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2017

K-5 Educators' Perceptions of the Role of Speech Language Pathologists

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December 2017

Abstract

K-5 Educators' Perceptions of the Role of Speech Language Pathologists

By

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Ed.S. University of Southern Mississippi, 2003

M.Ed. State University of West Georgia, 1998

B.S.Ed. North Georgia College and State University, 1989

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

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Abstract

Rarely is a school-based speech language pathologist (SLP) thought of as an active

contributor to the achievement of students or to the learning community in general.

Researchers have found benefits for students when members of the learning community

collaborate, and the SLP should be a part of this community collaboration. This

qualitative case study examined elementary school teachers', administrators', and reading

specialists' perspectives related to knowledge of and the inclusion of the SLP in the

learning community at a local elementary school in central Georgia. Schon's theory of

reflective practice and Coleman's theory of social capital provided the conceptual

framework. Via an open-ended questionnaire and intensive interviews, 8 educators with

3 or more years of experience in 1 of the K-5 elementary schools in this local community

provided data for this study. Data were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed through

inductive methods using open and axial coding with thematic analysis. The results of the

study showed 4 common themes that the participants felt were important. These themes

included the fact that teachers understood the SLP to be a resource, but were unsure how

to access their specialty; teachers and SLPs needed allotted time to work together;

teachers and SLPs needed to communicate frequently; and teachers desired more

knowledge of the SLP's role in the educational setting. Important implications for social

change in elementary school learning communities include increasing involvement of the

SLP, promoting SLP involvement in the identification of at-risk students, increasing

educator awareness of the SLP's benefit, and increasing collaboration between SLPs and

educators promoted through a 3-day professional learning project.

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The Local Problem

With the Department of Education's (DOE) mandates for school districts to address educational standards and the drive to improve test scores, educators have had to find effective ways to address students' weaknesses. Response-to-Intervention (RTI) developed as one solution to address student needs while maintaining a positive culture and learning environment in the schools. Allington (2008) described RTI as an *old wine with a new label* as it is born out of the failure of student support teams that were designed to intervene with at-risk students in school and prevent them from failing" (p. 1). Grimaldi and Robertson (2011) have likewise supported RTI. Driven by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, RTI originated with the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (Council for Exceptional Children, 2006). RTI, broadly defined, is as a process based on a student's response to high-quality instruction. Student response guides educational decisions about the usefulness of individual instruction, interventions, and student eligibility for special education programs (Strangeman, Hitchock, Hall, Meo, & Coyne, 2008). RTI was designed to help educators use evidenced-based interventions specified for individual students who are identified through collaborative efforts involving the entire learning community. Such learning communities within a school consist of teachers, administrators, counselors, therapists, teacher assistants, custodians, parents, and others who participate in the education of a child (DuFour, Eaker, & DuFour, 2005, 2012).

RTI introduced various challenges for administrators, regular education teachers, and special education teachers because implementation of steps and tiers were left to the discretion of individual school systems. This led to varying interpretations and implementations. According to Prelock (2000), the rebirth of a newer and improved version of the student support team (SST) caused educators and related service providers to question their role and accountability in identifying at-risk students. There was no standard process handed down from the Department of Education (DOE) for implementation. As a result, implementation has been difficult, as individual schools have designed their version of RTI while not collaborating with other schools, especially those in the same district. Specifically, this kind of individualized implementation in elementary schools in a small rural school district in the southeastern United States caused inconsistencies in the process among elementary schools in the district. Because the RTI process was designed to address individual student needs, interventions prescribed for a student at one school may not meet the RTI standards established at other schools, so the process must begin again, according to one GA special education director. At times, a student may be overlooked in his or her new school, resulting in his or her academic needs not being met for an extended period.

Additionally, RTI was designed to reduce the number of students referred to special education. According to Samuels (2010), RTI is not designed to prevent students from receiving needed special education services, but rather to shore up areas of academic weakness as early as possible. Another concept of RTI design is to prevent students from falling so far behind that they end up being retained. RTI should be a

customized approach designed for early intervention in regular education classrooms for additional specialized or more intensive assistance (Riley-Tillman, Chafouleas, & Briesch, 2007). RTI should also incorporate the "problem-solving approach that incorporates evidence-based interventions delivered effectively and efficiently" (Waguespack, Broussard, & Guilfou, 2012, p. 174). Effective RTI implementation requires strong partnerships and continued collaboration between school and family, and the RTI process should involve the entire learning community. Therefore, communities of practice, made up of groups of people who share concerns, problems, or passion for education should be the core of the school community.

As one member of this learning community, the speech language pathologist (SLP) is sometimes considered a related-service professional, as are the physical therapist and occupational therapist; however, some schools consider speech therapists part of the certified staff because school-based SLPs hold a teaching certificate. Of the related-service professionals, the SLP is usually the one who is housed in a school, participates in the day-to-day workings of a school, and serves students who have impairments in the areas of speech, language, fluency, or voice (The American Speech-Language Hearing Association [ASHA], 2010). ASHA, the governing body for SLPs, supports the idea that school therapists should provide services for students in schools that will promote positive academic outcomes. As a result, SLPs should be essential members of school faculties and learning communities (ASHA, 2010).

However, a large student caseload often prevents the SLP from venturing into regular education classrooms or settings, which may limit visibility and collaboration

opportunities. The position of an elementary school SLP can sometimes isolate him or her from classroom teachers because caseload size can vary from 50-100 students (ASHA, 2006). Because the SLP falls in the category of special education, and because RTI is considered a *regular education* entity, SLPs are often out of the loop and not thought of as a valid resource for providing strategies for students in the regular education classroom. This lack of exposure prevents the SLP from becoming an active participant in RTI and the learning community. By participating in a school's community of practice or learning community, the SLP should be able to interact with members collaboratively with increased frequency.

SLPs are responsible for working collaboratively with reading specialists, literacy coaches, special education teachers, and regular education teachers. According to the Georgia Department of Education (GDOE, 2007), collaborative teaching is an intervention that complies with Georgia's Performance Goals and Indicators for Students with Disabilities. ASHA's (2010) view of collaboration coincides with the GDOE in that SLPs are responsible for working in partnership with other members of the school to meet students' needs. Again, according to the GDOE and ASHA, the SLP should be a vital participant in a school learning community, which today includes RTI. In my experience, a problem exists when SLPs are not actively involved in collaboration and the processes RTI entails. Many students would benefit from the SLP collaborating with the teacher to address at-risk students' needs, especially if those students are identified through RTI. Fuchs, Fuchs, and Compton (2012) indicated that lack of education and awareness of the SLP's expertise contributes to the problem of lack of collaboration

because the teacher may not realize the severity of the student's problem, or that the problem is directly related to the SLP's area of expertise.

In general, the SLP is not usually involved in the intervention segment set aside during the school day for one reason or another. Ehren (2005) indicated that a typical school day consists of instruction by the classroom teacher, and that intervention should take place when that daily instruction is not sufficient in helping a particular student to succeed in the mastery of standards. With this need for additional specialized intervention, RTI's design moves students through tiers of various interventions that target weaknesses. Further, the interventions should show that the student can improve at the same rate as his or her peers through the use of data collection. These data collected as a result of interventions are used to prevent the student from being referred for evaluation, and therefore prevent placement in the special education program (Bauer, Iyer, Boon, & Fore, 2010; Ehren, 2005). Data include but are not limited to intervention success, benchmark assessments, and documented progress with interventions. The SLP should be an integral part of this intervention process by offering strategies to address weaknesses in the areas of speech, phonics, or core components of language, which fall into the SLP's area of expertise. ASHA (2010) stated that the SLP's role is to provide distinct interventions based on expertise in language and the interworking of language, which include listening, speaking, and writing, contributing to students' literacy achievement. Often, problems arise when students who exhibit weaknesses in these areas are not identified as true at-risk speech or language students. Sawyer (2007) pointed out that speech and language disabilities are not always identified and fall second in number

to other disabilities which leads to reduced idenfication of students with speech and language difficulties.

In many cases, teachers identify these students as at-risk in reading, but do not address the underlying cause of the weakness, which falls within the SLP's area of expertise. Increased teacher awareness of what the SLP does for students in the school setting, the SLP's active participation in the RTI process, and collaboration between teachers and the SLP to address speech, language, or reading for at-risk students could transform the entire RTI process to be more advantageous to the learning community.

Definition of the Problem

According to an elementary school-based speech in a small rural county in Georgia, students who are at-risk in the areas of phonics, articulation, or language were not being identified. The difficulty and newness of the RTI process could be one of the reasons for this, but another could be lack of educator awareness of the SLP's purpose in the school setting. The SLP is the expert in the areas of phonics, articulation, and language; therefore, she or he could be used as a valid resource for identification of students' needs. The SLP could also provide strategies for interventions to address these needs. Currently, this local elementary school system implements RTI for specifying interventions; however, there are students who are not identified as needing interventions in areas that the SLP addresses. This problem has affected first, second, and third grade students in particular. The speech-impaired student caseloads for this small Georgia school system indicated lower numbers of students. For example, for the 2011-12 school year in one of the elementary schools, kindergarten and first grade caseload consisted of

29 students, fourth and fifth grade caseload was 15; however only 9 students in second

and third grade qualified for services by the SLP according to the special education

student services coordinator of the small rural county. Data collected by the SLPs in the

local school system indicated the problem that teachers, administrators, or the reading

specialist in this local elementary school was not identifying students with speech and

language difficulties. The data collected from student record reports sent to the state by

the special education department of the local school system showed the following number

of students who were found eligible for the speech impaired (SI) program (speech only)

in grades K-12 between the years of 2010 and 2014:

Table 1.

Eligible SI Students

Year	# Of Students
2010	166
2011	161
2012	155
2013	145
2014	134

According to the special education department administrative assistant and records clerk,

there is no way to divide the data into elementary, middle, and high school numbers so

kindergarten through twelfth grades are represented in these numbers. However, this data

indicated that since the inception of RTI, the SLP has not been an active part of the

educational learning community, thereby decreasing the number of identified speech or

language students in this local school system.

At the beginnings of the past several school years, the SLPs in this particular local

school system did not conduct early intervention screenings to identify speech or

language difficulties, but depended on RTI for this identification. Usually, this early intervention screening process identified at least 8-10 speech or language students who struggled with either articulation or language and through these screenings, obvious articulation or speech issues would be identified. However, because the area of language encompasses so many subgroups, screenings would only skim the surface. With early intervention screenings, any area identified could be investigated further. In this small rural school system, the early intervention screening process stopped due to the introduction and implementation of RTI. Many unidentified kindergarten students exhibited weaknesses in speech or language failed to receive without assistance. As the years progressed, the unidentified students in this local school system received no services until possibly their 3rd grade year when the teacher noticed and documented difficulties with reading, writing, and grammar as noted by a SLP working in the county. At this point, the students' situation became *pass the CRCT or be retained.* When this situation occurred, teachers began to grasp for ways to address student weaknesses in a fast-paced fashion. Subsequently, this situation left the non-identified students to struggle with academics for 3 years, struggle to catch up, or struggle to keep up with his or her peers, and little or nothing done to address these struggles.

The number of eligible students fell during the years when RTI began and early intervention screenings ceased. The majority of these second and third grade students had other eligibilities with speech considered their secondary disability, which meant he or she was not directly referred for evaluation to or by the SLP. A possible explanation for the lack of referrals appears to be that teachers are neither aware of how the SLP can

help students in the regular education setting, nor do they realize that the SLP can be a useful resource for interventions for RTI. Many possible factors contribute to the problem in this school system, including: (a) temporary discontinuation of early intervention screenings, (b) the initial lack of understanding and training by those who had to implement RTI, (c) lack of specific guidelines for the implementation of RTI, (d) trial by error implementation of RTI as it was left to the discretion of individual schools, (e) educators' lack of knowledge of the SLP's area of expertise, and (f) lack of collaboration between the SLP and teachers during the RTI process. Ehren, Montgomery, Rudebusch, and Whitmire (2006) documented similar problems in other school systems. My study may contribute to the body of knowledge needed to address the problem of lack of SLP inclusion by focusing on research that supports increasing educator knowledge of the role of the SLP, collaboration between teachers and SLPs, and the correlation of these strategies to the teachers' perceptions of the SLP in the RTI process. The number of referrals to the SLP in one local school system has declined to the point of almost nonexistence since the inception of RTI. In the last 5 years, the SLP has processed only 5-7 students through RTI. Currently, the caseload consists of four SI students in kindergarten, three speech impaired students in third grade, and zero students in fourth or fifth grade. This decline is a result of discontinuing early intervention screenings before the students enter kindergarten, only to have the burden of identification and referrals through RTI fall on classroom teachers (see Ehren et al., 2006; Snow, Sanger, Childers, Pankonin, & Wright, 2013). According to Fuchs, Fuchs, and Compton (2012), SLPs should *screen to reduce false positives*, meaning early

intervention screenings are beneficial in identifying at-risk students who may have needs in the areas addressed by the SLP. The previous strategy of early intervention screenings produced results used to guide the identification of speech language students. However, the school system discontinued this strategy because teachers did not follow through with the identification and documentation through RTI. The decrease in identification has been consistent since the inception and implementation of RTI. These concerns are important to the purpose of this study**.**

Locally, the decreased number of identified speech or language students in first and second grades could be caused by several factors, which may include: (a) elementary students' speech and language skills have naturally improved over the years; (b) educators in the elementary setting have not been formally trained on the workings of RTI; (c) educators have not been formally trained on the content areas that the SLP addresses; and (d) because of the implementation of RTI, SLPs can no longer search for students to evaluate through early intervention screenings. Any of these underlying factors could be a result of the SLP not being actively involved in collaboration with educators when addressing the needs of students. This problem unfolds in schools as a disservice to elementary students when those at-risk speech and language students are not identified through RTI. A reading support specialist in a local GA school noted that students might not learn age-appropriate vocabulary or grammar skills because they remain unidentified but expected to hang on or catch up with the strenuous curriculum. At-risk students who may be fortunate enough to be identified for these weaknesses do not reap the benefits of SLP intervention. In addition, educators lack the appropriate

training or are not made aware of the SLP's value as a resource when dealing with speech or language difficulties. Standardized test scores for these students are normally lower than those receiving appropriate interventions. Finally, these at-risk speech and language students remain unidentified to learn what they can with little or no intervention because teachers and administrators are not aware of the benefit of the SLP. These factors contribute to the lower number of identified speech-impaired students, which again is a disservice to elementary students.

On a larger scale, my study may prove that schools could use the SLP as a valid resource for students in all grade levels and not just elementary students. While teacher collaboration does increase student achievement, it is often overlooked (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006). Educators should not overlook this most important aspect of effective communities of practice because it is the basis of the SLP's involvement in the RTI process for students (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006). The SLP should be a vital participant in the community of practice within a school, but may not be actively involved in collaboration because teachers are unaware of the SLP's expertise. Consultation and collaboration among teachers, administrators, parents, and the SLP will contribute to the benefit of this study. Collaboration can be successful when members of the learning community, which includes the SLP, work together to create change for all of the members. I hope that the results of this study will provide ways to increase collaboration between teachers and SLPs, and lead the way to a more successful learning community. Community participation could lead to social change for this particular school, and for other elementary schools in the county. Advantages of such participation

include making educators aware of the benefits of collaborating with the SLP; providing a resource guide for teachers incorporating intervention strategies related to areas of speech or language; and enhancing the RTI process for identification of at-risk speech or language students.

The success of the implementation of the project could lead to increased collaboration between the SLP and classroom teachers, which in turn could lead to more adequate identification of at-risk students in the areas of language, speech, and phonics. Increase in knowledge and collaboration within the learning community could lead to positive social change in the elementary educational setting. Teachers should be actively involved in the implementation of the project associated with this study in order to build a sense of unity in the learning community team. Thus, the outcomes from this study may include the development of a hierarchy of skills for increasing teachers' knowledge of the SLP and the provision of a resource guide for identifying at-risk students in the areas speech and language. These outcomes may imbed the importance of language learning in the school culture.

Rationale

When teachers are directly responsible for identifying their own instructional needs and then developing a plan for improving their instructional practices, the change begins from within the heart of the school rather than outside the school. Fullan (2006) expressed concerns about sweeping reforms that ignore the importance of classroom instruction. However, there is little research on SLP involvement in the RTI process and little to no evidence indicating the relative effectiveness of the involvement. In addition,

research on teacher awareness of what the SLP does in the educational setting is limited. Lack of awareness and collaboration between the SLP and elementary teachers for the purpose of RTI was the basis for this study. Secondly, I chose to pursue this project study because the majority of the research I found on the topic of elementary teachers knowledge and understanding the purpose and role of the SLP is outdated, was conducted outside the United States, or only available to members associated with the organization which publishes similar research studies

As a result, my rationale for choosing this problem was driven by the fact that the number of students in the local elementary school who have been identified as having difficulty in phonics, speech, and language, dropped significantly from the 2006 to 2010 school years according to speech therapists working in the small rural GA county. Moreover, the SLP could have been a resource early on to help with the interventions the students needed. In a survey of speech therapists, Lozo (2012) found that 38% of participants were concerned about the lack of referrals, lack of consistency, lack of teacher accountability, and lack of administrative support where RTI and SLPs are concerned. Another concern Lozo investigated was that a lack of training for teachers lead to insufficient data collection and ineffective interventions for language students. All of the factors relate to the lack of teacher knowledge and awareness of what the SLP does in the educational setting. Lozo (2012) suggested an increase in collaboration with teachers and administration could increase the effectiveness of the SLP's involvement in education.

Many times, the student has difficulties that could have been addressed by the SLP, but teachers neither realize, nor know what the SLP targets in the educational setting, so the student is left behind. A survey of 2000 SLPs (Lozo & GO SSLP, 2012), indicated that RTI's long tiered process wastes valuable time in identifying students who have a significant speech language disorder when and if the disorder is evident to the SLP. The survey results also pointed out that severe articulation and language students should go directly to Tier 3; however teachers may not be aware of the severity, or that a direct referral is necessary. Hall (2008) found that professional development on effective use of materials and programs would enhance teachers' knowledge of interventions and benefits of the SLP. Teachers in the local elementary school have not been formally trained to implement RTI or on the role of the SLP; therefore, they are unaware of what a valuable resource the SLP can be. Another issue is that teachers do not have the time to access strategies for identifying at-risk students in the areas of phonics, speech, or language because an SLP's scope of practice covers many areas.

In a study on the SLP's perceptions of the referral practices of public school teachers, Friberg (2006) searched for data to support their active involvement. In Friberg's (2006) study, 212 practicing school-based speech therapists participated in a survey to assess teacher knowledge of the SLP's role, their knowledge of when and how to refer a student to the SLP, and when and how teacher training should occur. The results of the study indicated that speech therapists believe teachers are unable to make accurate referrals, and that teachers needed training related to speech language

development and disorders in addition to training that would provide strategies to support students' speech and language skills in the classroom.

Nevertheless, the problem continues in that teachers do not effectively use the services of the SLP. Many times, this lack of teacher awareness leaves students who are at risk of having speech or language difficulties to flounder. Consequently, this situation does a disservice to the students who are indeed struggling with speech or language concepts (Sanger, Mohling, & Stremlau, 2011). The identification of at-risk students could occur earlier in the student's elementary career if teachers were aware of the SLP as a resource, and if teachers actively collaborated with the SLP. Sanger et al. (2011), along with other researchers, recognized the need to increase SLP involvement in the learning community by providing additional training to school personnel, and by increasing collaboration and common planning time between teachers and speech therapists. Sanger et al. also urged SLPs to be their biggest advocate, and to educate the learning community on their area of expertise, the necessary role SLPs play in RTI, and the overall educational process. In this qualitative project study, I examined teachers' perceptions of the SLP in the learning community, which in a large part includes RTI.

Finally, in my literature review, I found that research on teachers' knowledge of the SLP, SLP in collaboration with teachers, and SLP involvement in RTI is limited at best. Much of the research I found was from other countries outside the United States, and was not current. Ehren (2007) pointed out that "there are very few examples of SLPs' involvement and leadership in RTI models, and from a national perspective, they are not yet central players" (p. 1). Speech language pathologists are not considered

essential participants in most RTI models; therefore, current research is scarce. A final concern is that a great deal of research related to this study is located on websites that are only accessible by members of the American Speech and Hearing Association (ASHA) or other membership-based organizations. In this case, the general public may only have access to the abstracts and not the entire articles without incurring extensive costs. Teachers would not know where to access this information or they may not be granted access because they do not work in the field of speech language pathology. Teachers would thus have to spend more time searching for information about the SLP than necessary; in an already packed educational day, the teacher should not have to fight this battle to gain information about a SLP.

Consequently, the problem I addressed is that the speech therapist is not actively involved in the workings of learning community. Teachers' perceptions and lack of understanding of the potential role that the SLP can play in the school setting can contribute to a lack of collaboration between the SLP and elementary school staff, which in turn contributes to the under-identification of at-risk students. To address this problem, I conducted this research to increase understanding of educators' perceptions of the SLPs areas of expertise, and show what kind of resource the SLP can be.

To conclude, increased teacher knowledge of the SLP in the RTI process could lead to positive social change with teachers, administration, and SLPs. Thus, this study may lead the way to more involvement and collaboration with the SLP in the education setting including but not be limited to RTI. This project may also increase teacher knowledge and awareness of the SLP, and provide resources for teachers in identifying

at-risk speech and language students. Finally, this information should be helpful to administrators, teachers, and SLPs throughout this county and hopefully beyond.

Definitions of Terms

The following definitions are provided in order for the reader to have clear and concise understanding of what I am trying to convey throughout this study.

Caseload is a term used by SLPs to represent the number of students who receive speech and language impaired services during a school year (ASHA, 2007).*Collaboration* is the "development of the model of joint planning, joint implementation, and joint evaluation between individuals or organizations that share responsibility and authority for basic policy decision-making" (Hord, 1986, p. 1).

Constructivist learning theory: "Constructivism is a philosophy of learning founded on the premise that, by reflecting on our experiences, we construct our own understanding of the world we live in" (Hein, 1991, p. 1).

Constructivism refers to the idea that "learners construct knowledge for themselves---each learner individually (and socially) constructs meaning---as he or she learns" (Lambert, Walker, Zimmerman, Cooper, Lambert, Gardner, & Szabo, 2002, p. 24).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB): NCLB, reauthorized as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), is "the main federal law affecting education from kindergarten through high school…NCLB represents accountability for results, more choices for parents, greater local control and flexibility, and an emphasis on doing what works based on scientific research" (Klein, U.S. Department of Education, 2015, p. 1).

Phonics: The "relationship between the sounds of spoken language (phonemes) and the letters representing those sounds in written language (graphemes)" (Telian, 2009, p. 4).

Phonemic awareness: The "awareness of the sounds structure of language at the individual sound (phoneme) level and the ability to differentiate, blend, segment, and manipulate those sounds" (Telian, 2009, p. 1).

Professional development: Any activity that "should be planned in advance and based on an assessment of knowledge, skills, and competencies of the individual and/or an assessment of knowledge, skills, and competencies required for the independent practice of any area of the profession" (ASHA, 2006, p. 3).

Response to Intervention (RTI): An instructional strategy commonly defined as "the practice of providing high-quality instruction and interventions matched to a student need, monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about changes in instruction or goals, and applying child response data to important educational decisions" (National Association of State Directors of Special Education, 2006, pp. 2-3).

Speech (or language) impairment: Refers to a communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, language or voice impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance. "A speech or language impairment may be congenital or acquired. It refers to impairments in the areas of articulation, fluency, voice or language" (GDOE, 34 C.F.R. § 300.8(c), p. 11).

Significance of Study

The study could be advantageous to elementary educators who are held

accountable for the academic successes of their students because the SLP, as a reading

resource, can provide knowledge necessary to help these students increase performance

in the areas of reading, phonics, and language. The potential impact of this study will be

to increase (a) involvement of the SLP in the day-to-day educational process, (b)

involvement in the RTI process, and (c) collaboration with teachers, which should lead to

the SLP becoming an active part of the learning community. For this to occur, the SLP

should increase classroom teachers' knowledge of the SLP's role and help make them

aware of the advantages of the SLP as a resource. The significance here is that teachers

will understand what the SLP does and how he or she can help with interventions for the

students as a part of RTI. Active participation in my study will help build a sense of a

learning community through team effort; thereby increasing educator awareness,

collaboration with the SLP, and the effectiveness of RTI in identifying speech impaired

students. Services provided by the SLP imbed the importance of language learning in the

school culture. If successful, my study should lead the way to more involvement of the

SLP in the learning community, increase collaboration between the SLP and teachers,

and enhance the RTI process. As the language specialist in schools, the SLP can offer

strategies and increase awareness of how linguistic, socioeconomic, and cultural

differences may contribute to student achievement or learning difficulties and provide an

avenue to social change (ASHA, 2010). The findings from this study may be helpful to

administrators, teachers, and SLPs throughout, and hopefully beyond, the local educational community.

Guiding Research Question

Because RTI has been an integral part of the school system for the last 3 years, there has been decrease in the number of students identified for the SI program. This decrease has become a problem in that classroom teachers or member of the RTI team are not identifying students who exhibit weaknesses in the areas of speech, language, reading, and phonics. RTI is a process designed to involve the entire learning community, which includes classroom teachers, administrators, school psychologists, and SLPs. However, many SLPs have been minimally involved in the RTI process since its inception. Research indicates that RTI is a positive process for identifying at-risk students, but lack of training and collaboration has left the learning community at a disadvantage. An issue that informed my development of this study's research question is that educators may lack knowledge of the SLP's areas of expertise and purpose in the educational setting. Educators thus may not be not aware of interventions and strategies that SLPs could provide for at-risk students, or of how to incorporate the SLP as a collaborating partner in the RTI process. This potential lack of awareness could have a negative impact on the education of at-risk speech and language students. I therefore developed the following research question:

R₁: What are the elementary school teachers', reading specialists', and administrators' knowledge of RTI and their perceptions of the function and duties of the SLP in the educational learning community?

Review of Literature

In the literature review, I focused on research concerning teacher and administrator perspectives on the speech therapist's involvement in the learning communities of elementary schools. In what follows, I review research on the conceptual framework of the study, the process of RTI, the SLP, the process of collaboration, and teacher perceptions of the SLP in the educational process. I found that a minimal amount of research had been conducted on teachers' knowledge and perceptions of the SLP, the SLP's direct involvement in RTI, or teachers' perceptions of collaboration with the SLP. Of the research I found, a few studies centered on the SLP in the high school realm, a few documented SLP participation in phonemic awareness activities, one study targeted principals' perceptions of the SLP, and several were conducted in the medical setting. Further, Cirrin et al. (2010) conducted an evidence-based systematic review investigating the effects of a variety of service delivery models on intervention outcomes for elementary school-aged children, of which the SLP is a large part. This study included a comprehensive list of the available scientific literature from the past 30 years that indicated only five studies met the strict review criteria, with only three specifically pertaining to the relationship between service delivery models and treatment outcomes. Therefore, a lack of evidence was available indicating the effectiveness of school-based SLPs' participation in decisions for service delivery, collaboration with teachers, or informed decision-making regarding evidence-based practices for at-risk students (Cirrin, et al., 2010; Gilliam & Gillam, 2016). The results of my search, gave credence to the argument that there is a need for more extensive research in these areas. None of the

research projects I reviewed addressed teachers' perceptions of the SLP in the educational setting. Minimal research on the education of teachers on the SLP's role in education was also an issue. It appeared that researchers outside of the United States had conducted more research on these topics. Of the studies I found, none were recently published—the newest is dated 2005. Finally, I found that a great deal of research involving the SLP is located on the ASHA website, which is only available to ASHA members and not to teachers or school-based SLPs who do not hold ASHA credentials. These factors compelled me to undertake this study. I had to extend the search for research regarding this topic to the following databases in hopes of reaching saturation: Walden Library, EBSCOhost, ASHA library, Google Scholar, Bing, SAGE, British academic libraries databases, and a database found from the United Kingdom. Some information from these databases was accessible; however much of the supporting research was not because of requirements for membership or access only to students of particular colleges or universities. At times, my access was denied to the more recent related studies conducted in other countries because of these factors. In this literature review, I offer information that describes RTI and its purpose, shows how collaboration with the SLP can be advantageous, and justifies the SLP's involvement in the learning community.

Conceptual Framework

The concept of teachers and the SLP working together in a collaborative manner through RTI resonates Schon's theory that teachers working collaboratively could benefit students. According to the constructivist theory (Lambert et al., 2002),

school leaders must find a way to encourage colleagues to engage in the processes that will further their thinking, adapt their beliefs, and foster a desire to teach differently, which are the core of success with RTI. For this study's conceptual framework, I adapted key elements from Schon's theory of reflective practice and Coleman's theory of social capital.

Schon's (1983) reflective conversation theory reflects a vision for educators because it revolves around the practitioner's effort to solve a problem. Schon's reflection-in-action theory made a remarkable contribution to teachers' understanding of the theory and practice of learning. Since students learn in many different ways, teachers must find the appropriate strategy for identifying academic difficulties, which for the purpose of this study include speech, language, and phonics. Smith (2009) found that, throughout the years, Schon continued to support the idea that the learning process spiraled through stages of appreciation, action, and re-appreciation, which characterize the intervention process designed for RTI.

In the constructivist model, students are urged to be actively involved in their own process of learning. Research from von Glasersfeld (1995) concerning constructivism as a paradigm for teaching and learning, showed the difference in theoretical models of teaching. The theories behind both the traditional classroom model and the constructivist classroom model support the underlying concept of RTI. In support of RTI and collaboration, the traditional classroom uses repetition of concepts and assessment through testing. However, the constructivist model provides much stronger support for the organization of RTI, in that teachers in this model use manipulatives to enhance

learning, base learning on what the student already knows, and build from there. In the constructivist classroom, knowledge is taken as dynamic and ever changing with student experience, and students are allowed to work primarily in small groups. The dynamic and small group components of the constructivist model begin in Tier 2 of RTI, though some states implement small groups in Tier 1.

Key components from Coleman's theory of social capital also proved useful as I developed the conceptual framework. According to Coleman (1988), social capital refers a relationship between a variety of resources that consist of some aspect of social structures and facilitate certain actions of people within a particular structure. Coleman considered social capital a productive way to make things possible in life that without it would not be possible. Social capital facilitates productivity through trust within a group of people in a variety of settings, such as the elementary school where I conducted this study.

Teachers who work together, collaborate together, and share ideas represent the ideals of social capital. The results of Leana's (2011) study indicated, "teacher social capital was a significant predictor of student achievement gains above and beyond teacher experience or ability in the classroom" (p. 4). She further indicated that for teaching to be done well over a period of time, it should be done collaboratively, not individually. Collaboration exposes teachers to others' priorities in the classroom and encourages them to build in their knowledge and incorporate the experience and ideas of others into their own approach to teaching. Coleman's (1988) work spiked interest in human and social capital concepts following his study of the success of public versus

parochial school students. The results of the study revealed that parochial students

performed better because of the social links the parents had among themselves and others

in the neighborhood. These types of links appeared to promote stronger student support

systems, which in turn could increase student achievement. Leana's (2011) research

showed that it takes more than enhancing human capital, including *teacher experience,*

subject knowledge, and pedagogical skills, to increase student achievement. Human

capital along with social capital includes interaction and collaboration between teachers

and would have a much larger impact on student achievement. Finally, if social capital is

strong, teachers communicate extensively, learn from their interactions, and become

better at what they do. Leana's strongly advocates the drive to increase collaboration

between the SLP and teacher in elementary schools as part of this project study.

