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Novice Teachers' Perspectives of Learner-Centered Reading Instruction

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Walden University

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Jennifer Loudon

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Walden University

2018

Abstract

Novice Teachers' Perspectives of Learner-Centered Reading Instruction

by

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MA, Southern Arkansas University, 2013

BS, Colorado State University, 2001

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

May, 2018

Abstract

Learner-centered reading instruction was underrepresented in novice K to 5 teachers' classrooms despite a district mandated requirement to use them. When learner-centered reading instruction is not used, students are less motivated to learn and less likely to become proficient readers. The purpose of this bounded qualitative case study was to explore novice K to 5 reading teachers' perspectives of learner-centered reading instruction and how they taught a comprehensive reading curriculum in their classrooms. The conceptual framework was based on the Arkansas Department of Education's science of reading and Weimer's learner-centered teaching. The research questions focused on exploring novice K to 5 teachers' perspectives of learner-centered reading instruction and how they taught a comprehensive reading curriculum in their classrooms. Purposeful sampling was used to select 10 novice K to 5 reading teachers. Data were collected through semistructured interviews and classroom observations. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis and open and axial coding strategies, which led to themes. Participants identified that they were unprepared to implement learner-centered reading instruction and did not feel they had time to collaborate and plan learner-centered instructional lessons. Based on these findings, a professional development series was designed to support novice teachers' implementation of learner-centered reading instruction. The findings from this study and the resulting project may lead to positive social change when novice teachers implement learner-centered reading instruction leading to increased student motivation and reading achievement.

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Dedication

I dedicate this achievement to my husband, Charlie. I could not have completed this journey without your unwavering encouragement and support. I also dedicate this to my three biggest cheerleaders - Lexi, Jack, and Luke. Your hugs and words of encouragement meant more to me than you will ever know as I completed this doctoral journey. To my mom and dad, thank you for believing in me and believing that I could accomplish anything I set out to do. To Laurie, thank you for your prayers and words of encouragement along the way. And, to Neelie, who spent many long runs and miles listening to me talk about my study.

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Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

Central School District (CSD; pseudonym) teachers are required to use learner-centered instructional methods when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum. The benefits of learner-centered instruction in engaging students and promoting reading success led CSD district administrators to require the use of learner-centered instructional strategies in the classroom. Researchers have shown that the use of learner-centered instructional strategies when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum increases student engagement and leads to students who are more successful in reading (Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Roehl, Reddy, & Shannon, 2013). When learner-centered instruction is not used in the classroom, students are less motivated to learn and less likely to progress to become proficient readers (Goodwin et al., 2014). However, CSD lesson plan data collected from K to 5 novice reading teachers indicated an underrepresentation of learner-centered instructional strategies when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum (assistant superintendent, personal communication, May 16, 2017). Based on the lesson plan data, a gap in practice exists at CSD regarding novice teachers' implementation of learner-centered instructional strategies when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum (assistant superintendent, personal communication, June 19, 2017).

To improve reading instruction, CSD requires that novice K to 5 reading teachers, a teacher who has been teaching for less than 5 years, use learner-centered instructional methods when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum (assistant superintendent, personal communication, May 16, 2017). To prepare novice teachers to use learner-

centered pedagogy, CSD administrators provided professional development on learner-centered instructional techniques in the fall of 2014, 2015, and 2016 (assistant superintendent, personal communication, May 16, 2017). Despite the district requirement to use learner-centered reading methods, learner-centered instructional practices were underrepresented in novice K to 5 reading teachers' instruction of a comprehensive reading curriculum (assistant superintendent, personal communication, May 16, 2017).

Learner-centered instruction is based on five principles: (a) teacher facilitation of learning, (b) teacher-student shared decision making, (c) use of content to build knowledge and skills, (d) student responsibility for learning, and (e) multiple approaches to evaluation (Weimer, 2013). Learner-centered instruction encourages deep understanding of the content being taught and results in students who are more engaged in the classroom (Dole, Bloom, & Kowalske, 2016). Students in learner-centered classrooms are also provided with opportunities to participate in their own education, which increases their motivation to learn (Roehl et al., 2013). When used while teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum, learner-centered instruction increases student literacy knowledge (Arkansas Department of Education [ADOE], 2017; Simpson, 2016; Snow & Matthews, 2016; Weimer, 2013).

Teachers should provide learner-centered instruction when teaching the five research-based components of a comprehensive reading curriculum: (a) phonological awareness, (b) phonics, (c) fluency, (d) vocabulary, and (e) comprehension (ADOE, 2017; Simpson, 2016; Snow & Matthews, 2016; Weimer, 2013). Learner-centered reading instruction leads to students who are more likely to become fluent and proficient

readers (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). A teacher's use of learner-centered instruction to teach a comprehensive reading curriculum is crucial in promoting student reading success (ADOE, 2017; Snow & Matthews, 2016; Weimer, 2013). Additionally, readers in learner-centered classrooms are more likely to be motivated and engaged in reading than readers in teacher-centered classrooms (Little, McCoach, & Reis, 2014).

Teacher-centered and learner-centered instruction are different pedagogical strategies. In a teacher-centered classroom, students focus on the teacher as the classroom leader and instructional methods revolve around classroom lecture, guided discussion, teacher-led demonstrations, and all students working on the same task (Polly, Margerison, & Piel, 2014). In a learner-centered classroom, students work collaboratively, participate in instructional decisions, and take responsibility for their learning, while the teacher serves as a facilitator of student learning (Polly et al., 2014; Weimer, 2013). Teacher pedagogy plays an essential role in developing fluent and proficient readers; however, it is common for novice teachers to forgo learner-centered instruction and to rely on existing pedagogical strategies that revolve around teacher-centered instructional methods (DuFour & Marzano, 2015; Goodwin et al., 2014). Novice teachers often implement teaching strategies that are familiar to them, and they often have a preconceived idea that teacher-centered instruction is a tried and true strategy (Dole et al., 2016).

The Local Problem

An instructional problem exists at CSD where learner-centered instructional strategies are underrepresented in novice K to 5 teachers' instruction of a comprehensive reading curriculum despite a district mandated requirement to use them (assistant superintendent, personal communication, May 16, 2017; ADOE, 2017). In the fall of 2014, 2015, and 2016, reading teachers at CSD were provided with professional development based on learner-centered instructional strategies and were required to incorporate these strategies into their teaching of a comprehensive reading curriculum. However, according to the assistant superintendent at CSD, a K to 5 district analysis of novice teachers' lesson plan data indicated an underrepresentation of learner-centered instruction when teaching phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (assistant superintendent, personal communication, June 19, 2017).

In addition to the lesson plan data, the most recent state test scores showed that over half of second through fifth grade students at CSD were categorized as below proficient in reading, with that number increasing to near 70% for students in novice teachers' classrooms (ADOE, 2016). According to CSD's literacy curriculum specialist, district reading subscores showed that more than 50% of students were reading below grade level when they graduated fifth grade (personal communication, March 15, 2017). The state public school program advisor asserted that the underrepresentation of learner-centered instruction in novice teachers' classrooms when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum, along with the percentage of students who scored below grade level in reading, pointed to a concern about how novice teachers were teaching a

comprehensive reading curriculum. The program advisor voiced an additional concern about novice teachers' perspectives regarding learner-centered reading instruction (public school program advisor, personal communication, 2017). A gap in practice exists at CSD regarding novice teachers' implementation of learner-centered instructional strategies when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum (assistant superintendent, personal communication, June 19, 2017).

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

The literacy coach at CSD revealed concerns about the instructional practices among novice reading teachers (literacy coach, personal communication, April 28, 2017). In grade-level literacy meetings, the literacy coach noted that novice teachers often did not participate in discussions that focused on learner-centered teaching methods (personal communication, April 28, 2017). Additionally, as previously mentioned, a review of novice teachers' lesson plans indicated an underrepresentation of learner-centered instruction when teaching the components of a comprehensive reading curriculum (assistant superintendent, personal communication, June 19, 2017). The evidence of an underrepresentation of learner-centered reading instruction in novice teachers' classrooms caused district administrators to examine student performance on state and district reading assessments.

State assessments administered to second through fifth grade students at CSD are used to establish the standard of proficiency in reading. In 2013 and 2014, the overall percentage of students who scored proficient or advanced on state tests was higher than

60%, while those scoring proficient or advanced in novice teachers' classrooms was slightly above 30% (ADOE, 2016). The overall percentage of students who scored proficient or advanced in 2015 and 2016 decreased to 57% and 44% respectively, while those who scored proficient and advanced in novice teachers' classrooms remained near the 30% mark (ADOE, 2016). While reading scores decreased, the number of novice teachers teaching reading in K to 5 classrooms increased from two in 2013 to 21 in 2016, which was more than half of the K to 5 reading teachers at CSD (see Table 1). In addition to state assessments, students are given a district reading assessment to determine if they are reading at, above, or below grade level. In 2016, 39.8% of fifth grade students were reading at or above a fifth grade level, a decrease from 44.6% in 2015 (Dibbles Assessment Data, 2016). Data from 2013 and 2014 were higher, indicating that slightly more than half of fifth grade students read at or above grade level in those years.

Table 1

Overall Percent of K to 5 Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced on State Reading Tests Compared to Percent Scoring Proficient and Advanced in Novice Teacher Classrooms

Year	Overall	Novice teacher classrooms	Number of K to 5 novice reading teachers
2016	43.6	27.7	21
2015	57.4	30.7	10
2014	73.2	32.6	4
2013	78.2	34.8	2

Results from state assessments, district reading assessments, and classroom lesson plan data led district administrators and state education literacy specialists to voice their concerns about novice K to 5 teachers' perspectives of learner-centered reading

instruction and how novice K to 5 teachers are teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum at CSD (assistant superintendent, personal communication, May 16, 2017; public school program advisor, personal communication, April 10, 2017).

Evidence of the Problem from Professional Literature

The quality of instruction used in a teacher's classroom is one of the biggest indicators of student success (Brookfield, 2015; Ingersoll & Perda, 2013; Kunter et al., 2013), and success in student literacy is improved when teachers use learner-centered instructional strategies to teach a comprehensive reading curriculum (ADOE, 2017; Lerkkanen et al., 2016; Weimer, 2013). Snow and Matthews (2016) reported that

Children who don't develop age-appropriate literacy skills by the end of third grade are at high risk of school failure. Longitudinal research conducted over almost 40 years has confirmed that differences between high school dropouts and graduates can be identified as early as third grade. (p. 2)

Much of the reading instruction that takes place in those first 3 years of school can be completed in the moment, when teachers are presented with unplanned opportunities to offer additional information about a topic (Griffith, Bauml, & Barksdale, 2015). If novice teachers do not use learner-centered instructional methods, they cannot fully take advantage of "in the moment" learning opportunities (Griffith et al., 2015).

Learner-centered instructional methods are reported to be more effective than traditional teacher-centered instructional methods (Burns, Pierson, & Reddy, 2014; Moore, 2014). The use of learner-centered instructional strategies to teach reading results in students who are more engaged in the classroom, are more motivated learners, and

have better attitudes toward reading (Bradford, Mowder, & Bohte, 2016; Cudney & Ezzell, 2017; Kashef, Pandia, & Khameneh, 2014). Both teachers and students have opportunities to engage in the instructional process and share their ideas during learner-centered instruction (Haber-Curran & Tillapaugh, 2015; Weimer, 2013). Additionally, an increase in diversity and background experiences among students makes it is even more important for teachers to understand and use learner-based instructional strategies to motivate and meet the different reading needs of learners (Goodwin et al., 2014). Zeichner and Pena-Sandoval (2015) argued that there is an urgent need for novice teachers to employ research based instructional strategies such as learner-centered instruction. However, novice teachers frequently do not use learner-centered instructional strategies when teaching reading in the classroom (Goodwin et al., 2014). Many novice teachers resort to strategies that focus on teacher-centered instruction (Strom, 2015). Goodwin et al. (2014) reported that it is common for novice teachers to rely on pedagogy that revolves centers on teacher-centered instructional strategies.

The purpose of this case study was to explore novice K to 5 teachers' perspectives of learner-centered instruction when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum at CSD and to explore how they were teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum in their K to 5 classrooms. My objective was to understand novice teachers' perspectives of learner-centered instruction when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum and to understand how novice teachers were teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum in their classrooms. To address this, I developed a project study to explore the problem of underrepresentation of learner-centered instructional strategies in novice K to 5 reading

teachers' classrooms to investigate novice teachers' perspectives of learner-centered instruction when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum and to investigate how novice teachers were teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum in their classrooms. The findings from this study may aid in understanding how to help novice teachers apply learner-centered instructional strategies when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum, as part of an effort to increase not only reading achievement but also students' overall ability to read, enjoyment of reading, and knowledge of how to apply and infuse reading into everyday life, which may promote positive social change.

Definition of Terms

Comprehension: A reader's ability to extract information and construct meaning from written language (ADOE, 2017).

Comprehensive reading curriculum: A curriculum that incorporates phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension into reading instruction (ADOE, 2017).

Fluency: The ability of a reader to read text rapidly, with accuracy, and with proper expression (Gunning, 2016).

Learner-centered: A form of instruction in which the teacher assumes the role of facilitator of the learning environment and instruction is focused on the learner and what the learner is learning (Weimer, 2013).

Novice teacher: A teacher who is in his or her first 5 years of teaching (Simpson, 2016).

Phonics: A system for approaching reading where letters are linked to sounds and the focus is on spelling patterns and blending of sounds (Reutzel & Cooter, 2015).

Phonological awareness: Rhyming, manipulating letter sounds, blending and segmenting of words (Suortti & Lipponen, 2016).

Vocabulary: The teaching of new words either separate from or as they appear in text (ADOE, 2017).

Significance of the Study

Reading is an essential skill for students, and a relationship exists between a student's reading proficiency and his or her overall academic success (Dogan, Ogut, & Kim, 2015; Schwabe, McElvany, & Trendtel, 2015). Students who struggle with reading in elementary school are more likely to struggle throughout their educational careers (Hagans & Good, 2013). Learner-centered instructional strategies based on the components of a comprehensive reading curriculum provide students with engaging and meaningful instructional opportunities that are more likely to result in student reading success (ADOE, 2017; Spear-Swerling & Zibulsky, 2014; Weimer, 2013). However, it was unknown why novice teachers at CSD do not apply learner-centered instructional strategies with fidelity in their classrooms to teach a K to 5 comprehensive reading curriculum. CSD administrators expressed concerns over K to 5 novice teachers' lack of learner-centered instruction when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum (assistant superintendent, personal communication, March 15, 2017). Due to the importance of learner-centered instruction and the positive effect it has on student reading success, it was necessary to conduct this case study at CSD to explore novice K to 5 reading

teachers' perspectives of learner-centered instructional strategies when teaching the five research-based components of a comprehensive reading curriculum and to understand how novice K to 5 reading teachers are teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum in their classrooms.

This project study may provide a contribution to the field of education by increasing stakeholders' understanding of novice K to 5 teachers' perspectives of learner-centered instruction when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum. Additionally, this project study may increase stakeholders' understanding of how novice K to 5 teachers are teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum in their classrooms.

Stakeholders may use the findings from this study to make decisions to improve reading instruction in novice teachers' classrooms. An increased awareness of novice teachers' perspectives of learner-centered instruction and how novice teachers are teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum in their classrooms may benefit administrators, classroom reading teachers, teacher education program providers, and students. CSD administrators and stakeholders may use the information from this study to support novice teachers in using learner-centered instruction when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum in K to 5 classrooms. If findings show why novice teachers at CSD are not applying learner-centered instruction to teach a comprehensive reading curriculum, administrators at CSD may take steps to provide professional development to better assist them. The insights from this study may lead to positive social change by aiding in the understanding of how to help novice teachers use learner-centered instruction when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum to increase reading

achievement as well as students' overall ability to read, enjoyment of reading, and knowledge of how to apply and infuse reading into everyday life.

Research Questions

CSD administrators, along with the state public school program advisor, expressed concerns regarding an underrepresentation of learner-centered methods in novice teachers' instruction of a comprehensive reading curriculum in K to 5 classrooms (assistant superintendent, personal communication, April 24, 2017; public school program advisor, personal communication, April 12, 2017). A district analysis of novice teachers' lesson plans indicated an underrepresentation of learner-centered instructional strategies when teaching phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (assistant superintendent, personal communication, June 19, 2017). Additionally, students in novice teachers' classrooms scored lower on state and district mandated reading tests when compared to students in experienced teachers' classrooms, and the percentage of students scoring proficient and advanced in the district had decreased as the number of K to 5 novice reading teachers had increased (assistant superintendent, personal communication, April 12, 2017; ADOE, 2016). Research supports the concept of learner-centered instruction and the five components of a comprehensive reading curriculum, but novice teachers' perspectives of learner-centered reading instruction and how novice teachers were teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum at CSD were unknown (assistant superintendent, personal communication, 2017; Spear-Swerling & Zibulsky, 2014). I developed two critical research questions intended to increase CSD administrators' and other stakeholders' awareness of why

learner-centered instructional strategies are underrepresented in novice K to 5 teachers' classrooms when they teach a comprehensive reading curriculum.

1. RQ1 – What are novice K to 5 reading teachers' perspectives of learner-centered instructional strategies when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum?
2. RQ2 - How do novice K to 5 reading teachers teach a comprehensive reading curriculum in their classrooms?

Review of the Literature

Conceptual Framework

Novice teachers at CSD are expected to use learner-centered instructional strategies to implement a district mandated reading curriculum based on the components that encompass a comprehensive reading curriculum. This project study was grounded on the ADOE's (2017) science of reading and Weimer's (2013) learner-centered teaching. The science of reading (2017) portion of the framework identified the content that should be taught in a K to 5 reading classroom, while the learner-centered teaching portion identified how it should be taught.

The science of reading model outlined the five components of a comprehensive reading curriculum as phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (ADOE, 2017). Over 40 years of research has addressed reading development and the instruction students need to receive to become proficient readers (National Reading Panel, 2000; Snow, Burns, & Griffen, 1998). In 1997, the National Reading Panel was created and tasked with evaluating over 100,000 studies to determine the best methods for teaching students to read. The National Reading Panel (2000) report

identified that reading instruction should be based on phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The science of reading model further outlined these components of a comprehensive reading curriculum and asserted that students need to receive instruction in all components of a comprehensive reading curriculum to be successful in reading (ADOE, 2017). Additionally, in order to promote student-reading success, instruction of all five components must happen throughout elementary school years for students to gain the most benefit (ADOE, 2017; Torgesen, 2002).

Instruction in phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension should be taught throughout elementary school years using strategies that are learner-centered and consider the unique backgrounds and experiences of each of the students (ADOE, 2017; Weimer, 2013). One of the main goals of reading is for an individual to comprehend the text they read, but without instruction that is learner-centered, it is difficult for students to achieve this goal (ADOE, 2017; Weimer, 2013).

Learner-centered instruction provides benefits for many different types of learners (Weimer, 2013). One benefit is that teachers' lessons are based on students' experiences, interests, suggestions, or input (Weimer, 2013). Additionally, opportunities that allow students to choose activities are based on their personal learning needs (Weimer, 2013). According to Weimer (2013), learner-centered instruction should be based on the following five strategies:

1. Teacher facilitation of learning. Teachers do less of the teaching and telling and promote student learning and discovery.

2. Teacher-student shared decision-making. Teachers allow students to have some control over their learning, which increases student motivation and enthusiasm.
3. Use of content to build knowledge and skills. Teachers use the content from the curriculum to build students' knowledge, skill, and ability to transfer knowledge to other settings.
4. Student responsibility for learning. Teachers create an environment that recognizes the uniqueness of each learner and promotes intrinsic motivation for learning.
5. Considering the purpose for evaluation. Teachers focus on learning and not on testing. Feedback should be detailed and promote growth. Different types of assessments and evaluations should be used, including the opportunity for self and peer evaluation.

