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Promoting Social Change by Increasing Oral Reading Fluency by Second Grade

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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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Abstract

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M.S., Grambling State University, December 15, 1989

BA, Louisiana Tech University, May 24, 1979

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Teaching students to read fluently has always been a national problem. At an elementary school in Louisiana, over 50% of second grade students earned at risk or at some risk ratings on the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) test in reading fluency from 2007 to 2009. The purpose of this project study was to determine the professional learning needs of educators for teaching oral reading fluency by investigating 2 aspects of reading proficiency: educators' perceptions of additional skills needed to increase students' fluency by second grade, and the types of professional development educators believed would assist them in improving students' fluency skills. Theories of self-efficacy, behaviorism, and automaticity formed the theoretical framework for the study. A qualitative case study approach was used that included the responses of 4 participants to an open-ended researcher-developed questionnaire, lesson plans from participants, and the researcher's journal. Participants' written responses to the questionnaire were coded and themes determined, then triangulated with their lesson plans and the researcher's journal notes. Findings showed that teachers believed the components of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, along with recognition of the letters of the alphabet, whole word recognition strategies, and practice, should be the focus for professional learning for teachers' collaborative learning communities, teacher study groups, and workshops as the preferred methods. Contents of the project include best practices for educators to use to increase oral reading fluency at any age, which may effect positive change with the national problem of helping persons in our society become literate by reading fluently.

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Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

All schools in the United States that receive federal funds must meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) in order to maintain eligibility for continued funding. State by state, teachers assess students in grades 3 through 8 with standardized testing every year in grades 5 through 8, and once between grades 10 and 12. The NCLB Act requires that every student, including those students with special needs, make adequate yearly progress in reading and mathematics by 2014. The population of schools is broken down, into broad subgroups. Since 2001, benchmark scores of students increased yearly with the aim of having 100% of students in all groups achieve proficiency in reading and math by 2014. The entire school fails if one of the subgroups does not meet this academic standard. The inability of one of the subgroups to meet this standard forces schools to offer school choice to students, administrative removal, and staff removal. If the school is unable to meet this standard, parents may send their child to the school of their choice. Administrators and staff may be terminated or asked to work in another school. NCLB Act may also require schools to replace the curriculum, and some states may experience the removal of state funding (No Child Left Behind, 2001).

Definition of the Problem

An elementary school in a rural district in Louisiana, XYZ Elementary School (a pseudonym), has not met AYP since the 2004-2005 academic year. In Louisiana, a school with a School Performance Score that decreases yearly by more than -2.5 receives the growth label of a "school in decline" (Bulletin 111, 2007). Between 2005 and 2011, the school was designated as a "school in decline" for three academic years. A primary factor contributing to XYZ Elementary School's failure to meet target projections has been the students' failing reading scores. Table 1 shows the third and fifth grade students' reading scores from 2006-2011. Scores remain consistently high for students that are *at some risk* or *at risk* for learning to read fluently.

Table 1

Percentage of third and fifth grade students in XYZ Parish that scored at some risk or at risk in reading from 2007-2011

	2007		2008		2009		2010		2011	
	Some Risk	At Risk	Some Risk	At Risk	Some Risk	At Risk	Some Risk	At Risk	Some Risk	At Risk
Grade 3	40%	25%	39%	35%	20%	25%	30%	26%	20%	25%
Grade 5	22%	21%	24%	18%	18%	13%	26%	12%	16%	12%

Note. From Louisiana Department of Education-Spring Progress Report 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 Louisiana Department of Education- iLEAP 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011.

Over 30% of students consistently scored *at risk or at some risk* in reading. At some risk refers to those students who have the odds of approximately 40-60 % in their favor of

meeting later reading outcomes. These students may require some help in addressing the regular curriculum. *At risk* means students for whom the odds of meeting later reading outcomes are approximately 10 to 20%. At risk students may need intensive support to address the regular curriculum (DIBELS Data System, 2011). The only year that fifth grade students scored under 30% in unsatisfactory reading performance was in 201l. A total of 28% of fifth grade students in a small rural district scored as at risk or at some risk in reading (Louisiana Department of Education-iLEAP 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011; Louisiana Department of Education-Spring Progress Report 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011).

Although the scores of second grade students are not counted in the overall ratings of schools, educators must ensure that second graders master specific academic skills in order to prepare them for success in the third and subsequent grades. Upon reviewing second grade reading assessment data at XYZ Elementary School, the researcher found that second grade students had not been achieving at projected levels on the DIBELS subtest in Oral Reading Fluency (ORF). Between 2007 and 2009, over 50% of second grade students at XYZ Elementary School scored at some risk or at risk in oral reading fluency skills (Louisiana Department of Education-Spring Progress Report, 2007, 2008, 2009). In 2010 and 2011, over 40% of second grade students scored at some risk or at risk in oral reading fluency. If second grade students do not achieve the oral reading fluency achievement levels that are expected of them, they are not likely to achieve

reading fluency in subsequent years (Altman, 2011; Learning to read: What's at Stake-What's Involved, 2011; Schools: Why Reading Is Job #1, 2011; Where Are Non-Readers Found in the United States, 2011).

State leaders in Louisiana have recognized the need for educational reform in the area of literacy in Louisiana (Louisiana Students to Benefit from Literacy Grant, 2011; Zinshteyn, 2011). Since 2005 when XYZ first failed to meet AYP in reading, the district provided professional development to educators in the areas of classroom management, motivation, and instructional strategies. So far, the state's approach to this problem has not produced positive results. Indeed, as former State Superintendent of Education Paul Pastorek reported, "For decades Louisiana has repeatedly applied failing solutions to improve the ability of public schools to adequately educate young people, and that impasse still impedes our current effort" (Louisiana Department of Education, 2011, p. 1).

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

Reading data show that a problem clearly exists with elementary students learning to read by second grade. Numerous studies and reports show that this problem prevails on the national, state, and local levels. In the United States, from 30% to 50 % of second grade students scored at risk, at some risk, below basic, or below proficient level in reading (Boulton, 2012; Bracey, 2009; KIDS COUNT, 2007, 2009, 2011; The Nation's

Report Card, 2011). Elementary students' reading scores clearly indicate that a reading problem exists in the United States.

Several potential gaps in practice on the national, state, and local levels support the rationale for this study. First, scores from 2007-2009 showed that 30 to 50% of students in the United States failed to make adequate yearly progress (Boulton, 2012; KIDS COUNT, 2007, 2009; The Condition of Education, 2010). Second, standards for reading teachers do not exist on the national level for elementary teachers. Each state determines the qualifications for reading teachers in the elementary school (Information Specialist, United States Department of Education, personal communication, April 9, 2012). Another gap stems from the recommendation to use Common Core Standards to teach reading in the elementary school; however, recommendations for teaching these standards do not exist (Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects, 2010). Finally, locally XYZ School District hired additional personnel for small group instruction and reading consultants to strengthen reading fluency skills of students, but test results did not improve. Professional development offered in the areas of motivation, classroom management, and instructional strategies are specific areas in which teachers need development to increase the overall performance of students' scores in oral reading fluency at XYZ Elementary.

Studies support the premise that if students read fluently by second grade, this can change the projection of their life (Davis, 2010; Kellett, 2009; Kreider, 2011). Success

can follow students at every grade level if fluency is developed by second grade. However if this reading problem is not corrected, students will not be prepared to graduate from high school, go to college, or obtain a job in the workplace (Education Secretary Duncan Issues Statement on the Nation's Report Card in Reading for 4th, 8th Grades, 2010; U. S. Education Reform and National Security, 2012).

In 2007, 2008, and 2009, over 50% of second grade students at XYZ Elementary scored at some risk or at risk in oral reading fluency (Louisiana Department of Education-Spring Progress Report, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2011). The data show that poor oral reading fluency has consistently been a problem for this school. The purpose of this project study is to investigate educators' perceptions of their professional development needs as they relate to teaching oral reading fluency.

Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature

Reading scores document a problem in literacy all over the United States. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reported the history of the problem of students' learning to read in the United States (The Nation's Report Card, 2009). In order to clearly show the problem, the National Assessment Governing Board along with the National Center for Educational Statistics rated students at four levels: Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced. The rating of below basic denotes that those tested were functionally illiterate (Master the Code, 2011).

Table 2 shows the percentage of elementary students in the United States who scored below basic from 2005-2011, according to The Nation's Report Card (2009,

2011). In 2005, the data indicated that 38% of students scored below basic in the United States. In 2007 and 2009, 34% of students scored below basic. The percentage of students who scored at the below basic level did not substantially decrease from 2007-2011.

Table 2

Percentage of elementary students in the United States scoring below basic in reading from 2005 – 2011

Year:	**Percentage below basic:**
2005	38%
2007	34%
2009	34%
2011	33%

Note. From The Nation's Report Card (2009, 2011)

Definition of Terms

The following section provides definitions of terms that will be used throughout the study:

Benchmark: A score on a test that is given three times yearly on grade-level material to help identify students who need additional help. The word "benchmark" can also refer to students who are "at benchmark" which indicates students who have achieved the goals that all students should reach ([DIBELS] Data System, 2008).

Decoding: The ability to recognize a word from print to speech, usually by synthesizing knowledge of sound symbol relationships; also, the act of unraveling a new word by sounding it out (Glossary of Terms, 2011).

Deficit At Risk Intensive: Students for whom the odds of successfully meeting later reading outcomes are approximately 10%-20%. They are likely to need intensive support ([DIBELS] Data System, 2008).

Established Low Risk Benchmark: Students who have the odds of approximately 80%-90% in their favor of meeting later reading outcome goals. They are less likely to need core support ([DIBELS] Data System, 2008).

Fluency: Ability to read text quickly, accurately, and with proper expression ([DIBELS] Data System, 2008). .

Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF): Assesses a child's knowledge of letter-sound correspondences as well as his or her ability to blend letters together to form unfamiliar, nonsense" (e.g., ut, fik, lig, etc.) words (Cummings, Kaminski, Good, O'Neal, 2011; Cummings, Kennedy, Otterstedt, Baker, Kame'enui, 2011; Dewey, Latimer, Kaminski, & Good, 2012; [DIBELS] Data System, 2008).

Oral Reading Fluency (ORF): Accesses a child's skills at reading connected text in grade-level materials (Cummings, Kennedy, Otterstedt, Baker, Kameenui, 2011; Dewey, Latimer, Kaminski, & Good, 2012; [DIBELS Data System, 2008).

Phonemic Awareness: Cognizant that spoken words consist of individual sounds or a segment of sounds, and the understanding that phonemes are reassembled and exchanged to create new words (Glossary of Terms, 2011). .

Prosody: Reading with expression, proper intonation, and phrasing. Read as if speaking the part read (Glossary of Terms, 2011).

Progress Monitoring: Assessment used with students that need additional help after the benchmark assessment has been completed. Progress monitoring is done to examine those students more frequently in the area(s) where they are having problems to ensure that they are making adequate progress. Progress monitoring can be done on out-of-grade material when necessary ([DIBELS] Data System, 2008).

Reading Professional Development Project (RPDP): A reading professional development designed to increase oral reading fluency. .

Retell Fluency: Measure used as an indicator of comprehension (Cummings, Kennedy, Otterstedt, Baker, Kame'enui, 2011; Dewey, Latimer, Kaminski, & Good, 2012; [DIBELS] Data System, 2008).

Strategic Emerging Some Risk: Students who have the odds of approximately 40%-60% in their favor of meeting later reading outcomes. These students are likely to need strategic support ([DIBELS] Data System, 2008).

Word Use Fluency: Measure of oral language and expressive vocabulary ([DIBELS] Data System, 2008).

Significance of the Problem

Statistically, more students from the United States experience long-term social, cultural or monetary damage from failing to learn to read than from accidents, parental abuse, and all other childhood diseases and disorders combined (Boulton, 2012). Students who fail to read experience long-term damage through repeated cycles of failure. Repeated failure in reading at school as a child leads to failure as an adult in qualifying

for the highest strata of jobs and life opportunities. In financial terms, reading related problems cost America more than the war on drugs, terrorism, and crime (Boulton, 2012). More than any other skill, reading affects society and dominates students' futures (Boulton, 2012; Learning to Read; What's at Stake-What's Involved, 2011).

Reading problems correlate with socio-economic, racial, and ethnic disparities. According to disaggregated data, approximately 70% of young African American students and 65-70% of Hispanic students cannot read (Boulton, 2012; Schools: Why Reading Is Job # 1, 2011). This same data showed that the majority of students at risk of reading failure resided in homes with poverty as the socio-economic status.

The ability to read fluently supports the development of skills in other subject areas (Munson, 2011; Pool, Johnson, & Carter, 2009). Teaching reading is the most critical responsibility assigned to elementary schools. Students who read with ease in the early grades establish a foundation to build new knowledge in English/language arts, science, social studies, reading, and problem solving in math (Boulton, 2012). These studies show that students who do not acquire reading skills early in the learning process typically remain frustrated and experience failure throughout their learning experiences.

The review of research shows that a reading problem exists in the nation as well as in the XYZ School District. Research maintains that a connection exists between reading successfully at the elementary level, promoting at each grade level, and graduating from high school (Altman, 2011; Learning to read: What's at Stake – What's Involved, 2011; Schools: Why Reading Is Job #1, 2011; Where Are Non-Readers Found

in the United States, 2011). In XYZ Parish for the 2008-2009 School Year, 76.0% of students graduated from high school, while during this same time, 66.6% of students graduated in Louisiana. Even though 76% of students graduated in XYZ Parish, 24% failed to graduate (Louisiana Department of Education - Cohort Graduation Rates, 2011).

In XYZ District, the results of this study could impact the school's long term goals by improving oral reading fluency for students in lower grades. The results of this study may give students a better chance of succeeding at all grade levels, and consequently graduating from high school. These same students will enjoy far greater earning power than their peers who do not graduate from high school. Students will have the skills necessary to make choices concerning continuing education after graduating from high school. Upon reaching adulthood, students can more fully participate in XYZ District and society. Learning to read fluently in the elementary grades supports learning in subsequent grades (Altman, 2011; Learning to Read: What's at Stake – What's Involved, 2011; Schools: Why Reading Is Job #1, 2011; Where are Non-Readers Found in the United States, 2011). This study should aid in providing a solution for this local problem, thus solidifying the importance of this research if the problem is addressed while students are in the elementary grades.

Guiding Research Question

The guiding questions for this study are designed to examine the perceived needs of the educators who teach reading in the early primary grades. The guiding questions are the following:

1. What are educators' perceptions of additional components or skills needed to increase oral reading fluency by second grade at XYZ Elementary?

2. What types of professional development do educators perceive will assist them in improving the oral reading fluency skills of students at XYZ Elementary?

Research has addressed the problem of increasing oral reading fluency, but the problem still exists in schools in the United States (Boulton, 2012; The Nation's Report Card, 2009, 2011). XYZ Elementary attempted to correct the problem by hiring additional personnel, hiring reading consultants, and by providing professional development, but students have still failed to read fluently by the second grade level. These failed attempts to correct the problem of poor oral reading fluency in schools demonstrates the need for continued research in the area of oral reading fluency. This project study will add to research to close the gap in local practice by providing a guide for educators to increase oral reading fluency by second grade regardless of students' race, class, or academic concerns.

Review of the Literature

For three years, over 50% of students scored at some risk or at risk in oral reading fluency at XYZ Elementary School (Louisiana Department of Education-Spring Progress Report, 2007, 2008, 2009). As the researcher, I will investigate educators' perceptions of their professional development needs as they relate to teaching oral reading fluency. A review of the literature that relates to the problem shows that a problem exists nationally as well as locally concerning oral reading fluency (Boulton, 2012; Louisiana Department

of Education-iLEAP 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011; Louisiana Department of Education-Spring Progress Report 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011; The Nation's Report Card, 2009, 2011). Initiatives, funding, and strategies previously provided yielded poor results (Boulton, 2012; Bracey, 2009; KIDS COUNT, 2007, 2009, 2011; The Nations Report Card, 2011). Statistics show the need for additional research in order to alleviate this problem.

Various topics concerning the problem included the definition of oral reading fluency, assessment of oral reading fluency, history of oral reading, history of oral reading fluency, history of oral reading fluency in the measurement of reading competence, and problems associated with poor oral reading fluency. Also, this section includes the problem of oral reading fluency in the United States, the problem of oral reading fluency in Louisiana, and the problems of oral reading fluency locally. The discussion includes the conceptual framework, initiatives to correct the problem of oral reading fluency, and instructional strategies to improve the problem of oral reading fluency has various definitions. Finally, the problem and how it relates to social change as well a conclusion completes the literature review section.

Search terms that led the investigation included *oral reading, fluent, oral reading fluency, definition, assessment, measurement, testing, measures, DIBELS*, and *DIBELS next.* Additionally, other terms used include *history, reading comprehension, decoding, sight words, reading problems, reading failure, Master the Code, American Federation of Teachers, Louisiana Department of Education, State of Louisiana, Louisiana*

Federation of Teachers, United States, United States Department of Education, and *the National Association of Educational Progress.* Other search terms included *elementary, elementary school, reading difficulty, National Institute for Literacy, Nation's Report Card, National Center for Educational Statistics, Erne Duncan, National Reading Panel, National Institute of Child Health* and *Human Development, Kids Count,* and *Louisiana.* Next, *self-efficacy, behaviorism, automaticity, initiatives, Title One Reading, Reading Excellence, Even Start Family Literacy Program, No Child Left Behind, Race to top Fund, and poverty.* Finally, terms searched included *parental support, instructional strategies, strategies, methods, repeated reading, neurological impress method, systematic decoding instruction, sight word recognition, independent silent reading,* and *read while listening.*

Academic databases used to search for information included ERIC, Google, Google Scholar, Education Research Complete, and Education: a SAGE full-text data base. Others included Academic Search-Premier, Thoreau, ProQuest Central, PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES, PsycBOOKS, PsycEXTRA, PsycINFO, books, SocINDEX and Teacher Reference Center.

Oral Reading Fluency Defined

Previous research conducted concluded that various definitions relay the meaning of oral reading fluency. Researchers Speece and Ritchey (2005) defined oral reading fluency as reading with a combination of speed and accuracy, but other researchers included reading with ease, accuracy, speed, and prosody as important components as

well (Ardoin, Morena, Binder, & Foster, 2013; Benjamin, Schwanenflgel, Meisinger, Goff, Kuhn, & Steiner, 2013; Chappell, Begeny, Laugle, Krouse, Lynn, Tayrose, & Stage, 2010; Hicks, 2009; Kuhn, Schwanenflugel, Meisinger, 2010; Noltemeyer, Joseph, & Watson, 2014; Schrauben, 2010, Stephens, Kinnison & Pettigrew 2009). Researchers Hudson, Mercer, and Lane (2000) affirmed that fluency should include the three components of accurate reading, rate, and prosody to define oral reading fluency. However, Dowhower, Schreiber, Schreiber, and Read (as cited in Rasinski, 2004) described that the prosody part of reading fluency emphasizes the correct use of phrasing and expression. When students use appropriate volume, tone, emphasis, phrasing, and other elements of oral expression, students get meaning when the passage is read orally. Hence, students read the way they speak. Investigators at The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) agreed with this definition (Musti-Rao, Hawkins, & Barkley, 2009). Mather and Goldstein (2001) established a similar definition. They found that reading fluency involved the ability to read the text rapidly, smoothly, effortlessly, and automatically with little thought to decoding or recognizing words by sight. Valencia, Smith, Reece, Li, Wixson, and Newman (2010) agreed that students need to read the text swiftly, correctly, and with expression, but added that students need to concentrate on understanding the text as well when reading fluently. Other researchers endorsed comprehension as part of the definition of oral reading fluency (Grabe, 2010; Kuhn, Rasinski, & Zimmerman, 2014; Rasinski, 2004).

Regardless of the formal definition of oral reading fluency, authors and researchers concluded that ease of reading, accuracy, speed, prosody, and comprehension compose the definition oral reading fluency. Rasinski (2004) concluded that ease of reading through word recognition skills and comprehension relates to the connection between the two major components of reading fluency. He noted that at one end, fluency connects to accuracy and automaticity in word recognition skills. At the other end, fluency connects to comprehension through prosody, or expression. In order to synthesize the aspects that influence oral reading fluency, I developed Figure 1.

Figure 1

A depiction of oral reading fluency as the combination of factors involved in reading

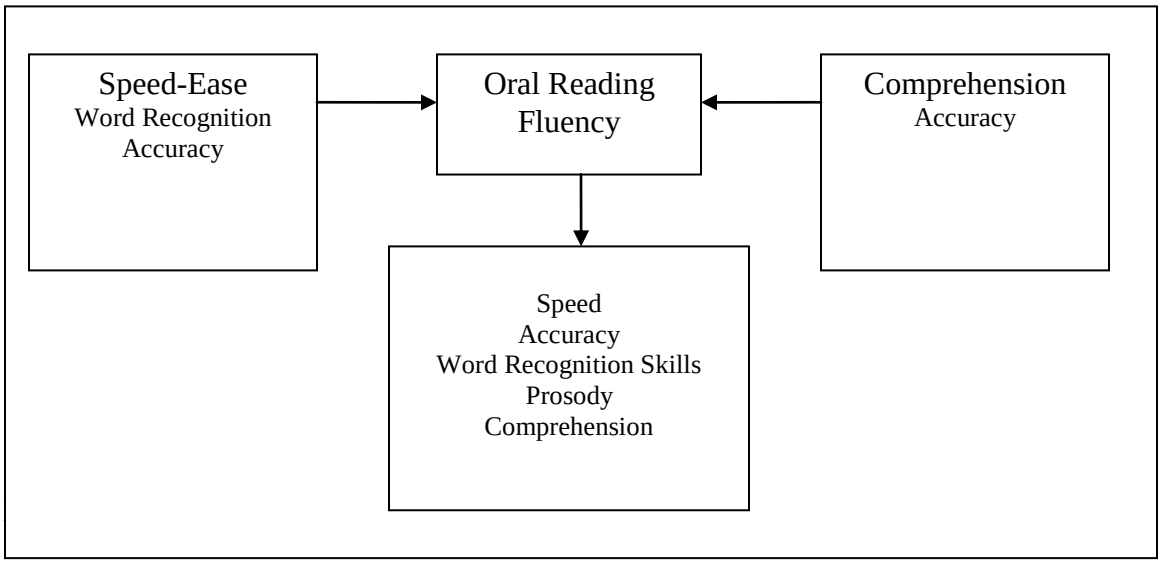

Figure 1. This drawing shows the various definitions of oral reading fluency. A summation of the components to define oral reading fluency include speed, accuracy, word recognition, prosody, and comprehension.

Assessment of Oral Reading Fluency

DIBELS

Authors of Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) created DIBELS according to assessment guidelines for Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM). Deno and associates developed DIBELS through the Institute for Research and Learning Disabilities at the University of Minnesota in the 1970-80s (Good & Kaminski, 2005). Cost consciousness and effectiveness when measuring students' progress toward achieving projected goals led developers to create DIBELS (Good & Kaminski, 2005; Shelton, Altwerger, & Jordan, 2009).

The University of Oregon conducted studies initially on DIBELS in the late 1980s. Thereafter, a continuous series of studies on DIBELS showed the reliability and validity of the assessment as well as their sensitivity to student change. Authors of DIBELS wanted to increase learning outcomes for students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds (Good & Kaminski, 2005).

DIBELS, a set of guidelines and measures, assess whether or not kindergarten through sixth grade students master early literacy skills. These short fluency assessments provide data concerning the development of early literacy and early reading skills often during the school year. Assessors test students for benchmark assessments at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year. Administrators of the DIBELS conduct

progress monitoring on a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly basis. DIBELS provide results quickly to help teachers classify students that may require small group or individualized instruction (Adams, Cathers, Swezey, & Haskins, 2012; Goldberg, Weinberger, Goodman, & Ross, 2010; Good & Kaminski, 2005; Hoffman, Jenkins, & Dunlap, 2009). Winston (2011) indicated that the use of DIBELS is to determine students that need extra help to become fluent readers.

Measures used by DIBELS include phonemic awareness, alphabetic principle, accuracy, and fluency with connected text, reading comprehension, and vocabulary ([DIBELS] Data System, 2008). These measures relate to one another psychometrically and theoretically. Measures of phonological awareness include initial sounds fluency and phonemic segmentation. Assessments of alphabetic principle and phonics measure nonsense word fluency and oral reading fluency (Cummings, Kaminski, Good, O'Neal, 2011; Cummings, Kennedy, Otterstedt, Baker, Kame'enui, 2011; Dewey, Latimer, Kaminski, & Good, 2012; [DIBELS] Data System, 2008). Measure of accuracy and fluency with connected text involves oral reading fluency. Oral reading fluency and retell fluency measure comprehension. Measures of vocabulary and oral language involve word use fluency ([DIBELS] Data System, 2008; Goffreda & DiPerna, 2010).

The developers of DIBELS created it to determine whether students demonstrate problems obtaining the basic literacy skills. Additionally, data acquired from the administration of DIBELS allow educators to provide assistance to students experiencing difficulty and to eliminate the chance of those students having problems learning to read

later (Good & Kaminski, 2005; Hoffman, Jenkins, & Dunlap, 2009). Studies indicated that elementary students who read below grade level do show improvement, but they often do not close the gap to reading on level for their particular grade level. Early and purposeful intervention such as DIBELS improves students' scores in reading at the elementary level and possibly bridges the achievement gap (Cummings, Dewey, Latimer, & Good III, 2011; [DIBELS] Data System, 2008).

In a review of the literature, three views emerged on the use of DIBELS as a measure of oral reading fluency. In one view, research showed a strong reliability and validity of DIBELS as a measure of oral reading fluency (Goffreda &, DiPerna, 2010). Using DIBELS, teachers can quickly and adequately assesses a student's progress in acquiring the skills necessary to read fluently early in the educational experience. It informs educators of the areas of instruction that requires additional support, facilitates parent communication, and research forms the basis of its foundation (Goffreda & DiPerna, 2010; Goldberg, Weinberger, Goodman, & Ross, 2010; Hoffman, Jenkins, & Dunlap, 2009). In a second view of studies, it was documented that problems exist concerning the use of DIBELS as a measure of oral reading fluency (Hoffman, Jenkins, and Dunlap, 2009; Kamii & Manning, 2005; Shelton, Altwerger, & Jordan, 2009). Some disadvantages noted by educators were that DIBELS does not test comprehension, places emphasis on speed, uses nonsense words, and requires no written responses (Hoffman, Jenkins, & Dunlap, 2009; Shelton, Altwerger, & Jordan, 2009). The third view suggests

a moderate approach: Calling further research to improve DIBELS as a measure of oral reading fluency (Goffreda, Diperna, & Pedersen, 2009).

At XYZ Elementary, educators think that DIBELS serve as an excellent assessment to use when determining students' strengths and weaknesses in reading. They show students' progress on reading skills related to the curriculum as well as progress on short-term objectives. XYZ Elementary assessed students using DIBELS for approximately five years. Educators examined results to assist in guiding professional development activities and instruction in schools in the XYZ District.

DIBELS Next

Developers created DIBELS Next as the newest version of DIBELS. Designers of DIBELS Next revised all forms and passages by refining instructions to assist administrators when giving the test and students when taking the test. New measures include early phonemic awareness and first sound fluency. Developers replaced the initial sound fluency test with the first sound fluency test. The new measures relate to maze practices. Daze, stored in DIBELS Next, serves as an extra indicator of comprehension for third through sixth grades. DIBELS Next includes documents with larger format for scoring booklets, and recording responses. Creators of DIBELS Next include a retell in the oral reading fluency assessment. Developers of DIBELS Next determined new benchmark goals and cut points for risk ([DIBELS] Next, 2010).

Assessors started using DIBELS Next as a means to determine reading ability at

XYZ Elementary in 2010. DIBELS Next appears more user friendly as compared to DIBELS.

History

History of Oral Reading

According to Hyatt (1943), the reading curriculum included oral reading since colonial times. The evaluation of reading instruction depended on the students' ability to read orally. Even though oral reading emerged as one of the goals of reading instruction in schools, people hardly kept books in homes during this time and possibly only one person in the home could read (Hyatt, 1943). The reader in the home read books or other information aloud as a source of entertainment (Hyatt, 1943; Reutzel, Hollingsworth, & Eldredge, 2001).

In the 19th century, schools emphasized oral reading in elementary education (Hyatt, 1943). Teachers stressed pronunciation, emphasis, inflection, and force (Hyatt, 1943). Instructors provided drills on elementary sounds to correct problems in pronunciation and in strengthening the vocal organs. Other components of reading received very little attention. Educators thought teaching reading as separate from teaching other subject matter (Hoffman, 1987; Hyatt, 1943).

During the middle of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, teachers used recitation lessons for instruction. The teacher read the text followed by the student(s) reading the text. The students' ability to read the text and answer questions about what they read evolved as a method to evaluate reading performance. In

subsequent years, according to William James (as cited in Rasinski & Hoffman, 2003), oral reading surfaced as an important part of education in the United States; consequently, teachers' progress in teaching reading depended on the oral reading method used as far as the public was concerned.

Around the beginning of the 20th century, educators investigated the accuracy of oral reading as the primary form of instruction (Rasinski & Hoffman, 2003). During this time period, focusing on how the text read seemed more important than reading for comprehension. On the other hand, according to Rasinski & Hoffman (2003), Horace Mann indicated that "more than eleven-twelfths of all the children in reading classes do not understand the meaning for the words they read" (p. 511). Mann thought that oral reading received too much attention as compared to reading comprehension. As sources became more accessible for reading, the need for oral reading for getting information decreased and individual silent reading became important to families and communities (Monaghan & Barry, 1999; Rasinski & Hoffman, 2003). According to Mead, Oberholtzer, Pintner, Gilliland, Schmidt, and Judd (as cited in Hyatt, 1943), the need for silent reading prevailed more than the need for oral reading. Publishers provided textbooks in large quantities that taught methods for silent reading. As proof of the effectiveness of using silent reading grew, educators allotted time in the classroom to teach silent reading techniques (Hyatt, 1943). Silent reading and comprehension became as the most important forms of reading in schools (Rasinski, 2003, Reutzel, Hollingsworth, Eldredge, 2001). Students used the silent reading technique for

standardized and achievement tests as well. The use of these tests for educators assisted when critiquing students' and schools' performance (Rasinski & Hoffman, 2003).

Around 1930, gains in silent reading originated from the sacrifice of oral reading. Educators had stopped teaching students to read orally. Teachers explored ways to use oral reading in school setting. Educators thought that inadequacies appeared in reading instruction unless it provided for instruction in oral and silent reading. They thought students may learn more if educators used both oral and silent reading techniques to teach reading (Hyatt, 1943).

During the later half of the 20th century, teachers taught reading by using the round robin technique. Teachers applied round robin reading by allowing one student to read aloud while the other students followed along in the book awaiting their turn. If the student needed assistance, the teacher assisted with recognizing words. During this time oral reading remained in use, primarily as a method of checking students' word recognition after reading silently (Rasinski & Hoffman, 2003; Reutzel, Hollingsworth, & Eldredge, 2001).

Reading during the 21st century has centered around technology and digital devices (Anonymous, 2009; National Reading Panel, 2000). Levitov (2010) agreed that technology relates fundamentally to reading in the 21st century, but she added that books in print still serve as useful during this time. She stressed that students need to read books in print or electronically in order for their students' reading skills to improve. A need exists to discuss books and correlate the reading of books as a favorable experience.

Educators stress comprehension of text whether using ebooks or books in print. The students' ability to communicate also ranks as important during this time.

History of Oral Reading Fluency

William MacKeen Cattell, one of the first researchers of fluency, helped educators understand the concept of fluency in 1886. He stressed that fluency develops in individuals when they read similarly to the way they speak. Cattell thought that learning to read with automaticity represented the extra ordinary capacity of the brain. Students learn to read so well that they can do it without thinking (Wolf, 2011).

In the classic publication by Huey (1908-1968), a discussion exists concerning the construction of oral reading fluency; however, most information concerning oral reading fluency traced the theoretical foundations to the 1974 article by David LaBerge and Jay Samuels (Pikulski & Chard, 2005; Rasinski, 2006; Wolf, 2011). LaBerge and Samuels developed a model of automaticity first. LaBerge and Samuels contended that more than one thing can be done if attention is alternated between two or more activities or if these activities can be performed automatically. They further emphasized that reading fluency develops quickly by utilizing micro level subskills such as knowing letter-sound rules, letter combination, and the meaning of words and their connections. They argued that only when these lower-level micro skills become automatic can the reader give time to more complex comprehension skills (Wolf, 2011).

In the past, educators used the Repeated Reading Technique to correct the problem of oral reading fluency. A Repeated Reading Technique, designed by Dahl in

1974 and Samuels in 1985, allowed students to read a selected passage at the students' reading level continuously until students achieved a particular rate of words per minute. This idea suggested that repeated reading quickens fluency, and fluency attributes to comprehension (Samuels, 1979; Wolf, 2011). According to Walker, Jolivette, and Lingo (2005), repeated reading improved fluency.

