning from them through receiving answers to their questions and through observing their teaching strategies. T6 described, "The veteran teachers were willing to offer me tips and, um, tools and, you know, uh, kind of sometime model things for me." T5 stated, "We have, um, instructional coaches that come in and help us. Um, you know, whenever we need, we can easily ask them to model something or explain something."

Five participants cited the contributions of the support and guidance of administrators and instructional coaches as a vital aspect in overcoming obstacles in teaching reading, learning from a role model, and learning from constructive feedback.

T9 shared, "I think that our PLCs [professional learning communities] that I have with my reading coach is very helpful." T8 shared that instructional coaches helped them learn the skills needed to effectively teach. T8 stated, "Well, we have instructional coaches that, that teach us skills on how to teach." The administrators were perceived as the ones who helped teachers access the support of instructional coaches. T3 shared, "My school administration provides instructional coaches that we meet with weekly." In T4's experience, the administrators called for the help of the instructional coach to guide the novice teacher. Participant 4 stated,

If we brought things up to admin, they would get an instructional coach to come in to assist us, whether it be, you know, modeling a lesson or just, you know, uh, team teaching, things like that. So, I really received a lot of, um, more help from the instructional coaches than admin, per se.

The participants' suggestions for their growth and support included having a structured system, particularly, having an assigned mentor who is a veteran teacher. T2 shared, "I believe first time teachers really need to have more professional learning. I believe we need mentors to hold our hands to be [guided] step by step." The participants stated their desire to have more opportunities to observe veteran and successful teachers. T5 shared,

I have both observed and compared myself to other colleagues because I know I have a lot to learn as an ELA [English Language Arts] teacher. I am a math and science teacher at heart but there are so many different techniques to learn and improve on. Oftentimes I am able to take away teacher moves that I would not

have thought of myself if I did not see it modeled in front of me. For example, using student resources like how a student would in real time that way the students understand why it is there but also how to use it.

T2 elaborated how they could benefit from observing teachers from low-income districts, as they were able to successfully improve their students' reading levels despite the scarcity of resources. T7 offered this description:

Modeling from other experienced teachers or reading specialists, I think for me personally at least that's a big thing. I need to see it and see how it's done and then, you know, be able to do it myself a few times and then get feedback from, you know, another teacher or another reading specialist. Um, but modeling, I think it's the biggest one.

Overall, the participants expressed that they found the support of the administration and the instructional coach to be helpful in their experiences as a novice teacher. The participants also learned from observing veteran teachers especially when given a chance to be mentored by them. Lastly, the participants found collaborative work with other teachers to be beneficial to their experiences as a novice reading teacher.

Research Question 2

RQ2 was, What do K–2 teachers believe they need to improve their strategies to teach reading? The participants recommended three improvements to the practices in supporting novice K–2 novice teachers of reading. The first was to have additional support from their veteran colleagues in the form of mentoring and from their co-teachers in the form of better collaborative efforts. The second was to have additional professional

development provided by the district. The third was for the district to provide resources that were suitable for the needs of the current students.

Theme 4: Additional Resources Needed to Assist Novice Reading Teachers Are More Support, Professional Development, and Appropriate Resources

All 11 participants stated their beliefs in the need to have support to improve their teaching strategies when teaching K–2 students to read. Support was coded many times amongst the 11 participants. Five participants expressed their need for a more supportive team. T11 believed that they needed to have a co-teacher inside the classroom to assist with giving the students one-on-one support: “Maybe put somebody in the room to support more, pull the child over to the side and give some more one-on-one.” T3 believed in the need to have better alignment with the team to address their students’ learning needs better. T3 stated, “Make sure that we're all on the same page and that way that we will all be together when we are working with the students and understanding the specific needs for the students.” T10 shared that the co-teacher should have time to provide support, as in their experience, the seasoned co-teacher was too busy to provide guidance. T10 stated, “I did have a co-teacher who was very seasoned and very experienced, but she was being pulled in a million directions, so she wasn't always available.” T9 stated, “It's very important to have someone who's over you, like the instructional coach, um, to be very knowledgeable and supportive.”

The participants’ suggestions for their growth and support included having a structured system, particularly, having an assigned mentor who is a veteran teacher. T2 shared, “I believe first time teachers really need to have more professional learning. I

believe we need mentors to hold our hands to be [guided] step by step.” The participants stated their desire to have more opportunities to observe veteran and successful teachers.

T5 shared:

I have both observed and compared myself to other colleagues because I know I have a lot to learn as an ELA [English Language Arts] teacher. I am a math and science teacher at heart but there are so many different techniques to learn and improve on. Oftentimes I am able to take away teacher moves that I would not have thought of myself if I did not see it modeled in front of me. For example, using student resources like how a student would in real time that way the students understand why it is there but also how to use it.

T2 elaborated how they could benefit from observing teachers from low-income districts, as they were able to successfully improve their students’ reading levels despite the scarcity of resources. T7 offered the following description:

Modeling from other experienced teachers or reading specialists, I think for me personally at least that's a big thing. I need to see it and see how it's done and then, you know, be able to do it myself a few times and then get feedback from, you know, another teacher or another reading specialist. Um, but modeling, I think it's the biggest one.