Weimer (2013) argued that when teachers use learner-centered instruction, students are more likely to become critical and independent thinkers, which are skills required for lifelong success. While teacher-centered classrooms are not entirely negative, and they do require discipline, learner-centered environments empower students and encourage them to be motivated learners (Weimer, 2013). Students become empowered in their own education when they feel that they are involved in their learning process (Weimer, 2013). The use of learner-centered instruction when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum increases the likelihood that students will be successful in reading (ADOE, 2017; Weimer, 2013).

The framework for this project study identified the components that encompass a K to 5 comprehensive reading curriculum as well as learner-centered instructional strategies. Using the framework as a lens allowed me to investigate novice teachers' reading instruction and their perspectives of learner-centered instructional strategies when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum. This framework also allowed me to explore why learner-centered instructional strategies are underrepresented in novice teachers' teaching of the components of a comprehensive reading curriculum identified by the science of reading model (ADOE, 2017). A qualitative study investigating novice K to 5 teachers' perspectives of learner-centered instruction when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum and how they are teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum in their classrooms has the potential to increase understanding of how to better help novice teachers use learner-centered instruction to teach a comprehensive reading curriculum. I used interviews and classroom observations of reading instruction to research the problem.

Review of the Broader Problem

A review of current research regarding the components of a comprehensive reading curriculum was necessary to determine why learner-centered instructional strategies are underrepresented in novice teachers' instruction of the components. In this literature review, I focused on the broader problem by covering eight topics: learner-centered instruction, learner-centered instruction of a comprehensive reading curriculum, phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and novice teachers and reading instruction. To demonstrate saturation of the topic, I gathered

materials from the Southern Arkansas University Library and the Walden University Library using the databases SAGE, Education Source, ProQuest, and ERIC. I used the following terms and phrases to locate peer-reviewed articles: *learner-centered instruction, learner-centered instruction when teaching reading, inquiry-based teaching, project-based teaching, reading curriculum, phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and novice teachers and teaching reading.*

Learner-Centered Instruction

Learner-centered teaching strategies increase the likelihood that students will be successful in the subject being taught (Weimer, 2013). Learner-centered instruction leads to an active learning environment that increases student motivation, cooperation, preparation and leads to a common-sense thinking style that improves critical decision-making (Duros, 2015). In a study conducted by Duros (2015), learner-centered instructional strategies were implemented in classrooms that had previously been teacher-directed. Once teachers transitioned to using learner-centered instruction, students were more motivated and better able to think critically when answering questions in the classroom. In another study conducted by Gningue, Peach, and Schroder (2013), learner-centered instructional strategies were implemented in a mathematics classroom, and the researchers found that once learner-centered instructional techniques were used, students were more motivated and better able to retain the content taught. While researchers have recommended learner-centered instructional strategies, not all teachers implement the strategies into their classrooms.

Scripted curriculums and the use of high-stakes testing have led teachers to adopt teacher-centered pedagogy to meet the demands of the classroom leading to students who are bored and unmotivated when learning (Fullan & Langworthy, 2013). However, implementing learner-centered instructional strategies in the classroom leads to a positive classroom-learning environment (Kim, Kim, Khera, & Getman, 2014). In a 2016 study, a group of classroom teachers were asked to implement a learner-based strategy in the form of project-based learning (Dole et al., 2016). The teachers involved in the study reported that while they struggled with the idea of giving up control in their classroom, they did see a positive shift in the climate of the classroom once they transitioned (Dole et al., 2016). Teachers often struggle in the transition to learner-centered instruction; however, once they have implemented the strategies in their classrooms, they see critical thinking and motivational gains amongst their students (Capps, Shemwell, & Young, 2016).

Learner-centered instruction is a critical strategy in promoting student success; however, there is often a lack of training to prepare teachers to use learner-centered instruction in their classrooms (Lee & Shea, 2016). Lee and Shea (2016) examined science teachers' understanding of learner-centered instruction and found that most elementary school science teachers had simplistic ideas of learner-centered instruction and how it should be implemented in the classroom. Additionally, Gutierrez (2015) found that while teachers understood the importance of learner-centered instruction, they were hesitant to implement it due to a lack of training. Capps et al. (2016) found that teachers often believed they were implementing learner-centered instructional strategies into their science classrooms when they were not. Learner-centered instruction is an effective

teaching strategy to use in the classroom; however, teachers must be properly prepared to use the methods.

While learner-centered instruction is largely regarded as an effective instructional method to use in the classroom, some studies have pointed to the benefits of teacher-centered instructional methods. In a 2015 study, Gillies and Nichols found that teachers who do not have strong foundational knowledge in the content they are teaching benefit from, and largely rely on, direct teaching methods in which they can control the discussion and classroom environment. The challenges of implementing learner-centered instruction can leave teachers feeling overwhelmed if they do not have a firm background in learner-centered pedagogy (Hannafin, Hill, Land, & Lee, 2014). McGee, Wang, and Polly (2013) found that third grade students in a mathematics classroom benefitted from teacher-centered instructional techniques in learning multiplication facts. Additionally, Seines, McLaughlin, Derby, Weber, and Gortsema (2015) argued that using teacher-centered instructional methods benefit students who struggle or have learning disabilities.

Traditional Versus Learner-Centered Instruction of a Comprehensive Reading Curriculum

Traditional reading instruction consisted of teachers using direct instructional methods and the same materials and texts for all students in the classroom. Teachers used very limited flexibility and adjustments in terms of reading content and tasks assigned to students (Mason, 2013). Additionally, in traditional reading instruction, the focus was on whole group instruction and automaticity in reading, and there was very little focus on comprehension, student choice, facilitation of learning, or diversity in learning

(Lerikkanen et al., 2016). The focus of traditional reading instruction was to increase standardized test scores in the areas of vocabulary and comprehension, and the instruction did not consider the importance of reading to construct meaning (Tang et al., 2017).

The use of learner-centered instruction when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum increases the likelihood that students will be successful in reading. A study by Lerikkanen et al. (2016) examined to what extent learner-centered versus teacher-centered instruction predicted the development of children's reading skills in early elementary school. Researchers found that students who received learner-centered instruction had better reading skills, and the use of learner-centered instruction was equally beneficial to students from varying developmental backgrounds (Lerikkanen et al., 2016). Additionally, in a study that examined teacher-centered and learner-centered methods to teach a reading curriculum, researchers found that students who received learner-centered instruction showed the most gains and had the highest reading skills (Tang et al, 2017). Students in a middle school reading classroom who were allowed to participate in the instructional decision-making process, a learning-centered instructional technique, when receiving vocabulary instruction had an increase in both self-confidence and motivation (Lehmann & Weimer, 2016). Learner-centered reading instruction benefits all students in the classroom, and it is an important method to use for both struggling and advanced readers.

Learner-centered instructional strategies are beneficial in improving reading comprehension skills in struggling readers as well as motivating advanced readers

(Ghahari & Basanjideh, 2017). Moon, Wold, and Francom (2017) conducted a study in which fifth grade students were allowed to use iPads to work on comprehension skills. Students who participated in the study reported that they were excited about learning and found reading enjoyable. Additionally, researchers found a significant increase in comprehension skills among struggling readers in the classroom.

Despite research findings which indicate that learner-centered reading instruction is an important strategy in promoting student reading success, not all researchers agree that learner-centered instructional strategies are the best method for teaching reading in the classroom. There is a body of research that ties reading achievement to a direct instructional method of teaching reading (Allor, Mathes, Roberts, Cheatham, & Otaiba, 2014). Direct instruction is highly teacher directed and students have very little input into the focus of the learning in the classroom (Ku, Ho, Hau, & Lai, 2014). In a study conducted by Mason et al. (2016) researchers investigated whether direct instruction improved students' oral reading fluency and found that using direct instruction led to increases in fluency skills and assisted students in decoding strategies. Additionally, direct instruction can be beneficial to students with learning disabilities (Seines, McLaughlin, Derby, Weber, & Gortsema, 2015). In a study by conducted by Heric, McLaughlin, Derby, Weber, and Everson (2016), the researchers found that a fifth-grade student with learning disabilities who received direct instruction in fluency had significant gains in fluency skills. The use of direct instruction has been found in some studies to be an effective instructional strategy when teaching reading and when providing reading instruction to students with learning disabilities.

Phonological Awareness

When reviewing literature on phonological awareness, it is important to distinguish phonological awareness from phonemic awareness. Phonological awareness refers to rhyming, manipulating letter sounds, blending and segmenting of words (Suortti & Lipponen, 2016). Phonemic awareness, a part of phonological awareness, is the ability to recognize sounds (Gunning, 2016). Phonological awareness is an integral part of a comprehensive reading curriculum; moreover, including structured phonological awareness instruction in early grades can help prevent reading difficulties in later grades (Adams, 1990; National Reading Panel, 2000; Torgeson, 2000). Phonological awareness plays an important role in the reading process and lays the foundation for reading.

Reading is largely thought of as a language-based skill (Batson-Magnuson, 2017) and the skills taught through phonological awareness lay the foundation for reading (National Reading Panel, 2000; Suortti & Lipponen, 2016). Success in phonological awareness is an important predictor in students' ability to read both in early and later grades and is a better predictor of reading success than intelligence, vocabulary knowledge, and socio-economic status (Gunning, 2016; Suortti & Lipponen, 2016). For phonological awareness instruction to be effective, it must be explicitly taught in the classroom using learner-centered instruction (Gunning, 2016; Suortti & Lipponen, 2016). When explicit and learner-centered instruction takes place, skills are often acquired rapidly (Suortti & Lipponen, 2016). A struggle with phonological awareness skills, or a curriculum that lacks proper phonological awareness instruction, can be an early warning

of future reading difficulties (Batson-Magnuson, 2017). In addition, phonological awareness instruction can benefit students beyond primary grades.

Instruction in phonological awareness is typically associated with emergent readers, but it also benefits and continues to develop in students beyond first grade (Lane & Pullen, 2015; Suortti & Lipponen; 2016). Advanced phonological awareness skills should continue to be taught through upper elementary school (ADOE, 2017). Lane and Pullen (2015) found struggling learners in grades 2-5 experienced reading gains when offered explicit learner-centered phonological awareness instruction. Disabled students of all ages benefitted greatly from instruction in phonological awareness techniques when they were explicitly taught (Claravall, 2016).

Phonics

Phonics is a system for approaching reading where letters are linked to sounds and the focus is on spelling patterns and blending of sounds (Reutzel & Cooter, 2015). The use of phonics instruction in schools is the current trend; however, whole language is another approach that has been used to teach reading in elementary classrooms. Goodman (1986) described the whole language approach as emphasizing sentences and coupling reading and writing rather than putting the importance on syllables and sounding out words. While a debate between the use of phonics and whole language exists, various studies have linked the benefits of phonics instruction in elementary grades with success in student reading (Adams, 1990; Min-Chin, & Shu-Hui, 2014; National Reading Panel, 2000). According to the ADOE (2016) and Gunning (2016), in order to be the most effective, phonics instruction is most effective when explicitly taught using learner-

centered instruction, with exposure to text, and by a teacher knowledgeable about sound, spelling, and blending patterns.

Effective reading instruction in phonics is associated with increased reading performance among elementary students (Gunning, 2016; National Reading Panel, 2000). As stated on the ADOE webpage (2017), “The combination of explicit phonics and phonological training for all students in kindergarten and first grade provides far greater results in word-level reading skills than any other teaching practice that has been studied.” In a 2015 research study, researchers found that by the end of first grade, students who received explicit and learner-centered phonics instruction scored the equivalent of seven to eight points higher on reading comprehension tests (Kilpatrick, 2015). A comparison of students who received a meaning-based approach to reading in place of phonics instruction showed that those who received the phonics instruction scored higher on comprehension tests than those who did not (Kilpatrick, 2015). Additionally, researchers have found that student benefit from phonics instruction past early elementary years (Meese, 2016).

While phonics instruction is frequently associated with early grades in school, Meese (2016) found that struggling learners in older grades, and even in high school, benefitted from phonics intervention. Likewise, in a study by Warnick and Caldarella (2016), the researchers found that learner-centered phonics instruction improved reading skills in adolescents, and there was a significant improvement among those who received the phonics instruction compared to those who did not. In other studies, researchers have found that phonics instruction is more beneficial when it is embedded in a comprehensive

reading curriculum with an emphasis placed on vocabulary and comprehension (Campbell, Torr, & Cologon, 2014). However, to effectively embed phonics instruction within a curriculum, a teacher must be knowledgeable about the curriculum they are teaching (Reutzel & Cooter, 2015).

Fluency

Fluency, or fluent reading, refers to the ability of a reader to read text rapidly, with accuracy, and with proper expression (Gunning, 2016). To be considered a fluent reader, a person must possess all the components of fluency (Gunning, 2016; National Reading Panel, 2000; Shanahan, 2005). Fluency should not be confused with speed reading, when the goal is to read as quickly as possible. The goal for a fluent reader is for their reading to sound like talking (Kuhn, Rasinski, & Zimmerman, 2014). Fluent reading should be a focus in elementary classrooms because it is crucial in students' reading success.

Developing reading fluency is considered a foundational skill and a critical factor in the success of a student's reading ability; therefore, it should be mastered in elementary school (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2016; DiSalle & Rasubski, 2017; National Reading Panel, 2000). A reader must be able to read fluently to move on to the more complex task of comprehending text, which is the ultimate goal of reading (DiSalle & Rasubski, 2017). If a student is unable to read words fluently, then they will not be able to focus on making meaning of the text (Gunning, 2016). In beginning readers, fluency success depends on instruction that fosters fluency strategies (Gunning, 2016; National Reading Panel, 2000). If fluency is not practiced, then students are

unlikely to become fluent readers who can read for meaning (Rasinski, Rupley, Paige, & Nichols, 2016).

Lack of reading fluency can be a major barrier to students becoming proficient readers (Rasinski et al., 2016). Researchers suggest that approximately 75% of students who struggle on high stakes reading tests have difficulties in the area of reading fluency, and even mild fluency difficulties can affect how well a reader comprehends the text (Kilpatrick, 2015; Rasinski et al. 2016).

Struggling readers benefit from explicit and learner-centered fluency instruction throughout their elementary school years. Rasinski et al. (2016) found that struggling readers benefit from strategic and learner-centered fluency instruction in all grades, and a lack of fluency practice interferes with their ability to comprehend what they are reading. In an additional study conducted by DiSalle and Rasiniski (2017) researchers found that fourth grade students who participated in a 12-week learner-centered fluency instructional routine made significant progress in both fluency and reading comprehension. However, while many students continue to struggle with fluency well beyond elementary school, fluency is not being practiced in classrooms past the early elementary years (Paige, Magpuri-Lavell, Rasinski, & Smith, 2013).

Vocabulary

When discussing a comprehensive reading curriculum, vocabulary is defined as the teaching of new words either separate from or as they appear in text (ADOE, 2017). A well-rounded vocabulary serves a key role in students learning to read and is critical to developing reading success (National Reading Panel, 2000; Roskos & Neuman, 2014).

Strong vocabulary knowledge allows an emergent reader to access meaning from the text and use vocabulary encountered in texts in their oral language (Roskos & Neuman, 2014). A reader's vocabulary plays a key role in his or her text comprehension (Ambrose, Goforth, & Collins, 2015). Carlisle, Kelcey and Berebitsky (2013) found that explicit and learner-centered vocabulary instruction had a significant effect on text comprehension especially when target words from the text were focused on during the instruction.

While explicit and learner-centered instruction are important when teaching vocabulary, vocabulary instruction has the biggest influence on students' comprehension when teachers have knowledge of how to extend teaching beyond a simple focus on definitions (Rimbey, McKeown, Beck, & Sandora, 2016). In a study of third grade teachers, researchers found that the quality of vocabulary instruction a student received from their teacher had a significant influence on their gains in reading comprehension (Carlisle et al., 2013). However, the same study found that teachers' vocabulary instruction was superficial and lacked the deep or rich instruction required when providing support to students' vocabulary learning (Carlisle et al., 2013). Carlisle et al. (2013) asserted that teachers must be knowledgeable about best methods for teaching vocabulary for students to make the most gains in their reading.

The quality of vocabulary instruction in a classroom has an impact on student reading success. In a study conducted by Vadasy, Sanders, and Logan (2015), teachers from 61 classrooms were assigned to a treatment group, in which teachers spent time each day on specific vocabulary instruction, or a control group, in which instruction went on as it normally did with little emphasis on vocabulary instruction. The researchers

found that when teachers used learner-centered vocabulary instruction in their routine, students were more likely to expand their vocabulary knowledge (Vadasy et al., 2015). Additionally, Myers and Ankrum (2016) reported that when vocabulary instruction is explicitly taught in the classroom, students are more likely to gain a deep understanding of sophisticated vocabulary words; however, the researchers emphasized that teachers must have a firm understanding of how to teach vocabulary to children.

Comprehension

Comprehension is a reader's ability to extract information and construct meaning from written language (ADOE, 2017). The ability to read and understand text is a key component to overall social and economic success, and it should be a major focus of reading instruction in the classroom (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2016; Gunning, 2016). Despite the knowledge that reading comprehension is of utmost importance, novice teachers do not seem to be effectively teaching it in schools (Klapwijk, 2015). In a study done by Klapwijk (2015), novice reading teachers were interviewed and observed teaching reading comprehension. Klapwijk (2015) found that novice teachers were not teaching comprehension effectively in their classrooms because they were not taught best methods to teach comprehension in their teacher preparation programs. Additionally, in a study of comprehension instruction conducted by Goldman and Snow (2015), researchers found that a focus on comprehension often does not begin until later elementary school, even though teaching learner-centered comprehension strategies from a young age increases the likelihood that a student will be successful in reading.

For students to get the most benefit out of instruction in reading comprehension the instruction should be learner-centered, modeled for students, and focused on asking inference questions (Hart & Stebick, 2016; Rosaen, Meyer, Strachan, & Meier 2017). However, researchers have found that novice teachers are not implementing learner-centered comprehension strategies in their classrooms (Hurford et al., 2016). In a study of comprehension instruction, Elleman, Steacy, Olinghouse, and Compton (2017) found that novice teachers focused on direct instruction and asking literal questions where answers can be found directly in the text; moreover, they rarely used learner-centered strategies that will build deeper comprehension skills. Burns, Maki, Karich, and Coolong-Chaffin (2017) researched the effect of learner-centered and explicit comprehension instruction on students with reading comprehension difficulties. Students explicitly taught techniques using learner-centered instruction, such as generating questions, summarizing, clarifying, and predicting, showed an improvement in reading comprehension ability (Burns et al, 2017).

Novice Teachers and Reading Instruction

One of the biggest indicators of student success is how well an educator teaches the content in their classroom (Brookfield, 2015; Ingersoll & Perda, 2013; Kunter et al., 2013). Student reading achievement is linked to the knowledge and instructional teaching of the teacher within the classroom (Johansson, Myrberg, & Rosen, 2015). However, several researchers have shown that novice teachers lack the skills and knowledge required to teach reading (Martinussen, Ferrari, Aitken, & Willows, 2015). In a study investigating the relationship between novice teachers' perceived and actual knowledge

of phonemic awareness, a component of phonological awareness, researchers found that participants had relatively low perceived and actual knowledge of phonemic awareness and struggled to differentiate phonological awareness and phonics (Campbell, Torr, & Cologon, 2014; Martinussen et al., 2015). Additionally, Martinussen et al. (2015) found that while pre-service and novice teachers had strengths in phonological awareness skills, such as syllable counting, they struggled to identify the meaning of phonological awareness and how phonological awareness and phonics differ.