Pat Bowers and colleagues developed another technique called assisted reading to correct the problem of oral reading fluency. Assisted reading consisted of a child's needing assistance in reading fluency by reading along with a fluent reader (Wolf, 2011). The student that reads fluently adjusts his or her reading to that of the student that reads less fluently. The less fluent reader can read independently by signaling to the fluent reader to continue or discontinue reading (Rasinski & Hoffman, 2003). Methods for teachers for assisted reading include reading with the teacher, student, parent, as well as when reading in a group chorally, or from a recording (Rasinski & Hoffman, 2003; Wolf, 2011).

Stanovich (1980) added significantly to increasing the importance of oral reading fluency. He stressed a correlation between fluency and the amount of time that students read. Students that attain fluency are likely to read more than students who do not read often since the latter find reading challenging. Stanovich (2005) noted that readers' skills increased more in all areas related to fluency since students read more. Nonfluent readers who do not read often get further and further behind (National Reading Panel, 2000; Pikulski & Chard, 2005; Stanovich, 1980).

Wolf's (2011) research on fluency indicated that fluency problems develop through time. Wolf concluded that kindergarten students experience problems in phonemic awareness skills, such as slow naming speed problems of letters or sounds often go on, to become children with later fluency and comprehension concerns (Wolf, 2011).

Examining fluency by looking at it developmentally may impact the prevention, intervention, and assessment of fluency problems. Researchers gear current studies to focus on designing and testing a comprehensive, developmentally based fluency intervention that addresses phonology, orthography, semantics at three levels, which involves letter pattern, word, and connected text. Research showed thus far that fluency and comprehension increased from the use of this approach (Wolf, 2011).

History of Oral Reading Fluency in the Measurement of Reading Competence

William Gray published the first reading assessment in 1914. Gray's instrument measured oral reading. The use of this instrument required time demands on educators since it required students to take the test on a one-on-one basis (Pearson, 2000; Rasinski, 2003). After that, educators used fluency as a measure of reading competence.

From before 1929 through 1960, oral reading fluency evolved as a measure of reading competence. Approximately 20% of tests assessed fluency in some way. The percentage of measurements that concentrated on fluency dropped in the 1970s. A possible reason for this decline in the use of oral reading fluency as a measure of reading competence resulted from the stress on language experience and whole language methods

to teaching reading (Fuchs, Fuchs, Hosp, & Jenkins, 2001). During this time, educators considered it optional to use oral reading fluency as a measure of reading competence. Teachers and researchers chose to limit the use of the thought of oral reading fluency as the most important indicator of skillful reading. Before teachers and researchers considered using oral reading fluency as a measure of reading competence, they realized the concept needed additional study (Fuchs et al., 2001).

The use of oral reading fluency as a measure of reading competence gained momentum during the 21st century after the National Reading Panel published its mandated study on teaching students to learn to read. Panelists noted oral reading fluency as one of the five important components of teaching reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (Nation Reading Panel, 2000). Educators used fluency in a number of screening measures for grades 1-3 to include the Test of Word Reading Efficiency, Woodcock Johnson Diagnostic Reading Battery, DIBELS, AIMSweb, EdCheckup, System to Enhance Educational Performance, and Test of Silent Word Reading Fluency (Johnson, Pool, & Carter, 2009).

Problems Associated with Poor Oral Reading Fluency

In order for fluency to develop, students must be able to recognize and give meaning to text. Reading the text involves students' scoring on or above grade level on phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension skills. If deficiencies exist in one or more of these skills, then students usually experience a problem with oral reading fluency (National Reading Panel, 2000; Rasinski, 2006).

In order to recognize and comprehend the alphabetic principle, students must know that sounds relate to the letters of the alphabet (Torppa, Poikkeus, Laakso, Eklund, Lyytinen, 2006). Phonemic awareness refers to students' ability to concentrate on and decode single sounds into words (Phonological and Phonemic Awareness, 2011). Phonemic awareness skills lead students to recognize and spell words. Phonemic awareness remains as one of the most efficient indicators of how efficient students progress when acquiring skills to learn to read during the first two years of school. Students with poor oral reading fluency usually have difficulty with phonemic awareness skills (Fien et al., 2010; Kubina, & Starlin, 2003; Pikulski & Chard, 2005).

Teaching word identification strategies such as decoding rank is important since students do not automatically recognize all words. Decoding means the students' ability to use skills taught on letter-sound and letter patterns relationships (Glossary of Terms, 2011). Knowledge of these relationships helps students to pronounce known and unknown words. If students show deficiencies in this skill area, then deficiencies occur in fluency. Students read awkwardly (Fien et al., 2010; Hudson, Lane, & Pullen, 2005). Once students learn the connection between the sound-symbol relationship and become competent decoders, their ability to read fluently increases (Hudson, Lane & Pullen, 2005; Kim, Petscher, Schatschneider, & Foorman, 2010).

Accuracy in decoding words remain as one of the main benchmarks for marking reading progress. The number of words a student can read correctly measures accuracy. The level of words read correctly indicates the students' reading level. Table 3 indicates

three levels of performance for word decoding accuracy: Independent Level, Instructional Level, and Frustration Level. Students who score in the 97-100% range can read the test without assistance. Students who score within the 90-96% range can read the assessment with some assistance from the teacher. The readers who score below 90% in word recognition accuracy remain challenged by the assessment even with assistance (Rasinski, 2004).

Table 3

Levels of Performance for Word Decoding Accuracy

Level of Performance	Percentages
Independent Level:	97-100%
Instructional Level:	90-96%
Frustration Level:	<90%

Note. From Assessing Reading Fluency by Rasinski, 2004

Vocabulary refers to knowing the meaning of words in order to communicate. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing serve as the four types of vocabulary. Reading vocabulary relates to oral reading fluency since it refers to students' knowledge of the meaning of words to understand the text. Students' reading vocabulary greatly impacts their ability to comprehend (Foorman, Carson & Santi, 2007). Students experience difficulty in comprehension of the text if they do not know the meaning of the words (Hudson, Lane, Pullen, 2005; Vocabulary, 2011).

Comprehension is the students' ability to gather the meaning of the text read (Glossary of Terms, 2011). In order to understand the text, deciphering words and

relating meaning to the text ranks as important for students to obtain meaning. According to some researchers, reading fluently involves comprehension of the text (Pikulski & Chard, 2005). Students who read with adequate fluency are likely to comprehend the text (Allington, 2009). Research conducted by Applegate, Applegate, and Modla (2009) contradicts this statement. They contend that fluent readers experience problems comprehending the text.

Weaknesses in oral reading fluency affect comprehension since readers need to be able to think, reason, and draw conclusions concerning the information read (Kim, Petscher, Schatschneider, & Foorman, 2010; Pikulski & Chard, 2005). Researchers Hudson, Lane, and Pullen (2005) agreed that comprehension can impact oral reading fluency if weaknesses exist in fluency.

The Problem of Oral Reading Fluency in the United States

A crisis exists with students learning to read in the elementary grades in the United States (Munson, 2011). Clearly, the literature documented the crisis through the years (National Association of Educational Progress [NAEP] as cited in Blokker & Levine, 2004; Speece et al., 2010).

Teaching students to read in the elementary grades is one of the major responsibilities of educators across the United States. Through primary grades, students learn to read. In subsequent grades, students read to learn. Students who experience academic failure in high school and those that drop out of school usually experience academic problems in middle school. Academic failure in middle school is usually

linked to students that failed to learn to read in elementary school. The correlation between poor reading skills in the elementary grades and consistent poor academic achievement in middle school and high school concerned educators for some time. Educators realized that students must read on grade level by second and third grade if these students expect to experience academic success in middle and high school (Altman, 2011; Learning to Read: What's at Stake – What's Involved, 2011; Schools: Why Reading Is Job #1, 2011; Where Are Non-Readers Found in the United States, 2011).

Studies from the Department of Education and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development concluded that all but 2 to 5% of students may experience success when learning to read if taught properly. Other statistics established by these departments and noted by O'Neal (2011) included the following:

- Almost 70% or two out of three fourth graders in the United States cannot read at grade level.
- Average reading scores for 9-year-old public school students are lower today than they were 20 years ago.
- 70% of prison inmates are functionally illiterate.
- 70% of all Americans arrested each year are illiterate.
- 75% of unemployed adults are illiterate.
- 75% of school dropouts are illiterate.
- 85% of juvenile offenders are illiterate.

- Illiteracy costs the United States more than $225 billion a year in lost productivity.
- Some states now base their projections for future prison construction, in part, on the number of second graders who are not reading at grade level.
- Statistics show that 80%-90% of children in public schools who are unable to read by the end of first grade will never learn to read (p.1)

According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), a history of the problem of students learning to read in the United States exist (The Nation's Report Card, 2009). In order to clearly show the problem, the National Assessment Governing Board along with the National Center for Educational Statistics rated students at four levels: Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced. The rating of below basic denotes that those tested were functionally illiterate (Master the Code, 2011).

Table 4 shows the number of students across the nation reading below grade level from 2005-2011 according to the National Kids Count Program. Scores remained consistently low from 2005-2011 (Kids Count, 2005, 2007, 2009, & 2011).

Table 4

Percentage of students who scored below basic from 2005-2011

Year:	**Percent below basic:**
2005	38%
2007	34%
2009	34%
2011	34%

Note. From National Kids Count Program (2005, 2007, 2009, 2011)

Researchers (Wendorf, 2011, Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2000) agreed with the consensus that a history exist of the problem of elementary students learning to read in the United States. Arne Duncan, United States Secretary of Education, noted that students are not making enough progress to compete globally (Education Secretary Duncan Issues Statement on the Nation's Report Card, 2010). From this information, it can be assumed that educators in the United States continue to need support in the area of reading through professional development in order to help students read on or above grade level.

The Problem of Oral Reading Fluency in Louisiana

Resources are available in Louisiana to provide a quality education to its students. The percentage of students taught by certified teachers during the 2006-2007 school year was 94%, 2007-2008 (93%), 2008-2009 (94%), and 2009-2010 (95%). The number of teachers that were highly qualified during the 2008-2009 school year was 80% and 2009-2010 was 86%. Information was not compiled for highly qualified teachers before the 2008-2009 school year (A. Vaughan, personal communication, November 22, 2011). The per pupil expenditure for students in Louisiana for 2006-2007 was $10,266, for 2007-2008 it was 11,698; 2008-2009 it was 12,104, and for 2009-2010 it was 12,130, yet a major problem dwelled with students learning to read in elementary school in Louisiana (Louisiana Department of Education-Annual Revenue & Expenditure Report, 2011). Over 200,000 students scored below grade level on assessments. This means that nearly

one out of every three student performs below grade level (Ensuring Literacy For All, 2011).

Students in Louisiana take the iLEAP in third grade and the LEAP Test in fourth grade to measure academic performance in reading. Ratings are determined by using the terms Advanced (A), Mastery (M), Basic (B), Approaching Basic (AB), and Unsatisfactory (U). The Louisiana Department of Education (2011) explains these terms to mean the following:

> *Advanced:* A student at this level has demonstrated superior performance beyond the level of mastery.
>
> *Mastery:* A student at this level has demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter and is well prepared for the next level of schooling.
>
> *Basic:* A student at this level has demonstrated only the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for the next level of schooling.
>
> *Approaching Basic:* A student at this level has only partially demonstrated the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for the next level of schooling.
>
> *Unsatisfactory:* A student at this level has not demonstrated the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for the next level of schooling (p. 1).

Scores rating performance on the iLEAP and LEAP tests differ for *advance, mastery, basic, approaching basic*, and *unsatisfactory* placement. Score ranges on the iLeap are Advance -500-383, Mastery-382-338, Basic-337-282, Approaching Basic-281-239, and Unsatisfactory-238-100. Score ranges on the LEAP are Advance-500- 408,

Mastery-407-354, Basic-353-301, Approaching Basic-300- 263, Unsatisfactory-262-100 (Anonymous, personal communication, November 22, 2011).

Table 5 shows the students that scored at the approaching basic level and unsatisfactory on the iLEAP Test from 2006 to 2010 (Louisiana Department of Education - iLEAP, 2011). The number of students at the approaching basic level has remained fairly steady over the five year period with a slight drop for the most recent year. The number of students at the unsatisfactory level remained consistent with only a slight decrease from 16 to 13 from 2006-2009.

Table 5

Number of students that scored "Approaching Basic" and "Unsatisfactory" on iLeap Test for Years 2006-2010

Year:	"Approaching Basic" Scores	"Unsatisfactory" Scores
2006	21	16
2007	21	14
2008	22	14
2009	20	13
2010	19	13

Note. From Louisiana Department of Education – iLEAP, 2011

Table 6 shows the number of students that scored at the approaching basic level and unsatisfactory level on the LEAP test from 2006 to 2010 (Louisiana Department of Education – LEAP, 2011). Similar to scores on the iLEAP test, the numbers have been steady for the approaching basic level, but decreasing slightly at the unsatisfactory level. These scores demonstrate that there exists a need to improve students' reading performance.

Table 6

Number of students that scored at the approaching basic level and unsatisfactory level on the LEAP test from 2006 to 2010

Year:	"Approaching Basic" Scores	"Unsatisfactory" Scores
2006	20	16
2007	19	12
2008	19	12
2009	19	10
2010	19	13

Note. From Louisiana Department of Education – LEAP, 2011

Table 7 shows the percentage of students that are reading below grade level from 2005 to 2011 according to the National Kids Count Program (2005, 2007, 2009, 2011). Scores remained consistently low from 2005-2011 (KIDS COUNT, 2005, 2007, 2009, & 2011).

Table 7

Percentage of students who scored below basic from 2005-2011

Year:	**Percent below basic:**
2005	38%
2007	34%
2009	34%
2011	34%

Note. From National Kids Count Program (2005, 2007, 2009, 2011)

Table 8 shows the percentage of students who performed below basic with permitted accommodations according to The Nation's Report Card from 2005 to 2011

(G. Wilburn, personal communication, June 18, 2012). Even with accommodations, a high percentage of students consistently scored below the satisfactory level.

Table 8

Percentage of students who performed below basic with permitted accommodations according to The Nation's Report Card from 2005 to 2011

Year:	Percentage Below Basic Accommodations Permitted
2005	36%
2007	34%
2009	34%
2011	34%

Note. From G. Wilburn, personal communication, June 18, 2012

The Problem of Oral Reading Fluency Locally

Five schools exist in XYZ School District including XYZ Elementary. Two of the schools house grades K-12 students. One middle school and one high school are situated in XYZ Parish with approximately 2,300 students in all of the schools in the district. Ninety-eight percent of the staff rank as highly qualified. The per pupil expenditure is around $10,000 (A. Northington, personal communication, November 1, 2011). Of the five schools in XYZ Parish, only three of the schools serve second grade students. In all three schools, students experience the problem of inadequate reading skills resulting in poor oral reading fluency. Table 9 shows the performance of the second grade students in the area of oral reading fluency from 2007-2011. Data shows that in 2007, a total of 68% of the second grade students scored at some risk or at risk in oral reading fluency in School 2, while a total of 73% of students showed deficiencies at School 3 in the same area. In 2008, 41% of second grade students showed weaknesses in

oral reading fluency at School 2, while 44% of second grade students needed to improve in oral reading fluency at School 3. There was a slight decrease in students' performance as compared to the previous year in performance in oral reading fluency at School 2 with students scoring at 38% and the score remained the same at School 3 with 44% of the students scoring poorly in oral reading fluency in 2009. Data in 2010 and 2011 from School 2 and School 3 showed that at least 39-50% of students scored at some risk or at risk in oral reading fluency at the second grade level.

Table 9

Yearly break-down of 2nd grade students in XYZ School District with risk factors related to oral reading fluency

	2007		2008		2009		2010		2011	
	Some Risk	At Risk	Some Risk	At Risk	Some Risk	At Risk	Some Risk	At Risk	Some Risk	At Risk
Grade 2 School 2	34%	34%	19%	22%	21%	17%	32%	18%	24%	19%
Grade 2 School 3	22%	51%	19%	25%	19%	25%	21%	21%	19%	20%

Note. From Spring Progress Report 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011

At XYZ Elementary, there are over 400 students. The baseline school performance score is 75.3. The students eligible for free and reduced meal program make up 90.8% of the students. Minority student include 73.5% while 9.4 % of the students have disabilities (Louisiana Department of Education – District at a Glance, 2011).

Reading remains as fundamental to the progress of any school and certainly to an elementary school. Educators and the community expressed concern about the progress made by students in reading at XYZ Elementary through the years. XYZ Elementary

School faculty tried to remediate the problem but attempts remained unsuccessful. The Louisiana State Department of Education recognized XYZ Elementary as a school in decline during the 2006-2007 school year. The school did not experience any growth academically during the 2007-2008 school year and only minimal academic growth during the 2008-2009 school year (Louisiana Department of Education - Louisiana Education Results, 2011). Currently, the Louisiana State Department of Education graded XYZ Elementary with the grade of a D-. Other schools in the area received grades of C, B, D, and D- on their School Report Card.

A school in a district in the surrounding area of XYZ Elementary failed to make annual progress in an area of literacy. The state statute requires that a school meet adequate yearly progress in the subject where there was failure for two consecutive years. Since the school failed to make adequate progress, the school board has to give parents the option of sending these students to other neighboring schools (The News-Star, 2011).

Fluency ranks as one of the five components of reading that should be obtained in order for students to be successful in reading (Konza, 2014). Reading fluently is important to the overall ability of students learning to read since it is one of the five components of reading. Reading fluently is a concern for students at XYZ Elementary and in the surrounding area according to the assessments used. Scores on reading fluency from DIBELS, which is the assessment measure used at XYZ School for the 2007, 2008, and 2009 school years, showed that over 50% of second graders are at some risk or at risk in the area of fluency at XYZ Elementary (Louisiana Department of Education - Progress

Report, 2007, 2008, 2009). The numbers show that reading fluency is a local concern that needs to be addressed at XYZ Elementary School and possibly the other schools in the area (KIDS COUNT, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009; Leader, 2011; Louisiana Department of Education – Progress Report, 2007, 2008, 2009).

Theoretical Framework

The theories of self-efficacy, behaviorism, and automaticity form the theoretical framework for the problem of students with poor oral reading fluency skills. These theories support this study since educators stress that students can learn to read, teaching reading should be a structured process, and the consequences of reading instruction should be reading with automaticity.

Self-Efficacy

The concept of students performing at their peek performance is grounded in the self-efficacy theory of Albert Bandura (Epstein & Willhite, 2015; Sezgin & Erdogan, 2015). Bandura defined self-efficacy "as a person's belief about their ability to organize and execute courses of action necessary to achieve a goal" (Bandura, 1977, p. 191). This theory implies that people operate in a way called triadic reciprocal causation. Bandura identified the individual, the environment, and the outcome as the parts of the triad (Barkley, 2006) and noted that surroundings impact results. Barkley explained Bandura's concept: "Factors inherent to the individual also affect outcomes within the triadic relationship, and one of the most important of the individual factors is the efficacy belief: a person's belief(s) about his or her abilities to complete a given task" (2006, p.194). The

thoughts of the student play an important role in how well the student will perform on given tasks (Arslan, 2012, Zimmerman, 2000).

Self-efficacy thoughts are assessed from low to high. Students with low self-efficacy often fail consistently when faced with challenging tasks (Barkley, 2006). These students do not have confidence in their ability. They think that their weak performance is associated with their ability to complete the task rather than the way they perceive themselves. Students with high self-efficacy usually complete tasks successfully (Barkley, 2006; Hidi & Renninger, 2006; McMillan, & Turner, 2014). Character traits of students with high self-efficacy include willingness to try difficult tasks and eagerness to use multiple strategies to achieve success. These students remain highly motivated and achieve highly as well (Putman, 2009).

Bandura's theory of self-efficacy is applicable to this study since students' belief about their ability to learn to read fluently is associated with their self-efficacy (Corkett, Hatt, & Benevides, 2011; McCabe & Margolis, 2001). Cook (as cited in Wilson, 2005) emphasized that students must first desire to read. Consistent with this, it is important that educators teach students to think that they can read fluently if they put forth the effort and use what they are taught. Without educators promoting high self-efficacy, learning to read fluently will be challenging rather than an exciting experience for students (Corkett, Hatt, & Benevides, 2011; Davis, 2010; Kizilgunes, Tekkaya, & Sungur, 2009). Wilson (2005) agreed that high self-efficacy is needed in order for students to excel when learning to read fluently.

Research documents the negative impact of repeated failure on students' self-efficacy (McTigue, Washburn, Liew, 2009; Putman, 2009; Quirk, Schwanenflugel, & Webb, 2009). This means if problems are not corrected early during the learning process, the idea of failure will be instilled in students' minds (Cleary, 2009; McTigue, Washburn, Liew, 2009; Putman, 2009). I will use the data to analyze how teachers promote self-efficacy when teaching reading to improve oral reading fluency. I will also specifically review lesson plans to determine if lesson plans are just skill related or if there is some type of strategy that is used to promote self-efficacy when teaching reading to increase fluency.

Behaviorism Theory

According to Rosen (2010), Watson defined behaviorism as "the business of behavioristic psychology to be able to predict and to control human activity" (p.88). His research showed a connection between reward and punishment on learned behavior. Watson felt that his research helped to change the world by making it better. By the mid-20th century, Watson's style of behaviorism had given way to the philosophy of B. F. Skinner. Skinner believed that "consistent, repetitive punishment and reward administered in a perfectly controlled setting nearly always yielded positive results-results that could be achieved in people" (Rosen, 2010, p. 87). Isman (2001) further explained that "Behaviorism is a theory of learning that takes into consideration the relationship between stimulus and response, the reinforcement factor and designing environment conditions" (p. 137). Considering that the environment is set up for

learning, behaviorists think that all students can learn given the appropriate environment. Behaviorists think that all students have potential (Bush, 2006).

The behaviorist method includes repetition, direct instruction, token treats, drill, and practice (Eret, & Kiraz, 2010; Gokmenoglu, Eret, & Kiraz, 2010). When teachers use the behaviorist theory, learning occurs from repeated and controlled circumstances that yield a predictable response from students. This repeated grouping of stimulus and response along with the use of selected rewards and punishments leads to reading (Alexander & Fox, 2004).

Research related to behaviorism in the classroom has shown that the techniques used promote students' learning (Behlol, 2010; Bush, 2006; Gang, 2011; Guccione, 2011; Isman, 2011; Moore, 2010; Rosen, 2010). While the behaviorism theory is not frequently used to teach reading (Reyhner, 2008; Risko, Roller, Cummins, Bean, Block, Anders, & Flood, 2008), it has been shown to be effective in learning new knowledge (Behlol, & Dad, 2010; Bush, 2006; Isman, 2011). Revisiting this theory in teaching oral reading fluency may increase reading performance. This inquiry intends to explore that avenue. I will use data from the questionnaires and analysis of lesson plans to determine how much and what kind of behaviorism techniques were used in the classroom.

Theory of Automaticity

Originated from the word automatic, automaticity is crucial for developing students who read the text with competence. It means being able to process information without really thinking about it. This skill is something that we are not born with, but

rather develop with instruction. When used in reading, automaticity is the ability to look at words and read them aloud without thinking. Reading is done automatically (Phillips & Thomas, 2010; Schrauben, 2010).

The Theory of Automaticity was developed by LaBerge and Samuels in 1974 from the meaning of the word automatic. This theory indicated that students should become fluent in word decoding and word recognition skills in order to read with ease. As readers continuously learning words, they should be able to recall words quickly and correctly (Schrauben, 2010).

LaBerge and Samuels (as cited in Randolph & Crittenden, 2010) indicated that automaticity is a step-by-step process that begins with letter discrimination and ends with being able to recognize words. After students can accurately recognize words through decoding or by sight, then they can concentrate on reading fluently and comprehending what they read (Randolph, Crittenden, 2010).

The theory of automaticity relates to the conceptual framework of this study since fluency is the skill that is going to be developed with students through professional development for teachers. Students will be expected to recognize words readily and with ease by using the Automaticity Theory in order to free up the processing space for comprehension (LaBerge & Samuels as cited in Hudson, Lane, & Pullen, 2005; Petscher & Young-Suk, 2010).

Research documents several strategies for students to gain automaticity in reading. Strategies include the instructional strategy of repeated reading, strategy of the

neurological impress method, strategy of systematic decoding instruction, strategy of sight words recognition instruction, strategy of independent silent reading, and the strategy of reading while listening (Hudson, Lane, & Pullen, 2005; National Reading Panel, 2006). Throughout the course of this project, I will examine lesson plans and responses from the questionnaires to determine what strategies are used to promote oral reading fluency.

Review of Literature

Initiatives to Correct the Problem of Oral Reading Fluency

Through the years, initiatives have been implemented in the United States to improve the problem of literacy with elementary students: (1) Title One Reading, (2) Reading Excellence Act, (3) Even Start Family Literacy Program, (4) No Child Left Behind Act, and (5) Race to the Top Fund. Through these initiatives, financial support has been provided through the federal government to achieve the national literacy goal in the United States, which is for all students attending a public school in the United States to be efficient in reading (Gupta, 2003). At the time of this study, many elementary students fail to learn to read and many students are not reading at or above their grade level (Gupta, 2003; Master the Code, 2011; Speece et al., 2010; The Nation's Report Card, 2009).

Title One Reading

The Title One Reading Program started in 1965. Title One is an educational program created to provide additional assistance to students experiencing difficulty in

reading and math. The goal of Title One is to provide an excellent holistic education for every child; therefore, the program focuses on meeting the needs of neglected children living in poverty, who are delinquent, and those that are homeless. Title One also provides financial support for teachers to attend professional development activities (Gupta, 2003; National Assessment of Title I: Interim Report – 2006; Stullich, Abrams, & Eisner, 2009).

The local school district must have at least one school with Title One school improvement status in order to receive funds from Title One. A school is considered for a school-wide Title One Program if more than 50% of the students in the school meet the standards for free or reduced lunch, and demonstrate a need for assistance through standardized test results, individual reading inventories, and through teacher recommendations (Gupta, 2003; National Assessment of Title I – Interim Report to Congress, 2006).

Reading Excellence Act

President Clinton signed The Reading Excellence Act in 1999. This act focused on students who needed extra help in the elementary grades. The goal of The Reading Excellence Act was for every student to read on or above grade level by the end of third grade. In order for this goal to be met, attention was on serving struggling elementary students (Gupta, 2003).

The Reading Excellence Act had three main goals to increase reading ability in primary students: (1) professional development, (2) out-of-school tutoring, and (3) family

literacy. The program allowed for more tutors and mentors to be available for students during the school year, after-school, and during the summer. In this program, parents stress and model a love of books by reading with their children daily (Gupta, 2003).

Even Start Family Literacy Program

The Even Start Family Literacy program was started to increase the educational level of students and adults by correlating community early childhood education and adult education for parents into a family literacy program. The intent of Even Start was to decrease poverty and illiteracy by increasing the educational level of families in poverty by integrating early childhood education, adult literacy or adult basic education, and parenting education into a collective family literacy initiative (Daisey, 1991, Gupta, 2003).

Even Start developers have been concerned about the primary educational needs of parents of students up to age eight for families in poverty by providing programs of (1) adult basic or secondary education and literacy program for parents, (2) assistance for parents to effectively promote their children's educational development, and (3) early childhood education for children. A majority of the Even Start projects provided a center based early childhood program directly or indirectly by working with programs such as Head Start (Gupta, 2003).

No Child Left Behind

The No Child Left Behind Act was considered to be the most powerful act since the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 was passed. This Act was signed

into law on January 8, 2002, by President Bush. It reestablished the federal duties for K-12 education and planned to help close the achievement gap between students that were achieving as related to those that were not achieving as a result of socio-economic status and race. The No Child Left Behind Act stressed school systems being held accountable for students' progress, more flexibility and local control of progress, increased options for parents, and teaching by using best practices. The law has provided changes to state and local educational systems and each year will invest about $22 billion nationwide to implement the changes. Annual assessments, National Assessment of Educational Progress, accountability, data disclosure of results, teacher quality, math and science excellence, technology, early reading, flexibility, and alignment are the ten key areas to be changed (Goldstein & Beutel, 2009; Gupta, 2003; Phillips, 2010).

The No Child Left Behind Act has provided funds for early reading, math, science and technology. All states can participate in a new $1 billion program for early reading improvement including both pre-K and grades 1-3 reading programs to ensure all students can read by grade 3. Each state may receive assistance in a 1 billion grant program to use technology in education, and up to $450 million annually allocated for math and science groups. State and local school districts may use a number of diverse federal program funds to match local priorities and achieve results (Gupta, 2003). The saturation of efforts in the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act led to the creation of the Race to the Top Fund.

Race to the Top Fund

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act was signed into law in 2009. It was developed to boost the economic crisis, assist in job creation, and fund important programs such as education. The Race to the Top Program received billions of dollars. It is a competitive grant developed to assist and reward states that are utilizing educational changes in four areas: implementing standards and assessments, improving teacher effectiveness and achieving equity in collection and use of data, and supporting struggling schools (Department of Education, 2012; Hershberg & Robertson-Kraft, 2010; Race to the Top Fund, 2009). States that receive a Race to the Top grant use part of the financial support for subgrants to local educational agencies (Race to the Top Overview, 2009).

Applicants for the Race to the Top grant are judged by a two-tiered review process. Written applications are reviewed first. Participants chosen to be finalists give presentations to the reviewers (Race to the Top Overview, 2009).

Major initiatives that supported literacy in the United States included the Reading Excellent Act and Even Start Family Literacy Program. Currently, the No Child Left Behind Act and the Race to the Top Fund remain in force. Statistics on the effectiveness of these programs is not conclusive. Some studies indicated that these federal programs yielded instant positive effects for students' reading accomplishments (Gilrane, Roberts, & Russell, 2008). In contrast, the effectiveness of these programs did not improve

students' performance over time and was negligible after students were no longer enrolled in the program (Armario, 2011; Edmondson & D'Urso, 2009; McNeil, 2011).

Instructional Strategies to Improve the Problem of Oral Reading Fluency

After oral reading fluency instruction, many students may not read fluently since oral fluency is not a reading program in itself, but instead is a part of a comprehensive reading program. Students who lack fluency need direct instruction on how to read fluently in an instructional program for reading (Hudson, Lane, & Pullen, 2005).

Reading fluency should be assessed regularly in the classroom by educators and instruction should be provided to remediate problems with students as they occur in the classroom (Hudson, Lane, & Pullen, 2005). Regardless of the importance of reading fluently and the need for instruction, reading fluency is not often taught in instructional programs for reading (Allington, 1983). Educators that want to address the needs of every student in the classroom should consider whether they know who the non-fluent readers are and the types of strategies they plan to provide these readers through instruction (Hudson, Lane, & Pullen, 2005).

There are a number of research based general recommendations for how to provide instruction in reading to build fluency with students. Hudson, Lane, and Pullen (2005) indicated that educators should take the following steps with students to build fluency:

- Model fluent oral reading using teacher read-alouds and as part of repeated reading interventions.

- Provide direct instruction and feedback to teach decoding of unknown words, correct expression and phrasing, the return-sweep eye movement, and strategies that fluent readers use.
- Provide oral support and modeling for readers using assisted reading, choral reading, paired reading, audiotapes, and computer programs.
- Provide students with plenty of materials at their independent reading level to read on their own.
- Offer many opportunities for practice using repeated readings of progressively more difficult text.
- Encourage prosody development through cueing phrase boundaries. (p. 708)

The National Reading Panel (2000) considered the strategies of repeated reading, neurological impress paired reading, shared reading, and assisted reading as similar ways to practice to increase oral reading fluency; however, repeated reading and the neurological impress method are explained separately since a review of the literature noted differences in these approaches. The strategies of repeated reading, Neurological Impress Method, systematic decoding instruction, sight word recognition, independent silent reading, and read while listening are documented remedies to the problem of reading fluently.

Instructional Strategy of Repeated Reading

Repeated reading is done when a student reads the same passage until automaticity has been developed (What Works Clearinghouse, 2014). The purpose of

repeated reading is to improve the pace of recognizing words in order to focus on comprehension. Samuels (1997), the developer of the repeated reading strategy, thought that rereading text until fluency was obtained increased word accuracy and comprehension (Walker, Jolivette, & Lingo, 2005). Samuels thought that instead of having students read a new passage daily, a better strategy to increasing fluency would be to have them practice reading the same text several times until a predetermined level of fluency had been reached. He developed a technique in which individual students first read aloud to an adult, then re-read the passage silently several times. Then they re-read the passage orally. When they reached a predetermined reading rate, they moved on to another passage and repeated the technique (Osborn, Lehr, & Hiebert, 2003). Oakley (2003) noted that the text determined for repeated reading should be of interest to the reader and should be at a simple reading level. Once fluency has been developed, the benefits of repeated readings can be transferred to new previously unread passages. She as well as other researchers (Report of National Reading Panel, 2006; Topping, 2014) indicated that repeated reading could be done with the assistance of the teacher, parents, or peers.