Nine participants shared that their administrators provided them with resources and a curriculum to teach reading to K–2 students, but the participants generally believed that their teaching strategies could be further improved with better suited resources and curriculum to address their current students’ learning needs. The participants believed

that they needed to acknowledge their students' different learning needs and be able to adapt to address those needs. T6 reported the need for students to have more practice in reading and suggested integration of reading time with other subjects, for instance, reading math problems. T10 expressed the belief that they could improve their teaching strategies with increased flexibility in the implementation of the curriculum to accommodate students with special needs. T4 similarly stated,

Every kid's not on the same level as every student in, uh, you know, the state that you're working in. So, a lot of the resources, you know, you're having to pull other things, which is not really a problem, but the sole purpose of that resource that they're giving you is for that to be what you, what you're using. And sometimes it just doesn't work like that. So maybe not necessarily additional resources, maybe, um, better resources.

Better resources also included exploring the benefits of using technology. Two participants perceived that online programs, apps, and computers in general could be used to aid in teaching K–2 students to read. T1 stated that online reading programs could supplement the instructions delivered in classrooms. T2 elaborated, “Computers are definitely taking over...and if we're gonna use computers, why not use 'em effectively with reading programs? ...Reading programs would be awesome. Reading applications.” The participants reported that as novice teachers, that the support and training they received had an effect on their readiness to teach.

The participants also believed in the need for structured and immediate feedback on their teaching methods in order to address their incorrect ways. T8 stated, “I don't mind being corrected right then and there.” T10 shared:

I would say, and having more feedback or, or being able to observe other, more seasoned teachers would help. It would've been really nice to, to have a team of people I could have observed or who could have come and observed me and shared their wisdom with me.

Overall, in this theme, the participants expressed their beliefs that they need the appropriate resources, and more support and professional development which are important to enhancing their teaching strategies as novice teachers.

Discrepant Cases

Throughout the data analysis process, I did not find evidence that contradicted the findings, hence further analysis was not required. Themes 3 and 4 were supported by all 11 participants. Theme 3 referred to the participants' practices that were helpful to their experiences as novice teachers. The participants shared the helpfulness of collaboration, observation of veteran teachers, and coaching to their preparedness to teach. Theme 4 was the participants' report of the resources they perceived would be helpful in the preparedness of novice teachers. The participants believed that novice teachers would benefit from additional support from the administrators, professional development, and resources suited to the needs of their students.

Theme 1 was supported by nine of 11 participants. Participants T2 and T11 did not contribute to the development of this theme. Participant T11 shared that their

experiences as a student teacher and a paraeducator, as well as having mentors helped them feel somewhat prepared to teach despite the lack of hands-on classroom experience. Participant T2 similarly shared that their field experience and patience helped them feel prepared to teach. Nonetheless, both Participants T2 and T11 also stated that not all pedagogical strategies were taught in the teacher preparation program.

Theme 2 was supported by 7 of the 11 participants. Participants 1, 8, 9, and 11 did not report experiencing challenges related to differentiated instructions and classroom management. Participant 1 stated being challenged with different curricula used to teach reading. Participant 8 shared that they felt confident to teach in the classroom. Participant 9 believed that their self-efficacy in teaching in the classroom was continuing to grow as they gained more experience. Participant 11 reported feeling prepared to teach in the classroom.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

I used certain techniques to establish the trustworthiness of this study, in line with the methodology. To contribute to the credibility and applicability of the findings it was essential to the trustworthiness of the study. The establishment of trustworthiness was evaluated based on the following criteria: credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability.

Credibility

Credibility was the extent to which the results accurately represent the participants' experience (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). From the selection of suitable participants to data collection and data analysis, techniques to establish credibility were

observed. Purposive sampling was utilized to select a sample of teachers who met the inclusion criteria of having 3 years or fewer teaching experience, with at least 1 year experience of teaching reading within the past 3 years, and taught reading to K–2 students. The eligibility criteria were vital to having a selection of participants who could share insights of their experiences that were relevant to the purpose of this study. In data collection, interview participants received a 2-page summary of the study findings along with a request to share comments or questions regarding the findings. This practice contributes to the credibility of the by promoting member validation, transparency, and a comprehensive understanding of the data.

Dependability

Dependability is the extent to which the results remain stable when replicated (Polit & Beck, 2014). The field of education may involve changes over time. For instance, the past 5 years were affected by changes brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, situations regarding teaching reading to K–2 students may be affected by such changes. The use of an audit trail to document how the results emerged within the context of this study increased the dependability of the results. I kept a log of the processes involved in data collection and analysis. In data collection, the interview process was conducted as consistently as possible through using the interview protocol.

The interview protocol served as a guide to ask open-ended questions that were aligned with the research problem, purpose, and questions. The use of an interview protocol helped establish that the same questions were asked to all the participants and that the responses elicited were as aligned to the components of this study as possible. In

data analysis, the codes, categories, themes, and the thought processes in the theme development process were recorded in a spreadsheet. The use of a spreadsheet allowed for auditing the data and grounding the results to the data instead of my personal interpretations. The spreadsheet was also helpful in the practice of bracketing as I had a visual representation of how the codes and themes emerged from the data. I did not allow my perspective of the topic to create any biases or skew data collected. During the data analysis process, I did not detect any evidence contrary to the findings, so further analysis was unnecessary.

Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which the results can be useful to people in other settings (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). To ensure transferability was met, I presented a detailed description of participants' experiences and the context in which these experiences occurred. Participants were recruited from various sources, including the Walden University participant pool website and early childhood teacher groups, and snowball sampling. Individuals with diverse backgrounds and experiences were recruited from a variety of places. Study participants assisted with recruiting additional participants. Recruiting from a single source may have resulted in a sample that was not diverse enough to assure that findings were transferable. Readers were provided contextual details to enable them to assess the transferability of the study to different settings.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the extent to which the results are neutral (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Lincoln and Guba (2006) stated one can achieve confirmability when credibility, dependability, and transferability are all met. The data is pertinent to the perspectives of the participants, and not my individual biases, principles, motivations, or interests. I kept a reflective notebook to document any experiences or opinions that might have influenced my research. I wrote in this journal daily during data collection and analysis phases, thoroughly recording thoughts, beliefs, biases, and worldviews. During the time of coding, interpreting the data, and identifying emerging themes, I implemented a systematic approach of carefully explaining each step taken in data analysis. I provided examples from the study that substantiated these processes, eliminating room for potential bias or subjective interpretation.

Summary

This chapter contained the presentation of the results aimed to explore novice K–2 teachers' perspectives of their preparedness to teach students to read and what they believed was needed to improve their strategies to teach reading. The sample of this study was 11 novice K–2 teachers. The participants were interviewed individually to gain insights on their preparedness to teach students to read. The data was coded inductively based on Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory. The open codes were analyzed through axial coding to develop categories. From the categories, four themes emerged in the data.

The first theme was novice teachers lack foundational knowledge and skills to teach reading. The participants disclosed that their college education equipped them with

some pedagogical knowledge, especially in theoretical knowledge about phonemic awareness. However, their college experience did not include adequate exposure to actual classroom settings to practice their knowledge. Thus, the participants generally perceived that their expectations were different from their actual teaching experience, and that they felt insufficiently prepared to be in the classroom to teach reading.

The second theme was novice teachers are challenged to teach reading due to a lack of skills in differentiating instruction and classroom management. The participants reported their realization as novice teachers that students tended to have different learning needs which were addressed through differentiated instructions and different classroom management techniques. The participants' lack of time spent teaching in the classroom meant that they also lacked the preparedness to address the needs of a diverse population of students.

The third theme was novice teachers develop professionally through a combination of support, collaboration, coaching, and professional development. As novice teachers, the participants generally needed the support and guidance of administrators, instructional coaches, veteran teachers, and colleagues to increase their preparedness to teach K–2 students to read. The fourth theme was novice teachers need additional professional development, more coaching, and time to observe veteran teachers.

The participants shared that they benefitted from receiving assistance in overcoming challenges during their first few years of teaching. They also learned from asking questions, observing role models, and constructive feedback. Colleagues were

helpful in sharing professional advice, ideas, and resources, as well as in providing encouragement. The participants started gaining comfort and confidence in the classroom after having experience and achievements in helping their students improve their reading levels. To further improve their teaching strategies, the participants shared the need for better resources, improvements in the curriculum, and more learning opportunities. The participants suggested to have a structured form of support and feedback through formal mentorship and evaluations. The participants also expressed their need for more continuous professional development, and opportunities to observe veteran teachers. In terms of resources and curriculum, the participants reported the need to make alterations and accommodations to address the students' different learning needs.

Themes 1–3 answered RQ1, and Theme 4 answered RQ2. RQ1 was an inquiry on K–2 teachers' perspectives on their preparedness to teach students to read. The results of this study showed that K–2 novice teachers perceived that they lacked the foundational knowledge regarding reading pedagogy despite undergoing the teacher preparedness program. The teachers also perceived a lack of adequate experiences to manage a classroom and differentiate instructions for students with different needs during their first year of teaching. Nonetheless, the teachers revealed that they had support from the administration, instructional coaches, and co-teachers to help them feel prepared to teach during their first year. RQ2 was a question on the participants' belief in the needs to improve their strategies to teach reading. The participants disclosed that additional support from their veteran colleagues in the form of mentoring and from their co-teachers in the form of better collaborative efforts, additional professional development provided

by the district, and appropriate resources to meet the needs of the current students could improve their teaching. The next chapter contains the discussion of how the results could contribute to addressing the research problem and the gap in literature about novice teachers' preparedness to teach reading. The theoretical and practical implications of the study will also be included in the next chapter along with the limitations, recommendations, and conclusion of the study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of the study was to explore novice K–2 teachers’ perspectives on their preparedness to teach students to read and what they believed was needed to improve their strategies to teach reading. I used a qualitative methodology to examine teachers' subjective experiences and perspectives. Four themes emerged from the analysis: (a) novice teachers lack reading pedagogical knowledge; (b) a lack of skills in differentiating between instruction and classroom management challenges novice reading teachers; (c) collaboration, observation, and coaching are helpful practices that support novice reading teachers; and (d) novice reading teachers need additional resources such as more support, professional development, and appropriate resources. In Chapter 5, I interpret the findings, discuss the study's limitations, offer recommendations for future research, consider the implications of the research, and provide a conclusion to the study.