Further, school leaders should continuously search for opportunities to encourage

and support teacher learning. In order to do this, leaders should first look to the staff for

skilled facilitators to enhance the community of practice. Murza and Ehren (2015)

conducted a study of 200 SLPs regarding their perceptions of PL experiences. The

results indicated SLPs' need for individualized PL experiences. The standard approach

to PL was problematic because speech therapists have a different thought process

concerning education innovations because of differences in training. Murza and Ehren

(2015) encourage a change in mindset as first and foremost for PL involving speech

therapists.   In addition, these researchers propose using differentiated models of PL for

maximum benefit as do Hall and Hord (2015). Both studies proposed differentiated

evaluations to maximize participants' understanding, and thus the success, of the PL.

Further evaluation by Guskey (2005) allows SLPs to strategize and support

understanding of students' strengths and weaknesses, therefore providing adequate ideas

for those at-risk or impaired students who require speech and language goals and therapy.

Administrators hold the key to successful and meaningful PL. In a pure descriptive

research project, Higgins (2016) promoted PL communities where all students can learn

(DuFour et al., 2005; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006). In order for this to occur, the

researchers proposed that teachers develop and manage high learning standards,

expectations, and shared responsibility for student achievement. The researchers further

proposed that these expectations continue through professional learning communities.

Administrators play a large role in supporting positive change in school systems by being

actively involved in PL, understanding teachers' individual needs, and listening to

questions and concerns from the educators. Higgins (2016) advocated commitment from

all who are involved to make professional learning communities successful and have a

direct impact on all students learning. Hall and Hord's (2015) results indicated that with

support from administration and the professional learning community itself, positive

school change could take 3 to 5 years for successful implementation to occur.

Administrators continue to play an important role in implementing a change in a school's

process, and without consistent support and supervision, the change may not be

successful (Higgins, 2016; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006). Further, McLaughlin and

Talbert support the idea that school administrators can facilitate the use of all resources to

implement a program successfully. The SLP needs this support in an effort to become

part of the RTI process.

On December 3, 2004, congress reauthorized the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). Priddy (2010) identified RTI as an outcome of this reauthorization. The act provided seven provisions that were supposed to enhance the learning environment for special education students and teachers. The reduction of paperwork was one of the major changes to impact teachers. Another was for schools to maintain certified/licensed professionals to work in special education. In addition, early intervention programs were created for children birth to age six. These programs, along with funding changes, allowed the implementation of early intervention programs designed to serve young students early in their educational career in order to prepare them for kindergarten. The funding changes allowed "local educational agencies to use up to 15% of their Part B funds for supportive services" to help those at-risk students (Priddy, 2010, p. 2).   The SLP provides some of these support services, and thus should be considered a valid addition to the RTI process.

Response to Intervention

Equally important, the Council for Exception Children, CEC, (2006) defined RTI as an Act that reflected new ideas for learning and the concept of pre-identification strategies for identification of learning disabilities, hence RTI. RTI was designed to promptly intervene at an early stage and get the students help before they have the chance to fail (Klotz & Canter, 2007). The CEC (2006) indicated that for RTI to be successful, classroom teachers needed adequate training to identify students who have speech, language, or phonics difficulties. These identified students needed prompt referral to the

SLP for appropriate interventions, which in turn should increase student success and achievement.

In the beginning, laying the groundwork for RTI as a replacement for SST was a complex process. Allington (2008) believed that RTI was possibly, "our last, best hope for achieving full literacy in the United States" (p.1). Allington received credit for helping lay the groundwork for RTI; therefore, he criticized the way RTI was *conceptualized and implemented* in schools. He indicated that at last the federal government intervened and told school systems to use 15 percent of special education funds to prevent special education placement. Hence, RTI was born. The federal government however, did not provide a plan for specific intervention tiers, but schools were to incorporate increasingly expert and intensive instruction to make RTI work. RTI in schools began to have many variations in implementation (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006; Fuchs et al., 2012; Fuchs & Vaughn, 2012). The mandate for implementing RTI informed schools to "stop using money in ways that haven't worked over the past half-century and start investing at least some of that money in interventions that are designed to actually solve kids' reading problems" (Allington, 2008, p. 1).   Bineham, Shelby, Pazey and Yates, (2014) along with Fletcher and Vaughn's (2009) research paralleled that of Allington in they believed long-term support could continue to make a program successful. Programs need more than one year to become successful; therefore, continual support from the learning community is a must for the program to show documented success. Bineham et al (2014) stressed that teachers needed to be educated on the RTI process, make appropriate intervention choices, and use specialists as a sounding board

for interventions. Finally, Allington (2008) stated that as teachers, "we have to understand and ask the questions about what we are doing or not doing, rather than asking what is wrong with the child" (p. 5).

The Federal Institute of Education Sciences published a practice guide on reading instruction and RTI that signified its approval of the RTI process and supported its adoption among schools (Samuels, 2009). The Institute's guide advocated a multi-tiered system beneficial in identifying students who need extra help. At times, early intervention can capture too many students and become an issue. The Federal Institute described RTI in the following way: 1st Tier is comprehensive instruction administered to all students, the 2nd Tier equals small group instruction administered to students identified as at-risk in specified problem areas, and finally the 3rd Tier focuses more on individualized students who have continued difficulty in the specified areas (Samuels, 2009). The guide includes recommendations for educators in setting up an RTI program. The Institutes' definitions of the RTI have been implemented in many states, but some states have implemented a 4-tier program rather than 3-tier as described in this article. In the United States, the 4th Tier is considered the referral tier where students are referred for special education testing. Currently, this is the tier where the SLP becomes involved.

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) expanded on RTI and the definitions as prescribed by their guidelines. Based on a position statement by CEC, RTI "must be viewed as a school-wide initiative, with special education as an explicit part of the framework" (CEC, 2007, p. 1). Further, RTI was to be used to identify and address academic concerns of students which may reduce the number of students referred for

special education. Screening is an integral part of the initial RTI adoption; therefore,

SLPs, who are allowed to screen early literacy skills, can identify children who may be at

risk for literacy challenges or in need of further assessment. If identified, detailed

instruction could be provided for the general education classroom teacher by the SLP

(Pool & Johnson, 2015).

Students in Tier 2 of the RTI process should receive supplemental interventions

provided by the classroom teachers or another interventionist such as the SLP. With this

in mind, the CEC's definition of RTI states that the SLP should be actively involved in

RTI. Denton et al. (2010) proved that "early reading intervention has positive effects on

students in smaller studies or studies that involve multiple schools" (p. 413). So, again

based on the research, early intervention remains an effective way to identify at-risk

students (Denton et al., 2010; Swanson, Solis, Cuillo, & McKenna, 2012).

In fact, the new RTI should engage and revitalize partnerships between general

and special education personnel to help bridge the gaps between research and

instructional practice. Based on The National Research Center for Learning Disabilities,

NCLD, (2007) findings, RTI holds a great deal of promise as a way to promote school

reform. Other entities, the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (NJCLD)

and the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE),

supported RTI and recommended a three-tiered model (Vaughn & Wanzek, 2007;

Wanzek & Vaughn, 2011; Wanzek et al., 2013). Thus, the goal of the model is to assure

effective instruction through preventative education to reduce the number of students

with severe academic difficulties. The research conducted by the NCLD (2007) involved

small group instruction which falls at Tier 2 and should be where the SLP is included, but in my experience, most of the time are not.

Results from studies conducted on the success of interventions in elementary schools appear varied. Vaughn and Wanzek's (2007) study involved kindergarten through third grade students who received thirty weeks of small group reading interventions. The study revealed that after several years of extensive interventions, only 8% of the students continued to be behind in reading with 25% of the population responding minimally. Only 25% showed gains, which may not carry enough weight to support interventions continuing over several years before diagnosing a deeper problem (Wanzek et al., 2013). Researchers Allen, Ukrainetz, and Carswell (2012) investigated narrative language performance of first graders identified as at-risk through the RTI process. The researchers identified three types of readers who showed no significant difference between types of learners based on the results of their study. Differences in RTI interventions did not have an impact on the types of learners in this study.

O'Connor, Harty, and Fulmer (2005) believed in multi-tiered interventions, but their research denied the premise that this process would reduce the number of identified special education students. This team of researchers thought that Vaughn and Wanzek's (2007) research "left open the possibility that we may be seriously overestimating the effects of our short-term interventions on the long-term trajectory of reading growth" (O'Connor et al., 2005, p. 533). Both teams of researchers continued their study as the students progressed from grades kindergarten through third. Results indicating improvement showed at Tier 2 but not until the second year of interventions. Therapists

trained in the components of reading intervention and involved in a collaborative team were considered a resource for interventions for the at-risk students.

After a year of implementation, data proved positive in the findings of a qualitative study conducted by Greenfield, Rinaldi, Proctor, and Cardarelli (2010) concerning how educators view the RTI change process. The group of researchers interviewed eight teachers in an urban elementary school to determine if RTI was working. The teachers' responses were analyzed using consensual qualitative methodology. The results of the study indicated that teachers positively viewed RTI as an effective way to identify at-risk learners in a variety of need areas. Teachers also agreed that the use of data to lead instructional planning as well as progress monitoring as a way to measure student progress aided in the effectiveness of the instruction. The results of the study revealed some teacher concerns about the implementation of the RTI process because of lack of knowledge. According to Greenfield et al (2010), the majority of teachers involved in the study believed the outcomes during the first year of implementation were positive and the school culture positively mixed. This meant that teachers were still working to understand the process, but positive things were happening with the students. The RTI process is a beginning for a positive change in schools, and collaboration with the increase of teacher knowledge is as a way to increase student achievement.

Similarly, the International Reading Association (IRA) has been and continues to be an avid supporter of RTI in the schools. One of the *very hot* topics in reading education in 2011 was that of RTI, as indicated by literacy experts interviewed for the

annual survey published in *Reading Today* (Cassidy, Ortieb, & Shettel, 2011). Some of those interviewed indicated that they were not quite sure how to define RTI. This uncertainty may have existed because of the multiple dimensions of RTI, the varying ways implemented, and the variations in how researchers, practitioners, and teacher educators define the term (Education Week, 2011). The IRA originated a working draft for guiding principles used in effective RTI design (NASDE, 2006). The components essential to RTI according to the IRA included: a) specifically designed instruction provided by teachers who optimize resources, b) responsive teaching and differentiation in language and literacy instruction, c) multidimensional assessments that identify language and literacy weaknesses, d) dynamic, positive, and productive collaboration among the learning community, e) strong partnerships between professionals, parents, and students, and f) interventions provided by experts in language and literacy (NASDSE, 2006). The IRA is a proponent of the continuing education of teachers, interventions provided by the experts in language and literacy, which is at the heart of a SLP's training, and collaboration between the members of the learning community which are at the heart of this project study.

In addition to SLPs having an active role in RTI, researchers believe the reading specialist should have an active part as well. Fuchs et al. (2012) believed that reading specialists should have a strong role in RTI because previous research indicated about 80% of students diagnosed learning disabled were disabled in the area of reading. This study discovered that after a child had been identified as at-risk, he or she should have received around eight weeks of intervention in a targeted area. After such time, the

student may take a brief standardized test in the targeted area to determine the success of the interventions. Therefore, there should be at least eight weeks of documented unsuccessful interventions in order to move a student from one tier to the next. For many years, reading has been a strong area of need. For this reason, teachers should collaborate with the SLP who has strong backgrounds in the components of reading to develop appropriate interventions (Bineham et al., 2014; Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). The SLP's involvement early in the RTI process could be of tremendous benefit in determining appropriate interventions based on the results.

To enhance the implementation of this new and improved process, RTI required teachers and administrators to identify the students in need, design needs based groups, and create effective strategies for intervention during a school day that is already packed with reading, writing, and *rithmetic*. Clarity of the roles of general education and special education teachers were two-fold based on a study conducted in Finland by Bjorn et al. (2015). In the Finnish RTI framework, no specific instructions were provided for developing or choosing appropriate interventions; however, in the U.S., general education teachers played a greater role in the RTI process. Special education teachers needed to be called upon in Tier 3, but collaboration in Tier 2 would be more effective. According to Bjorn et al. (2015), in both countries studied, the role of special education teachers and support personnel such as SLPs was not clearly defined. Even though interventions are easy to create, they must be scientifically research-based and address specific needs of the identified students. Intervention, therefore, becomes a rather nasty word in education. With the confusion of who plays the larger part in the process, students unfortunately

have gotten the shaft in some cases. These problems could probably be more easily

digested if training and student program outcomes were not used solely for accountability

of teachers and geared more for student success (Hawkins, Kreoger, Musti-Rao, Barnett,

& Ward, 2008; Weiss & Friesen, 2014).

On the other side of the coin, RTI models appeared to be different from school to

school but ideally needed to be similar in all schools. Sanger, Friedli, Brunken, Snow,

and Ritzman (2012) studied three schools and their implementation of RTI. These three

schools participated in only two days of professional development and no follow-up

support. The researchers reviewed ways to implement RTI and to monitor the parameters

and components for implementation. Six issues surfaced with one being the need for

varying collaboration at the different tiers of RTI. The collaboration at Tier 2 required

more intense collaboration involving regular and special education teachers or other

educational specialists like the SLP. The need for meaningful collaboration for

interventions, progress monitoring, and possible *push-in* service to aid in the

implementation of interventions was noted (Sanger, Friedli, Brunken, Snow, & Ritzman,

2012). In addition, the study revealed "collaboration among educators in delivery of tier

1 and tier 2 instructions strengthens outcomes for students" (Hoover & Love, 2011, p.

45).

In order to assess the effectiveness of RTI, quick reference guides were developed

to provide an easy way to collect data on the effect of RTI. The National Association of

School Psychologists, NASP, (2006) created craft fact sheets used as a quick reference

guide for RTI for teachers, parents, and academic team members to provide a resource for

the ins and outs of the RTI process. This association advocated for the use of early

intervention, close collaboration between regular education classroom teachers and

special education professionals, and the commitment of the school system in finding the

necessary resources to ensure the identified at-risk students make progress in the general

education classroom.

Speech Language Pathologist

In the year 2030, motivation will be seen as a crucial component of teaching and

learning in all areas of instruction, including phonemic and phonological awareness,

phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (Malloy, Marinak, & Gambrell, 2010).

Effective leadership in the learning community is critical in order for students to move

forward with achievement levels. Teachers and many administrators are not aware of the

duties and responsibilities of a SLP even though he or she works side by side each day.

ASHA (2010) defined parameters for the SLP in the educational setting as a critical role

of the essential members of the school community. Based on ASHA guidelines, SLPs are

responsible for providing speech and/or language services across all grade levels from

pre-k to high school, which is the case for my study. The SLP's area of expertise extends

from communication disorders, to include but not limited to language, articulation,

fluency, resonance/voice, and swallowing. In order for the school-based SLP to address a

disorder, it must have a negative impact on the student's educational progress and

performance. In addition, the SLP may address personal, social, emotional, academic,

and vocational needs that negatively impact the student's ability to access the educational

curriculum. Speech Therapists have many roles in identifying students in need.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2010) SLPs, have the ability to assess, diagnose, and treat speech, language, voice, fluency, swallowing, and cognitive communication disorders. SLPs use qualitative and quantitative assessments to analyze and diagnose impairments, their nature and extent. These qualifications would enhance the process of RTI because SLPs analyze student performance and diagnose strategies that attack the students' difficulties. SLPs should be considered an excellent resource because of focused expertise in language in addition to SLP availability to offer assistance for students with disabilities and those who are *at risk* of failing. According to the ASHA statement of roles and responsibilities of the SLP, research supports listening, speaking, reading, and writing as interconnected across the curriculum. SLPs should be an active resource in literacy achievement in the schools. With growing caseloads, this level of responsibility may seem overwhelming; however exciting to consider how our expanded role can positively impact our students' success (Blosser & Kaiser, 2013).

At times, schools find themselves incurring extensive costs when purchasing intervention programs to implement for RTI. The underlying purpose of RTI is to prevent schools from excessive and costly interventions according to Kerins et al. (2010). These researchers conducted a study of 23 first graders identified as having below average reading skills or phonemic awareness. The 23 students were randomly divided into two groups. One group received interventions from the special education reading teacher along with instruction from the regular education classroom teacher. This group also participated in specific phonemic awareness intervention provided by the SLP. The second group received instruction in the regular education reading class. The method of

assessments included classroom based and standardized tests. The results of the study did not reveal a significant difference between deliveries of instruction. Assessments of the reading ability and phonemic awareness indicated improvements in both groups. This study did not prove that there was a significant difference in Tier 1 instruction in regular education classroom and Tier 2, where more intense intervention occurs. In addition, Kerins et al. (2010) advocated using the SLP as a credible resource for phonological awareness and literacy instruction; however, they concluded that the best resource is always the one who has the greatest impact on the students. Special education and regular education teachers are great resources as well, but the question appears to be who can provide the most effective instruction (Guiberson & Atkins, 2013; Kerins et al., 2010; Williams & McLeod, 2012).

Since the development of RTI was left up to individual school systems, ASHA cannot mandate involvement by the SLP in the RTI process. Therefore, Ehren's (2007) research revealed that there are very few examples of the SLP's involvement in RTI noted in literature. Ehren's research pointed out that SLPs are not considered valuable participants in most RTI models even though they have much to offer in terms of providing effective, scientifically based intervention in the schools even though they are considered literacy specialists. She further added that RTI may spark interest needed to draw attention to SLPs and their expertise.This has not happened in many schools because of educators are not aware of what a speech therapist's area of expertise includes. Ehren (2007) also considers SLPs as experts in language and literacy which should put us upward on the list of resources for the RTI identification and intervention

stage. Finally, Ehren's viewed RTI as a specific framework where the SLP can assume roles and responsibilities.

Again however, SLPs are still in the shadows in many schools. Ehren (2005) considered that now is the time for SLPs to network with teachers and show what they know and can do to increase academic achievement in reading and writing because of their backgrounds in language and the components of reading. Ehren's research indicated that *speech teachers* are not called upon for problem-solving concerning at-risk students. Educators continue to wonder what roles the SLP has in curriculum and literacy, and most of all SLPs are not very visible during the school day because therapy sessions are usually held in the smallest corner of the school. As a child with a speech and language disability is likely to have fewer meaningful peer relationships than the typically developing child, language intervention with the SLP could help improve the child's overall self-esteem and ability of the SLP to form relationships with peers and adults (Wankoff, 2011). Awareness is lacking in elementary schools, which negatively impacts collaboration, student identification, and student achievement in language and literacy.

Research conducted by Ehren et al. (2006) indicated that SLPs are valid resources and can play a number of roles in RTI; therefore, the SLP has the knowledge to identify at risk students and provide instruction in any educational setting. In this study, the authors indicated emphasis needs to be on instructional interventions and progress monitoring before a referral to SPED occurs. SLPs face challenges when working with RTI to shift from a traditional "pull out" method of service delivery to one based more on

a pragmatic educationally relevant strategy that measures students' performance over a specified period of time. Educational budget cuts have shifted the concentration to funds which SLPs generate based on the number of students actually on caseload not on the number of students served through RTI and before placement in special education. However, according to RTI research, changing the model is the way to do more preventative work in the schools. On the whole, SLPs work with delays and disorders where teachers work with students with learning disabilities (Ehren et al., 2006; Snow et al., 2013). In an older study conducted in 2003 by Ukrainetz and Fresquez, information from five SLPs with more than ten or more years of experience and 15 elementary school teachers using interviews, observations, field notes, and SLP treatment logs, discovered what constituted language in the schools. Ukrainetz and Fresquez (2003) found that SLPs have formal roles that differ from other educators who work in the schools. According to this research, SLPs have a more defined role specified by target areas of speech, language, and communication. SLPs are supposed to develop interventions that target literacy and lead to academic success, all done in close communication with teachers. These researchers define SLPs as language specialists and language is the basis for "every cognitive and communicative act taken by a person" (Ukrainetz & Fresquez, 2003, p. 285). Language differences should never be confused as being a lack of intelligence (Obiakor, Harris, Mutua, Rotatori, & Algozzome, 2012). The results of the interviews indicated that teachers believed they were more associated with reading, writing, and math whereas SLPs were more related to oral language and auditory skills. One of the interviewees pinpointed the role of the SLP as one where the importance of

talk is both target and tool for the SLP. Teachers practiced some preliminary speech exercises with the students, but felt a bit uncomfortable as that was not their area of expertise. According to Obiakor et al, the SLPs believed that therapy was moving away from the traditional and towards reading and writing. This push has been adopted in RTI. Comments from all of the participants indicated the willingness and desire to collaborate with teachers to find out what they are doing in the classrooms, provide guidance, and problem solve on communication issues that arise. SLP support is warranted in continuing intervention, collaboration in areas of instruction, and education teachers on the underlying process, skill and strategies integrated with speech and language. In conclusion, this study identifies with the need for SLPs to assess their contribution to schools and provide services to meet the needs of the students.

Moreover, the SLP's expertise and training in language can help teachers develop comprehensive profiles of students with academic difficulties. Ehren et al. (2006) further indicated that "the point of RTI for SLPs is not to add more tasks but to reallocate time to address prevention and early intervention, and in the long run serve more students up front" (p. 6). Based on research, SLPs may contribute to RTI in the following ways: a) explaining the role that language plays in curriculum, assessment, and instruction, as a basis for appropriate program design, b) describing the interconnection between spoken and written language, c) helping identify systemic patterns of student need with respect to language skills, d) assisting in the selection of scientifically based literacy intervention, e) planning for and conduct professional development on the language basis of literacy and learning (Ehren et al., 2006; Kollia & Mulrine, 2014). Additionally, the trend towards

Evidenced-Based Practices (EBP) lead a group of researchers to conduct an online survey of 2,762 SLPs in 28 states to discover how much training SLPs received to prepare for determining evidence based interventions for at-risk students. The study revealed that one quarter of the participants received no formal training in EBP. Of those who participated, 11% of SLPs worked in school districts with official EBP procedural guidelines (Hoffman, Ireland, Hall-Mills, Flynn, 2013). However, because SLPs are trained to evaluate, assess data, development interventions based on needs, and are avid researchers to support the choices of interventions, the lack of training was not considered to be a high priority but would welcome training to support scientifically based practices (Hoffman et al., 2013).

According to a more recent report provided in the ASHA Leader by Blosser and Kaiser (2013), SLPs have become increasingly responsible for helping with student achievement. As previously mentioned, the crucial task of the SLP and education team is to identify students who present with communication issues that considerably interfere with academic progress. Another critical task for SLPs is to intervene with the struggling students and along with the classroom teachers develop appropriate interventions (Blosser & Kaiser, 2013; Ehren et al., 2006). In the past, SLPs in a local school system, we have contributed very minimally to the RTI process. Over 80% of participants of Sanger, Mohling, and Stremlau's (2011) study reported concerns including adequate access to training, funding, additional personnel, administrative leadership, and planning time as barriers to have the SLP fully involved actively in the academic world of at-risk students. As a SLP, I believe these aspects could be very beneficial to our staff and

students, however lack of education and RTI design have prevented our involvement at this time.

Perceptions of Educators

Further studies concerning teacher attitudes or perceptions towards the SLP are minimal. Tomes and Sanger (1986) conducted several studies on the attitudes of educators toward public school speech language services. The first study was conducted in 1954 and then in 1977, 1980, & 1981 respectively. However, Tomes and Sanger's 1986 on the attitudes of interdisciplinary team members toward public school speech language pathologists yielded positive results. Randomly selected participants, 346 of them, completed a 64-item questionnaire. The participants included classroom teachers from grades kindergarten through sixth grade, principals, school psychologists and special education teachers. The results of the study conducted in 1986 revealed positive beliefs concerning clinicians' remediation practices, evaluations, and educator-clinician relationships. Attitudes toward the amount of time spent with speech language students were unsatisfactory. Educators were confused by the role of the speech clinician, which caused conflict in collaboration and working relationships. The surveyed educators expressed a desire for in-service and suggestions for classroom management (Mander & Moore, 2015; Tomes & Sanger, 1986). The findings recommended more teacher clinician interaction in both cases. Kalkhoff and Collins (2012) sent surveys to 500 speech therapists, 250 in the school setting and 250 in the medical setting with only 98 surveys returned. The survey assessed job satisfaction in schools versus job satisfaction in the medical setting. The results received from both groups stressed the importance of

professional learning and support in each setting. The lack of availability of professional support moderately influenced work-related stress and job satisfaction in each area. A strong indicator of reduced job satisfaction in the school setting was misperceptions of the roles and responsibilities of SLPs. Additionally, teachers struggled with SLP responsibilities in the school setting. Survey results revealed a lack of awareness on the teachers' part led to SLP frustration, increased stress level, and decreased job satisfaction. Based on an ASHA report by Blosser and Kaiser (2013), if SLPs are to be active members of educational learning teams, there must be a thorough understanding of at-risk students' educational goals, the Common Core State Standards, and the school's organization and culture within the team. Also, to function as a comprehensive learning community, educators, parents, and teachers must understand the goals of speech-language services and the link between communication disabilities and classroom performance (Blosser & Kaiser, 2013; Tomes & Sanger, 1986).

Consequently, if the SLPs and coworkers had a good working relationship, were helpful and friendly towards each other, and teachers took an interest in the services the SLP provided, job satisfaction was increased. Finally, Kallkhoff and Collins (2012) recommended the school SLP become an active listener and an active member of the educational team.

Attitudes and perceptions of educators toward teamwork are very important. Malone & Gallagher (2010) found that attitudes and perceptions of special education teachers towards teamwork were generally favorable. One hundred eighty-four K-5 elementary special education teachers participated voluntarily taking three surveys

designed to measure attitudes and perceptions about teamwork. Favorable aspects

included planning and implementation of supports for special needs students. Concerns

discovered in Malone and Gallagher's (2010) study included timing, scheduling, parent

participation, teamwork of educators, as well as lack of research.

In addition, Malone and Gallagher's (2010) study addressed many variables

relevant to effective performance. A few of the variables relevant to the SLP working

collaboratively with teachers were flexibility, communication, problem solving,

establishing goals, group cohesion, time and resource management, and access. The

study further provided positive results of school-based teams for promoting collegiality,

increased insight and knowledge gained from team members, enhanced communication,

improved planning and student outcomes, and finally enhanced problem solving and

decision making. Teachers, general and special education, discussed students' needs;

problem solved, strategized, shared resources, and participated in professional

development as a team (Obiakor et al., 2012). To conclude the positive results, increased

camaraderie was viewed by teachers as personal and positive gain. The negative issues

revealed included lack of financial support, time constraints, lack of formal training,

interdisciplinary collaboration, inadequate support and resources. The negative outcomes

of Malone and Gallagher's 2010 study resembled to the problems with RTI in many other

schools. Positive and negative components from Malone and Gallagher's study guide the

need for more research as with my study.

Kindergarten teachers were familiar with many aspects of language, were

somewhat knowledgeable of interventions to support students' progress in language, and

had positive impressions of the SLP based on research by Shaughnessy and Sanger (2005). Their study examined the perceptions of 484 kindergarten teachers regarding language and literacy development, roles and responsibilities of speech-language pathologists (SLP), and teacher-delivered interventions in the classroom. As cited in their study, previous research indicated that SLPs can provide crucial intervention in phonological awareness to preschool and school-age students, improve reading fluency through interventions, design reading programs for students with language learning problems, provide assessment and intervention services for at-risk students, and contribute to collaboration through direct service or as a consultant. The survey results supported shared responsibility between teachers and the SLP in addressing the needs of at-risk students. Many of the teachers surveyed complimented SLPs on their knowledge of the aspects of language and the assistance they provided (Sanger, Friedli, Brunken, Snow, & Ritzman, 2012; Sanger et al., 2011; Shaughnessy & Sanger, 2005). Similarly, pre-school teachers participated in a PL program led by the SLP. The PL focused on areas of SLP expertise such as sound awareness, decontextualized oral language skills, and facilitated emergent literacy skills that yielded success in increasing student achievement. The preschool teachers involved in the PL implemented a varied delivery model suggested by the SLP and participated in coaching sessions with the SLP. The participants reported that the follow-up coaching sessions were the most beneficial for efficient implementation and carryover into each respective classroom (Girolametto, Weitzman, & Greenberg, 2012).

Even though many of the responses were positive, the researchers continued to express the need for further research in the following areas: SLPs involvement in the educational setting, ways to establish and continue collaboration, and education of teachers in the SLP's role in education. Lastly, the participants in these studies welcomed the opportunity to collaborate however ultimately needed to understand the roles of SLPs to increase collaborative planning for students with language learning difficulties (Girolametto et al., 2012; Shaughnessy & Sanger, 2005).

Teachers believed that everyone in a school needed to be flexible to meet the needs of the students. Ukrainetz and Fresquez's (2003) study revealed teacher perceptions of the SLPs service practices in relation to language development and instruction. One teacher believed that SLPs are teachers like other with no lines to separate their jobs. Another teacher stated that she wanted students to experience overlap when receiving instruction in the areas of need. The overlap meant students were hearing the information from lots of different people in different settings therefore reinforcement was taking place. Teachers interviewed and observed felt SLPs were "capable of working on anything involved in language arts, but they might be too busy with oral language to spend a lot of time on written language instruction" (Ukrainetz & Fresquez, 2003, p. 290). Finally, the teachers interviewed expressed concern that they generally did not know what special skills or training SLPs brought into the education realm which is a target outcome of my study.

Collaboration in Education

Collaborative intervention continues to receive much attention as RTI becomes more popular. SLPs are attempting to redefine their roles as interventionists in schools; however, the varying ways schools implement RTI has caused confusion among teachers and speech therapists alike. Researchers must recognize the value of collaboration among educational providers in school systems as there is a critical need for shared understanding (Kollia & Mulrine, 2014; Prelock, 2000; Prelock & Deppe, 2015). Futernick (2007) surveyed 2000 teachers in California who admitted that they felt more personal gratification when they believed their opinion was valued. They were involved in decision-making, and were able to build collegial relationships with their peers through professional growth and development. School leaders and teachers have indicated that at times they are ill prepared to work with and effectively educate students from diverse backgrounds and especially those with special needs (Futernick, 2007; Smith & Tyler, 2011). This struggle hinders positive attitudes and confidence among educators. Highly effective educators must be willing to assume responsibility for being informed and prepared to work with the diverse population which can be done through effective professional learning. "Well trained teachers make significant differences in the lives and educational achievement of students" (Smith & Tyler, 2011, p. 325).

Giangreco (2000) suggested that regular education teachers and SLPs should collaborate on communication opportunities for students in order to maximize students' strengths with peers during the school day, thus lending to increasing the students' language abilities, which drives conversation. Bruce, Trief, and Cascilla (2011)

conducted interviews with 29 special education teachers and SLPs to discover their views on tangible symbol intervention use for disabled students. The participants agreed that effective interventions are applicable in schools and home environments and contribute to self-confidence and self-efficacy. The results of the study yielded four major themes including student-learning benefits, barriers and supports of student learning, adult learning, and future directions. Teachers and speech therapists discovered benefits from using tangible symbols such as improved behavior and socialization skills, as well as "improved ability to meet wants and needs" (Bruce, Trief, and Cascilla, 2011, p. 175). The SLP participant in the study was most impressed with the increase of social skills and choice making. The collaborative team noted improvements in the participating students and the use of tangible symbol interventions. They also agreed the interventions could be generalized into the home environment for ideal carryover. Collaboration of this type allows the SLP to have ownership in a student's day-to-day educational experience. Another view discussed in this research, was one of guided inquiry where the SLP and teacher work together to address language learning problems through question and answer sessions. Another factor in the study was the research-to-practice partnership (Hadley, Simmerman, Long, & Luna, 2000; Thomas & Lance, 2014). Research-to-practice perspectives expand the role of the SLP into one of prevention, which supports the basis for RTI. My experience leads me to suggest weekly team meetings between teachers and the SLP to discuss phonological awareness and vocabulary, a few components of reading. In this study, two of the kindergarten classrooms had the SLP working with the students for 2.5 days per week and the other

two did not. The researchers incorporated an extra 25 minutes of instruction in the collaborative setting for six months. The results indicated that students in the collaborative classroom where the SLP and classroom teacher worked together demonstrated increased receptive and expressive vocabulary and phonemic awareness. The research team discovered that using collaboration as a preventative measure for these particular components, increased student achievement.