Repeated readings can be timed. Timed repeated readings involve the instructor selecting a short passage at the student's instructional level, setting the rate standards, and having the student repeatedly read the passage until the standard projected has been an obtained. Documenting the rate of reading is suggested as a way of keeping a record of the students' progress when using a repeated reading technique. Great Leaps Reading,

Jamestown Timed Reading Plus, and QuickReads are examples of timed repeated reading programs and are considered to be effective in improving oral reading fluency (Hudson, Lane, & Pullen, 2005).

The repeated reading strategy is widely used and has been shown to improve reading in several components (Begeny, Krouse, Ross, & Mitchell, 2009; Swain, Leader-Janssen, & Conley, 2013; What Works Clearinghouse, 2013). This strategy has been studied, and it was concluded that repeated reading improves fluency and comprehension (Stoller, 2015**)**. The strategy of repeated reading has been effective in improving overall reading achievement (Berg & Lyke, 2012; The National Reading Panel, 2000). According to Samuels (1979), and Rasinski, (2003), repeated reading is the best-known strategy for developing fluency. Research showed that repeated reading is the most frequently used approach to increasing fluency (Ates, 2013; Lo, Cooke, & Starling, 2011; National Reading Panel, 2000). Studies showed that the repeated reading strategy was important in improving word recognition fluency and comprehension (Blau, 2011; Hicks, 2009; Lo, Cooke, & Starling, 2011; Musti-Rao, Hawkins, & Barkley, 2009; Nears, 2010). The Learning First Alliance (2000) contended that repeated reading is only effective if students can read the isolated words in the reading passage with acceptable speed.

Strategy of the Neurological Impress Method

The Neurological Impress Method (NIM) was brought into general use in the 1960's by Heckelman. This strategy is a form of choral, unison, assisted, or paired

reading. It is recommended to begin using the NIM by having the student read books he can master. The teacher and student read in unison while tracking the words. The teacher reads slightly more quickly, loudly and directly into the student's ear. The student's finger should be placed on top of the instructor's as a way of tracking the words when reading. This process allows the student to hear the words quickly before repeating them, copy the prosody and flow of the language while tracking the words (Coleraine, 2009; Oakley, 2003).

There are several advantages to using the Neurological Impress Method. Studies conducted by Coleraine (2009) and Young (2011) noted that the NIM improved self-assurance in reading, provides a model of reading in automaticity, and provides a comfortable and pleasant atmosphere for reading to take place. Oakley (2003) contended that the NIM is instrumental in increasing reading fluency in text where students have or have not practiced. The Strategy of Decoding Instruction improves fluency, but differences occur in the application of that strategy as compared to the NIM.

Strategy of Systematic Decoding Instruction

Systematic Decoding Instruction (SDI) is when educators provide phonic instruction in a planned sequenced manner. Students learn to read passages by quickly decoding unfamiliar words using procedures from SDI. Learning to recognize the letters of the alphabet, phonemic awareness, and phonics are important skills for reading to initially begin and for fluency to develop eventually (Fien et al., 2010). These skills are the basis for reading development.

Some students learn by the structure provided in teaching reading. Systematic Decoding Instruction based on phonics has been recognized as an important component of developing fluency (Fien et al., 2010; Good, Baker, & Peyton, 2009). The National Reading Panel determined through its review of the literature that systematic phonics instruction yields important benefits for students in the elementary grades. Teaching Systematic Decoding Instruction should begin as early as possible for students (Langenberg, 2000). Consistency in educators providing instruction in systematic decoding leads to the possibility of students recognizing words by sight.

Strategy of Sight Word Recognition Instruction

Sight word reading is done when students can recognize familiar words by recalling them from memory (Ehri, 2005; Hudson, Lane, & Pullen, 2005; LaBerge & Samuel, 1974; Pikulski & Chard, 2005). Some people put restrictions on the term sight word to include only high-frequency words or irregularly spelled words. This is not correct. Any word that is read often with accuracy becomes a sight word (Ehri, 2005).

Sight word reading can be done in several ways: decoding, analogizing, or predicting unfamiliar words. Through practice, students can read words rapidly by sight which is the most efficient way to read words in text. The procedure of recognizing sight words involves forming relationships between graphemes and phonemes to bond spellings of the words to their pronunciations and meanings in memory. This procedure is used by knowledge of phonemic awareness and by knowledge of the alphabetic system (Allor, 2002; Ehri, 2005).

Recent studies have indicated that alphabetic knowledge improves students' learning of new words (Ehri, 2005; Frien et al., 2005; Hudson, Lane, & Pullen, 2005). Alphabetic knowledge is the foundation skill connected with reading proficiently. Efficiency in this skill enables students to connect the internal structure of words in order for words to be recognized (Fien et al., 2010).

Automaticity in recognizing words by sight impacts oral reading fluency. Recognizing words by sight is a foundation skill in which reading fluency is built and a crucial skill for determining reading comprehension (Perfetti & Hogaboam, 1975). Since comprehension involves higher order thinking that cannot be automatic, word recognition must become the fluent process (Hudson, Lane & Pullen, 2005).

Reading instruction should include quickly recognizing words since this skill enhances fluency (Duke & Block, 2012). Word reading is done unconsciously when students know words by sight and can recall them automatically. Reading words automatically from memory is an efficient way to read words in print; therefore, building a sight vocabulary is helpful in achieving fluency (Ehri, 1997; Ehri, 2005; Pikulski & Chard, 2005). Partnership in Reading (2001) indicated that recognizing words quickly in isolation may not transfer to recognizing those same words while reading the text.

Strategy of Independent Silent Reading

Independent silent reading is a widely used method to motivate students to read extensively with little guidance (Cetinkaya, 2013). Examples of programs that promote independent silent reading are sustained silent reading, Drop Everything and Read, and

Accelerated Reader. These are only a few examples of the programs for independent silent reading since many times approaches in independent silent reading do not have a formal name, but require that students read in an unsupervised independent reading environment at school and at home (National Reading Panel, 2000).

In the report prepared by the National Reading Panel (2000), they were able to find only a few studies on whether encouraging children to read on their own is effective in increasing reading fluency and overall reading achievement. The studies reviewed the effect of encouraging independent reading and increased overall reading achievement rather than examining increased reading fluency as a result of reading independently. Most of the research did not find a correlation between motivating students to read and increased reading achievement. Only a few of the studies documented how much students read; consequently, it was not certain whether independent silent reading increased reading independently, reading fluency, or achievement (National Reading Panel, 2000). National Reading Panel members did not discourage the practice of independent silent reading. Many studies did show that better readers read silently to themselves more often than struggling readers and better readers prefer to read silently as compared to struggling readers (Langenberg, 2000).

The Nation Reading Panel (2000) determined that if independent silent reading is used in schools as a strategy to enhance reading skills and fluency, it should be used with a combination of other methods of reading instruction. The different forms of guided reading were recommended to be used with this process for reading (National Reading

Panel, 2000; Reutzel & Juth, 2014). In work done by Hansbrouck (2008), silent reading alone was not enough to improve fluency. It was felt that more practice and more support would be needed in order for fluency to be enhanced by using silent reading. Research done by the Partnership for Reading (2001) showed that there were no studies with evidence to affirm that time in the classroom spent on independent silent reading with little assistance and feedback improved reading fluency. The Learning First Alliance (2000) thought that the concept of silent reading with a series of books at similar reading levels of difficulty was beneficial, but this opinion was not supported by research. In a later study conducted by the National Reading Panel (2006), independent reading was found to contribute to reading fluency.

Strategy of Reading While Listening

The strategy of Reading While Listening (RWL) is used as another effective method for increasing fluency. Research done by Kuhn and Schwanenflugel (2006) used books on audio text to expose students to large quantities of reading material in an easy way while concurrently providing a model of reading. To implement RWL, the educators should select a book at the student's independent reading level and a recording of the book read by a fluent reader at about 80-100 words per minute. The student hears a fluent reader read the book on an audiotape while the student reads along in a book. For the initial reading, the student should be guided by the tape, pointing to each word in the book as the book is being read. Next, the student should attempt to read orally with the tape. Continuously reading along with the tape should be done until the student can

read the book independently without the assistance of the tape (Texas Education Agency, 2002)

Read While Listening helps those readers who have not established automaticity or prosody, but are able to decode some words. Goldstein and Mather (2001) endorsed reading while listening as an effective method for increasing oral reading fluency. They added that students should be given opportunities to read the passage(s) out loud after listening to an audiotape which is consistent with the recommended procedure for this strategy.

The use of computers can improve oral reading fluency since students have opportunities to listen to the information multiple times. Through the use of the internet, linkage can be made possible to various sites and programs to improve fluency. The number of studies conducted in this area is small; therefore, only a generalization can be made concerning the impact of using computers to improve fluency. It was generally concluded that the use of computer technology improves fluency (Amendum & Vernon-Feagans, 2011; Cheung & Slavin, 2013; Ciampa, 2012; Huang, Liang, Su, & Chen, 2012; Report of the National Reading Panel, 2006).

Implications

Educators and researchers have worked to analyze and correct the problem of poor oral reading fluency, yet the problem still exists (Boulton, 2012; Bracey, 2009; KIDS COUNT, 2007, 2009, 2011; The Nations Report Card, 2011). Students need to be able to read and read fluently in order to complete activities in school in all subject

areas. Teachers have tried to correct this problem through the years, but studies show that there is a need for purposeful professional development in the area of oral reading fluency (Boulton, 2012; Bracey, 2009; The Nations Report Card, 2011). Created to help teachers learn effective strategies and best practices, the Reading Professional Development Program (RPDP) in reading fluency is the reason for this doctoral project study. This research aims to discover a remedy to the problem in this study of how to improve academic performance in oral reading fluency at XYZ Elementary School. Findings of the research will be joined together to develop a plan of action, a RPDP, for this project. RPDP may be used as the culminating project of this research for second grade teachers.

This RPDP is intended as a comprehensive plan that can be applied in many educational environments. It will be designed to address educators' precise concerns. Information gathered from replies to question one will be used to establish topics in the project to address educators' specialized concerns. Details explained in replies to question two will assist in ascertaining the arrangement of the project. Even though the project was assimilated by the information collected from a small sample of educators, the comprehensive organization of the RRDP is universal enough to be adjusted to address educators' concerns in various educational environments. Implications may possibly include guiding educators to be more informed by creating a professional development program to increase oral reading fluency.

Summary

The reading crisis has plagued the United States for decades. Instead of steadily decreasing through the years, the problem has increased or remained the same. Statistics show that over 35% of elementary students in the United States scored below basic on reading assessments (KIDS COUNT 2002, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009; O'Neal, 2011; The Nation's Report Card, 2009; Wendorf, 2011). Top officials and agencies have noted that the United States is failing its students in teaching literacy skills (Bracey, 2009; Education Secretary Duncan Issues Statements on the Nation's Report Card, 2010).

Billions of dollars have been appropriated through the years in programs and initiatives to support literacy in the United States. Some of them include Title One Reading, Reading Excellence Act, Even Start Family Literacy Program, No Child Left Behind, and Race to the Top (Goldstein & Beutel, 2009; Gupta, 2003; National Assessment of Title I: Interim Report, 2006; Phillips, 2010; Race to Top Fund, 2009; Race to Top Overview, 2009; Stullich, Abrams & Eisner, 2009). Even with these program and initiatives, the ability of students learning to read and read fluently has been and still is a problem in the United States (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2000; Armario, 2011; Edmondson & D'Urso, 2009; McNeil, 2011).

As elementary educators, one of our primary responsibilities is to teach students to learn to read and read fluently with comprehension. Teachers must be cognizant of how students learn to read, why some students experience difficulty learning to read, and how to identify and use effective instructional strategies. Educators must know how to

determine quality research and implement it to develop curricula and teaching approaches based on the soundest and most scientifically rigorous studies. Effective literacy instruction should be provided throughout the elementary grades until at least 2012 (Goldstein & Beutel, 2009; Race to Top Fund, 2009; Race to Top Overview, 2009). Even with these program and initiatives, the ability of students learning to read and read fluently has been and still is a problem in the United States (Armario, 2011; Edmondson & D'Urso, 2009; McNeil, 2011).

In order to teach, teachers must earn a degree from an accredited college or university in the United States. In cases where there is a shortage of teachers, the most qualified person is trained and hired (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011). There are millions of qualified elementary school teachers employed in schools throughout the United States (Facts for Features: Back to School: 2010-2011, 2010). Even with this number of qualified elementary personnel, reading scores remain inadequate. These numbers demonstrate that there is a need for professional development for educators in teaching literacy skill in order to enhance oral reading fluency. Section 2 describes the methodology used in this study, including data collection and analysis. Section 3 includes the project while Section 4 reports the reflections and conclusions of the study.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to provide an assessment of the development needs of teachers in reading fluency instruction at XYZ Elementary by investigating teachers' perceptions of their professional development needs. The first section includes the guiding questions, description of qualitative research, and the justification for a case study design. The next part includes criteria for selecting participants, procedure for gaining access, methods of establishing a researcher-participant working relationship, and information concerning the use of ethical considerations. The third section provides a description of data collection methods and the data collection plan of how data were collected and processed. The last part of the methodology explains the data analysis plan, procedure to assure credibility, and the procedure for dealing with discrepant cases.

Research Design and Approach

Introduction

This study applied qualitative research methods to obtain a solution to a specific problem (Creswell, 2008, Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010; Patton, 2002). In 2007, 2008, and 2009, over 50% of students at XYZ Elementary scored at some risk or at risk in oral reading fluency (Louisiana Department of Education-Spring Progress Report, 2007, 2008, 2009). I used this needs assessment to investigate teachers' perceptions of the professional development they needed to teach oral reading fluency successfully. According to Creswell (2008, 2009), the guiding questions framed the study and gave it

depth. Qualitative research questions were broad and open-ended (Creswell, 2008, 2009; Hatch, 2002; Patton, 2002).

Description of Case Study Design

Many times researchers conduct qualitative studies when the goal is to understand or uncover educators' views about educational concerns (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010; Patton, 2002). In an effort to understand views concerning professional development as a way to improve instruction specifically in oral reading fluency, I conducted a project study using a qualitative case study approach. Based on the findings of the case study, I propose to plan a project to improve reading instruction in oral reading fluency at XYZ Elementary School.

Case studies allow expression of thoughts without manipulation and usually focus on a certain issue with limitations on time and space (Timberlake, 2009). Reading instruction and professional development encompass the case in this study. The consistently large number of students failing to meet annual yearly progress in oral reading fluency on DIBELS influenced this case study since these scores reflected the need to improve instruction in this area. Both location and time duration bound the study of the local problem. XYZ Elementary served as the site and nine weeks served as the duration of time for the study. A case study design allowed for different sources to be used to collect data in the natural setting to analyze the problem.

Nine qualities symbolize qualitative research. The qualities of qualitative studies are multiple sources of data, natural setting, researcher as a key instrument, inductive data

analysis, participants' meaning, emergent design, theoretical lens, interpretive, and holistic account (Creswell, 2009). A description of each component will follow and will link to this study to guide and explain the selection of the research design.

Frequently used methods to collect data by researchers in qualitative research include interviews, observations, and documents (Creswell, 2009; Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010). In this needs assessment, I collected data from two sources: responses to open-ended questions on a questionnaire and an examination of lesson plans. The data were analyzed by determining recurrent categories or themes.

Creswell (2008) contended that qualitative researchers most likely gather data at the location where participants encounter the problem that is being examined. This setting is considered natural (Creswell, 2008, 2009; Patton, 2002). In this needs assessment, XYZ Elementary was the setting. Educators at the school completed a questionnaire with open-ended questions in order to report their knowledge of teaching reading, expressed their development needs, and conveyed their experiences in teaching reading. In conjunction with the questionnaire, I critiqued lesson plans to determine the use of the reading standards established by the NRP, elements in lesson plans, and the conceptual frameworks to support this investigation.

The researchers in qualitative studies gather data themselves by reviewing documents, observing behavior, or interviewing participants. Qualitative researchers usually do not use questionnaires or instruments developed by other analysts (Creswell, 2009). In this study, I gathered data through questionnaires developed for the study that

used open-ended questions, and I also analyzed lesson plans. My thoughts concerning the study and data gathered were documented in a research journal.

In qualitative research, researchers use inductive data analysis. Using the inductive process, researchers systematically view the problem examined, and look for themes, categories, or patterns, and create a generalization from the analysis of themes (Creswell, 2009). I carried out this inductive data analysis process as I reviewed data to detect themes, categories, or patterns to guide the final project in this study.

Obtaining the participants' point of view centralizes the focus of the qualitative research process (Creswell, 2009; Patton, 2002). Because of this, I sought and documented the participants' views throughout the data gathering process. Consequently, the participants' point of view emerges in this study (Creswell, 2009).

Since the researcher must remain neutral in the research process, I documented my thoughts in a research journal. The journal allowed my thoughts to be documented separately in order to give priority to the voice of the participants. Since I am an experienced educator, my views could aide in the research process. The comments from educators, however, formed the core of this case study and led to the formation of the final project (Creswell, 2008, 2009; Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010).

Qualitative researchers often use a conceptual lens to view their study. Many times, the emphasis of the study focuses on recognizing the social, political, or historical context of the problem that is being studied (Creswell, 2009; Patton, 2002). The problem of poor oral reading fluency exists locally as well as nationally and various initiatives

applied to solve this problem have failed to show improved results in fluency. I used a the conceptual frameworks of self efficacy, behaviorism, and automaticity

Qualitative research is a kind of interpretive inquiry in which analysts make an assumption based on what they view, hear, and comprehend. Their views cannot be distinguished from their own past. Having readers, participants, and the researchers all making assumptions increases the probability that more than one point of view of the problem can arise (Creswell, 2009). In order to de-emphasize my own view, I wrote my thoughts in a research journal. Only the input from the participants' point of view shall comprise this study, which remains consistent with the guidelines for a qualitative study (Creswell, 2009; Hatch, 2002).

Qualitative researchers attempt to provide a complete picture of the problem that is under study. This includes sharing more than one point of view, noting the many factors in a situation, and generally discovering the larger picture that unfolds. Viewing the multiple facets of a procedure assists in creating this holistic picture. Using the views from the participants concerning the problem and the completion of the final project, I showed the holistic account of the problem of oral reading fluency in completing the final project.

Justification of Research Design

This qualitative case study allowed me to ask guiding questions and clarify ideas to gain an in-depth needs assessment of the oral reading fluency situation at XYZ Elementary. Categories and themes emerged during the data analysis process. The use

of a case study for this research was appropriate since case studies allow investigation of more complex situations (Creswell, 2008, 2009; Hatch, 2002).

Participants

The participants of this study included four purposefully selected participants at XYZ Elementary. Purposeful sampling means individuals selected by qualitative researchers to benefit the study since these individuals understand the research problem and provide in-depth information in answering the research questions (Creswell, 2009). A total of 33 educators worked at XYZ Elementary, with one principal as the educational leader. Also, a reading coach and reading interventionist assisted with reading instruction. One counselor was employed at the school. Kindergarten and first grade classes remained with the same teacher all day. Second through fourth grades were departmentalized. At each grade level (second through fourth) one teacher taught language arts while another teacher taught math, science, and social studies. Teachers who taught reading in grades K-2 were invited to participate in the study as well as the principal, reading coach, and interventionist. The principal, reading coach, and interventionist were invited to provide added views on teaching reading based on their knowledge of teaching reading (Creswell, 2008, 2009). A total of five to seven adults were invited to participate in the study; however, only four teachers agreed to participate in the study. There was a large turnover of teachers leaving the district with substitute teachers hired in their place, and in some instances first year teachers to the district were hired.

Criteria and Justification for Selecting Participants

The invited participants included the teaching and administrative staff at XYZ Elementary. Proposed participants included two kindergarten, two first grade, and one second grade teacher. My goal was to invite a sampling that represented the variety of experience and education at XYZ Elementary. A total of 48% of educators had less than 10 years of experience while 36% of educators have from 10 to 19 years of experience. Sixteen percent of the educators have more than 20 years of experience at XYZ Elementary. No information regarding advanced degrees was available on the teachers in the district. Two percent of the staff is working toward a doctorate degree. One hundred percent of the teachers and paraprofessionals work as highly qualified in their area of employment.

These participants were purposefully selected, since they could provide the depth of the narrative information needed for qualitative research (Creswell, 2008). The selection of participants was not random, but deliberate (Creswell, 2008). The sample size for this study was bounded, which allowed the gathering of in-depth information through the open-ended questions on the questionnaire in order to gain a deep understanding of the evidence presented (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). Creswell (2008, 2009) explained that sample size may differ, but qualitative studies often involve only a few participants. For this reason, selected participants that are cognizant of strategies to improve oral reading fluency comprised the sample in this case study at XYZ Elementary School.

Procedure for Gaining Access to Participants

Gaining access to the site and participants in the study is a crucial step in any qualitative study. Permission should be sought at different levels to gain access to the site to conduct the study (Hatch, 2002; Patton, 2002). First, I approached the superintendent of the school district where the study took place to gain access to the district to conduct the study. Then I approached the principal of the school where the study took place to gain access to the site. The superintendent and principal received an invitation letter from me requesting permission to conduct the study (See Appendices B and C). The invitation letter included the purpose of the study, data collection procedures, and the approximate time to conduct the study. To protect participants, the invitation letter stated clearly that information concerning the study and their identity will remain confidential (Creswell, 2008; Lodico, Spalding, & Voegtle, 2010).

Once approval was obtained from the superintendent of the district and the principal of XYZ Elementary to access the site, approval was granted by the Institutional Review Board (IRB), which is a committee of faculty members at Walden University who review and approve research proposals. In accordance with standard practice (Creswell, 2008, 2009), I submitted my proposal to the IRB with assurances that participants' rights were protected in order to obtain approval to conduct the study.

Once approval was obtained from the district and school levels and from the Walden IRB, the next step was to approach five to seven educators that were

purposefully selected to participate in the study. Invited educators that taught reading at the kindergarten, first, or second grade levels participated in the study.

Administrators and the reading interventionist were considered, based on their knowledge of teaching reading since they did not actively teach reading. All participants who agreed to participate in the study were provided a consent form. The consent form contained background information concerning the purpose of the study, procedure for collecting data, and sample data collection questions. Information concerning voluntary participation, risk and benefits of being in the study, and the assurance of privacy was included on the form as well (See Appendix D). Hancock and Algozzine (2006), Hatch (2002), and Creswell (2008, 2009) contended that consent forms should inform participants of their rights, the purpose of the study, any known risks, benefits from participating in the study, and the researcher/participant role in the study. Taylor and others reminded us that privacy laws require confidentiality concerning the identity of participants and their responses (Hatch, 2002; Lodico, Spaulding, Voegtle, 2010). Through the use of a consent form, I informed participants that their responses would remain confidential.

Walden's IRB considers participants that are over 20 years of age and who are not pregnant as viable participants for this type of study. Creswell (2008, 2009) agreed that researchers should follow these suggestions when conducting research to gain access to a site to do qualitative research. Since I selected licensed teachers, none of the participants were under 19 years of age. To avoid possible stress from additional requirements from

cooperation in the study, I encouraged participants who were pregnant during the study to refrain from contributing (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010; Patton, 2002).

Establishing a Researcher-Participant Relationship

In a large number of studies, researchers and participants are strangers (Creswell, 2008, 2009; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Accordingly, Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtle (2010) and Hatch (2002) declared the need for a good researcher-participant relationship in qualitative studies. Overall, the researcher should be sensitive to participants and use language in the study that reflect sensitivity and appropriately describe participants and their role as a means to establish rapport (Creswell, 2008, 2009). The language used should inform participants about the scope of the study including their involvement in completing open-ended questions on a questionnaire, and an examination of lesson plans with teacher names removed.

Over the course of years, my colleagues and I have learned to build a trusting relationship through collaboration. Even though I am the colleague of invited participants, I took appropriate measures to create a comfortable environment to collect data for the study. Since teachers have additional responsibilities as a result of the hiring of a consultant to increase students' performance, I used open-ended questions on a questionnaire instead of using interviews. Open-ended questions on a questionnaire would allow educators to complete the questions at their convenience instead of being rushed during the school day and after school hours to participate in a lengthy in-depth

interview. The open-ended questions on the questionnaire provided the data needed for the creation of the final professional development activity.

Ethical Considerations

In collecting data for qualitative research, I sought an in-depth explanation of the problem. Participants may be asked to describe encounters that are private, and this procedure requires trust. As a result of the nature of qualitative research, ethical concerns may develop such as informing participants of pertinent information concerning the study through collaboration, refraining from deceptive practices, informing participants of the role of the researcher and participant, reciprocity, being respectful of the research area, using appropriate interview practices, and keeping information confidential (Creswell, 2008).

In order to assure that ethical practices were followed, I informed participants through the use of a consent form about my role as the researcher, the purpose of the study, procedures for conducting the study, their rights as a participant, any known risks, confidentially of their participation, and benefits from participating in the study. Participants knew that participation was not mandatory, and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any harm or retaliation. I did not use deceptive practices to influence this study and respect of the data collection process prevailed in this inquiry.

At XYZ Elementary, I ensured that the study's results would protect the identities of the participants. To do so, I asked the principal to remove the name of the participant

on the lesson plans. Lesson plans were reviewed without the name of the educator on the plan. In addition, I respected the research site itself. That is, I did not place at risk nor harm members of the study. I will keep the data in a locked safe for five years and then destroy the files after five years.

Data Collection

The intent of data collecting in qualitative research is to explore in great detail the main problem in the study. Qualitative researchers believe there are multiple views concerning the problem being studied. They give voice to the problem being studied through participants that have been intentionally selected to provide input through interviews and various other data collecting techniques such as observations, questionnaires, documents, and audiovisual material (Hatch, 2002; Ponterotto, 2006).

Qualitative researchers usually use more than one type of data collection method to validate results. In qualitative research, the researcher selects a primary data collection technique, and the data collection method that is used to substantiate the finding (Patton, 2002). For this reason, I used open-ended questions on a questionnaire as the primary source of data collection. Lesson plans served as the secondary source of data. In order to keep my thoughts separate from any data collected and analyzed, I used a research journal to document my thoughts during the research process. The research journal served as a secondary resource so I can cross-reference emerging ideas. These data collection techniques are explained and justified in the following subsections. Figure 2 provides an example of data collection procedures and shows how data were triangulated.

Open-ended questions regarding oral reading fluency and professional development were used in combination with lesson plans to assess the needs of educators in these areas. In order to better ensure that my opinion is kept separate from the data, I used a research journal to document my thoughts. Figure 2 shows the triangulation of data model.

Figure 2. Triangulation of Data

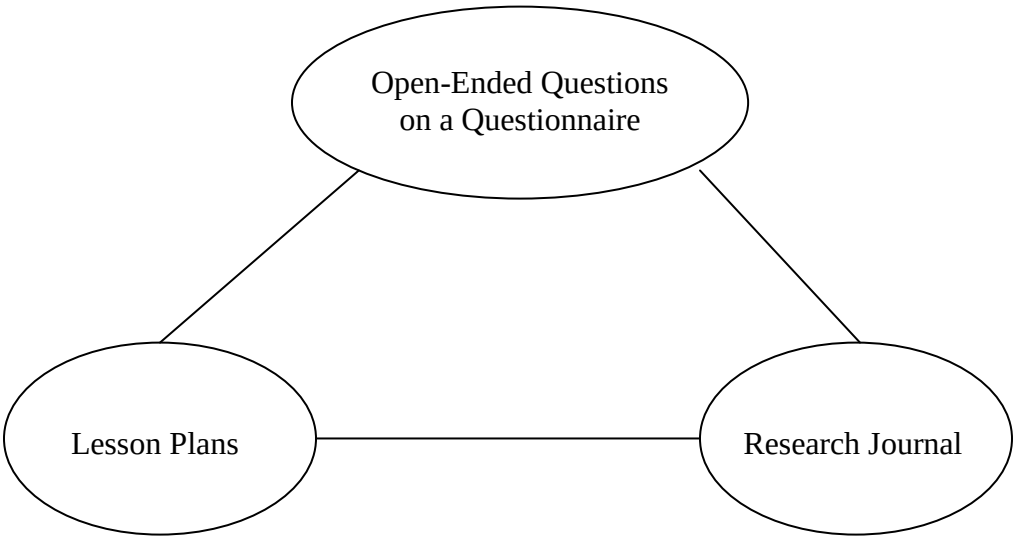

Figure 2. This figure shows the triangulation process of the data collected during the course of this investigation.

Open-ended Questions on Questionnaires and Lesson Plans

Creswell (2008) suggested using open-ended questions on a questionnaire to obtain in-depth information from participants for a qualitative study. Questions included either closed-ended questions, that is, answerable with simple predetermined responses, or open-ended questions that allowed the participants to provide responses in their own words. The advantage of using the open-ended methodology is that I was able to explore the reasons for the closed-ended data as well as identify any comments people might have

beyond the responses to the closed ended-data. This more in-depth data collection method would enable the researcher to detect the themes among participants' responses. The *Davis Oral Reading Fluency Open-Ended Questionnaire* answered the first and second research questions which included a self-assessment of needs in the areas of oral reading fluency and professional development. Refer to Appendix E for the *Davis Oral Reading Fluency Open –Ended Questionnaire.*

Lesson Plans

Documents, whether public or private, serve as an important source for obtaining information for qualitative studies. Examples of public and private documents include newspapers, lesson plans, journals, blogs, minutes from meetings, and official memos. Documents give important information to assist researchers in understanding the main phenomena in qualitative research (Creswell, 2008, 2009; Hatch, 2002). In this study, I examined the objective(s), cognitive level, and instructional strategies used in teachers' lesson plans.

I also critiqued the lesson plans to determine if the reading components established by the NRP, elements in lesson plans, and the conceptual frameworks to support this investigation existed in the lesson plans. The analysis of lesson plans supported and extended the information obtained from the questionnaire.

Research Journal

In qualitative studies, the researcher must report the thoughts of the participants, while the thoughts of the researcher must remain neutral. The voice of participants

should be heard. The researcher may experience difficulty in being impartial; therefore, the researcher can document experiences, thoughts, and reflections in a research journal (Creswell, 2008; Hatch, 2002; Ortlipp, 2008). Merriam (2002) suggested that the researcher should use a journal to reflect thoughts or experiences during the data gathering and data analysis process. Using a journal helps the researcher separate her thoughts from data collected and analyzed (Creswell, 2009; Hatch, 2002). I used a research journal to document my personal experiences during the research process, and my thoughts and reflections concerning the research data collected and analyzed. The research journal served as a secondary source to cross-reference emerging ideas as expressed in the journal.

Data Collection Plan

Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) noted that themes generally develop after 12 interviews. Hence, I sought five to seven participants to complete the open-ended questions on the questionnaire via electronic or hard copy. Potential participants included the administrator, teachers, reading coaches, and the reading interventionist at XYZ Elementary. With each participant, I explained how to complete the open-ended questions on the questionnaire.

Participants provided in-depth answers to the questions and returned the questionnaire within a week. The questionnaire responses were then coded for the development of themes. Hatch (2002) and Merriam (2002) noted that this process

coincides with the assertion that data collection and data analysis are interwoven in qualitative research.

Questioning participants using a questionnaire, transcribing, coding, and determining themes continued until all themes were explored (Creswell, 2007, 2008, 2009). In order to determine teachers' process for developing reading fluency when teaching reading, I asked for copies of lesson plans from the administrator. I examined the lesson plans for three weeks to determine if and to what extent the objective(s), cognitive levels, and instructional strategies existed. Using the criteria noted by the National Reading Panel (NRP), I critiqued the lesson plans to determine if the elements in lesson plans, and the conceptual frameworks to support this investigation, existed in the planning of lessons.

Finally, I kept a research journal to cross-reference emerging ideas. I included self-reflections and thoughts associated with the study in a journal. As the researcher, I have securely stored all data on my personal computer, jump drive, and in a locked file that will be kept for a period of five years. Only I have access to the data.

Tracking Data

From the questionnaire and documents reviewed, I collected data on a weekly basis. Collecting data on a weekly basis allowed additional opportunities for participants to submit data at their convenience. As the researcher, I saved the data in several computer drives and on a flash drive. I placed data from the study in a cataloging system

and record it in a word processing document. According to Yin (2009), this type of cataloging system will keep data and allow for organization during the data collection and data analysis process. Cross-referencing data shall continue to ensure accuracy of codes and themes. At the end of the study, I triangulated the data from the questionnaires and lesson plans. The research journal served as the third means of comparing the data in the triangulation process.

Role of the Researcher

During this research process, I served as the data collector and collator of data. The researcher serves multiple roles in qualitative research. Identifying the research topic, conducting the literature review, gaining access to the site, selecting participants, maintaining good relations with participants, collecting data, analyzing data, interpreting results, and disseminating results are some of the responsibilities of a qualitative researcher (Berg, 2004). Even though a qualitative researcher has numerous roles, the researcher serves as the main source to collect and analyze data (Merriam, 2002).