Without the background knowledge needed to understand the content of a comprehensive reading curriculum, novice teachers will struggle to teach the concepts in their reading classrooms (Darling-Hammond, 2015). In a 2014 study, Spear-Swerling and Zibulsky investigated whether novice classroom teachers were implementing a comprehensive reading curriculum in their classrooms. Spear-Swerling and Zibulsky (2014) found that while comprehension and vocabulary were taught during reading instruction, no time was set aside to teach phonological awareness skills or phonics. Noll and Lenhart (2013), on the other hand, found that novice teachers could design and implement comprehensive reading curriculums in their classrooms due to strong teacher preparation programs that provided a solid reading foundation (Noll & Lenhart, 2013).

Novice teachers often implement teaching strategies they are familiar with when teaching reading in the classroom, and they often have a preconceived idea that teacher-centered instruction is a tried and true strategy (Dole, Bloom, & Kowalske, 2016). A longitudinal study conducted by Scales et al. (2017) examined seven novice teachers' literacy teaching practices. Using the findings from the study, researchers suggested most

novice teachers use strategies that are common among colleagues to teach reading in their classrooms, and they also rely on strategies learned in teacher education programs.

However, Scales et al. (2017) also reported that some novice teachers will go against the school norm and use reading strategies they find best for their students.

Implications

The goal of this project study was to explore novice teachers' perspectives of learner-centered instruction when teaching a comprehensive K to 5 reading curriculum as well as to understand how novice K to 5 teachers were teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum in CSD. I used individual interviews and classroom observations to explore the phenomenon, which had the potential to lead to a deeper understanding of the problem. The data acquired from this study could lead to a project in the form of a professional development series for novice teachers to provide them with additional support in their application of learner-centered reading instruction to teach a comprehensive reading curriculum. Although this project study did not focus on the perspectives or understanding of administrators, the results of the study may help them make decisions to better support novice teachers in their application of learner-centered instructional strategies to teach a comprehensive reading curriculum.

Summary

In this section, I discussed the problem at CSD, based on relevant district data, that learner-centered instructional strategies are underrepresented in novice K to 5 teachers' instruction of a comprehensive reading curriculum. Throughout the section, I outlined the rationale of the study, defined terms important to the problem, discussed the

significance of the study, and presented the research question that guides the study. The conceptual framework, which drives the study, was defined and explained. Additionally, I conducted a review of the research associated with the problem.

In the following section, I will focus on details about data collection, analysis of the data, and the findings from the study. In section three, I will define and discuss the project. In the final section, I will focus on my reflections and conclusions based on this project study.

Section 2: The Methodology

Research Design and Approach

The purpose of this case study was to explore novice K to 5 teachers' perspectives of learner-centered instruction when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum at CSD and to understand how they are teaching phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, which are identified as the five research-based components of a comprehensive K to 5 reading curriculum (ADOE, 2017; Snow & Matthews, 2016). I used a research method that was qualitative in nature. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), qualitative research focuses on insight into and understanding of perspectives. In addition, qualitative research allows for in-depth exploration of the problem being studied (Creswell, 2012; Yin, 2017). Specifically, I used a case study design calling for a detailed empirical investigation in a real-life setting to address the research question (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). A case study should be used when the researcher is studying a phenomenon within a bounded system and when the goal is to explore a program, event, or person(s) to gain in-depth understanding through collection of data in a natural setting (Yin, 2014).

When choosing which research design to use for my study, I considered different qualitative designs. I did not select ethnography as my research design because I was not seeking to examine a cultural group (see Creswell, 2012). Grounded theory was discarded because my goal in this study was not to derive a theory (see Creswell, 2012). I did not consider phenomenological qualitative designs appropriate because I was not focusing on the occurrence of a unique event or experience (see Creswell, 2012). The case study

design was an appropriate choice because the goal of my study was an in-depth understanding of instructional practices of novice teachers who teach at a single site. By selecting a qualitative case study design, I intended to add depth to the phenomenon that I am studying in order to increase my understanding (see Yin, 2017). Additionally, I strived to give administrators and other stakeholders a clearer picture of the results that emerged regarding novice teachers' perspectives of a learner-centered reading instruction and how novice teachers are teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum in their classrooms.

Participants

After receiving approval from Walden IRB to conduct my study (approval #11-03-17-0570045), I reached out to potential participants via email and sent them an invitation to participate in my study. Participants for this study were K to 5 novice reading teachers in CSD. I used purposeful sampling because it allowed me to select participants who fit the specific criteria of the study. Researchers use purposeful sampling to intentionally select individuals who meet the criteria of a study in order to gain a deep understanding of the phenomena (Creswell, 2012). Purposeful sampling was appropriate for my study because I intentionally selected participants who met four criteria: (a) a CSD teacher, (b) a K to 5 teacher, (c) a reading teacher, and (d) a novice teacher with 0 to 5 years of experience. A novice teacher is defined as a teacher who has taught for less than 5 years (Simpson, 2016).

In a case study design, a sample size of four to 12 people is typically used when the researcher is seeking in-depth insight into a phenomenon (Yin, 2017). Since it was

my intent to gain a deep understanding of how novice teachers are teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum as well as novice teachers' perspectives of using learner-centered instruction to teach a comprehensive reading curriculum, I followed these guidelines and attempted to select 12 participants for my project study; however, only 10 agreed to participate in the study. All participants were novice K to 5 reading teachers at CSD. Based on administrator identification of novice K to 5 reading teachers, I selected a range of teachers to span the K to 5 grade levels and invited them to participate in the study.

A researcher-participant working relationship was established through open communication based on trust and full disclosure of the roles and responsibilities in the study (see Creswell, 2012). From first contact, I was straightforward with participants about the purpose of the study and their role as a participant. I informed participants that their role in the study would involve a 45 to 60-minute interview as well as a classroom observation that would be scheduled during their reading instruction. Participants were invited to participate in the study via email, which I secured from the building principal. I sent the same email invitation to each participant to ensure consistency. I explained to participants that all participation was voluntary, and their confidentiality would be protected. I also disclosed my role as the researcher to participants. As the researcher, my role was to conduct the interviews and classroom observations as well as to interpret the results of the study. I worked around schedules and conducted interviews and observations at a time of participants' choosing. Interviews were done at the participants'

school for their convenience. Additionally, I was available to answer participants' questions via phone calls or email.

Each participant was emailed an invitation to participate in the study, and they were asked to respond via email within 5 days if they were interested. Once participants emailed me their interest in participating in the study, I emailed them an informed consent form. The informed consent form explained (a) the purpose of the study, (b) that all participation was voluntary, (c) that identities would remain private, (d) the option to withdraw from the study at any time, (e) the participant's role in the study, and (f) researcher and Walden University contact information. I was the only person with access to participant information and responses. All participant information and responses were stored in a researcher log. The researcher log was divided into sections based on participants. In each section, I kept contact information, interview notes and transcriptions, and classroom observation data. Interviews were recorded via an audio recorder to ensure accuracy. No names were used during the interview or observation process. I transcribed interviews myself to further ensure participant identities remained private. In my reporting of the findings, no identifying factors were used, such as participant names. For example, "T1" stands for Teacher Number 1. Raw data will be destroyed 5 years after the study completion. All raw data collected by paper will be shredded, and all raw data collected via recording will be deleted. All raw data, field notes, consent forms, and pages connecting participants' names to their identifiers have been locked in a file cabinet. Electronic data were stored in a password-protected folder on my computer, and I am the only one who has access to the password.

Data Collection

In qualitative research, the researcher relies on open-ended and unrestricted data collection methods (Creswell, 2012). In a case study design, more than one type of information should be collected to provide triangulation looking for an in-depth understanding of the phenomena being studied (Creswell, 2012; Yin, 2014). In this study, data collection was in the form of one-on-one participant interviews and classroom observation. I first interviewed participants, and once the interviews were complete, I conducted classroom observations. Using two methods of data collection, I was able to gather multiple pieces of information providing deeper insight into my problem and allowing me to collect unrestricted data from my participants. According to Hatch (2002), the use of interview and classroom observation in a qualitative case study is an effective method to use when attempting to triangulate a study.

My first method of data collection was through one-on-one interviews. The use of interview allowed me to collect unrestricted information from my participants regarding my research questions (see Creswell, 2012). To guide the interview process, I followed a researcher-developed interview guide. According to Creswell (2012), a researcher-developed guide is an effective tool to use when conducting interviews because it allows the researcher to focus on the phenomena being studied. I used semistructured interview questions, which I developed, based on the framework of ADOE's (2017) science of reading and Weimer's (2013) learner-centered teaching (See Appendix B). I used the interview questions to explore novice K to 5 teachers' perspectives of learner centered reading instruction when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum as well as how

they teach a comprehensive reading curriculum in their classrooms. Individual participants were each interviewed one time for approximately 45 to 60 minutes in a 2-week time frame. I conducted the interviews in a semistructured format to allow for additional information to be gained through supplemental or probing questions after the initial question had been asked (see Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010). Data gathered during the semistructured interview process were audio recorded to ensure accuracy of reporting participants' responses.

In my second method of data collection, I conducted classroom observations of participants teaching reading in their K to 5 classrooms. Classroom observations provided me with a form of data from the natural classroom environment, an aspect that can provide a researcher with valuable information (see Hatch, 2002). Through classroom observation, I was able to watch participants teaching a reading lesson to identify any aspects of learner-centered instruction that existed. This helped answer my question about how novice K to 5 reading teachers teach a comprehensive reading curriculum in their classrooms. In addition, additional understanding was gained of novice teachers' perspectives of learner-centered instructional strategies when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum. Each participant was observed once within a 2-week timeframe. Observations varied in length depending on the how long each participant's reading block lasted. Participants were informed during the consent stage that they would be observed teaching reading in their classroom as a part of the data collection process. I used a researcher-developed observation protocol form, which is aligned to the framework and based on ADOE's (2017) science of reading and Weimer's (2013) learner-centered

teaching (see Appendix C), to document classroom observations and notes regarding classroom reading instruction, including a description of teaching strategies, evidence of learner-centered instruction, and objectives of the lesson.

I organized the collected data in a researcher log. A researcher log is used to record observations, reactions of participants, and details about the setting (Creswell, 2012). I created the researcher log using an organized system to ensure I could easily and effectively track and retrieve the data collected throughout my study. I used a binder to create the researcher log and divided it into sections for each participant. In each participant's section, I kept contact information, interview notes and transcriptions, and classroom observation data. The researcher log provided a way for me to track the process and the data I collected. A researcher log can also be a beneficial way to self-assess and reduce bias when reporting the findings (Hatch, 2002).

Permission to conduct the case study at CSD was obtained through personal communication and using written permission. During a face-to-face meeting with the superintendent, I explained the purpose of the study, the role of the participants, and my role in the study. I gained written permission from the superintendent of CSD in the form of a signed letter of cooperation. Once the superintendent signed the letter of cooperation, I contacted the building principal through a personal visit. I brought the signed letter of cooperation with me to the meeting with the principal, and I explained the purpose of my study and the participants I needed. The building principal gave me access to the names of 18 potential participants, their email addresses, and permission to contact them. I made initial contact with all 18 of the potential participants through email. I informed all

potential participants that participation in the study was voluntary. Of those 18 participants, 10 responded that they were interested in participating in the study. I emailed interested participants an informed consent form, and all 10 consented to participate in the study. Participants signed the informed consent letter prior to participation in the study. Participants included one kindergarten teacher, two first grade teachers, two second grade teachers, two third grade teachers, two fourth grade teachers, and one fifth grade teacher.

My role as a researcher in the study did not have any cause for bias or conflict of interest. I was previously employed at CSD as a classroom teacher and then as a literacy coach, but I have not worked there in over five years. Since I selected participants who had taught for fewer than five years, I had not worked with any of the participants in the past. Because I had not worked with any of the participants in the past, there was no conflict in the collection of data through interview or classroom observation. My personal bias is that learner-centered instruction is the best method for teaching reading in a K to 5 classroom. I acknowledged my bias and took steps to reduce any influence on my bias had on the study. One of the best ways to prevent a possible bias is to present findings to a qualified and critical colleague (Yin, 2014). To do this, I used peer debriefing and requested that a colleague with qualitative research expertise read my results and provide feedback to reduce any bias.

Data Analysis

Data analysis for this study continued throughout the duration of the study and followed Creswell's (2012) seven suggested steps for analysis of qualitative data: (1) preparing for analysis, (2) reading and reflecting of data, (3) coding data, (4) using coded data to determine themes, (5) representing themes, (6) interpreting findings, and (7) validating accuracy of findings. Data for this study were collected from interviews and classroom observations. Before I began the data analysis process, I created a researcher log, Microsoft Word (Word) file, and Microsoft Excel (Excel) file to help me stay organized and record information (Yin, 2014).

The data analysis technique I used was thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is an appropriate form of analysis in qualitative research because it involves recognizing, examining, and recording themes from data collected (Creswell, 2012). In order to complete an analysis on data collected during interviews, I first transcribed recordings of participant interviews into a Word document within 48 hours of each interview. To stay organized and identify participant interview transcripts, transcripts were assigned a letter and a number, such as "T1" for teacher number one. I input data from interviews into Excel so that I could assign and filter codes. Interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis and open and axial coding strategies (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I used open coding to separate the data from the interviews into concepts and categories. To do this, I identified specific words and phrases that were related to my research questions, then I assigned each one a label specific to common words or phrases. I continued this process until all my interview data were assigned a code linked to a category or concept. This

process allowed me to develop temporary themes for the interview data set (Creswell, 2012).

To complete an analysis of data collected during classroom observations, I first typed observation notes into a Word version of the document within 24 hours of each classroom observation. As was the case with the interview data, I assigned observation notes a letter and a number, such as “T1” for teacher number one. I input data from classroom observations into an Excel document to assign and filter codes. I analyzed observation data using thematic analysis and open and axial coding strategies (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I used open coding to separate the data from the observations into concepts and categories. After identifying specific words and phrases related to my research questions, I assigned each one a label specific to common words or phrases. I continued this process until all of my observation data were assigned a code linked to a category or concept. This process allowed me to develop temporary themes for the observation data set (Creswell, 2012).

The final step in the thematic analysis was to determine relationships among the established categories using axial coding (Creswell, 2012; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I then made inferences from the data, and connected my findings to my research questions, literature review, and conceptual framework. Finally, I reported my results in narrative form, including rich and detailed descriptions of the findings.

Evidence of Quality

I took several steps to ensure the accuracy of the data obtained in my study such as member checks, peer debriefing, and triangulation. Participants engaged in member checks to make sure my findings were accurate and that I correctly interpreted their data (Creswell, 2012). Participants were invited to review my findings and verify that their data were accurately interpreted. I emailed a two-page summary of my findings to participants and requested that they read through the findings to verify the accuracy of their own data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I asked that participants email me their comments within five days, and all participants emailed me within five days to indicate that they agreed with the findings.

Peer debriefing can be used to ensure credibility of a study and can provide the researcher with feedback about interpretations made in a study (Creswell, 2012). The use of peer debriefing allows a researcher to uncover biases, check for accuracy in the interpretation of findings, and leads to increased trustworthiness of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I invited a colleague with qualitative research expertise to serve as a peer debriefer and check for errors and bias. The peer debriefer I selected has a doctoral degree in education and has multiple years of experience conducting and presenting on qualitative research. In addition, she teaches a qualitative research course at the doctorate level. The peer debriefer was asked to sign a confidentiality agreement. Through a face-to-face meeting, this colleague was asked to participate in a discussion with me of the themes that I identified and identify any potential bias. The colleague was asked to provide alternative themes from the data that were collected. The peer debriefer agreed

with the themes that I identified from the data, and she saw no indication of personal bias in my results.

Triangulation, or corroborating evidence obtained from multiple sources, should be used in qualitative research to produce understanding and validate findings (Creswell, 2012). Since data were collected from multiple sources, interviews and classroom observation, triangulation was used in this study. Triangulation was used in my study to compare different sources of data and identify commonalities and differences between the sources. I compared the interview transcripts with the notes collected during classroom observations. The findings from data collected during the interviews were corroborated with the findings from classroom observations. Using this triangulation, it was my intent to increase confidence in the results of the study. A qualitative study is considered more accurate when there are several sources from which to draw information because there are multiple measures of the phenomenon (Yin, 2014).

Discrepant Cases

Discrepant cases are data that appears to contradict emerging themes in a qualitative researcher's analysis of the data (Ravitch & Carl, 2015). When discrepant data occurs, it may be because the researcher has overlooked information, or it may indicate that there is a need for additional research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). If discrepant cases arise, further analysis of the cases will be necessary, such as a reevaluation of the question that produced the discrepancy. When a researcher actively seeks discrepant data, it is more likely that saturation will be achieved, and the researcher may increase or

modify their understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I looked for discrepant data in my findings, but I found no discrepant cases.

Data Analysis Results

A problem existed at CSD where there was an underrepresentation of learner-centered instruction when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum in novice K to 5 teachers' classrooms. The purpose of this case study was to explore novice K to 5 teachers' perspectives of learner-centered instruction when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum at CSD and to understand how they are teaching phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, which are identified as the five research-based components of a comprehensive K to 5 reading curriculum (ADOE, 2017; Snow & Matthews, 2016).

Data collection for this study took place through one-on-one semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. Using a researcher-developed interview guide, I explored novice K to 5 teachers' perspectives of learner-centered reading instruction when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum. Interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes each. Once the interviews were completed, I observed participants teaching reading in their classrooms and recorded data on a researcher-developed observation protocol form. Observations varied in length depending on the grade-level. I then coded the data collected from participant interviews and classroom observations, and several themes emerged. I looked for discrepant cases in the data, but no discrepant cases emerged. Through the research questions that I developed for this study, I attempted to understand novice K to 5 teachers' perspectives of learner-centered instruction when

teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum and how novice teachers were teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum in their classrooms.

Research Questions

In alignment with the framework for this study based on ADOE's (2017) Science of Reading and Weimer's (2013) Learner-Centered Teaching, I attempted to understand novice K to 5 teachers' perspectives of learner-centered instruction when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum and how novice teachers were teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum in their classrooms. I developed the following research questions to guide my study:

RQ1 – What are novice K to 5 reading teachers' perspectives of learner-centered instructional strategies when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum?

RQ2 - How do novice K to 5 reading teachers teach a comprehensive reading curriculum in their classrooms?

Research Question 1 was designed to be answered through data gathered during semi-structured one-on-one interviews, and Research Question 2 was designed to be answered through data collected from semi-structured one-on-one interview as well as through data collected during classroom observations of reading instruction. The coding and analysis of the data collected is described below.

Research Question 1

What are novice K to 5 reading teachers' perspectives of learner-centered instructional strategies when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum?

Through individual semi-structured interviews with participants, I posed questions that were intended to elicit responses to help me understand their perspectives of learner-centered reading instruction. I asked questions intended to provide participants with the opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings regarding learner-centered instruction, share experiences they had with learner-centered instruction, and provide examples of how they use the strategies in their reading classrooms. Through the interview process, I was able to engage in conversations with the participants about their perspectives of learner-centered instruction when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum, to ask additional questions for clarification, and, finally, to identify the themes that emerged from their responses.

I used open and axial coding to identify central ideas that emerged from the interview data through the framework of learner-centered instruction. Coding is a process qualitative researchers use to categorize qualitative data and describe the implications of these categories (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I began the process of open coding by manually highlighting words and phrases that reoccurred throughout the interview transcripts. I identified 20 common labels and terms that became my open codes that were based on the interview transcripts (see Appendix D). Common words and phrases were highlighted with specific colors to group them into categories. After I reduced the text to open codes, the next step was axial coding. During axial coding, I looked for

commonalities among the identified codes and grouped the codes into categories to create temporary themes related to novice teachers' perspectives of learner-centered instructional strategies when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum (see Table 2). I then used thematic coding and looked for patterns and relationships among the temporary themes (see Table 2). I concluded that the following themes revealed concepts related to teacher perspectives of learner-centered reading instruction:

1. Knowledge of learner-centered instruction;
2. Preparedness to teach learner-centered reading instruction; and
3. Time.