In addition to the previous study, Goddard, Godddard, and Tschannen-Moran's (2007) review of literature reported very little research that supported collaboration as a way to increase student achievement. However, in surveying 452 teachers and reviewing reading and math scores of 2,536 fourth graders, the researchers found a positive correlation between teacher collaboration and student achievement. Finally, they believed teacher collaboration should be centered on curriculum, instruction, and professional development. Teachers need administrative support for successful collaboration in order to have flexibility for scheduling, appropriate structure of collaboration sessions, and social affirmation to be fully involved and committed to collaboration (Goddard et al, 2007; Goddard, Goddard, Kim, & Miller, 2015; Rudebusch & Wiechmann, 2013). Researchers in the field of PL and school reform are insistent that unless changes in education become more collaborative, substantive, and involve the entire learning community. Without changes, schools will be unable to create a community of learners that will lead to the noteworthy changes needed to impact student achievement now and in the future (Crevola, Fullan, & Hill, 2006; Harris & MacNeill, 2015). ASHA (2010) defined collaboration for SLPs as a requirement for educators to

work in partnership. SLPs work collaboratively with teachers, parents, school partners, and administrators to develop academic programs for students with speech and language disorders. These professionals are responsible for helping students access the general education curriculum.

The Language Literacy Laboratory that was implemented in 2004 in Louisiana and designed to include the SLP as a resource for at-risk students and was based on an inclusive speech-language therapy service for special at-risk students. According to Faucheux (2006), the primary focus of his project was to create successful collaboration between professionals, parents, and regular special education teachers and at-risk students in the classroom. The student strategies included basic language concepts necessary for academic success in reading, math, and language arts. Special education teachers brought their students to the Language Lab for center activities guided by the SLP. Lesson plans were based on the Educational Assessment Program and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. Collaboration between the SLP and the regular education teacher was an integral part of the success of the Language Literacy Laboratory. At-risk students with language weaknesses (those not placed in special education) received language services integrated into the educational setting. The results indicated significant gains in literacy skills. The benefits of the Language Literacy Laboratory included improved student performance, increased student motivation, improved self-concepts, decreased inappropriate behaviors during class, increased collaboration between faculty members, and added camaraderie between peer tutors and specials needs students. Data obtained, analyzed and disseminated by Louisiana State University (LSU) researchers in the

Language Literacy Laboratory, indicated that this program was effective, increased students' language arts skills, and addressed the nationwide need to supply curriculum-based interventions for school-aged children (Faucheux, 2006; Ramirez, 2011). The lab project advocated that SLP support for at-risk students as well as collaboration with classroom teachers yielded positive results for student achievement.

Truly, collaboration as a part of a child's learning experience makes for a more inclusive education. Spielvogle (2010) discussed collaboration as the "key to success for SLPs, teachers, and parents" (p. 38). She indicated "collaboration builds trust and respect" (Spielvogle, 2010, p. 38) between the members of the learning community, but more importantly builds self-esteem for the students. The benefits of collaboration are endless, but to name a few: a) the child can learn in her natural environment, b) the teacher and SLP plan and implement language-building activities within the classroom, and c) teachers and SLPs are able to try alternative teaching methods to carry over language goals in the regular education classroom (Neltner, 2014; Spielvogle, 2010). To include the parents in collaboration was the most difficult, but accomplished by providing information about collaboration and how it works in their child's classroom. Allow parents to participate and feel as if they are a vital part of the team. "Teamwork is the key to successful collaboration" (Spielvogle, 2010, p. 38). As collaboration is an integral part of RTI, Spielvogle's thoughts concerning collaboration provide support for my study. If I can effectively implement collaboration between teachers and SLPs during the RTI process, then as a team we can design interventions that would best benefit the needs of the at-risk child.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2010) defines the role of a SLP in the schools as one who collaborates with teachers, special educators, and parents to develop and implement Individualized Education Plans (IEP) that target the specific speech and language needs of students. SLPs provide resources to parents concerning the disability of their child. Effective communication and listening skills are essential characteristics that would make the SLP a great candidate for collaboration with teachers in the educational setting. Also, teachers, speech therapists, and teaching assistants in the United Kingdom participated in a small qualitative study about students with severe learning and physical disabilities and the students' ability to make decisions about their education (Feiler & Watson, 2010). The results indicated the need for professional practice and perspective variance. Professional development to enhance teamwork was determined to be a need also. As with many school issues, the need for more flexibility in school schedules was deemed important for the educational team to collaborate and plan for strategies and interventions.

In fact, highly skilled teachers in education are important. However, "the role of the highly skilled teachers, educators, policymakers, and philanthropists" as the push for successful schools sometimes overlooks "the value and benefits that come from teacher collaborations" (Leana, 2011, p. 1). Her definition of human capital in the context of schools is a culmination of "abilities, knowledge, formal education, and on-the-job experience" (Leana, 2011, p. 7). Social capital on the other hand places value on relationships between teachers. According to Coleman (1988) and Leana (2011), "when social capital is strong, student achievement scores improve" (Leana, 2011, p. 3).

Finally, if social capital is strong, teachers communicate extensively, learn from their interactions, and become better at what they do. The information provided by Leana (2011) strongly supports the drive to increase collaboration between the SLP and teacher in elementary schools as part of this project study.

In order for a study to be successful and positively impact student achievement, the researchers have to become a more culturally proficient in their leadership and provide others with a deeper understanding of the target of the study which in this case is the SLP's area of expertise. Based on a study by Lindsey, Roberts, and Campbell-Jones (2005), "A culturally proficient leader uses their influence to help others make changes in their values, beliefs, and attitudes," (p. 20). As a culturally proficient leader, I can educate teachers on collaboration and how this collaboration can positively impact student achievement thereby ultimately promoting social change. SLPs play critical rolls in collaboration with RTI according to Ehren et al. (2006). A few of the collaborative roles are to assist with universal screenings along with interpreting screening and progress assessments. In contrast, those roles scarcely exhibited were ones serving as members of the intervention assistance teams and using the speech therapist's expertise in language, its disorders, and treatments. SLPs are very rarely asked to consult on language issues with teachers to meet the needs of students identified through RTI. The lack of understanding of what the SLP does prevents participation when dealing with the underpinnings of language, learning, and literacy. In the beginning of RTI implementation, collaboration between administrators was minimal; however, throughout the years the minimal contact with administrators concerning RTI has decreased to

almost non-existence. Ehren's (2006) research proposed in order for the SLP to be able to effectively collaborate, school leaders need budgetary power and a strong ability to bring the learning community together to share resources. Strong leaders whose focus remains on the education of their students are usually able to overcome obstacles, bring the collaborative team together, and promote the success of preventative measures of RTI (Dunst & Bruder, 2014; Ehren et al., 2006).

Presently, difficulties involving the SLP span across the U.S. as well as into other countries. According to Baxter, Brookes, Bianchi, Rashid, and Hay (2009), joint workings of SLPs and teachers as they refer to it brought a holistic approach to meeting a student's needs and revealed benefits reaped from this partnership's collaboration. This mixed methods study used a questionnaire and survey to gather perceptions of school staff in 25 schools concerning the SLP. The results revealed several issues that we are currently experiencing in my school system. According to the results of the study, staff awareness or knowledge of the SLP may be lacking, limited time for training is available, and minimal contact between the SLP and teachers is occurring. Staff also found fault in the variation of delivery of speech therapy across the system they investigated. Over the last 20 years in the United Kingdom, mainstreaming inclusion has taken place, making it difficult for the SLP to serve students in appropriate ways. Other barriers included insufficient time for collaboration, lack of support and training, and less than valuable teacher knowledge when dealing with students presenting with communication difficulties (Neltner, 2014; Rudebusch & Wiechmann, 2013). Finally, the SLPs are often

viewed as visitors in the schools and collaboration would allow them to establish mutual trust and respect thereby becoming a valuable member of the learning community.

Flexibility and a give and take attitude were beneficial when collaborating. Baxter, et al. (2009), noted that working together had benefits as it allowed staff to share professional knowledge, ideas, problem solving strategies, and support to better serve the students. Teachers requested more time to meet with the SLPs to discuss student concerns and establish a trusting and collaborative relationship. Finally, the results that support the purpose for my study are that the majority of teaching staff who participated in the UK study suggested more face-to-face meetings with the SLP, PL, and an increased amount of time for team meetings with those who work with the students (Baxter et al., 2009; Bush, 2014).

Presently, general education teachers play a key role in RTI and collaboration. Canter's (2006) research pointed out that general education teachers should be the key player in implementing the RTI process with integrity. This can be accomplished through collaboration of the educational team, regular education teachers, sped teachers, reading specialists, administrators, and speech therapists just to name a few (Bineham et al., 2014; Canter, 2006). The learning community including speech therapists should work together to implement RTI. The collaborative team uses a problem-solving model to identify the problem, analyze, implement, and evaluate (Gresham, 2011). To be successful, effective assessments identify at-risk students, monitor progress, and make decisions for interventions based on the results of the meaningful assessments (Fuchs et al., 2012; Fuchs & Vaughn, 2012; Gresham, 2011). Canter (2006) determined new and

expanded roles for teachers including RTI systems design, professional development, team collaboration, and strategies for serving small groups and individual students. Working collaboratively allows service providers a chance to set goals for students and evaluate progress. School-based teams collaborate to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions for at-risk students. The teams evaluate student data, create and implement checklists to assess interventions, and monitor student progress. Results should be shared in grade level teams through collaboration for support, suggestions for improvements, and discussions concerning student success (Fuchs et al., 2012; Weiss & Friesen, 2014). Involvement of the SLP in RTI to "improve upon the science, art and craft of teaching is imperative" (Canter, 2006, p. 44).

Finally, gaps in literature lead to a need for more research on the topics of RTI and the SLP's involvement in schools. Most of the research discussed in my literature review was considered old by the five-year research standard; however, the majority I found suggested further research was needed in all areas addressed. The research to support the SLP's involvement in the educational setting and the success or failure of this combination is limited; therefore, I believe my research will be beneficial to SLPs and school communities alike.

Implications

My study has potential for social change because it provides an increased understanding of educators' perceptions of the SLP and involvement in the educational learning community. A possible outcome of the study allows participants the opportunity to be actively involved and to build a sense of a learning community in our school

through team effort. Services provided by the SLP imbed the importance of language learning in the school culture by using education, consultation, and collaboration. At the conclusion of this study, educators should have increased knowledge of the SLP, value of the SLP as a resource, and ways to involve the SLP in the learning community. Aspects of SLP involvement could lead to positive social change with teachers, administration, and the overall learning community. The results of my study identified a need to increase educator awareness of the SLP's area of expertise. A 3-day PL unit designed to increase teacher awareness of the SLP will in turn help increase SLP involvement, increase educators' knowledge of the SLP, and increase collaboration with teachers when identifying students who are at-risk in speech, language, or phonology. Since increasing teacher and administrator awareness of what the SLP does and how the SLP can benefit students in the educational setting, a collaborative schedule may be developed which would involve specific times for the SLP to collaborate with teachers and administrators through RTI. Positive student outcomes gained through efficient collaboration and early intervention strategies are designed to reduce the need for special education services (Wanzek & Vaughn, 2007, 2011). This collaboration would allow the SLP to build a rapport with the elementary learning community and could be used to monitor consistency of implementation of strategies from the professional learning unit.

Finally, the results of my study may be important to administrators, teachers, and stakeholders as a way to promote positive social change as collaboration leads to success. Increasing collaboration between teachers and SLPs could enhance the RTI process by capitalizing on the expertise of the SLP. When school administrators become aware of

the benefits of the SLP and how increased educator awareness would help in the identification of students at-risk in the areas the SLP addresses, social change should occur. In addition, the success of increased elementary staff awareness, SLP and teacher collaboration, and enhancement of the RTI process would allow the stakeholders to see an increase in appropriate identification of at-risk speech and language students.

Summary and Transition

The SLP is considered a related service professional in the school setting, participates in the day-to-day workings of a school, and serves students who have impairments in the areas of speech, language, fluency, or voice. According to ASHA, school-based speech therapists should provide services for students that promote positive academic outcomes. SLPs should be essential members of school faculties and learning communities (ASHA, 2010). The position of the SLP of an elementary school can sometimes isolate them from classroom teachers (ASHA, 2006) and students as well as limit visibility and collaboration opportunities. That is a problem in a local school district in rural Georgia. Section 1 of this research project described the problem in detail, provided a general description of the problem, and identified the rationale for the research project. Definitions are also provided to expand the reader's understanding of an SLP and the components SLPs target in the school settings. The literature review revealed studies related to the research topic but not duplicated, as a study of this kind has not yet been developed nor tested. The focus of this study may be significant to elementary educators who are held accountable for the academic successes of students in the elementary setting. The goals of this study are to:

- assess the perceptions of teachers, administrators, and reading specialist regarding the knowledge of the role of the SLP in educational setting, which includes RTI,

- increase educator awareness of what the SLP does or can do to help with students who are struggling with reading or any other element contained in the SLP's area of expertise,

- increase collaboration between teachers, administrators, reading specialist and the speech therapist in the elementary setting as well as in the process of RTI.

Ultimately, as the language specialist in schools, the SLP offers strategies and increase awareness of how linguistic, socioeconomic, and cultural differences may contribute to student achievement or learning difficulties which is certainly an avenue to social change (ASHA, 2010).

In the following sections, I collected and analyzed data to make this qualitative research project successful. In section 2, the methodology implemented in the study is discussed. The tradition or design of this study is based on a qualitative case study approach because the natural setting is where the SLP has access to teachers, administrators, and students. The perceptions of the people involved in the elementary school's learning community were the target of this qualitative design and the participants were selected using purposeful sampling. Open-ended interview questions that were posed to six elementary school teachers, one elementary administrator, and one elementary reading specialist from various grade levels in the elementary school setting. I analyzed the data using the inductive analysis method then further transcribed and

coded using three levels of coding procedures to maximize the potential for success. Section 3 of this study includes a brief description of proposed project, its goals, and a rationale of why I chose the project. In addition, section 3 includes a discussion of how the data collected and how the problem might be addressed. A review of the literature includes an analysis of research and theory, how both are connected, and how the research supports the content of the project. Peer-reviewed and academic journals were used along with other sources that justify the diverse perspectives concerning this project and to show that saturation was reached. Lastly, the project's implications for social change and the project's importance to the stakeholders and learning community are included in section 3.

Finally, in section 4 I discussed the strengths and limitations of the study along with recommendations of ways to address the problem in the school system. This section includes an analysis of what the researcher learned while involved in the project as well as scholarship, project development, leadership, and social change. The information provided in section 4 contributes to the findings of my study by revealing the results of the data collection and analysis to connect the variables, tie particular pieces of evidence together, and make a general statement or theory to match the whole (Hatch, 2002). As a final point, a discussion of implications, applications, and directions for future research presented in section 4 brings closure to my study.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

For the past few years in a local school system, the speech impaired (SI) program has seen the number of student referrals decline, which in reality is the goal of RTI (according to a special education direction in a local school system. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to identify and understand teachers', administrators', and reading specialists' perceptions of the SLP's involvement in RTI and the overall learning community in the educational setting of a local elementary school. Through creation of a professional development project, I worked to enhance educator knowledge of the SLP's areas of expertise, increase collaboration between the SLP and teachers, and lead the way to more involvement of the SLP in the learning community. Educator perceptions guided my research, and the data collected informed the project. The qualitative method of data collection included interviews and observations collected from six teachers in grades kindergarten through fifth grade, one administrator, and one reading specialist. I sought participants' perceptions of RTI and ideas about why there has been a decrease in the involvement of the SLP in the educational learning community in one local elementary school. Accordingly, I hoped that the results of this study would provide elementary educators with increased knowledge of the SLP, and would encourage increased collaboration during the RTI process.

Qualitative Research Design and Approach

I used a qualitative case study design for this project study. Qualitative case studies allow the researcher the opportunity to explore a program, process, or individual in a

thorough manner (Creswell, 2009). A case study takes place in the natural setting, in this case an elementary school where the problem was occurring. As an SLP, I had the opportunity to talk directly to the participants, observe them in their natural environment, and have face-to-face interactions with them throughout the study (see Creswell, 2009). In addition, I was the data collector for the study; therefore, I had many opportunities to hear and understand teachers' perceptions of the role of the SLP in student learning, collaboration, and RTI.

The case study approach allowed me to take an active part in working with the participants throughout the data collection process. Creswell (2009) defined case study research as a way for the researcher to "explore the depth of a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals" (p. 13). Further, in case study research, cases are "bounded by time and activity and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time" (Creswell, 2009, p. 13). According to Creswell (2007), researchers have expressed several different views on case study as a qualitative methodology. Stake (1995) believed that a case study is simply a choice of what subject to study rather than a true methodology. Other researchers supported Creswell's (2007) definition of a case study as a comprehensive strategy of inquiry, whose purpose is to discover the object or product of inquiry that led to a true methodological approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Merriam, 1998, 2009; Yin, 2003). These definitions bolster my decision to chose a case study approach as a way to discover what teachers, administrators, and reading specialist perceived about the SLP's purpose in the educational setting.

For this research project, I asked: What are the elementary school teachers',
reading specialists', and administrators' knowledge of RTI and their perceptions of the
function and duties of the SLP in the educational learning community? I assessed
administrator, reading specialist, and teacher knowledge and perception of the SLP's role
in the learning community using in-depth interviews. I had an opportunity to understand
participants' perceptions of the SLP's role in the education of the school's students.
Therefore, I believe that the case study approach was appropriate for this qualitative
research study.

Conversely, I did not choose quantitative research methods for this study because
a survey or closed-ended questionnaire would not provide enough evidence or support for
the intended topic. Quantitative research results in numbers that can be compared and
contrasted. It provides excellent data, but the qualitative method allows for more in-
depth information to be gathered from the participants. The in-depth information
gathered via a qualitative study allows for thick rich narrative descriptions, direct data
collection in the natural setting, and participant perceptions of the topic (Carlson, 2010).
According to Marshall and Rossman (2006), quantitative data collection can disguise the
participants' personal experiences. These experiences were what I was most interested in
for this study. Further, the purpose of quantitative research is to classify features of the
topic, count those features, and construct statistical models that are to be explained.
According to Creswell (2007), the quantitative model also includes testing of theories by
statistically measuring and analyzing variables. In contrast, qualitative methodology
allows the researcher to obtain a complete, detailed description of the objectives in the

study. The qualitative approach is geared towards understanding a social problem, which is the core of my research. I believe the qualitative approach was more suited to this study because the goal was to find out what elementary teachers and administrators perceived about the speech therapist, which was more appropriately documented through in-depth interviews. Finally, I revealed the results through a narrative that targeted specific themes obtained from the data collection procedures.

Participants

Since there is no recommended number of participants required for a qualitative study, the number should depend on the multiple perspectives and experiences needed to address the research question adequately. The population for this project study included one administrator, one reading specialist, and six classroom teachers from kindergarten through fifth grades located in one elementary school in the southeastern United States. My justification for selecting these participants was that these educators had experiences that may offer insight regarding the role of the SLP in the school setting. Because these participants are engrossed in the day-to-day education of students, I consider their views to be valuable and practical assets to this study (see Marshall & Rossman, 2011). I conducted in-depth interviews with the school administrator, reading specialist, and one teacher from each grade level in this elementary school to gain insight into their perceptions of the SLP.

The nature of qualitative studies is to develop an understanding of the participants' viewpoints and interviewing grade level teachers afforded me the opportunity to conduct in-depth questioning to develop a true picture of participants'

perspectives of the SLP. I purposely selected the interview participants based on the following criteria:

1. The teacher/educator worked in this particular rural school system for at least 3 years.

2. The teacher/educator has participated with the SLP in the RTI process in some way during their tenure.

In purposeful sampling, subjects are chosen because of some specific characteristic or pre-selected criteria the researcher is studying. The individuals I chose for this study had experience in the educational setting and experience with the SLP. I assumed that this experience could offer insight related to my research question, which is: What are the elementary school teachers', reading specialists', and administrators' knowledge of RTI and their perceptions of the function and duties of the SLP in the educational learning community? According to Creswell (2009), purposefully selecting the subjects is the best way to understand the problem and research questions. In this case, the criteria for the sample included teachers in an elementary school whose perception of the SLP in the educational process is very important.

When choosing participants and the study site, Miles and Huberman (1994) indicated four things to consider, including setting, actors, events, and process. The setting was, of course, where the study took place and the actors were the participants in the study. The events in this case were how teachers and administrators perceived the SLP in the educational setting, especially in the RTI process. Finally, the process

consisted of the nature of events the subjects participated in within the setting, including open-ended questionnaires, observations, interviews, and focus groups.

According to Creswell (2007), purposeful sampling allows the researcher to alter the sample size based on data saturation. The sample size is also determined by the time and resources available to the researcher. This type of sampling is most successful when the data review and analysis is done along with data collection, which was possible because I work in the same school system as the participants. We do not however work in the same building. Finally, purposeful sampling was most appropriate for this qualitative research project because the setting was limited, given my plan to sample only one elementary school in the district.

Limitations for using purposeful sampling indicated that the researcher had a valid reason for choosing purposeful sampling and for gathering information. The goal of the research was to collect enough information to provide a comprehensive picture of the case which in some cases can limit the importance of the study. Selecting boundaries may limit a case study and sampling process because time could also be a problem for the researcher (Creswell, 2007). Additionally, establishing a defined beginning and ending to the study is most important in establishing boundaries to envelop your cause according to Creswell (2007). If these limitations are respected and monitored, the study's results will be valid and help the researcher in advocating for social change.

The Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) granted permission for the data collection process to begin in February 2014 (#01-29-14-0146024). Once I obtained permission, I drew the sample. The participants consisted of eight participants:

six elementary teachers—one from each grade level from kindergarten to fifth grades, the

school's reading specialist, and one administrator. Neither ethnicity nor gender was a

consideration in this study. I fully informed all participants of their rights and requested

that they sign a consent form. Educators who participated in the interviews were given

the opportunity to withdraw from the study for any reason; however, no participants

withdrew.

Because all participants were located in one school building, I had access to

interview them either before or after school. The scheduling of the interviews was

dependent on the availability of the participants during their free time, which included

before school, after school, or any free time the participants had in their schedules. I did

not collect data during students' academic time.

Finally, I made every effort to protect all participants. I did not have any

supervisory role that affected any type of evaluation of these participants' jobs. I have

worked in all of the schools located in said county, and have an established relationship

with the majority of administrators, teachers, and speech therapists in the county. Thus,

choosing one school over another would not make a difference in the established

relationships.

Once the study was approved by Walden University's IRB, I began the process of

purposefully selecting participants and gaining their permission to be included in the

study. Communication with the participants was through Walden e-mail as well as

personal e-mails of the identified participants. One interview participant was chosen

from each grade level, kindergarten through fifth grade and two from the administrative

group which provided me with eight interview participants. These interview participants were purposefully selected based on the criteria of years of experience, exposure to RTI, and the SLP. Time permitting, only one interview was conducted per participant; however no further data were needed therefore second interviews were not necessary. I informed the participants of their rights and advised them that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which they were otherwise entitled. Once I obtained participant permission, the data collection began.

Finally, participants involved in this study completed a consent and confidentiality form. This permission from informed the educators of the nature of the study and how their participation would be used to lend knowledge of role of the SLP in the educational setting. In an effort to protect educator confidentiality, I assigned the participants a number so their names were not used in the publishing of this project study. All interview recordings and transcripts are being kept in my home, away from the school, to ensure that no other member of the faculty has access to this information. If at any time the participants in this project study felt that their rights were breached they could have withdrawn from the study, but no participant withdrew.

In summary, the first step to protect the participants was to obtain a letter of cooperation from the principal of the school where the study was to be conducted. Secondly, I gained approval from Walden University's Institutional Review Board while obtaining formal permission from my local school board by submitting a proposal for consent to conduct this study. The proposal was reviewed by the Superintendent and

presented to the Board of Education. Once approval from the board was obtained, I submitted a request showing the need and purpose of the study to the principal of the elementary school involved. I described procedures and the duration of the school's involvement as well as the hopes and benefits of the study. School officials granted permission to conduct my study. I maintained confidentiality throughout the study and disclosed procedures for storing records. An indication of who would have access to data was disclosed as well. Additionally, data transcripts and notes were numbered so that names did not have to be used. Once the interviews were completed, I placed them under lock and key in a safe in my home; therefore, upholding confidentially.

Data Collection

For this qualitative study, educators were available for observations and discussions during RTI data meetings held one day per week during teacher planning and/or free time. All participants were also available before or after school for interviews to be conducted. Because I have worked with most of the participants in the study, an amicable relationship already exists. The purpose of conducting interviews was to have an in-depth understanding of the perceptions that educators have of the SLP. By finding and documenting the different perspectives of the participants, coding by themes was integrated into the data collection and analysis through in-depth interview results.

The criteria established for selecting participants provided information such as years of experience in the educational setting, exposure to the SLP, and collaboration with the SLP during their tenure in education. Thereby, I used the established criteria to purposefully select the participants for the interviews. One participant from each grade

level, kindergarten through fifth grade, one administrator, and one reading specialist were

chosen as interview participants. The criterion was important to the study because I

believed using participants with at least 3 years of experience would enhance the benefit

of the study.

For this qualitative study, I notified the participants of selection through e-mail.

Once the participant agreed to be a part of the study, I sent a consent form through e-mail

as well. The consent form was returned by fax or email with the participants' electronic

signature. Once the participant consented to the interviews, I provided an overview of

the study.

Once the interview participants were chosen, the interviews took place either

before or after school at a designated place that was comfortable for the participants. I

conducted the in a conversational manner so that the participants felt comfortable

answering the interview questions. The participants were interviewed using carefully

selected interview questions (Appendix B). Hatch (2002) discussed that interviews led

by the researcher should be recorded for reference for transcription of the information;

therefore I audio-taped and transcribed the interviews using the Coding Analysis Toolkit

(CAT) developed by the Qualitative Data Analysis Program and obtained through the

University of Pittsburgh (C.A.T., http://cat.texifter.com/).

In order to keep track of the data, I kept up with the participants and completion

of interviews with an EXCEL document created by the researcher. I cataloged and

transcribed the interviews using a formal transcription software program obtained

through the University of Pittsburg. I established themes using the transcribed interview

information. Throughout the study, I reflected on the happenings of the study in a journal. The journal provided a chance to reflect on the events, problems, and solutions of the study. In addition, I made use of the journal for keeping track of the data collected during the study.

Once I collected the data, the interviews and transcripts were placed in a locked file cabinet in my home. Currently, data is stored on the my personal home computer and on a CD; however at the end of five years all records pertaining my study will be appropriately shredded and discarded.

Role of the Researcher

As a SLP who has been in this school system for 28 years as a teacher, SLP, and special education team leader, I am involved and aware of the daily functioning of the school. I have had the opportunity to interact with many members of this school faculty throughout my experience. I am not nor have I ever been in a supervisory position that governs the participants of this study.   Through my involvement within the county schools, I have maintained a positive relationship with many members of the elementary schools' faculty.

Fortunately, I have worked in the three elementary schools in the county and have participated in some capacity with all the teachers involved in the study within the past ten years. I have also worked in the middle school and high school as a SLP within the past ten years and have an established rapport with those faculties as well. As an added ethical protection to the participants and the study, those participating had the opportunity

to withdraw from the study at any time; however, no participants withdrew. At this time, I do not feel that I hold any biases that impacted my study.

Data Analysis

Using several strategies, I collected and analyzed the data for this study about the SLP in the educational setting. The in-depth interviews were audio-taped and transcribed. Through data analyses, I triangulated by gathering data from the various interviews and comparing the developed themes representing educators' perception of the SLP in the elementary setting. I followed further data analysis procedures by sorting and coding the results in a systematic and meaningful way. I included sufficient rationale for the analysis. My methods were documented to establish trustworthiness and credibility and an adequate amount of participant quotations corroborated the conclusions of the study (Merriam, 1998, 2009).

Inductive data analysis was selected as the method for this study. Inductive analysis allowed me to search for patterns of meaning in the data collected so that I could formulate general statements about the phenomenon being studied (Hatch, 2002). I looked for patterns across individual observations and proceeds from specific to general explanations (Potter, 1996). Inductive analysis is well suited for studies whose purpose is to discover the cultural meaning from large data sets; however, for the purpose of my study, a small sample that represents a larger population was chosen. According to Hatch (2002) the researcher can analyze data that can be adopted for use in a wide variety of studies within any research paradigm. In addition, inductive analysis draws meaning from complex data gathered with a broad focus in mind. It allows the researcher to feel

confident about what they report concerning the findings of the study and using the inductive approach for analyzing qualitative data can lead to reliable and valid findings in the end (Thomas, 2006). Inductive analysis represents social situations examined or the perspectives of the participants being studied which parallels the goal of my research.

Inductive data analysis may not be as suited for studies that rely on interview data and focus groups; however, Hatch (2002) supported the use of inductive data analysis as a starting point because some researchers will begin with inductive analysis and "then move to the next level in order to add an interpretative dimension to earlier analytic work" (p. 180).

Further, Hatch (2002) supported the use of interpretative analysis as a more effective form of data analysis for researchers who are studying educational criticisms. Thomas (2006) agreed that the general inductive approach is not as strong as other analytic approaches, but will provide the researcher with effortless, straightforward strategy for discovering results that are directly related to the research questions. Further, I collected data through the audiotaping of interviews. The use of open-ended questions allowed the participants to provide answers not guided or swayed by me. I transcribed and coded the interview tapes. Transcribing occurred immediately following the interviews using a formal transcription software program along with my notes allowing me to access memories of the conversation. And finally, coding was also used to establish themes of the interviews.

Coding

Coding is a process for both categorizing qualitative data and for describing the implications and details of these categories. Initially one does open coding, considering the data in minute detail while developing some initial categories (Creswell, 2007). Later, one moves to focused coding and then to Axial and/or selective coding where one systematically codes with respect to a core concept. Coding is used to help organize and analyze a large quantity of data collected in qualitative research methods (Hahn, 2008). According to Hahn (2008), coding moves in a *stepwise fashion* and progresses from data that is unorganized to more developed categories, themes, or concepts.

Open Coding

After the collection of data, I began the process of open coding. Creswell (2007) described open coding as breaking the data down into large categories of information (p. 64). Open coding is used to organize, focus, and label large amounts of raw data. This type of coding is considered Level 1 Coding according to Hahn (2008). During this process the researcher seeks to find major components of the data that seem to repeat themselves. The emergence of patterns and themes will guide the researcher in the search for relationships that lead to Level 2 Coding. Level 2 Coding is considered more focused coding and used to develop categories for the data (Hahn, 2008). These components will then be used to focus on the central phenomenon of the study.

Thematic Coding

Once open coding is completed, axial coding is used to make connections between the emerging categories. Axial also known as thematic coding is used when the

researcher is organizing the categorized data into more developed themes (Hahn, 2008).

Babbie (2010) described axial coding as "regrouping of categories created in open coding

in order for the researcher to search for more analytical concepts" (p. 402). The purpose

of thematic coding is to compile the data collected from open coding and axial coding

and focus in on the central phenomenon or themes.

Concurrently, common themes developed from the interviews were aligned using

open coding along with thematic coding strategies. Hatch (2002) stated that

"understandings are generated by starting with specific elements and finding connections

between them" (p. 161). Through interviews, connections were made. I formatted the

coded data in Microsoft Word, then analyzed and reported the results in narrative form.

In summary, I used the inductive data analysis method to analyze teachers',

administrators', and reading specialists' perceptions of the SLP in the elementary

education setting in a K-5 school. I transcribed and further coded the results of the in-

depth interviews using three tiers of coding which include open coding, focused coding,

and thematic coding. By the time axial coding was reached, the data were categorized

into common themes. Hatch (2002) stated "understandings are generated by starting with

specific elements and finding connections between them" (p. 161).