Interpretation of the Findings

The framework used for this study was Bandura’s self-efficacy theory. Bandura (1977) described self-efficacy as an individual’s belief in their capability to perform a behavior. Educators utilize Bandura’s (1993, 1994) self-efficacy theory to understand and develop teaching methods. The theory can help guide the development of teachers’ instructional practices as it impacts how confident teachers are when completing work tasks related to teaching. Granziera and Perera (2019) and Marschall and Watson (2019) used self-efficacy theory to examine classroom and teaching outcomes among teachers. Granziera and Perera also examined teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs, engagement, and

work satisfaction. The findings of their study showed that self-efficacy beliefs and engagement, as well as engagement and satisfaction, were significantly linked.

I interviewed the participants to identify and explore their perspectives on their preparedness to teach K–2 students to read and what they perceived was needed to improve their reading instruction strategies. I based my findings on their accounts of experiencing support and guidance from their colleagues, veteran teachers, administrators, and instructional coaches. I found that they developed competence in teaching reading because of their experiences. The participants generally believed they lacked preparedness, confidence, and pedagogical knowledge, especially regarding developing phonemic awareness. In addition, they perceived a need for more exposure to actual classroom settings to put their theoretical knowledge into practice. The participants recognized they needed a supportive work environment and suitable resources for their current students to improve their reading teaching strategies.

According to educational experts, many reading preparation programs for teachers use teaching strategies unsupported by research (Koch & Sporer, 2017; Schwartz, 2021). Data from the 2022 NAEP (The Nation’s Report Card, 2022) indicated that approximately 52% of fourth graders were not proficient in reading. As some states have enacted new Read by Grade 3 laws, NAEP researchers concluded that it is essential for teachers to be well prepared to teach reading to their students.

Arrow et al. (2019) and Pogorzelski et al. (2021) suggested that some K–2 teachers are unprepared to teach students to read, creating a gap in practice focused on teaching reading skills to K–2 students. Researchers have provided evidence that supports

the need to address this gap in teaching practice on preparedness to teach reading (Drake & Walsh, 2020; Hindman et al., 2020; Moats, 2020). Moats (2020) stated that teachers need better preparation and professional development to facilitate intentional instruction in reading. Drake and Walsh (2020) noted that many nonconventional certification programs are negligent in providing adequate reading instruction or proficient scores on reading-specific licensing assessments for teachers. Hindman et al. (2020) asserted that efficient reading instructional practices are multifaceted, and teachers may need significant support to implement reading instruction effectively. These findings correspond with the study participants' perspectives.

Theme 1: Novice Teachers Lack Reading Pedagogical Knowledge

This theme emerged from the participants' experiences of lacking foundational knowledge and skills they ought to have gained from the teacher preparation program. College experience provided foundational pedagogical comprehension, but the teachers believed they needed more opportunities to secure practical classroom know-how. They lacked confidence upon entering the classroom as they experienced unexpected challenges related to pedagogy and the curriculum, which resulted in awareness that their understanding of reading pedagogy needed improvement. Over the years, U.S. educators have witnessed teachers and administrators disagreeing on the best methods and strategies for teaching children to read, and researchers compared traditional and alternative teaching strategies related to various levels of reading teacher preparedness (Raymond-West & Rangel, 2020).

Nearly all participants shared that novice teachers' college and preservice experiences did not build their pedagogical knowledge to teach reading. The participants deemed themselves unprepared, especially regarding teaching experience, developing practical skills, teaching phonemics, and an extensive preparation program. These results confirm research findings by Meeks et al. (2020) and Abualzain (2020), who aimed to gain knowledge of teachers' perceived preparedness to teach early reading skills. The participants were in-service teachers or teachers seeking employment. In both studies, the participants had less than adequate knowledge of beginning reading skills. This evidence showed a requirement for further research, indicating a need to understand teachers' perspectives of their preparedness to teach students reading (Meeks et al., 2020; Solikhah, 2018).

Inadequate knowledge and skills impede early childhood teachers' efforts to help their students learn to read. Participants in this study disclosed that they experienced challenges in reading pedagogy as novice teachers and reported a need to learn more about the practices and principles related to reading instruction despite going through the teacher preparedness program. Some participants felt a need for more information to teach reading because of their unfamiliarity with the curriculum, that the curriculum contradicted what they knew about reading pedagogy or that they felt challenged in understanding and learning the curriculum. Past research by Asri et al. (2021), Curran and Kitchin (2019), and Jakobson et al. (2022) have shown that some early childhood teachers do not have the skill set or knowledge necessary to provide reading instruction successfully. Still, U.S. state and federal mandates in education require early childhood

teachers to have this expertise. In 2021, only 20 U.S. states required the assessment of preservice teachers on their reading instruction knowledge before hiring (Schwartz, 2021). Other states continue to require only a content licensure exam for reading teachers (National Council on Teacher Quality, 2021).

Some researchers have emphasized the changes in reading preparation established in the ESEA of 2001 (Hill et al., 2019; Wrabel et al., 2018; Zhu et al., 2020). They found a gap between what teachers knew about reading and what they learned to prepare for reading instruction in the classroom (Drake & Walsh, 2020; Hindman et al., 2020; Ho & Lau, 2018; Moats, 2020; Raymond-West & Rangel, 2020; Rogde et al., 2019). Further studies showed that teachers lacked professional experience and the appropriate abilities to provide learning activities to meet students' reading needs (Abualzain, 2020; Poole, 2019). Researchers also discussed teaching strategies shown to be successful in reading instruction, such as reciprocal teaching, phonetic learning, and cross-grade reading buddies (Ehri & Flugman, 2018; Nevenglosky et al., 2019).