Table 2

Research Question 1: Open Codes, Axial Codes, and Themes

Open code	Axial code/Temporary theme	Theme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choice • Student led • Facilitator role • Assessment 	Definition of learner-centered instruction	Knowledge of learner-centered instruction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student-led • Student engagement 	Student-led classrooms	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator • Student-led 	Teacher acts as the facilitator	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits students • Understanding content 	Beneficial to student learning	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overwhelmed in professional development • Broad professional development 	Professional development too broad	Preparedness to teach learner-centered reading instruction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted professional development 	Desire for targeted training on each learner-centered component focused on reading	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacking confidence • Nervous 	Lack of confidence	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibilities • Overwhelmed 	Overwhelmed with responsibilities	Time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration 	Collaboration time	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning • Time 	Time to plan learner-centered lessons	

A detailed description of the themes, along with supporting excerpts from interviews, is described below.

Theme 1: Knowledge of Learner-Centered Instruction

A teacher's level of understanding about a concept affects their performance in creating an outcome, so it was important to understand if novice K to 5 reading teachers understood and defined learner-centered instruction. All participants defined learner-centered instructional strategies. For example, T5 commented, "Learner-centered instruction is when students lead the instruction and the teacher serves as the facilitator in the classroom." Additionally, T8 commented, "In learner-centered instruction, students have a voice in the classroom and help to lead and take charge of their own learning. The teacher should facilitate discussion, allow students to have choice, and assessment should be authentic."

In addition to defining what learner-centered instruction entails, participants understood the benefits of learner-centered instruction. The use of learner-centered instructional strategies encourages deep understanding of the content being taught and leads to students who are more engaged and motivated in the classroom (Dole, Bloom, & Kowalske, 2016). T4 stated, "When a teacher uses learner-centered instruction, students are more likely to participate in the lesson meaning they will better understand the material that is being taught." Not only did participants understand the overall benefits of learner-centered instruction, they also tied the benefits specifically to reading instruction. The use of learner-centered instructional strategies to teach reading results in students who are more engaged in the classroom, are more motivated learners, and have better

attitudes toward reading (Bradford, Mowder, & Bohte, 2016; Cudney & Ezzell, 2017; Kashef, Pandia, and Khameneh, 2014). T1 commented, “The benefits when teaching reading would be the same as what they are overall, right? Students are more involved in the lesson and they understand the lesson better than if it was teacher-centered.”

Theme 2: Preparedness to Teach Learner-Centered Reading Instruction

How prepared teachers feel to teach a strategy is an important consideration when measuring their perspectives, so it was necessary to determine if participants felt prepared to teach learner-centered instruction when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum. While participants acknowledged that they participated in the professional development that the district offered regarding learner-centered reading instruction, they felt unprepared to implement learner-centered reading instruction in their own classroom. T1 stated, “The training was a great overview of learner-centered instruction in general, but I still felt unprepared to put it into place when I got to my own classroom.” In addition, participants stated that the training was too broad because it tried to cover all aspects of learner-centered instruction instead of focusing on one or two aspects. For example, T10 stated,

The training threw so much information at us that it made me feel overwhelmed.

There were too many things being said, and too much that we were expected to go back and do. It would be helpful if I could first learn to be a facilitator in the classroom and then learn about everything else that is involved.

T6 commented,

I am not confident in preparing lessons in which I am the facilitator in the classroom, and I feel like this has become a barrier for me. I understand how important this is for students, but I don't feel like I am ready to do it. I don't feel ready to use learner-centered instruction until I am comfortable being a facilitator in my classroom.

Participants would feel more confident in planning learner-centered lessons to teach a comprehensive reading curriculum if professional development covered learner-centered reading instruction instead of just learner-centered instruction in general. For example, T3 said, "The professional development that was offered by the district covered learner-centered instruction, but most of it used math lessons as an example. I didn't find this helpful in using learner-centered instruction to teach reading." T2 stated, "I really felt like the training we received focused on using learner-centered instruction for math. I get that it's important to teach reading too, but it would be nice to see some examples of that as well."

Theme 3: Time

One of the biggest obstacles participants faced in using learner-centered reading instruction to teach a comprehensive reading curriculum was lack of time to create the lessons and to collaborate with colleagues. Participants would be more confident and prepared to use learner-centered instruction to teach a comprehensive reading curriculum if they had time to plan lessons and to work with colleagues when planning them.

Participants desired help in planning learner-centered reading lessons especially when it

came to facilitative teaching. For example, T5 said, “I already have so much to do each day, and planning learner-centered reading lessons takes a lot of time. I would love to start using learner-centered instruction when I teach reading, and I would love to be a facilitator in my classroom, but I need time to plan the lessons, and I need someone to help me get started on planning them.” T3 stated, “The biggest obstacle for me is finding the time to plan learner-centered instruction. If I could have time to plan with other teachers, or even with the literacy coach, then maybe I would be able to start using it more in my classroom.” Additionally, T6 stated, “My biggest obstacle is planning lessons where I am facilitating the lesson instead of leading it. I need help to plan those lessons.”

Research Question 2

How do novice K to 5 reading teachers teach a comprehensive reading curriculum in their classrooms?

Individual semi-structured interviews were used to pose questions to participants, which were intended to elicit responses to help me understand the methods participants were using to teach reading in their classrooms. I asked participants to describe how they taught each of the components of a comprehensive reading curriculum and to provide an example from their classroom teaching. By engaging participants in the interview process, I was able have conversations with the participants about how they teach a comprehensive reading curriculum and ask additional questions for clarification.

In addition to semi-structured interviews, I conducted classroom observations of participants teaching reading. By conducting classroom observations, I observed participants in their natural teaching environment to attempt to determine the techniques

they used to teach reading in their classrooms. I used a researcher-developed observation protocol during the classroom observations, and I took notes on the teaching strategies I observed being used to teach each of the components of a comprehensive reading curriculum. In addition, I noted if I saw evidence of learner-centered reading instruction. By using classroom observations, I saw real-time examples of how each of the participants taught reading in their classrooms.

I used open and axial coding to identify central ideas that emerged from the interview and observation data through the framework of learner-centered instruction. Coding is a process qualitative researchers use to categorize qualitative data and describe the implications of these categories (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I began the process of open coding by manually highlighting words and phrases that reoccurred throughout the interview transcripts. I identified 15 common labels and terms that became my open codes from my interviews that were based on the interview transcripts (see Appendix E). I then manually highlighted words and phrases that reoccurred throughout the observation notes. I identified 14 common labels and terms that became my open codes from my observations. Common words and phrases were highlighted with specific colors to group them into categories. After I reduced the text to open codes, the next step was axial coding. During axial coding, I triangulated the data by looking for commonalities among the identified codes from the interviews and observations. I grouped the codes into categories to create temporary themes related to how novice teachers' teach a comprehensive reading curriculum (see Table 3). I then used thematic coding and looked for patterns and relationships among the temporary themes (see Table 3). I concluded that

the following themes revealed concepts related how novice K to 5 teachers teach a comprehensive reading curriculum in their classrooms:

1. Teacher-centered reading instruction; and
2. Classroom control.

Table 3

Research Question 2: Open Codes, Axial Codes, and Themes

Open Codes	Axial Codes/Temporary Theme	Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture • Teacher-centered questions • Teacher-centered explanations • Teacher-directed instruction 	Teacher-led discussions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher examples • Teacher demonstrates 	Teacher-led demonstrations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher-selected examples • Teacher-selected books • Teacher-selected activities 	Teacher-choice of material	Teacher-centered reading instruction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid-fire questioning • Teacher ask questions • Teacher generated questions 	Teacher-led questioning	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worksheets • Class reading same novel • Class vocabulary practice 	All students work on same task	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test • Vocabulary tests • Comprehension tests 	Focus on assessment	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control 	Control of classroom	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom Management 	Classroom management	Classroom control
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiar • Comfortable 	Familiar with teacher-led instruction helps control	

Theme 1: Teacher-Centered Reading Instruction

Participants relied on teacher-centered instructional methods to teach the components of a comprehensive reading curriculum. When using teacher-centered instructional methods, the teacher serves as the classroom leader and instruction features classroom lecture, teacher-led discussion, teacher-led demonstrations, students working on the same task, and teacher choice of instructional materials (Polly, Margerison, & Piel, 2014). During interviews, the methods participants described that they used to teach reading were teacher-centered methods. Classroom observations during reading instruction confirmed that participants were relying on teacher-centered methods to teach the components of a comprehensive reading curriculum. A description of participants' instruction in each of the components of a comprehensive reading curriculum is included below.

Phonological awareness. Phonological awareness skills can be effectively taught using a combination of teacher-led methods of instruction and learner-centered methods of instruction (Suortti & Lipponen, 2016). Teacher-centered methods of instruction involve teacher-led discussion and demonstrations while learner-centered strategies invite student-led discussions and student-led demonstrations of the skill (Suortti & Lipponen, 2016). Participants provided instruction in phonological awareness using teacher-led instructional methods such as teacher-led discussion and demonstrations. T3 stated, "I provide students with examples of rhyming words that I had created ahead of time. Then I list several words, two that rhyme and one that does not, and students pick out the word that doesn't rhyme." Classroom observations confirmed that participants provided

phonological awareness instruction using teacher-led demonstrations and discussions.

While lessons allowed for student participation and engagement, there was no evidence of learner-centered instructional techniques such as student-led discussions, student-led examples, or student-led demonstration of the skill.

Phonics. Snow and Matthews (2016) stated that while it is appropriate to use teacher-led instructional methods when introducing phonics skills, students benefit from applying those skills using learner-centered strategies. Learner-centered phonics instructional methods include student demonstration of applying phonics rules, student created examples, and student led discussions about phonics rules (Snow & Matthews, 2016). Participants relied on teacher-centered methods of instruction such as teacher-led discussions and teacher-led demonstrations when teaching phonics in the classroom. T7 stated, “The method that is easiest for me is to talk students through the phonics rule I am teaching. I explain the rule, provide examples, and let them see me underline the rule in a few different words. Then I give the students a worksheet so they can demonstrate their understanding.” Additionally, T9 explained, “The other day I was teaching students about silent e. I had 10 words listed on the board and I showed them how the words changed when I added the e and the vowel sound changed. I probably could have had students participate by coming up with some words, or even discussing why the e changed the word, but I didn’t think about it.” Data collected during classroom observations confirmed that participants relied on teacher-centered methods of instruction such as teacher-led discussions and teacher-led demonstrations when teaching phonics. For example, during a classroom observation a participant was using teacher-led discussion to

teach students about the blend “ar”. Students in the classroom made attempts to participate in the discussion by providing their own example of words that had the “ar” blend. Each time a student attempted to provide an example, they were told that the teacher had already selected the words and written them on the board. In data collected from both participant interviews and observations, there was no evidence of learner-centered instructional methods during phonics instruction such as student demonstration of applying phonics rules, student created examples, or student led discussions about phonics rules.

Fluency. Teacher-led fluency instruction involves teacher selected instructional materials and teacher-centered instruction and discussion of fluency techniques (Fenty, Mulachy, & Washburn, 2015). During learner-centered fluency instruction, students have choice in the materials selected and participate in student-led discussions about fluency techniques (Rasinski et al, 2016). Participants used teacher-centered methods in their fluency instruction. Fluency instruction class discussions were teacher generated and led, and fluency instructional material was teacher selected. T3 stated, “When providing fluency instruction I read aloud to students and then lead a discussion about the fluency strategies used.” T6 said, “When it comes to choosing a book, I make the choice for them. I just think it’s easier if I pick, that way I don’t have to worry about students being overly picky about book choices.” In addition, T8 said, “Students don’t always know what level they should be reading at, so it’s better if I choose the books for them.” T1 stated, “I always struggle with who should pick the book. I want my students to enjoy the books I am reading or that they are reading, but I think it’s easier if I pick for them.”

Data collected during classroom reading observations confirmed that the teaching methods participants used to teach fluency instruction were teacher-centered methods. Fluency instructional materials were pre-selected by the teacher with no student choice. In one classroom, when a student asked if he could read a different book, he was told to read the book that was provided. In another classroom, all students completed fluency practice with the same passage regardless of reading level. There was no evidence of student choice of materials or student-led discussion during fluency instruction.

Vocabulary. Teacher-centered vocabulary instruction occurs when the teacher leads the discussion over vocabulary words, supplies definitions for the students, and all students complete the same task at the same time (Carlisle et al., 2013). During learner-centered vocabulary instruction, the discussion is student led and vocabulary tasks may vary as appropriate for students or there may be student choice involved in the tasks (Rimbey et al., 2016). Vocabulary assessments vary in a learner-centered classroom with a focus on learning and not testing (Rimbey et al., 2016; Weimer, 2013). Participants used teacher-centered instructional methods to provide vocabulary instruction such as having all students complete the same task by looking up definitions in a glossary of dictionary. Student-led discussion over vocabulary words was not used in the classroom. Assessment over vocabulary words was emphasized over the learning of the words. For example, T5 stated, “I don’t have a lot of time for vocabulary instruction, so I have students copy the definitions to words and then they study them throughout the week and are tested on Friday. If they do well on their test, then I assume they must know the words.” T4 stated, “Vocabulary instruction happens on Monday. I give students a list of

words from their story that week, and they use the glossary to look up the definitions of the words.” Participants also used teacher-centered instruction through providing the definition to students in student friendly terms and the students copying down the definitions with no student led discussion or examples. For example, T10 said, “My students struggle to copy definitions out of a dictionary, so I found that it works better if I give them a student friendly definition. I provide the definition and then students write it down in their reading journals.”

Comprehension. Teacher-centered comprehension strategies involve the use of teacher-led discussion and questioning, a focus on assessment, and teacher selected instructional materials (Haber-Curran & Tillapaugh, 2015). In a learner-centered reading classroom, comprehension instruction involves student-led questioning and discussion, with the teacher acting as the facilitator, a focus on constructing meaning over assessment, and student choice in comprehension tasks and in selected text (Haber-Curran & Tillapaugh, 2015). Participants relied on teacher-centered instructional methods to teach comprehension in their classrooms using teacher-led discussion, teacher-led questioning, and teacher-selected materials. Students completed the same comprehension task, and read the same text, with no option for student choice. T8 stated, “To make sure my students are comprehending what they read, I ask them questions about the reading. I’ll either ask the questions out loud, or I’ll give them a worksheet. I know if they comprehended the story when they do well on their test.” T9 said, “I do different things to teach comprehension. Sometimes my students will write a summary. Sometimes I’ll ask them questions. I try to mix it up so that they don’t get bored but I

need them to all be working on the same thing so that I can manage my classroom.” T4 stated, “Honestly, I pretty much ask direct questions when I want to see if my students are comprehending the text. I know that I should be facilitating a discussion with them, and I have tried, but I don’t really feel comfortable doing that, so I went back to asking questions. I always follow up with a test on Friday to make sure they all understood the story.” Classroom observations during comprehension instruction confirmed that participants relied on teacher-centered instruction to teach comprehension. Participants used teacher-centered discussions and questioning, and discussions about text focused on participants asking students questions to which one student would respond with a direct answer. Comprehension instruction also involved students completing the same task such as a worksheet activity involving students working individually to answer comprehension questions about the text that was read. There was no evidence of student-led questioning and discussion, a focus on constructing meaning over assessment, or student choice in comprehension tasks or texts.

Theme 2: Classroom Control

Participants rely on teacher-centered instructional methods to teach a comprehensive reading curriculum because they feel more in control of the classroom when they do so. Participants are familiar with teacher-centered strategies, such as teacher-led questioning and discussion, which also makes them feel more in control of the learning environment. Participants felt they had better classroom management when teacher-centered methods were used in the classroom. For example, T1 stated, “I know that my principal wants me to use learner-centered teaching, but I teach the way I do

because I need to feel like I am in control in my classroom.” Additionally, T4 commented, “I’d really like my comprehension instruction to be more of a conversation with my students, but when I’ve tried it, I feel like I have no control.” However, participants would be willing to use learner-centered instruction when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum if they felt comfortable in doing so.

Outcomes

The problem that this study addressed was an underrepresentation of learner-centered instructional strategies in novice K to 5 teachers’ instruction of a comprehensive reading curriculum at Central School District. The purpose of this study was to explore novice K to 5 teachers’ perspectives of learner-centered instruction when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum at CSD and to explore how they were teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum in their K to 5 classrooms. Common themes among participants’ interview responses and classroom observation data were identified. To successfully implement learner-centered teaching strategies into reading instruction, participants need to feel prepared to use learner-centered instructional strategies and they would benefit from professional development that was targeted on the learner-centered strategy of facilitative teaching. Participants desire adequate time to collaborate with colleagues and plan learner-centered reading lessons.

When teachers use learner-centered instructional methods to teach a comprehensive reading curriculum, students are more like to become critical and independent readers and thinkers who possess the skills for lifelong-success (ADOE, 2017; Weimer, 2013). In addition, Weimer (2013) argued that learner-centered

instructional environments empower students and encourage them to be motivated learners. While participants shared positive views of the benefits and importance of using learner-centered instructional strategies, they would be more prepared to implement learner-centered reading instruction if they were provided with targeted professional development that focused on learner-centered reading instruction. According to Weimer (2013), when preparing teachers to use learner-centered instructional methods, one principle of learner-centered teaching should be introduced at a time beginning with facilitative teaching. Participants would prefer to implement one strategy at a time with the first being facilitative teaching. The professional development that was previously offered was broad and was not specifically tied to reading instruction. In addition, the previous professional development covered all aspects of learner-centered instruction, which left participants feeling overwhelmed. Participants also desired planning and collaboration time as part of the professional development. In the past, participants had not been given time to plan learner-centered reading instruction. For novice teachers to be successful in implementing learner-centered reading instruction, they need appropriate training and time for planning. Professional development that is specific to learner-centered reading instruction, and focused on just one strategy, could help prepare them to implement learner-centered instruction into their teaching of a comprehensive reading curriculum. As a result the findings of the study, I created a project in the form of a 3-day professional development series. The series is designed to support K to 5 novice reading teachers' implementation of learner-centered reading instruction. I used the findings from this study to guide my development of the project. In addition to the initial 3-day

professional development series, continuing support will be provided in the form of monthly follow-up meetings.

Conclusion

In this case study, I explored novice K to 5 teachers' perspectives of learner-centered instruction when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum at CSD as well as how they were teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum in their classrooms. Using a case study design, qualitative data were collected in the form of interviews and classroom observations to explore the following research questions: What are novice K to 5 reading teachers' perspectives of learner-centered instructional strategies when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum? How do novice K to 5 reading teachers teach a comprehensive reading curriculum in their classrooms? Ten novice K to 5 reading teachers at CSD formed the sample of participants for this study. I collected data through semi-structured individual interviews and classroom observations of reading instruction.