Evidence of Quality

To ensure the best possible accuracy and credibility of the findings of this study,

member checking, peer debriefing, rich thick description, and clarification of researcher

bias were implemented. According to Carlson (2010), member checking provides the

participants (members) an opportunity to review data and provide feedback. Reilly

(2013) added that member checking provides a way to test the data, analyze the categories developed through coding, and "insure truthfulness and authenticity" (p. 2). After transcribing and establishing themes, the interview participants had the opportunity to review the data several times for validity and further discussion to ensure member checking was implemented. For the purpose of this study, I implemented member checking by providing participants with a letter that stated the purpose of the study and rationale for review of the transcripts. I requested suggestions for revisions, providing the participants with partial narratives to verify plausibility as including the entire transcription could cause undue stress on the participants (Curtin & Fossey, 2007). I included a self-addressed stamped envelope so that when the participants were finished reviewing and revising, the transcripts were returned to me. I provided the participants with contact number in case there were questions during the review of the data. Lastly, I assured the participants that their contributions were "worthy, valid, and respected" (Carlson, 2010, p. 1111) which may increase the trustworthiness as well as the stability of the study. Finally, all correspondence were audio-taped so that I could validate the data collected.

Peer debriefing is yet another important technique employed to ensure the collection of valid information for the study. Peer debriefing involves a disinterested peer or someone not directly involved in the research who can reflect on the data and decisions made by the researcher (Onwuegbuzie, Leech, Collins, 2008). Through peer review, the researcher may gain information and insight into the research process. For the purpose of this research, peer debriefing was used to make the "process more

transparent and motivate the researcher to document the evolution of the research study" (Collins, Onwuegbuzie, Johnson, & Frels, 2012, p. 6). During this process, the peer reviewed data on one or more occasion to provide feedback on the process and allow me to make necessary adjustments throughout in hopes of establishing more trustworthiness in the research. As a way to assess the research process, the team used eight questions developed by Onwuegbuzie and his colleagues (2012) that addressed researcher bias. The questions pertained to the researcher's:

> "(a) experience with interviewing participants, (b) understanding of the
> participants, (c) depth of knowledge of non-verbal communication, (d
> interpretation of the interview findings, (e) thoughts regarding how the study
> affected the researcher, (f) concerns regarding the impact of the study on the
> participants, (g) ethical or political issues that might have come up during the
> research, and (h) identification of problems that stemmed from the interviews."
> (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2008, pp. 6-7).

To accomplish peer debriefing, I had the Talented and Gifted (TAG) teacher review the analysis, themes, and my interpretations of results as she is familiar with the SLP's area of expertise (Creswell, 2007, 2013). The TAG teacher's interpretations assisted in the quality of the research. I also had another SLP from the same school system participate in peer debriefing to add to the quality of the study. According to Kolb (2012), using triangulation would ultimately increase the validity and quality of the study if multiple methods of data collection are used. This qualitative study involved multiple opportunities for data collection because of the variety of participants from

across grade levels along with researcher notes. As a final point, I implemented member checking and peer debriefing to support the evidence of quality.

Discrepant Cases

Discrepant data contradict the established themes or patterns. I actively searched for, recorded, analyzed, and reported negative cases of discrepant data that were an exception to patterns or themes found when coding the data. Negative cases allow the researcher to compensate for relying on first impressions that emerge from the data (Hatch, 2002). Thus, the search for counterevidence or other pieces of data that may have a distant connection should also be considered. These data may reveal important elements that should be closely examined in order to determine an explanation for the contradiction or disregard the information as irrelevant to the study. I examined all avenues of data, themes, etc, and left nothing to chance. I can state with confidence that the findings of my study are supported by the data collected (Hatch, 2002). Further, I did not identify any discrepant data during the data analysis.

Limitations

The participants chosen for this project study included administrators, reading specialists, and classroom teachers from kindergarten through fifth grades in one elementary school in the southeastern United States where the RTI process had been implemented. With administrators among the sample, some bias may exist in their responses due to their expectations of what the role of SLP should be in assisting students and teachers rather than what the SLP actually does with students and teachers. The procedures used within the study may also limit study findings. The use of one data

source, individual interviews, rather than multiple sources, may limit study findings.

Including focus group interviews of other grade teachers at the participating schools

and/or other administrators and observations at times of student pull-outs, may have

provided additional themes and findings to the current study if incorporated into the study

as data sources. The additional sources would have also provided greater triangulation of

data. As part of the data analysis process, the Talented and Gifted (TAG) teacher

reviewed the analysis, themes, and interpretations of the results as she is familiar with the

SLP's area of expertise. The TAG teacher's interpretations assisted in the quality of the

research, however may have included bias during those interpretations. Similarly, I have

worked with most of the participants in the study, and an amicable relationship already

exists between the researcher and participants. In addition, I am also the SLP at another

elementary school in the participating district. Despite making all efforts to eliminate

bias during the interpretation of results, some bias may exist.

Data Analysis Results

For this study, eight educators were interviewed, responses audiotaped, and

transcribed. Responses were coded using open, axial, and thematic coding. The results

are as follows:

R1: What are the elementary school teachers', reading specialists', and administrators'

knowledge of RTI and their perceptions of the function and duties of the SLP in the

educational learning community?

During data collection, the ideas of what a speech therapist does in the

educational setting varied among the one administrator, one reading specialist, and six

classroom teachers. In analyzing data, several themes emerged in understanding the role of the SLP. I found that five out of eight educators perceived that the role of the SLP is to assess, treat, and diagnose students with articulation or language difficulties. Two of the educators perceived that the SLP works on articulation, language, sounds, language arts stuff, vocabulary, definitions, and oral motor concerns. One teacher noted that the SLP identifies students in these areas through early intervention; however, speech therapists have not participated in the early intervention evaluation process for the last 5 years. An equal number of educators perceive SLPs as a support for students and teachers. Two out of eight participants view the SLP as a resource, mediator between teachers and parents, and a specialist in speech and language. Speech therapists are viewed as part of the students' educational team through on-going communication to identify and *fix* speech or language students. One administrator added, "Oftentimes especially for a language delay teachers just need to know what they can do in the classroom to help the students."

In addition, one teacher thought that the SLP oversees the special education process at the school. Another teacher mentioned that the SLP helps plan and determine services for at-risk students. Only one teacher discussed the SLP being involved in the RTI process, developing interventions, and attending Student Support Team (SST) or data meetings. A teacher said "saying words and how to use them correctly", teaching students, remediation, working with students to build confidence, and just simply having therapy described the SLP's duties and responsibilities. The reading specialist stated, "Having been a speech student myself when I was in school, early intervention is

important because fixing the speech problems sometimes saves students from

embarrassment. I think the earlier we can get children in and save them from that kind of

issue, we can save the child." The results of common responses from participants

concerning perceptions of the SLP's role in the learning community are reflected in

Table 2:

Table 2.

Educators' Perceptions of SLP

Common Perceptions of what the SLP does in educational setting	*Number of Participants Supporting Common Perception*
Assess, treat, diagnose	5
Works on speech deficits	5
Works on language deficits	4
Supports teachers	6
Resource for teachers	4

From the research question, two sub-topics emerged from data and that is how

the data is presented. The sub-topics include the need for increased collaboration

between the speech therapist and educators along with the need for professional

development to increase educator awareness of the SLP's area of expertise, and how to

incorporate the SLP as a resource in the educational setting.

"Sometimes expectations and perceptions don't always line up but when you see

the speech program as part of the puzzle, it's almost like part of the stitches that are a

fabric of the school," school learning support specialist. The data collected from the

teachers, reading specialist, and administrator indicated communication, collaboration,

and good interaction with classroom teachers as the forerunners of their perception. Of

the participants, six out of eight educators perceived the SLP as a resource with whom

they share information and therefore have good interaction. Four of those six added that the SLP should be available to have discussions concerning students. Daily discussions concerning students' progress, questions about interventions, and simply what to work on in the classroom were of importance to three of the six teacher participants whose classrooms were in close proximity to the SLP's office. Of those three teachers, two of them felt constant communication was important.

For RTI, the participants perceived the SLP as a member of a team who can diagnose students' area of weakness. The SLP is a participant who works in conjunction with language standards to pull together materials for the teacher to use in the classroom when the student is going through the RTI process. One administrator added that the SLP was a resource who helps coordinate enabling them to push the child through RTI. She also felt that the SLP coordinated conferences between the teacher and parent.

Even though only two of the eight participants perceived the SLP as a collaborative partner, the support for collaboration was strong. These educators' perception was that the SLP plans targets, supports goals, works hand-in-hand as a team, and is a sounding board for intervention ideas. One teacher stated that the SLP "works together with us to ensure success of all students." Finally, the LSS added that "collaboration is the key to helping the whole school see how valuable the SLP is." Collaboration with the SLP was important to participants as responses targeted that area during the interviews. The second area with the most responses was communication as shown in Table 3:

Table 3.

Need for Communication and Collaboration

Areas of Need Indicated by Participants	Occurrence of Participant Responses
Collaboration	20%
Communication	16%
Daily discussion - student progress	12%
Weekly discussion – interventions	12%
Other	40%

According to one participant, "RTI changed relationships in the educational setting and pieces are missing in professional learning opportunities for the SLP to share knowledge with educators. Teachers need to collaborate on requirements for the SLP and RTI and special education testing because the SLP is the expert and teachers are unaware." Consequently, teachers don't understand how or when to collaborate and involve the SLP in the RTI process. Three of the eight participants agreed that new teachers do not know the SLP or what the SI program is or how it works.

Professional learning was another concern of the participants in that if the SLP was involved in professional learning, she could teach educators what they need to know about paperwork, interventions, and/or modifications for at-risk students. Professional learning would provide the SLP an opportunity to give teachers a *cheat sheet* or *tricks of the trade* and give pointers on how to identify and address articulation or language concerns. Educate teachers," according to the learning support specialist. The educators wanted more specifics about the areas of weakness to increase awareness. During the interviews, five out of eight participants touched on the SLP providing strategies or pointers to educators to increase knowledge and help them have a better understanding of

at-risk students in the areas of speech or language. Educators need to have information to address oral motor or the linguistic issues of our students according to three of the teachers.

To address increasing knowledge, time is needed in the classroom for the SLP to show teachers how to implement interventions and suggestions for our at-risk students based on the responses of three of the participants. If the SLP could provide materials for classrooms and instruct teachers on how to use them, that would help according to one classroom teacher's response.   In addition, a missing part of the identification process for at-risk students is that "teachers are interested in knowing what would put the student in speech or language in the first place, what the student may be working on, and how teachers could address needs in their classrooms," stated a third-grade teacher. A fifth-grade teacher added, "If we don't have or have never had speech impaired students in our classroom, we understand less about what the SLP does because we never have contact. If you don't have interaction with the SLP, you may not have any idea of what she does. Only time you may see her is in an IEP meeting. Therefore our knowledge is limited." Finally, as stated by a second grade teacher, "If teachers knew more about what the speech therapist could help us with, it would help us understand and use her knowledge to help our students more often." Increasing educators' knowledge about the SLP yielded the following results presented in Table 4:

Table 4.

Major Themes – What Educators are Missing

Themes/Areas to Improve	*Occurrence of Participant Responses*
Knowledge of the SLP	16%
Need for SLP "Tricks of Trade"	13%
Time to Collaborate	8%
Know How/When to Ask for Help from SLP	8%
Other	55%

Summary

I believed that an increase in educator awareness and collaboration between the SLP and all grade level teachers needed to be addressed, but for the purpose of my study, I specifically targeted kindergarten through fifth grade teachers, the reading specialist, and the administrator of one district school. To make this successful, I interviewed those participants concerning their perceptions of the SLP's involvement in the educational setting including RTI, evaluated the results, and addressed the issues. The results of my study help to understand how educators view the role of the SLP in the educational setting. I discovered in research that, "A culturally proficient leader influences others to make changes in their values, beliefs, and attitudes" (Lindsey, Roberts, and Campbell-Jones, 2005, p. 20). In order for my study to be successful and impact educator perceptions, I had to become a more culturally proficient leader, provide others with a deeper understanding of my area of expertise as a speech language pathologist, and show how I can be immersed more effectively in the educational process. In addition, once teachers are educated on the SLP's areas of expertise, ways to incorporate the SLP as a new resource will be available for the intervention stages of RTI.

The continued success of this project relies on the qualitative project study (Creswell, 2009) that encompasses kindergarten through fifth grade teachers, an administrator, and a reading support specialist in my local school system. The methodology is specified in section 2 of my study. Section 3 contains information regarding further research that supports increasing teacher awareness of the SLP's area of expertise aiding in increasing teacher and SLP collaboration with teachers during the RTI process. The project provides information that guides in the understanding of the SLP, involves the SLP in the learning community, and provides teachers with strategies for students who are at-risk in speech, language, or phonology. Finally, the remaining sections of this doctoral study contribute to the findings of my study by revealing the results of the data collection and analysis to connect the variables, tie particular pieces of evidence together, and to make a general statement or theory to match the whole (Hatch, 2002).

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

I designed a 3-day professional development for this project to provide information concerning the role of the SLP to educators in the elementary school setting. The information provided in the PL sessions is designed to increase educator knowledge of what the SLP's area of expertise entails and what the SLP can offer as a resource in the school environment. This information includes a speech language *cheat sheet* to teachers as a resource for identifying at-risk speech and language students. The cheat sheet supplies teachers with the following: tactics with which to identify students with speech and language difficulties, ideas for designing and implementing strategies or interventions to help address speech language concerns, and information to help distinguish the difference between an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and a 504 Plan. I designed the topics of the project based on result of data analysis from educators' responses to the face-to-face interview questions.

The purpose of this professional development workshop is to provide knowledge, skills, and techniques to educators to identify students who may be at risk of speech and language deficiencies. My overall goal included enhancing educator knowledge of the SLP's realm of practice through:

- Increasing educator knowledge speech and language areas that are applicable to the educational setting.
- Exposing educators to ways of identifying age appropriate speech sound errors and/or difficulties.

- Increasing awareness of strategies for identifying age-appropriate language skills and/or difficulties.

- Increasing knowledge of fluency and voice as they relate to the educational setting.

- Developing a cheat sheet of strategies and interventions to help educators identify/address speech and language challenges in the elementary school setting.

I determined that a professional learning project was the best approach for teaching educators how to (a) become more familiar with the areas covered under the eligibility category of speech and language, (b) recognize speech and language problems in the classroom, (c) develop appropriate interventions that meet RTI guidelines, and (d) provide interventions necessary to address the students' difficulties in these areas. Sheridan, Edwards, Marvin, and Knoche (2009) identified three models of professional development for educators, including in-service, coaching, and consultation. In-service usually entails workshops that are brief and could include a series of sessions, but do not require ongoing contact or follow-up between the instructor and educator. Coaching may occur frequently over brief periods of time between the expert and the person seeking to increase knowledge about a particular skill. Finally, consultation or collaboration covers problem solving between parties to address a concern for a student or a group of students. Even though coaching is the more long-term of the three models, I chose a professional learning plan as the genre for this project because the results of the data collection

indicated the educators' desire for more knowledge concerning the SLP. This in-service will be delivered in three separate PL sessions.

The PL workshop will enhance awareness for kindergarten through fifth grade elementary educators, reading support specialists, and administrators, and will increase their knowledge of the SLP's area of expertise. As part of the three sessions, I will provide handouts and time for grade level teachers to plan and collaborate. Teachers will then be expected to incorporate knowledge and skills shared during the workshop during weekly planning periods within their respective grade levels. Each presentation in the workshop will be focused on increasing knowledge about speech and language characteristics/deficiencies that are relevant to all grade levels, and strategies to use for identifying them. Planning time will be used to concentrate on ways to apply these in all elementary grades.

Rationale

This professional development 3-day workshop was based on my qualitative project study addressing the problem of students not being identified in areas that the SLP addresses because of the lack of educator awareness, despite the school implementing RTI for specifying interventions. Based on interviews with kindergarten through fifth grade teacher participants and administrators in a local school system, the workshop will increase teacher awareness of the SLP's area of expertise and the use of the SLP in collaboration with teachers during the RTI process. The professional development workshop will provide a guide to teachers that helps with awareness and identification of

students who are at-risk in speech, language, or phonology. In addition, I will include a list of strategies to use with at-risk SLP students in the classroom.

<div align="center">**Review of the Literature**</div>

Three common themes that emerged from the data collected in the study included: (a) lack of knowledge of how to access the SLP, (b) increased opportunities for teachers and SLPs to communicate and collaborate, and (c) increased knowledge of the SLP's role as a potential resource in the educational setting. Due to time constraints in the day-to-day schedule, collaboration and communication, which entail more than a 5-10 minute conversation in the hallway, are difficult. The participants in the study were discouraged by the lack of communication and collaboration between the SLP and teachers, which has been proven to be an on-going problem in elementary schools (Hopkins, Kanaris, Parsons, & Russell, 2015). In the literature review, common themes of communication through collaboration along with increased teacher awareness through professional development, the genre of the study, are discussed.

Professional Learning

Researchers have indicated a concern with PL in educational institutions in the United States. Mizell, Hord, Killion, and Hirsh (2011) researched PL styles and determined most of the styles were out of date. To address this issue, new PL should be designed to gather input from potential participants to ensure personal investment and buy-in for effective use of time, money, and resources. Wei, Darling-Hammond, and Adamson (2010) reported that school systems have reduced the amount of time for providing teachers with intensive professional development that would lead to substantial

positive impact on student learning. This concern about a lack of effective teacher professional development is relevant because lack of knowledge of the SLP and ways to involve the SLP in the learning community could be a hindrance to positive student outcomes.

In the educational setting, professional development is designed to help teachers gain knowledge and aptitude in order to improve their teaching practices and improve student outcomes (Avalos, 2011; Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009). As Mizell et al. (2011) noted, "By making learning the focus, those who are responsible for professional learning will concentrate their efforts on assuring that learning for educators leads to learning for students" (p. 11). Increasing teacher knowledge on ways to involve the SLP in the learning community will do just that, increase learning for students. Collaboration, increased teacher knowledge, and communication concerning the SLP are targeted areas for this project, which I discuss in the literature review.

Collaboration

Collaboration was one of the highest rated concerns of the participants in this study. Educators stated that time constraints prevented adequate time for collaboration with the SLP, and they supported increasing time during the school day for collaboration to discuss students' speech and language concerns. Forbes and McCartney (2012) addressed the benefits of inter-professional collaboration. The purpose of their study, conducted in the United Kingdom, was to introduce new ideas concerning inter-professional relationships between the SLP and teachers. According to Forbes and

McCartney (2012), inter-professional collaboration should be developed or enhanced using the theory of social capital. The theory advocates bonding, bridging, linking, and building strong relationships based on core values and trust among the educators and speech therapists. They also discussed bridging weaker connections between personnel, and linking people of power to form positive, supportive relationships. Opportunities for first year teachers to collaborate on instructional practices yield improved attitudes toward teaching and job satisfaction, and decreased their likelihood to quit teaching or request transfer to other schools (Pogodzinski, Youngs, Frank, & Belman, 2012; Youngs, Holdgreve-Resendes, Quian, 2011). Consequently, student progress improved when teachers were involved in collaboration, curriculum development, and instruction. Goddard et al. (2015) studied 452 teachers in 47 different elementary schools, and found that teacher collaboration positively predicts student achievement. The results of this study indicated that in order to improve relationships and achieve cultural change, new types of inter-professional education and training need to take place. This education and training should be presented in a collaborative manner so the learning community works as a team.

Collaboration will also assist in participants becoming more familiar with and more confident in each other's areas of expertise. Wilson, McNeill, and Gillon (2015) conducted an online survey completed by 58 elementary student teachers and 37 SI students, all in their last year of college. The results of the surveys indicated that the preparation of both educational programs left each group with a limited knowledge and understanding of literacy curriculum and spoken language concepts. The participants

also felt they were not familiar with each other's area of expertise which left them at a disadvantage. The teacher candidates were accepting of the SLP as a consultant, but not as a co-teacher or active participant in classroom instruction. The results further indicated the need for speech language therapists and teachers' ongoing collaboration to enhance students' communication skills (Wilson et al., 2015).

Collaboration between teachers and SLPs allows opportunities for discussing strategies and planning interventions for students. Starling, Munro, Togher, and Arciuli (2012) conducted a study to evaluate the effectiveness training secondary education teachers through collaboration with the SLP in the areas of oral and written language. The training was designed to increase teacher knowledge for designing interventions and whole-class practices to instruct language-impaired students in mainstream classes. Thirteen eighth grade teachers participated in this study. The results indicated an increase in test scores from students who were taught by the teacher participants in the study. The teachers became more aware of interventions and teaching strategies used with language-impaired students; therefore the training and collaboration that took place between the teachers and SLPs increased awareness, which further enhanced the success of students at the secondary level, even if on a smaller scale (Starling et al., 2012). Collaboration among teachers is useless if it is not supported and happens only occasionally in cafeterias and hallways. According to Goddard et al. (2015), frequency of collaboration is a reflection of its intensity and impact on instruction. In addition, its success is directly linked to principal leadership, formal responsibility, and teacher experience with collaboration (Pogodzinski et al., 2012; Youngs et al., 2011). The

findings of this research are in direct correlation with the needs I identified through the study.

Common planning is another way for teachers and SLPs to collaborate to share ideas as well as discuss concerns about students. Common planning is an effective resource that schools fail to make good use of (Jacobson, 2010). Jacobson proposed partnering of PL with teacher collaboration to achieve effective PL communities. He noted that one approach involved teacher-led discussions and the other approach had administrators leading the PL and collaboration. Teacher focus would be on teaching practices and the administration would focus on assessment results. According to Jacobson (2010), "the strength of each approach is the other's weakness" (p. 39) and the most effective approach combined the two.

Based on research by Jacobson (2010), collaborative practices increase the effectiveness of the learning community with high levels of leadership direction and collaborative expertise. The data collected from my study revealed a need for collaboration or common planning between the SLP and teacher as time is strained during the school day. Information found in previous research indicated that administrators had not seen this lack of time as a problem (Jacobson, 2012). In contrast, analysis of responses from participants in my study supports this time constraint and lack of collaboration as an issue preventing effective identification and interventions for at-risk students. Therefore, in support of the findings of my study, common planning has been noted to increase the effectiveness of the learning community, which in turn creates positive social change among educators.

Researchers have identified different levels of collaboration to be achieved by the SLP. Kathard et al. (2011) along with Wium and Louw (2013) revisited roles and responsibilities of SLPs and addressed collaborative roles of the SLPs in South African schools. Wium and Louw (2011, 2013) revisited the roles of SLPs and delved further into a study originally conducted by Kathard, et al. (2011). The researchers addressed four levels of collaborative roles of SLPs in the educational setting. The first level of collaboration was the learner level where prevention and support are essential. At level two, the teacher level, training, mentoring, monitoring, and consultation took place. When collaboration happens at the district level, support programs for teachers are developed and implemented which was level three. Finally, level four targeted collaboration at the national level where policy is impacted. According to the research teams, South African SLPs need to "act as a consultant and facilitator to teachers and parents" (Wium & Louw, 2011, p. 32) but more comprehensive guidelines should be established based on analysis of data. In addition, SLPs' knowledge of language, phonology, and literacy allow them the opportunity to provide teacher support in schools (O'Connor & Geiger, 2009). The profession of speech therapy should be one that supports basic education with the SLPs being essential members of the learning community. The important role of preventing academic failure requires SLPs to educate teachers on the role of language in learning and collaborate with the educators to make this possible (O'Connor & Geiger, 2009).

Not only do SLPs play a vital role in collaboration but teachers do too. Since teachers are the curriculum experts, teachers should guide the SLPs when determining

interventions appropriate to the curriculum (Bauer, Iyer, Boon, & Fore, 2010). In this South African study, researchers found that collaboration works if teachers allocate time in their schedule to discuss concerns for student weaknesses, learning objectives, and ways to achieve the objective with SLPs (Bauer et al., 2010). Friend, Cook, Hurley-Chamberlain, and Shamberger (2010) revealed that teachers gathering and presenting academic weaknesses to SLPs who would in turn target areas applicable to the student's weakness; therefore, teachers and SLPs should have collaborative discussions where student needs should be ranked in order of severity. Collaboration if implemented correctly would enable all parties in the learning community to share knowledge and expertise to achieve success with students. The results of my data analysis indicated lack of collaboration as a concern; however, an even larger concern was the lack of time during the school day for collaboration or common planning between teachers and the SLP.

Antoniazzi, Snow, and Dickson-Swift (2010) believed that collaboration between SLPs and educators would result in more accurate assessment and identification of students at-risk of oral language and literacy difficulties. Antoniazzi et al. conducted a study of 15 teachers who completed the checklists and screenings on children in their first year of school. The results compared teachers' knowledge of language fundamentals. The teachers' ratings indicated difficulty identifying children with limited skills in the area of language. In a different study concerning the collaborative roles of SLPs in the educational setting conducted by Kathard et al. (2011), levels of involvement for the SLP to become an amiable part of the learning community. Kathard's research team

advocated for SLPs to be most effective at level three which includes collaboration at the

district level. At this level, SLPs should target the largest group of educators through PL

to increase teachers' knowledge. Level three established roles for the SLP as a support

team member who developed programs for teachers and visited different classrooms to

implement the programs designed that helps identify at-risk speech or language students.

According to international researchers, SLPs want the opportunity to have "closer and

more frequent contact with teachers" (Feiler & Watson, 2011, p. 39). The need for more

collaboration between teachers and SLPs, flexible scheduling, and more time for

effective teamwork was noted. Teamwork could be enhanced across professional groups

through school-based training and PL. The SLP can provide guidance for staff who work

with special needs students rather than providing direct service to the student.

Participants in both schools in Feiler and Watson's study expressed the need for more

training to enhance individual skills for working with the special needs population.

Finally, within current United Kingdom governmental policy which apparently governs

the educational system in the UK, "enhancing professional expertise to help children

communicate should lie at the heart of professional development initiatives" (p. 119).

Through the RTI process, collaboration between teachers and other professionals

whose area of expertise could target the student weaknesses should be included at Tier

two. However, collaboration at tier 2 is lacking. Watson and Bellon-Harn (2013)

indicated a relationship between "early reading achievement and phonological/print

awareness, literacy experiences, and vocabulary" (pp. 237-38) which encompass areas of

expertise of an SLP. Watson and Bellon-Harn (2013) found that RTI required close

collaboration between classroom teachers and special education personnel including speech therapists. A problem became evident when individual schools and local education entities were left to interpret ways to implement collaboration and development of interventions because each entity added their own twist to the plan (Reutebuch, 2008). Spencer, Schule, Guillot, and Lee (2008) researched phonemic awareness skills of SLPs versus other educators. The researchers evaluated SLP phonemic awareness skills as compared to those held by teachers. Teachers and SLPs possess adequate skills in the area of phonemic awareness; however, SLPs were found to have much more proficient skills in that area than teachers. The results of this study support themes found in my data analysis. Spencer et al. (2008) indicated SLPs are team members who are best suited to provide support for appropriate interventions through RTI but only when educators are able to collaborate as a team. SLPs might work collaboratively with classroom teachers or incorporate their knowledge into the classroom through co-teaching (Spencer et al., 2008). As a final point, the collaboration design according to a study conducted by Watson and Bellon-Harn (2013) allowed teachers an opportunity to discuss student weaknesses with the SLP so that strategies could be created and implemented to address speech or language needs.

Squires, Gillam, and Reutzel (2013) reported that SLPs have "specialized knowledge about oral language and its relationship to early literacy" (p.1) allows speech therapists to be a very useful resource to teachers. However, teachers may not be aware of the skills the SLP is able to address in the educational realm. RTI calls for SLPs and teachers working together to increase the success of struggling learners. Subsequently,

Squires et al. (2013) advocated for teachers to seek advice from SLPs to address reading

and oral expression concerns because SLPs have been trained to assess student

performance, recognize difficulties, and link those concerns to interventions and

instruction. Collaboration is a key element to accurately assessing student performance

according to Sanger et al. (2012). Additionally, enlightening teachers about the SLP

would further promote the collaboration and opportunities for student success (Hoover &

Love, 2011; Sanger et al., 2012; Squires et al., 2013).

Moreover, according to Watson and Bellon-Harn (2013), lack of educator

knowledge and training left educators wondering what areas were appropriate for the SLP

to address. The role of the SLP in schools today requires role-definition and cross

disciplinary training necessary to make the learning community a coherent success

(Watson & Bellon-Harne, 2013). Teachers who haven't worked closely with the speech

therapist may not know the potential contribution of the SLP's services. Administrative

support would be necessary for the SLP and teacher to collaborate effectively during the

school day. Collaborative research and curriculum development would also assist in

developing successful approaches to language and literacy learning (Antoniazzi et al.,

2010). Collaboration is critical as found in the results of a study conducted by Sawyer

(2007). Further, the results of Sawyer's study indicated that SLPs need an opportunity to

have contact with teachers and time to collaborate with colleagues to maximize the

effectiveness of the SLP. Finally, successful collaboration among SLPs and teachers

generate communication friendly classrooms that enhance childrens' spoken and written

language learning. The downfall is that educators do not have the opportunity for PL or

time to develop the shared knowledge, perceptions, and attitudes required for effective collaboration (Wilson et al., 2015).

Increased Teacher Knowledge

Researchers proposed that enlightening teachers about the SLP would further promote the collaboration and opportunities for student success (Squires et al, 2013). Professional learning is an important part of the education realm for educators, therapists, and anyone involved in the learning community. Moats (2014) referred to special education teachers and SLPs as intervention specialists. His research delved into intervention specialists and their knowledge of reading instruction. The components of reading and language are essential components of education but in the overall picture not being adequately taught in the education of students. Moats (2014) indicated that the concept "all teachers of reading should share the basic set of concept with intervention specialists" (p. 88). According to Moats (2014), teachers should have the knowledge to teach reading and writing, include phonemic awareness, phonics, morphology, syntax, etc.; however, the teachers believed they were ill-prepared or did not have a good knowledge base for teaching the concepts. Teachers simply know as much or as little as their students concerning speech sounds in words, word structure, its relation to meaning or how to describe the parts of a sentence which belong in a speech therapist's area of expertise. Fortunately, these concepts are part of SLP's area of expertise. This expertise should allow the SLP an opportunity to be a valued resource to teachers who feel deficient in these areas. In addition, Moats offered strategies for teacher preparedness including PL for new teachers. He stated that a "once-over-lightly treatment is not

sufficient to prepare anyone for the challenges of teaching literacy to students" (2014, p. 84). This research revealed continuing and on-going education to target deficient areas of need will help teachers be aware of ways to educate students more effectively. Again, the SLP or intervention specialist, according to Moats, provides a valuable resource in these weak areas associated with reading and language. Additionally, a survey conducted in primary schools in Melborne, Australia was used to determine the attitudes of primary school educators towards the area of speech language pathology in general (Hopkins et al., 2015). In this study, teachers felt confident in identifying speech and language issues, but felt they needed more information and training in order to be more effective in identifying students who may be at-risk in this area.

Furthermore, the school principal may neither have the knowledge of the SLP's roles in RTI or the education setting nor be knowledgeable about the SLP's area of expertise (Watson & Bellon-Harne, 2013). There again, PL to increase educator knowledge would be beneficial. Professional learning is a valid strategy for increasing educator knowledge of the SLP's role and a strategy for helping expose teachers as well as the principal to the importance of the SLP in the education setting. The PL could include data and supporting evidence for the following: "(a) preventing inappropriate referrals, (b) increasing time for collaboration and common planning, (c) increasing prevention and interventions outside the IEP process, and (d) looking at students' speech and language weaknesses to verify they are true speech or language issues" (Friend et al., 2010, p. 239). Lack of educator knowledge was identified as a theme in my data analysis. Teachers simply felt that they did not know enough about the SLP or what areas

they address; a problem that left them at a disadvantage when trying to identify and design interventions for weaknesses of at-risk students.