The researcher plays an important role in an investigation. The goal of the researcher when conducting qualitative research encompasses collecting accurate data in the natural setting (Creswell, 2008). This involves participants describing the situation as viewed by them; consequently, qualitative researchers should get to know the participant in the study to understand the participant's point of view (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010). In this research situation, I have been working with the participants. While addressing the regular curriculum, the teachers and I have collaborated weekly on

the progress or the lack of progress that students make in the regular classroom. We determine strategies to help students that demonstrate consistent weakness on skills. A positive relationship prevails among us as we work together to help students succeed.

Personal biases can unknowingly become a part of qualitative research. To decrease the likelihood of personal biases becoming a part of this research, I allowed participants to record their thoughts on a questionnaire through a host site. My thoughts were kept separately in a research journal to assure that they will not become a part of the study. During the research process, I used ethical practices recommended by Creswell (2008) and Ortlipp (2008). Participants participated without coercion and could have withdrawn from participating any time. Participants reviewed and signed a consent form before data were collected. I kept all data collected confidential.

Experienced researchers suggest that researchers voice their personal connections to the study upfront, rather than acting as though their prior experiences do not exist (Merriam, 2002). I acknowledge that I know that there was a problem with students learning to read fluently at XYZ Elementary. I would also like to express that I believe that educators need assistance in effectively improving reading fluency.

Data Analysis

During the initial stage of qualitative analysis, the organization of data is crucial (Auerbach, 2003; Berg, 2004; Brantlinger, Jimenez, & Klingner, 2005). Microsoft Word gave me the tool necessary to organize the file into tables. I started the analysis process

by coding the data by hand and making sure that I reviewed all crucial information. Coding allows for the understanding of narrative data, separating of narrative data into text, coding of each segment, reviewing of codes for repetition, and merging of codes into major themes (Creswell, 2008). To get a sense of the whole, I read the documents several times, then bracketed the transcript for meaning by hand, and then assigned a code to the bracketed text. I reduced similar codes into major themes.

Data analysis in qualitative research is continuous and occurs throughout the data collection process. The process involves simultaneously analyzing data while collecting data (Auerbach, 2003). I analyzed data and collected data simultaneously in the study as recommended by Hatch (2002), Merriam (2002), and Brantlinger, Jimenez, and Klingner (2005).

In order for the analysis of data to be unbiased and accurate, I included discrepant cases. Raw data were reviewed that did not support the themes developed, as espoused by (Brantinger, Jimenez, and Klingner (2005) as well as Kiriakidis (2008). Because validity increases by including disconfirming data, discrepant cases were noted in data analysis as well as in the results and conclusions. Figure 3 shows the data analysis procedure for this study.

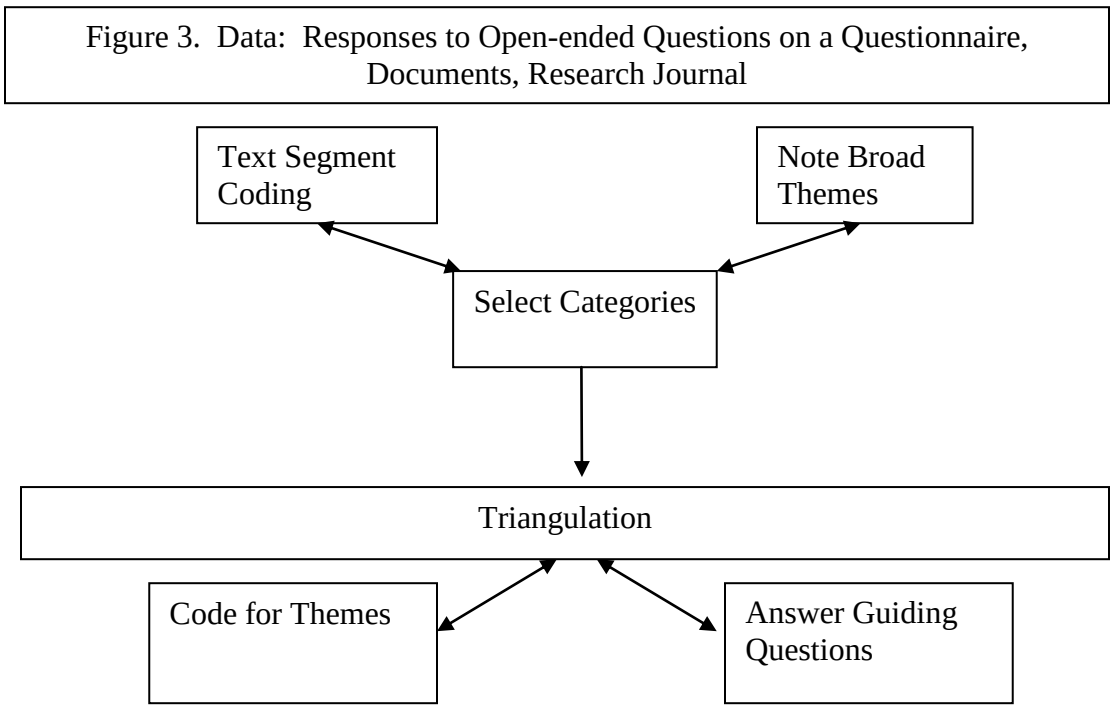

Figure 3. This drawing shows the cross checking procedure which took into account open-ended questions on a questionnaire, documents, and a research journal.

Findings

The findings of this research correlate directly with the problem: XYZ Elementary School has not met AYP since the 2004-2005 academic year. The purpose of this needs assessment was to investigate educators' perceptions of their professional development needs as they related to teaching oral reading fluency. Themes were developed from the triangulation of data to answer the guiding questions. The

themes for the first guiding question showed that recognition of the letters of the alphabet and whole word recognition strategies should be emphasized when teaching students to learn to read. Also, practice should be emphasized when teaching students to read fluently. Collaborative learning communities, teacher study groups, and workshops were determined as themes for the second guiding question. Teachers noted that the five components (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension) recognized by the National Reading Panel in 2000 are important when teaching students to read fluently. The teachers felt comfortable in teaching these components, but they were receptive to considering programs that are data driven to improve reading fluency skills. The analyzed results from the data formed the justification for this project and are explained in the subsequent section. I labeled participants by numbers to preserve their identities: Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 3, and Participant 4.

Guiding Question 1: Increasing Oral Reading Fluency

The feedback to the first guiding question, "What are educators' perceptions of additional components or skills needed to increase oral reading fluency by second grade at XYZ Elementary?" can be answered with three main themes. The triangulation of data showed that the five components established by the National Reading Panel: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension should be taught as well as recognition of the letters of the alphabet, and whole word recognition strategies. Also, the triangulation of data indicated that practice should be emphasized in order for oral reading skills to be increased at XYZ Elementary.

Components Established by the National Reading Panel: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, Comprehension

Phonemic Awareness. Three participants justified competence in teaching phonemic awareness skills by commenting that they had received training in phonemic awareness. Participant 1 commented, "I have attended professional development in the area of phonemic awareness. I implement the LIPS program in my classroom. I was trained in LIPS [Lindamood Phoneme Sequencing for Reading, Spelling, and Speech] as a college student for a class." Similarly, Participant 2 answered, "I have received training in Project Read and DIBELS. These programs very successfully give one a great awareness of phonemic awareness. I have always been very adept at phonics." Participant 4 stated, "I understand and have been taught skills on how to teach phonemic awareness to students but do [not] feel that I am an expert." When answering the question, Participant 3 did not address the question directly and instead explained that she selected the confidence level she did because she knew "if the phonemic awareness skills are developed the student have a great chance of becoming a fluent reader." As with the other components established by the National Reading Panel, analysis of the lesson plans reflected that phonemic awareness is being taught in the classroom. Lesson plans concerning phonemic awareness on the kindergarten level involved an introduction of a letter that was to be recognized while on the first grade level lesson plans included determining the position (initial, medial, or ending) of the sound studied as well as

distinguishing the difference between long and short sounds. Also according to plans on the first grade level, students were expected to segment and count phonemes. While the lesson plans reflect that the information is being taught, when compared to the participants' responses on the questionnaire, some variance with what teachers see as needed in a classroom environment versus what they feel confident in teaching existed. The responses showed that those teachers who had received training also felt confident in their ability to teach phonemic awareness. It was not possible to determine which of the four participants felt minimally confident in their ability to teach phonemic awareness skills, but it can be inferred from the responses that those teachers with training in LIPS and DIBELS spoke of their skills confidently. This showed that additional training in teaching phonemic awareness could assist in teacher confidence levels.

Phonics. A total of 75% of the participants ranked their confidence level at teaching phonics as "Very Confident." Participant 1 mentioned using additional material that discusses teaching writing. She noted that, "While teaching at another school, I was able to use Handwriting Without Tears." Handwriting Without Tears is a program designed to help educators teach handwriting using multisensory techniques and consistent habits that make learning to write easy and fun. Participant 2 showed that she tracked her students' test scores by writing, "My students have consistently improved their DIBELS scores each year." Participant 3 recognized that phonics skills are important in helping students to learn to read, while Participant 4 commented, "I feel fairly confident when teaching phonics, but again, not an expert." As with the previous

response, those who reflected additional training (DIBELS, Handwriting Without Tears), spoke of their teaching skills with confidence, while the two respondents who did not mention their training expressed their feelings with less confidence such as Participant 4's repeated phrase "not an expert." Similar to the lesson plans that involved phonemic awareness, lesson plans consistently showed that teachers were addressing phonetics in their classroom. Lesson plans on phonics on the kindergarten level required students to connect the lowercase form of the letter to the uppercase form of the letter, determine words with the same beginning and ending sounds, and match sounds to letters. Lesson plans on the first grade level required students to associate the vowels, vowel combinations, consonants, and consonant combinations sounds when learning to spell words. As before, the difference between what instructors know needs to be taught and their confidence level in teaching phonetics indicated that further professional learning in teaching phonics would be beneficial to teachers.

Comprehension. The confidence rating of participants for comprehension were the same as the rating for phonemic awareness and phonics, 75% of the participants felt very confident in teaching comprehension. Each participant explained why she felt competent in teaching comprehension skills. Participant 1 indicated, "Students are encouraged to explain what he/she reads through partner talk, group talk, illustrations, etc." Participant 3 wrote, "Students need to be able to comprehend what they read," while Participant 4 wrote, "I am more confident in this area because it is easier for me as an individual." These comments suggest that the participant who provides experiences for

her students to comprehend through various techniques and the participant who felt that she feels confident in teaching comprehension skills since comprehension is easier for her as an individual felt very confident in teaching comprehension skills. It is not clear from their comments if Respondent 2 or Respondent 3 felt minimally confident since both of their written answers reflected discomfort. Participant 4 felt more confident in teaching comprehension as compared to phonemic awareness and phonics. Lesson plans for kindergarten students in the area of comprehension expected students to understand the information in the text, recall and retell story elements and events in the story, and read text with predictable endings. Lesson plans on the first grade level in the area of comprehension required students to answer questions concerning characters, settings, and major events in stories using key details as well as retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message. While the lesson plans again reflected that teachers provide instruction on comprehension, the responses to the questionnaire show that how to balance this instruction with the other components is challenging for teachers. Participant 2, for example, explained, "In my opinion, teaching comprehension strategies is very hard to accomplish when working with children who are lacking in vocabulary and life experiences. Our school population fits into this category." This suggested that more training in the area of comprehension, particularly as a holistic approach, could enhance respondents' confidence levels.

Fluency. Very confident and minimally confident were the confidence ratings selected by participants when teaching fluency strategies skills at XYZ Elementary.

Sixty-seven percent of the participants ranked their confidence level as very competent when teaching fluency while 33% of the participants felt minimally confident. One participant skipped the question. To explain the confidence level selected, two of the participants described the strategies they use in the classroom. Participant 2 noted, "Students are given daily oral reading opportunities to use skills they have been taught" while Participant 3 wrote, "I model for my students on how they should read and that helps with fluency." These replies imply that the participant who provides students with a daily opportunity to use skills in the classroom, and the participant who models how students should read fluently felt very confident about teaching fluency skills. Analysis of the lesson plans reveal that strategies to increase fluency are used by all of the participants. Lesson plans on the kindergarten level in the area of fluency did not use the term fluently as an expectation for the skills indicated on the lesson plans whereas lesson plans for first grade students in the area of fluency indicated fluency as an expectation when reading text, and suggested rereading the text until fluency was developed. When responding to the questionnaire, in contrast, participants 1 and 4 both indicated the desire for more training or strategies to incorporate their training in the classroom. Participant 4 suggested that more training and assistance would be helpful: "More collaboration time with other teachers is needed to see what they are doing and what works for them. Additional ideas, games, activities, etc." Participant 1 was concerned about the readiness skills of students, and she has not gotten a chance to implement the strategies she learned during the summer to increase students oral reading fluency skills. She wrote, "So many

student are not ready for the grade he/she is entering that it causes several different academic levels in the classroom. I am only aware of a limited amount of strategies. This summer I attended a professional development in improving students' fluency, but have not been able to use the strategies yet to determine my confidence in the new strategies learned." Considering all of the responses provided, which participant felt minimally competent or skipped the question cannot be determined. This examination revealed that more supplemental training on strategies for teaching fluency skills was needed.

Vocabulary. A total of 50% of the participants rated their ability as very confident when teaching vocabulary skills while 50% of the participants felt minimally confident when teaching vocabulary skills. Two participants indicated that vocabulary skills are taught in the classroom. Participant 1 wrote, "I encourage students to use context clues to determine the meaning of unknown vocabulary words," and "Participant 3 noted, "Vocabulary is another key in developing fluent readers." These comments provide evidence that the participant that encouraged students to use context clues to determine the meaning of unknown vocabulary words felt very confident in their ability to teach vocabulary skills. As with the other components, analysis of the lesson plans reveal that the information would be presented in the classroom. Lesson plans on the kindergarten level in the area of vocabulary were associated with oral language with the expectation for students to express feelings, and recite rhymes. Vocabulary lesson plans on the first grade level required students to alphabetize a series of words to the first letter,

identify directional words, identify story words, and preview and predict what the story may be about. Two participants did not concentrate on teaching vocabulary skills. Despite the focus on vocabulary reflected in the lesson plans, two of the participants stated on the questionnaire that they did not emphasize this skill. Participant 2 replied, "At the kindergarten level, vocabulary is not as important as sight words and phonemic strategies" while Participant 4 communicated, "Unfortunately, I don't tend to focus a lot on vocabulary skills in my grade level. We discuss what a particular word means, but then move on." From the comments provided, it is unclear which participants ranked minimally confident as a response for teaching vocabulary skills. The comparison between goals of the lesson plans and the answers provided on the questionnaire about their practices provides evidence that not only do the respondents feel less confident overall in teaching vocabulary verses phonemic awareness, but also 2 of the participants don't see the value in focusing on teaching vocabulary at all. This showed that additional training in teaching vocabulary was needed since participants did not recognize the value of teaching vocabulary, and time was a factor. Strategies could be shared on teaching vocabulary in conjunction with the other reading skills.

Even though lesson plans showed lessons in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, a review of data revealed that 100% of the participants did not feel confident in teaching in these areas. Journal notes that I documented indicated that teachers may need support in these areas since over 50% of second grade students at XYZ Elementary earned at risk or at some risk ratings on the

(DIBELS) test in reading fluency. The triangulation of data from the questionnaire, lesson plans, and journal notes show that professional learning was needed in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. All of these data gathering procedures suggested that additional professional learning was needed in the five components suggested by the National Reading Panel to teach reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Recognition of the letters of the alphabet and Whole Word Recognition Strategies. When asked on the questionnaire, "In addition to the five components determined by the National Reading Panel and noted in this questionnaire, what other components/skills of reading instruction do you feel should be addressed in order to increase student achievement in reading fluency?" Three participants skipped the question, and one participant wrote "none." Since an answer was not provided in response to the questionnaire item, a determination was made from the triangulation of data from the review of lesson plans and journal notes that more emphasis needs to be placed on recognizing the letters of the alphabet and whole word recognition strategies. As a result of participants' response to this question, I examined their experience in teaching. Participants' experience in teaching ranged from three to 25 years. From this range of experience, the data suggested that experienced teachers felt that every component was being addressed that needed to be addressed to increase oral reading fluency; consequently, no additional component/skill should be addressed, and participants with less experience may not have been aware of additional

components/skills to address to increase oral reading fluency. From the lesson plans reviewed, phonemic awareness and phonics were taught consistently without consideration that students may still be experiencing problems with letter recognition. Also, the lesson plans revealed that the predominant method for teaching oral reading fluency was phonetically without consideration for methods to recognize words without the use of phonics and emphasis on the recognizing the letters of the alphabet to recognize whole words. The lack of responses indicated that the participants may not know of other components/skills to increase oral reading fluency which would be another indicator of the need for professional learning.

Practice. When asked, "Do you think it is important to teach reading in a systematic way by using direct instruction, repetition, drill, and practice?" the dominate response was practice. Participant 1 wrote, "The more the learner practice[es] he/she should improve. Students learn through repetition and practice." Participants 3 wrote, "The more practice, the better the skill gets. Participant 4 agreed, writing, "Students need to practice in order to get good at it." Participant 2 felt that all of the methods mentioned, direct instruction, repetition, drill, and practice, were needed. She wrote, "Those methods used consistently and in an interesting format would result in successful reading." Another question on the questionnaire that relates to practice was "How do you develop automaticity in reading in the classroom?" While two participants skipped the question, one participant wrote, "Lots of practice, flashcards, word grids, and games." Practice was provided in all areas of the lesson plans. On the kindergarten plans, practice was

indicated by worksheets, practice books, and practice pages, and review of material. On the first grade lesson plans, practice was indicated by fluency practice on oral reading, and practice was provided by students completing worksheets and practice workbooks. Even though practice was indicated on the lesson plans, the school performance was in decline, indicating that more practice was needed.

Guiding Question 2: Increasing Oral Reading Fluency

The second guiding question, "What types of professional development do educators perceive will assist them in improving the oral reading fluency skills of students at XYZ Elementary?" was answered with three themes: collaborative learning communities, teacher study groups, and workshops. Support for the themes was determined by repeated comments on the questionnaire and ratings on the question, "Rank the following five types of professional development strategies, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest ranked. The ranking will demonstrate what you think benefits you the most in order to increase oral reading fluency with students. If you have a suggestion for another type(s) of professional development that would meet your needs to increase oral reading fluency, please check the blank for other and indicate the type(s) of professional development in the space provided."

Collaborative Learning Communities

According to the question, Rank the following five types of professional development strategies: collaborative learning, teacher study groups, lesson studies, book studies, and workshops with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest ranked. If you

have a suggestion for another type(s) of professional development that would meet your needs to increase oral reading fluency, please check the blank for other and indicate the type(s) of professional development. Based on the analysis of data, collaborative learning communities was ranked the highest to this question. In order to support their response, Participant 2 stated, "I believe teachers learn best from each other sharing successful teaching strategies." Participant 3 stated, "It takes a village to raise a child and to help them succeed." Participant 4 wrote, "I enjoy seeing what others are doing and what works for them." Responses from other questions shows the consistency of the belief that collaborative learning was the most preferred method for professional learning. For example, when responding to the questions on the questionnaire concerning support to teach phonemic awareness, more collaboration time with other teachers was a response. Additionally, the response was more collaboration with teachers for support to increase oral reading fluency skills with students. Finally, the response was collaboration time with teaches for support to improve students' comprehension skills.

Teacher Study Groups & Workshops

Since teacher study groups and workshops were ranked following collaborative learning communities, the data showed teachers prefer interpersonal interaction when working in groups rather than working independently. All of these showed that professional learning sessions are not only important for increasing teacher effectiveness, but also were the preferred method of professional learning.

Discrepant Data

Generally, themes emerge from data that are repeated from participants (Creswell, 2008; Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010), but every participant did not agree on the first guiding question. Comparison between responses to the questionnaire and the lesson plans showed that while lesson plans incorporate all five components the instructors did not see the value in emphasizing all five equally. An analysis of data showed that participants agreed on responses to the second guiding question, the method of professional development.

Conclusion

This segment includes an analysis of the qualitative case study approach and conclusions from this research. This study derived systemically from the problem in the research and the projected aim of the project. A description of participants was given as well as the process for collecting and analyzing data. Open ended questions on a questionnaire, research journal, and an analysis of lesson plans were used as data collection methods and were explained qualitatively. Findings were indicated systematically in correlation with the problem and guiding questions. The first guiding question was addressed with the five components suggested by the National Reading Panel: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension in addition to recognition of the letters of the alphabet, whole word recognition strategies, and practice. Responses to the second guiding question provided three themes: collaborative learning communities, teacher study groups, and workshops. Discrepant data were

revealed in only the first guiding question. Discrepant data included a variance between lesson plans and the stated value of the teachers. Conclusions were used to support the development of a project: A Reading Professional Development Program (RPDP). Section 3 includes a thorough representation of the project and section 4 includes reflections and conclusions. The RPDP is included in Appendix A.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

To obtain excellence in reading for all students, educators must be cognizant of effective strategies in this subject area and engage in professional development that supports them in becoming experts in the use of these strategies (Kennedy, 2010; Killion, 2014; Lyon & Weiser, 2009; Moats, 2009; Perconti, 2010; Podhajski, Mather, Nathan, & Sammons, 2009; Vermont Department of Education, 2011). The first part of this section includes the description and goals of the project to increase students' oral reading fluency by second grade, while the next segment includes the rationale for the project. The third part includes a review of the literature, and the subsequent segment explains how the project will be implemented. The fifth portion includes the project evaluation. The final sections include implications including social change, followed by a conclusion.

Description and Goals

The concept for this project originated from the need for students to improve oral reading fluency skills by the time they complete second grade at XYZ Elementary. Educators need effective professional development in order for students to become successful readers by second grade and experience continued success in subsequent years as students (Kennedy, 2010; Podhajski, Mather, Nathan, & Sammons, 2009). To examine the problem of poor oral reading fluency at XYZ Elementary and the need for professional development in this area, I conducted a qualitative case study. The results of the study have guided the development of a systematic program that addresses the

problem of poor oral reading fluency. The framework for the project is based on seven research based standards from learning forward professional standards (learning forward, 2011). These standards shape the basic premise of the project, which can impact all students through educator training. The standards are as follows:

1. Learning Communities: Professional learning that improves teachers' performance within the district.
2. Leadership: Professional development that enhances educators' proficiency and outcomes, which can impact all students require trained leaders who design support systems for professional learning.
3. Resources: Professional learning that improves educators' performance, and requires selecting appropriate resources for educator learning.
4. Data: Professional development that improves educators' proficiency and outcomes to benefit all students uses an array of sources and types of student, educator, and system data, assess, and guide professional learning.
5. Learning Designs: Professional development that improves educator effectiveness and results in teachers 'ability to assimilate theories, research, and models of human learning to accomplish projected outcomes.
6. Implementation: Professional learning that enhances the instructors' competency and outcomes for all students, uses research on change, and maintains support for implementation of professional learning for long term change.

7. Outcomes: Professional learning that improves teacher effectiveness and outcomes for all students, aligns its results with teacher effectiveness and student curriculum standards. (p.1)

The project addressed the problem identified in Section 1, which is XYZ Elementary School's failure to meet AYP since the 2004-2005 academic year. At XYZ Elementary, between 2007 and 2009, over 50% of second grade students scored at some risk or at risk in oral reading fluency skills (Louisiana Department of Education-Spring Progress Report, 2007, 2008, 2009). In 2010 and 2011, over 40% of second grade students scored at some risk or at risk in oral reading fluency (Louisiana Department of Education 2010, 2011). The project primarily addressed the oral reading fluency problem at XYZ Elementary and provided professional development that should support teachers' efforts to improve students' oral reading fluency skills. The project further addressed the identified problem since the project is comprehensive in that it included the major components of reading instruction and suggested best practices for teaching these strategies according to the theoretical frameworks of self-efficacy, behaviorism, and automaticity. According to the National Reading Panel (2000), the major components for reading instruction are phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and, comprehension.

The district can possibly use this project on a broader scale by increasing second grade comprehension. Suggestions for best practices for these components align with the theories used in this study. The ultimate goal of this project was to improve students'

progress in oral reading fluency by second grade at XYZ Elementary through professional development for educators. Additionally, this project aimed at consistently improving the reading performance of all students by examining the current performance level of students and increasing their oral reading fluency performance following the implementation of this project. In summary, this project provided adequate support to educators locally through professional development in order to develop oral reading fluency skills by second grade, and subsequently more students may progress at each grade level in order to graduate from high school and enter the workforce or continue learning in higher education.

Participants in the study responded to the first guiding question concerning what other components and skills were needed to increase oral reading fluency by second grade by reporting that students acquire recognition of the letters of the alphabet, whole word recognition strategies, and practice skills. The areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension founded by the National Reading Panel (2000) were included in the project as well. The eight professional development sessions were arranged in this order: recognition of the letters of the alphabet, phonemic awareness, phonics, whole word recognition strategies, fluency, vocabulary comprehension, and practice. There was a three-hour session on each of the eight topics with the option for additional assistance on a one-on-one basis at the school site on the components and skills found in this research and on the areas noted by the National Reading Panel in 2000. The evaluation explained the purpose, criteria, and major

outcomes to address the local needs. Participants were encouraged to complete a formative evaluation after each professional development session as well as a summative evaluation at the completion of the professional development sessions to increase oral reading fluency by second grade.

Rationale

The rationale for this project was that the low test scores at XYZ Elementary, where over 50% of students earned at risk or at some risk ratings in the area of reading fluency, was a pervasive problem that needed to be addressed. This problem was also prevalent at the state and national levels (Boulton, 2012; Bracey, 2009; KIDS COUNT, 2007, 2009, 2011; Louisiana Department of Education- iLEAP 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011; Louisiana Department of Education-Spring Progress Report 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011; The Nation's Report Card, 2011). I created this particular project since research has shown that positive self-efficacy (Putman, 2009) and the structured teaching of reading improves student performance in learning to read (Gokmenoglu, Eret, & Kiraz, 2010). All of the study participants felt that positive self-efficacy and teaching reading using a structured method was important for student learning. I also developed this project as a result of the data collected and analyzed during the qualitative case study described in Section 2. Results indicated that educators need to emphasize recognition of the letters of the alphabet, whole word recognition strategies, and practice as well as the five components recognized by the National Reading Panel in 2001 for improving oral reading fluency. The participants felt that that collaborative learning communities,

teacher study groups, and workshops were efficient forms of professional development for this project.

The content of this project addresses the problem by offering strategies to improve oral reading fluency in the areas of recognition of the letters of the alphabet, phonemic awareness, phonics, whole word recognition strategies, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and practice. The theoretical foundation for this research uses the theories of self-efficacy, behaviorism, and automaticity. The synthesis of information from the content areas of the project and the application of the theories should produce more students reading fluently by second grade and an improvement in district graduation rates.

Review of the Literature

Introduction

There is an ongoing need for professional learning to improve students' performance in meeting academic standards established by the enrolling district (learning forward, 2011; Manathunga, 2011). Whether administrators label professional learning as in-service, staff development, or professional learning, the goal has been to increase student performance to meet targeted goals (learning forward, 2011). Educators use various procedures, approaches, and standards to develop and implement professional learning. This researched focused on standards revised by learning forward (2011), which include learning communities, leadership, resources, data, learning designs, implementation, and outcomes. These standards note the aspects of professional

learning that influence effective teacher procedures, supportive leadership, and increased student outcomes.

This review was organized around the standards developed by the NSDC, which is presently known as learning forward. Staff developers of the 1940s and 1950s stressed research and the need for change at both the individual and group levels. Researchers in this time period emphasized the importance of a supervisor in developing a social atmosphere involving mutual support and trust for professional learning (Coffey & Goldin, 1957). In the 1960s and 1970s, the major concentration of professional development was on teacher behavior and how new procedures learned through professional development could change their behavior. The new procedures were research based and centered on transferring the information learned during professional development back into the classroom (Manathunga, 2011; Smith, Hofer, Gillespie, Solomon, & Rowe, 2003). The emphasis shifted toward school improvement and the part professional development played in aiding school reform in the 1980s (Smith, Hofer, Gillespie, Solomon, & Rowe, 2003). In the early 1990s, the focus shifted toward student achievement and the need for professional development to improve students' performance. During this time, there was an emphasis on accountability in education. In the late 1990s, the concentration shifted to teacher quality and the need for professional development to help teachers develop into high-quality teachers (Smith, Hofer, Gillespie, Solomon, & Rowe, 2003). More recently, the focus has been on educators determining

for themselves what is considered useful through collaboration (Carpenter & Sherrettz, 2012; learning forward, 2011).

In the past, educators used various approaches to professional development. Professional days were designated for teachers on the school calendar (Elbousty & Bratt, 2010; Smith, 2012), yet the days were not always used for professional development. Some districts allowed teachers to use professional development time to work in their classroom (Richardson, 2007). Other districts required teachers to attend workshops on new procedures in teaching varied subject matter (Duncan, 2011; Richardson, 2007) rather than using student data to determine the workshop that teachers should attend (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2010; Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009; Elbousty & Bratt, 2010; Love, 2009; Smith, 2012. Hence, according to Wilson and Berne (1999), Richardson (2007), and Mizell, Hord, Killion, and Hirsh, (2011), few teachers implemented the new processes learned in the professional development.

As various approaches to professional development continued to emerge, educators began to develop professional development standards. In 1995, the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) developed its first set of professional standards. The NSDC was a non-profit organization of over 8000 educators. These educators were committed to assuring success for all students through effective professional development. The standards developed in 1995 were developed from the efforts of over 50 educators. Standards for professional development included the areas of context, process, and content (Standard for Staff Development: Elementary School Edition Study

Guide, 1995). In 2001, the NSDC revised the standards to reflect what the NSDC and the broader staff development community had learned about professional learning since the creation of the original standards in 1995 ([NSDC] Standards for Staff Development, 2007). The name changed from NSDC to learning forward in 2010. Learning forward established new standards in 2011 (Information Specialist, learning forward, personal communication May 13, 2013). As with the NSDC, learning forward has continued to be committed to enhancing professional learning for student success. Its vision has been to ensure that every educator engages in purposeful professional leaning that generates student success (learning forward, 2011; Mizell, Hord, Killion, & Hirsh, 2011).

Organizers of learning forward endorsed seven standards as a guide for excellence in professional learning. Further, these standards lead teachers to acquire improved teaching practices and supportive leadership (learningforward, 2011). Search attempts to find studies related to the seven standards included the following terms: *professional development, in-service training, staff development, professional development, learning communities, leadership, resources, data, learning design, implementation, and outcomes*. Academic databases used to search for information included Google, Google Scholar, ERIC, Education Research Complete, Education from SAGE, Academic Search Complete, Teacher Reference Center, and Teacher Reference Center. Full text articles and abstracts were reviewed concerning in-services, professional development, staff development, and professional learning.

Learning forward uses research-based guidelines that support districts in coordinating local professional development programs. These standards are influenced by the connection between professional learning and student results as follows:

- When professional learning is standards-based, there is a greater chance to alter what educators learn, do, and believe.
- When educators know more about pedagogy and strategies, they have an array of effective strategies to use to address student learning needs.
- When teachers' performance improves, students have an improved chance of achieving at a higher level (Key Points in Learning Forward's Definition of Professional Development, 2010; National Standards for Professional Learning- learning forward, 2005).

When students' performance increases, they are likely to continue to improve as they matriculate through school (National Standards for Professional Learning-Learning Forward, 2005). Professional learning standards are a foundation to create professional learning experiences at the district or school level to guide that improvement. These standards can support educators in obtaining the needed education to enhance student learning. The standards developed by learning forward are considered the current and most effective standards for professional development (Information Specialist, learning forward, personal communication, May 13, 2013).

The subsequent sections are framed by learning forward standards and validated by recent research from varied references that support the fundamental belief concerning

effective professional development for teachers. Additional headings and information will be concerning the 7 standards established by learning forward which include learning communities, leadership, resources, data, learning designs, implementation, and outcomes.