I used the findings from the study to create a project in order to promote positive social change by preparing novice K to 5 reading teachers to use learner-centered instructional strategies to teach a comprehensive reading curriculum. Improvement in novice K to 5 teachers' use of learner-centered instruction when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum may increase reading achievement as well as students' overall ability to read, enjoyment of reading, and knowledge of how to apply and infuse reading into everyday life, which will promote positive social change. The description and details of this project are outlined in Section 3.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

The purpose of this project study was to explore novice K to 5 teachers' perspectives of learner-centered instruction when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum at CSD and to explore how they were teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum in their K to 5 classrooms. In this qualitative case study, I interviewed 10 novice K to 5 reading teachers and observed each of them teaching a reading lesson in their classrooms. Participants reported they felt unprepared to implement learner-centered reading instruction, did not have enough time to plan learner-centered instruction, and needed time to work collaboratively on designing learner-centered instructional lessons. Participants were particularly reluctant to use facilitative teaching strategies in their classrooms. Classroom observations revealed that participants were relying on teacher-centered instructional methods when teaching reading. CSD administrators need to offer ways to support novice K to 5 reading teachers who are struggling to implement learner-centered reading instruction. While CSD has provided professional development on learner-centered instruction, participants thought the professional development was too broad and they would benefit from a targeted professional development that focused on the learner-centered method of facilitative teaching. A project in the form of a 3-day professional development series with monthly follow-up meetings allows teachers the opportunity to collaborate, work together to create learner-centered reading lessons, and learn more about learner-centered reading instruction with a focus on facilitative teaching.

Description and Goals of Project

The project for my doctoral study is a 3-day professional development series designed for novice K to 5 reading teachers (see Appendix A). In addition to the initial 3-day professional development, ongoing support will be provided to novice K to 5 reading teachers in the form of a monthly meeting. The monthly meeting may change over the course of the year potentially involving a larger audience within the school and the district. For professional development opportunities to be effective, they should be ongoing and allow participants time to meet with their colleagues where they can collaborate, learn from each other, and support each other (Bowles & Pearman, 2017). Administrators, such as the building principal and assistant principal, and the school literacy coach will be invited to attend the professional development series as well as the ongoing monthly meetings. The purpose of the project is to prepare novice teachers to implement the learner-centered instructional strategy facilitative teaching into their reading instruction as well as to provide ongoing support in their implementation of facilitative teaching. The professional development will focus on using learner-centered instructional strategies, specifically the strategy of facilitative teaching, within the context of a comprehensive reading curriculum. Time will be set aside for collaboration and lesson plan development to create learner-centered reading lessons that can be used in the classroom. Time for collaboration and lesson plan development is critical to this professional development series because participants expressed a need for both in the study. The goals of this professional development series are to engage participants in collaborative conversations about learner-centered instructional strategies with an

emphasis on facilitative teaching, reflect on examples of learner-centered instructional strategies being applied to a comprehensive reading curriculum, and create learner-centered reading lessons that use facilitative teaching and can be used in participants' classrooms. The overall goal of this professional development series is to ensure that participants are prepared to implement learner-centered instruction, particularly the use of facilitative teaching, when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum. By participating in monthly follow-up meetings, participants will have the opportunity to plan and collaborate with colleagues as well as to discuss successes and challenges in their implementation of facilitative teaching. Participants will also have the opportunity to receive ongoing support if needed during monthly follow-up meetings.

Rationale

Project Content Rationale

The problem addressed in this project study was that learner-centered instructional strategies were underrepresented in novice K to 5 teachers' instruction of a comprehensive reading curriculum despite a district mandated requirement to use them (assistant superintendent, personal communication, May 16, 2017; ADOE, 2017). An analysis of K to 5 novice teachers' lesson plans confirmed that they were not infusing reading instruction with learner-centered methods. Additionally, results from state and district literacy assessments indicated that the reading scores in novice teachers' classroom were lower than those in experienced teachers' classrooms. Participants revealed that while they understood the importance of learner-centered instruction, they were unprepared to implement learner-centered reading instruction, did not have enough

time to plan learner-centered instruction, and needed time to work collaboratively on designing learner-centered instructional lessons. Participants were particularly reluctant to use facilitative teaching strategies in their classrooms. Participants desired additional training based on the learner-centered instructional strategy facilitative teaching and collaboration and lesson planning time. The findings of the study were used in the planning of the professional development series. The content of the professional development will focus on facilitative teaching with built-in time for collaboration and lesson planning.

Novice teachers' underrepresentation of learner-centered instructional strategies when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum is concerning because a teacher's practice has a significant influence on student learning, and a classroom teacher has more influence on student achievement than any other factor (Brookfield, 2015; Ingersoll & Perda, 2013; Kunter et al., 2013). Additionally, students who struggle with reading in elementary school are more likely to struggle later in their education (Hagans & Good, 2013). Students in classrooms in which learner-centered instruction is the focus are more likely to be motivated and successful in their learning (Weimer, 2013). To support novice teachers in creating classroom environments that support student learning, professional development must be well planned, collaborative, and focused on content (Evers, Van der Heijden, & Kreijns, 2016; Killion & Roy, 2009).

Project Genre Rationale

I selected professional development as the genre for my project because it is an important tool for educators when developing their teaching practice (see Bowles & Pearman, 2017). Educators should frequently and continuously participate in professional development that is relevant to their needs throughout their careers (Burns & Lawrie, 2015). Additionally, professional development contributes to school improvement, teacher quality, and student learning (Girvan, Conneely, & Tangney, 2016). Successful professional development is collaborative, focused on topics relevant to the educators, and should include teachers who work at the same school or in the same grade or subject to promote a focus on instructional goals (Killion & Roy, 2009). I developed this project to allow participants the opportunity to collaborate, identify learner-centered instructional strategies and how to apply those strategies when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum, and apply new knowledge to develop learner-centered reading lessons participants can use in their own classrooms.

Review of the Literature

In Section 1 of this study, I described the conceptual framework, ADOE's (2017) science of reading and Weimer's (2013) learner-centered teaching. The literature review in Section 1 covered learner-centered teaching, learner-centered teaching within a comprehensive reading curriculum, and novice teachers' experience with teaching reading. The literature review in this section addresses professional development and benefits of professional development on instructional practices, collaboration, and time.

To demonstrate saturation of the topic, I gathered materials from the Southern Arkansas University Library and the Walden University Library. The following terms and phrases were used in reviewing the literature: *professional development*, *professional development and instructional practices*, *teacher collaboration*, and *teacher time constraints*.

Project Genre

I chose professional development as the genre for my project. Professional development is familiar to teachers and is the most common form of training in schools (Darling-Hammond, 2017). Professional development is an important tool when preparing teachers to teach a new or unfamiliar concept (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2014). Professional development is the most appropriate genre for my project because of its potential to help prepare novice K to 5 reading teachers to implement learner-centered reading instruction. Study participants identified that they felt unprepared to implement learner-centered reading instruction, particularly facilitative teaching, and they desired time to plan learner-centered lessons and work collaboratively with colleagues. I chose professional development as the genre for this project because professional development will allow participants the opportunity to work collaboratively to gain additional knowledge of ways to use facilitative teaching in their reading instruction. The professional development series I designed for this project focuses on helping novice K to 5 teachers feel prepared to implement the learner-centered reading strategy facilitative teaching. Within the professional development, participants will have time to collaborate and will have the opportunity to create learner-centered reading lessons. In addition,

monthly follow-up meetings will be held to provide participants the opportunity to continue planning and collaborating with colleagues, as well as time to discuss successes and challenges in their implementation of facilitative teaching.

Professional development is defined as experiences provided to educators to provide them with the knowledge and skills to promote student success (Learning Forward, n.d.). Professional development is used when there is a desire to improve teacher practice or instruction or to help prepare teachers to master a new concept (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2014). Professional development can be considered traditional, in the form of workshops and conferences, or nontraditional, such as mentoring, coaching, and learning communities (Bayar, 2014). Whether the professional development is traditional or nontraditional, effective professional development should take into account the needs of the adult learner and be collaborative, hands-on, content related, and focused on issues relevant to the teacher (Killion & Roy, 2009). Additionally, professional development requires that participants take part in active learning and collective participation (Polkinghorne, 2013). According to Brown and Militello (2016), professional development should be continuous and ongoing, collaborative, address teacher needs, monitored for effectiveness, and focused on instructional outcomes.

Professional development should be developed with an emphasis on allowing teachers the opportunity to increase their knowledge relating to their own identified needs and the needs of their students. In a mixed-methods study, Polkinghorne (2013) explored teachers' perceptions of professional development opportunities. He found that teachers preferred professional development opportunities that were voluntary and easy to apply

to their own needs and classrooms. Additionally, the participants in Polkinghorne's (2013) study indicated that they wanted hands-on professional development that allowed time for collaboration with peers. While professional development is frequently designed without input from teachers, principals can influence how professional development is designed and should seek the input of their faculty and staff (Brown & Militello, 2016).

Professional development should be created with an emphasis on allowing teachers to improve their practice as related to identified need (Leko, Roberts, & Pek, 2015). In a mixed-methods study that examined the effect professional development had on middle school teachers' reading instruction, researchers found that the teachers perceived the professional development as effective, related to their needs, and participants were able to implement what was learned in the professional development sessions (Leko, Roberts, & Pek, 2015). Additionally, in a longitudinal study that examined how high quality professional development impacts instructional strategies, researchers found that teachers who identified instructional strategies as a personal concern benefitted the most from the professional development and were able to address their instructional concerns in the classroom (Sun, Penuel, Frank, Gallagher, & Youngs, 2013).

Benefits of Professional Development on Instructional Practices

As detailed in the findings from the study, participants desired additional training in the learner-centered strategy of facilitative teaching to be better prepared to implement the strategy. For literacy professional development to be effective and produce the best results in improving teachers' instructional methods, it should include research-based

instructional and reading practices (Vaughn & Fletcher, 2012). Fischer et al. (2016) asserted that professional development must include active learning and require that participants be actively engaged in both the activities and the thinking process. In the active learning process participants are constructing knowledge through analyzing work, looking at examples, and collaborating with peers (Fischer et al, 2016). When professional development provides concrete teaching tasks through active learning and collaboration, participants are more likely to leave prepared to implement new strategies in their classrooms.

Professional development is considered a vital component in education (Hilliard, 2015). When an educator has opportunities to exchange ideas with colleagues, those exchanges may lead to identical or opposing pedagogical ideas, both are important in the professional growth of the educator (Jarvis, Dickerson, & Chivers, 2012). Teachers often desire the opportunity to train and collaborate with peers while learning new instructional techniques for the classroom (Bradley, Munger, & Hord, 2015). Participation in professional development allows teacher educators to form collaborative relationships that may extend well beyond the workshop and offer long-term benefits for classroom instruction (Hilliard, 2015). When a teacher enters the classroom, they bring with them familiar pedagogical ideas, but professional development offers the opportunity to look at new pedagogy through the eyes and experiences of peers (Kelly & Cherkowski, 2015).

Professional development that focuses on best instructional practices through discussion, coaching and lesson planning offers long-lasting benefits for participants (Hargreaves & Fullan 2012; Zwart, Wubbels, Bolhuis, & Bergen, 2008). Learner-

centered instruction is considered a best instructional practice and offers a voice to students in their own learning (Weimer, 2013). To participate in learner-centered instruction it is imperative that learners master skills such as reflection, critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration (Gallavan & Kottler, 2012). These learner-centered skills should be incorporated as an integral part of a professional development workshop for participants to model and practice.

An important part of the learner-centered classroom is participation in discussions; therefore, discussion is a critical component of professional development that focuses on learner-centered pedagogy (Brookfield, 2015; Weimer, 2013). The use of discussion in professional development allows participants to reflect on their own practice and share what is working and what needs improvement. Additionally, the use of discussion encourages participants to share their knowledge and experiences of learner-centered instruction (Gallavan & Kottler, 2012).

Collaboration

As detailed in Section 2, participants would benefit from time to work collaboratively with colleagues in their implementation of learner-centered reading instruction. Researchers have found that collaboration is critical when planning effective professional development opportunities (Dufour & Dufour, 2013; Learning Forward, n.d.). Additionally, novice teachers benefit from collaboration with colleagues when implementing new concepts (Darling-Hammond, 2017). Learning is a collaborative process and should take place in a collaborative working and learning environment (Dufour & Dufour, 2013). Therefore, effective professional development should focus on

creating collaborative communities in which participants' teaching practices are enhanced and improved (Castro & Granada, 2016). In a study conducted by Mraz, Salas, Mercado, and Dikotla (2016) the effects of literacy professional development were analyzed, and collaboration was found to be a critical factor in the effectiveness of professional development. Additionally, the researchers found professional development was the most effective when the opportunity to collaborate was ongoing throughout the school year (Mraz, Salas, Mercado, & Dikotla, 2016). Continuous collaboration energizes teachers to keep up with practices learned and ensures support when implementing new strategies (Allen, 2016).

Time

Participants in the study understood the importance of learner-centered reading instruction, but they lacked the time needed to prepare lessons and implement the strategies. Researchers have found that time constraints are a common issue for novice teachers expected to implement new strategies (Bettini, Kimerling, Park, & Murphy, 2015). Burkhauser and Lesaux (2017) found that when teachers are provided with ample time to focus on implementing new strategies, they are able to effectively implement them in their classrooms. Casperson and Raaen (2014) found that novice teachers described their first teaching job as a shock and reported that they did not feel as though they had enough time to do what was expected of them. In order for novice teachers to be able to implement unfamiliar strategies, they must be given time to become comfortable with the strategies (Ronfeldt, Farmer, McQueen, & Grisson, 2015).

Project Description

To assist novice K to 5 reading teachers with their application of learner-centered instructional strategies to teach a comprehensive reading curriculum, and specifically in the use of facilitative teaching, I propose a 3-day professional development series that will include teacher collaboration and lesson planning. The 3-day professional development series will be followed up with monthly meetings to allow participants the chance to collaborate and share successes and challenges in their implementation of learner-centered reading instruction. Through the monthly meetings, participants will have the opportunity to receive ongoing support in their implementation of learner-centered reading instruction. The professional development series will be called, “Designing Learner-Centered Reading Instruction.” Ideally, I will hold these sessions at the elementary school in August during teacher-required back-to-school professional development sessions. I will invite all novice K to 5 reading teachers to attend, and the sessions will be open to experienced elementary reading teachers as well. Administrators and the literacy instructional facilitator will also be invited to attend. The building principal will have the discretion to determine if the novice reading teachers’ attendance is voluntary or mandatory.

I will conduct the initial professional development series over 3 full and consecutive school days. Each day will begin at 8:00 a.m. and finish at 3:00 p.m., with a 1-hour lunch break at either 11:00 a.m. or 12:00 p.m. My study findings suggest that novice K to 5 teachers at CSD feel unprepared to apply learner-centered instructional strategies when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum, and they were particularly

to use facilitative teaching. Participants expressed a desire to have time to plan learner-centered reading lessons. Participants also expressed the need for collaboration time to feel prepared to implement learner-centered reading instruction. To address the needs found from my study, the first day of professional development will focus on learner-centered instruction and the principles of facilitative teaching. The focus on learner-centered instruction on the first day of professional development is critical for laying the foundation and providing the participants with the necessary background knowledge. Day 1 will end with guest speakers from the district who have been recognized for their exceptional use of learner-centered reading instruction.

On the second day of the professional development, participants will take part in collaborative activities to deepen their understanding of how the learner-centered instructional strategy facilitative teaching can be applied when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum. At the start of the session, I will give participants an example of a teacher-centered and a learner-centered reading lesson. Participants will outline and discuss the two lessons and the differences they see between them. The teacher-centered lessons are lesson plans that came from novice K to 5 teachers at CSD. Participants will then share the differences they saw between the lesson plans and relate this to their own teaching. Next, a teacher centered and learner centered role-play activity will take place. For this activity, the same guest speakers from the day before will model a reading comprehension lesson that is first teacher-centered and then learner-centered. A discussion of each of the methods will follow. Finally, participants will divide into groups, and each group will receive a teacher-centered reading lesson focusing on

vocabulary, which is one of the components of a comprehensive reading curriculum. This lesson plan came from a novice fourth grade teacher's classroom at CSD. Groups will work to adapt the lesson to a learner-centered plan. Groups will share their lessons with the entire group before leaving. At the end of Day 2, I will instruct participants to bring their reading curriculums to the following session so they can create learner-centered reading lessons to use in their classrooms.

I have structured the third day of professional development to allow attendees to create learner-centered reading lessons, which focus on facilitative teaching, to use in their own classrooms. Participants will have the opportunity to collaborate with other session participants during this time. Killion and Roy (2009) asserted that effective professional development should be collaborative and relevant to the participants. By allowing the attendees time to build lessons they can take to their own classrooms, the professional development will be relevant to each of the participants. Due to the large number of novice K to 5 reading teachers in CSD, there will be many opportunities for participants to collaborate with others. At the end of Day 3, participants will share the learner-centered reading lessons they created, and we will create a Dropbox folder for all participants to share lessons with the group and throughout the district.

After the initial 3-Day professional development series has concluded, CSD and I will provide ongoing support to participants in the form of monthly meetings. The monthly follow-up meetings are 1.5 hours in length and will take place on Wednesdays. During the monthly meetings, participants will collaborate and share the successes and challenges they have faced in their implementation of learner-centered reading

instruction. Participants will also have the opportunity to share lesson plans they have developed during the month. As the researcher, I will facilitate the ongoing monthly meetings because it is important that someone knowledgeable about the topic be available to facilitate discussions during ongoing professional development and collaboration opportunities (Learning Forward, n.d.). I will also invite the building literacy instructional facilitator and administrators to attend monthly follow-up meetings. Monthly follow-up meetings will continue for the duration of the school year.

Resources, Supports, and Potential Barriers

To conduct this professional development, I will need my laptop, a projector, and access to the Internet. I will distribute PowerPoint presentations used in the professional development to the participants. Additionally, I will need Weimer's (2013) book, *Learner-Centered Teaching*. I will also need index cards, cardstock paper, markers, sharpies, chart paper, pens, pencils, and the pre and post assessments. I will need access to a location to hold the professional development; ideally, we will hold the professional development in the school's library.

Several barriers could potentially affect the professional development. The first barrier is that technical issues could occur with Internet connection. To address this barrier, I will request access to the technology director. The library being unavailable for the training is another possible barrier. If this occurs, I will request access to an alternate location, ideally still in the school. An additional potential barrier would be participants' willingness to learn and participate in the professional development. By presenting the overall goals, and basing the professional development on teacher need, I can overcome

this barrier. A barrier for the follow-up meetings is the time needed during the school day to hold follow-up meetings. Participants may be tired at the end of the day, and they may not want to stay to attend an hour and a half professional development meeting. By making the follow-up meetings collaborative and focused on teacher needs, I can overcome this barrier as well.

Project Implementation

As the author of the study, I am the person most knowledgeable about the problem and most prepared to offer potential solutions. In addition, I am a faculty member at a university and prepare preservice elementary education teachers to teach reading in the classroom. Therefore, I will lead the professional development series and follow-up meetings. However, the professional development will focus on collaboration and ideas, and discussions will be welcome from participants. By sharing ideas and knowledge, participants can discuss instructional strategies and develop new insights (Runhaar & Sanders, 2016). Additionally, I will work closely with the school's principal and literacy specialist when setting up the professional development.

As the facilitator of the professional development, I will be tasked with creating an atmosphere in which participants feel safe to collaborate, reflect, and share their personal experiences in the classroom. To create this type of atmosphere, an effective facilitator will encourage involvement from participants and allow time for reflection (Range, Pijanowski, Duncan, Scherz, & Hvidston, 2014). At the beginning of the first day, participants will introduce themselves, talk about what grade level they teach, and

share instructional successes they have experienced. Subsequent days will also include a quick warm-up to encourage interaction and serve as a daily icebreaker.

After the warm-ups, activities will engage participants in a discussion about learner-centered instructional strategies and how to use those strategies to teach a comprehensive reading curriculum. Activities will involve participant interaction and focus on active learning. Participants will be involved throughout the workshops and there will be a focus on using information and situations that are meaningful to the participants. On the final day of the initial professional development series, participants will be allowed to create learner-centered instructional lessons to use in their own reading instruction so that they have lessons ready to take back and implement. I plan to invite the literacy specialist from the district as well as a colleague from my university to assist on the third day of the professional development to provide additional assistance in lesson planning. I will also invite the building principal to attend the professional development.