A mixed methods study conducted by Sawyer (2007) used surveys and interviews to research supervision, evaluation, and professional development practices of school-based SLPs in Idaho. The results indicated that principals may lack an understanding of special education laws as well as the roles of special education professionals. The SLPs involved in the study revealed a lack of training offered for special education teachers and principals. The need for PL for teachers and principals to increase awareness in SLP practices and areas of expertise was noted. In addition, the consensus of the educators involved in the study suggested that school districts need to be committed to PL as a strategic part of the overall educational plan. Results of various studies showed that once administrators established a shared vision of what PL should look like, student intervention teams could collaborate, provide professional support, analyze student performance, and determine interventions (Whitten, Esteves, & Woodrow, 2009). These intervention teams would also aid in data-based decision making to address the needs of the students (Brown-Chidsey & Steege, 2010; Nellis, 2012). Additionally, instructional coaches were available to offer support to educators using modeling, observation, and most importantly, continuous feedback which has been proven to be lacking in PL environments (Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010). As a final point, when PL is implemented effectively using PL teams and administrator commitment, teacher growth, and positive student outcomes should be evident (Teemant, Wink, & Tyra, 2011).

Jacobson (2010) proposed partnering PL with teacher collaboration to achieve effective PL communities. He showed that common planning was an effective resource that schools are failing to make good use of which mirrors exactly the concerns expressed by the participants in my study. More recently, researchers conducted a pilot study in Australia to explore early childhood educators' (ECEs') perception of PL concerning their knowledge of child language acquisition and their confidence in that knowledge (Scarinci, Rose, Pee, & Webb, 2015). In 2003, a survey study indicated that about 450 ECEs received less than eight hours of training in normal speech and language development; however about 75% of the participants received no training at all (Letts & Hall, 2003). Scarinci's (2015) team of researchers believed that early childhood educators should have knowledge of language along with language stimulating strategies to facilitate language enriched development and increased awareness. This provides teachers with knowledge to better identify students who are having difficulties in language development and make appropriate referrals to the SLP. Educators noted useful tidbits of information provided to the ECEs were "useful in helping them identify children with potential speech and language difficulties" (Scarinci et al., 2015, p. 43). Participants in the in-service program increased their knowledge and confidence which was a promising outcome of the study according to Scarinci et al (2015).

Previously, Oberklaid and Drever (2011) found that knowledge of language acquisition and milestones impacted appropriate referrals of children to speech therapists. The knowledge allowed educators to match the stage of the child's language development to what is truly expected in each grade level and determine if the child's language is

delayed. The study also revealed that as educator confidence increases, underlying knowledge and skills increase which allows educators to feel more confident in referring students to the SLP. Spencer et al. (2008) found that challenges of teachers in areas of speech or language would be well supported through PL in the area of phonemic awareness. The team found that PL in other areas targeted by the SLP could be beneficial. Spencer et al. were surprised to learn that educators were not aware of many strategies for teaching phonemic analysis to their students and called for more PL involving the SLP. Professional development provided by the SLP can increase awareness of many areas of language of which phonemic awareness is just a small part (Spencer et al., 2008). As well, educators who have increased knowledge have been found to invest more effort in actually practicing applicable language acquisition skills in the learning environment (Stormont, Reinke, & Herman, 2011).

Leeson, Campbell-Barr, and Ho (2012) found that as ECEs received more training and education concerning speech and language milestones and acquisition, their confidence increased in areas of promoting language development in students and contributing more comfortably in providing high quality education to students. Educational programs that are efficient and cost effective are "indeed needed at this time when many children attend long hours of childcare." (Lesson, Campbell-Barr, & Ho, 2012, p. 48). In addition, the potential of SLP-led in-service education programs can justly equip educators with strategies for helping increase knowledge of language development (Scarinci, et al., 2015). The opportunity for SLPs to share expertise about instructional language strategies and interventions through PL appeared to enhance

educators' teaching practices which in turn increased success of language impaired students who were in mainstream classrooms (Starling et al., 2012). However, the time necessary for PL may prevent educators from being able to attend multiple sessions due to other commitments in the learning environment. There again, PL to increase educator knowledge would be beneficial to the success of the learning community.

SLPs wear many hats; therefore need time allotted for various activities during the school day. These activities include but are not limited to assessments, interventions, planning, meetings, consultation with teachers and parents, along with attending professional development and "assuming leadership roles in schools" (ASHA, 2010, p. 34). An aspect of a South African research study (Wium & Louw, 2011, 2013) was that SLPs in South Africa work as part of the school community; therefore share information with parents through presentations and collaborate effectively with educators in the learning community through PL sessions. Time management and availability continue to be at the forefront of challenges preventing effective collaboration. Additionally, in another study conducted by Navsaria, Pascoe, and Kathard (2011) in South African schools reiterated that negative long-term effects of student outcomes have been linked to limited PL support received in schools. SLPs have the expertise and knowledge to assist with communication difficulties of all kinds whether written or verbal language. According to Navsaria et al., it was argued that speech therapists should be involved in supporting teachers and learners through communication. However in order to propose interventions relevant to the needs areas, an in-depth understanding of teachers' perspectives and awareness was required. One of the issues resulting from the research

of Navsaria, Pascoe, and Kathard (2011) indicated a lack of training and support for teachers. The participants in the study did not feel they had the skills to reinforce or development interventions for the needs of the students nor a true understanding of the SLP's potential as a resource. Study participants needed improved teaching strategies to target needs of the students in the study. Updated training would help improve the areas lacking and may progress towards adequate teaching and teacher knowledge. Finally, in this study, eight main barriers were identified. Of the barriers, teachers having received insufficient training to support all learners and lack of resources were the top two. However, in addition to those barriers, Navsaria, Pascoe, and Kathard pointed out that there was a need for speech therapists in South African schools. The researchers also pointed out that SLPs would be a benefit to the learning teams in schools, could promote change, and enhance literacy and learning if involved. SLPs would also help with decisions for professional learning, collaborate with teachers, provide early language support, assist with planning and teaching of language lessons, and help promote an overall understanding of the importance of *total* communication in the educational setting (Navsaria et al., 2011).

Milburn et al. (2015) conducted a study that investigated the benefits of classroom coaching by the SLP as part of an emergent literacy professional development program designed to enhance educators' knowledge of phonological awareness. Coaching provides an opportunity for the speech therapist and educators to work together to develop strategies to target specific needs of at-risk students. The coaching model emphasizes "mutual respect, collaboration, and professional empowerment" (Cornett &

Knight, 2009, p. 199). The results of Milburn's study revealed a combination of coaching and professional development workshops were most beneficial. The students involved in the experimental group participated in discussions with teachers or were involved in more phonological awareness talk throughout the study; therefore the interaction of the SLP and teacher along with the strategies developed helped increase the knowledge and awareness of the students by creating an enriched learning environment (Milburn et al, 2015). Another study conducted in six self-contained pre-school classrooms for students with disabilities, used coaching as a part of PL. Two early education teams were designed with one receiving PL and coaching and the other receiving no support following the training. For the purpose of the study, coaching took on voluntary collaboration that used evaluation and supervision to develop trusting relationships between the participants. The relationships promoted self-assessment that led teachers to rally for "self-discovery, problem solving, and collaboration after the professional development took place" (Wilson, Dykstra, Watson, Boyd, & Crais, 2012, p. 99). Coaching allows for ongoing support and collaboration between teacher-participants. Positive outcomes included an increase in team collaboration, ongoing support rather than one-time contact during the study, and an increase in professional accountability. A few disadvantages such as lack of collaboration and lack of resources emerged as well. Increased collaboration requires more time for the team to collaborate, but that time was difficult to schedule. In addition, the team desired more support from administration. For this, administration may need to find outside funding and/or partnerships that could provide resources to enhance the coaching process. Increased

resources would lessen time constraints and increase time for common planning and collaboration (Wilson et al., 2012).

Information provided through research indicated that not only general education educators needed to participate actively in professional learning, but so do SLPs who work in the schools. Because of involvement in the educational planning for students, SLPs are oftentimes asked to adopt new policies and/or practices. Training usually has been *one-size fits all* but in our data driven world of today, one-size fits all is not always the best option. Professional learning should be data-driven and designed to increase student outcomes. Most PL does not include follow-up for any length of time after the initial information sharing sessions. Information is provided with no follow-up or tracking for success or failure. According to Murza and Ehren (2015), PL should be "focused, ongoing, supported, and evaluated" (p. 182) for optimum possibility of improving student outcomes. Graner, Ault, Mellard, and Gingerich (2012) also agreed moving PL away from a one-time session because it is not an effective use of time, money, knowledge, or resources. The research by Gusky (2005, 2015) set the stage for high quality PL that required professionals to "change their thoughts, beliefs, and practices" (Murza & Ehren, 2015, p. 183). Hall and Hord's (2015) research also reiterated that high quality innovative PL will help with positive student outcomes. Their ideas advocated tools to assess SLP's involvement in the PL, manage collaboration, thoughts and feelings towards the PL, and evaluate the effectiveness of the PL itself for promotion of overall improved student outcomes.

In addition to researchers promoting the need for professional development with employed professionals, research conducted with college students in the final year, involved in student teaching in the educational setting, provided results that indicated the need for more collaboration and professional learning during the collegiate years. Professional learning of this type would better prepare future educators and speech pathologists for actual practice in the educational setting (Wilson et al., 2015). The online survey study conducted by Wilson, et al. provided student teachers and SLPs practicing in the education setting for their final year of college an opportunity to participate in pre-service inter-professional education and training to help foster a better understanding of each other's area of expertise. Results of the study indicated that more opportunities for on-site PL for student teachers immersed in the education setting could prove beneficial for collaborative instruction to enhance students' language and literacy success as well as enhance cross discipline knowledge and expertise (Wilson et al., 2015).

The research promoting the SLP's involvement with educators in the educational setting continues to be limited; however when researching themes revealed in my data analysis, much of the favorable research I found was conducted outside the United States. The research presented here offers for PL projects to be implemented in the elementary school setting. The target of these PL projects should be to increase educator awareness in the areas of language to include but not be limited to phonemic awareness, syntax, semantics, etc., along with the components of speech and speech acquisition. This knowledge would allow educators to create a *cheat sheet* if you will for developing

interventions, knowing when to collaborate with the SLP, and ideas for strategies for appropriate referrals to the SLP through RTI. In conclusion, I believe the research presented supports the findings of my study and will be beneficial for social change in the elementary school learning community.

<div align="center">**The Project: Professional Learning Workshop**</div>

I elected to create a 3-day professional learning program as the project for this qualitative study. I created the PL program to address the themes discovered in the data analyses. The project provides information about the SLP to educators at any grade level, but for this study group, kindergarten through fifth grade teachers, reading specialists, and administrators are included. The project provides information to enhance knowledge about what the SLP does on a daily basis, the realm of speech and language that the SLP works with each day, and information that provides educators with background in all of the areas of language that impacts a student in the educational setting. I designed a 3-day PowerPoint presentation to include activities that enhance educator knowledge, provide strategies for identification of at-risk speech or language students, review handy handouts for reference, and identify and discuss links for further information.

Day One

The first day of the workshop will cover the roles and responsibilities of the SLP as well as the importance of collaboration between the SLP and classroom teachers (Appendix A). The presentation will begin with an overview of the roles and responsibilities of the SLP. Teachers will learn the SLP is a resource to seek out for prevention, assessment, and intervention of students who may demonstrate speech and

language problems. I also addressed the importance of collaboration between the SLP and classroom teacher because the SLP works in partnership with others, especially classroom teachers, to meet students' needs. The SLP will work not only with students and school professionals, but also with the families of students in order to make sure parents can deliver interventions and assistance in the home environment.

Day Two

I discuss impairments and interventions during the second day of the workshop, covering different impairments children may demonstrate, symptoms associated with specific impairments, and the treatments and interventions used to assist students who have speech and language difficulties (Appendix A). The presentation will begin with how to identify the different types of impairments students may demonstrate in the school setting and the respective treatments. After a discussion of the three most common impairments and their interventions, a video showing students getting assistance from the SLP in a therapy setting will be viewed. I explain articulation, language, and fluency impairments as well as voice disorders. Teachers will learn what to look for in a student who may have impairments, the causes and/or dangers of each, and specific interventions for students who have the specific struggles. At the end, a brief discussion of what teachers can do when initially noticing students who may struggle with articulation, language or fluency.

Day Three

The last day of the workshop encompasses the RTI process and the role of the teacher in the process (Appendix A). Teachers will learn of indicators in identifying

students who are at-risk for speech and language difficulties and how to assist them through the RTI referral process and in the classroom. Knowledge of developmental indicators would give teachers the ability to identify speech and language issues seen in the classroom, therefore increasing referrals and decreasing the wait-time for providing students with assistance in the areas of speech and language. Tier 2 interventions – student assistance that is provided at any time by the teacher – will be presented as a means of helping teachers assist students in the classroom, or at any time, prior to the start of SLP services. The intervention is a form of progress monitoring where the teacher works with speech and language students 2-3 times a week for a minimum of three weeks, recording data on speech and language students from at least one session per week. Data collected from the intervention goes to the SLP who will help teachers in determining next steps. At that point, the teacher and SLP collaborate to determine appropriate services and interventions for students. Lastly, I will distribute a number of handouts related to the particulars discussed as reference for identification, intervention, and data collection.

Project Description

A professional learning workshop was prepared to provide kindergarten through fifth grade teachers, reading specialists, and administrators with knowledge, skills and techniques toward identification and assistance with students who are at-risk for speech and language deficiencies. In order for elementary educators to attend the 3-day workshop, allotted time and space needs to be provided during in-service days, preferably those workdays at the beginning or end of the school year. A request to provide the PL

workshop should be presented to school administrators as appropriate; requests may be accepted by administrators at specific times of the year, per school policies or specific to the time of year in-service workdays occur. Educators wishing to implement the 3-day workshop should check with their school policies and/or administrator to learn of request deadlines.

Following is a discussion of support and materials needed to implement the 3-day workshop as well as potential barriers and solutions for addressing potential barriers during the implementation of the workshop. Once secured, the SLP and presenting educator should collaborate on the role and responsibilities of each during the 3-day workshop.

Support and Materials

The superintendent of the school system fully supports this project; however will approve a time and place for the PL to take place. As part of the PL workshop, the SLP should be available to attend. Although the SLP is not needed for the entire workshop to take place, any of the workshop days would be acceptable and helpful for attending and presenting to teachers. The attached Power Points are necessary, one for each of the 3 days. Accompanying handouts specific to each day's presentation are provided along with the evaluation forms that include the Satisfaction Instrument and Implementation Survey (Appendix A).

Potential Barriers and Solutions

Potential barriers may exist in not only scheduling the 3-day workshop but also recruiting attendees for the workshop. To address any scheduling conflicts that may

arise, presenters should check with school administrators to ensure there are consecutive in-service days that can accommodate the 3-day workshop. If only one day can be secured, presenters should work with the school's SLP to modify the 3-day workshop into a one-day presentation, to include the most significant points. All handouts and surveys should still be provided to attending teachers during the workshop, regardless of material presented.

Another potential barrier is acquiring attendees. As in-service days typically include several workshops that teachers can choose from, elementary educators may find other workshops to be more appropriate to their needs. One solution to conflicting workshops may be to try to schedule the workshop on days when (1) no other workshops are being provided or (2) a non-RTI workshop is being provided. Despite scheduling conflicts, it still may be a challenge for all kindergarten through fifth grade elementary educators at the school to attend. To ensure attendees from each grade level, seek out each grade level teacher to request or seek recommendations for a grade level representative to attend the workshop. By doing so, at least each grade level will be represented at the workshop, and take workshop materials back to their grade level meeting and share with their respective educators.

Project Evaluation Plan

To evaluate the effectiveness of the project created from my study; both formative and outcomes-based surveys will be administered. Effective PL evaluations require the collection and analysis of the five critical levels of information: participants' reactions; participants' learning; organization support and change; participants' use of skills and

knowledge; and student learning outcomes (Guskey, 2000). With each succeeding level, the process of gathering evaluation information gets a bit more complex. Because each level builds on those that come before, success at one level is usually necessary for success at higher levels (Guskey, 2000). The goal of the SLP PL workshop is to provide knowledge, skills, and techniques that will aid teachers in identifying students who are at risk in areas of phonemic awareness, speech, language, components of reading, and other speech and language deficiencies. To ensure the workshop is well received and able to be implemented by teachers, an evaluation of the workshop and subsequent implementation of skills and knowledge learned from the workshop is necessary. The evaluation questions addressed include:

- What are the outcomes of the SLP workshops for teachers and students, including effects on teacher knowledge, pedagogical practice, and attitudes?

- How do these outcomes come about—both during the workshops themselves and through the processes by which teachers use or adapt the workshop methods and materials for their classrooms?

- What are the barriers to the use of concepts, materials, and methods from the workshops?

At the end of the 3-day PL workshop and incorporated into the final minutes of the third day, workshop participants will complete the Satisfaction Instrument (Appendix A). Findings from this survey will confirm whether the workshop was well-prepared, well-conducted, and applicable to educators when used in a classroom setting. After educators have had time in the classroom to implement knowledge, skills, and techniques obtained

from the SLP workshop, a follow-up evaluation, the Implementation Survey (Appendix A), will be provided for completion to kindergarten through fifth grade teachers who attended the workshop. The Implementation Survey (Appendix A) measures changes in behavior as a result of professional development, providing feedback on whether teachers could in fact implement knowledge, skills, and techniques acquired from attending the 3-day SLP workshop.

Project Implications

From the implementation of this 3-day PL project, kindergarten through fifth grade elementary educators, reading specialists and administrators will have greater awareness of the roles and responsibilities of the SLP within educational realm. Information concerning how to identify and assist students in the classroom who are at-risk for speech and language deficiencies and how the SLP is involved the RTI process are presented. With the knowledge obtained from the PL, students needing SLP services can be identified more accurately and possibly more often. Educators will be able to assist speech and language students when in the classroom, provide follow-up support to SI students. Most importantly, collaboration between teachers and the SLP can improve. A collaborative schedule may be developed which would involve specific times for the SLP to collaborate with teachers and administrators through RTI. This collaboration would allow the SLP to build a rapport with the elementary learning community and could be used to monitor consistency of implementation of strategies from the professional learning unit. Another result of the implementation of the PL project is effective involvement of the SLP of the RTI process. Students needing speech and

language support will have greater and more frequent assistance from the SLP and teachers toward improving speech and language abilities as well as overall academic achievement.

The effective implementation of RTI not only benefits students but schools and districts overall. The RTI process has been implemented in many states, but some states have implemented a 4-tier program rather than 3-tier (Samuels, 2009). In the United States, the fourth Tier is considered the referral tier where students are referred for special education testing. Currently, this is the tier where the SLP becomes involved. Through an effective RTI process, as described by the implementation of the 3-day workshop, social change should occur. Administrators of elementary schools would be more aware of the benefits of the SLP and have increased awareness that helps identify students in need of strategies in the areas the SLP addresses. The success of the PL project provides for increased elementary educator and administrator awareness in addition to increased SLP and teacher collaboration. Moreover, the success of this increased awareness could carry over into to schools and districts provided funding for the continued implementation of early intervention programs continued (Priddy, 2010).

Summary

In summary, information contained in section 3 explains the PL project designed for this study. The project was designed as a way to increase awareness and knowledge about the SLP. SLPs work in the educational setting and are a part of the learning community. However, at times educators do not know how to involve the speech therapist or what exactly they can do to help with students. The project was designed to

highlight what the SLP does and what kind of resources the SLP can provide to classroom teachers and administrators. The project provides strategies for identifying students who are struggling with speech or language, stuttering, or oral communication in general. The educators receive ideas for designing interventions to help address these concerns when involved in RTI, guidance for referring a student for RTI interventions in the areas of speech or language, and specifics on what the SLP is able to target.

The literature review in this section highlights the themes in the data which include the need for collaboration, increased communication, increased teacher knowledge, and an overall understanding of the SLP. The search for literature to support these areas was extensive as there continues to be limited research associating the SLP to these areas in the education setting; hence the need for this study. In addition to the literature review, an evaluation plan was developed to assess what educators learn from the workshop. The purpose of this project was to provide educators with a resource, reference if you will, for identifying students at-risk in the areas that the SLP addresses and is knowledgeable about. The overall goal of this project is for educators to walk away with an understanding of how the SLP, as an involved member of the learning community, provides consistent and effective services in the educational setting.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to discover teacher and administrator perceptions of the role of the SLP in the educational setting of a local elementary school. The SLP can be a resource to help with early interventions the student needs if teachers are aware of what the SLP's role in identifying and serving students with speech and language problems. In this current study, I sought to determine the extent of teacher understanding of what the SLP does in the educational setting in hopes of improving the effectiveness of the SLP's involvement in education.

Findings from the study showed that elementary educators perceive the SLP to be a potential resource who works together and communicates with teachers on the progress of students with speech and language issues. However, despite regular communication, study results showed these educators would like more time with the SLP to learn more about what the SLP does, and about SLP resources that can be used in the classroom to further assist, identify, and progress students with speech and language issues. Participants suggest the potential usefulness of a resource guide or *cheat sheet* of speech and language strategies, pointers, and identification factors that they could use not only in the classroom, but also to help in the identification of students potentially needing SLP services, thereby leading to the more effective use of the SLP.

Potential Strengths

According the ASHA, SLPs area of expertise extends from communication disorders to include issues with language, articulation, fluency, resonance/voice, and

swallowing (ASHA, 2010). The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2010) defines the role of a SLP in the schools as one who collaborates with teachers, special educators, and parents to develop and implement IEPs, which target the specific speech and language needs of students. Results of my study showed that elementary educators understand the role of the SLP as a resource, one who serves students with speech and language deficits and works with teachers to assist those students in the classroom. These findings revealed the defined roles of SLP, although participants would like to know more about the SLP role to more effectively assist students in the RTI process. As Ehren (2005) suggested, and as this study confirms, teachers are not using the SLP as much as they could be. A lack of education and awareness of the SLP's expertise contributes to a lack of collaboration because the teacher may not realize the severity of the student's problem, or that the problem is directly related to the SLP's area of expertise (Fuchs et al., 2012; Fuchs & Vaughn, 2012). Findings from my study extend knowledge in the area of understanding of the role of the SLP and SLP services; elementary educators know the SLP to be a resource, but desire more knowledge to fully utilize their services.

Based on research by Jacobson (2010), collaborative practices increase the effectiveness of the learning community by adding high levels of leadership direction and collaborative expertise. The data I collected showed collaboration between the SLP, schools leaders, and teachers is lacking and needs improvement to be considered an effective practice. Participants perceived the need for more time with the SLP, such as a common planning period or the SLP's attendance of weekly data meetings, as a means of increasing collaboration between the SLP and teachers. Previous researchers have shown

that administrators have not seen lack of time as a problem (Jacobson, 2012), but educator responses in my study show time as an issue. Based on my findings, administrators should acknowledge that teachers have great insight into how to better collaborate with the SLP in effectively serving students who may need speech and language services. Teacher perceptions I gathered in this study resonate with findings from Spielvogle (2010), who found that collaboration is the "key to success for SLPs, teachers" (p. 38) and other members of the learning community.

While study results showed that time for collaboration is an issue, findings also showed that teachers and the SLP do in fact collaborate. Participants shared that the SLP and teachers work together to assist students with speech and language problems. The collaboration may take the form of sharing lesson plans to keep students working on the same material as they would if in class, or of a brief conversation about the progress of speech and language students. Contrary to research, that teacher collaboration is often overlooked (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006), the educator perceptions I gathered indicated the importance of collaboration and involvement of SLPs in the RTI process for students. Additionally, participants revealed that collaboration exists between teachers and the SLP, confirming the research of Friend et al. (2010) that teachers should have collaborative discussions about speech and language students regarding academic weaknesses and student needs, targeting areas applicable to the students' weaknesses. Educators in my study only wished for more time to collaborate, which would improve the sharing of knowledge and expertise to achieve success with students (see Friend et al., 2010).

Ehren et al. (2006) found that teachers rarely ask SLPs to consult on students' language issues identified through RTI. My study findings showed that teachers communicate with the SLP on a regular basis, seeking out the SLP with any questions and having small conversations as the SLP picks up speech and language students from class. These findings contradict those of Ehren et al. (2006), but align with those of Allington (2008) who stated that as teachers, "we have to understand and ask the questions about what we are doing or not doing, rather than asking what is wrong with the child" (p.5). Participants did not share whether they did in fact discuss what is wrong with a specific student, but teachers indicated they felt comfortable seeking out the SLP to ask questions.

I also found that participants desired more communication via email. Email provides opportunities to discuss the progress of students, and to share resources for teachers to use in the classroom. More email communication could minimize the need for more time with the SLP. Email communication could be a means of providing resources, activities, strategies, and website links to online programs and activities that teachers may not have access to in the classroom. Research and developmental indicators are typically found on association sites that are limited to members only (ASHA, 2010), therefore teachers would not have access to desired information, or may not know where to access information because they are not in the field of speech pathology. Findings from the study are similar to those in existing research concerning the need for ongoing communication between teachers and the SLP.

Moats (2015) offered strategies for teacher preparedness including PL for new teachers, but stated that a "once-over-lightly treatment is not sufficient to prepare anyone for the challenges of teaching literacy to students" (p. 84). Educator perceptions I collected in this study showed the need for more knowledge of strategies and the role of the SLP in identifying and assisting students with speech and language deficits. The use of a *cheat sheet* or resource guide to help teachers target deficient or areas of need was mentioned by teachers as a means of helping teachers identify and support SLP services when students are in the classroom. This finding is in agreement with Stormont et al. (2011) that educators who have increased knowledge will invest more effort in actually practicing applicable language acquisition skills in the learning environment; teachers wanted the knowledge of language acquisition skills in order to apply it in the classroom environment. My findings are also comparable to other research on knowledge of acquisition milestones; as part of the *cheat sheet,* teachers wanted to learn developmental indicators to better identify and assist students with speech and language problems. As found by Oberklaid and Drever (2011), knowledge of language acquisition and milestones impacts appropriate referrals of children to speech therapists. This knowledge allows educators to match the stage of the child's language development to what is truly expected in each grade level in order to determine if the child's language is delayed. The result would be increased knowledge and skills, which would allow educators to feel more confident in referring students to the SLP.

Participants also mentioned the use of in-service days as a means of gaining time with the SLP and increasing knowledge of SLP services and resources. Educators in my

study saw the benefits of time spent on SLP information and with the SLP during in-service programs, and identified this time as an opportunity to increase their knowledge of language development. This finding parallels and extends existing research on the benefits of continued learning and professional development. As Spencer et al. (2008) found, PL provided by the SLP can increase teacher awareness of many areas of language. Hall (2008) also found that PL on effective use of materials and programs would enhance teachers' knowledge of interventions and benefits of the SLP. Educators in my study felt that they did not know enough about SLPs and the areas they address--a problem that left them at a disadvantage when trying to identify and design interventions for weaknesses the SLP could help with. Study findings match up to the beliefs of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC, 2006) that for RTI to be successful, classroom teachers need to be adequately trained to identify students who have speech, language, or phonics difficulties, and to then promptly refer those students to the SLP for appropriate interventions, which in turn should increase student success and achievement.

Limitations of the Study

The participants chosen for this project study included administrators, reading specialists, and classroom teachers from kindergarten through fifth grades in one elementary school in the southeastern United States where the RTI process has been implemented. With administrators among the sample, some bias may exist in their responses because of their expectations of what the role of SLP should be in assisting students and teachers, rather than what the SLP actually does with students and teachers. The procedures I used in the study may also limit study findings. My use of one data

source, individual interviews, rather than multiple sources, may limit study findings. Including focus group interviews of other grade-level teachers and/or administrators at the participating schools and observations at times of student pull-outs, may have provided additional themes and findings. The additional sources would have also provided greater triangulation of data. As part of the data analysis process, I asked the Talented and Gifted (TAG) teacher to review the analysis, themes, and interpretations of the results because she is familiar with the SLP's area of expertise. The TAG teacher's interpretations contributed to the quality of the research, but may have introduced bias. Similarly, I have worked with most of the participants in the study and have an amicable relationship with them. Despite making all efforts to eliminate bias during the interpretation of results, some bias may exist.

Recommendations

Additional research extended from the current study could add to the existing literature on RTI interventions. The current study results are based on a sample of administrators, specialists and teachers within a local elementary school. Conducting the same study using a sample of grade-level teachers only from that same school may provide more accurate perceptions of the instructional and collaborative role the SLP plays in assisting students and teachers during the RTI process. Similarly, the use of focus groups in addition to individual interviews may generate additional findings not presented by the current study. Conversely, a study conducted with SLP staff only could provide insight on what their perceptions of teacher knowledge of SLP and the RTI process are in determining whether perceptions among teachers and SLP are similar.

Conducting the same study in low-performing or underachieving elementary schools that have an SLP program would also contribute to learning whether the knowledge, collaboration, and communication between teachers and SLP is consistent with findings from the participating elementary school of the current study. These schools are required by the government to meet educational targets in order to receive additional funding; therefore, an increase in educator knowledge would be beneficial in helping meet the targets. Also, understanding collaboration and communication between teachers and the SLP in this environment can benefit the existing literature on the role of the SLP within RTI.

Lastly, I conducted my study in the county where I currently work as an SLP, but not in the same elementary school where I practice. Having someone who works outside this school system associated with my study could minimize or eliminate any bias that may exist in the collection and analysis of data. Interpretation of results may differ and/or provide additional insight to teacher perceptions of the SLP and SLP services during the RTI process.

Scholarship and Project Development

As the researcher and project developer, I discovered that educators have minimal knowledge about the SLP and many struggle with the purpose of the SLP in the educational setting. My study examined elementary school teachers', reading specialists', and administrators' perceptions of the SLP's role in the schools and in the RTI process. Based on study results, these elementary educators perceived the SLP to be a resource for teachers but need additional knowledge of speech and language

deficiencies and resources to assist students with such problems in the classroom.

Classroom strategies and activities used by teachers with the assistance of the SLP could

help progress students through the RTI process more effectively than relying solely on

the strategies provided by the SLP. Additional knowledge of speech and language issues

could also assist classroom teachers adequately identify at-risk students in the areas of

language, speech, and phonics. Recommended by a few participants, a *cheat sheet* of

strategies and identification factors for speech and language issues should be considered

for teachers. Knowledge of pointers, developmental factors, strategies, and activities that

could be implemented in the classroom for students with speech and language issues

would help teachers identify students potentially needing services as well as further the

progress of students with speech and language issues rather than through the SLP alone.

The *cheat sheet* would be a means of increasing knowledge and collaboration between

teachers and SLP and in turn, contributing to an effective RTI process.

In addition to a desire for more knowledge, teachers agreed that a lack of time

with the SLP during the school day was a concern. Time constraints among elementary

school teachers, staff, and administrators are typical and schedules of each can vary.

Although attendance by the SLP to weekly teacher meetings may not be possible on a

regular basis, the use of in-service and conference days to schedule meetings between

teachers and the SLP would be beneficial. Additionally, weekly email correspondence

could provide a communication piece that allows teachers more time to collaborate

indirectly with the SLP. Increased communication through more informal meetings

could improve the instructional and professional practice between educators, contributing

to a more effective involvement of the SLP. The overall process of conducting this study

was very enlightening because I realized that educators do want to work with the SLP,

but do not know how, when, or where to make this happen. I hope that this project will

help address educators' questions and concerns and allow the learning community to

work together as a team to integrate the SLP into the educational setting.