Learning communities. Research notes several purposes that are given for the use of a professional learning community in the educational arena (Darling-Hammond, Wel, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009; DuFour, 2004). First, the purpose of learning communities is to ensure that all students learn (Darling-Hammond, Wel, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009; DuFour, 2000; Easton, 2012; Elbousty & Bratt, 2010; Smith, 2012; Tobia & Hord, 2012). The student body benefits from the resourcefulness and expertise of every educator. Next, learning communities generate a culture of collaboration (Attard, 2012; de Grott, Endedijk, Jaarsma, Simons, van Beukelen, 2014; Eason, 2012; Easton, 2013; Elbousty & Bratt, 2010; Ferguson, 2013; Garrett, 2010; McConnell, Parker, Eberhardt, Koehler, & Lundeberg, 2013; Richmond & Manokore, 2010; Riveros, Newton, & Burgess, 2012; Sackey, 2012; Scott, 2011; Servage, 2009; Smith, 2012; Southwest educational development laboratory (SEDL) Introduction , 2013; Thornton & Cherrington, 2014; Tobia, & Hord, 2012). Participants of the learning community network about their practice, visit each others' classroom, and use each others' resources (Elbousty & Bratt, 2010; Murrer, Frizzell, & Yoshioka, 2015; Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL), 2O13; Standards for professional Learning Communities, 2012; Tobia & Hord, 2012). Third, learning

communities collaborate for school and district improvement (DuFour, 2004; Killion, 2011). Opportunities are provided throughout the school year to review assessments. Strengths and weakness are identified in order to raise student achievement in both areas in classrooms. Fourth, barriers should be removed that hinder learning communities from being successful (DuFour, 2004). Lack of time, educators failing to endorse the idea of collaboration, and lack of training in collaboration are major barriers that inhibit the development of learning communities at the school and district levels (Lujan & Day, 2009). Finally, learning communities focus on results (DuFour, 2004; Garrett, 2010). All teacher teams participate in continuously identifying the current level of students' achievement and determining a goal to increase that current level. Learning communities use steps to enhance the learning process for educators and students (Ermeling, Gallimore, 2013; Watson, 2014; Wiedrick, 2011). Some school districts establish their own steps for establishing guidelines for the professional learning community while others may seek assistance from consultants (Ermeling & Gallimore, 2013; Garrett, 2010). Steps established by learningforward (2011) and other researchers are indicated below.

- Students' and educators' learning needs are determined by the use of data (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2010; Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009; DuFour, 2004; Elbousty & Bratt, 2010; Love, 2009; Smith, 2012; Standards for Professional Learning-

Learning Communities, 2012) or other determined means such as a learning support team (Wiedrick, 2011).

- Shared goals of students and educators are identified (Hillard & Newsome, 2013; Huffman, 2011; Smith, 2012; Standards for Professional Learning, 2012; Tidwell, Wiedrick, 2011; Wymore, Garza, Estrada, & Smith, 2011).
- Information is shared concerning how students learn, classroom management, content knowledge, and content-specific pedagogy is shared among the learning community (Elbousty & Bratt, 2010; Richmond & Manokore, 2010; Southwest Educational Development Laborary (SEDL) Introduction, 2013; Standards for Professional Learning-Learning Communities, 2012).
- Evidence-based strategies to achieve student and educator learning goals are chosen and applied at the school level (Standards for Professional Learning-Learning Communities, 2012; Wiedrick, 2011).
- Strategies are continuously monitored, refined, and evaluated to achieve optimum results (Darling-Hammond, Wel, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009; Garrett, 2010; Hilliard & Newsome, 2013; New Standards Put the Spotlight on Professional Learning,

2012; Standards for Professional Learning-Learning Communities, 2011; Wiedrick, 2011).

Learning communities are a continuous source of support for improvement and use of school and district wide programs (Abrego & Pankake, 2011; Dickson & Mitchell, 2014; Duncan, 2011; Hoffman, Dahlman, Zierdt, 2009; Leclerc, Moreau, Dumouchel, & Sallafranque-St-Louis, 2012; Lieberman & Miller, 2011; Owen, 2014; Psencik, Brown, Cain, Coleman, & Cummings, 2014; Van Lare & Brazer, 2013; Wells & Feun, 2013). To avert any discourse among participants of a learning community, leaders in the professional learning community develop policies that hold members accountable and accomplish outcomes (DuFour, 2007). These guidelines and supports are concurrent with the vision and goals of the learning community. Learning communities adjust their goals with those of the school and school district. When professional learning is conducted with high expectations, shared goals, professionalism, and peer accountability, the students and school system are improved (Standards for professional Learning-Learning Communities, 2012; Tobia & Hord, 2012).

Leadership. Students achieve at a higher level in schools where school leaders support professional learning (Education Week, 2005; Mizell, 2012) as compared to leaders of schools that do not support professional learning (Fahey, 2012; Natsiopoulou & Giouroukakis, 2010). Leclerc, Moreau, Dumouchel, and Louis (2012) noted that leaders must apply leadership skills that will allow the school to work as a professional learning community in order for student learning to be at its peak. Voicing the vision

of the school, encouraging teacher learning, and collaboration are some of the strategies used by leaders (Devos, Tuytens, & Hulpia, 2014; Fahey, 2011; Heikka & Hujala, 2013; Kise, 2012; Psencik, Brown, Cain, Coleman, & Cummings, 2014; Sheppard, Hurley, & Dibbon, 2010; Wahlstrom York-Barr, 2011). Duncan (2011) found that leaders that promote a culture of continual renewal through professional learning are best able to assist students to excel and improve their lives. Principals often use distributive leadership in order for these improvements to be made in the staff and student body (Fusarelli, Kowalski, & Petersen, 2011; Mayrowetz, 2008).

According to Natsiopoulou and Giouroukakis (2010), the distributive leadership concept permits the leader at the school to allow the staff to work as a network of individuals that bring their expertise together productively. Principals share authority and power in order to allow teachers to take leading roles and responsibilities (Natsiopoulou & Giouroukakis, 2010). Mullen (2011) found that leaders that support the distributive leadership concept afford teachers the opportunity to grow professionally as instructional leaders. Hence, principals realize that in order for students to continue to excel at high levels, leadership has to be distributed to accomplish individual, team, school, and school system goals (Mullen, 2011; Natsiopoulou & Giouroukakis, 2010).

The leader's role in schools is crucial to improving the quality of the teaching and learning process (Braun, Gable, & Kite, 2011; Sheppare, Hurley, & Dibbon, 2010). Leaders who distribute leadership that allows the staff to work collaboratively as a

professional learning community expand the knowledge, skills, and practices of educators (Supovitz, Riggan, Consortium for Policy Research in, E., 2012). Essentially, these distributive leaders are creating schools that support professional learning through collaboration, and as a result there is continuous improvement for students (Sheppare, Hurley, & Dibbon, 2010).

Resources. According to Learning Forward (2012), technology, time, materials, and staff are resources for professional development. All of these resources are dependent on the amount of funding that is available in a district and how the funding is appropriated. If adequate funding is available and budgeted appropriately for resources, professional learning could lead to teachers using effective teaching practices that improve students' performance (Killion & Hirsh, 2012; Mindich & Lieberman, 2012; Odden, 2011; Sackey, 2012). Slabine (2012) concluded that prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for teachers is required in order to improve teacher effectiveness and results for students.

The prioritization of resources improves the quality of educators' learning experiences (Killion & Hirsh, 2013; learning forward – Resources, 2012; Odden, 2011; Slabine, 2012). Equal allocations of resources, and an examination of priorities to achieve the desired outcomes for educators and students should be considered when planning for professional learning (Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Killion & Hirsh, 2012). Opportunities to learn in the area of weakness for teachers and students should be a top priority of the district in order for all students to achieve at their highest level.

Prioritizing the allocation of resources based on the equal allotment of resources to address areas of weakness increases the opportunity for all educators to receive individual, team, or school-based support to promote continuous student improvement in a district (Horn & Little, 2010; Killion & Hirsh, 2012; learning forward-Resources, 2012; Odden, 2011; Slabine, 2012).

Multiple sources may be used to obtain resources for professional learning. Some sources may include government appropriations, public organizations, and private institutions. Educators themselves may serve as a source to obtain resources (Herrmann, 2011; Jaquith, Mindich, Wei, & Darling-Hammond, 2010; Killion & Hirsh, 2012; Loeb, Miller & Strunk, 2009; Odden, 2011; Slabine, 2012). Regardless of the source, it is necessary to monitor the resources (Desimore, 2010-2011; Jaquith, Mindich, Wei, & Darling-Hammond, 2010). Some expenses are easy to monitor. These expenses include the cost for consultants, materials, staff, registrations, stipends for mentor teachers, and relief teachers (learning forward-Resources, 2012; Vaden-Kiernan, Jones, & McCann, 2009). Other expenses are more challenging to monitor. These expenses include technology used for professional learning and the time educators are involved in job-embedded professional learning (learning forward - Resources, 2012). A challenge is to determine the efficiency of the appropriations without a thorough method to record and monitor the resources (Killion & Hirsh, 2012; learning forward-Resources, 2012; Odden, 2011).

Killion and Hirsh (2012) found that the amount of funding varies since there is a lack of consistency concerning what constitutes investments in professional learning. Generally, school districts in the United States spend between 1% and 8% of their operating budget on professional learning (Killion & Hirsh, 2012). In higher performing schools universally, investments in professional learning for teachers and administrators is much higher (Killion & Hirsh, 2012; learning forward-Resources, 2012).

Slabine (2012) recognized that it is the responsibility of educators and stakeholders to coordinate resources appropriately for effective use in schools. They work together to make decisions concerning the allocation of resources and critique the effectiveness of resources appropriated for professional learning (Desimore, 2010-2011; Jaquith, Mindich, Wei, Darling-Hammond, 2010; Killion & Hirsh, 2013; Mizell, 2012; Odden, 2011). Leaders review and suggest adjustments to policies, regulations, and agreements related to professional learning to be sure that the resources invested in professional learning achieve their intended results (Desimone, 2009; Killion & Hirsh, 2012). With initiatives coming to districts from multiple sources, coordinating the resources in alignment with a district's needs is important to assuring success for the district to meet its outcomes (Jaquith, Mindich, Wei, Darling-Hammond, 2010; Killion& Hirsh, 2012; learning forward-Resources, 2012; Odden, 2011; Sawchuk, 2010; Slabine, 2012).

Data. Reeves & Fluch (2010) found that educators use multiple sources of data to assist them in making decisions concerning professional learning that will lead to improved student performance at the school and district levels. Multiple sources include work samples, performance, observations, portfolios, self-reports, metrics, and formative and summative assessments (Holcomb, 2013; Tidwell, Wymore, Garza, Estrada, & Smith, 2011; Torma, 2011). The analysis of data from multiple sources provides a detailed and comprehensive review of student, educator, and system performance (Helman, Burns, & McComas, 2015; Hill & Rapp, 2012; Holcomb, 2013; Mindich & Lieberman, 2012; Pella, 2012; Torma, 2011).

Student data includes daily classroom work, classroom assessments, benchmark, as well as achievement data such as grades, and formal and informal assessment (learning forward – Data, 2014). Additional forms of student data are attendance, demographics, student perceptions, engagement, behavior, discipline, participation in extracurricular programs, and post-graduation education (Goren, 2012; Holcomb, 2013). Data concerning students are helpful when determining goals for professional learning (Berg, Bosch, Lesion-Joseph, & Souvanna, 2013; Darling-Hammond, 2009; Jensen & Moller, 2013; Reeves & Flach, 2011; Torma, 2011). The analysis of student data helps educators to be cognizant of where students are functioning in conjunction with the curriculum standards and to determine the focus for educator professional learning (Boehle, 2013; Killion & Kennedy, 2012; Smith, Johnson, & Thompson, 2012; Tidwell, Wymore, Garza, Estrada, & Smith; 2011).

Odden (2011) found that educator professional learning needs are determined by deficiencies found by examining student data. Data of students are analyzed (Darling-Hammond, 2009; Kin & Taft, 2014), but examining student data alone is not enough (Chapman, Ortloff, Weaver, Vesey, Anderson, Marquez, & Sanchez, 2013; Goren, 2012). Educators' perceptions, preparation information, performance on various assessments, student results, and individual professional learning goals are to be used along with student data to determine educators' learning needs for professional learning (Goren, 2012; Kise, 2012; Reeves & Flach, 2011; Smith, Johnson, & Thompson, 2012; Torma, 2011). Teachers obtain critical information through these assessments concerning the impact of their teaching on student performance (Elbousty & Bratt, 2010; Herman, Wardrip, Hall, Chimino, 2012; Jimerson, 2013; Psencik & Baldwin, 2012). The increase in student performance serves as a powerful motivator for teachers to continue to enhance their skills in teaching through professional learning (Desimore, 2009; Hirsh & Killion, 2009; learning forward – Data, 2014; Mindich & Lieberman, 2012).

Along with teachers, school system administrators engage in collecting and analyzing data to obtain a holistic view of the school or district (Reeves & Flach, 2011; Szczepaniak, 2010). Strengths and weaknesses are reviewed from data before suggesting a plan for improving the district (Holcomb, 2013; Hord, 2012; Robinson & Dimgba, 2014). The district wide plan may include specific goals and objectives based on data. Responsible persons, time-lines, and outcomes should be considered as well in the plan. Collectively, administrators should be able to convey where the district is at any given

time, where the district needs to be, how the district will close the achievement gap, and how progress will be monitored and evaluated using data from the plan (Chenoweth & Theokas, 2012; Hord, 2012). The plan is important for administrators to achieve gains in student achievement (Hilliard & Newsome, 2013; Holcomb, 2013; Tidwell, Wymore, Garza, Estrada, & Smith, 2011).

The evaluation of professional learning involves the examination of data from many areas. Fiscal, personnel, and time allocations are examined (Killion & Hirsh, 2012). Frequency of participation, level of engagement, and type of communication are measured. Also, changes in educator practice and student achievement are evaluated (Killion & Hirsh, 2012). The evaluation of data from these areas provide the needed information for those who promote, plan, facilitate, and support professional learning (Chenoweth & Theokas, 2012). Ultimately, the evaluation of professional learning using data informs those that want to know about the contribution of professional learning on student achievement (Desimone, 2010-2011; learning forward - Data, 2014).

Learning Designs. Educators, neuroscientists, and psychologist have researched and analyzed the learning process for years and found that synthesizing research, theories, and models of human learning contribute to the effectiveness of the professional learning experience (Drago-Severson, 2011; Kennedy, 2012). The findings from research, theories, and human models of learning support the work educators use to design professional learning (Joyce & Calhoun, 2011; learning forward – Learning Designs, 2012; Levine, 2010; Rosemary & Feldman, 2009; Trust, 2012; Vanderven,

2009). Common features of the many designs that exist include modeling, metacognition, application, and feedback (Broderick, 2011). Additional common features include active engagement, ongoing support, formative assessment, and summative assessment (Hirsh, 2011; Rosemary & Feldman, 2009; Vasumathi, 2010). The efficient use of these features during the professional learning experience enhances the skills, knowledge, and practice of educators (Boderick, 2011; learning forward – Learning Designs, 2012; Rosemary, & Feldman, 2009).

Baker (2008) concluded that one of the most effective ways to design professional learning is through active engagement. Active involvement in professional learning improves the practice of educators in the classroom by allowing educators to collaborate during the professional learning experience in the content area and with each other (Blank, 2013; Carnahan, Musti-Rao, & Bailey, 2009; Ching-Huei, 2011; Drago-Severson, 2011; Glass, Henderson, Barnum, Kronenberg, Blair, Jenkins, & Hurel, 2010; Harwood & Bork, 2011). Examples of active involvement include writing demonstrations, inquiry, reflection, metacognition, coaching, and modeling. Also, discussion and dialogue, co-construction of knowledge, practice with feedback, and problem solving are considered active involvement (Drago-Severson, 2011; Hirsh, 2011). As a result of active involvement in professional learning, educators are respected as professionals for their comments when developing their own learning. Educators are motivated to apply the information learned in professional learning since they had a voice in shaping their learning experience (Berry, Daughtrey, & Wieder, 2010). Active

engagement allows professional learning participants to actively develop, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize knowledge to achieve positive outcomes for students (Joyce & Calhoun, 2011; Stinson, 2011).

Several factors affect the quality and success of the design of professional learning. These elements include resources to conduct the professional learning experiences, goals of the professional learning experience, traits of learners and their knowledge of the content, and educators' comfort with the learning experience. Educators' work environment and the amount of expected change influence the quality and effectiveness of the learning design as well (Blank, 2013; Hirsh, 2013). Regardless of the factors impacting quality, the intent of the professional learning experience is to improve the effectiveness of the educator in the classroom (Blank 2013; Vasumathi, 2010).

Miao, Marcel van der Klink, Sleep and Koper (2009) found that professional learning may be designed to be conducted face to face, online, or in a hybrid setting. The professional learning experience may be designed to concentrate on individual learning, teams based learning, or whole-school learning (learning forward-Learning Design, 2012). Some professional learning is conducted during the school day (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009; Trust, 2012). An example would be job-embedded learning designs (Croft, Coggshall, Dolan, Powers, & Killion, 2010; Hunzickers, 2011; Killon, 2013). Job-embedded learning designs include case studies, student observation, data analysis, and study groups. Also, analyzing student

data, co-teaching with peers, peer coaching, expert coaching, and examining educator or student work are examples of job-embedded learning designs (Hirsh, 2011; Hunzickers, 2010; Kennedy, 2012; Rosemary & Feldman, 2009). Other forms of professional learning are held after the school day (Killion, 2013; Sargent & Hannum, 2009). Learning designs for the professional development experience may be a workshop or course (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009; Killion, 2013). Learning may be designed as live, in print, or nonprint. Professional learning activities should be designed in order that skills and procedures maybe modeled or practiced, and support transfer of learning to the classroom (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009; Killion, 2013; learning forward-Learning Design, 2012).

According to Hirsh (2011), educators should consider the intended outcome determined from the analysis of student and educator learning needs regardless of the learning design chosen. Learning designs should allow educators to apply the strategies that lead educators to master the intended outcomes that are useful to assist them in moving beyond comprehension on the surface of a new strategy to develop a complete understanding of the concept (Guskey, 2012; Vasumathi, 2010). Murphy and Calway (2008) concluded that in order to increase student learning, learning designs should provide many opportunities for educators to practice new learning so that the new learning becomes routine behavior on the goal projected for the school or district.

Implementation. According to Aguilern and Zepeda (2013), " professional learning is a process of continuous improvement focused on achieving clearly defined

student and educator goals rather than an event defined by a predetermined number of hours" (p. 2). Thus, endorsing and maintaining implementation for a long-term change is a procedure that occurs over a long period of time (Hall & Hord, 2011; Roy, 2010; Stinson, 2011). Ermeling (2012) recognized that educational leaders demonstrate long-term change by establishing clear goals, attaining high expectations, and by providing intense follow-up. Support is needed from the administration for implementation to infix new strategies into practice in the classroom (Brown, 2013; Linder, Post, & Calabrese, 2012; Long, Labone, & Nicholson, 2009; Roy, 2010; Stinson, 2011). The implementation of new methods through ongoing participation in professional learning is the goal of professional learning since it incites improvement in educators' strategies and increases student learning (Ermeling & Gallimore, 2013; Hall & Hord, 2011; Klein & Riordan, 2009; Reeves & Flach, 2011; Vermont Department of Education, 2011). Roy (2010) agreed that on-going professional learning affords educators the opportunity to improve from being a non-professional to a professional by extending the learning periods provided to implement new learning from the professional learning activity. Studies support the implementation of professional learning by the learning being continuous (Hall & Hord, 2011; Kind, 2014; Knight, 2009; Miller & Kritsonis, 2009; Roy, 2010).

Research conducted by Klein and Riordan (2009) established that occasional professional learning has only a small impact on educator practice since on-going support and feedback are not provided concerning the implementation of new strategies.

Prolonged formal professional learning is relevant to increase educators 'skills and strategies, and to provide networking opportunities for participants (Klein & Riordan, 2009). Educators need three to five years of continuous support is needed to integrate new concepts into practice (Klein & Riordan, 2009). On-going support for implementation of professional learning may be in the form of conferences, workshops, reflection, coaching, or reviewing results (Aguilern & Zepeda , 2013; Klein & Riordan, 2009). Support may occur individually, in pairs, or in collaborative learning teams (Brown, 2013; Visser, Coenders, & Pieters, 2013). Knight (2009) concluded that educators support and sustain implementation from powerful new strategies and need adequate support from the school district.

Organizers of professional learning activities provide resources for long-term implementation (Klein & Riordan, 2009; Long, Labone, & Nicholson, 2009; Roy, 2010; Roy, 2011). Resources may include technology, material, and time (Klein & Riordan, 2009; Leclerc, Moreau & Dumouchel, 2012). Resources are provided for implementation to be organized and evaluated by leaders to demonstrate best practices and concentrate on strategies for accomplishing them (Klein & Riordan, 2009; Leclerc, Moreau, & Dumouchel, 2012). Educator performance and student learning is improved when professional learning facilitators are cognizant of how educators react to change in their work environment. Being cognizant of their reaction gives leaders an indication of the support that is needed to improve participants' strengths and weaknesses (Aguilern and Zepeda, 2013).

Reeves and Flach (2011) found that effective feedback quickens implementation by using formative assessment. When communicating about feedback about implementation, the concerns about the professional learning experience should be based on evidence from expected behaviors, progress toward expectations, and guidance for achieving full implementation (Hall & Hord, 2011; Knight, 2009; Miller & Kritsonis, 2010; Reeves & Flach, 2011; Roy, 2009). Specific information from feedback is provided to evaluate practices and to select practices that correlate closely with outcomes (Hall & Hord, 2011). Feedback from educators, administrators, and external experts provide data for educators to use as they prefect their practice (Brown, 2013; Hall & Hord, 2011; Reeves & Flach, 2011; Roy, 2010).

Outcomes. According to Mizell (2013), effective learning begins with knowing the outcomes you are seeking. Consequently, that is why administrators focus on the learning standard, outcomes, when preparing for professional learning (Guskey, 2012; Hirsh, 2013; Kinzer & Taft, 2012; learning forward – Outcomes, 2014; Mizell, 2013). The outcomes for student learning should be clear for all students to achieve at high levels and the professional learning for educators should aline with the outcomes for students (Ermeling, 2012; Kennedy, 2012; Saphier, 2011). Concentrating on student learning outcomes when planning professional learning experiences greatly improves educators' knowledge of how students learn specific content (Burn, Mutton & Hagger, 2010; Guskey, 2012; Kennedy, 2012; Killion & Hirsh, 2011). Professional learning is the best way educators have to teach this new content to improve students' performance

in content areas (Desimone, 2011; learning forward - Outcomes, 2014; Podhajski, Mather, Nathan, & Sammons, 2009; Saphier, 2011). As a result of participating in professional learning, educators will have the ability to model and engage students in the use of effective strategies for mastery of specific disciplines (Hirsh, 2013; Kinzer & Taft, 2012; learning forward – Outcomes, 2014; Mizell, 2013; Saphier, 2011).

Academic outcomes can be based on several factors (Guskey, 2012; Kennedy, 2012; Kinzer & Taft, 2012). According to Kinzer and Taft (2012), important factors concerning academic outcomes include collaboration in a learning culture and academic outcomes based on student achievement data. Similarly, Kennedy (2012) recognized that academic outcomes of professional learning should be decided by learning teams. Additionally, Kennedy (2012) observed that performance goals and current evaluation results were used by individual educators to establish what they would like to learn to enhance their teaching skills. Another factor mentioned according to Kennedy (2012) indicated that gaps in student learning should be examined by school leaders to determine what educators need to be taught to fill in information educators needed to know.

The outcome standard stresses that professional learning should be coherent (Kang, Cha, Woon Ha, 2013; Killion, 2012). Desimone (2011) established that coherence in professional learning supports the knowledge educators already have obtained, and coincides with local, state, and national standards. Also, coherence allows educators to obtain a continuous professional dialog with other educators that have experienced similar adjustments in teaching (Clauset & Murphy, 2012; Ermeling &

Gallimore, 2013; Guskey, 2012; Hirsh, 2013; Killion & Hirsh, 2011; Long, Labone, Nicholson, 2009; McGowan & Graham, 2009; Mizell, 2013; Peck, 2010; Sackey, 2012; Siguroardottir, 2010; Smardon & Charteris, 2012). Finally, coherence in professional learning promotes continuous refinement of teaching to obtain the ultimate teaching methods to support students to always perform at their peak (Desimone, 2011; Killion & Kennedy; 2012; Saphier, 2011).

Mizell (2011) concluded that concentrating on student learning outcomes to guide professional learning experiences improves educators' pedagogical and content knowledge. When focusing on outcomes to drive professional learning is used, educators are cognizant of skills and strategies that can be used in the classroom to meet the desired students' outcomes (Kang, Cha, Woon Ha, 2013; Latta & Hee Kim, 2010; Long, Labone, Nicholson, 2009). Students can then master skills from the curriculum with success (Berkeley, Regan, Lindstom, Nealy, Southall & Stagliano, 2012; Sappington, Baker, Gardner, Pacha, 2010). Success for all students is the outcome that districts across the United States are continuously seeking (Kang, Cha, Woon Ha, 2013; Killion & Hirsh, 2011).

Implementation

According to Hall and Hord (2011), implementation of a project should involve long-term change that occurs over an extended period. Constructive feedback from participants is crucial to the implementation process as well (Brown, 2013; Knight, 2009; Miller, Green, Kritsonis, Parker, 2010; Reeves & Flach, 2011; Roy, 2009). Resources

and supports are important to ensure that the implementation process is effective, and identifying potential barriers is also crucial. The following subsections indicate the resources, supports, and barriers to a RPDP. The proposal for implementation and timetable as well as the roles and responsibilities of students and others will be discussed in this subsection.

Potential Resources and Existing Supports

Learning forward (2014) advocated that effective professional learning include resources to support professional learning and collaboration. The availability of resources impacts the quality and results of the professional learning experience. Understanding and tracking the resources needed for professional learning enhances decision making concerning professional learning. The resources and supports needed for the implementation of this project include funding as well as people and location. Other resources are time, technology, and reading material.

Funding for the project can be obtained from Title I funds and funds designated for Professional Learning in the district. These funds are important to implement several areas of the project. One area that requires funding includes the purchase of binders, paper, ink, and toner needed for participants to prepare an organized binder with hard copies of the information shared during the professional learning sessions. The binder will assure that educators have a reference of the content shared at the professional learning meetings. Another consideration for the allocation of funds would be to purchase software to supplement skills taught during the professional learning

experience. Educators will have the opportunity to utilize the software while support is available from the facilitator. Last, as the facilitator, I will provide several options for the professional learning sessions to be offered to educators. Sessions may be offered as part of the district's requirement for professional learning by setting aside time during the school day, after the school day, or during the summer months. Should the professional learning be held after school hours or during the summer months, funds would be used to provide a stipend to educators for their time for attending the professional learning meetings and for sharing their expertise during the collaboration sessions.

The people and locations for the implementation of this project will be personnel at XYZ Elementary. The project facilitator is another key person for the implementation of this project. As the initiator of the project, I will serve as the facilitator at XYZ elementary. Additionally, the principal and reading coach may serve as support staff for the project. The participants will be those teachers that teach reading in grades kindergarten through second grades at XYZ elementary. Teachers will be encouraged to attend these professional learning sessions. As the facilitator, I will not require that attendance at the professional learning meetings be mandatory.

Time related to implementation of a project is crucial to students' success. Three to five sessions should be devoted to providing content for the implementation of this project. The sessions should last from 3 to five hours per session. During this time, teacher will be given the opportunity to evaluate the project. Once teachers have completed the professional learning sessions concerning the content of the project,

monthly meetings will be held for educators to collaborate to perfect their teaching skills in the area of reading, specifically oral reading fluency. Monthly meetings for collaboration will be held for one year unless the educators feel that more time is needed to fully embrace the project.

During the professional learning experience, educators will be provided with resource websites for additional reinforcement on strategies as well as games to increase oral reading fluency. Educators will have the opportunity to access the sites since the room that will be used for professional learning has computers and an interactive white board with wireless internet access. Educators at XYZ can readily use the software shared during the professional learning experience since all of the classes at XYZ Elementary have an interactive white board with wireless internet access and computers. In some of the classrooms at XYZ Elementary, students have an individual laptop computer. These computers can be used by students to access websites and games to increase oral reading fluency.

This RPDP will require educators to utilize the reading series that has been purchased for the district to teach reading. Some of the educators in the district have attended Spaulding in-services as well as other professional learning sessions offered on teaching phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. Educators may bring material from these professional learning sessions as well. Additionally, educators may suggest any other websites, games, or other material they have found useful in teaching oral reading fluency. This information may be shared with

other educators during the professional learning sessions or during collaboration. The reading material on the Spaulding Method shared during the previous professional learning meetings provided by the district is essential to the implementation of the project. Reading material from the district such as the reading book is important to the implementation of this professional learning experience. Other information or material shared by participating educators during collaboration may or may not be essential for the implementation of the project.

Potential Barriers

As the facilitator, my intent is that educators will learn from this professional learning experience; therefore, all potential barriers are considered and addressed. These barriers include possible teacher frustration with trying different programs to increase reading fluency, time restraints for participating in the professional learning sessions, time restraints for collaboration, and frustration when implementing this program in the classroom.

Through professional learning, teachers at XYZ Elementary have been offered various strategies to use in the classroom to increase oral reading fluency, but the reading scores at XYZ Elementary remained inadequate for a number of years. The professional learning was considered important, yet students' reading performance continued to remain low. With the constant involvement in professional learning and continuous weak performance from students, educators may feel that this is just another failed attempt at try to increase oral reading fluency.

A commitment of educators' time to devote to learning the content should help the implementation of the professional learning. Time may be a factor since many educators have personal concerns that they need to address after school hours. The professional learning may take several hours per session to teach the content. Educators may not have the time after school to commit to attending the sessions of the project. To alleviate this potential barrier, I will offer the professional learning sessions at a time that is convenient for the majority of the participants, and I will work with the other participants who have additional time restraints. The school day at XYZ Elementary is fully scheduled. Teachers have little time for collaboration with the responsibilities that they have in teaching and additional duties. To alleviate this barrier, I would ask that P. E., music, computer, and recess be taught consecutively. This block of time would allow teachers to have adequate time during the school day to collaborate. Teachers would be expected to participate in three monthly meetings for collaboration. The additional need for time for collaboration after the first year would be determined by evaluations which would be completed after each professional learning meeting, and after each session for collaboration.

Even though I may consider this professional learning as easy other educators may not feel that the content is easy to understand and apply. The evidence of this could be the consistent low scores of students in oral reading fluency at XYZ Elementary after educators received numerous professional learning experiences on increasing oral reading fluency. Possibly, adequate support was not provided to educators after the professional

learning experiences. As the facilitator of this professional learning experience and as an employee in the district as well as having a long-term relationship with the participants, I would be available to answer questions or address problems that participants may have in a timely manner in order to ensure students' success.

Proposal for Implementation and Timetable

This RPDP will be implemented in three phases during a one year period with the option for continuous training as determined by a summative evaluation. Hall and Hord (2011) asserted that it takes time to change instruction through professional learning effectively. Change generally from professional learning usually does not occur after several hours of instruction. Thus, the timetable of this program is determined by several factors. The suggested timeframe is recommended to give educators the time to gain an understanding of the content in the project, work collaboratively in professional learning communities, and to determine the need for on-going professional learning. Also, during this period of time, educators can implement the content from the professional learning meeting in their classroom with the support of the facilitator and the professional learning communities established for collaboration.

Phase I will be the content phase in which the content of the professional learning is presented to participants. Several topics will be addressed and discussed in Phase I. The framework that supports the composition of the project and the plan for presenting instruction will be discussed in this phase. The facilitator and participants role, suggested time for closure, and guidelines for evaluating and reviewing will be implemented as

well. The concentration in Phase I will be on the content needed to increase oral reading fluency. Some collaboration will be done at this time to involve educators in learning the content for the professional learning.

Phase 2 of the implementation stage will consist of educators collaborating on each skill taught in the content areas presented. Educators may share the students' results from suggested strategies used through professional learning as well as other strategies they incorporated in instruction. Independent research done by educators may be discussed during this time that was used to support the learning process. Educators may observe each other during this phase and critique observations. The professional learning meetings for collaboration will be used to discuss the effectiveness of the strategies shared during professional learning, other strategies discovered through research, and observations to increase students' performance in oral reading fluency. A formative evaluation will be conducted after each session.

Phase 3 of the professional learning program will be a summative evaluation of the project to determine its effectiveness and the need for continued training or support in the area of oral reading fluency. Educators will determine their effectiveness in teaching oral reading fluency and be encouraged to suggest areas that are needed for continued support. Based on results from the summative assessment, professional learning communities will continue or cease. Full implementation of the content of the professional learning sessions, collaboration, research, and observations should be implemented into the classroom for student success in oral reading fluency.

Table 10

Timetable for Project Implementation

Phase 1 Year 1	Discussion of the framework that supports the composition of the project and the plan for presenting instruction during professional learning
	Dialogue about the facilitator and participants' role, suggested time for closure, and guidelines for evaluating and reviewing
	Facilitator conducts professional learning sessions with content in one or two weeks
	Resource binder provided for participants
	Professional learning meetings for collaboration are established
	Suggested guidelines for collaboration are established.
	Collaboration encouraged during presentation of content
Phase 2 Year 1	Learning communities meet 3 times monthly for collaboration
	Learning communities continue to add worksheets and research to binders
	Observations are conducted
	Formative assessments are done to determine if needs are met during collaborative sessions
Phase 3 Year 1	A summative assessment conducted to determine if content from professional learning sessions, collaboration, observations, and research meet the needs of educators to increase students' oral reading fluency
	From the summative assessment, determine the need for continuous training and collaboration

Roles and Responsibilities of Student and Others

Prior to the development of this project, I was responsible for conducting this case study, collecting data, analyzing data, and computing funding in order to implement the project. As the developer and facilitator of this RPDP, I will have multiple roles in the implementation process. The major roles include the design of the project, development of the project, and facilitator of the project. Other responsibilities that I will have include preparing the budget, allocating time for sessions, planning sessions, preparing handouts, and developing binders. Allocation of time for collaboration, obtaining feedback from sessions, and evaluating the feedback will also be responsibilities that I will have as the facilitator of this project. Along with these responsibilities, I will work full time at XYZ Elementary in the capacity of a teacher. Participants and other districts may have a role in the implementation of this project.