Project Evaluation Plan

Goals and Objectives of the Project

The objective for this project is for novice K to 5 reading teachers to understand and apply the learner-centered instructional strategy of facilitative teaching to their teaching of a comprehensive reading curriculum. Participants from the study revealed that they felt unprepared to implement learner-centered reading instruction, did not feel that they had enough time to plan learner-centered instruction, and felt that they needed time to work collaboratively on designing learner-centered instructional lessons.

Participants were particularly reluctant to use facilitative teaching strategies in their classrooms. The main goals for the project are as follows: (a) engage participants in collaborative conversations about learner-centered instructional strategies with an emphasis on facilitative teaching, (b) reflect upon examples of learner-centered instructional strategies being applied to a comprehensive reading curriculum, and (c) create learner-centered reading lessons that use facilitative teaching and can be used in participants' classrooms. The key stakeholders are the K to 5 teachers this project will serve as well as the district and building administrators. I have created an evaluation plan to determine if this project met its goals and objectives.

Evaluation Plan

When implementing a project, it is important to determine if its outcome was successful and met the identified goals and objectives (Pal, 2014). Therefore, throughout the implementation of this professional development, I will be considering whether the goals and objectives are being met. I will also be looking for strengths and weaknesses of the project. I will use formative and summative assessment to accomplish this evaluation.

Formative assessment is ongoing and allows for immediate feedback, which is beneficial when determining if goals and objectives are being achieved (Cai & Sankaran, 2015). I will conduct formative assessments throughout the professional development by asking reflective questions and listening to discussions that are occurring. For example, I will ask, "What aspects of this lesson make it learner centered?" "How can you incorporate the learner-centered instructional technique of facilitative learning into your own reading lessons?" and "How will using learner-centered instruction improve the

overall reading instruction in your classroom?” Additionally, I have designed activities that will lead to discussions that will allow me to determine if the goals and objectives are being met. For example, on the second day of the professional development, participants will work in groups to turn a teacher-centered reading lesson into a learner-centered teaching lesson that focuses on facilitative teaching. Formative assessment will also take place during the monthly follow-up meetings. During these meetings, I will listen to participants discuss the challenges and successes they are having in their classrooms in their implementation of learner-centered reading instruction and their use of facilitative teaching.

Summative assessment is used as a final evaluation of whether the goals and objectives have been met (Cai & Sankaran, 2015). I will attempt to determine if the objective of the initial professional development series was met by administering a presurvey at the beginning of the first session and a post-survey at the end of the last session (see Appendix A). In this survey, I will ask participants open-ended questions to determine if they are better prepared to implement learner-centered reading instruction in their own classrooms, particularly the use of facilitative teaching, which was the overall objective of the professional development. By using summative evaluation in this way, I intend to determine and measure the results of what participants learned (see Tolgfors & Ohman, 2016).

Evaluating this project is important to determine if participants are better prepared to implement learner-centered instruction, particularly facilitative teaching, to teach a comprehensive reading curriculum. Improving novice teachers’ instructional practices

could positively affect student reading achievement. In addition, the information from the evaluations may be used within the educational community to allow for future professional development opportunities on the topic of learner-centered instructional strategies, thereby increasing teacher instructional strategies and student learning success.

Project Implications

Social Change

This project has the potential to benefit novice K to 5 reading teachers and their students. The initial 3-day professional development series may prepare novice K to 5 reading teachers to use learner-centered instructional methods, which may have a positive impact on their instruction in the areas of phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. For professional development to be sustainable, which is critical to its success, it must be ongoing, such as in the form of monthly meetings (Warr Pedersen, 2017). Through monthly follow-up meetings, participants will have the opportunity to collaborate and share successes and challenges in their implementation of learner-centered reading instruction; moreover, they will have the chance to receive ongoing support in their implementation of learner-centered instructional methods when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum. Monthly follow-up meetings may allow administrators the opportunity to reflect upon the success of novice K to 5 reading teachers in their implementation of learner-centered reading instruction and may provide information on potential improvement opportunities. Improvement in novice K to 5 teachers' use of learner-centered instruction when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum may increase reading achievement as well as students' overall ability to read,

enjoyment of reading, and knowledge of how to apply and infuse reading into everyday life, which will promote positive social change.

Local Level

This project study has the potential for positive social change implications on the local level for novice teachers, administrators, and students. According to Lumpkin, Achen, and Dodd (2015) learner-centered instructional strategies create learning environments that allow students to have a voice and be active in their learning process in the classroom. Using learner-centered methods increase student engagement and success in the learning process (Lumpkin et al., 2015). Using the findings from my study, administrators may be better equipped to support novice teachers in their use of learner-centered instruction to teach a comprehensive reading curriculum. The project developed from the findings of this study may lead to improved reading instruction in novice teachers' classrooms through the use of learner-centered strategies, thus resulting in increased literacy achievement and positive social change through the creation of a community of proficient readers.

Far-Reaching

The professional development series created in this project study has the potential for far-reaching positive effects on student reading achievement. Other districts may adapt the professional development to provide teachers, both novice and experienced, with support in using learner-centered instructional strategies to teach a comprehensive reading curriculum, thus creating communities of proficient readers. I will be available as a resource to help other districts apply and adapt the professional development, and I will

work with administrators to train any person who may facilitate the professional development.

Conclusion

The proposed project developed for this study is a 3-day professional development workshop with monthly follow-up meetings. In Section 3, I discussed the project, the rationale for choosing professional development as the project genre, and a literature review on the topic of professional development and critical components of professional development. I also included a description of the project, described a plan for implementation and evaluation, and reviewed potential project implications. In Section 4, I provide a reflection of the project's strengths and limitations, as well as reflect on my personal growth as a researcher and scholar.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

The purpose of this case study was to explore novice K to 5 teachers' perspectives of learner-centered instruction when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum at CSD and to understand how they are teaching phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, which are identified as the five research-based components of a comprehensive K to 5 reading curriculum (ADOE, 2017; Snow & Matthews, 2016). The project, which resulted from the findings, was a 3-day professional development series along with monthly follow-up meetings that incorporated ideas intended to help novice K to 5 teachers in their implementation of learner-centered reading instruction. In this section, I discuss the strengths as well as the limitations of my project, and I consider alternative approaches. I also include a reflection on my growth as a scholar, researcher, and project developer that resulted from my participation in this journey. In the end, I make recommendations for future research.

Project Strengths and Limitations

Strengths

Researchers have shown that the use of learner-centered instructional strategies when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum increases student engagement and leads to students who are more successful in reading (Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Roehl et al., 2013). When learner-centered instruction is not used in the classroom, students are less motivated to learn, and they are less likely to progress to proficient readers (Goodwin et al., 2014). The first strength of this project is that it has the potential to improve the

way novice K to 5 teachers teach reading in their classrooms. In creating the project, I took into account the barriers novice teachers faced when implementing learner-centered reading instruction and attempted to provide them with the tools and knowledge to implement facilitative teaching, one of the strategies, into their classrooms. I formulated the project using the data collected during the study, which allowed me to design it with the intent to meet the needs of novice K to 5 teachers. Another strength of the project is that it gives novice teachers the time to create learner-centered reading lessons that they can immediately implement in their classrooms, and it also provides the opportunity for ongoing collaboration and support through follow-up meetings. A final strength of this project is that other districts may be able to adapt it to provide their teachers with professional development in learner-centered reading instruction.

Limitations

A limitation of this project is that it does not address all components of learner-centered instruction. Learner-centered teaching is based on five principles: (a) teacher facilitation of learning, (b) teacher-student shared decision making, (c) use of content to build knowledge and skills, (d) student responsibility for learning, and (e) purpose of evaluation (Weimer, 2013). This project only focuses on the first principle, teacher facilitation of learning. While I did this by design in response to data collected during interviews, it does serve as a limitation. Novice K to 5 teachers will leave the professional development series prepared to implement the learner-centered teaching strategy of facilitative teaching, but the other four strategies will not be covered in depth. Novice K to 5 teachers still may feel unprepared to implement the other four learning-

centered strategies, and they may require further professional development on those strategies once facilitative teaching is mastered. Another limitation of the project is that it is specifically built with the needs of the study participants in mind. It is possible that other districts will have different needs, which would make it less beneficial to them.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

The problem for this project study was an underrepresentation of learner-centered instructional strategies in novice K to 5 teachers' instruction of a comprehensive reading curriculum at CSD. I collected data by first interviewing participants and then conducting classroom observations. I could have completed the classroom observations first and then interviewed participants gaining additional insights into the data collected in the observations. I could have explored this problem using an alternative approach by changing the design of the study. Instead of designing a qualitative case study, I could have designed a quantitative (or mixed) study. I could have given participants a survey over their knowledge and use of learner-centered instruction when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum to determine the extent to which they were using the strategies. Additionally, I could have used a questionnaire to determine if participants had a sufficient knowledge base about learner-centered instructional strategies to effectively use them in their instruction of a comprehensive reading curriculum. Using a survey or questionnaire would have allowed for the possibility of a larger sample size and to extend my study beyond one district, which could provide results that could be easily generalized to other situations (see Creswell, 2012).

Scholarship, Project Development, and Leadership and Change

Scholarship

During the time I spent as a student at Walden University, I grew as a scholar in my ability to conduct and analyze research. Through the challenges and setbacks I faced along the way, I was able to appreciate the challenges scholars face when conducting research. I learned how to anticipate and accept setbacks; moreover, I overcame the setbacks and allowed myself to continue to progress. When I first started in the doctoral program at Walden, I found different methodologies and research designs to be confusing, but as time passed, and my experience grew, I became confident in distinguishing between methodologies and designs and to determine the appropriate one for different research settings. Additionally, I believe that I became a more skilled researcher and am better able to conduct interviews, classroom observations, and data collection in general. Before I started at Walden, I never truly considered the effect bias can have on research. I now understand the importance of setting aside and acknowledging bias when conducting research, and I was able to effectively do so in the interest of my own study.

As an educator and a scholar, it is my goal to make a positive contribution to the field of education and to impact the lives of teachers, students, and communities. My time at Walden has instilled in me the importance of contributing to positive social change. Through my time spent at Walden, I am confident that I now have the skills and knowledge to contribute to positive social change in the field of education. I am

committed to using my research skills to address and look for potential solutions to educational problems.

Project Development

The opportunity to develop a project based on the findings of my study allowed me to grow in the area of project development. In the past, I served as a literacy facilitator, and I was involved in designing short professional development sessions. However, I had never used data to design these sessions and ensure that they would meet the needs of the participants. This process taught me of the value of collecting data to design professional development that will meet the participants' needs. I also learned about what effective professional development entails. I used the information to create a professional development series that I am confident will meet the needs of novice K to 5 teachers. The experience I gained through this process and the development of the project will help me when I design and facilitate future professional development activities.

Leadership and Change

Through my time spent at Walden, I learned about what it takes to be an effective leader and inspire change in the field of education. I have served in many leadership roles in my professional career. I have been a department chair and a literacy instructional facilitator, and I now work in higher education working to inspire future teachers. While completing my project study, I have been able to further develop my leadership skills by thinking critically about how to inspire positive change and influence those around me. I feel better prepared to lead people and to encourage them to take part in the leadership and decision-making process.

Scholar. Participating in the doctoral process allowed me to become better equipped to conduct research and analyze the findings. I learned about the research process and how to effectively design a study. I work in higher education where there is a large emphasis on scholarly activity and participating in the growth of knowledge in the chosen field. Before I began at Walden, my understanding of the research process was vague, and I struggled to participate in conversations with my colleagues. I am now confident in my ability to conduct valuable research, and I feel as though I can contribute in the field of education.

Academic writing is another area that I grew in during my time at Walden. I considered myself to be a strong writer, but I did not understand academic writing. When I began my project study, I realized this was a weakness and worked to improve my academic writing skills. I grew tremendously in this area, which has helped me in my professional responsibilities as well as in the doctoral process. I also learned the importance of being patient with myself and to persevere through setbacks and difficulties.

Practitioner. Not only have I grown as a scholar through this process, but I have also gained more confidence as an educational practitioner. I currently instruct preservice teachers in the area of teaching reading, and my study allowed me to gain important insight in the instruction of my students. I am more knowledgeable about how to prepare them to be effective reading teachers when they enter a classroom of their own. I have also learned the importance of being a life-long learner. In the field of education, it is commonly said that a teacher must continue to learn to be effective. This process

illustrated that point for me and taught me the importance of continuing to grow, research, and learn as a practitioner in the field of education. I will endeavor to remain on the cutting edge of the field of education and to be knowledgeable about best methods and practices to make a difference for my students as they begin their careers as educators.

Project developer. In my previous position as a literacy instructional facilitator, it was my responsibility to develop professional development sessions for the teachers in my school. In my current position in higher education, I still occasionally develop professional development opportunities when a need arises. While I have always understood that professional development should be engaging from my own experiences with it, developing this project allowed me to fully understand the components that make up a successful professional development experience. In addition, I now understand the value of using data to design the professional development to ensure that it meets the needs of those it serves. I feel confident in my ability to successfully design, and evaluate, future projects and professional development series.

Reflection on the Importance of Work

As a faculty member for a teacher education department, it is of utmost importance to me that novice teachers are prepared to successfully teach reading when they enter the classroom. When teachers use learner-centered strategies to teach a comprehensive reading curriculum it increases the likelihood that students will become fluent and proficient readers (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Through listening to the perspectives of novice K to 5 reading teachers and their specific needs, reading

instruction can be improved in novice teachers' classrooms. When the needs of novice teachers are met and supported, it increases the likelihood that they will successfully implement learner-centered reading instruction. Through my participation in this project study, I learned a valuable lesson about the importance of supporting teachers and giving them a voice.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

This project has the potential to benefit educators beyond the local level by providing support for all K to 5 educators who are struggling to implement learner-centered reading instruction into their classrooms. Further application of the project might involve offering the professional development series to districts around the state. Additional support might be offered to teachers through the modeling of learner-centered reading lessons in classrooms. Furthermore, additional professional development could be provided that targets the additional four learner-centered instruction principles that were not targeted in this professional development series: (a) teacher-student shared decision making, (b) use of content to build knowledge and skills, (c) student responsibility for learning, and (d) multiple approaches to evaluation (Weimer, 2013).

This project study was grounded on the ADOE's (2017) science of reading and Weimer's (2013) learner-centered teaching. Both the literature review that was conducted as a part of the study, and the findings that came as a result of the study, could have theoretical implications. The literature review and the findings from the study support learner-centered instruction as being an effective method for teaching a comprehensive

reading curriculum. This may support a new theory regarding the use of learner-centered reading instruction.

Educational leaders at CSD need to conduct continuous research on sustaining learner-centered reading instruction in K to 5 classrooms. In this study, I explored the perspectives of novice K to 5 teachers regarding learner-centered reading instruction, and I explored how novice K to 5 teachers were teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum in their K to 5 classrooms. Once novice teachers at CSD begin implementing learner-centered reading instruction, further research could involve exploring the effectiveness of learner-centered reading instruction in K to 5 classrooms. Additional research could also be conducted on teacher confidence when implementing learner-centered instruction.

Potential Impact for Social Change

The purpose of this case study was to explore novice K to 5 teachers' perspectives of learner-centered instruction when teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum at CSD and to explore how they were teaching a comprehensive reading curriculum in their K to 5 classrooms. Through the data collected in the project study, I have learned that novice K to 5 teachers feel unprepared to implement learner-centered reading instruction in their K to 5 classrooms and that they are using teacher-centered instruction in their teaching of a comprehensive reading curriculum. I have learned that novice K to 5 teachers desire time to collaborate with colleagues and plan learner-centered reading lessons. In addition, I have learned what support novice K to 5 teachers need to feel comfortable using learner-centered strategies during reading instruction. By providing professional development to meet the needs of novice K to 5 reading teachers, they may

be better prepared use learner-centered strategies to teach a comprehensive reading curriculum. This may increase not only reading achievement but also students' overall ability to read, enjoyment of reading, and knowledge of how to apply and infuse reading into everyday life, which may promote positive social change.

Conclusion

Learner-centered reading instruction is crucial in promoting student reading success, and when teachers use learner-centered instruction to teach a comprehensive reading curriculum, students are more likely to be engaged in the lesson and to achieve fluent and proficient reading (ADOE, 2017; Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Snow & Matthews, 2016; Weimer, 2013). Reading is an essential skill for academic success; however, students who experience reading difficulties in elementary school are more likely to experience the same reading difficulties throughout their educational careers and as adults (Hagans & Good, 2013). The findings from my study indicated that novice teachers at CSD struggle with the implementation of learner-centered reading instruction in their K to 5 classrooms. Understanding the perspectives of novice teachers regarding learner-centered reading instruction is critical in helping them to successfully implement learner-centered reading instruction in their classrooms. Improved reading instruction may impact students both in and out of the classroom through an increase in reading achievement as well as students' overall ability to read, enjoyment of reading, and knowledge of how to apply and infuse reading into everyday life.