Leadership and Change

My study showed that elementary educators see the SLP as a resource and use the

SLP to the extent they know how. In addition, educators need increased knowledge to

recognize weaknesses in the areas of speech and language and to successfully recognize

services they can offer. This knowledge would increase collaboration, communication,

and mutual understanding between elementary educators and SLPs. Increased

knowledge leads to a combination effort for effective and ongoing interventions for

students with speech and language issues, aiding in their academic success. RTI is a

program intended to provide students with interventions that can help them achieve

academically. As educators develop the appropriate interventions, knowledge of the

areas to target continues to be most helpful. As a final point, my study revealed

educators want to make efforts to change the practices typical of elementary school

settings but in addition seek to make efforts to improve student learning

Elementary school educators are charged with providing students with necessary

curricula while at the same time monitoring student needs and/or issues that may impact

students' academic abilities in later grades. Efforts demonstrated in my study to increase

knowledge and collaboration within the learning community could lead to positive social

change in elementary educational settings. Knowledge of developmental indicators in the

areas of speech and language would give teachers the ability to identify issues seen in the

classroom, therefore increasing referrals and decreasing the wait-time of providing

students with speech and language assistance. The results of this study indicate that

increasing knowledge and awareness of what the SLP does on a daily basis and the type

of resource the SLP can be certainly creates an environment for positive social change. If

administrators buy into my project, educators in all settings would recognize the benefit

of the SLP. In addition, increased awareness would allow educators the opportunity to

improve the identification process for RTI as well as increase the effectiveness of

interventions for students. The SLP is a valid resource for helping this improvement to

come to fruition. A positive and effective learning environment for students is one where

educators within that environment want to make changes for the benefit of the students.

Results of my study show the participating elementary school as an example of such a

learning environment and one that other elementary schools view as a model for creating

an effective learning community for students; therefore providing positive social change

for educators, reading support specialists, administrators, and the overall learning

community.

Analysis of Self as Scholar, Practitioner, and Project Developer

I have always been a scholar as I have spent a lifetime pursuing advanced

educational degrees and learning from the students I serve. I continued to follow the

scholarly path as I took the final step in my educational pursuit to obtain my doctoral

degree in the field of educational leadership. This pursuit has been very challenging and

difficult, taking years to accomplish. Before I began my research study, I did not fully

comprehend the intensity of such a pursuit. As a practitioner-scholar, I expanded my

knowledge of how to utilize the web to locate sites that were suitable and reliable for

scholarly research related to my topic. In addition, I learned the type of journals to look

for and what constituted *scholarly research*. As a scholar, I had the opportunity to learn

from my professors' knowledge, guidance, and expertise along with growing as a lifelong

student, educator, and speech language pathologist. The knowledge I obtained from

research helped me further understand that SLPs' are regarded as part of the learning

community but oftentimes misunderstood by educators who have limited knowledge of

the SLP's purpose in the schools. My research of scholarly work broadened my

knowledgebase and helped me understand how to interpret the information and use it to

substantiate my study and its purpose. The essential concept of scholarly learning is to

think and plan with the end of your project in mind (Fullan, 2014). As I reflect on what I

have learned and how it has made me become a more acute scholar, I realize that my

chair and committee members always encouraged and expected me to be a critical

thinker, evaluator, data collector, and data analyst throughout this process. In the data

analysis, I grew in my knowledge of organization and categorization of the data

collected. I have become more inept in social interaction skills that will help in my

continued endeavor as a lifelong learner. As a university scholar, I have learned to think

more critically, analyze arguments and assumptions I encountered during my research,

and build my knowledge base to create a deeper understanding of the world and myself.

I believe that becoming a successful practitioner through the research, data collection,

and data analysis, has allowed me an opportunity to become more familiar with those

areas and able to rationalize and discuss the information gained in a way that will help

educators understand the value of a SLP in the school system. Finally, my

accomplishments allow me to share what I have learned throughout this journey with my

peers, colleagues, and prospective students who want to enter the world of education

whether as a student, teacher, or SLP. My advanced degree will allow me to continue to

be a role model to my colleagues and students and affect social change in my educational

community.

Reflections on the Importance of Work

As I reflect on the work that has gone into my pursuit of this higher degree, I

wonder if it has truly been worth it. Since I began my journey, I have experienced so

many hurdles with this task and in my life in general that caused me to think that I would

never make it to this stage in the doctoral process, but here I am. When I originally

choose a topic, Response-to-Intervention was new and was challenging the identification

and eligibility of potential speech students so that was my target. However, throughout

my journey, suggestions and guidance from professors, teachers, etc., altered my topic to

center more on what I was responsible for in the education realm. In addition, how I

could help educators have a better understanding of what I do in the educational setting,

thus hopefully in the grand scheme of things, having some positive impact on RTI.

My struggles with research and the fact that there was little to no research out

there concerning perceptions of educators towards the SLP, reiterated the fact that

research needed to be done! Eventually, I was able to find research that was in some way

related to my topic, but I had to branch out into related areas to saturate my literature reviews. I would not say that I am the greatest skilled researcher, but I gave it my best shot. In addition to the literature review challenges, time management has been my ultimate uphill battle. All in all, however, I believe I have improved my research skills, learned more about analyzing data, applying analyses to my study, and determining the impact of those analyses on my job in the learning community. Developing a professional learning project helped me become more aware of the specifics of my job as a SLP that teachers are not aware of and enabled me to increase educator knowledge concerning the world of speech. Overall, this journey has been a learning experience that I believe has made me more aware of education in general and enhanced my ability to impact others as a leader, scholar, and a well-rounded educated professional.

Implications, Applications and Directions for Future Research

Implications

The current study showed that participating elementary educators recognize the SLP as a resource and use them to the extent they know how. Also, to successfully assist students through the RTI process, teachers, administrators, and support staff, require, more knowledge of SLP's potential as a resource. This knowledge would in turn increase collaboration, communication, and mutual understanding between elementary educators and the SLP; the result would be effective identification, creation of appropriate interventions, and knowledge of the RTI process. Enhanced knowledge allows educators to target at-risk students in varying areas thereby increasing their academic successes. Based on information revealed in my study, as educators make efforts to improve student

learning, efforts to change the typical elementary practices in school settings also occur creating positive results for students.

Elementary school educators are charged with providing students with necessary curricula while at the same time monitoring student needs and/or issues that may impact students' academic abilities in later grades. Efforts demonstrated in my study to increase knowledge and collaboration within the learning community could lead to positive social change in elementary educational settings. Knowledge of developmental indicators would give teachers the ability to identify speech and language issues seen in the classroom, therefore increasing referrals and decreasing the wait-time of providing students with speech and language assistance. A positive and effective learning environment for students is one where educators within that environment want to make changes for the benefit of the students. Results of my study show the participating elementary school as an example of such a learning environment and one that other elementary schools should view as a model for creating an effective and positive learning community for students and teachers alike.

Applications

The current study examined elementary teachers', reading specialists', and administrators' perceptions of the SLP's role in the educational setting. Based on study results, these elementary educators perceived the SLP to be a resource for teachers. Educators expressed the need for additional knowledge of speech and language concepts and available resources in order to assist students with such problems in the classroom. Strategies and activities used by teachers during classroom lessons could assist the SLP

in their work with students, moving students through the RTI process more effectively than if relying solely on the work provided by the SLP. Additional knowledge of potential speech and language issues could also assist classroom teachers in more adequately identifying at-risk students in the areas of language, speech, and phonics. Recommended by a few participants, a *cheat sheet* of strategies and identification factors for speech and language issues should be considered for teachers. Knowledge of "pointers," developmental factors, strategies, and activities that could be used in the classroom for students with speech and language issues would help teachers in identifying those potentially at-risk for SI services. The *cheat sheet* would be a means of increasing knowledge and collaboration between teachers and SLP and in turn, contributing to an effective RTI process.

Participants also identified the lack of time available to work with the SLP as a concern. Time constraints among elementary school teachers, staff, and administrators are typical and schedules can vary each day demanding more of educators. Although attendance by the SLP to weekly teacher meetings may not be possible on a regular basis, the use of in-service opportunities on conference days to schedule meetings between teachers and the SLP would be a benefit. Additionally, weekly email correspondence could provide a strategy for increasing communication between educators and the SLP. The SLP could indirectly assist teachers with questions or concerns if face-to-face time spent with the SLP was not possible. Increased communication via email or through face-to-face collaboration could improve the instructional and professional practice

between educators, contributing to a more effective RTI process and overall improved learning community.

Directions for Future Research

Additional research extended from my study could add to the existing literature on RTI interventions and SLP involvement. The results of my study emerged from a sample of administrators, specialists, and teachers within a local elementary school. Conducting the exact study using only a sample of grade level teachers from that same school may provide more accurate perceptions of the instructional and collaborative role of SLP in the educational setting. Similarly, the use of focus groups in addition to individual interviews may generate additional findings not presented by the current study. Conversely, a study conducted with SLP staff only could provide insight on what their perceptions are of teacher knowledge of SLP and the RTI process in determining whether perceptions among teachers and SLP are similar.

Conducting the same study in low-performing or underachieving elementary schools that have an SLP program would also contribute. The target would be to consider whether the knowledge, collaboration, and communication between teachers and the SLP are comparable with findings from my study. These schools are required by the governing agency to meet educational targets in order to receive additional funding; therefore, understanding, collaboration, and communication of and between teachers and the SLP in this environment can benefit the existing literature concerning the role of the SLP within the educational realm.

Lastly, I conducted this study in the participating elementary school that is in the local school district in which I work. I do not however work at the school that participated in the study. It would be interesting to discover the results of a different study conducted in the same school by an outside researcher to minimize or eliminate any bias that may have existed in the collection and analysis of data. Interpretation of results may differ and/or provide additional insight to teacher perceptions of the SLP and SLP involvement in the learning community.

Conclusions

Response-to-Intervention and the Speech and Language Pathologist are two educational entities involved in schools to assist at-risk students. RTI was created to address student needs through the use of evidence-based interventions as a means of preventing academic failure (Allington, 2008). The role of the SLP within the RTI process is to work with students who have been identified as at-risk of or having impairments in the areas of speech, language, fluency, or voice (ASHA, 2010). Because the SLP falls in the category of special education and because RTI is considered a *regular education* entity, SLPs are often out of the loop and not thought of as a valid resource for providing strategies for students in the regular education classroom (ASHA, 2006). This underutilization of the SLP limits the ability of the SLP to be an active and effective participant in RTI process and learning community as a whole, and as a result, impacting abilities, skills, and academic success of students needing SLP services.

In my study, I examined teacher perceptions to understand the involvement of the SLP and SLP services within a school where these services were not being used as

effectively as they could. Teacher understanding and involvement of the SLP within the

RTI process is important for the progress of students needing speech and language

services as well. My study results show that teachers, reading specialists, and

administrators view the SLP as a resource, serving students with speech and language

deficiencies as well as working with teachers to assist those same students in the

classroom. Despite knowledge of having this "resource," teachers would like to know

more about what the SLP does and availability of SLP resources that could be used by

teachers in the classroom. A better understanding of the SLP's role in the educational

setting results in a number of positive outcomes including increased collaboration and

communication and use of specific instructional strategies in the classroom by teachers

and the SLP. Increased educator knowledge also helps teachers design interventions for

students at-risk for speech and language deficits, and assists in the overall improvement

and progress of students in the academic setting.

My study revealed collaboration and communication between elementary

educators and the SLP exists, but not regularly. Teachers work together to assist students

with speech and language issues. However, educators expressed a desire for more time

with the SLP for discussing student data, monitoring student progress, and formulating

strategies used to follow-up with targets students are working on with the SLP assisting

with carryover of these targets into the classroom. Participants indicated a need for more

email communication as a means of increasing communication without taking additional

time from teachers or the SLP because time constraints are typical in the day-to-day

workings of an elementary educator. Although more time with the SLP would allow for

longer discussions about student needs and progress, the participating elementary school demonstrates an open-door style of collaboration and communication, where teachers and SLP can both informally drop in for a brief discussion. Elementary schools can benefit from this collaborative and communicative environment, and in turn so will their students. Further, additional communication can benefit students and teachers in learning environment.

Increased knowledge was an overall theme throughout the study. Time with the SLP would increase knowledge; however, time is limited among educators. The use of in-service days to spend time with the SLP is one means of gaining a better understanding of the SLP and their services as well as discovering strategies for assisting speech and language students in the classroom. Additionally, participants felt a *cheat sheet* with developmental indicators, resources, and tips for identifying and working with SLP students would give them the tools to assist SLP students in the classroom. This resource would also allow for early identification and referral of students to SLP for services, utilizing the SLP more effectively. Despite the underutilization of the SLP in the participating school, the participants demonstrated their desire to change this. These elementary educators desire more knowledge of the SLP that would improve active involvement of the SLP in the learning community; as a result, so would the developmental and academic abilities of their students. Elementary school learning communities would benefit as well if their educators take that same approach.

Further research on the utilization of the SLP in elementary schools can add to findings from the current study. The same study conducted with SLPs only to learn of

their perceptions of the utilization of their services could show whether perceptions

among SLPs are similar to those of elementary teachers and administrators. Extending

the study to low- or under-achieving schools is also recommended as those schools are

required by government to meet educational targets in order to receive additional funding

and therefore their understanding, collaboration and communication of and between

teachers and the SLP may differ. Results from different approaches on my study can also

add to the literature on SLP services within the RTI process. Learning about educator

perceptions of the SLP from different educator communities can contribute to the existing

literature on utilization of the SLP and as a result, benefit students within those

educational environments.

My study was conducted to provide awareness on teacher perceptions of the SLP

and what that role in the elementary school setting entails. Elementary educators

working with the SLP or other support staff within intervention programs can use the

results of this study to take a closer look at their own educational environment and

determine what is needed to utilize their support staff effectively.   The use of a *cheat*

sheet or resource guide that includes speech and language developmental indicators,

strategies for specific impairments, activities, and online resources can be an effective

means of increasing not only knowledge of the SLP's role and services among educators

but alleviate any lack of communication or time that may exist between teachers and the

SLP. These elementary school educators desire to improve what is only partially

working in terms of communication and collaboration, and know for themselves what is

needed to make their role as educators even more effective for their students; they want

to provide better assistance to speech and language students, they just need the tools to do

so.

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Appendix A

Professional Development on the Role of the Speech Language Pathologist

The Speech Language Pathologist

In Elementary Schools:

Professional Development Project

Karmon D. Hatcher

Professional Learning Project

The Role of the Speech Language Pathologist

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

Dr. Marilyn Robb, Committee Chair

Karmon D. Hatcher
August 2017

Table of Contents

Day 3

Evaluations

Introduction

Response to Intervention (RTI) and the Speech and Language Pathologist (SLP) are two educational approaches implemented in schools to assist at-risk students. RTI was created to address student needs through the use of evidence-based interventions as a means of preventing academic failure (Allington, 2008). The role of the SLP within the RTI process is to work with students who have been identified as at-risk of or having impairments in the areas of speech, language, fluency, or voice (ASHA, 2010). In an elementary school where RTI is implemented for specifying interventions, there are still some students not being identified in areas that the SLP addresses.

A qualitative case study was conducted to discover what teachers and administrators perceived about the SLP in the educational setting of a local elementary school. The goals of this study were to:

❑ assess the perceptions of teachers regarding the knowledge of the role of the SLP in educational setting, which includes RTI,

❑ increase teacher awareness of what the SLP does or can do to help with students who are struggling with reading or any other element contained in the SLP's area of expertise,

❑ increase collaboration between teachers, administrators, and the speech therapist in the elementary setting as well as in the process of RTI and finally,

❑ develop a hierarchy of skills that will aid teachers in identifying students who are at risk in areas of phonemic awareness, speech, language, components of reading, etc.

For the project, administrators, reading specialists, and classroom teachers from kindergarten through fifth grades in one elementary school in the southeastern United States were recruited during the 2014-15 school year. Criteria for selecting participants included at least 3 years of experience in the educational setting, exposure to the SLP, and opportunity for collaboration with the SLP during their tenure in education. One participant from each grade level, kindergarten through fifth grade, one administrator, and the reading specialist were chosen as interview participants. The participants were interviewed using carefully selected interview questions. Data collection occurred beginning in the Spring of 2014 and was completed in the Fall of 2014 during participants' free time either before or after school. Results of my study show that the participating elementary school is an example of a positive learning environment – one where educators within that environment want to make changes for the benefit of the students; other elementary schools should view the participating school as a model towards creating an effective learning community for students. The following 3-day professional learning workshop was created from educator perspectives on the role of the SLP.

Overview

A professional learning workshop has been created to include on in-service days for elementary educators. The workshop focuses on aspects of the SLP and how to use the SLP within the educational environment. Planning time during the workshop will be provided to allow educators time to explore and employ knowledge and skills learned. Participants should then discuss strategies during weekly planning periods to incorporate

knowledge and skills shared in the PL within their respective grade levels. Each

presentation within the workshop will focus on characteristics that are relevant to all

grade levels; planning time will concentrate on ways to apply these in all elementary

grades. The first part of the workshop will cover the roles and responsibilities of the SLP

as well as the importance of collaboration between the SLP and classroom teachers.

Impairments and interventions will be discussed during the second part of the workshop,

covering different impairments children may demonstrate, symptoms associated with

specific impairments, and the treatments and interventions used to assist students who

have speech and language difficulties. Lastly, a discussion will be presented on the RTI

process and the role of the teacher in the process. As part of the three sessions, handouts

and time for grade level planning and collaboration will be provided to classroom

teachers.

SLP Workshop – Agenda for Day 1

8:15 – 8:30   Register/Sign in

8:30 – 9:15   My Study, Guiding Questions, What does an SLP do?, Range of
                 Responsibilities

9:15 - 10:00   Collaboration

10:00 – 10:15 Break

10:15 – 11:00 Leadership

11:00 – 11:45 Factors to be Considered

11:45 – 12:45 Lunch

12:45 – 1:30   Implications, Evolving Practices

1:30 - 2:15   RTI

2:15 – 3:00   Critical Roles: Telepractice, Questions, Comments, Concerns

3:00 – 3:30   Tickets out the Door

Lesson Plan

The initial presentation for the workshop will provide teachers with an overview of the roles and responsibilities of the speech and language pathologist (SLP). Also discussed is the importance of collaboration between the SLP and classroom teacher. Teachers will learn the SLP is a resource to seek out for prevention, assessment, and intervention of students who may demonstrate speech and language problems. Most important is that the SLP works in partnership with others, especially classroom teachers, to meet students' needs. The SLP will work with not only work with students and school professionals, but also with the families of students in order to make sure students can receive interventions and assistance in the home environment. Succeeding presentations will discuss for impairments, interventions and services provided to students who struggle with speech and language disorders.

The Speech and Language Pathologist

Roles and Responsibilities

Day 1 - Agenda

8:15 - 8:30	Register/Sign in
8:30 - 9:15	My Study, Guiding Questions, What does an SLP do?, Range of Responsibilities
9:15 - 10:00	Collaboration
10:00 - 10:15	Break
10:15 - 11:00	Leadership
11:00 - 11:45	Factors to be Considered
11:45 - 12:45	Lunch
12:45 - 1:30	Implications, Evolving Practices
1:30 - 2:15	RTI
2:15 - 3:00	Telepractice, Questions, Comments, Concerns
3:00 - 3:30	Tickets out the Door

MY STUDY

A qualitative study that examines the perspectives of elementary school teachers and administrators related to the inclusion of the SLP in the learning community

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Guiding Question

- What educators' perceptions of the SLP in the educational setting?
- How can educators use the SLP as a collaborative resource for the intervention and education of students?

The roles and responsibilities of speech-language pathologists (SLPs) outlined in this presentation:

provide the basis for speech-language services in schools to promote efficient and effective outcomes for students.

What does the SLP do?

Works Across All Levels

Serves a Range of Disorders

Ensures Educational Relevance

Highlights Language/Literacy

Provides Culturally Competent Services

7

Range of Responsibilities

SLPs help students meet the performance standards of a particular school district and state.

8

Prevention

SLPs collaborate with teachers to prevent

academic failure

thru

Evidence-based Practices (EBP)

for

Response to Intervention (RTI)

9

Assessment

*helps to identify students with communication disorders

*provides information for instruction and intervention, consistent with EBP/RTI

10

Quick Articulation Screener

Activity for You:
1) Grab a partner
2) Take turns engaging in a 1 minute conversation, observe, and document speech sounds on screener provided.
3) Discuss results as a group

http://www.speech-language-therapy.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=46:speechax&catid=9

11

Program Design

✓ Offer a variety of service delivery models

✓ Individual or small group setting

✓ Least restrictive environment

✓ Based on the severity of student need

✓ Provided one to five times per week

✓ Usually 30 minute sessions

12

Intervention

SLPs can provide interventions that are appropriate to the age and learning needs of each individual student as determined by screenings or testing

13

Data Collection and Analysis

Data-based decision making

Gather and interpret data

Program evaluation

14

Compliance

Must meet:
federal and state mandates
local policies in performance of duties

Activities may include but are not limited to:
Screening
Evaluations
Individualized Education Program (IEP) development
Data collection/treatment plan/therapy log development
Medicaid billing
Report writing

15

Collaboration

SLPs work in partnership with others to meet students' needs.

16

SLPs Collaborate With

❑ Special Education Teachers
❑ Families of Students
❑ Students
❑ School Administrators
❑ Special Education Teachers
❑ Regular Education Teachers
❑ Reading Specialists
❑ Audiologists
❑ School Psychologists

17

Leadership

SLPs provide direction in defining their roles and responsibilities and in ensuring delivery of appropriate services to students.

18

Advocacy

- for appropriate programs and services
- reasonable workloads
- professional development opportunities/program supports
- communicate roles /responsibilities to the learning community
- influence the development and interpretation of laws, regulations, and policies

19

SLPs as Leaders

Supervision and Mentorship
Professional Development
Parent Training
Research

20

Factors to be considered

21

Role and Responsibility Realignment

Professional Preparation

Lifelong Learning
seek out and be allowed to participate in professional learning experiences to update knowledge base and skills set

Implications for Services in the Schools

Range of Roles and Responsibilities

23

Critical Roles in Education

SLPs must be able to:
- Provide appropriate service to speech or language students
- Serve students with
  - autism
  - traumatic brain injury
  - severe medical conditions
- Work with at-risk students
- Identify/implement assessments to determine disabilities

24

Range of Roles and Responsibilities

Accountability within educational systems includes all professionals working within those systems

SLPs must ensure that they assist the students with whom they work to meet performance standards and become productive members of society

SLPs must determine how students' academic strengths and weaknesses relate to speech, language, and communication disorders.

SLPs collect relevant student data in various contexts, develop intervention plans, and provide services in collaboration with others to meet students' educational needs

25

As the communication and language experts in schools, SLPs can shed light on how linguistic, socioeconomic, and cultural differences may contribute to achievement gaps.

SLPs may also provide insight on approaches to reducing disproportionate referrals of minority students to special education by accurately identifying whether student performance is reflective of a true disorder.

26

Evolving Professional Practices

27

❖ advocate for appropriate roles and responsibilities

❖ require continuing education for SLPs

❖ know and understand how legal mandates affect practice

❖ advocate for meeting the intent of the law

❖ mentor less experienced SLPs

28

Additional possible professional practices/services:

medically fragile
work with reading
writing
curriculum
EBP
RTI
Telepractice

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Response to Intervention (RTI)

30

Slide 31

Tier III: Intensive
Tier II: Targeted
Tier I: Universal

Response to Intervention (RTI) has been receiving widespread attention across the country.

Response to Intervention is the first line of defense to help struggling and at-risk students.

RTI is a framework for addressing diverse learning needs, prevent failure, and provide a different way to identify students with learning disabilities.

Slide 32

RTI Definition

A process that provides services to struggling learners at increasing levels of intensity through direct and indirect intervention services.

RTI's purpose is to reduce/prevent placement in special education.

Slide 33

RTI and SLP's should work together because the SLP can:

❖ Engage in new and expanded roles that incorporate prevention and identification

❖ Continue to engage in their traditional roles

❖ Offer expertise

❖ Participate as a valuable resource in schools for program design

❖ Problem solve and collaborate with teachers

❖ Assist in the identification of screening tools

❖ Select the right intervention plan

❖ Share knowledge in monitoring student progress

Slide 34

The RTI model is a great tool to help SLPs

· Validates the effectiveness of therapy

· Assists in determining deficit areas faster

· Helps set individual goals

· Shows daily progress

· Analyzes student growth with data

· Tracks progress over time

Slide 35

RTI and SLPs work together at each Tier

SLPs & Tier 1

Indirect Services	Direct Services
❏ Student observations	❏ Development and administration of a universal speech and language screening
❏ Helping the teacher make connections	❏ Co-teaching
❏ Parent and/or teacher consultations	❏ Other specific classroom activities that support oral language development
❏ Staff development	

Slide 36

RTI and SLPs work together at each Tier

SLPs & Tier 2

Indirect Services	Direct Services
❏ Selecting research-based interventions	❏ Targeted interventions
❏ Student observations	❏ Group or individual
❏ Progress monitoring	❏ Same ability

RTI and SLPs work together at each Tier

SLPs & Tier 3

Indirect Services	Direct Services
❑ Selecting research-based interventions	❑ Intense targeted interventions (individual)
❑ Student observations	❑ Intense targeted interventions (individual)
❑ Progress monitoring	❑ Intense targeted interventions......
❑ Helping the team make decisions regarding a referral for a special education evaluation	

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More Advantages

easy data collection • reduction in paperwork • SLPs are more visible • reduced complaints about missed sessions • integrated homework • parents and teacher involvement • other "benefits" of the program include marked improvement in: – grammar, MLU, vocabulary, and correct production of non-targeted sounds

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Telepractice

39

With technology and its distance learning capabilities, speech-language pathology and audiology does now include telepractice in many areas but especially in cyber schools.
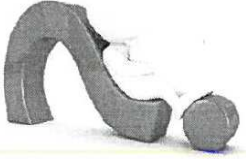
40

Telepractice may be used to overcome difficulty with access of services caused by distance, unavailability of therapists, or limited mobility of the students.

41

Questions/Comments

42

Tickets out the Door

Write a news headline based on what you learned today.

Write a text message summary of what you learned today.

43

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44

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The Speech and Language Pathologist: Roles and Responsibilities –

Day 1 – Script

> *Power Point*
> *Slide 2*

Day 1 - Agenda

8:15 – 8:30   Register/Sign in
8:30 – 9:15   My Study, Guiding Questions, What does an SLP do?,
                       Range of Responsibilities
9:15 - 10:00   Collaboration
10:00 – 10:15 Break
10:15 – 11:00 Leadership
11:00 – 11:45 Factors to be Considered
11:45 – 12:45 Lunch
12:45 – 1:30   Implications, Evolving Practices
1:30 - 2:15   RTI
2:15 – 3:00   Telepractice, Questions, Comments, Concerns
3:00 – 3:30   Tickets out the Door

> *Power Point*
> *Slide 3*

MY STUDY

A qualitative study that examines the perspectives of elementary school teachers and administrators related to the inclusion of the SLP in the learning community

> *Power Point*
> *Slide 4*

Guiding Research Question: *What are elementary school teachers', reading specialists', and administrators' perceptions of the Speech Language Pathologist, knowledge of RTI, and SLP duties in the educational learning community?*

> *Power Point*
> *Slide 5*

The roles and responsibilities of speech-language pathologists (SLPs) outlined in this presentation will provide the basis for speech-language services in schools to promote efficient and effective outcomes for students.

> *Power Point*
> *Slides 6-7*

What does the SLP do?
  • **Working Across All Levels**

SLPs provide appropriate speech-language services in Pre-K, elementary, middle, and high schools with no school level left underserved. (Note: In some states infants and toddlers are included in school services.)

- **Serving a Range of Disorders**

As delineated in the ASHA *Scope of Practice in Speech-Language Pathology* (ASHA, 2010) and federal regulations, SLPs work with students exhibiting the full range of communication disorders, including those involving language, articulation (speech sound disorders), fluency, voice/resonance, and swallowing if there is a negative educational impact.

- **Ensuring Educational Relevance**

The litmus test for roles assumed by SLPs with students with disabilities is whether the disorder has an impact on the education of students. Therefore, SLPs address personal, social/emotional, academic, and vocational needs that have an impact on attainment of educational goals.

- **Providing Unique Contributions to Curriculum**

SLPs provide a distinct set of roles based on their focused expertise in language. They offer assistance in addressing the linguistic and metalinguistic foundations of curriculum learning for students with disabilities, as well as other learners who are at risk for school failure, or those who struggle in school settings.

- **Highlighting Language/Literacy**

Current research supports the interrelationships across the language processes of listening, speaking, reading, and writing (ASHA, 2009). SLPs contribute significantly to the literacy achievement of students with communication disorders, as well as other learners who are at risk for school failure, or those who struggle in school settings.

- **Providing Culturally Competent Services**

With the ever-increasing diversity in the schools, SLPs make important contributions to ensure that all students receive quality, culturally competent services. SLPs have the expertise to distinguish a language disorder from "something else." That "something else" might include cultural and linguistic differences, socioeconomic factors, lack of adequate prior instruction, and the process of acquiring the dialect of English used in the schools. This expertise leads to more accurate and appropriate identification of student needs. SLPs can also address the impact of language differences and second language acquisition on student learning and provide assistance to teachers in promoting educational growth.

Power Point Slides 8-15

Range of Responsibilities

SLPs help students meet the performance standards of a particular school district and state.

- **Prevention**

SLPs collaborate with teachers to prevent academic failure in whatever form those initiatives may take; for example, evidence-based practices (EBP) and Response to Intervention (RTI).

- **Assessment**

SLPs conduct assessments in collaboration with others that help to identify students with communication disorders as well as to inform instruction and intervention, consistent with EBP.
Articulation Screener Activity

Power Point Slide 11

- **Program Design**

It is essential that SLPs configure school wide programs that employ a continuum of service delivery models in the least restrictive environment for students with disabilities. SLPs provide services to students as appropriate based on the severity of need.
When speech/language therapy is warranted, it can be delivered in a variety of ways. It may be provided in an individual or small group setting.
Direct services may be provided one to five times a week, depending upon the severity of the communication disorder.

- **Intervention**

SLPs can provide interventions that are appropriate to the age and learning needs of each individual student as determined by screenings or testing.

- **Data Collection and Analysis**

SLPs, like all educators, are accountable for student outcomes. Therefore, data-based decision making, including gathering and interpreting data with individual students, as well as overall program evaluation are essential responsibilities.

- **Compliance**

SLPs are responsible for meeting federal and state mandates as well as local policies in performance of their duties. **Activities may include but are not limited to:**
 Screening, evaluations, Individualized Education Program (IEP) development, data collection/treatment plan/therapy, log development, Medicaid billing, report writing

Power Point Slides 16-17

Collaboration
SLPs work in partnership with others to meet students' needs.

- **With Other School Professionals**

SLPs provide services to support the instructional program at a school. Therefore, SLPs' unique contributions complement and augment those made by other professionals who also have unique perspectives and skills. Working collegially with general education teachers who are primarily responsible for curriculum and instruction is essential. SLPs also work closely with reading specialists, literacy coaches, special education teachers, occupational therapists, physical therapists, school psychologists, audiologists, guidance counselors, and social workers, in addition to others. Working with school and district administrators in designing and implementing programs is crucial.

- **With Universities**

SLPs form important relationships with universities in which both the SLPs and the universities can benefit from shared knowledge and perspectives. Additionally, SLPs can serve as resources for university personnel and the university students whom they teach.

- **Within the Community**

SLPs work with a variety of individuals and agencies (e.g., physicians, private therapy practitioners, social service agencies, private schools, and vocational rehabilitation) who may be involved in teaching or providing services to children and youth

- **With Families**

For students of all ages it is essential that SLPs engage families in planning, decision making, and program implementation

- **With Students**

Student involvement in the intervention process is essential to promoting personal responsibility and ownership of communication improvement goals. SLPs actively engage students in goal planning, intervention implementation, monitoring of progress, and self-advocacy appropriate to age and ability level (self-determination).