A further concern involves the content of teacher preparation programs. Researchers have shown that many reading preparation programs include teaching strategies unsupported by research (Elleman & Oslund, 2019; National Council on Teacher Quality, 2021; Schwartz, 2021). Based on my findings, inadequate or nonexistent training are fundamental factors concerning the quality of the reading instruction the study participants felt capable of providing K–2 students. Even so, study participants shared that their comfort and confidence in teaching increased from seeing their students' progress. Some shared that they periodically checked for gaps in their

students' learning, set goals for them to achieve, and helped their students reach their objectives. They found seeing their students attain their targets affirming.

Theme 2: A Lack of Skills in Differentiating Instruction and Classroom

Management Challenge Novice Reading Teachers

Most participants shared the challenges they experienced while teaching in a school. They perceived their problems as resulting from a lack of field experience in differentiating instruction and classroom management during their teacher preparation program. They felt unprepared to establish and sustain a learning environment that encourages effective instruction – so lessons can run fluently – while purposefully directing the teaching process so learning could take place. They were ill-equipped to differentiate their instructions, pace lessons, and work with students with diverse needs, priorities, a short attention span, or troubles at home. They also believed they were unprepared to teach students from different backgrounds.

Research has shown that most teachers express a need to motivate and engage students, address the loss of hands-on learning opportunities, and assess and support students' social and emotional well-being. Whereas Capodieci et al. (2020) and Sun et al. (2021) found that the teacher should be able to adapt instruction to meet students' needs, the methods of preparing the elementary teachers that must deliver reading instruction differ, making their expertise varied (Bratsch-Hines et al., 2019; Pogorzelski et al., 2021; Suarez et al., 2020). Studies showed that differences in how teachers taught reading courses created challenges for determining best practices in reading education (Pogorzelski et al., 2021; Suarez et al., 2020). Teaching reading requires a systematic

approach. Preservice teachers learn methods of reading instruction, but not all teachers from higher educational institutions use the same methods. Studies showed that college education did not guarantee exemplary practices when teachers entered the classroom, nor were those teachers found to increase reading learning with their students (Bratsch-Hines et al., 2019; Pogorzelski et al., 2021; Suarez et al., 2020).

Some teachers may enter primary classrooms containing students with various instructional needs that require familiarity with several effective teaching methods in reading (Merga, 2019). Researchers' findings related to reading processes and initial teacher preparation include observing significant gaps in teachers' foundational knowledge of reading instruction after formal educational training (Hindman et al., 2020; Robertson et al., 2020). These results support study participants' concerns regarding field experience and their ability to differentiate between instruction and classroom management. Robertson et al. (2020) agreed with Hindman et al. (2020) that teacher education is a must to teach reading. Both studies found that support from district leaders was lacking and suggested that district leaders address the need for students' hands-on learning, provide teacher training on distance learning, and make technology available for students (Hikida et al., 2019; Hindman et al., 2020).

Experts in higher education instruction disagree on the best preparation method for instructing primary school reading teachers (Hill et al., 2019; Zhu et al., 2020). Some experts suggested that college professors should train preservice teachers in teaching reading, while others have stated the necessity of postgraduate programs for learning methods on reading instruction (Hill et al., 2019; Zhu et al., 2020). The latter experts

have also expressed that a preservice teacher only benefitted from teaching instruction after having hands-on teaching experiences (Hill et al., 2019; Zhu et al., 2020). Based on such research, educational leaders have developed multiple teacher preparation programs for reading instruction that teachers can take during and after college and some program professors promote preservice teacher efficacy in reading (Bratsch-Hines et al., 2019; Meeks et al., 2020). Scholars have supported the need for specific reading tutoring programs, such as systematic phonics instruction (Bowers, 2020; Fletcher et al., 2021).

Researchers have noted that scientifically based reading instruction must include instructional strategies (Glover et al., 2023). Scientifically based reading instructional strategies and programs were shown effective through “(a) the use of rigorous, systematic, and empirical methods, (b) adequate data analyses, (c) reliance on measurements that provide valid data across evaluators and observers and multiple measurements and observations, and (d) acceptance in peer-refereed journals” (Head Start Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center, 2020, para. 4).

Reading practices change with time, with researchers noting that reading teachers are more confident when they receive continued education on new teaching methods. Teachers may learn effective instructional practices from professional development sessions offered by their respective school districts. Professional development leaders of such instruction and interventions may provide reading teachers with new instructional practices (Nilvius et al., 2021; Sandberg & Norling, 2018).

Theme 3: Collaboration, Observation, and Coaching Are Helpful Practices That Support Novice Reading Teachers

Nearly all the novice teachers perceived that the coaching, training, and collaboration they received from colleagues influenced their preparedness to teach reading. I coded coaching multiple times amongst participants who said they could approach their co-teachers for cooperative work and support. Moreover, a participant stated they approached the students' parents for additional support in teaching students to read. The participants' co-teachers assisted them by giving professional advice, sharing ideas and resources, giving words of encouragement, and working as a team. Ehri and Flugman (2018) and Flynn et al. (2021) examined teacher mentoring practices in systemic phonics instruction. They found little research showing outcomes from such training for beginning reading practices. Ehri and Flugman noted that such mentoring in phonics instruction increased reading abilities taught to students with lower reading achievement. Flynn et al. stated that the mentoring practices were necessary and professional development with in-service training for phonics teaching was only beneficial when teachers and mentors were closely partnered and provided integration of old and new teaching strategies, thus giving the teacher a feeling of empowerment as they make the needed changes in their teaching practices.