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Appendix A: The Project

Learner-Centered Reading Instruction Professional Development	
Purpose	This professional development series was created to address the needs of novice K to 5 reading teachers in their implementation of learner-centered reading instruction. The purpose of this project is to provide novice teachers with information and strategies to implement learner-centered reading instruction, and to provide time for them to design lesson that they can implement in their own reading classrooms.
Target Audience	The target audience for this project is novice K to 5 reading teachers. Administrators and the literacy instructional facilitator will also be invited to attend.
Goals and Objectives	Objective: Participants will understand and apply the learner-centered instructional strategy facilitative teaching into their teaching of a comprehensive reading curriculum. Goals: Participants will engage in conversations about learner-centered reading instruction and facilitative teaching Participants will reflect upon examples of learner-centered instructional strategies being applied to a comprehensive reading curriculum Participants will create learner-centered reading lessons that use facilitative teaching which can be used in their classrooms.
Evaluation	Participants will complete formative and summative evaluations. Formative evaluations will be a pre-assessment, discussions held throughout the professional development, and participant reflections. The post-assessment will be professional development evaluation help at the end of the professional development series.
Resources/Materials	PowerPoint Presentation Projector Laptop

	<p>Internet connection Copies of PowerPoint for participants Weimer's (2013) Learner-Centered Teaching Book Copies of pages 72-74, 74-76, 76-79, 81-83, and 83-84 from Weimer's book Cardstock paper Markers Sharpies Index Cards Chart Paper Pens and pencils Pre-assessment worksheet Post-assessment worksheet</p>
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Professional Development: 3-Day Agenda

Day 1

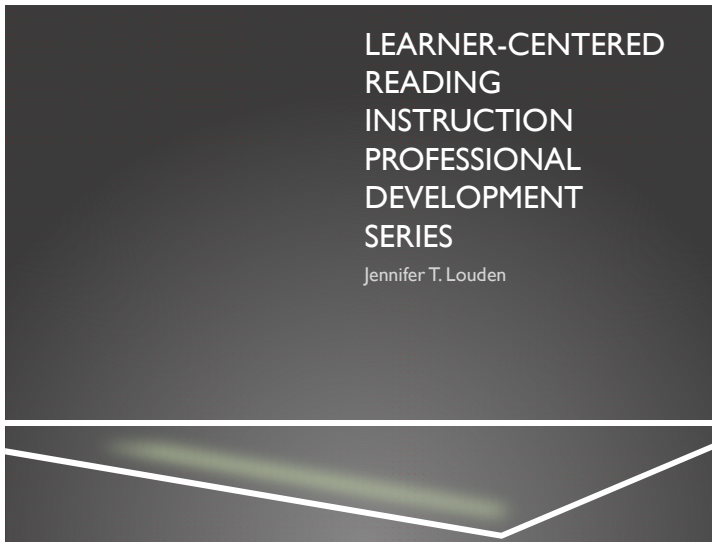
Time	Activity
8:00am – 8:30	Sign-in and Continental Breakfast
8:30 – 8:40	Welcome, Housekeeping, and Introductions
8:40-9:00	Warm-Up Activity
9:00 – 9:15	Overview of Workshop Goals and Objectives
9:15 – 9:30	Administration of Pre-Assessment Evaluation
9:30 – 9:45	What is Learner-Centered Reading Instruction?
9:45 – 10:00	Break
10:00-11:00	Facilitative Instructional Strategies Activity Participants will form groups, be assigned a strategy, and create posters to teach the strategy
11:00-12:00	Lunch
12:00-1:00	Group Teaching/Presentations
1:00 – 1:15	Reflection: How do the ideas from the presentations connect to you and your teaching?
1:15-1:30	Benefits of Learner-Centered Reading Instruction
1:30-1:45	Challenges of Learner-Centered Reading Instruction
1:45-2:00	Break
2:00 – 2:45	Guest Speaker: Applying Learner-Centered Reading Instruction
2:45 – 3:00	Reflection and Closing

Day 2

Time	Activity
8:00am – 8:30	Sign-in and continental breakfast
8:30-9:00	Welcome and Warm-Up Activity
9:00-9:30	Group Work: Compare Teacher-Centered vs. Learner-Centered Reading Lesson Plans
9:30 – 10:00	Sharing of Teacher-Centered vs. Learner-Centered Reading Lesson Plans
10:00-10:30	Reflection on Lesson Plans: Which Do You Identify With? Why? Which are more beneficial to students? Why? Which aspects of the learner-centered lesson plans would you be willing to apply in your reading classroom?
10:30 – 10:45	Break
10:45-12:00	Guest Speakers: Role-Play - Teacher-Centered and Learner-Centered Reading Instruction
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-1:30	Reflection of Role Play Activity
1:30 – 2:45	Group Work: Converting a Teacher-Centered Reading Lesson to a Learner-Centered Lesson
2:45-3:00	Reflection and Closing

Day 3

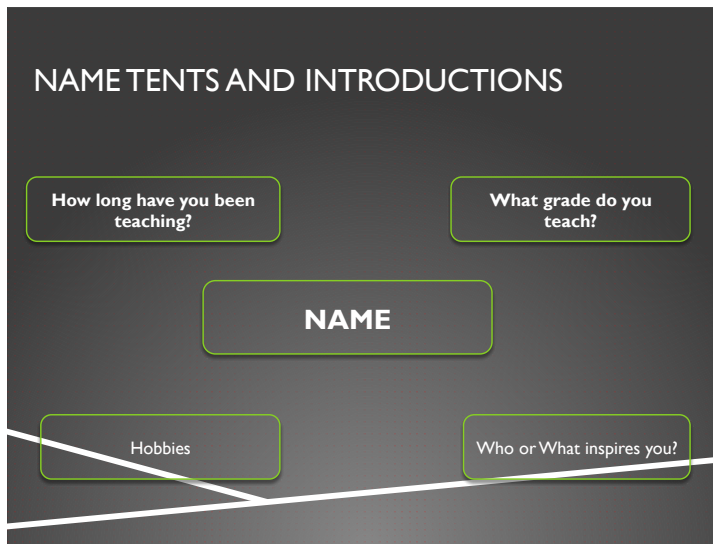
8:00am – 8:30	Sign-in and continental breakfast
8:30-9:00	Welcome and Warm-Up Activity
9:00 – 12:00	Work and Collaboration Time: Designing Learner-Centered Reading Instruction
12:00 – 1:00	Lunch
1:00 – 2:30	Work and Collaboration Time: Designing Learner-Centered Reading Instruction
2:30 – 3:00	Post-Assessment Evaluation and Wrap-Up



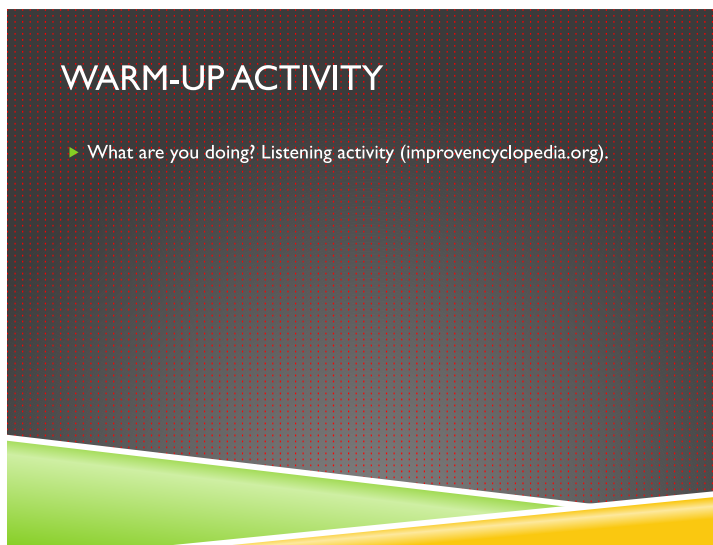
Note to Trainer: Welcome novice teachers to the professional development. Explain that the purpose of the professional development series is for participants to understand and apply learner-centered instructional strategies into their teaching of a comprehensive reading curriculum. Allow time for participants to get coffee and enjoy a small continental breakfast.



Note to Trainer: Take 2-3 minutes to have participants' sign-in. Discuss logistics so that the day will run smoothly. Hand out copies of the Power Point presentation so that participants can take notes on the handout.



Note to Trainer: Hand out colored paper. Have participants tent the paper and use the markers on their tables to create name tents with the following information. Spend 10 minutes allowing them to introduce themselves to the group. Introduce yourself as well. Ask participants to keep the name tents up throughout the training.



Note to Trainer: Participants will form a circle with the one person in the center of the circle. The person in the center of the circle will perform an action, such as brushing their hair, and a second participant from the circle will enter into the center and ask, “What are

you doing?” The response from the person performing the action can be anything other than what they are doing (Example: While performing the action of brushing their hair, the participant in the center of the circle might say, “I am mowing the lawn.”). Each participant in the center of the circle will perform one action while saying another one. The next participant must then do what the previous person said they were doing (not the action they were performing). This will continue until everyone has a turn. At the end of the activity, the facilitator will ask, “What was the importance of listening in this activity?” The facilitator will then link the importance of listening to instruction in the classroom. This activity should take about 20 minutes.

A presentation slide with a dark background and a decorative green and yellow gradient at the bottom. The title "WORKSHOP GOALS AND OBJECTIVES" is centered at the top in white. Below the title, there are two main sections: "Objective:" and "Goals". Each section has a list of bullet points, each preceded by a small green arrowhead.

WORKSHOP GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- ▶ Objective:
 - ▶ For participant to understand and apply learner-centered instructional strategy, facilitative teaching, into their teaching of a comprehensive reading curriculum.
- ▶ Goals
 - ▶ Engage in conversations about learner-centered instructional strategies and facilitative teaching
 - ▶ reflect upon examples of learner-centered instructional strategies being applied to a comprehensive reading curriculum
 - ▶ create learner-centered reading lessons focusing on facilitative teaching that can be used in classrooms

Note to Trainer: Share with participants that the objective of the professional development series for participant to understand and apply learner-centered instructional strategies into their teaching of a comprehensive reading curriculum. The facilitator will also share that the main goals for the project are: engage participants in conversations about learner-centered instructional strategies, reflect upon examples of lessons that model learner-centered instructional strategies within a comprehensive reading curriculum, and create learner-centered reading lessons that can be used in participants’ classrooms. The facilitator will then answer any questions that participants have regarding the objective and goals. This should take approximately 15 minutes.

PRE-ASSESSMENT SURVEY

Pre Assessment Evaluation Name: _____

1. What is learner-centered instruction?
2. Provide two examples of learner-centered instructional methods.
 - a).
 - b).
3. Provide two examples of how learner-centered instruction benefits students?
 - a).
 - b).
4. What is facilitative teaching?
5. Provide two examples of how facilitative teaching can be used to teach reading.
 - a).
 - b).

When complete, please return to the facilitator of the session. Thank you

Note to Trainer: The facilitator will take 15 minutes to administer the evaluation to participants. Participants are to take the survey individually and then turn in the completed survey to the facilitator.

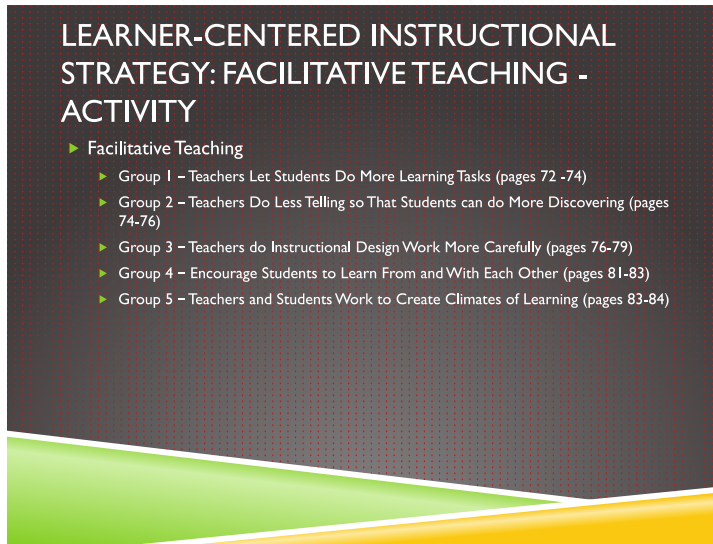
DEFINITIONS OF LEARNER-CENTERED READING INSTRUCTION

- ▶ On a notecard, write what learner-centered reading instruction looks like to you?
- ▶ Share your view with your shoulder partner.
- ▶ Revamp your view.
- ▶ Share with group.

Note to Trainer: Participants will be provided a notecard and will be asked to write what they believe learner-centered reading instruction is. Participants will then turn to a shoulder partner to discuss. After a discussion period, participants will have one minute to revamp what they wrote on their cards. Participants will then share with the group. Once they have had time to be shared, notecards should be put aside for later. Allow 15 minutes for this activity.



Note to Trainer: Allow participants to take a 15-minute break.




Note to Trainer: Participants will break into 5 groups. Each group will receive a different learner-centered principle related to facilitative teaching to read about and teach the group about. Examples of what each principle looks like in the classroom are included in the readings. Participants will become familiar with the principle through reading (and additional online research if they chose to) and will create a poster highlighting the facilitative teaching principle and ideas on how incorporate the principle into a reading classroom. Participants will be informed that they will be teaching the group about their principle. The principles come from Weimer's (2013) Learner-Centered Teaching Book. Participants will have one hour to read about and create their posters. While participants are working, the trainer should walk around and monitor to check for understanding. Trainer should be available to answer questions during this time.



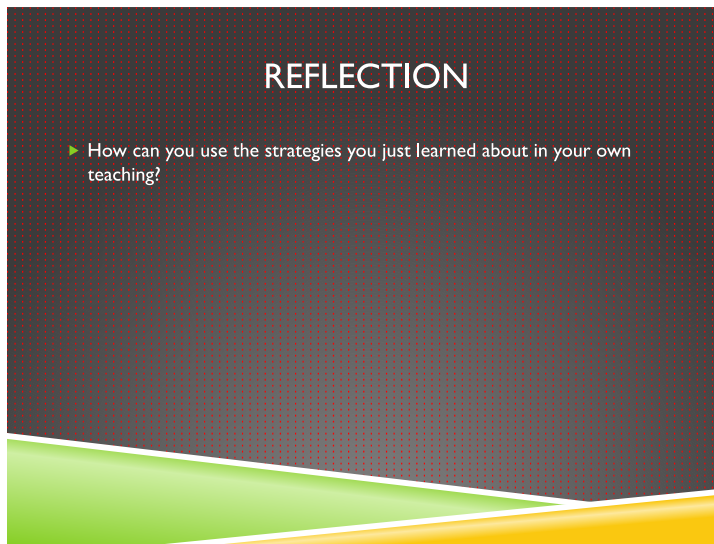
Note to Trainer: Participants will take an hour-long lunch.

GROUP TEACHING

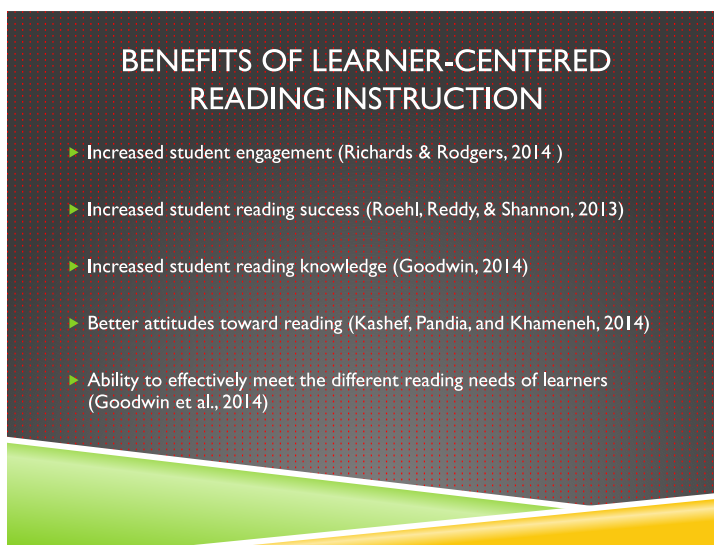
- With your group, present your strategy and how it can be used in reading instruction.

An illustration of a teacher standing at a greenboard, holding a yellow paper. Three students are sitting in front of the board, looking at the teacher. The background is dark grey with a white dotted pattern, and there is a white and grey curved shape at the bottom.

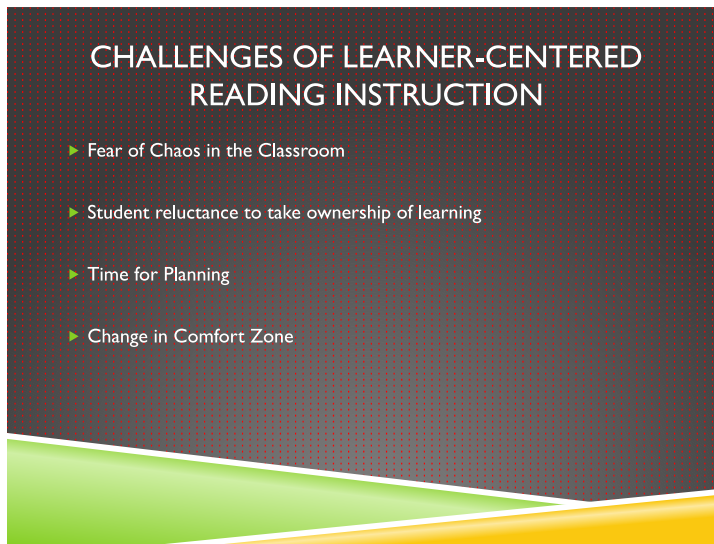
Note to Trainer: Each group will have 10 minutes to present about their learner-centered instructional strategy and how it can be used in a reading classroom. The trainer will provide insights and clarifications when needed.



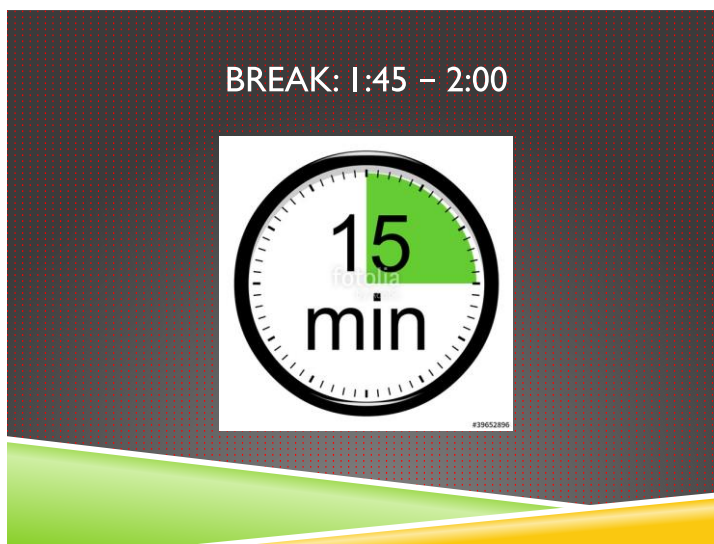
Note to Trainer: On a notecard, have participants take 10 minutes to write about how they can use they strategies that they learned about in their own reading instruction. Take 5 minutes to allow them to share with the group.



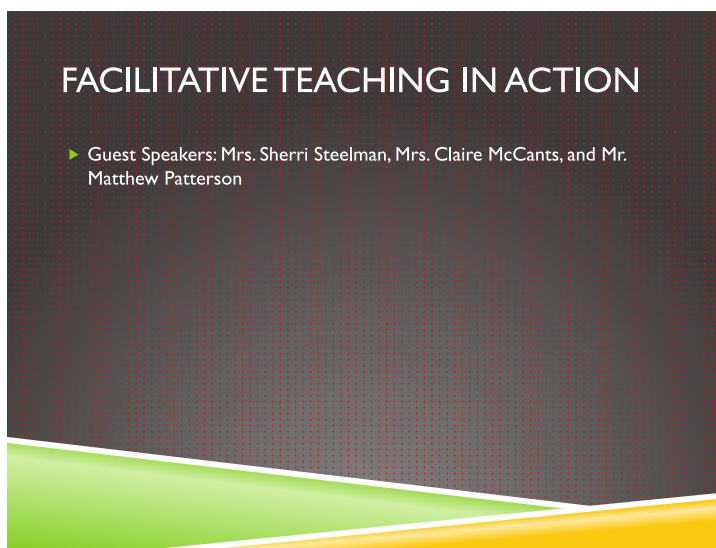
Note to Trainer: Discuss the research-base benefits that are associated with implementing Learner-Centered Instructional Techniques. Allow participants to discuss these benefits and how the benefits will improve reading instruction in their classrooms. This discussion should take approximately 15 minutes.



Note to Trainer: Discuss the challenges that are associated with implementing Learner-Centered Instructional Techniques. Allow participants to discuss these challenges and come up with ideas to overcome them. Encourage them to support each other as they overcome the challenges. This discussion should take approximately 15 minutes.



Note to Trainer: Allow participants to take a 15-minute break.

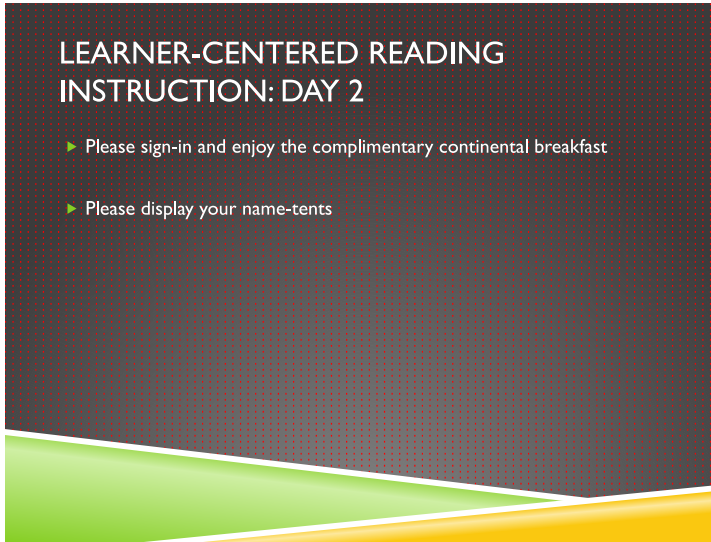


Note to Trainer: Presenter 1, Presenter 2, and Presenter 3 will share their experiences, challenges, and successes in using facilitative teaching in their classroom. All three teachers have been recognized within the school district as being successful in their use of learner-centered instruction to teach a comprehensive reading curriculum.