With regard to speech-language services for students with disabilities, federal statutes and regulations specify requirements for group processing and decision making. For example, IEPs must be developed by a team that includes parents/guardians and a general education teacher. However, even when specific collaborations are not required by law, compliance with legal mandates is a responsibility shared by all educators, with collaboration a key in successful implementation. Work within the larger context of education, such as with literacy, curriculum, and RTI, requires close collaboration with other educators. As SLPs work to provide services in the classroom, finesse in working with classroom teachers becomes paramount. Collaboration with parents/guardians remains essential but the SLP must continue to establish strong partnerships with others as well:

- support personnel
- reading specialists
- school psychologists
- special education teachers
- educational audiologists
- school administrators

More than ever, partnerships among school practitioners and university faculty are needed to promote research-based practice and practice-based research to help SLPs in schools meet the requirements of new and expanded roles and responsibilities. Evolving professional practices may require SLPs to forge new roads in collaboration. For example, in working with medically fragile students, SLPs may need to collaborate with professionals who are not school-based, such as physicians and respiratory therapists.

*Power Point
Slides 18-20*

Leadership

SLPs provide direction in defining their roles and responsibilities and in ensuring delivery of appropriate services to students.

- **Advocacy**

To assume productive roles, SLPs must advocate for appropriate programs and services for children and adolescents, including reasonable workloads, professional development

opportunities and other program supports. Because some of the roles SLPs assume may be new or evolving and may not be clearly understood by others, SLPs have a responsibility to articulate their roles and responsibilities to teachers, other school professionals, administrators, support personnel, families, and the community. They also work to influence the development and interpretation of laws, regulations, and policies to promote best practice.

- **Supervision and Mentorship**

SLPs play a vital role in inducting new professionals. They are involved with supervising student SLPs and clinical fellows, as well as in mentoring new SLPs. They also may supervise paraprofessionals.

- **Professional Development**

SLPs are valuable resources in designing and conducting professional development. Given their expertise in communication and language, SLPs have much to offer other educators, including administrators, teachers, other educational specialists, and paraprofessionals in the collaborative effort to enhance the performance of students in schools.

- **Parent Training**

SLPs are in a position to provide training to parents of students of all ages with regard to communication development and disorders. They may be especially helpful to families in creating a language- and literacy-rich environment.

- **Research**

Federal law requires the use of scientific, research-based practices. It is important for SLPs in the schools to participate in research to generate and support the use of evidence-based assessment and intervention practices.

> *Power Point Slides 21-22*

Factors to be considered

- **Role and Responsibility Realignment**

The current educational context for speech-language services requires reflection on and a possible realignment of existing roles and responsibilities to make maximum use of the SLPs' expertise. SLPs and school systems can then carve out a set of roles and responsibilities that is both manageable and efficacious for the diverse student body in today's schools. Establishing workload priorities is crucial. Further, these roles and responsibilities should be viewed in the larger context of the array of programs and services provided to students, including those with disabilities, and in light of the responsibility for student achievement that all educators share.

- **Reasonable Workloads**

For SLPs to be productive in the many roles and responsibilities for which their expertise prepares them, they must have reasonable workloads. Therefore, school systems and SLPs themselves must make ethical and judicious decisions, consistent with legal mandates, about the services they provide. They must balance their scope of work to use their expertise most effectively and efficiently. New or expanded roles cannot merely be additions to an already full workload.

- **Professional Preparation**

SLPs must be fully prepared to meet the needs of the diverse student body they will be called upon to serve in the myriad roles and responsibilities outlined in this document. The range and complexity of student problems require at a minimum well-prepared, master's level professionals with a strong knowledge base in speech-language/literacy development and speech-language/literacy disorder, as well as a strong skill set in diagnosis, intervention, and workload management at the pre-service level. New or expanded roles may require high quality professional development for SLPs already in the schools.

- **Lifelong Learning**

To keep abreast of changes in education and speech-language pathology, it is essential that SLPs seek out and be permitted to engage in continuing education experiences to update their knowledge base and skills.

Implications for Services in the Schools

Power Point Slides 23-26

*Critical Roles in Education

Expansion of the number of students with disabilities who are served in the schools means that SLPs must be able to serve those students, including those with severe disabilities. SLP's workload now includes more students with autism, traumatic brain injury, and severe medical conditions. The growing emphasis on prevention of school failure through work with at-risk students presents another population with whom SLPs may play critical roles. SLPs contribute to educational equity by identifying and implementing appropriate assessment methodologies and approaches that lead to accurate disability determinations regardless of the students' cultural, linguistic, or socioeconomic backgrounds.

*Range of Roles and Responsibilities

Accountability within educational systems includes all professionals working within those systems. SLPs must ensure that they assist the students with whom they work to meet performance standards and become productive members of society. SLPs must determine how students' academic strengths and weaknesses relate to speech, language, and communication disorders. SLPs collect relevant student data in various contexts, develop intervention plans, and provide services in collaboration with others to meet students' educational needs. A continuum of services must be designed to serve students with disabilities in the LRE. Some of the biggest changes brought on by evolving practices are in the emphasis on curriculum and literacy acquisition and prevention activities with school-age students (such as in RTI initiatives). These foci have expanded roles to students not traditionally on the caseload. All of these changes that span a broader range of roles and responsibilities must be addressed with a redefinition of workload by SLPs in schools. As the communication and language experts in schools, SLPs can shed light on how linguistic, socioeconomic, and cultural differences may contribute to achievement gaps. SLPs may also provide insight on approaches to reducing disproportionate referrals of minority students to special education by accurately identifying whether student performance is reflective of a true disorder.

Power Point Slides 27-29

Evolving Professional Practices

Evolving professional practices require that SLPs advocate for appropriate roles and responsibilities within expanded arenas and that they articulate those roles and responsibilities to others. They may also require continuing education for SLPs to update their skills in areas where they may not have received preparation. In situations they encounter in schools, SLPs must know and understand how legal mandates affect practice. They may on occasion need to advocate for meeting the intent of the law and communicate effectively with others about the congruence of their practices with legal mandates. They may also need to mentor less experienced SLPs on interpretation of legal mandates. In the early years of school practice, provision of services focused on fluency, voice, and articulation disorders, with later inclusion of language disorders.

Although these areas continue to be included within the SLP's roles and responsibilities, changing legal mandates, and an expanded scope of practice for SLPs across settings has prompted a redefinition of work in the schools. Several professional practices may now be included as part of the SLP's workload that were not a typical part of their work when the 2000 ASHA guidelines were published. These areas include work with students who are: medically fragile, work with reading, writing, curriculum, EBP, RTI, and telepractice.

Power Point Slides 30-38

Response to Intervention (RTI)

Response to Intervention (RTI) has been receiving widespread attention across the country. Response to Intervention is the first line of defense to help struggling and at-risk students. It is a framework for addressing the diverse learning needs of all students at a school to prevent failure and provide an alternative method for identifying students with learning disabilities.

RTI Definition: A process that provides services to struggling learners at increasing levels of intensity. The purpose is to provide direct and indirect intervention services designed to prevent placement in special education.

RTI and SLP's should work together because the SLP can:
- ❖ Engage in new and expanded roles that incorporate prevention and identification
- ❖ Continue to engage in their traditional roles
- ❖ Offer expertise
- ❖ Participate as a valuable resource in schools for program design
- ❖ Problem solve and collaborate with teachers
- ❖ Assist in the identification of screening tools
- ❖ Select the right intervention plan
- ❖ Share knowledge in monitoring student progress

The RTI model is a great tool to help SLPs
- • Validates the effectiveness of therapy

- Assists in determining deficit areas faster
- Helps set individual goals
- Shows daily progress
- Analyzes student growth with data
- Tracks progress over time

RTI and SLPs work together at each Tier

SLPs & Tier 1
Indirect Services
- ❑ Student observations
- ❑ Helping the teacher make connections
- ❑ Parent and/or teacher consultations
- ❑ Staff development

Direct Services
- ❑ Development and administration of a universal speech and language screening
- ❑ Co-teaching
- ❑ Other specific classroom activities that support oral language development

SLPs & Tier 2
Indirect Services
- ❑ Selecting research-based interventions
- ❑ Student observations
- ❑ Progress monitoring
Direct Services
- ❑ Targeted interventions
- ❑ Group or individual
- ❑ Same ability

SLPs & Tier 3
Indirect Services
- ❑ Selecting research-based interventions
- ❑ Student observations
- ❑ Progress monitoring
- ❑ Helping the team make decisions regarding a referral for a special education evaluation
Direct Services
- ❑ Intense targeted interventions (individual)
- ❑ Intense targeted interventions (individual)
- ❑ Intense targeted interventions…….

More Advantages
easy data collection • reduction in paperwork • SLPs are more visible • reduced complaints about missed sessions • integrated homework • parents and teacher

involvement • other "benefits" of the program include marked improvement in: – grammar, MLU, vocabulary, and correct production of non-targeted sounds

Many different styles of RTI exist, including an academic or behavioral orientation, or both. Some are literacy-focused; others have a more general problem-solving focus. Most styles includes a tiered approach to providing increasingly intense interventions to students who are struggling, with the focus on high quality core instruction.

Power Point Slides 39-41

Telepractice

With the advance of technology and its distance learning capabilities, the practice of speech-language pathology and audiology may include telepractice. Telepractice is an appropriate model of service delivery for the profession of speech-language pathology and may be used to overcome barriers of access to services caused by distance, unavailability of specialists and/or subspecialists, and impaired mobility. SLPs will need to acquire the necessary technical and clinical skills to practice telepractice competently, ethically, and securely for the benefit of their clients and families. Although in its infancy in terms of school practice, the use of technology to address the problems of delivering services to students in rural or remote locations is evolving within the United States and in other countries.

Power Point Slide 42

Questions???

Power Point Slide 43

Tickets out the Door

    1)   Write a news headline based on what you learned today.

    2)   Write a text message summary of what you learned today.

Power Point Slidse 44-47
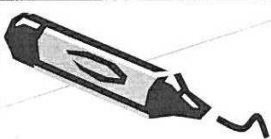
References

SLP Workshop - Agenda for Day 2

8:15 – 8:30   Register/Sign in/Breakfast Snacks

8:30 – 9:15   Causes of Speech Language Impairments

9:15 - 10:00   Areas of Speech Language Impaired, Articulation

10:00 – 10:15 Break

10:15 – 11:00 Articulation continued

11:00 – 11:45 Language

11:45 – 12:45 Lunch

12:45 – 1:30   Language continued

1:30 - 2:15   Fluency, Voice

2:15 – 3:00   Recap, Questions, Comments, Concerns

3:00 – 3:30   Tickets out the Door

Lesson Plan

A presentation will be presented on identifying the different types of impairments students may demonstrate in the classroom and the respective treatments. After a discussion of the three most common impairments and their interventions, a video will be shown of students getting assistance from the SLP in a therapy setting. Articulation, language and fluency impairments as well as voice disorders are discussed. Teachers will learn what to look for in a student who may have impairments, the causes and/or dangers of each, and specific treatments for students who have the specific struggles. At the end, a brief discussion of what teachers can do when initially noticing students who may struggle with articulation, language or fluency.

The Speech and Language Pathologist

Impairments and Interventions

Karmon D. Hatcher, Ed.S.-SLP

1

MY STUDY

A qualitative study that examined the perspectives of elementary school teachers and administrators related to the inclusion of the SLP in the learning community

2

Guiding Questions

- *What are educators' perceptions of the SLP in the educational setting?*
- *How can educators use the SLP as a collaborative resource for the intervention and education of students?*

3

Day 2 - Agenda

8:15 - 8:30	Register/Sign in/Breakfast Snacks
8:30 - 9:15	Causes of Speech Language Impairments
9:15 - 10:00	Areas of Speech Language Impaired, Articulation
10:00 - 10:15	Break
10:15 - 11:00	Articulation continued
11:00 - 11:45	Language
11:45 - 12:45	Lunch
12:45 - 1:30	Language continued
1:30 - 2:15	Fluency, Voice
2:15 - 3:00	Recap, Questions, Comments, Concerns
3:00 - 3:30	Tickets out the Door

4

Day 2

Identification of speech and language disabilities/impairments/disorders in the school setting

Tips for identifying students at-risk for a Communication Impairment/Disability/Disorder
(terms are used interchangeably)

5

1 in 6 people has a speech, language or hearing disorder

SAY WHAT?!

6

Some causes of speech and language disorders:
- ·· Traumatic brain injury
- ·· Stroke
- ·· Head and neck cancers
- ·· Learning disabilities
- ·· Degenerative diseases (e.g., ALS, Parkinson's, etc.)

7

"If we don't have or have never had speech impaired students in our classroom, we understand less about what the SLP does because we never have contact."

"Only time you may see her is in an IEP meeting. Therefore our knowledge is limited."

Finally, as stated by a second grade teacher, "If teachers knew more about what the speech therapist could help us with , it would help us understand and use her knowledge to help our students more often."

(quotes provided by participants, 2014)

8

9
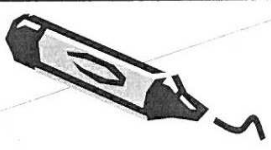
Areas of Communication Served in Public Schools

Articulation
Oral Language
Voice
Fluency

10

Articulation Impairments

11

Articulation Impairments
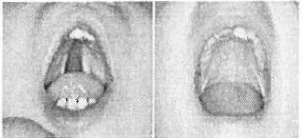
❑ Also referred to as an impairment in speech sound production

❑ The service most people are familiar with

❑ Etiologies: delayed development, poor muscle control, cleft lip/palate, hearing impairment, learning disability, or neurological damage

12

Examples:

- wabbit for rabbit, poon for spoon, ello for hello, tup for cup, etc
- nasal speech due to a cleft palate

- cleft lip
- deaf or hard of hearing speech

13

Cleft Lip before and after pics.
Cleft lip may or may not impact speech.

14

Treatment of Speech Sound Impairments
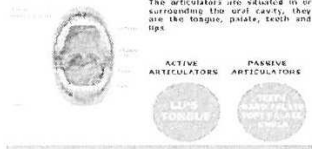
- Teaching the correct placement of articulators to make the correct sounds

- Replacing the speech pattern in error with the correct pattern (replace tuk with truk or twuk with truk)

- Teaching students to compensate or approximate if improvement is not possible (especially applicable for deaf/hard of hearing students)

- Providing an alternative means of communication if the disorder is so severe that speech is not possible (ie communication devices, sign language, etc)

15

Speech Articulators

THE ARTICULATORS OF THE ORAL CAVITY

The articulators are situated in or surrounding the oral cavity, they are the tongue, palate, teeth and lips

ACTIVE ARTICULATORS   PASSIVE ARTICULATORS

16

Articulation Therapy Setting

Video of speech session with student with a severe speech impairment

Video
(2:42)

17

Language Impairments

18

Language Impairments

18

"Oftentimes especially for a language delay teachers just need to know what they can do in the classroom to help the students *(study participant, 2014)*."

19

Language Impairments

- Difficulty understanding what is being said (receptive)
- Difficulty providing ideas, asking questions, and/or answering questions (expressive)
- Behavioral signs of a language disorder include but aren't limited to:
  - Poor oral and/or written abilities, including sentence structure, grammar, or use of word endings
  - Difficulty expressing ideas clearly and succinctly
  - Poor oral vocabulary or difficulty searching for words to respond with
  - Lack of awareness of listener's needs
  - Difficulty understanding what has been said
  - Having extreme problems following directions
  - Weak social language skills
  - Difficulty carrying on a conversation with others

20

Five basic areas of language impairments are recognized

1. Phonological disorders:
   A child with a phonological disorder may be hard to understand or not saying the sounds correctly.
2. Semantic disorders:
   Students will demonstrate difficulty with word meanings, multiple word meanings, excessive use of nonspecific terms (e.g., thing and stuff), and indefinite references (e.g., that and there).
3. Morphological disorders:
   Students with difficulties with inflections on nouns, verbs, and adjectives that signal different kinds of meanings.
4. Syntactic deficits:
   Typically, these students produce shorter and less elaborate sentences with fewer cohesive conjunctions than their peers.
5. Pragmatic difficulties:
   These students may lack an understanding of the rules for making eye contact, respecting personal space, requesting information, and introducing topics.

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Receptive Language Impairments look like.....

- Difficulty understanding language.
- A hard time understanding what other people have said
- Problems following directions that are spoken to them
- Problems organizing their thoughts

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Expressive Language Impairments look like......

- Problems using language to express what they are thinking or need.
- Hard time putting words together into sentences, or their sentences may be simple and short and the word order may be off
- Difficulty finding the right words when talking, and often use "um"
- Low vocabulary that is below that of their peers
- Leave words out of sentences when talking
- Use certain phrases over and over again, and repeat (echo) parts or all of questions
- Use tenses (past, present, future) improperly
- Socially awkward for the student and/or others around them

At times, language disorders may be part of the cause of severe behavioral problems.

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Mixed Language Impairment

Developmental	Acquired
· does not have a known cause	· caused by direct damage to the brain.
· normally appears at the time that a child is learning to talk	· occurs suddenly after such events as a stroke or traumatic head injury.
	· can occur at any age.

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Causes

Learning disabilities are caused by a difference in brain structure that is present at birth, is often hereditary, and is often related to specific language problems.

There is no known cause of developmental mixed receptive-expressive language disorder.

Researchers are conducting ongoing studies to determine whether biological or environmental factors may be involved.

The acquired form of the disorder results from direct damage to the brain caused by a stroke, tramatic brain injury, seizure, or other medical conditions.

The specific symptoms of the acquired form of the disorder generally depend on the parts of the patient's brain that have been injured and the severity of the damage.

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Language Therapy Setting

4 year old with mixed receptive and expressive language impairments

Video
(3:16)

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Treatment for Language Impairments

Treatments for language disorders vary based on the disorder and the goals established in the IEP.

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Fluency Impairments

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Fluency Impairments are also referred to as Stuttering or Dysfluencies

Stuttering Another word for stuttering, or disrupted speech, is disfluency. These disruptions in speech production can occur on sounds, syllables, or words.

In addition to disfluencies in speech, many individuals display concomitant behaviors that present themselves as physical behaviors, avoidance behaviors, or "tick-like movements" to help students get through the stuttering moment. These physical characteristics are considered secondary behaviors.

In a SLP's world, fluency means dysfluent speech and not the rate in which a child can read a reading passage which is what teachers associate with fluency.

29

A fluency lesson from a student who stutters

Video
(2:47)

30

Warning or Danger Signs

Frequent and consistent occurrence of any of these behaviors in a young child's speech would identify a child at serious risk.

❏ **Multiple part-word repetitions:** Repetition of first sound or syllable of a word, such as t-t-t-table or ta-ta-ta-table.

❏ **Prolongations:** Child stretches out a sound, such as rrrrrrr abbit.

❏ **"Schwa" vowel:** The use of the weak (schwa) vowel. For example, instead of saying bay-bay-bay-baby, the child substitutes b^b^b^baby.

❏ **Pitch and loudness rise:** As the child repeats and prolongs, the pitch and loudness of the voice increase.

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Warning or Danger Signs

❏ Tremors

❏ Avoidance

❏ Fear

❏ Difficulty in starting or sustaining airflow or voicing for speech:

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You can decrease stuttering by:

❖ Easy starts (MaaayI..... have a cookie?)
❖ Light starts (slow and soft)
❖ BREATHE!!!!
❖ Relax
❖ Stutter in an easy way

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Treatments for Fluency Impairments: What can teachers do?

· talk slowly & clearly

· answer ?'s after a pause

· stay calm, don't be bothered (patience!)

· give reassurance & encourage talking about his or her stuttering

· create a plan for class participation

· allow increased response time
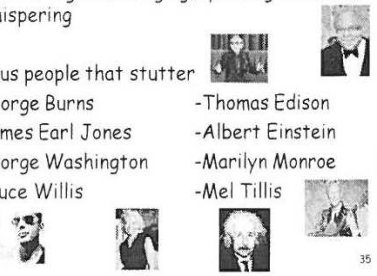
34
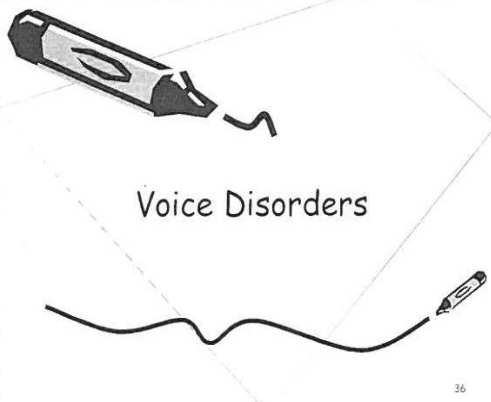
Interesting Facts About Stuttering

· Stuttering occurs most often in left-handers

· No stuttering when singing, speaking in unison, or whispering

· Famous people that stutter
  – George Burns   -Thomas Edison
  – James Earl Jones   -Albert Einstein
  – George Washington   -Marilyn Monroe
  – Bruce Willis   -Mel Tillis

35

Voice Disorders

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Spasmodic Dysphonia
a voice disorder

Video
(5:02)

37

What are Voice Disorders

Callus-like nodules, polyps, or cysts found on the vocal folds/chords. A common cause of voice problems is one or more benign (non-cancerous) lesions on the vocal fold.

Calluses/nodes on vocal folds

38

Characteristics of a Voice Disorder?

hoarseness	periodic loss of voice
vocal fatigue	raspiness
inappropriate pitch or loudness	

Voice problems, although very common, are not normal.

Over 1 million children suffer from a voice disorder nationwide. The incidence of voice disorders in school-aged children ranges from 6% to 23%.

Respiratory problems which are indicated by breathiness in voice/speech may occur due to abnormal closure of the vocal cords which can often be successfully treated with voice therapy.

39

Why are Voice Disorders serious in children?

❖ Can cause problems in acting, singing or communicating during sports.

❖ May interfere with class presentations or socialization with peers.

❖ May impact self-image and self-esteem.

❖ May lead to nodules (similar to calluses) on the vocal cords. Nodules are among the most common causes of voice disorders in children and account for approximately 40% to 80% of chronic hoarseness in children.**

40

Diagnosing Voice Impairments

School-based Speech Therapists do not diagnosis voice impairments

ASHA and NIDCD recommend seeing a physician, particularly an otolaryngologist (ear-nose-throat doctor) with a specialty in voice, if signs and symptoms of vocal nodules persist for two to three weeks or more.

The doctor will use a special instrument, usually a mirror or camera with a light, to look inside the nose and mouth. A neurological examination may be done as well.

The professionals who assess the voice will look at (ASHA (1), n.d. ¶ 5):

    ⬜⬜ Vocal quality   ⬜⬜ Pitch   ⬜⬜ Loudness

    ⬜⬜ Ability to sustain (hold out) voicing

    ⬜⬜ Other characteristics of the voice

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Therapy Setting

Help the students think about the ways they use their voices.

Talk about the different ways the children use their voices: talking to friends at school, at sporting events, on the phone; talking to their families; singing; giving speeches; etc.

Solicit input from the students about ways they use their voices. If they provide examples of unhealthy voice uses (e.g., screaming on the playground), use this opportunity to talk about what screaming, loud talking, etc., do to the vocal folds.

Education about vocal folds and their use, respiration, vocal hygiene, and strategies to change inappropriate vocal use are the suggested methods for therapy at school and at home. Very important for parents to buy into therapy for voice abuse.

42

Teach...............

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Recap

Today we have discussed:

Articulation

Language

Fluency

Voice

Ways to identify these impairments
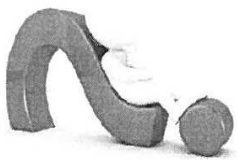
Therapy techniques for each

+++

Tomorrow we attack strategies and interventions for educators to use in the classroom

44

Questions/Comments

45

Tickets out the Door

If this presentation were a pizza, what would the toppings be?

Write a text message summary of what you learned today

46

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The Speech and Language Pathologist *Impairments and Interventions -*

Day 2 Script

Power Point
Slide 2

MY STUDY

A qualitative study that examined the perspectives of elementary school teachers and administrators related to the inclusion of the SLP in the learning community

Power Point
Slide 3

Guiding Questions

What are educators' perceptions of the SLP in the educational setting?
How can educators use the SLP as a collaborative resource for the intervention and education of students?

Power Point
Slide 4

Day 2 - Agenda

8:15 – 8:30   Register/Sign in/Breakfast Snacks
8:30 – 9:15   Causes of Speech Language Impairments
9:15 - 10:00   Areas of Speech Language Impaired, Articulation
10:00 – 10:15 Break
10:15 – 11:00 Articulation continued
11:00 – 11:45 Language
11:45 – 12:45 Lunch
12:45 – 1:30   Language continued
1:30 - 2:15   Fluency, Voice
2:15 – 3:00   Recap, Questions, Comments, Concerns
3:00 – 3:30   Tickets out the Door

Power Point
Slide 5

Goal

 *Identification of speech and language disabilities/impairments/disorders in the school setting. Tips for identifying students at-risk for a Communication Impairment/Disability/Disorder (terms are used interchangeably)

Power Point
Slides 6-9

1 in 6 people has a speech, language, or hearing disorder. Some causes of speech and language disorders:
•• Traumatic brain injury
•• Stroke
•• Head and neck cancers
•• Learning disabilities
•• Degenerative diseases (e.g., ALS, Parkinson's, etc.)

"If we don't have or have never had speech impaired students in our classroom, we understand less about what the SLP does because we never have contact." "Only time you may see her is in an IEP meeting. Therefore our knowledge is limited." Finally, as stated by a second grade teacher, "If teachers knew more about what the speech therapist could help us with , it would help us understand and use her knowledge to help our students more often."
(quotes provided by participants, 2014)

> *Power Point*
> *Slide 10*

Areas of Communication Served in Public Schools
Articulation
Oral Language
Voice
Fluency

> *Power Point*
> *Slides11-17*

Articulation Impairments
- ❏ Also referred to as an impairment in speech sound production
- ❏ The service most people are familiar with
- ❏ Etiologies: delayed development, poor muscle control, cleft lip/palate, hearing impairment, learning disability, or neurological damage

Examples:
- ❖ wabbit for rabbit, poon for spoon, ello for hello, tup for cup, etc
- ❖ nasal speech due to a cleft palate
- ❖ cleft lip
- ❖ deaf or hard of hearing speech

> *Power Point*
> *Slide 15*

Treatment of Speech Sound Impairments
- ➢ Teaching the correct placement of articulators to make the correct sounds
- ➢ Replacing the pattern in error with the correct pattern
- ➢ Teaching students to compensate or approximate if improvement is not possible
- ➢ Providing an alternative means of communication if the disorder is so severe that speech is not possible (ie communication devices, sign language, etc)

> *Power Point*
> *Slide 16*

Speech Articulators – Discuss the slide graphics

*Power Point
Slide 17*

Articulation Therapy Setting - Video of speech session with student with a severe speech impairment <u>Video</u> (2:42)

*Power Point
Slides 18-27*

Language Impairments
"Oftentimes especially for a language delay teachers just need to know what they can do in the classroom to help the students (*study participant, 2014*)."

*Power Point
Slide 20*

Language Impairments
**An impairment affecting the ability to use language to understand what is being said (receptive) or to give ideas and ask and answer questions (expressive)
Behavioral signs of a language disorder include:
  – poor oral and/or written expressive abilities, including sentence structure, grammar, or use of word endings
  – difficulty expressing ideas clearly and succinctly
  – poor oral vocabulary or often searching for words
  – lack of awareness of listener's needs or being unable to change the style of language to fit the situation
  – difficulty understanding what has been said, having extreme problems following directions, and showing poor auditory memory

*Power Point
Slide 21*

  – weak social language skills or difficulty carrying on a conversation with others

Five basic areas of language impairments are recognized:
1. Phonological disorders: abnormal organization of the phonological system, or a significant deficit in speech production or perception. **A child with a phonological disorder may be hard to understand or not saying the sounds correctly. Apraxia of speech is a specific phonological disorder where the student may want to speak but has difficulty planning what to say and the motor movements to use.**

2. Semantic disorders are characterized by poor vocabulary development, inappropriate use of word meanings, and/or inability to comprehend word meanings. These students will demonstrate restrictions in word meanings, difficulty with multiple word meanings, excessive use of nonspecific terms (e.g., thing and stuff), and indefinite references (e.g., that and there).

3. Morphological disorders are difficulties with morphological inflections (inflections on nouns, verbs, and adjectives that signal different kinds of meanings).

4. Syntactic deficits are characterized by difficulty in acquiring the rules that govern word order and others aspects of grammar such as subject-verb agreement. **Typically,

these students produce shorter and less elaborate sentences with fewer cohesive conjunctions than their peers.**

5. Pragmatic difficulties are considered as problems in understanding and using language in different social contexts. **These students may lack an understanding of the rules for making eye contact, respecting personal space, requesting information, and introducing topics.**

Power Point Slide 22

***Receptive Language Impairments* look like.....**
Difficulty understanding language.
A hard time understanding what other people have said
Problems following directions that are spoken to them
Problems organizing their thoughts

Power Point Slide 23

***Expressive Language Impairments* look like……**
Have problems using language to express what they are thinking or need.
Have a hard time putting words together into sentences, or their sentences may be simple and short and the word order may be off
Have difficulty finding the right words when talking, and often use placeholder words such as "um"
Have a vocabulary that is below the level of other children the same age
Leave words out of sentences when talking
Use certain phrases over and over again, and repeat (echo) parts or all of questions
Use tenses (past, present, future) improperly
Because of their language problems, these children may have difficulty in social settings
At times, language disorders may be part of the cause of severe behavioral problems.

Power Point Slides 24-26

Mixed Language Impairment…..
Developmental
Does not have a known cause
 Normally appears at the time that a child is learning to talk
Acquired
Caused by direct damage to the brain.
Occurs suddenly after such events as a stroke or traumatic head injury.
Can occur at any age.

Causes
Learning disabilities are caused by a difference in brain structure that is present at birth, is often hereditary, and is often related to specific language problems.
There is no known cause of developmental mixed receptive-expressive language disorder.
Researchers are conducting ongoing studies to determine whether biological or environmental factors may be involved.

The acquired form of the disorder results from direct damage to the brain caused by a stroke, tramatic brain injury, seizure, or other medical conditions.

The specific symptoms of the acquired form of the disorder generally depend on the parts of the patient's brain that have been injured and the severity of the damage.

Language Therapy Setting

4 year old with mixed receptive and expressive language impairments

> *Power Point*
> *Slide 27*

Treatment for Language Impairments

Treatments for language disorders vary based on the disorder and the goals established in the IEP.

> *Power Point*
> *Slides 28-35*

Fluency Impairments

Fluency Impairments are also referred to as Stuttering or Dysfluencies

Stuttering is a disorder that affects the normal flow and pattern of speech. Another word for stuttering, or disrupted speech, is disfluency. These disruptions in speech production can occur on sounds, syllables, or words. In addition to disfluencies in speech, many individuals display struggling behaviors or avoidance behaviors to help them get through the stuttering moment. These physical characteristics are secondary behaviors of stuttering.

In a SLP's world, fluency means stuttering not the rate in which a child can read a reading passage

> *Power Point*
> *Slide 30*

A fluency lesson from a student who stutters. <u>Video</u> (2:47)

> *Power Point*
> *Slides 31-32*

Warning or Danger Signs

Frequent and consistent occurrence of any of these behaviors in a young child's speech would identify a child at serious risk.

- ❑ **Multiple part-word repetitions:** Repetition of first sound or syllable of a word, such as t-t-t-table or ta-ta-ta-table.
- ❑ **Prolongations:** Child stretches out a sound, such as rrrrrrrrabbit.
- ❑ **"Schwa" vowel:** The use of the weak (schwa) vowel. For example, instead of saying bay-bay-bay-baby, the child substitutes b^b^b^baby.
- ❑ **Pitch and loudness rise:** As the child repeats and prolongs, the pitch and loudness of the voice increase.

Warning or Danger Signs

- ❑ **Tremors:** Uncontrolled quivering of the lips or tongue may occur as the child repeats or prolongs sounds or syllables.