Study participants reported that they perceived administrators, veteran teachers, instructional coaches, and mentors as their role models in teaching reading. They disclosed that their preparedness for teaching increased by approaching their role models and learning from them through modeling, receiving answers to their questions, tips and

tools, and observing their teaching strategies. There is a need for teachers who can engage in practice. Those with the ability have considered multiple paths for improving their reading teaching skills.

Fundamentally, all elementary educators should have knowledge of the constructs that make up the five reading skills. These constructs include phonics, vocabulary, reading comprehension, phonological awareness, and reading fluency (Ellis et al., 2023). Each of these components of reading must first be taught to the teachers so they can pass the knowledge on to their students. Researchers observed that elementary school educators not well-versed in reading teaching methods will often significantly depress student academic achievement (Catts, 2022; Suarez et al., 2020). Several participants cited the support and guidance contributions of administrators and instructional coaches as vital in overcoming obstacles in teaching reading as they learned from the constructive feedback role models offered. They perceived administrators as the ones who helped them access instructional coaches' support.

The participants' suggestions for growth and support included having more professional learning and a structured system, particularly an assigned veteran teacher mentor. They stated their desire for more opportunities to observe veteran and successful teachers. A participant elaborated on how they could benefit from observing teachers from low-income districts as these educators successfully improved their students' reading levels despite the scarcity of resources. Habibi and Dehghani (2022) and Catts (2022) recognized that teaching students to read was not always a focus in education degree programs. Desta 2020 and Suarez et al. (2020) suggested that teachers concentrate

on these instructional practices before turning their learning attention to other facets of their education. As to the participants questioned in this study, it appears that administrators, instructional coaches, and mentoring by experienced teachers enabled the novices by providing the training and assistance they did not receive at college.

Theme 4: Additional Resources Such as More Support, Professional Development, and Appropriate Resources Are Needed to Assist Novice Reading Teachers

Study participants expressed that better-suited resources and a curriculum that addresses their current students' learning needs would improve their teaching strategies. They acknowledge their students' different learning and special needs and want to be able to adapt to address and accommodate them with increased flexibility in implementing the curriculum. A participant reported that students needed more reading practice and suggested integration of reading time with other subjects, for instance, reading math problems. Experts have found that teachers lacking professional experience had deficits in providing learning activities to meet students' reading needs (Abualzain, 2020; Poole, 2019). They recognized that primary school teachers face many challenges when providing reading and writing instruction based on their perceptions of reading education (Gündoğmuş, 2018; Poole, 2019).

According to participants, better resources included exploring the benefits of using technology. They perceived that using online programs, apps, and computers could aid in teaching K–2 students to read and that online reading programs could supplement classroom instructions. However, DeCoito and Estaiteyeh (2022) and Sucena et al. (2022) found that many studies showed a lack of teacher preparedness in using the online

platforms required for teaching. Researchers posited that such platforms discouraged teachers' self-efficacy and did not provide the necessary instructions to students (Azevedo et al., 2021; Bao et al., 2020; Hamilton et al., 2020; Poulain et al., 2021). The above indicates that many teachers may require instruction to teach online.

Study findings showed that students that faced challenges learned less online than in traditional classrooms (Adelstein & Barbour, 2018; Martin, 2019) when instruction environments changed, and students had to attend online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic. Researchers attributed this discrepancy to the text-based communication and course content that demanded levels of self-discipline at-risk students lack (Adelstein & Barbour, 2018; Martin, 2019). Minimal interactions among students and teachers compared to what occurred in brick-and-mortar school settings and teachers' self-efficacy in their preparedness for teaching in the online environment also caused poor achievement results in student populations (Elleman & Oslund, 2019; Merga, 2019).

The participants in this study also believed in the need for structured and immediate comments on their teaching methods such as being observed, corrected, and receiving feedback from those with wisdom to share in order to address their incorrect ways. A participant shared that they would appreciate a co-teacher inside the classroom to assist with one-on-one student support. Another mentioned the need for better alignment with the team, believing it would enable them to address students' learning needs more effectively when all are on the same page. A novice teacher suggested that the co-teacher should have the time to provide support, as seasoned co-teachers were too busy to provide guidance. Studies showed that participants consistently described

difficulties teaching reading and writing (Abualzain, 2020; Poole, 2019). Poole (2019) and Solikhah (2018) cited parental indifference, lack of student readiness and motivation, high rates of student absenteeism, and a lack of teacher confidence in their professional experiences and instructional methods. The results revealed that teachers lacked professional expertise in providing learning activities to meet students' needs.

Meeks et al. (2020) and Abualzain (2020) noted that teachers who adjusted their instructional methods when navigating unpredictable situations were likelier to promote innovative literacy instruction and successfully teach reading skills. Didion et al. (2020) and Kuranchie and Bampo (2023) concluded that professional development is vital for ensuring high-quality teaching and student achievement. Sandberg and Norling (2018) found that such instruction and interventions may furnish reading teachers with new reading instructional practices, while school district leaders report that reading practices change and that reading teachers are more confident when they receive continued education on new methods (Campbell, 2018). Kalinowski et al. (2019) found that attending a series of professional development programs can help teachers engage in the learning activities essential to absorb the complex strategies that enable teachers to foster adequate reading proficiency for K–2 students.