Participants' role is crucial to the implementation process of this RPDP. They will be expected to attend, participate, and collaborate during this time. Also, participants may bring material that they have used to increase oral reading fluency successfully and participate by giving feedback through formative evaluations and a summative evaluation. At the end the content phase of the professional learning sessions, participants will have completed the RPDP with new content information in a resource binder to effectively increase oral reading fluency.

Finally, another group that could have a role in the implementation process would be other districts or schools in the area. Funds will be needed for the implementation

process as well as the completed binder with the content information to increase oral reading fluency. Should the professional learning sessions be held during the summer months, I will be available as a facilitator. If the professional learning is conducted at another time, the district would need a facilitator cognizant of the content shared in the resource binder to increase oral reading fluency. Additionally, funds will be needed to compensate participants if the professional learning sessions are held after school or during the summer months whether I am the facilitator or someone else is the facilitator.

Project Evaluation

The evaluation process is a part of professional learning. The evaluation will help the facilitator know what was considered effective and what was not considered effective according to the participants in order to adjust the project. For the purposes of this doctoral study, I included a process for the project evaluation as part of the RPDP. Evaluation plans for the project include both formative and summative evaluation(s). These types of evaluations will be used since the goal of the project is to increase knowledge of educators in order to improve students' skills in the area of oral reading fluency. The formative assessments will consist of ten questions related to the clarity and content of the content information presented on each topic. Topics will include content information on recognition of the letters of the alphabet, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, whole word recognition strategies, vocabulary, comprehension, and practice.

Participants will complete the formative assessments individually as well as in small groups. Completing the evaluation in small groups will allow participants to

discuss the positive and negative aspects of the project. A recorder will be assigned from the group to record responses. On-going formative assessments individually and in small groups will allow adjustment to be made to address the concerns of participants. As the facilitator, I will primarily be interested in the feedback from the formative evaluations; however, the administration may have an interest in them as well to determine if this professional learning experience should be provided in the future. A summative evaluation will be completed at the end of the professional learning experience by participants. Using the standards for professional learning and the content from each session of the professional learning sessions, 50 questions will be asked in order to provide a summation of the effectiveness of the professional learning experience. Additionally, questions will be asked concerning the participants understanding of the content presented and level of ease toward implementing the concepts taught in their classroom setting. Again, I will allow individual participants and small groups to complete the formative evaluations and the summative evaluation. Receiving feedback this way will provide me with individual as well as group feedback. This data could provide information on the areas that need additional clarification for educators to increase oral reading fluency in the classroom in future sessions.

Implications for Social Change

Educators that are cognizant of the best strategies to use through professional learning have a greater chance of increasing students' performance (learning forward, 2011; Manathunga, 2011). Social change evolves when educators are knowledgeable of these

best strategies to improve students' skills (learning forward, 2011). This RPDP includes the most recent standards established by learning forward for professional learning for educators to increase their knowledge. The particular area for educators' to improve their knowledge base in this program is in the area of oral reading fluency. The program provides content knowledge on topics in this area as determined by participants in this case study. Additionally, the program provides time for collaboration when content information is shared during the professional learning sessions, and time for collaboration during the implementation phase of the project. The learning should be useful and meaningful when educators realize the positive relationship between students and the subject matter they are learning. Presumptions for this RPDP evolve positive social change that is localized and far-reaching.

Local Community

XYZ Elementary has experienced consistently weak scores in the area of oral reading fluency in the past. This program was designed to support educators at XYZ Elementary by using the views of the educators concerning the areas and skills that need to be strengthened to increase oral reading fluency. As well as using the views of educators, the professional developer will provide time for collaboration when content is introduced and during additional collaborative sessions. Students, educators, families, school personnel, and stakeholders will note an improvement in students' performance in reading because of improved instruction in oral reading fluency through professional learning. This improvement in students' performance in the area of oral reading fluency

in the elementary grades may be the skill that is needed to generate students' success throughout subsequent grades (Altman, 2011; Boulton, 2012; Schools: Why Reading Is Job #1, 2011, Learning to Read: What's at Stake – What's Involved, 2011; Where Are Non-Readers Found in the United States, 2011).

Far Reaching

This project has far-reaching implications in several areas. In addition to helping educators at XYZ Elementary improve oral reading fluency skills with students, this project could assist other elementary educators in XYZ district as well as in the state of Louisiana improve students' oral reading fluency skills. The percentages of students at risk in the area of oral reading fluency in the other elementary schools in the district as well as in the state of Louisiana showed a need for support in teaching oral reading fluency skills (Bulletin 111, 2007; Louisiana Department of Education-iLEAP 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2011; Louisiana Department of Education-Spring Progress Report 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011). This project could provide educators that support needed to assure reading success at the elementary level.

This project may be a new approach for teaching and/or supporting reading instruction for grades pre-K-12. Many students do not learn to read in the elementary grades (Boulton, 2012; The Nation's Report Card, 2009, 2011). Usually, instruction in learning to read stops at the elementary level (Boulton, 2012). This project could allow for the continuation of the teaching of reading after the elementary school through professional learning. Teachers that teach reading, language arts, or English in junior

high schools and high schools could be required to receive instruction in this professional learning program to continue the process of teaching reading to those students that did not learn to read in the elementary grades. Even math, social studies, history, and science teachers could be required to provide reading instruction since the problem is broad.

Students could receive a pre-test and post-test at each grade level on the skills included in this professional development program to increase oral reading fluency. Records would be documented in the students' cumulative folder on the students' performance each school year in order for the receiving reading, language arts, or English teacher to be aware of the progress that was made and where to begin instruction the next school year in teaching reading after giving the pre-test at the beginning of that school year. This program could be used throughout the school years from grades pre-K-12 until students can read fluently to be successful in school. This professional development program could change the way educators perceive teaching reading in that all students will be expected to learn to read fluently at some point during their school years, pre-K – 12 grades if it should become mandatory that reading is taught throughout these years until students can read fluently. Educators will now be able to say that students will learn to read while they are in school, pre-K-12.

The impact on society as a whole would be far-reaching in that the school systems would allow reading skills to be taught until students can read fluently to be successful. Allowing this new trend in education to teach students to read fluently from pre-K-12 grades would cause more students to graduate from high school, possibly pursue a higher

education, and impact society by gainfully employing more students in a skill area to adequately support their family. The next generation or perhaps future generations of families will be stronger because their foreparents knew how to read. Society as whole would be impacted in that the people that make-up the society will be able to make better decisions by being educated since it would be mandatory to teach reading from pre-K-12 grades until students can read fluently. Making these few changes could positively impact the educational system throughout the world while simultaneously changing the expectations of reading performance of students for grades pre-K-12 throughout the world.

Conclusion

This segment gave a summation of the project for this doctoral study. Standards from learning forward were used to support the development of this RPDP. These standards are learning communities, leadership, resources, data, learning designs, implementation, and outcomes. It is the intent of the researcher to provide a clear, concise, effective approach to teaching, and supporting reading instruction in elementary schools through the use of these standards for professional learning.

The overall consensus for implementation of the standards for professional learning is for educators to work collaboratively in applying content knowledge for students' success. Through collaborative learning communities, educators can discuss learning issues until the learning problem has been alleviated. In this collaborative

environment, educators are receptive to thoughts shared which makes the collaboration time useful.

The importance of the availability of resources is crucial to the success of the project according to learning forward (2012). Needed resources include technology, time, materials, and staff. All of these resources are needed for successful implementation of the project.

The project will be evaluated individually formatively and collectively after each professional learning session. A summative evaluation will be conducted individually by each participant, and collectively by the group of participants at the end of the content phase of the professional learning experience, and at the end of the professional learning collaborative sessions on increasing oral reading fluency. This input from participants will provide the facilitator the input needed to improve the project for the next professional learning experiences.

This project will have local and far-reaching impact on social change. Students will have the opportunity to learn to read fluently locally at XYZ Elementary and at other schools in the district by using this project. Elementary students in other schools in Louisiana where this professional learning experience is presented will have the opportunity to improve reading fluency with students in their area. As educators, we can no longer sit back and say that students can't read fluently. We must realize what students are capable of learning to read, and then teach them to read at whatever level they are presently functioning on in reading in order to improve reading fluency. In

doing so, there should be a decrease rate in dropouts, crime, and other incidences related to students failing to be educated in the area of reading fluency. Most importantly, this project will influence educators to teach reading from grades pre-K-12 grades until students can read fluently by requiring reading, language arts, and English teachers to continue to teach reading fluency starting at whatever level students are functioning on until fluency is developed. Even math, social studies, history, and science teachers could be expected to teaching oral reading fluency skills since the problem is widespread.

Additionally, the stigma of students not being able to read will be removed because all students will be expected, and taught to learn to read through the twelfth grade at whatever level they demonstrate readiness. As a result of the widespread use of this project, there will be an increased number of students completing high school, and pursuing a higher education through vocational training or college. Students will enter the school of their choice of higher education prepared. Once students are enrolled in the school of their choice for higher education, students can take courses in their curriculum rather than taking developmental or remedial courses. After exiting from the higher continuing education school of their choice, students will be better prepare to enter the workforce and society.

Finally, traditions may develop in families to pursue a higher education and higher goals by simply changing this problem of poor oral reading fluency as soon as it is detected in students at schools across the nation. Hopefully, for generations to come, higher education will be the goal of students, families, schools, and districts by

addressing the problem of poor oral reading fluency. This higher aspiration can easily be obtained by successfully increasing oral reading fluency as quickly as the problem is detected during the learning process from grades pre-K-12. In addition, Section 4, which is the subsequent section in this research, describes reflections and conclusions with information concerning the project strengths, recommendations for remediation of limitations, and scholarship. The RPDP is included in Appendix A.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

In this project study, I concentrated on improving oral reading fluency skills for students through professional learning for educators. The primary factor for improving reading instruction was to inform educators of effective research based strategies for teaching oral reading fluency. Educational statisticians have found consistently that the students in the United States are performing poorly in the area of reading (Altman, 2011; Learning to read: What's at Stake-What's Involved, 2011; Schools: Why Reading is Job #1, 2011; Where are Non-Readers Found in the United States, 2011). These findings confirm the need for the development of a project to inform educators of effective strategies to teach oral reading fluency. The content and design of this project will enable educators to teach students to read fluently both in the area of reading and in content areas as they matriculate through school to obtain their high school diploma and pursue future endeavors.

This section consists of content describing the project's strengths, limitations, and scholarship. Additionally, in order to develop content for the project while considering impacting factors such as strengths, limitations, and scholarship, educators were consulted concerning how to improve oral reading fluency at XYZ Elementary. The results from the research were used to develop this RPDP that teaches reading strategies to educators to improve oral reading fluency through professional learning and collaboration. After Section 4, the project will be included in Appendix A.

Project Strengths

The strengths for this project are the potential positive outcomes from the use of this project. As a result of teachers using motivational quotes, structured methods for teaching reading, and effective researched methods, students' oral reading fluency skills should increase. Other strengths for the project are that data were generated by educators for educators with opportunities for collaboration, and that it was designed to be respectful of teachers' limited time in order for educators to meaningfully participate in the project. These strengths emerged from reviewing themes generated from the collection and analysis of data as well as from researching effective strategies for professional learning.

Researchers state that many times students are not motivated to learn to read (Davis, 2010; Kizilgunes, Tekkaya, & Sungur, 2009). Students simply lack the enthusiasm needed to grasp the concepts needed to read fluently (McTigue, Washburn, Liew, 2009; Putman, 2009; Quirk, Schwanenflugel, & Webb, 2009). This project includes motivational quotes throughout the project in order for learners to be continuously inspired to learn to read. Research shows that using motivational quotes in the learning process to teach reading fluency generates success (Cleary, 2009; Kennedy, 2010; Putman, 2009).

In this project, a structured method for instructing educators to increase oral reading fluency in students was used. It allows students to continuously repeat concepts

until these concepts are learned and at that point additional concepts are added. According to Kennedy (2010), using a structured method to teach reading to struggling readers assures more success as compared to methods that do not offer this repetition. A structured convergent method for teaching reading as compared to the divergent methods widely used in schools today was used in this project.

The methods suggested to increase oral reading fluency in this project are research based and are considered effective (Kennedy, 2010; Podhajski, Mather, Nathan, & Sammons, 2009). Participating in professional learning that is research based gives educators useful information and strategies to apply with students in the classroom (Blau, 2011; Coleraine, 2009; Good, Baker, & Peyton, 2009; Hicks, 2009; Kennedy, 2010; Musti-Rao, Hawkins, & Barkley, 2009; Nears, 2010; Yo, Cooke, & Starling, 2011; Young, 2010). Success for students is the ultimate goal of educators in increasing oral reading fluency skills and using researched based strategies greatly enhances educators' chances of guiding students to successfully read fluently (Rodhajski, Mather, Nathan, & Sammons, 2009).

Another strength of this project is that data were generated from educators using a case study approach. Educators analyzed their educational setting as well as the learning environment at XYZ Elementary to determine the needs at the school to increase oral reading fluency for students. This kind of analysis permitted educators to assist in their own learning as compared to hiring an outside consultant to provide assistance. These

experiences allowed educators to become efficient in subject areas, teaching strategies, and leadership.

Using collaboration among educators based on research based principles is considered an effective procedure for educators to become skilled in subject matter areas and teaching strategies (Darling-Hammond, Wel, Andree, Richarrdson, & Orphanos, 2009; Elbousty & Bratt, 2010; Smith, 2012; Tobia & Hord, 2012). WiedricK (2011) noted that the student body benefits from the collective ideas from educators in pedagogy and content areas. Collaboration enhances the overall improvement of schools since a group effort is being made to promote progress (Duncan, 2011; Garrett, 2010; & Hilliard & Newsome, 2013).

Time is crucial to consider since educators have multiple roles and responsibilities. Time for the content/collaboration phase of the project may be held during the school day for required professional learning experiences as determined by the district. If the sessions for professional learning cannot be held at that time, educators will have the option to participate in the sessions after school, during the weekend, or during the summer session when school is not in session. Time for collaboration after the content has been presented may be scheduled during the school day with the consolidation of time for P. E., music, computer, and recess. One year will be devoted for the implementation of the project with the option for continuous training and support as determined by the summative evaluation. This should allow educators the time and

support needed to successfully implement the strategies taught during the professional learning and collaborative sessions.

This project can be used to teach students from grades K-12, and any adult who has not learned to read fluently is considered to be a major strength. With this strength in mind, this project may support change in the way schools and society address the reading fluency problem in the United States.

Recommendations for Remediation of Limitations

Limitations for this study and possibly the project exist since there were a limited number of participants involved in the study. A larger pool of participants may have revealed different perspectives. All of the participants were employed at XYZ Elementary, and it is possible that more diverse results may have emerged if other schools in the district or even schools in the state of Louisiana had participated in the study. Also, quantitative data were not collected in this study. Possibly a quantitative analysis would have yielded a broad comparison of groups that did well or poorly on reading assessments.

Scholarship

In this study, I learned that students and educators can demonstrate scholarship. Scholarship reveals itself in students when the knowledge base of the participants expands greatly as a result of participating in some form of being taught or through self-study. Examples of students demonstrating scholarship include listening and applying information given in class settings as well as probing, researching and reading

independently. Examples for educators of demonstrating scholarship include learning and successfully applying content from participating in professional learning and collaboration. Probing, reading, and researching in given skill areas can yield scholarship for educators as well. Both students and educators should emerge as scholars in the teaching and learning process.

Students emerging as scholars should be ultimate goal of educators. This experience can exist when educators can effectively plan and disseminate knowledge to students that generate student success. In this project study, I attempted to provide educators with a professional learning experience to help educators improve their proficiency in teaching in the specific skill area of oral reading fluency.

Kiener (2009) noted that educators provide instruction and increase student performance by obtaining current knowledge in content areas through participating in professional learning and collaboration. Educators then have the tools necessary to monitor and adjust instruction to meet the needs of students successfully. I have found Kiener's assessment to be accurate. As an educator in XYZ district and as a learner in this program, I have been able to expand and synthesize my knowledge of oral reading fluency in order to develop a scholarly project for educators to improve oral reading fluency skills for students. As a result of my increased knowledge in the area of oral reading fluency, I will be able to teach and support other educators in the area of oral reading fluency as I conduct the professional learning experience in oral reading fluency.

Project Development and Evaluation

The basic components in developing a project are noting the problem, determining needs, developing the framework, selecting the location, selecting the participants, preparing for the evaluation, and starting the implementation of the project (Gavin, 2008). For this case study, I started by determining the problem, which was improving teaching skills for educators in the area of oral reading fluency through professional learning. This problem was identified at XYZ Elementary, but is a problem at the state and national level as well. I developed a needs assessment document and collected data by allowing educators to complete the needs assessment document, reviewing lesson plans, and journaling in my research journal. By triangulating these data, I developed the themes for the project.

Formative and summative evaluations were used to evaluate the project. The formative evaluation will occur after each content session. Each participant will complete a formative evaluation individually and as a group for each session. The summative evaluation will be given at the end of the content phase of the project and at the end of the one-year time frame given to fully implement the project. Summative evaluations will be given individually to participants and in a group setting as well.

Leadership and Change

Leaders must have a clear vision for the school and knowledge of how to arrive at the predetermined vision for the school. Thus, I have learned that effective leadership should be distributive. I am aware that leaders should have several other titles: servant

leaders, teacher leaders, and effective goal setters. An effective leader should have all of these characteristics, and know when to implement these qualities when working with their staff in order to get the maximum performance from the staff to improve students' performance.

Distributive leadership is exemplified when principals recognize leadership skills that others may have on the staff and designate leadership responsibilities to them (Sheppard, Hurley, & Dibbon, 2010). Distributive leadership responsibilities may be given to the assistant principal, mentor teachers, teacher leaders, and curriculum specialist, as well as others that are designated by the principal (Baloglu, 2012; Mullen, 2011; Natsiopoulou & Giouroukakis 2010; Spillane, 2009; Williams, 2009). According to Spillane (2009), these persons may take the leadership role in areas determined by the principal in order to get the most out of personnel and students while simultaneously supporting personnel and students. Distributive leadership removes the total responsibility of improving the school from the principal.

Crippen (2006) found that in order to be effectual, the principal should be willing to be of service to the staff. Directions should not always come from the principal for the staff to implement (Black, 2010; Paul, Smith, & Dochney, 2012). When the principals demonstrate wiliness to serve, the result is usually that the faculty and administration can work as a team in goal setting, implementing traditional ideas, and exploring innovative concepts to improve students' performance (Black, 2010). As the leader of this project, I hope to demonstrate servant leadership when I provide support to educators at their

request. If I am not able to solve the teacher's problem, I will continue to search for a solution to the problem until the issue is resolved.

Analysis of Self as Scholar

I learned several things about myself as a scholar. First, my thoughts on being a scholar prior to entering this program have been reinforced as I completed the course work. I realized that the content that I have read concerning oral reading fluency has supported what I was aware of as an educator; however, it was pleasing to know that the information that I read supports mostly what I had been doing in the classroom. Also, I learned new information concerning increasing oral reading fluency as well as other content information that will be of assistance to me as an educator. Next, I learned that the constant reviewing of studies and other content material has allowed me to become innovative in developing ideas for my project. Thirdly, endurance has been another scholarly trait that I have learned. I set goals daily and make every effort to accomplish the goals for that day regardless of the circumstances. Finally, I realized that all of the reading, writing, and researching that I have done has led to a scholarly project that will teach others how to read fluently. My first thoughts were to concentrate on teaching grades K-2 students to read fluently, but I realized that this project could be used and adapted for anyone that cannot read fluently. This realization is one of the greatest break-throughs that I have experienced while doing this research. As a scholar, I learned that using the project in this manner would make the greatest impact at XYZ Elementary and possibly on other segments of society to influence social change.

Analysis of Self as Practitioner

The first review of the literature and theories used to support this doctoral study confirmed that I was using the appropriate practices as an educator to increase oral reading fluency with students. With teaching knowledge and enhanced understanding through the research I conducted for this study, I feel assured that I have used some of the best practices with students to increase oral reading fluency. The theories of self-efficacy, behaviorism, and automaticity support the notion that oral reading fluency can be developed in students with continued practice, structure, and instruction.

The second literature review was helpful in developing my skills as a practitioner in that I will be aware of the best standards to use to provide instruction to educators to increase oral reading fluency with students. Using the professional standards of learning communities, leadership, resources, data, learning design, implementation, and outcomes will help me as a facilitator to instruct other educators concerning how to teach students. These standards provide a clear guide for me to provide educators with the information needed to support instruction. In this study, I have supported instruction for educators in the area of oral reading fluency. Using the standards for profession learning designed by learning forward will lead to efficient practices in teaching, supportive leadership, and increased student results in the area of oral reading fluency.

Analysis of Self as Project Developer

Through researching, reading, and organizing studies and literature about standards for professional learning, I gained knowledge concerning how to develop a project. The exposure to reading this literature helped me to determine how the project for professional learning in the area of oral reading fluency should be developed. Additionally, the findings, theories, and standards for professional learning developed by learning forward were instructional tools in developing the project to increase oral reading fluency.

As a project developer, I realize that the findings from my study should be used to guide the topics for the project. Obtaining the findings for this study were determined by the triangulation of data from educators completing a needs assessment, reviewing lesson plans from educators, and reviewing information from my research journal. Also, the review of scholarly studies enhanced my skills as a project developer.

In order to develop and deliver my project, I decided to use a slide presentation. The presentation will consist of slides with quotes concerning the themes that emerged from the study to support the theory of self-efficacy. Suggested best practices/strategies in the area of behaviorism will support the behaviorism theory in the slide presentation for the project. The combination of content from the self-efficacy theory and behaviorism theory will lead to automaticity in the area of oral reading fluency which is the third theory used to frame this study. As I prepare the slides by focusing on the findings and theories in this study, the standards for professional learning revised by

learning forward will be used as well to develop the final project which is to increase oral reading fluency skills.

The Project's Potential Impact on Social Change

This study is importance at the local, state, and possibly national level. All documentation and data show deficiencies on test scores concerning literacy from grades K-12 in the United States (Boulton, 2012; KIDS COUNT, 2007, 2009, 2011; The Nation's Report Card, 2011). Not only that, if students are unable to read during the elementary grades, it is highly unlikely that they will graduate from high school (Altman, 2011; Learning to Read: What's at Stake – What's Involved, 2011; Where Are Non-Readers Found in the United States, 2011; Why Reading Is Job #1, 2011). On the other hand, students that can read during the elementary years have a greater chance of graduating from high school and pursuing life-long goals whether through obtaining employment or continuing to study through higher education (Davis, 2010; Kellett, 2009; Kreider, 2011).

No longer can we as educators and citizens just accept that this child cannot read. As this is being done, the crime rate in America is steadily increasing (Boulton, 2012; Bracey, 2009; Master the Code, 2011). A large percentage of the crimes committed by people who either have dropped out of school or are illiterate (Bracey, 2009; Schools: Why Reading Is Job #1, 2011; The Nation's Report Card, 2011). As educators, we must look at whether students are capable of learning to read and teach them until they can read, regardless of the students' grade level. By doing so, this study may change the way

educators view learning to read, improve students chances of learning to read, and enhance learning in general in other subject areas. Society as a whole may be greatly impacted by having more citizens that can support themselves and their families through meaningful employment.

I learned that through continuous perseverance and study, the true goal will emerge. My first thoughts were just to improve oral reading fluency for grades K-2. As I continued to read studies and literature, I realized that this study and project could have a far greater impact on education and society by using the study and project to continue to teach reading fluency until it is learned from grades K-12, and thereafter if it is needed. Positive social change may be the result from this study since more individuals will be equipped with one of the most important skills to succeed which is reading and reading fluently.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

Improved performance in the area of oral reading fluency for students and adults are implications for this study and project. This research could contribute to early success of elementary students (K-2) in the area of oral reading fluency as well as students in grades 3-12 that did not learn to read. It may also be used as an independent project to teach adults that did not learn to read fluently in grades K-12, and would like to learn to read or read fluently as an adult. Applications involve presenting the RPDP at XYZ Elementary. Expanding the scope of the study and project involves including

educators from other schools in XYZ district, educators in the state of Louisiana, and educators on the national level.

Directions for future research may involve a different type of study, and the use of the most current technology to teach reading fluency. Perhaps a quantitative, mixed methods, or action research study could be conducted to determine if different or additional results might emerge. Through technology, there may be an application or some type of device that can be used on cell phones or electronically to support instruction in the area of oral reading fluency development. The user would have access to the lessons at their convenience and could review the lessons until mastery is developed in oral reading fluency.

The problem of oral reading fluency is quite apparent and there is a need for additional research. Perhaps, future researchers could answer questions that still remain even after this study has been completed. For example, what can be done in schools to teach oral reading fluency as early as the kindergarten level to all students? What can be done to effectively enrich students that are not reading fluently due to socio-economic concerns? What can be done to involve parents of students that are consistently performing inadequately in the area of oral reading fluency? How can the community become involved to improve the problem of poor oral reading fluency? What can be done to boost the morale of educators in order that they will go the extra mile to improved students' performance in the area of oral reading fluency? What can schools do to consistently be successful in teaching oral reading fluency to students? What can

be done to assure that students will read fluently if the school is the only source of support? Research addressing these questions would be an excellent starting point for future studies.

Conclusion

This section focused on the strengths, weaknesses, scholarship, project development, project evaluation, leadership, social change, implications, and applications concerning this qualitative case study. Directions for future research were included as well. Additionally, this section of the study allowed me to analyze myself as a scholar, practitioner, and project developer. All of the topics allowed me as the researcher to critique what I considered to be some of the major components of the study. As I reflect on the consolidation of topics in this section, I realize that even though there were a limited number of participants for this study, this project has great potential in supporting reading instruction for elementary educators after these teachers receive professional training. Also, this project may be used by educators in grades 3-12 for those students that did not learn to read fluently. Another use for the project may be for adults that wish to learn to read fluently.

The impact on social change may be life changing. It may become the norm for a large percentage of students from grades K-12 to read and read fluently. As a result of the use of this project in schools, more students may be prepared to enter the workforce or continue in higher education. When students enroll in institutions for higher learning, they may enter the university of their choice prepared for the course work on the college

level as compared to taking developmental courses. Upon graduation from college, students may be prepared for employment in their area of expertise. This level of success may be reachable for more students as the problem of oral reading fluency is resolved at whatever level it is detected. In conclusion, students' being successful is the ultimate goal of the educational experience.

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Appendix A: The Project

Promoting Social Change
By Increasing Oral Reading Fluency by Second Grade

By
Ella Davis

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Professional Learning Seminar
Promoting Social Change by Increasing Oral Reading Fluency By Second Grade
General Information

Purpose:
To provide professional learning to educators to increase oral reading fluency by 2nd grade, twelfth grade, or adulthood.

Goal:
Educators to effectively increase oral reading fluency of students by second grade, twelfth grade, or adulthood.

Learning Outcome:
To increase educators' knowledge in the areas of letter recognition, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, whole word recognition strategies, vocabulary, comprehension, and practice.

Targeted Audience:
Educators for grades kindergarten-2nd as well as teachers of reading, language arts, English in grades 3-12, or adult educators.

Math, social studies, history, and science teachers may benefit from this professional learning experience depending on how broad the problem is in reading fluency in schools in the district.

Format of PowerPoint Presentation

- Topic
- Definition
- Quote
- Pre-test
- Procedure for Teaching (Behaviorism Approach)
- Procedure-Best Practices
- Post-test
- Homework

- Collaboration
- Websites
- Note(s)
- **Rules are provided the following sections for phonics**: Single consonant sounds, vowels, long single vowels, short single vowels, silent vowels, initial consonant digraphs, final consonant digraphs, silent consonants, r & l control vowels, syllabication, and accenting.

- **Word lists are provided for the section**: Long single vowels

Procedure for Using the Behaviorism Approach

- Teach using direct, and explicit, and systematic instruction using one or more concepts at a time unless the student can learn several concepts at one time.
- Teach repeatedly the concept until the concept is learned.
- Provide a reward once the concept has been learned.
- Teach additional concepts concerning the skill being taught.
- Continue to provide rewards for concepts that have been learned.
- Continue to review the concepts that have been learned previously until all of the concepts have been learned consistently concerning the skill.

Definition of Behaviorism:
Theory of learning that considers the relationship between the stimulus and response, the reinforcement factor, and environmental conditions. Consistent repetitive punishment and rewards nearly always yield positive results. Direct instruction, repetition , tokens, drill, and practice are used in the Behaviorism Theory (Bush, 2006; Isman, 2001; Rosen, 2010).

Definition of Direct Instruction:
An approach to providing instruction that is face to face or in a small group where skills are sequenced, broken down into small units, repetitive, and taught clearly (Carnine, Silbert, Kame'enuil, & Tarve, 2013).

Findings--Best Practices for Teaching
The topics entitled letter recognition, phonemic awareness, phonics, whole word recognition strategies, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and practice will include the

contents of the formatted information the project. The formatted information for this project includes the topic/skill, definition, quote, pre-test, procedure for teaching (Behaviorism Approach), procedure-best practices, post-test, homework, collaboration, websites, and notes.

Letter Recognition

Definition:
The recognition of letters when seen in isolation or in a group and the ability to discriminate among them (Letter Identification, 2014).

Quote:
I can learn to recognize the letters of the alphabet!

Pre-test:
Options
Call out the upper and lower case letters of the alphabet out-of-order and allow students to write the letter.

Allow students to identify by stating the upper and lower case letters of the alphabet from a pretest with the letters already written on the test.

Procedure for teaching the letters of the alphabet using a behaviorism approach:
(See procedure for Teaching Using Behaviorism Approach)

Procedure for teaching the letters of the alphabet using best practices:
Teach skill during pre-kindergarten and/or during kindergarten (Duke & Block, 2012; Hall 2006; Jones & Reutzel, 2012; Letter Identification, 2014).

Keep copy of the upper and lower case letters on students' desk above the pencil holder.

Read to students by pointing to words and emphasizing the beginning sounds when reading (Friesen & Butera, 2012; Hall,2006).

Teach prerequisite skills for writing the letters of the alphabet to include lines, curves, circles, and slant lines.

Write each student's name (Alphabet Adventures-Learn the Letters of the Alphabet (ABC's), 2011; Geiser, 2013; Jones, Clark, & Reutzel, 2013; Jones & Reutzel, 2012; Stahl, 2011).

Write the name of members of the family (Alphabet Adventures-Learn the Letters of the Alphabet (ABC's), 2011; Geiser, 2013; Jones, Clark, & Reutzel, 2013; Jones & Reutzel, 2012; Stahl, 2011).

Teach an upper and lower case letter each day to allow for time during the school year for several instructional cycles to teach the letters of the alphabet and to provide repetition and additional practice on recognizing letters that are troublesome (Jones, Clark, & Reutzel, 2013; Jones & Reutzel, 2012).

Teach the letters at the beginning and end of the alphabet since they are easier to learn while the letters in the middle of the alphabet are troublesome for students to learn (Jones, Clark, & Reutzel, 2013; Jones & Reutzel, 2012).

Keep a record during each instructional cycle of the letters that students consistently recall and letters that require additional practice until all of the letters are learned by students (Jones, Clark, & Reutzel, 2013; Jones & Reutzel, 2012).

Use a variety of approaches such as pointing, circling, underling, cutting, drawing, reciting, and writing the letters of the alphabet to teach students to recognize the letters of the alphabet (Geiser. 2013; Jones, Clark, & Reutzel, 2013; Letter Identification, 2014).

Teach/reinforce the letters of the alphabet by using games (Alphabet Adventure- Learn the Letters of the Alphabet (ABC's); Canizares, 2014; Friesen & Butera, 2012; Geiser, 2013; Hall, 2006).

Post-test : Options
Call out the upper and lower case letters to students and allow students to write the letters.

Allow student to state upper or lower case letter that the teacher points to from a worksheet.

Homework:
Reinforce daily work sheets sent home by the teacher. It is important to reinforce the skills taught in class rather than using a new approach for teaching.

Reinforcing skills taught daily in class should help students learn the letters of the alphabet quickly.

Collaboration: Discussion and questions concerning information shared.

Participants share practices that have consistently worked for them in teaching students to recognize the letters of the alphabet.