❑ **Avoidance:** Child shows an unusual number of pauses; substitutions of words; interjections of extraneous sounds (um, uh), words (like, well) or phrases; avoidance of talking; or talking in funny voices.

❑ **Fear:** Child recognizes that certain words are likely to be troublesome, and may display an expression of fear when about to say those words.

❑ **Difficulty in starting or sustaining airflow or voicing for speech:** Heard most often when the child begins sentences or phrases. Breathing may be irregular and speech may come in spurts as the child struggles to keep the voicing continuous.

> *Power Point*
> *Slide 33*

You can decrease stuttering by:

❖ Easy starts (MaaayI….. have a cookie?)
❖ Light starts (slow and soft)
❖ BREATHE!!!!
❖ Relax
❖ Stutter in an easy way

> *Power Point*
> *Slide 34*

Treatments for Fluency Impairments: What can teachers do?

• talk slowly & clearly
• answer ?'s after a pause
• stay calm, don't be bothered (patience!)
• give reassurance & encourage talking about his or her stuttering
• create a plan for class participation
• allow increased response time

> *Power Point*
> *Slide 35*

Interesting Facts About Stuttering

Stuttering occurs most often in left-handers
No stuttering when singing, speaking in unison, or whispering
Famous people that stutter

– George Burns   -Thomas Edison
– James Earl Jones   -Albert Einstein
– George Washington   -Marilyn Monroe
– Bruce Willis   -Mel Tillis

> *Power Point*
> *Slides 36-42*

Voice Disorders

> *Power Point*
> *Slide 37*

Spasmodic Dysphonia *a voice disorder* <u>Video</u> (5:02)

What are Voice Disorders
Callus-like nodules, polyps, or cysts found on the vocal folds/chords. A common cause of voice problems is one or more benign (non-cancerous) lesions on the vocal fold. A lesion is a structural defect -- an irregular or abnormal area of tissue -- that can easily disrupt the normal functioning of the vocal folds and result in symptoms of a voice disorder.

Characteristics of a Voice Disorder?

hoarseness   periodic loss of voice
vocal fatigue   raspiness
inappropriate pitch or loudness

Voice problems, although very common, are not normal.
Over 1 million children suffer from a voice disorder nationwide. The incidence of voice disorders in school-aged children ranges from 6% to 23%.

Respiratory problems which are indicated by breathiness in voice/speech may occur due to abnormal closure of the vocal cords which can often be successfully treated with voice therapy.

Why are Voice Disorders serious in children?
❖ Can cause problems in acting, singing or communicating during sports.
❖ May interfere with class presentations or socialization with peers.
❖ May impact self-image and self-esteem.
❖ May lead to nodules (similar to calluses) on the vocal cords. Nodules are among the most common causes of voice disorders in children and account for approximately 40% to 80% of chronic hoarseness in children.**

Diagnosing Voice Impairments:

School-based Speech Therapists do not diagnosis voice impairments.

ASHA and NIDCD recommend seeing a physician, particularly an otolaryngologist (ear-nose-throat doctor) with a specialty in voice, if signs and symptoms of vocal nodules persist for two to three weeks or more. The doctor will use a special instrument, usually a mirror or camera with a light, to look inside the nose and mouth. A neurological examination may be done as well.
The professionals who assess the voice will look at:
· Vocal quality
· Pitch
· Loudness
· Ability to sustain (hold out) voicing
· Other characteristics of the voice

*Power Point
Slide 42*

Therapy Setting
Help the students think about the ways they use their voices. Talk about the different ways the children use their voices: talking to friends at school, at sporting events, on the phone; talking to their families; singing; giving speeches; etc. Solicit input from the students about ways they use their voices. If they provide examples of unhealthy voice uses (e.g., screaming on the playground), use this opportunity to talk about what screaming, loud talking, etc., do to the vocal folds. Education about vocal folds and their use, respiration, vocal hygiene, and strategies to change inappropriate vocal use are the suggested methods for therapy at school and at home. Very important for parents to buy into therapy for voice abuse.

*Power Point
Slide 43*

Teach……………..

*Power Point
Slide 44*

Recap:
Today we have discussed:
Articulation
Language
Fluency
Voice
Ways to identify these impairments
Therapy techniques for each

*Power Point
Slide 45*

Questions/Comments???

*Power Point
Slide 46*

Tickets out the Door
If this presentation were a pizza, what would the toppings be?

Write a text message summary of what you learned today

References *Power Point
Slide 47-50*

SLP Workshop - Agenda for Day 3

8:15 – 8:30   Sign in/Breakfast Snacks

8:30 – 9:15   What if? SLP/TEACHER

9:15 - 10:00   RTI

10:00 – 10:15 Break

10:15 – 11:00 RTI continued

11:00 – 11:45 RTI and the Teacher

11:45 – 12:45 Lunch

12:45 – 1:30   504 vs. IEP (brief comparison)

1:30 - 2:15   Super Duper Handouts Discussion/Review

2:15 – 3:00   Reflections/Questions/Comments

3:00 – 3:30   Tickets out the Door

Lesson Plan

Teachers will learn of indicators in identifying potential SLP students and how to assist them through the RTI referral process as well as in the classroom. Knowledge of developmental indicators would give teachers the ability to identify speech and language issues seen in the classroom, therefore increasing referrals and decreasing the wait-time of providing students with speech and language assistance. Tier 2 interventions – student assistance that can be done at any time by the teacher – will be presented as a means of help teachers assist students in the classroom, or at any time, prior to the start of SLP services. The intervention is a form of progress monitoring where the teacher works with speech and language students 2-3 times a week for a minimum of 3 weeks, recording data on speech and language students from at least one session. Data collected from the intervention is then provided to the SLP who will help teachers in deter mining next steps. At that point, the teacher and SLP collaborate to determine appropriate services

and interventions for students. A number of handouts will be provided to teachers to use

for identification, intervention, and data collection.

The Speech and Language Pathologist

RTI and Interventions

Karmon D. Hatcher, Ed.S.-SLP

1

MY STUDY

A qualitative study that examines the perspectives of elementary school teachers and administrators related to the inclusion of the SLP in the learning community

2

Guiding Questions

- What are educators' perceptions of the SLP in the educational setting?
- How can educators use the SLP as a collaborative resource for the intervention and education of students?

3

Day 3 - Agenda

8:15 - 8:30	Sign in/Breakfast Snacks
8:30 - 9:15	What if?, SLP/TEACHER
9:15 - 10:00	RTI
10:00 - 10:15	Break
10:15 - 11:00	RTI continued
11:00 - 11:45	RTI and the Teacher
11:45 - 12:45	Lunch
12:45 - 1:30	504 vs. IEP (brief comparison)
1:30 - 2:30	Super Duper Handouts
2:30 - 3:00	Reflections/Questions/Comments
3:00 - 3:30	Tickets out the Door

4

What if you asked teachers...

What do you know about speech and language development?

Do you believe speech and language development is part of your responsibility?

Do you believe you have what it takes to bring about change in children's language skills?

5

"I Know You're the Speech Teacher...Tell Me What You Do?"

Speech Teacher a.k.a. Speech/Language Teacher, Speech Pathologist, Speech/Language Pathologist. Speech Therapist, Speech/Language Therapist, Speech Clinician, Speech Correctionist etc

A speech teacher can provide a variety of services to speech/language impaired students:
screening and assessment
direct therapy in a pull-out or push-in program
collaboration and consultation with classroom teachers
instructional assistants, parents, and the IEP team

6

What if..........

Instead of this: Skunk Stump
A skunk sat on a stump and thunk the stump stunk, but the stump thunk the skunk stunk.

You heard this: Tun Tum
A tun ta on a tum an tun da tum tun, bud a tum tun da tun tun.

Or instead of this:
The Inimitable Peter Piper
Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers. A peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked. If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers, Where's the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked?

You heard this:
Feta fifa fickt a fect of fifl feffas. A fec of fickl feffas Feta Fifa fickd.......

7

RTI

8

Which students should be referred?

Students who are having difficulties with the following skills can be referred for a speech/language screening/evaluation.

· articulation (producing speech sounds)
· phonemic awareness skills (manipulating sounds in words)
· following directions
· listening and reading comprehension (summarizing, main idea...)
· auditory processing (attending, memory, sound discrimination, figure-ground)
· wh-questions (asking, answering)
· vocabulary (understanding, labeling, defining word meanings/word relationships)
· word finding (on the tip of my tongue)
· grammar/writing skills

9

There's more.........................

· narrative skills (the ability to describe things, and events, and to tell stories)
· sequencing events
· fluency/stuttering
· voice (may sound hoarse, nasal, denasal, too quiet/too loud)
· pragmatic skills (knowing what to say, how to say it, when to say it and how to
· interact with others)
· initiating/maintaining conversations
· and more!!
· **Paperwork, paperwork, paperwork!!!**

10

"If we don't have or have never had speech impaired students in our classroom, we understand less about what the SLP does because we never have contact."

"Only time you may see her is in an IEP meeting. Therefore our knowledge is limited."

Finally, as stated by a second grade teacher, "If teachers knew more about what the speech therapist could help us with , it would help us understand and use her knowledge to help our students more often."

(quotes provided by participants, 2014)

11

SLPs can be a resource

Empower teachers with tools and techniques to move language.
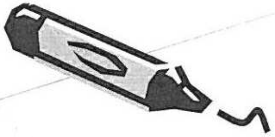
Provide specific strategies:
-Specific to teachers
-Wait time
-Schedules
-Extending/expanding

Tailor suggestions to speech and language needs of child

12

RTI and the Teacher

Referral Process for possible
speech, language, fluency kiddos

13

Rtl: Core Principles for both Academic and Behavioral Implementation

We can effectively teach all children

Intervene Early

Multi-tiered model of support

Use data to make decisions

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTIONS Rtl

Use problem-solving for decision making

Monitor student progress to inform instruction

Use assessment for three different purposes

Use SBR interventions

14

INTERVENTIONS—Tier 2 - "....but I'm not a speech theraist!!!

Tier 2 interventions can be done at any time of the day in your classroom:
reading groups
one-on-one
while you are waiting on kids during restroom break
end of lunch while everyone is finishing
whenever you can find just a few minutes to focus on that student

PROGRESS MONITORING:
1) working with the child at least 2-3 times each week
2) record data on form at least 1 time each week
3) minimum of 3 weeks

Don't be afraid to consult your SLP for recommendations for appropriate interventions for your student!

15

When you need to refer a student:

Complete the **TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE** (SI-RTI 1) for the student you are concerned about and take to the data meeting to discuss with RTI team.

If **ARTICULATION** is a concern
complete the Teacher Articulation Checklist (SI-RTI 2)
and take to data meeting.
For more information refer to SuperDuper Handy Handout Number 201.

SI-RTI forms created by BCSS SLPs can be retrieved from www.bcssk12.org
RTI manual for speech language referrals

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If **LANGUAGE** is a concern complete the appropriate grade level checklist:

Kindergarten = SI-RTI 3

First Grade = SI-RTI 4

Second Grade = SI-RTI 5

Third Grade = SI-RTI 6

Fourth Grade = SI-RTI 7

Fifth Grade = SI-RTI 8

and take to the data meeting

For more info. refer to SuperDuper Handy Handouts Number 377

SI-RTI forms created by BCSS SLPs can be retrieved from www.bcssk12.org.
RTI manual for speech language referrals

17

If **STUTTERING** is a concern
complete the Teacher Articulation Checklist (SI-RTI 9)
and take to data meeting.

Some see Porky Pig as an example of stuttering being the butt of jokes.

I see a confident stutterer not afraid of hiding any of his shortcomings.

And the fact that he doesn't wear any pants.

Voice disorders are diagnosed by a physician.

18

RTI Coordinator will record date of Tier 2 referral, collect forms, copy and send to SLP for review.

For initial interventions, refer to the following forms:

Articulation = SI RTI 10 (intervention suggestions)
SI RTI 11 (progress monitoring form)
SI RTI 12 (placement descriptions for various articulation sounds)

Language = SI RTI 13 (intervention suggestions)
SI RTI 14 (progress monitoring form)

Stuttering = SI RTI 15 (intervention suggestions)
SI RTI 16 (progress monitoring form)

3 weeks minimum. Record results on progress monitoring form.

SI-RTI forms created by BCSS SLPs can be retrieved from www.bcss12.org
RTI manual for speech language referrals

19

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3 weeks (or so) later.......

Discuss progress at next data meeting. There will be one of 3 results of the meeting:

Remain at Tier 2?
If you have started seeing progress after at least 3 weeks of interventions, that is fantastic! Keep it up! Stay in Tier 2.

If you see progress with 1 target, but need to also work on other goals, stay at Tier 2 with changes to goals. We may need to add a sound or another goal o intervention. Consult SLP.

Refer to Tier 3?
You provided the interventions with integrity. There was little or no change in the student's performance on targeted goals. The documentation provides the appropriate evidence. Refer to Tier 3 for more intensive intervention. At Tier 3, the SLP will make every attempt to attend the meetings. She will provide intervention materials if necessary and assist with some of the direct intervention if needed.

20

Common Speech Language Pathology Terms to be familiar with when determining what to refer the at-risk student for
(refer to Super Duper Handy Handout Number 207).

Let's Talk About It................................

Speech Language Difference vs. Disorder
Articulation vs. Phonology
Phonological Awareness vs. Phonics
Organic vs. Functional
Fluency vs. Dysfluency
Accommodations vs. Modifications
Syntax vs. Semantics
Augmentative vs. Alternative Communication
Oral vs. Aural

21

QUESTIONS about RTI?

How do you know the difference between an articulation and dialectal issue?

How does a speech problem affect assessments in the classroom?

If I can't understand a student because of a speech issue, how do I help make them successful? How do I avoid frustrating them, me, and/or embarrassing them?

More?????

22

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504 vs IEP

· Section 504, while intended to be consistent with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), is more encompassing;

· All individuals who receive special education and related services under IDEA are also considered to be qualified individuals under Section 504.

Section 504/ADA
· However, all individuals who qualify for Section 504 services may not qualify for special education under IDEA.

23

Section 504/ADA

· Section 504 covers all students who have a disability that substantially limits one or more major life activities which includes learning

· Section 504 also covers school employees and others with disabilities.

· All costs are the obligation of the general school budget, as no state or federal funding is provided to assist in complying with Section 504.

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Section 504/ADA

- A person may be considered disabled under the definition of Section 504/ADA if he/she:

  - Has a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more of such person's major life activities and impacts the student's educational program;

  - Has a record of such an impairment;

  - Is regarded as having such an impairment.

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Section 504/ADA

Major Life Activities" include:

- Caring for one's self
- Breathing
- Walking
- Eating
- Sleeping
- Seeing
- Speaking
- Hearing
- Learning

- Reading
- Thinking
- Concentrating
- Communicating
- Working
- Standing
- Lifting
- Bending

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Section 504/ADA

"*Major Life Activities*"

- When a condition does not substantially limit a major life activity, the individual does not qualify for services/accommodations under Section 504/ADA;

- The condition must impact the child's educational program.

- However, there may be a need for 504 documentation without accommodations (discipline)

27

Section 504/ADA

- In summary, it is important to remember that some students who have physical or mental impairments that substantially limit their ability to participate in the education program are entitled to accommodations under Section 504/ADA <u>even though</u> they may not fall into special education categories and be covered by the special education law.

- Although Section 504/ADA does not require schools to develop an Individual Education Program (IEP) with annual goals and objectives, it is required that the school provide written documentation for each 504/ADA eligible student; (and REVIEW IT PERIODICALLY)
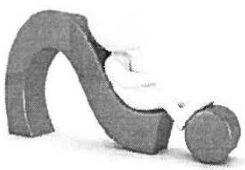
28

SuperDuper Handy Handouts

Number 162: What is a Speech Language Pathologist
Number 50: Apraxia of Speech and Developmental Verbal Dyspraxia
Number 209: What is a "Lisp"?
Number 306: Secondary Behaviors of Stuttering
Number 315: Noise-Induced Hearing Loss
Number 356: Phonological Disorders
Number 358: Developmental Domains
     Number 396: Difference between Speech and Language
     Number 38: Collaboration: The Key to Success!

Many other useful and informational handouts can be accessed at www.superduper.com
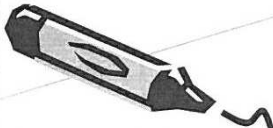
29

Questions/Comments

30

Tickets out the Door

Write a recipe for RTI using 3 ingredients and no more than 5 steps.

How does this information relate to the success of our students?
(no more than 5 statements)

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That's all Folks!

Cue Sound :0)

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The Speech and Language Pathologist: *RTI and Interventions –*
Day 3 Script

*Power Point
Slide 2*

MY STUDY
A qualitative study that examined the perspectives of elementary school teachers and administrators related to the inclusion of the SLP in the learning community

*Power Point
Slide 3*

Guiding Questions
What are educators' perceptions of the SLP in the educational setting?
How can educators use the SLP as a collaborative resource for the intervention and education of students?

*Power Point
Slide 4*

Day 3 - Agenda
8:15 – 8:30   Sign in/Breakfast Snacks
8:30 – 9:15   What if? SLP/TEACHER
9:15 - 10:00   RTI
10:00 – 10:15 Break
10:15 – 11:00 RTI continued
11:00 – 11:45 RTI and the Teacher
11:45 – 12:45 Lunch
12:45 – 1:30   504 vs. IEP (brief comparison)
1:30 - 2:15   Super Duper Handouts Discussion/Review
2:15 – 3:00   Reflections/Questions/Comments
3:00 – 3:30   Tickets out the Door

*Power Point
Slides 5-7*

What if you asked teachers…
What do you know about speech and language development?
Do you believe speech and language development is part of your responsibility?
Do you believe you have what it takes to bring about change in children's language skills?

"I Know You're the Speech Teacher...Tell Me What You Do?"
Speech Teacher a.k.a. Speech/Language Teacher, Speech Pathologist, Speech/Language Pathologist. Speech Therapist, Speech/Language Therapist, Speech Clinician, Speech Correctionist etc.
A speech teacher can provide a variety of services to speech/language impaired students:
- o   screening and assessment
- o   direct therapy in a pull-out or push-in program
- o   collaboration and consultation with classroom teachers

o   instructional assistants, parents, and the IEP team

What if..........

Instead of this: Skunk Stump

A skunk sat on a stump and thunk the stump stunk, but the stump thunk the skunk stunk.

You heard this: Tun Tum

A tun ta on a tum an tun da tum tun, bud a tum tun da tun tun.

Or instead of this:

The Inimitable Peter Piper

Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers. A peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked. If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers, Where's the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked?

You heard this:

Feta fifa fickt a fect of fifl feffas. A fec of fickl feffas Feta Fifa fickd………

*Power Point
Slides 8-11*

RTI

Students who are having difficulties with the following skills can be referred for a speech/language screening/evaluation:

o   articulation (producing speech sounds)
o   phonemic awareness skills (manipulating sounds in words)
o   following directions
o   listening and reading comprehension (summarizing, main idea...)
o   auditory processing (attending, memory, sound discrimination, figure-ground)
o   wh-questions (asking, answering)
o   vocabulary (understanding, labeling, defining word meanings/word relationships)
o   word finding (on the tip of my tongue)
o   grammar/writing skills

There's more………………………

o   narrative skills (the ability to describe things, and events, and to tell stories)
o   sequencing events
o   fluency/stuttering
o   voice (may sound hoarse, nasal, denasal, too quiet/too loud)
o   pragmatic skills (knowing what to say, how to say it, when to say it and how to
o   interact with others)
o   initiating/maintaining conversations
o   and more!!

Paperwork, paperwork, paperwork!!!

"If we don't have or have never had speech impaired students in our classroom, we understand less about what the SLP does because we never have contact." "Only time you may see her is in an IEP meeting. Therefore our knowledge is limited."   Finally, as stated by a second grade teacher, "If teachers knew more about what the speech therapist

could help us with , it would help us understand and use her knowledge to help our students more often." *(quotes provided by participants, 2014)*

Power Point Slide 12

SLPs can be a resource. We can empower teachers with tools and techniques to move language!
We can provide specific strategies 1) specific for teachers, 2) wait time, 3) schedules, 4) extending/expanding, 5) or simply taylor suggestions to meet the speech and language needs of the child!

Power Point Slides 13-15

RTI and the Teacher: Referral Process for possible speech, language, and fluency kiddos

INTERVENTIONS—Tier 2 - *"....but I'm not a speech theraist!!!*
Tier 2 interventions can be done at any time of the day in your classroom:
- ❖ reading groups
- ❖ one-on-one
- ❖ while you are waiting on kids during restroom break
- ❖ end of lunch while everyone is finishing
- ❖ whenever you can find just a few minutes to focus on that student

PROGRESS MONITORING:
1) working with the child at least 2-3 times each week
2) record data on form at least 1 time each week
3) minimum of 3 weeks

Don't be afraid to consult your SLP for recommendations for appropriate interventions for your student!

Power Point Slides 16-18

When you need to refer a student:
Complete the **TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE** (*SI-RTI 1*) for the student you are concerned about and take to the data meeting to discuss with RTI team.

If **ARTICULATION** is a concern complete the Teacher Articulation Checklist (*SI-RTI 2*) and take to data meeting. For more information refer to SuperDuper Handy Handout Number 201. RTI Coordinator will record date of Tier 2 referral, collect forms, copy and send to SLP for review.
If **LANGUAGE** is a concern complete appropriate forms indicated by the child's grade level (Slide # 17).
If **STUTTERING** is a concern complete Teacher Articulation Checklist (SI-RTI 9 and a fluency questionnaire) – Slide # 18.

*Power Point
Slides 19-20*

For initial interventions, refer to the following forms which are included in your packet:
Articulation = *SI RTI 10* (intervention suggestions)
              SI RTI 11 (progress monitoring form)
              SI RTI 12 (placement descriptions for various articulation sounds)

Language =   *SI RTI 13* (intervention suggestions)
              SI RTI 14 (progress monitoring form)

Stuttering =   *SI RTI 15* (intervention suggestions)
              SI RTI 16 (progress monitoring form)

**********3 weeks minimum. Record results on progress monitoring form*************

3 weeks (or so) later…….
Discuss progress at next data meeting. There will be one of 3 results of the meeting:
Remain at Tier 2? If you have started seeing progress after at least 3 weeks of interventions, that is fantastic! Keep it up! Stay in Tier 2.

If you see progress with 1 target, but need to also work on other goals, stay at Tier 2 with changes to goals. We may need to add a sound or another goal o intervention. Consult SLP.
Refer to Tier 3?
You provided the interventions with integrity. There was little or no change in the student's performance on targeted goals. The documentation provides the appropriate evidence. Refer to Tier 3 for more intensive intervention. At Tier 3, the SLP will make every attempt to attend the meetings. She will provide intervention materials if necessary and assist with some of the direct intervention if needed.

*Power Point
Slide 21*

Common Speech Language Pathology Terms to be familiar with when determining what to refer the at-risk student for (refer to Super Duper Handy Handout Number 207).

Let's Talk About It……………………………………..
Speech Language Difference vs. Disorder
Articulation vs. Phonology
Phonological Awareness vs. Phonics
Organic vs. Functional
Fluency vs. Dysfluency

Accommodations vs. Modifications
Syntax vs. Semantics
Augmentative vs. Alternative Communication
Oral vs. Aural

*Power Point
Slide 22*

QUESTIONS about RTI?
How do you know the difference between an articulation and dialectal issue?
How does a speech problem affect assessments in the classroom?
If I can't understand a student because of a speech issue, how do I help make them successful? How do I avoid frustrating them, me, and/or embarrassing them?
More?????

Allow time for intense discussion if needed!

*Power Point
Slide 23*

504 vs IEP
Section 504, while intended to be consistent with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), is more encompassing; All individuals who receive special education and related services under IDEA are also considered to be qualified individuals under Section 504.

*Power Point
Slides 24-25*

Section 504/ADA
However, all individuals who qualify for Section 504 services may not qualify for special education under IDEA. Section 504 covers all students who have a physical or mental disability that substantially limits one or more major life activities, including, but not limited to learning.

Section 504 also covers school employees and others with disabilities.

All costs are the obligation of the general school budget, as <u>no state or federal funding</u> is provided to assist in complying with Section 504.

A person may be considered disabled under the definition of Section 504/ADA if he/she:
  – Has a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more of such person's major life activities and impacts the student's educational program;
  – Has a record of such an impairment;
  – Is regarded as having such an impairment.

*Power Point
Slides 26-27*

Section 504/ADA
Major Life Activities" include:
  ✓ Caring for one's self   ✓ Walking
  ✓ Breathing   ✓ Eating

- ✓ Sleeping
- ✓ Seeing
- ✓ Speaking
- ✓ Hearing
- ✓ Learning
- ✓ Reading
- ✓ Thinking

- ✓ Concentrating
- ✓ Communicating
- ✓ Working
- ✓ Standing
- ✓ Lifting
- ✓ Bending

Power Point Slide 28

Summary
When a condition does not substantially limit a major life activity, the individual does not qualify for services/accommodations under Section 504/ADA;
The condition must impact the child's educational program.
However, there may be a need for 504 documentation without accommodations (discipline)

In summary, it is important to remember that some students who have physical or mental impairments that substantially limit their ability to participate in the education program are entitled to accommodations under Section 504/ADA <u>even though</u> they may not fall into special education categories and be covered by the special education law.

Although Section 504/ADA does not require schools to develop an Individual Education Program (IEP) with annual goals and objectives, it is required that the school provide written documentation for each 504/ADA eligible student; (and REVIEW IT PERIODICALLY)

Power Point Slide 29

SuperDuper Handy Handouts (all can be found at www.superduper.com and are available to the public).
Number 162: What is a Speech Language Pathologist
Number 86: Reauthorition of IDEA
Number 157: IEP Meeting Information
Number 50: Apraxia of Speech and Developmental Verbal Dyspraxia
Number 393: Dyspraxia – Symptoms and Treatment
Number 209: What is a "Lisp"?
Number 241: Tongue-Tied
Number 306: Secondary Behaviors of Stuttering
Number 210: Cluttering
Number 208: Vocal Nodules
Number 315: Noise-Induced Hearing Loss
Number 356: Phonological Disorders
Number 358: Developmental Domains
       Number 396: Difference between Speech and Language
       Number 401: Students and Standardized Tests
       Number 38: Collaboration: The Key to Success!

*Power Point
Slide 30*

Q**uestions/Comments**

*Power Point
Slide 31*

Tickets out the Door
Write a recipe for RTI using 3 ingredients and no more than 5 steps.

How does this information relate to the success of our students?
(no more than 5 statements)

References

*Power Point
Slide 32-35*

THE END

Day 1 - Agenda

8:15 - 8:30	Register/Sign in
8:30 - 9:15	My Study, Guiding Questions, What does an SLP do?, Range of Responsibilities
9:15 - 10:00	Collaboration
10:00 - 10:15	Break
10:15 - 11:00	Leadership
11:00 - 11:45	Factors to be Considered
11:45 - 12:45	Lunch
12:45 - 1:30	Implications, Evolving Practices
1:30 - 2:15	RTI
2:15 - 3:00	Telepractice, Questions, Comments, Concerns
3:00 - 3:30	Tickets out the Door

Day 2 - Agenda

8:15 – 8:30	Register/Sign in/Breakfast Snacks
8:30 – 9:15	Causes of Speech Language Impairments
9:15 - 10:00	Areas of Speech Language Impaired, Articulation
10:00 – 10:15	Break
10:15 – 11:00	Articulation continued
11:00 – 11:45	Language
11:45 – 12:45	Lunch
12:45 – 1:30	Language continued
1:30 - 2:15	Fluency, Voice
2:15 – 3:00	Recap, Questions, Comments, Concerns
3:00 – 3:30	Tickets out the Door

Day 3 - Agenda

8:15 – 8:30	Sign in/Breakfast Snacks
8:30 – 9:15	What if?, SLP/TEACHER
9:15 - 10:00	RTI
10:00 – 10:15	Break
10:15 – 11:00	RTI continued
11:00 – 11:45	RTI and the Teacher
11:45 – 12:45	Lunch
12:45 – 1:30	504 vs. IEP (brief comparison)
1:30 - 2:15	Super Duper Handouts
2:15 – 3:00	Reflections/Questions/Comments
3:00 – 3:30	Tickets out the Door

Satisfaction Instrument

My goal for attending this session is:

On this topic, 1 consider myself:
An Expert   Skilled   Knowledgeable   A Novice

SESSION CONTENT

In regards to this workshop, the content:	Significantly	Generally	Somewhat	Very Little	Don't Know
Is USEFUL to me					
Is APPLICABLE to me					
has CHANGED my THINKING.					
has REINFORCED my THINKING.					

List at least one thing you learned today that you will use in your classroom/program.

Concerning the content of the session you attended, how much have each of the following INCREASED?

	Significantly	Generally	Somewhat	Very Little	Don't Know
Overall KNOWLEDGE of the content presented					
Overall CONFIDENCE that you can apply the knowledge to your job.					
Overall MOTIVATION to implement the techniques presented					
Overall KNOWLEDGE of the content presented					

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ATTITUDE (Before and after this training)

		Significantly	Generally	Somewhat	Very Little	Don't Know
11. Insert KSA	Before					
	After					
12. Insert KSA	Before					
	After					
13. Insert KSA	Before					
	After					
14. Insert KSA	Before					
	After					

Implementation Survey

Information for Implementation

1. List at least one thing you have implemented in your classroom/program from the training.

2. Explain one "take away" from the training that has stuck with you.

Description of Implementation

3. Since the training, how have you used the strategies in your classroom/program?

4. Comparing the training to your current practice, how has your practice improved because of the training?

5. What have you done differently in your practice as a result of the training?

6. How do you vary your implementation of what you learned in the training in order to accommodate your classroom?

7. Reflecting on your current practices are they:

- Directly influenced by what you learned in the training

- Influenced by participating in the training

- As a result of another source (explain)

Degree of Implementation

8. To what extent has the information in the training changed your classroom routine?

9. How regularly are you using the techniques presented in the training in your program?

10. To what extent have you integrated the strategies from the training into your work?

Appendix B

Guiding Interview Questions

Interview Guiding Questions for Individual Participants

Administrator and Reading Specialist Questions

> Please explain your interactions with the SLP?

> What is your understanding of what the SLP does in relation to the education process of elementary students?

> What are your perceptions and/or expectations of the speech impaired program at school?

> What are your perceptions and/or expectations of the SLP in your school?

> Describe your experience in collaborating with the SLP in your school.

> How do you believe the SLP could participate more actively in collaboration with teachers during the RTI process? Please explain.

> How might we use our current resources to increase collaboration between the SLP and teachers in the education setting?

As the interviewee responds to the open-ended questions, I will listen carefully for the opportunity to ask one or more of the following probing questions (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

> What do you mean?

> I'm not sure that I am following you.

> Would you please explain that?

> What did you say then?

> What were you thinking about at that time?

> Tell me about it.

Interview Guiding Questions for Individual Participants
K – 5 Teachers

❖ Please explain your interactions with the SLP.

❖ What is your understanding of what the SLP does in relation to the education process of elementary students?

❖ What are your perceptions and/or expectations of the Speech Impaired program at school?

❖ What are your perceptions and/or expectations of the SLP in your school?

❖ Describe your experience in collaborating with the SLP in your school.

❖ How do you believe the SLP could participate more actively in collaboration with teachers during the RTI process? Please explain.

❖ How might we use our current resources to increase collaboration between the SLP and teachers in the education setting?

❖ What information do you believe that you need regarding the speech impaired program that would be beneficial to assist you in better serving at-risk students?

As the interviewee responds to the open-ended questions, I will listen carefully for the opportunity to ask one or more of the following probing questions (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

➢ What do you mean?

➢ I'm not sure that I am following you.

➢ Would you please explain that?

➢ What did you say then?

➢ What were you thinking about at that time?

➢ Tell me about it.