Overall, in this theme the participants agreed that increased learning opportunities and a supportive work environment are crucial to enhancing their teaching strategies. After a thorough data analysis process, I found no evidence that contradicted these findings. Further analysis was not required.

Limitations of the Study

There were several potential limitations to this qualitative study conducted in an online setting. I selected 11 novice K–2 teachers purposively through the following online platforms: the Walden University Participant Pool website and early childhood teacher groups found on Facebook and LinkedIn. Apart from Walden University’s IRB, no other approvals were required to recruit participants. Initial correspondence with the potential participants involved an introduction to the nature and purpose of the study as well as a screening for participation eligibility. The eligibility criteria were that participants be certified teachers for one to three years with experience in teaching reading to K–2 students within the past 3 years. The upper limit of teaching experience was five years to ensure participants were novices rather than veteran teachers, as reading instruction is pivotal in K–2. I lessened the limitations of the small sample size by ensuring that data from the participants were robust enough to develop thick descriptions and data saturation was achieved.

There was potential for my personal biases, which I recognized as an experienced teacher, to influence the study. I have encountered inadequately prepared colleagues who taught reading in the primary grades in my roles as a reading specialist and instructional coach. I found that their limited preparation directly affected teaching and learning. To ensure biases and assumptions did not affect the study, I did not include any teachers with whom I currently or previously worked, nor those with whom I had a personal relationship. I used reflexivity by recording my thoughts in a journal to address

preconceptions while conducting the study to ensure I only interpreted the participants' perspectives.

Another limitation of the study was that I based interviews on self-disclosure. Participants may have given answers they regarded as desirable or been reluctant to share their honest experiences. To address these limitations, I was welcoming and friendly during the interviews, allowing participants to relax and feel comfortable. I explained what I expected throughout the interview and reminded them that their responses were confidential. I also addressed these challenges by providing potential participants with a summary of the interview questions, offering a variety of times for scheduling the interviews, and assuring them that the time commitment was 45–60 min.

Recommendations

Based on study participants' perspectives and scholars' findings regarding the inadequacy of many reading preparation programs to successfully prepare K–2 teachers to provide effective reading instruction, I suggest further research to find specific answers that address the identifiable challenges evident in the teacher education system. Educational policy changes concerning teacher instructional curricula and content, classroom resources, and further professional development can support teachers in attaining more advantageous reading outcomes. The training aspects researchers should address include hands-on teaching experience, the development of practical teaching skills, phonemics teaching, an extensive preparation program, and familiarity with the curriculum before the teacher enters the classroom alone.

Studies focusing on deficits and faults in the teacher education system and how these can be corrected to support student competencies may find that adding the specialties mentioned above to the curriculum will empower novice teachers. Teacher training modalities may include integrating digital learning platforms and educational apps with face-to-face classroom instruction. Then novice reading teachers could provide a more comprehensive and versatile learning experience for students with various learning needs.

According to the study participants, coaching and mentoring provide skill development and confidence. Therefore, collective internet educator forums can provide support, feedback, guidance, and best practices learning opportunities. Another option is an assistant who works with individual students while the novice teacher continues teaching the rest of the class.

Implications

Given the influence of teachers' abilities on student learning in reading, I used the present study to explore novice K–2 teachers' perspectives on their preparedness to teach students to read. The results of this study may provide information for K–2 teachers to help them identify strategies to improve their instructional practices. The insights gained may contribute to positive social change by providing elementary education leaders with information to make informed decisions related to policy recommendations regarding teacher preparation and professional development in reading instruction. The study findings may be inspirational for researchers and lead to new research studies about the problems identified.

Citizens' ability to read and comprehend is germane to the well-being of individuals and society (Snow, 2020). Miller and McCardle (2019) found that reading literacy affords access to vital societal structures and substructures such as education, health care, and general community engagement. According to the authors, developing reading skills among elementary school students becomes a social justice concern because the ability to read leads to opportunities for further development in academia and general well-being (Miller & McCardle, 2019).

If teachers are inadequately prepared to teach reading to K–2 grade students, the quality of classroom instruction will be significantly impacted (Meeks et al., 2020). Students may experience significant setbacks in reading comprehension and writing. In most states, students who struggle to read in primary grades may continue to struggle in the upper grades, impacting student achievement on formative and summative state assessments in Grades 3-12 (Goldhaber et al., 2022). The ramifications for poor reading skills can be extensive, affecting student achievement during their formative years and in the future as it relates to career options and social experiences (Castles et al., 2018; Temur & Sezer, 2023). Goldhaber et al. (2022) concurred, expressing how individuals who lack proficient reading skills in Grade 3 experience a negative influence on their future success.

The information gained from this study may help educational leaders affect positive social change in education by providing them with information that can inform their decision-making regarding teacher preparation, professional development, and reading instruction in the primary grades. The results may provide information to primary

grade teachers by identifying what they can do to improve their reading instructional strategies. As teachers build the knowledge of effective strategies their confidence in their ability to provide effective instruction may improve.