Websites:
ABC Introduction
ABCmouse.com
http://www.pinterest.com/jean_thompson/abc-s-letter-recognition
www.starfall.com
Alphabet Action
Enchanted learning.com
Alphabet Match.com
Magic Mailbox
Rapid Naming

Notes:
Teach letter recognition until fluency is developed (Abu-Hamour &Mather, 2012; Stahl, 2011).

Recognition of the letters of the alphabet is a prerequisite skill for learning phonemic awareness skills, sounds, decoding, and vocabulary (National Early Literacy Panel, 2008; Roberts, 2003; Stahl, 2011).

The skill of recognizing letters is the most powerful indicator of reading success in upper grades (Canizares, 2014; Duke & Block,2012; Friesen & Butera, 2012; Jones, Clark, Reutzel, 2013; Piasta & Wagner, 2010).

Phonemic Awareness

Topic:
Phonemic Awareness

Definition:
Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear, identify, and use individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words (letter-sound correspondence) (Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Duff & Clarke, 2011; Joshi, Binks, Hougen, Dahlgren, Ocker-Dean, & Smith, 2009; Perelman, Daniels, Hyde, 2005; Phonemic Awareness, 2014; Schuele,& Boudreau, 2008; Shanahan, 2006; What is Phonemic Awareness, 2014; Wilson & Colmar, 2008).

Quote:
I can detect all of the sounds for the letters of the alphabet!

Pre-test:
Give students five words to provide the individual sounds in each word (Reading: Know What Works. A Practical Guide for Educators. National Reading Panel Update, 2001).

Procedure for Teaching (Behaviorism Approach):
(See procedure for Teaching Using Behaviorism Approach)

Procedures--Best Practices:

Teach phonemic awareness skills during pre-kindergarten and kindergarten years (Effective Strategies for Teaching Phonemic Awareness, 2014; Shanahan, 2006).

Teach using small groups or individualized instruction (Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Effective Strategies for Teaching Phonemic Awareness, 2014; Reading: Know What Works, 2001; Shanahan, 2006; Torgesen, Wagner, Rashotte, Herron, & Lindamood, 2010).

Classroom should be quiet and students should be able to see the teacher's mouth (Shanahan, 2006).

Use multisensory approaches when teaching phonemic awareness (Carbo, 2007; Churchill, Durdel, & Kennedy, 1998).

Games can help students learn phonemic awareness skills. Make learning to read fun (Carbo, 2007; Phonemic Awareness, 2014; Shanahan. 2006).

Teach one or two phonemic skills at a time (A Closer Look at the Five Components of Effective Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teachers, 2004).

Phonemic awareness instruction should be incorporated with letter Knowledge. Letters represent phonemes. Allow students to keep the letters of the alphabet guide on their desk and use it as needed to associate the sound with the letter (Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; National Reading Panel, 2000; Phonemic Awareness, 2014; Uhry, 2013).

Use hand signals to teach letter sounds (Churchill, Durdel, & Kennedy, 1998).

Teach students to spell the consonants first. Afterward, teach students to spell the vowels (Torgesen, Wagner, Rashotte, Herron, & Lindamood, 2010; Uhry, 2013).

Help students to realize that sentences are composed of words. Read to students by pointing or emphasizing the beginning sound in words. Read the information several

times with students using this method (Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Uhry, 2013).

Teach words can rhyme (Antonacci & O'Callaghan, 2012; Hempenstall, 2011; Josheph, 2008; Wilson & Colmar, 2008).

Clap or tap sounds in one syllable words (Effective Strategies for Teaching Phonemic Aware, 2014).

Teach that words can be broken down into onsets and rimes (Hempenstall, 2011; Wilson & Colmar, 2008).

Recognize that words can begin with the same sound (Antonacci & O'Callaghan, 2012; Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Joseph, 2008).

Recognize that words can end with the same sound (Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Joseph, 2008).

Recognize that words can have the same medial sound (Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Joseph, 2008).

Allow students to identify the beginning, middle, and ending sound in one-syllable words. Students should be taught that words are divided into small phonemic units (Effective Strategies for Teaching Phonemic Aware, 2014; Reading: Know What Works, 2001; Uhry, 2013).

Substitute the beginning, middle, or ending sound of words to develop new words (Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Effective Strategies for Teaching Phonemic Aware, 2014).

Identify phoneme that is the same and phoneme that does not belong in words (Antonacci & O'Callaghan, 2012; Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008).

Allow children to identify the first, middle, or ending sound of words. If needed, use flashcards to help students identify the phonemes that make up the word (Callaghan, 2012; Effective Strategies for Teaching Phonemic Aware, 2014).

Blend individual sounds into a word (Antonacci & O'Callaghan, 2012; Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Phonemic Awareness, 2007).

Recognize that words can be broken down into syllables (Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Wilson & Colmar, 2008). Phonemic awareness skills should

be taught regularly until students demonstrate fluency (Churchill, Durdel, & Kennedy, 1998; Torgesen, Wagner, Rashotte, Herron, Lindamood, 2010; Uhry, 2013).

Post-test(s):
Determine the words that have the same beginning sound.

Determine a single sound in words.

Substitute the beginning, middle, and ending sound in one syllable words to determine a new word.

State each sound in five new words to determine the pronunciation of the words.

Homework:
Any activity involving spoken or written language such as singing or talking. Also, reciting nursery rhymes, reading orally, and playing guessing games are activities children can do at home (Effective Strategies for Teaching Phonemic Awareness, 2014; Geiser, 2014).

Collaboration:
Discussion and questions concerning information shared.

Participants share practices that have consistently worked for them in teaching students phonemic awareness skills.

Discuss difficulties students have consistently experienced in acquiring phonemic awareness skills.

Discussion of remedies to the problem(s) that teachers have consistently had in teaching phonemic awareness skills to students.

Websites:
Alphabet Action
RBS Kids Raising Readers
RIF Learning to Reading
Family Learning
Starfall

Note(s):
Oral language is critical to the development to phonemic awareness (Callaghan, 2012; Uhry, 2013).

Letter knowledge and phonemic awareness leads to success later in reading and spelling (Callaghan, 2012; Duff & Clarke, 2010; McHugh, 2014; Phonemic Awareness, 2007; Torgesen, Wagner, Rashotte, Herron, & Lindamood, 2010; Schuele & Boudreau, 2008; Shanahan, 2006; Wilson & Colmar, 2008).

Phonics is more difficult for students to learn without training and mastery of phonemic awareness (Shanahan, 2006).

Phonemic awareness usually occurs naturally through exposure to print (A Closer Look at the Five Essential Components of Effective Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teachers, 2004).

Phonics

Topic:
Phonics

Definition of phonics:
A set of rules that are consistent enough to specify the relationship between letters in the spelling of words, sounds of spoken language, and to decode unfamiliar words in a printed text (A Closer Look at the Five Essential Components of Effective Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teachers, 2004; Borgia & Owles, 2011; Phonics Instruction, 2014; Tracey & Morrow, 2009; Vaugh & Linan-Thompson, 2014). Phonics includes the following sounds and skills: single consonant sounds, double consonants, vowels, long single vowel sounds, short single vowel sounds, silent vowels, initial consonant blends, final consonant blends, consonant clusters, initial consonant digraphs, final consonant digraphs, silent consonants, vowel digraphs, vowel diphthongs, r and l control vowels, word families, syllabication, and accenting.

Quote:
Allow students to use the quote, "I can" for the sounds/skills students are learning in the phonics section of the project. For example, if students are learning the consonant sounds, the quote would be, "I can learn those consonant sounds!" Apply this type of quote for each group of sounds/skills that are provided in the phonics section, **pages 230-239.**

Pre-test:
A pre-test should be given by allowing students to decode words prior to learning the sounds for each group of sounds from **pages 230-239**. The teacher should observe students when decoding words to determine if students are recognizing individual sounds in words. Additionally, notes may be taken concerning each students' pre-test.

Procedure for Teaching (Behaviorism Approach):
(See procedure for Teaching Using Behaviorism Approach)

Procedure-Best Practices:
Teach on an individual basis or in a small group (Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Literacy Survival Tips for New Teachers, 2011; Tracey & Morrow, 2009).

Teach decoding skills daily. Practice should be determined by the individual's skill level. Wording should be brief. Separate visually and auditorally similar letters (Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Cunningham & Cunningham, 2002; Moats, 1998; Reading: Know What Works, 2001; Shanahan, 2006).

Model how to decode unknown words by stating each sound of words and blending the sounds together to determine the word and gradually release modeling until students can decode words independently (Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Dahl, Scharer, Lawson, & Grigab, 2000; Joseph, 2008; Literacy Survival Tips for New Teachers, 2011; Phonics Instruction, 2014; Tracey & Morrow, 2009).

Phonics should be taught as a part of the reading program. Allow students to decode words that are unknown when reading if the sounds have been taught to the students. Keep a decoding list of words that each student writes down to decode independently (A Closer Look at the Five Essential Components of Effective Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teachers, 2004; Best Practices in Literacy : Study and Strategies, 2008; Borgia & Owles, 2011; Cunningham & Cunningham, 2002; Literacy Survival Tips for New Teachers, 2011).

Teach consonant sounds before teaching the vowel sounds (Best Practices in Literacy : Study and Strategies, 2008).

Praise and correct errors immediately (Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008).

Sounds should be grouped for teaching. **Teach the sounds until fluency has developed**. The same list of sounds may be used for testing (Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Literacy Survival Tips for New Teachers, 2011).

Use multi-sensory activities to teach phonics (Dahl, Scharer, Lawson & Grogan, 2000; Literacy Survival Tips for New Teachers, 2011; Tracey & Morrow, 2009).

Allow students to spell sounds until fluency is developed (Literacy Survival Tips for New Teachers, 2011; Moats, 1998; Shanahan, 2006).

A word list should be developed for practice and a word list should be developed for testing for each sound (An example is provided with the long a sound of the vowel). Teach decoding of each sound until fluency is developed (Tracey & Morrow, 2009).

Use some type of auditory program such as Spaulding in order for the instructor to hear the sound in order to teach the sounds to students (Spaulding & Spaulding, 1969).

Post-test(s)--Phonics Section--Pages 230-239
Post-test(s) should be given by allowing students to recognize by stating and/or writing individual sounds from each list of sounds provided as they are taught. Students may be asked to decode words, develop words, and/or spell words using the sounds studied for each group of sounds provided.

Post-test(s)--Phonics Section—Syllabication and accenting--Pages 239-241:
Develop a test of at least two words per rule after the content for these skills has been taught. Continually retest students again using the same rules while adding additional rules(s).

Homework--Phonics Section--List of Sounds Provided—Pages 230-239:
Provide practice sheets for students to match sounds studied to pictures or words.

Homework--Phonics Section—Syllabication—Pages 239-240:
Provide practice sheets for students to apply and write the rule used to divide words into syllables.

Homework--Phonics Section--Accenting--Pages 240-241:
Model accenting by allowing parents to read to the child **(Best Practices in Phonics Instruction, 2012).**

Collaboration:
Teachers should keep individual records of each student's progress when working on various sounds, syllabication rules, and accenting rules.

Teachers should collaborate on effective strategies for struggling students.

Websites/ Auditory Programs:
Alphabet Action
RBS Kids Raisin Readers
RIF Learning to Read
Family Learning
Starfall
Reading Eggs

BBC Words and Pictures
Gamegoo
School Bell
Scholastic Phonics
http://www.jmeacham.com/
ICT games
IXL
Hooked on Phonics
Spaulding

Note(s):
Phonics is essential for oral reading, reading comprehension, and spelling success (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2009; Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Literacy Survival Tips for New Teachers, 2011; Reading: Know What Works, 2001; Shanahan, 2006; Tracey, & Morrow, 2009).

Systematic and explicit phonics instruction is more effective than nonsystematic phonics instruction or no phonics at all (Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008).

Phonics--Single Consonant Sounds
Definition of single consonant sounds:
Phoneme said with more or less obstruction of the teeth, tongue, and lips (Consonant Combinations Study Guide, 2012; Strickland, 2011; Vaughn, Linan--Thompson, 2004).

Rules:
C followed by e, i, or y usually has the soft sound of s (city)

C followed by any other letter says the k sound (cake)

D followed by u sounds like j (individual)

D followed by ge is usually silent (edge)

G followed by o, a, or u makes the hard sound of g (goat)

G followed by e, i, or y usually has the soft sound of j (gem)

S usually unvoiced (caps, see)

S says z at the end of a word (as)

T usually says sh when followed by ial, ious, ion, or ient (partial, cautious, portion, patient)

T followed by ch is usually silent (catch)

Consonant y is usually used at the beginning of a syllable (yet)

W is a consonant at the beginning of a word or syllable (won, highway)

X usually sounds like ks (wax)

X sounds like gs when preceded by e and followed by a vowel (exact)

X at the beginning of a word sounds like z (xylophone)

Y at the beginning of a word is a consonant (you, yes)

Y at the beginning of a word is a consonant (you, yes)

Z is usually heard (crazy, zebra)

Z sometimes sounds like zh (azure) (Allington, 1983; Gunning, 2012; Harris & Sipay, 1971; McCormack & Pasquarelli, 2010; Miller, 2002; Spaulding & Spaulding, 1969; Strickland, 2011; Tankersley, 2003; Thompson, 2004; Vaughn & Linan--Thompson, 2004).

Phonics--Single Consonant Sounds

Table 10

List of Single Consonant Sounds (Voiced, Unvoiced, & Others)

Voiced		**Unvoiced**		**Others (Little Obstruction)**
Gg	Qu	Bb	Cc	Ff
Jj	Xx	Hh	Tt	
Ll	Zz	Pp		
Mm	Yy	Kk		
Nn	Ww	Dd		
Rr	Vv	Ss		

Note. From the sources listed: Gunning, 2012; Harris & Sipay, 1971; Miller, 2002; McCormack, 2010; Spaulding & Spaulding, 1969; Spaulding, 2003; Strickland, 2011; Tankersley, 2003; Vaughn, Linan-Thompson, 2004.

Phonics—Double Consonants
Definition of Double Consonants:
When a consonant is doubled, the first consonant is usually voiced and the second consonant is usually silent (hitting, stirred). Three exceptions exist.

1. gg as in suggest

2. ss when it is followed by ion is voiced as sh (passion, mission)

3. when cc is followed by i or e, the first c is hard and the second c is soft and is voiced ks (mission, passion) (Allington, 1983; Gunning, 2012; Harris & Sipay, 1971; McCormack, 2010; Miller, 2002; Spaulding & Spaulding, 1971; Strickland, 2011; Tankersley, 2003; Vaughn, Linan-Thompson, 2004).

Phonics--Consonants--Same Sound--Different Letters

Table 11

Phonics--Consonants--Same Sound--Different Letters

Consonants	Same Sound	Different Letters
f	ff	ph
j	g	dge
l	ll	le
m	mb	mn
r	wr	
s	ss	c
z	zz	
c	k	ck

Note. From the sources listed: Allington, 1983; Miller, 2002; Strickland, 2011; Tankersley, 2003; Vaughn, Linan--Thompson, 2004.

Phonics—Vowels
Definition of Vowels:
A vowel is a sound made without using the breath (Gunning, 2012; Harris & Sipay, 1971; McCormack & Pasquarelli, 2010; Spaulding & Spaulding, 1969; Vaughn, Linan--Thompson, 2004).

List of Vowels & Semi-Vowel:
a, e, i, o, u, (semi-vowel, y)

Rule for the vowel y:
The vowel y represents the long sound of the letter e or the short sound of the letter i depending on the region where you live (crazy, tiny) (Allington, 1983; Harris & Sipay, 1971; Miller, 2002; Spaulding & Spaulding, 1969; Tankersley, 2003).

Phonics--Long Single Vowels
Definition of Long Single Vowels:
The long sound of the vowels are the same as their alphabet name (Strickland, 2011; Tankersley, 2003).

Rule of long vowel sounds:
The first vowel is usually long and the second vowel is usually silent in words (Gunning, 2012; Harris & Sipay, 1971; Tankersley, 2003; McCormack, 2010).

Table 12

Example of Word List

Example of Word List for Practice – Long a Sound	Example of Word List for Testing- Long a Sound
1. make	1. kale
2. date	2. cake
3. save	3. base
4. bake	4. gate
5. tape	5. game

Note. From the sources listed: Allington, 1983; Gunning, 2012; Miller, 2002; McCormack & Pasquarelli, 2010; Strickland, 2011; Tankersley, 2003; Thompson, 2004; Vaughn & Linan--Thompson, 2004.

Phonics--Short SingleVowels
Definition of Short SingleVowels:
Short vowels are usually the sound you hear when there is one vowel in a word or one vowel in a closed syllable (Miller, 2002; Strickland, 2011; Tankersley, 2003; Williams & Phillips, 2006; Vaughn & Linan--Thompson, 2004).

Rules:
A vowel is usually short when there is one vowel in a word or in a closed syllable (Williams & Phillips--Birdsong, 2006).

A may sound like the a in bar, father

O may sound like the short u sound as represented by son, honey

O may sound like oo as in to and do

U is often pronounced like oo as in flute

U maybe pronounced like oo as in put (Allington, 1983; Gunning, 2012; McCormack & Pasquarelli, 2010; Miller, 2002; Spaulding, 2003; Tankersley, 2003; Vaughn & Linan--Thompson, 2004).

Phonics--Short Vowel Sounds
Table 13

Short Vowel Sounds & Key Words to Denote Sound

Short Vowel Sounds & Key Words to Denote Sound	
short a --apple	
short e --egg	ea--same sound as short e
short--it	
short o--octopus	
short u--up	

Note. From the sources listed: Allington, 1983; Gunning, 2012; McCormack & Pasquarelli, 2010; Miller, 2002; Spaulding, 2003; Tankersley, 2003; Vaughn & Linan--Thompson, 2004).

Phonics--Silent Vowels
Rules:
The e is usually silent in a word or syllable when there are 2 vowels in the word of syllable (dime, ate).

When two vowels occur in a word or syllable, the first vowel is usually long and the second vowel is usually silent (coat).

U is frequently silent when it followed by g (tongue).

U is frequently silent when followed by q (unique) (Allington, 1983; Miller, 2002; Tankersley, 2003; Vaughn, Linan--Thompson, 2004).

Phonics--Initial Consonant Blends
Definition of Consonant Blends:
A combination of two consonant letters that are slightly merged and are still heard at the beginning a word (Consonant Combinations Study Guide, 2012; Groff, 1971; Werfel & Schuele, 2012).

List of initial consonant blends:
fl, sl, sc, pl, sw, bl, cl, gl, sp, st, sm, sn, tr, dr, fr, gr, tw, sk, br, pr, cr (Allington, 1983; Miller, 2002; Strickland, 2011; Tankersley, 2003; Vaughn, Linan-Thompson, 2004).

Phonics—Final Consonant Blends
Definition of Consonant Blends:
A combination of two consonant letters that are slightly merged and are still heard at the end of a word (Consonant Combinations Study Guide, 2012; Groff, 1971; Tankersley, 2003; Vaughn & Linan-Thompson, 2004; Werfel & Schuele, 2012).

List of final consonant blends: lf, ld, lt, pt, lm, st, ng, nk, nd, sp, ct, ft, nt, mp, sk, & lp (Allington, 1983; Miller, 2002; Strickland, 2011; Tankersley, 2003; Vaughn & Linan-Thompson, 2004).

Phonics --Consonant Clusters
Definition of consonant clusters:
A combination of two or more consonant letters that slightly merge, but the sounds are still distinguishable (Consonant Combinations Study Guide, 2012; Harris & Sipay, 1971; Spaulding, 2003; Spaulding & Spaulding 1969; Tankersley, 2003; Vaughn & Linan-Thompson, 2004; Tankersley, 2003).

List of Consonant Clusters:
sch, spl, scr, phr, squ, str, spr, thr, & shr (Allington, 1983; Gunning, 2012; McCormack, Pasquarelli, 2010; Miller, 2002; Spaulding, 2003; Spaulding & Spaulding 1969; Strickland, 2011; Tankersley, 2003; Vaughn & Linan-Thompson, 2004).

Phonics--Initial Consonant Digraphs
Definition of consonant digraphs:
Two consonant letters that represent one sound (Consonant Combinations Study Guide, 2012; Harris & Sipay, 1971; Miller, 2002; Strickland, 2011; Tankersley, 2003; Vaughn, Linan--Thompson, 2004).

Rules:
Ch is frequently pronounced as the ch in child, chance

Ch frequently sounds like k (chord, character)

Gh at the beginning of a word sounds like g (ghost, ghastly)

Ph sounds like f

Q sounds like k (unique)

Sc sounds like s or sh when followed by e or I (science, ascend)

Sh has the sound sh as in she, wish

Th is often unvoiced as in thin

Th is frequently voiced as in then, with

Wh is occasionally used as h when followed by o as in who and whole (Allington, 1983; Tankersley, 2003; Strickland, 2011; Vaughn & Linan-Thompson, 2004).

List of Consonant Digraphs:
ch, sh, th, wh, ph, gh, qu, sc (science) (Allington, 1983; Gunning & Pasquarelli, 2012; Harris & Sipay, 1971; McCormack & Pasquarelli, 2010; Miller, 2002; Spaulding, 2003; Spaulding & Spaulding, 1969; Tankersley, 2003; Vaughn & Linan-Thompson, 2004).

Phonics--Final Consonant Digraphs
Definition of Final Consonant Digraphs:
Two consonant letters that represent one sound at the end of a word (Kirkland, 2011; Tankersley, 2003).

R**ules:**
Gh sounds like f (rough,cough)

Gh is usually silent (taught, though)

Ck occasionally is voiced as K; at the end of a syllable with a short vowel (back, luck)

Ch sometimes sounds like sh as in much

Th is often unvoiced as in moth (Harris & Sipay, 1971; Tankersley, 2003; Vaughn & Linan-Thompson; 2004).

List of final consonant digraphs: ck, gh, ch, & th (Allington, 1983; Gunning & Pasquarelli, 2012; Harris & Sipay, 1971; Kirkland, 2011; Spaulding, 2003; Tankersley, 2003; Vaughn & Linan-Thompson, 2004).

Phonics Silent Consonants
Definition of Silent Consonants:
When two consonants or more consonants occur together in a word, often one is silent (Consonant Combinations Study Guide, 2012; Tankersley, 2003; Vaughn & Linan-Thompson, 2004).

Rules:
G is not heard before n at the beginning of a word (gnat, gnaw)

K is silent before n at the beginning of a word (knit, knob)

S is silent sometimes before l (island)

N is silent sometimes after m (solemn)

W is not heard before r (wrap, wrest)

At the end of the syllable in a word, b preceded by m is not heard (lamb)

L is often not heard before m or k (film, talk)

P is quiet before s or n (psychiatry, pneum) (Allington, 1983; Gunning & Pasquarelli, 2012; Harris & Sipay, 1971; Tankersley, 2003; Vaughn, Linan--Thompson, 2004).

Gh is often not heard in words (might, hi)

T is frequently silent when followed by ch (match, hutch)

As indicated previously, the second consonant in double consonants is usually silent (Strickland, 2011).

List of silent consonants:
sl, gn, mn, mb, lm, lk, gh, ps, wr, pn, kn, & tch (Allington, 1983; Strickland, 2011; Tankersley, 2002).

Phonics --Vowel Digraphs

Definition of vowel digraph: Two vowel letters that represent one sound (Miller, 2002;

McCormack & Pasquarelli, 2010; Strickland, 2011; Tankersley, 2003; Vaughn & Linan--Thompson, 2004).

List of vowel digraphs:
ay, ai, aw, au, ee, ea, ei, eu, oa, oo, ou, ow, oe, ey, eu, & ew (Allington, 1983; Miller, 2002; Spaulding, 2003; Strickland, 2011; Tankersley, 2003; Vaughn & Linan-Thompson, 2004).

Phonics --Vowel Diphthongs
Definition of vowel diphthong:
Vowel diphthongs are the long sound of the vowels (Strickland, 2011; Tankersley, 2003; Vaughn & Linan-Thompson, 2004).

List of vowel diphthongs:
oi, oy, ou, oy (Allington, 1983; Gunning & Pasquarelli, 2010; Strickland, 2011; Tankersley, 2003; Vaughn & Linan-Thompson, 2004).

Phonics Long Vowels Same Sound Different Letters

Table 14

Phonics Long Vowels Same Sound Different Letters

Phonics Vowels	**Long Vowels-Same Sound-Different Letters**				
a	ai (middle)	ay (end)	eigh		
e	ee	ea	ie	y (end)	ey (end)
i	ie (end)	y (end)	igh	ind	ild
o	oa	ow (end)	oe (end, or middle if word ends with n,l,or er)	oll	old
u	ue				

Note. From the sources listed: Gunning, 2012; McCormack & Pasquarelli, 2010; Spaulding, 2003; Tankersley, 2003; Vaughn, Linan--Thompson, 2004).

Phonics r and l Control Vowels
Definition of r and l Control Vowels:
Long and short vowels are somewhat modified or controlled when they are followed by r (Harris & Sipay, 1971; Miller, 2002; Strickland, 2011).

Rules:
The short vowels are considerably modified when they are followed by r.

The long vowels are only slightly modified when they are followed by r (Strickland, 2011; Tankersley, 2003).

.
When a is followed by l, ll, or lk, you may here the short o or the short a sound (Harris & Sipay, 1971; Spaulding, 2003; Spaulding & Spaulding, 1969; Strickland, 2011; Tankersley, 2003; Vaughn & Linan-Thompson, 2004).

List of r and l controlled vowels:
ar, ur, er, or, ir, al, air, ure, all, ere, eer, alk, are
(Allington, 1983; Harris & Sipay, 1971; McCormack Pasquarelli, 2010; Spaulding, 2003; Spaulding & Spaulding, 1969; Strickland, 2011; Tankersley, 2003; Vaughn & Linan--Thompson, 2004).

Phonics-Word Families
Definition of word families:
Group of words that have common group of letters and a similar sound (Cunningham & Cunningham, 2002; Goouch & Lambirth, 2008; Gunning & Pasquarelli, 2011, 2012; Literacy Survival Tips for New Teachers, 2011; McCormack, 2010; Miller, 2002; Rasinski, 2000; Rasinski, Rupley & Nichols, 2008; Strickland, 2011; Tankersley, 2003; Vaughn & Linan-Thompson, 2004).

.
Note:
There are 37 common word families. The are as follows: ain, ack, ale, ame, all, ank, an, at, ash, ap, ate, ay, aw, ell, eat, est, ide, ick, ice, unk, ump, ug, unk,ight, ill, ine, in, ing, ink, it, ip, oke, ock, ore, op, ot, and ore. Combine an initial consonant sound or an initial consonant blend to develop a family of words (Allington, 1983; Cunningham & Cunningham, 2002; Dahl Scharer, Lawson, & Grogan, 2000; Literacy Survival Tips for New Teachers, 2011; Moats, 1998; Phonics Instruction, 2014; Rasinski, 2000; Rasinski, Rupley, & Nichols, 2008; Strickland, 2011; Tankersley, 2003; Tracy & Morrow, 2009; Vaughn & Linan-Thompson, 2014).

Phonics—Syllabication
Definition of syllabication:
Rules for dividing words into syllables to read and write (Tankersley, 2003).

Rules:
Divide words between like consonants (sup/per).

Consonant blends are not divided (mon/ster).

Divide the word between the prefix and the root word (un/safe).

Prefixes (pre, mis, a, ex, in, be, sub, un, dis, re, and un).

Divide words between the root word and the suffix (hope/ful).

Suffixes (y, er, ly, ness, less, ful).

Divide the word so that the vowel will keep its short sound (pun/ish).

Divide the words so that the vowel will keep its long sound.

Compound words are divided between the words that make up the compound.

Compound words are divided between the syllables within the word (ev/er/green) (Gunning, 2012; Literacy Survival Tips for New Teachers, 2011; Tankersley, 2003; Vaughn & Linan-Thompson, 2004; Werfel & Schuele, 2012; Williams & Birdsong, 2006; What is a Syllable, 2009).

See Project Read for additonal information on dividing words into syllables. .

Phonics--Accent

Definition of accent:
The syllable in words that is stressed louder is the syllable that is accented. The syllable that is not accented often has the schwa sound (Owens, 2013).

Rules:
The first syllable is usually accented in words (pro'/gram).

The accent is often on the main root word in words that have a prefix or suffix (un/do', box'/es).

If the a, pro, de, po, re, ex, or in is the first syllable in a word, it is usually not accented (de/pend', pro/found').

Two vowel letters together in the last syllable of a word frequently indicates an accented last syllable (com/plain').

The syllable before the double consonant is often accented when there are two like consonants letters in a word (con'nect).

The accent is usually on the syllable before the suffixes iou, ial, ian, ical, ic, ity, and ion (af/fec/ta'/tion).

The accent is usually on the second syllable before the suffix ate (dif/fer/en'/ti/ate).

One of the first two syllables is usually accented in words of three or more syllables (ac'ci/dent, de/ter'/mine) (Kunter, 2011; Owens, 2013; Williams & Birdsong, 2006).

Whole Word Recognition Strategies

Topic:
Whole Word Recognition Strategies

Definition of Whole Word Recognition Strategies phonics:
Techniques used to recognize the whole word by sight when reading or in isolation (Aaron, Joshi, Ayotollah, Ellsberry, Henderson, & Lindsey, 1999; Albert, 1995; Literacy Games to Develop Word Recognition, 2014; Reading Strategies: Word Recognition, 2002).

Quote:
I can learn the whole word!

Pre-test:
Access whether the students can recognize the upper and lower case letters of the alphabet out-of-order with fluency (Chard & Osborn, 2010; Developing Automaticity of Letter and Word Recognition, 2009).

Review to determine if the reading series that you are using to teach reading has an established word list. If the reading series does not have an established word list, make a word list by writing the words from the text out-of-order from the books in the reading series on the word list.

Use the list of words that students are expected to learn to determine the number of words that the students can already recognize. Place the number of words that the students can recognized over the number of on the word list(s) to evaluate the number of words

known. You can use your school district's grading scale to determine the students' letter grade if that information is needed.

Procedure for Teaching (Behaviorism Approach):
(See procedure for Teaching Using Behaviorism Approach)

Procedure-Best Practices:

Teach on an individual basis or in a small group.

Use a modified sight word recognition strategy as indicated in numbers 1-7:

1. Determine the number of words that students can learn weekly based on their learning rate.

2. Allow the student to point to each word. Teach students to **spell** the whole word(s) and then **say** the word for several days.

3. Allow the student to point to each word while saying those same words by **saying the whole word in the order the words are written on the word list** for several days.

4. Add **additional words weekly**, but always **start at the beginning of the word list** in order to **over learn** the words.

5. If students can **recognize the word(s) fluently when reading the text**, **then students have learned to recognize the whole word.**

6. You can **gradually discontinue stating at the beginning of the word list once** you are confident that those words at the beginning of the word list **is a part of the students' sight word vocabulary.**

7. Gradually, **add a new starting and stopping place on the word list(s)** when students have **demonstrated that the whole words have been learned (**Aaron, Joshi, Ayotollah, Ellsberry, Henderson, & Lindsey, 1999; Bower, 1992; Chard & Osborn, 2010; Faust & Kandelshine-Waldman, 2011; MacDonald, 2010; Marshall, 2012; Marzano, 1995; Phillips & Feng, 2012; Reyhner, 2010; Word recognition skills and strategies, 1997; Whole Word verses Phonics, 2014).

Use the content of the text in the sentence or paragraph to determine the pronunciation of the whole word (Literacy Games to Develop Word Recognition, 2014; Phonics, Whole--Word and Whole-Language Processes Add Up to Determine Reading Speed, Study Shows, 2007; Reading Strategies: Word Recognition, 2002; Reyhner, 2010; Richard, 2003; Rinsky, 1997; Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, 2010; Whole Word Verses Phonics, 2014; Wilson & Colmar, 2008; Word Recognition Skills and Strategies, 1997; Wryhte, 2014).

Use word walls that consist of the words that support the students at the reading level they are performing (Brabham & Villaume, 2001; Jackson & Narvaez, 2013; Jasmine & Schiesl, 2009; Wingate, Rutledge, & Johnston, 2014).

Post-test:
Use the same word list(s) that you used for the pretest. Determine the number of words that students can recognize fluently. Score the test by putting the number of words pronounced correctly with the total number of words on the list. Use the school district's grading policy to determine if students pass or fail the word list(s) test(s).

Homework:
Allow students to say the whole word daily on word list(s) your child is using at school. Use the starting and stopping place recommended by the teacher.

Allow your child to point to the words while you read to your child daily. Also, you can allow your child to read along with you.

Collaboration:
Collaborate on methods that consistently worked when teaching whole word recognition strategies.

Collaborate concerning students that continue to experience difficulty using whole word recognition strategies.

Collaborate on the support given at home using the suggested word recognition strategy.

Websites:
http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/wordbuild/
http://www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/Games/mag/spelling.html
http://www.starfall.com/n/level-a/learn-t0-read/load.htm?f
http://www.readwritethinnk.org/student_mat/student_material.asp?id=3
http://readwritethink.org/materials/wordwizard/
http://www.popcap.com/launchpage.php?theGame=bookworm&src=big8

Fluency

Topic:
Fluency

Definition:
The ability to read text aloud with speed, accuracy, and prosody (expression through proper pausing and emphasis) to permit comprehension to occur (A Closer Look at the Five Essential Components of Effective Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teachers, 2004; Ardoin, Morena, Binder, & Foster. 2013; Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Reading: Know What Works. Practical Guide for Educators, 2001; Shanahan, 2006; What Education Schools Aren't Teaching about Reading and What Elementary Teachers Aren't Learning, 2006).

Quote:
I must learn to read fluently!

Pre-test:
Test students to determine if they can read fluently by using a text at their performance level. If the students can read fluently at their performance level, chose the next text by selecting a reading book at the next level until students scores at the instructional or frustration level. Once students scores at the instructional or frustration level on a text, that level is where the instructor should start to work on improving fluency.

There are various tests that can determine students' frustration, instructional, or independent levels (Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Determining a Student's Instructional, Independent, or Hard Reading Levels, 2009; Treptow, 2006; Treptow, Burns, McComas, 2007).

Procedure for Teaching (Behaviorism Approach):
(See Procedure for Teaching Using Behaviorism Approach)

Procedure-Best Practices:
Develop fluency in identifying letter--sound correspondences, phonics, spelling patterns, and identifying isolated words (A Closer Look at the Five Essential Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teachers, 2004; Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001; Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Reading: Know What Works. A Practical Guide for Educators, 2001; Shanahan, 2006).

Teachers should discuss and demonstrate what good reading sounds like according to the definition of oral reading fluency (A Closer Look at the Five Essential Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teachers, 2004; Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001; Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Reading: Know What Works. A Practical Guide for Educators, 2001; Shanahan, 2006).

Instruction in fluency on students' instructional or frustration level leads to improved oral reading fluency, but more support may be required from teachers (Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Shanahan, 2006; Treptow, 2006; Treptow, Burns, McComas, 2007).

Any procedure used to teach fluency should include oral reading, repetition, and one on one feedback for students (Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Reading: Know What Works. Practical Guide for Educators, 2001; Shanahan, 2006). Also, instruction for fluency should be direct, explicit and systematic (A Closer Look at the Five Essential Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teachers, 2004; Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001; Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Shanahan, 2006; Reading: Know What Works. A Practical Guide for Educators, 2001).

Systematic Decoding Instruction--Phonic instruction is provided in a planned sequenced manner (Good, Baker, & Peyton, 2009; Langenberg, 2000; National Reading Panel Reports Combination of Teaching Phonics, Word Sounds, Giving Feedback on Oral Reading Most Effective Way to Teach Reading, 2000; Pikulski, 2006; Pressley, 2001; Pressley, Gaskin, & Fingeret, 2006; Torgesen & Hudson, 2006).

Provide daily opportunity for fluency building (A Closer Look at the Five Essential Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teachers, 2004; Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001; Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Carbo, 2008; Reading: Know What Works. A Practical Guide for Educators, 2001; Shanahan, 2006).

Use high interest reading material (Carbo, 2008; Oakley 2003; Torgesen, Houston, Rissman, & Kosanovich, 2007; Strategies to Help Engage Reluctant Readers in Reading, 2014).

Oral reading techniques used to build oral reading fluency include repeated reading, neurological impress method, assisted reading, paired reading, echo reading, technology Listening-while reading, tape recorded text, tape recorders, digital tape recorders, CD players, CD--ROM devices, and radio reading (Carbo, 2008; National Reading Panel, 2000; National Reading Panel Reports Combination of Teaching Phonics, Word Sounds,

Giving Feedback on Oral reading Most Effective Way to Teach Reading, 2000; Shanahan, 2006).

These terms are defined as…

Repeated Reading:

Repeated reading is when a student reads the same passage until automaticity has been developed. The purpose of repeated reading is to improve the pace of recognizing words (A Closer Look at the Five Essential Components of Effective Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teacher, 2004; Ardoin, Morena, Binder, & Foster, 2013; Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Carbo, 2008; Casey Robertson, Williamson, Serio, & Elswick, 2011; Dower, 1994; Hicks, 2009; Hapstak & Tracey, 2007; Hudson, Lane, & Pullen, 2005; Kuhn & Rasinski, 2007; Kubin & Starlin, 2003; Kuhn & Stahl, 2000; Learning First Allliance, 2000; Lo, Cooke, & Starling, 2011; National Reading Panel, 2006; Oakley, 2003; Osborn, Lehr, & Hiebert, 2003; Pressley, 2001; Rasinski, 2003; Reading: Know What Works. Practical Guide for Educators, 2001; Samuels, 1997; The National Reading Panel, 2000; Walker, Jolivette, & Lingo, 2005; What Education Schools Aren't Teaching about Reading and What Elementary Teachers Aren't Learning, 2006).

Neurological Impress Method (NIM):

This strategy is a form of choral, unison, assisted, or paired reading. It is recommended to begin using the NIM by having the student read books he can master. The teacher and student read in unison while tracking the words. The teacher reads slightly more quickly, loudly and directly into the student's ear. The student's finger should be placed on top of the instructor's as a way of tracking the words when reading. This process allows the student to hear the words quickly before repeating them, copy the prosody and flow of the language while tracking the words (Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Coleraine, 2009; Oakley, 2003; Shanahan, 2006; Young, 2010).

Assisted Reading:

A classmate is chosen to be the lead reader. The assisted reader (struggling reader) receives support and feedback from a partner (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003; Wright, 2012).

Paired Reading:

The teacher selects a passage at students' instructional level. The teacher and student begins to read in unison aloud. The student gives the teacher a silent signal to read independently. Students receive help as needed and continue to read in unison with the teacher (A Closer Look at the Five Essential Components of Effective Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teacher, 2004; Carbo, 2008; Shanahan, 2006, Wright, 2012).

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Echo Reading:
Text is selected by the teacher at the student's instructional level. The teacher reads aloud a short passage while the student follows along silently. The student then reads the same selection aloud and the read aloud activity continues alternating between the teacher and student until the passage has been read (Carbo, 2008; Shanahan, 2006; Wright, 2012).

Strategy of Sight Word Recognition Instruction:
Students can read fluently by recalling words from memory (A Closer Look at the Five Essential Components of Effective Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teacher, 2004; Reading: Know What Works. Practical Guide for Educators, 2001; Blau, 2011; Hapstak & Tracy, 2007; Hicks, 2009; Musti-Rao, Hawkins, & Barkley, 2009; National Reading Panel, 2006; Nears, 2010; Report of the National Reading Panel, 2006; Therrien, 2004; Therrien & Kubina, 2007; Shanahan, 2006; Sullivan, Konrad, Joseph, Luu, 2013; Yo, Cooke, & Starling, 2011).

Technology:
Technology used to increase oral reading fluency include the following: Listening-while speaking, listening-while reading, tape recorded text, tape recorders, digital tape recorders, CD players, CD--ROM devices, and radio reading (Carbo, 2008; Casey, Robertson, Williamson, Serio, & Elswick, 2011; Goldstein & Mather, 2001; Hudson, Lane, & Pullen, 2005; Kuhn & Schwanenflugel, 2006; Report of National Reading Panel, 2006; Shanahan, 2006; The National Reading Panel, 2000).

Post-test:
Teacher should observe to determine if student recognizes words fluently, read with prosody, and answer comprehension questions after reading the text (Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Determining a Student's Instructional, Independent, or Hard Reading Levels, 2009; Treptow, 2006; Treptow, Burns, McComas, 2007).

Homework:
Read with your child nightly using the assigned text from school and by using the recommended approach(es) from the teacher. Allow the child to read by pointing to the words or use a reading card if some fluency has been developed allow.

Collaboration:
Collaborate on the technique(s) that were the most effective in increasing oral reading fluency for students. Collaborate on the technique(s) that were felt to be ineffective in increasing oral fluency for students. Collaborate on new techniques determined to increase oral reading fluency.

Websites:
http:d//www.readingrockets.org/article/fluency-matters
http://www.readingrockets.org/guides/encouraging-your-child-read
http://www.readingrockets.orgg/guides/child-becomes-reader-ii-kindergarten-grade-threethrough-

Note(s):
Fluency can be taught and learned (A Closer Look at the Five Essential Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teachers, 2004; Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001; Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Reading: Know What Works. A Practical Guide for Educators, 2001; Shanahan, 2006)**.**

Teaching fluency improves reading regardless of how it is accessed (A Closer Look at the Five Essential Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teachers, 2004; Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001; Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Reading: Know What Works. A Practical Guide for Educators, 2001; Shanahan, 2006)**.**

Teaching fluency improves oral reading fluency, and it enhances students' skills in silent reading comprehension, decoding, word recognition and overall reading achievement in remedial and regular students (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn; 2001; A Closer Look at the Five Essential Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teachers, 2004; Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Reading: Know What Works. A Practical Guide for Educators, 2001; Shanahan, 2006; Your First-Grader and Reading, 2014)**.**

Guidance from teachers, and teachers directing parents, volunteers, and peers improves oral reading fluency regardless of the approach used (A Closer Look at the Five Essential Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teachers, 2004; Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001; Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Reading: Know What Works. A Practical Guide for Educators, 2001; Shanahan, 2006).

Words learned through continued practice in oral reading fluency transfers when students can read other text(s) (A Practical Guide for Educators, 2001; A Closer Look at the Five Essential Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teachers, 2004; Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001; Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Reading: Know What Works. A Practical Guide for Educators, 2001; Shanahan, 2006)**.**

After continued practice in oral reading fluency, the number of repetitions required decreases which indicates that learning has taken place and not just memorizing words (A Closer Look at the Five Essential Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teachers, 2004; Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001; Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Reading: Know What Works. A Practical Guide for Educators, 2001; Shanahan, 2006)**.**

Fluency instruction tends to be noisy (Shanahan, 2006).

Vocabulary

Topic:
Vocabulary

Definition:
Vocabulary is defined as words we should know the meaning of when listening, speaking, reading, and writing when interacting with others (A Closer Look at the Five Essential Components of Effective Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teachers, 2004; Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001; Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Mason, 2011; Reading: Know What Works. A Practical Guide for Educators. National Reading Panel Update, 2001; Shanahan, 2006; Sweeny, Trainer, Mason, 2011; What Education Schools Aren't Teaching about Reading and What Elementary Teacher's Aren't Teaching about Reading and What Elementary Teachers Aren't Learning, 2006).

Quote :
I can learn the meaning of all vocabulary words!

Pre-test:
Select words from the previous grade level(s) or students' grade level to determine the number of words that students can provide the definition of to you. Another option would be to use an established test on vocabulary to determine students' vocabulary grade level.

Procedure for Teaching (Behaviorism Approach):
(See Procedure for Teaching Using Behaviorism Approach)

Procedure--Best Practices:
Provide some type of daily review of the vocabulary words studied each week before a story is read. An example of a daily review may be follows:

Monday—Thursday:

Monday--Wednesday:
Daily review of the pronunciation of vocabulary words for the week to help students recognize the vocabulary words independently.

Monday and Tuesday:
Review the definition provided for the words, and if it is possible associate content that students are familiar with to the definition.

Wednesday and Thursday:
Assist students when completing a worksheet similar to the following content:

Definition of the words according to the dictionary or thesaurus:

Determine key word(s) of the word to define:
Determine key word(s) in the definition of the word to readily recall the meaning of the word and to assist with recalling the definition of the word when needed in class discussions or during testing (Shannahan, 2001).

Write or state the definition in your own words:
Write or state the definition in your own words (A Closer Look at the Five Essential Components of Effective Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teachers, 2004; Reading: Know What Works. A Practical Guide for Educators. National Reading Panel Update, 2001).

Write sentence(s) showing the application of the definition:

Develop the illustrations/examples of the word:
(A Closer Look at the Five Essential Components of Effective Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teachers, 2004).

Friday:
Construct a test that would allow students to use the vocabulary words using higher order thinking skills (design, connect, synthesize, apply concepts, critique, analyze, create, prove) (A Closer Look at the Five Essential Components of Effective Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teachers, 2004; Dubin, 2012; Shanahan, 2006; Sweeny, Trainer, Mason, 2011).

Procedure—Best Practices Continued:
Vocabulary instruction should be incorporated in reading instruction (Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008).

Students should read daily to improve vocabulary skills (A Closer Look at the Five Essential Components of Effective Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teachers, 2004; Reading: Know What Works. A Practical Guide for Educators. National Reading Panel Update, 2001).

Vocabulary instruction should be ongoing and long-term (A Closer Look at the Five Essential Components of Effective Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teachers, 2004; Shanahan, 2006).

Learn vocabulary words by using the context and learning word parts or root words (A Closer Look at the Five Essential Components of Effective Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading; Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001; Best Practices in Literacy Study and Strategies, 2008; Biemiller, 2000; Kesler, 2011; Protopapas, Mouzaki, Sideridis, Kotsolakou, Simos, 2013; Rasinski, Padak, Newton, Newton, 2011; Reading: Know What Works. A Practical Guide for Educators. National Reading Panel Update, 2001; Shanahan, 2006; Sweeny, Trainer, Mason, 2011; Winter, 2009).

Involve students in strategies/activities (oral read aloud, written work, active learning) that allow students to learn new vocabulary words and use the words in a variety of ways (A Closer Look at the Five Essential Components of Effective Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teachers, 2004; Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001; Best Practices in Literacy Study and Strategies, 2008; Blackowicz, 2005; Kesler, 2011; Reading: Know What Works. A Practical Guide for Educators. National Reading Panel Update, 2001; Shanahan, 2006; Sweeny, Trainer, Mason, 2011; Sweeny, Trainer, Winters, 2009; Toth, 2013).

Provide instruction on new words in all subject areas from textbooks (Reading: Know What Works. A Practical Guide for Educators. National Reading Panel Update, 2001).

Fieldtrips improve vocabulary by allowing students to experience the meaning of concepts taught in particular topics (Blachowicz & Obrochta, 2005).

Educators may provide students with several different definitions of the words to be learned or students can look up several different definitions of the words (A Closer Look at the Five Essential Components of Effective Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teachers, 2004; Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001; Reading: Know What Works. A Practical Guide for Educators. National Reading Panel Update, 2001). Pre-instruction should be provided on vocabulary words before reading the selection (Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Shanahan, 2006).

Provide practice on vocabulary words using technology (Shanahan, 2006).

Use a variety of methods for practice and repetition until automaticity develops when students use the vocabulary terms (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001; Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Reading: Know What Works. A Practical Guide for Educators. National Reading Panel Update, 2001; Shanahan, 2006).

Repeated exposure to new vocabulary words is important (A Closer Look at the Five Essential Components of Effective Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teachers, 2004).

Post-test:
Use a grade level established test on vocabulary for the grade level of words where vocabulary instruction began. If the pretest was on vocabulary words on a lower level than the students' grade level, then use an established vocabulary test on a lower level. If the pretest was on vocabulary words on the students' grade level, then use an established vocabulary test on the students' grade level. Compare results of the pretest and post tests.

Homework:
Provide homework related to the daily guide (Monday – Friday) provided in this section to reinforce the words that the classroom teacher is teaching during the week.

Collaboration:
Collaborate with teachers on effective, ineffective, and new practices when teaching vocabulary words.

Websites:
vocabulary.com
BBC Learning English
Confusing Words
Just The Word
Lexipedia
wordnik

Note(s):
Students learn the meaning of vocabulary words indirectly by engaging daily in oral language, listening to others read to them, and reading on their own (A Closer Look at the Five Essential Components of Effective Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teachers, 2004; Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001; Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Shanahan, 2006; What Education Schools Aren't Teaching About Reading and What Elementary Teacher's Aren't

Teaching About Reading and What Elementary Teachers Aren't Learning, 2006; Sweeny, Trainer, Mason, 2011).

A great deal of vocabulary words should be taught directly through instruction (A Closer Look at the Five Essential Components of Effective Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teachers, 2004; Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001; Biemiller,2001; What Education Schools Aren't Teaching About Reading and What Elementary Teacher's Aren't Learning, 2006; Sweeny, Trainer, Mason, 2011; Wanzek, 2014).

Vocabulary improves comprehension. Usually students that do well on vocabulary tests do well on comprehension as well (A Closer Look at the Five Essential Components of Effective Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teachers, 2004; Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001; Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Carlisle, Kelcey, Berebitsky, 2013; NAEP Reading Results-Vocabulary Results 2009-2011; Reading: Know What Works. A Practical Guide for Educators. National Reading Panel Update, 2001; What Education Schools Aren't Teaching About Reading and What Elementary Teacher's Aren't Learning, 2006; Verhoeven, Keeuwe, & Vermeer, 2011).

Vocabulary instruction is crucial to developing skilled readers (Reading: Know What Works. A Practical Guide for Educators. National Reading Panel Update, 2001**).**

Comprehension

Topic:
Comprehension

Definition:
Comprehension is the complicated mental process that includes the purposeful communication between the reader and the reading material to obtain meaning and understanding (A Closer Look at the Five Essential Components of Effective Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teachers, 2004; Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten through 3rd Grade, 2010; Reading: Know What Works. A Practical Guide for Educators. National Reading Panel Update, 2001; Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read, 2006; Shanahan, 2006).

Quote:
I can read with comprehension!

Pre-test:
Use a pre-established pretest for comprehension that will provide you with the grade level where students are currently functioning.

Procedure-Best Practices:
Students should intentionally think of questions before, during, and after reading to comprehend more completely what they intend to read. Also, ask who, what, where, when, and why questions about the plot and by noting the timeline, characters, and events in stories (A Closer Look at the Five Essential Components of Effective Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teachers, 2004; Archer, 2008; Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Ortlieb, 2013; Reading: Know What Works. A Practical Guide for Educators. National Reading Panel Update, 2001; Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read, 2006; Reading: Know What Works. A Practical Guide for Educators. National Reading Panel Update, 2001; Rickenbrode, Walsh, 2013).

Students should use prior knowledge to comprehend what they read (Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Reading: Know What Works. A Practical Guide for Educators. National Reading Panel Update, 2001).

Students should understand the structure and organization of the reading material to gain a greater meaning (A Closer Look at the Five Essential Components of Effective Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teachers, 2004; Armbruster & Osborn, 2001; Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008).

Students should manage their own thinking while reading in order to clearly note their thinking orally and in writing (A Closer Look at the Five Essential Components of Effective Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teachers, 2004; Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008).

Provide guided practice in strategy application. Use direct and explicit explanations to provided guided practice (A Closer Look at the Five Essential Components of Effective Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teachers, 2004; Armbruster & Osborn, 2001; Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read, 2006; Rickenbrode & Walsh, 2013).

Students should be aware of strategies to use when comprehension is slower or breaks down. For example, reread to improve understanding, read ahead to clarify meaning, stop and go back to clarify thinking, be aware of when focus is lost, recognize that all questions have values, think critically about the text, and match the problem with the strategy that will solve the problem. Also, students should track their own thinking

through coding, writing, or discussion. Identify and articulate what is confusing or puzzling about the text (A Closer Look at the Five Essential Components of Effective Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teachers, 2004; Archer, 2008; Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008).

Students determine the important elements and themes in the reading material at the whole--text level (Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008).

Students make predictions by using background knowledge and information learned from the text to draw conclusions, and make predictions (Archer, 2008; Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Lucariello, Butler, Tine, 2012).

Students create images that contribute to comprehension in the areas of drawing conclusions, filling in the missing information, and recalling important details (Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Reading: Know What Works. A Practical Guide for Educators. National Reading Panel Update, 2001; Study and Strategies, 2008).

Use a variety of comprehension techniques such as…
Visual Representation/Construct images
Think aloud
Graphic organizers
Cooperative Learning
Story Structure
Story Map
Question Frames-Teachers frame question for students to fill in what they would like to know. For Example: How would you describe _____ in your own words.
Summarizing (Includes important main points, details, clarifying, and synthesis of information) (A Closer Look at the Five Essential Components of Effective Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teachers, 2004; Archer, 2008; Armbruster & Osborn, 2001; Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Study and Strategies, 2008; Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten through 3rd Grade, 2010; Lucarello, Butler, Tine, 2012; Reading: Know What Works. A Practical Guide for Educators. National Reading Panel Update, 2001; Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read, 2006; Rickenbrode & Walsh, 2013; Shanahan, 2006).

Notes:
Comprehension is the reason for reading. Reading comprehension is important to academic learning in all subject areas and to academic learning in all subject areas and to lifelong learning (Armbruster & Osborn, 2001; Best Practices in Literacy: Study and

Strategies, 2008; Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read, 2006).

Students must have general language comprehension skills and the ability to identify words fluently in print to be able to comprehend (A Closer Look at the Five Essential Components of Effective Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teachers, 2004; Archer, 2008; Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Best Practices in Reading and Reading Comprehension Practice, 2014; Patton, Crosby, Houchins, Jolivette, 2010; Shanahan, 2006).

Vocabulary is important to comprehension (Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008).

Students experience reading comprehension problems when students have difficulty identifying words fluently (Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008).

Comprehension can be improved when specific mental strategies and reasoning strategically strategies (acquire meaning from what is read) are used (Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008).

Text comprehension instruction is effective when teachers use a combination of reading comprehension strategies (Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008).

Post-test:
Use an established test for comprehension for post-testing.

Collaboration:
Collaboration should be done on ineffective and effective strategies. If students continue to fail to progress regardless of the comprehension strategies used, that should be discussed as well.

Websites:
www.kidsbookshelf.com/
www.kid-lit.com/search.htm
www.edupuppy.com
www.car.org/read/
www.mikids.com
www.eduhound.com
www.eduscapes.com/ladders/

Practice

Topic:
Practice

Definition:
Provide drill and repetition in skill areas until the skill(s) becomes fluent/automatic when reading.

Quote:
I must practice in all skill areas (letter recognition, phonemic awareness, phonics, whole word recognition strategies, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension) in order to read fluently and comprehend!

Pre-test:
Prior to teaching in each skill area, give students a pre-test using the suggested method(s) provided to determine their present level of functioning.

Procedure for Teaching (Behaviorism Approach):
(See Procedure for Teaching Using Behaviorism Approach

Procedure--Best Practices:
Practice should be provided as needed at school and at home (Ardiub, McCall, & Klubnik, 2007; Bailey, Silvern, Brabham, Ross, 2004; Ehri, 2005; Fishel & Ramirez, 2005; Hook & Jones, 2002; Sullivan, Konrad, Joseph, Luu, 2013; Donovan & Ellis, 2005; Durham, 1999; Hindin & Paratore, 2007; Hintikka, Landerl, Aro, & Lyytinen, 2008; Joseph, 2006; Nist & Joseph, 2008; Reading Tips for Parents, 2008; Sullivan, Konrad, Joseph, Luu, 2013; The Importance of Homework and Studying, 2014; Tracey & Young, 2002; Waldbart, Meyers, & Meyers, 2006).

If practice is required at home, a guide should be provided by the teacher for practice to be done at home each time practice is given. Suggested practices were provided and explained in the fluency section. These strategies include repeated reading, neurological impress method, assisted reading, paired reading, echo reading, technology (Listening-while reading, tape recorded text, tape recorders, digital tape recorders, CD players, CD--ROM devices, and radio reading) (Bailey, Silvern, Brabham, & Ross, 2004; Carbo, 2008; Farrow, Tymms, Henderson, 1999; Fishel & Ramirez, 2005; Hindin & Paratore, 2007; National Reading Panel, 2000; National Reading Panel Reports Combination of Teaching Phonics, Word Sounds, Giving feedback on Oral Reading Most Effective Way to Teach Reading, 2000; Reading Tips for Parents, 2008; Shanahan, 2006; Tracey & Young, 2002).

Post-test:
Use an established test on fluency after ample practice has been given to access fluency.

Homework:
As indicated earlier in this section, if practice is required at home, a guide should be provided by the teacher for practice to be done at home each time practice is given (Bailey, Silvern, Brabham, & Ross, 2004; Farrow, Tymms, Henderson, 1999; Fishel & Ramirez, 2005; Hindin & Paratore, 2007; Reading Tips for Parents, 2008; The Importance of Homework and Studying, 2014; Tracey & Young, 2002).

Collaboration:
Collaboration should be discussed concerning the most effective strategies for practice, the least effective strategies for practice, and on-going strategies that may be considered innovative strategies for practice.

Websites:
http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/wordbuild/
http://www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/Games/mag/spelling.html
http://www.starfall.com/n/level-a/learn-t0-read/load.htm?f

Note(s):
Strategies have been provided in each skill area (letter recognition, phonemic awareness, phonics, whole word recognition strategies, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension) in order for students to read fluently and comprehend. Authors, educators, and theorist support the notion that fluency should be developed in all skill areas (letter recognition, phonemic awareness, phonics, whole word recognition strategies, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension) in order for students to read fluently and comprehend (A Closer Look at the Five Essential Components of Effective Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teacher, 2004; Armbruster & Osborn, 2001; Best Practices in Literacy: Study and Strategies, 2008; Carbo, 2007; Ehri, 2005; Reading: Know What Works. A Practical Guide for Educators. National Reading Panel, 2001; Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read, 2006; Shanahan, 2006).

Websites for Glossary of Reading Terms

http://www.educationoasis.com/curriculum/Reading/glossary_reading_terms.htm

http://www.fcrr.org/Curriculum/glossary/glossaryOfReading.pdf

http://www.readingrockets.org/teaching/glossary

http://legacysupport.nwea.org/sites/www.nwea.org/files/resources/GlossaryOfTerms.pdf

http://ri.search.yahoo.com/_ylt=A0LEVxpJyJ1U.gMAPgVXNyoA;_ylu=X3oDMTByZHI5

MXByBHNlYwNzcgRwb3MDNgRjb2xvA2JmMQR2dGlkAw--/RV=2/RE=1419655371/RO=10/RU=http%3a%2f%2flincs.ed.gov%2fresearch%2fGlossary.html/RK=0/RS=hCcpK664fusEpScPzd.dq.azvl0-

http://legacysupport.nwea.org/sites/www.nwea.org/files/resources/GlossaryOfTerms.pdf

https://esl-literacy.com/sites/default/files/Glossary%20of%20Terms.pdf

http://www.reading.org/General/Terms.aspx

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Best practices in reading and reading comprehension practice. (2014). Retrieved from http://www.soundreading.com/articles/Best-practices-in-reading

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Appendix B: Superintendent Invitation Letter

Ella Davis
271 Sugar Creek Road
Quitman, LA 71268
April 15, 2013

Superintendent of Schools
Address of Superintendent of Schools

Dear Superintendent:

I am a student at Walden University pursuing a Doctor of Education Degree in Administration Leadership for Teaching and Learning. I am conducting a study on the following topic:

Oral Reading Fluency

I am asking your permission to gain access to the school to conduct the study. I am seeking teachers who teach reading at the kindergarten, first, or second grade levels and administrators and reading facilitators cognizant of strategies to improve oral reading fluency.

As the researcher, I shall gather data by using open-ended questions on a questionnaire and reviewing reading lesson plans for teaching reading from kindergarten, first, and second grade teachers. I will ask other educators to complete the open-ended questions on a questionnaire. I plan to ask participants to review the findings during the data collection and data analysis process. I will handle and gather data in a confidential manner.

The study will take approximately nine weeks, but I will assure you that I will try to minimize the time required from participants as much as possible. I have less than twenty questions on the questionnaire. It may take one hour to fill out the questionnaire. I shall collect and review lesson plans during this period. It may take three to five hours of participants' time during this nine week period to participate in the study.

I will not begin the study until Walden's Institutional Review Board approves the study. I have a doctoral committee that is overseeing the study, and ethical procedures will be followed.

Thank you in advance for your consideration for conducting this study.

Sincerely yours,

Ella Davis
(318) 475-1100
elladavis0719@gmail.com

Statement of Consent:

I am consenting to allow Ella Davis permission to conduct the study in the district on
Name of Researcher

the following topic:

Oral Reading Fluency

_____ _____
Name/Title (Print) Date

_____
Signature

Appendix C: Principal Invitation Letter

Ella Davis
271 Sugar Creek Road
Quitman, LA 71268
May 1, 2013

Principal
Address of School

Dear Principal:

I am a student at Walden University pursuing a Doctor of Education Degree in Administration Leadership for Teaching and Learning.

I am conducting a study on the following topic:

Oral Reading Fluency

The purpose of the research is to develop a project to address the problem of poor oral reading fluency by second grade.

The superintendent approved for the study to be conducted at XYZ Elementary. I am asking your permission to gain access to the school to conduct the study. I am seeking teachers who teach reading at the kindergarten, first, or second grade levels and administrators and reading facilitators cognizant of strategies to improve oral reading fluency.

As the researcher, I shall gather data by using open-ended questions on a questionnaire and reviewing reading lesson plans for teaching reading from kindergarten, first, and second grade teachers. I will ask the reading coach, reading interventionist, teachers, and you to complete the open-ended questions on a questionnaire. I plan to ask participants to review the findings during the data collection and data analysis process. I will handle and gather data in a confidential manner.

The study will take approximately nine weeks, but I will assure you that I will try to minimize the time required from participants as much as possible. I have less than twenty questions on the questionnaire. It may take one hour to fill out the questionnaire.

I shall collect and review lesson plans during this period. It may take three to five hours of participants' time during this nine-week period to participate in the study.

I will not begin the study until Walden's Institutional Review Board approves the study. I have a doctoral committee that is overseeing the study and ethical procedures will be followed.

Thank you in advance for your consideration for conducting this study.

Sincerely yours,

Ella Davis
(318) 475-1100
elladavis0719@gmail.com

Statement of Consent:

I am consenting to allow Ella Davis permission to conduct the study in the district on
Name of Researcher

the following topic:

Oral Reading Fluency

_____ _____
Name/Title/Role (Print) Date

_____
Signature

Appendix D: Consent Form

You are being invited to participate in a research study designed to increase oral reading fluency for second graders at Southside Elementary. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named, Ella Davis, who is a doctoral student at Walden University. You may already know the researcher as a teacher, but this study is separate from that role.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to identify teachers' perceptions of the professional development they need in order to most effectively impact student achievement in oral reading fluency by second grade.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Complete open-ended questions on a questionnaire. This should take about one hour. The time given is an approximation. I will try to minimize the time as much as possible as well as collect the data to complete the project.

- Allow lesson plans to be reviewed (your name will be removed from the lesson plans). Lesson plan will be obtained from the principal if school is not in session. If school is in session, lesson plans will be received by placing the lesson plans in the researcher's box with the teacher's name removed. Here are some sample questions: Directions: Please respond to each question by placing a check beside the item you select to reflect your thoughts, and explain your answer in detail in the space given.

Here are some sample questions:

Directions: Please respond to each question by placing a check beside the item you select to reflect your thoughts, and explain your answer in detail in the space given.

1A. Research indicates that developing students' phonemic awareness skills is important to teaching reading to increase oral reading fluency. How confident do you feel

when teaching phonemic awareness skills to students?

_____ Not Confident

_____ Minimally Confident

_____ Very Confident

1B. Explain why you selected that confidence level.

1C. What additional support do you feel you could use (if any) as you work to improve your students' phonemic awareness skills?

2A. Studies reveal that teaching phonics skills is important to teaching reading to increase fluency. How confident do you feel when teaching phonics skills to students?

_____ Not Confident

_____ Minimally Confident

_____ Very Confident

2B. Explain why you selected that confidence level.

2C. What additional support do you feel you could use (if any) as you work to improve your students' phonics skills?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

The superintendent and principal have approved the study to be conducted at XYZ Elementary. As the researcher, I shall gather data by asking you to complete open-ended questions on a questionnaire and by reviewing reading lesson plans (teacher name will be

removed to ensure confidentiality). I will handle and gather data in a confidential manner.

The study will take approximately nine weeks, but I will assure you that I will try to minimize the time required from you as much as possible. There are fewer than twenty questions on the questionnaire, and it should take approximately one hour to fill out the questionnaire. I shall also collect and review lesson plans as a part of this study (teacher name will not be on the plans). It may take one hour of your time for you to participate in the study during this nine week period.

You are being asked to participate in the study because you teach one of the grade levels identified in the study and it is felt that you could provide valuable information that would support the development of the final project; however, participation in the study is voluntary.

Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one at XYZ Elementary will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind during the study. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as the time to participate in the study. Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing.

The purpose of the study is to understand teachers' perceptions of the professional development they may need to successfully teach oral reading fluency. The results of the study may culminate in the production of a supplemental guide to address teachers' needs when teaching fluency.

Payment:

Participants will not receive compensation for participating in the study. Participation is strictly voluntary.

Privacy:

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the

study reports. Data will be kept secure by storing the information in a locked file. Data will be kept for a period of at least five years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:
You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via cell phone, (319) 475-1100, or email, elladavis0719@gmail.com. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 1-800-925-3368, extension 3121210. Walden University's approval number for this study is 08-01-13-0164904, and it expires on July 31, 2014.

The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep.

Thank you in advance for considering participation in this study.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement.

By completing the questionnaire, I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above. The questionnaire can be found at https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/QHCYBDB

Researcher's email address: elladavis0719@gmail.com

Researcher's cell phone number: (318) 475-1100

Appendix E: IRB Approval Number

The Walden IRB approval number for this study is 672196.