Conclusion

The study participants recognized the necessity for being better prepared, understanding the instructional strategies implemented, and receiving support for classroom training in reading. According to Bandura (1993, 1994) and Ozyilmaz et al. (2018), teachers can, in the context of self-efficacy, significantly impact their performance and instructional practices in the classroom setting. It is imperative to understand teachers' self-efficacy concerning their preparedness and what they believe is needed to improve their strategies to teach reading, as it is crucial to identify what teachers may require to upgrading reading instruction in early education. Gaining the primary teachers' perspectives provided information on needed resources for teachers tasked with teaching students in K–2nd grade.

Regarding Theme 1, novice teachers lack foundational knowledge and skills to teach reading. The participants disclosed that their college education provided some pedagogical knowledge, especially theoretical information about phonemic awareness. However, their college experience did not include adequate exposure to actual classroom settings to practice what they had learned. Pertaining to Theme 2, novice teachers need additional professional development, coaching, and time to observe veteran teachers. The participants generally perceived that their expectations differed from their actual learning

experience and that they felt insufficiently prepared to be in the classroom to teach reading.

Aligned with Theme 3, novice teachers develop resourcefulness through support, collaboration, coaching, and professional development. As novice teachers, the participants generally needed the support and guidance of administrators, instructional coaches, veteran teachers, and colleagues to increase their preparedness to teach K–2 students to read. Finally, regarding Theme 4, the participants shared that they benefitted from receiving assistance in overcoming challenges during their first few years of teaching. They also learned from asking questions, observing role models, and receiving constructive feedback. The participants' colleagues shared professional advice, ideas, resources, and encouragement, which helped them to progress. After obtaining experience and noticing their students' improved reading levels, the participants started gaining comfort and confidence in the classroom. They shared the need for better resources, improvements in the curriculum, and more learning opportunities to develop their teaching strategies further.

The participants advocated for structured support and feedback through formal mentorship and evaluations. They also expressed their need for more continuous professional development, coaching, and the learning opportunities provided by observing veteran teachers. They reported that modifying instruction to accommodate students' different learning needs was essential, believing that more beneficial resources and curriculum content could achieve that aim.

The findings in this study may instigate further investigations and provide leaders in elementary education with the insights required to recommend progressive policy changes regarding teacher training and structured professional development in reading instruction. Also, the results of this study may provide information to primary grade teachers to be used by identifying what they can do to improve their reading instructional strategies.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. Describe your self-efficacy concerning your preparedness to teach K–2 students to read?
2. How were you prepared in your higher education coursework and field experiences to teach K–2 students to read?
3. How does your school administration provide assistance with improving teachers' abilities to teach reading?
4. Describe how your colleagues encourage or discourage your instructional strategies in teaching reading.
5. What challenges are you experiencing when teaching k-2 students to read?
6. What types of experiences or support do you believe might help improve your self-efficacy concerning teaching students to read?
7. What additional resources do you think you need to effectively teach K–2 students to read?
8. What else do you believe you need to improve your ability to teach students to read?
9. What additional experiences or thoughts can you share pertaining to teaching K–2 students to read?

Follow-up Questions for Clarification

Tell me more about.....

What do you mean by.....?

Please give me an example of when that.... worked/did not work.

Appendix B: Interview Protocol Guide

Date of interview:

Method of interview recording:

Start/End of interview:

Name of interviewee:

State in which interviewee resides:

Current or former teacher:

Number of years teaching:

School District:

Grade Level:

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. I know that your time is valuable, and I will work as efficiently as possible to complete the interview promptly. As you know, this interview will contribute information to a research study intended to explore novice K–2 teachers’ perspectives of their preparedness to teach students to read and what they believe is needed to improve their strategies to teach reading.

Your participation in this interview is important and voluntary. You have reviewed the informed consent form, but as a reminder, you may decline to answer any question you do not wish to answer or withdraw from the interview at any time. This interview will take approximately 45–60 min. With your permission, I will be making an audio recording of the interview and taking notes.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Preliminary Interview

I would like to begin by asking you some background questions to get to know you better. Do you have any questions before we begin?

- How many years have you been teaching?
- How many years have you taught reading in a classroom?
- How much time do you spend teaching reading each day?
- What curriculum resources have you used to teach K–2 students to read?

Interview Questions

1. Describe your self-efficacy concerning your preparedness to teach K–2 students to read?
2. How were you prepared in your higher education coursework and field experiences to teach K–2 students to read?
3. How does your school administration provide assistance with improving teachers' abilities to teach reading?
4. Describe how your colleagues encourage or discourage your instructional strategies in teaching reading.
5. What challenges are you experiencing when teaching K–2 students to read?
6. What types of experiences or support do you believe might help improve your self-efficacy concerning teaching students to read?
7. What additional resources do you think you need to effectively teach K–2 students to read?

8. What else do you believe you need to improve your ability to teach students to read?
9. What additional experiences or thoughts can you share pertaining to teaching K–2 students to read?

Follow-up Questions for Clarification

Tell me more about.....

What do you mean by.....?

Please give me an example of when that.... worked/did not work.

Conclusion

Thank you for your time today. I am very grateful for your contribution to this study. Any information that is obtained from participants will be kept confidential. The information will only be used for the purpose of the research study.

All information will remain secure on a password-protected drive and computer. The data will be stored for at least 5 years if the dissertation is approved. Following the time frame, all the data will be destroyed and deleted. As a reminder, I will send a copy of this interview transcript within 1 week for you to review and a copy of the data results once compiled for your feedback. May I contact you as well if I need any clarifications?

Thank you.