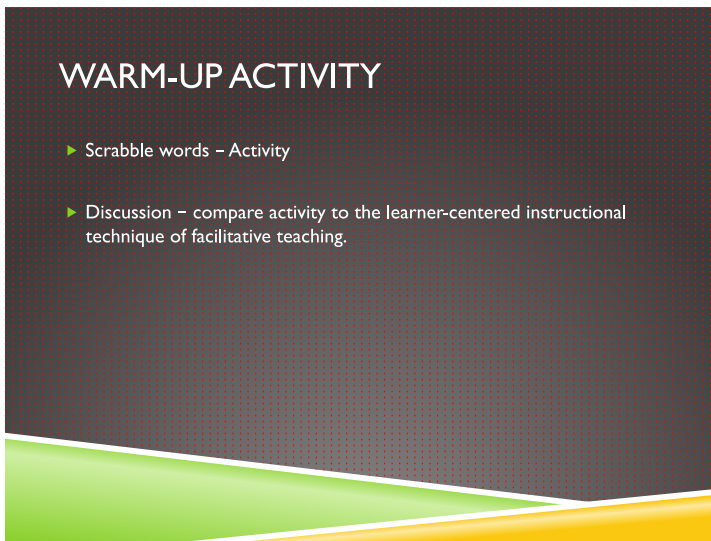


Note to Trainer: Participants should return to their notecards from earlier in the day in which they wrote down their view of learner-centered reading instruction. On the back of the notecard, have them write how their views have changed throughout the day. Then have them write three ways they could use what they have learned today about facilitative teaching in their own reading classrooms. Have volunteers share. Collect the notecards to

use as a formative assessment. Remind participants that tomorrow's training begins again at 8:00 with a continental breakfast.

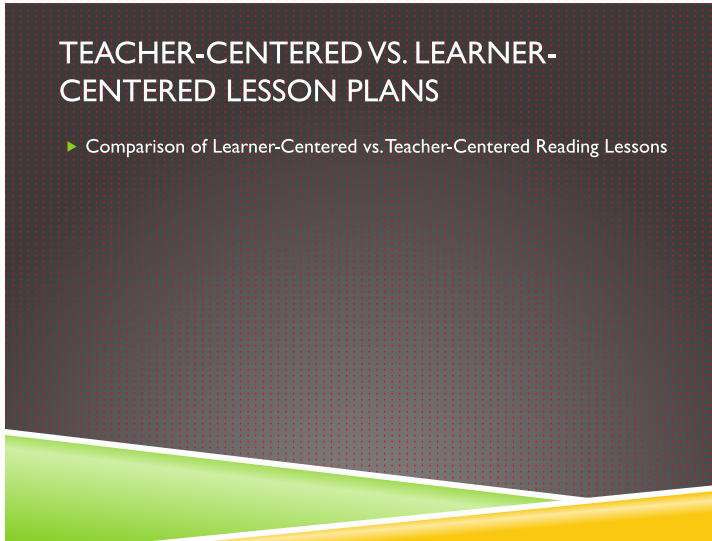


From 8:00 – 8:30 participants will sign-in and enjoy breakfast.

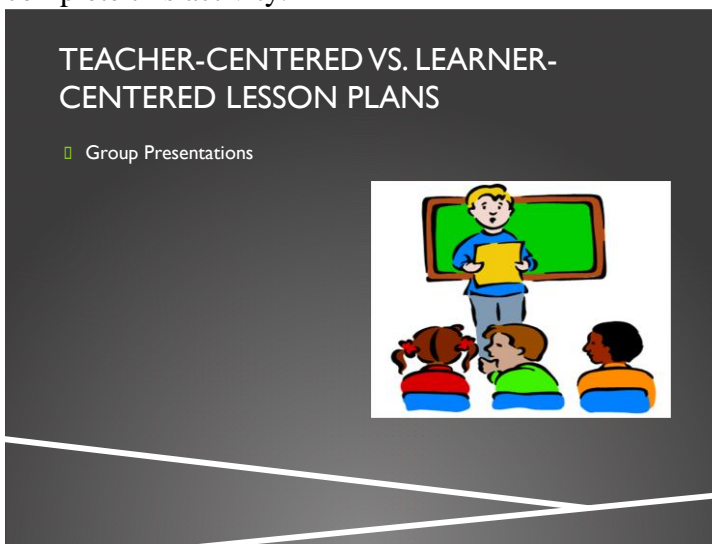


Participants will break into groups of 4. Each group will receive 3 scrabble tiles per group. As a group they must work together to score as many points as they can with their scrabble tiles by making multiple small words or one large word. Tiles may only be used once. The presenter should allow the groups to work without jumping in to help. Allow participants to work on this for 15 minutes. Once the activity is finished, lead participants

in a discussion about how this relates to facilitative teaching and how this can look in the classroom.



Note to trainer: Participants will work with their table groups for this activity. Each group will receive a teacher-centered and a learner-centered reading lesson plan (learner-centered plans will be based on facilitative teaching). Groups will read through the lesson plans and create a visual on a piece of chart paper that compares and contrasts the teacher-centered and learner-centered lesson plans. Allow participants 30 minutes to complete this activity.




Note to trainer: Each group will give a brief overview of their teacher-centered and learner-centered reading lessons and will present their comparisons to the whole group. Allow 30 minutes for presentations.

REFLECTION

- ▶ Which lessons do you identify with? Why?
- ▶ Which are more beneficial to students? Why?
- ▶ Which aspects of the learner-centered lesson plans would you be willing to apply in your reading classroom?

Note to trainer: Lead the group in a discussion using the prompts above. During this discussion, allow the participants to take charge of the discussion and the presenter should serve as the discussion facilitator. This will model facilitative learning for the participants as they are discussion the teacher-centered and learner-centered techniques. Allow 30 minutes for the discussion to take place.

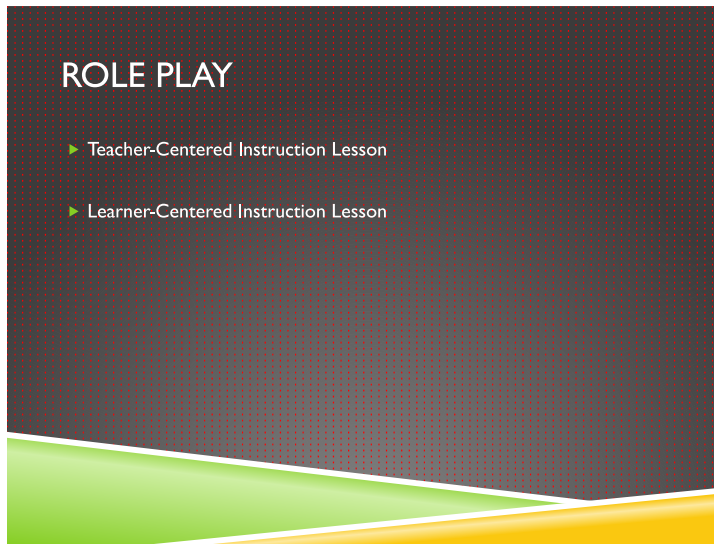
BREAK: 10:30 – 10:45



15 min

#39052896

Note to Trainer: Allow participants to take a 15-minute break.



Note to trainer: Presenter 1, Presenter 2, and Presenter 3 will again join the training for this session. The guests will model for participants both a teacher-centered and a learner-centered reading lesson with the focus of the lesson being on comprehension. The learner-centered lesson will focus on using facilitative teaching as the instructional strategy. Participants should take notes on what differences they saw between the lessons and on what facilitative teaching strategies they saw being used in the learner-centered version of the lesson. Presentations of the lessons will be from 10:45 – 12:00.






Note to trainer: Participants will reflect and discuss the role-play activity and the differences between the teacher-centered and learner-centered comprehension lesson. Participants will share the facilitative teaching strategies they saw used in the lesson and the manner in which it was used. Participants will then reflect on how this could be used in their own reading instruction and discuss this with the group. During this discussion, allow the participants to take charge of the discussion and the presenter should serve as the discussion facilitator. This will model facilitative learning for the participants as they are discussing the teacher-centered and learner-centered techniques. Allow 30 minutes for the discussion to take place.

CONVERTING A TEACHER-CENTERED READING LESSON TO A LEARNER- CENTERED LESSON

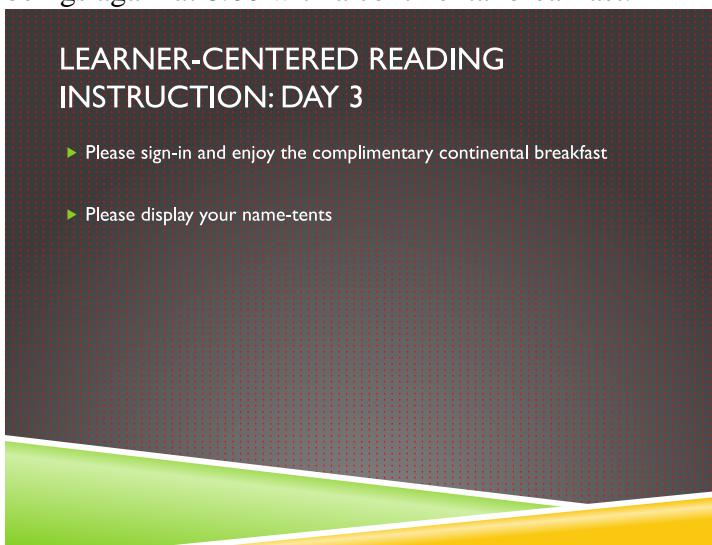
► Group Work



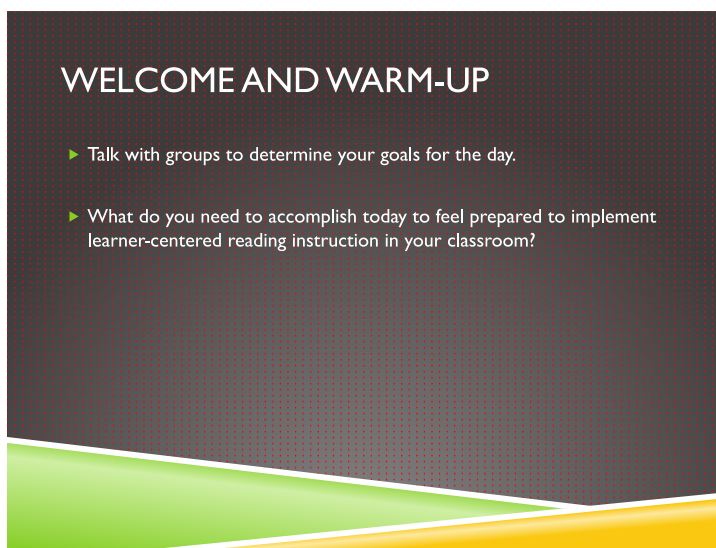
Note to trainer: Groups will receive a teacher-centered vocabulary lesson and will work with their group to convert that lesson into a learner-centered lesson that uses facilitative teaching methods. Groups will identify which methods they use. Allow 45 minutes for this group work and then allow each group to share their lesson with the whole group. This will allow participants to see different ways one lesson can be converted into a learner-centered lesson. Allow 30 minutes for the presentations and follow with a 15-minute discussion.



Note to Trainer: On a notecard, have participants write three ways they can use learner-centered instruction to teach reading. Have volunteers share. Collect the notecards to use as a formative assessment. Inform participants that tomorrow they will be working on creating learner-centered reading lessons that they can use in their classrooms so please bring any pacing guides, standards, or instructor manuals that they would like to use during the professional development. Remind participants that tomorrow's training begins again at 8:00 with a continental breakfast.



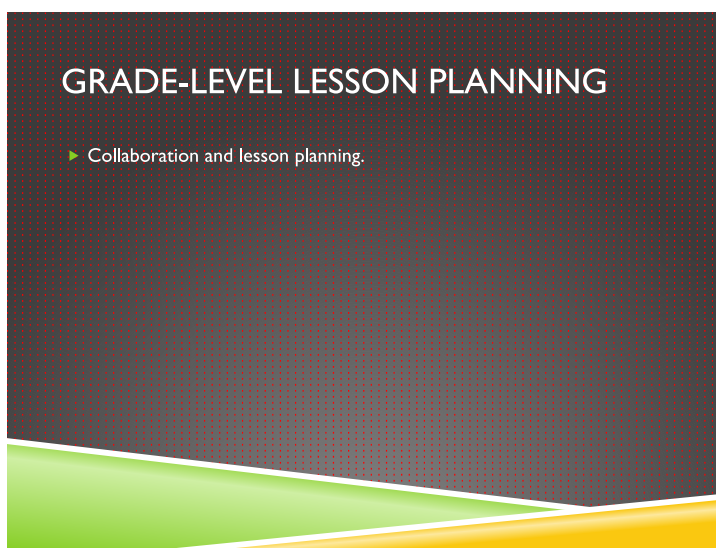
Note to Trainer: Participants may sign-in and enjoy a continental breakfast. Participants should sit within grade-level groups to lesson plan with colleagues.



WELCOME AND WARM-UP

- ▶ Talk with groups to determine your goals for the day.
- ▶ What do you need to accomplish today to feel prepared to implement learner-centered reading instruction in your classroom?

Note to Trainer: Participants will have 15 minutes to discuss with grade level groups what their planning goals for the day are. What do they need to accomplish for the day to feel prepared to go into the classroom and implement learner-centered reading instruction? Groups will then share their goals with the group.



GRADE-LEVEL LESSON PLANNING

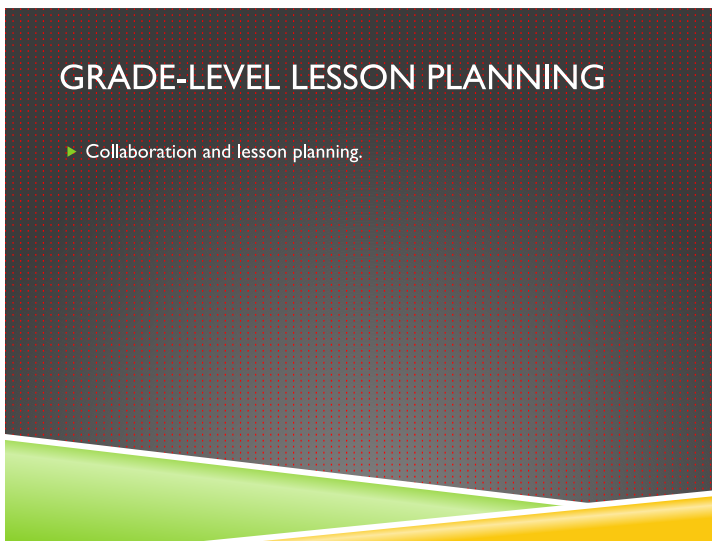
- ▶ Collaboration and lesson planning.

Note to Trainer: Participants will work with their grade-level groups to plan learner-centered reading lessons that use facilitative teaching which they can go back and implement in their classrooms. The trainer, literacy coach, and additional support person

will be available to assist in the planning of the lessons. The goal is for the participants to leave with tangible lessons that can immediately be implemented. Participants should work to plan from 9:00 – 12:00.

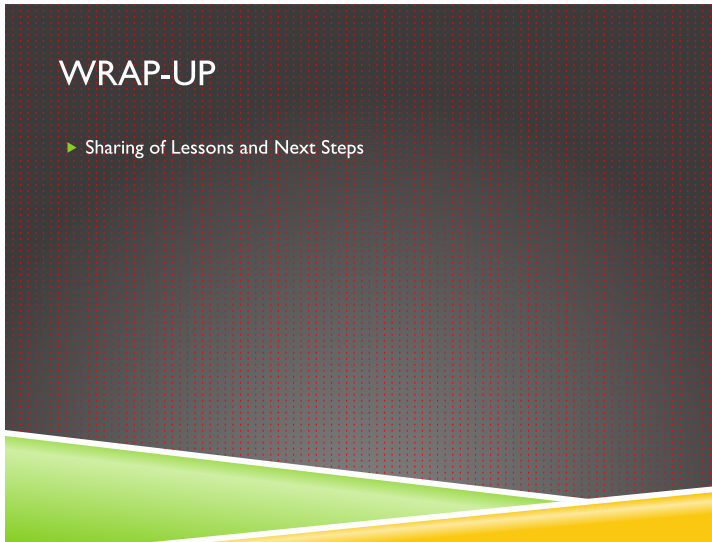


Note to Trainer: Participants will take an hour-long lunch.



Note to Trainer: Participants will continue to work with their grade-level groups to plan learner-centered reading lessons that use facilitative teaching which they can go back and

implement in their classrooms. The trainer, literacy coach, and additional support person will be available to assist in the planning of the lessons. The goal is for the participants to leave with tangible lessons that can immediately be implemented. Participants should work to plan from 1:00-2:30.



Note to Trainer: Participants will share what they accomplished during their collaboration time what their next steps will be in the implementation of learner-centered reading instruction in their classrooms. Remind participants that there will be a one hour follow-up meeting in a month. Participants will have the opportunity to share successes and challenges that they have faced in their implementation of the learner-centered strategy facilitative teaching. Ask participants to bring any lesson plans that they have used or created to the meeting in a month.

POST-ASSESSMENT EVALUATION

Post Assessment Evaluation Name: _____

1. What is learner-centered instruction?
2. Provide two examples of learner-centered instructional methods.
 - a).
 - b).
3. Provide two examples of how learner-centered instruction benefits students?
 - a).
 - b).
4. What is facilitative teaching?
5. Provide two examples of how facilitative teaching can be used to teach reading.
 - a).
 - b).

When complete, please return to the facilitator of the session. Thank you

Note to trainer: Participants will complete the post assessment evaluation and then give the evaluation to the trainer. The trainer will compare the pre assessment and post assessment evaluations to determine if the goals and objectives of the training were met.

Lesson Plans for Day 2 Activity: Teacher Centered vs. Learner-Centered Lesson Plans

Teacher Centered Phonological Awareness Lesson Plan

Grade Level: Kindergarten

Objective: Students will identify rhyming words.

Activity:

- 1). Say several rhyming words for students and explain to them what is similar about the words. Display the term rhyming on the board and explain to students what rhyming is.
- 2). Explain to students that you will be reading a book to them that has rhyming words in it. Read the book Hop on Pop to the students.
- 3). Once the book is read, display for students rhyming words that were in the book. Ask them to give thumb up if the words rhyme and thumb down if they do not.
- 4). Wrap up by reviewing with students what rhyming words.

Facilitative Teaching (Learner-Centered) Phonological Awareness Lesson Plan

Grade Level: Kindergarten

Objective: Students will identify rhyming words.

Activity:

- 1). Say several rhyming words for students. Ask them to discuss what they notice is similar about the words. Allow the discussion to continue for a minute or two accepting all responses. Bring the students attention back to you and solidify the explanation of rhyming words.
- 2). Allow students time to share words that rhyme. Write down the words on the board and ask students if they agree or disagree that the words rhyme.
- 3). Pass out rhyming word pairs on index cards giving one to each student. Students should walk around the classroom and find their match. Once they find their match, they should discuss with their partner why their words rhyme (what the words have in common).
- 4). Have pairs share with the class what the words were and why they rhyme.

Teacher Centered Phonics Lesson Plan

Grade Level: 1st Grade

Objective: Students will work with silent e and add a silent e to words in order to change the vowel sound and meaning of the word.

Activity:

- 1). Explain to students that they will be learning about the silent e today. Tell them that some words have a silent e that makes a vowel say its name. Explain that sometimes A has a short sound, and sometimes it has a long sound. Demonstrate the two different sounds. For example, *cat* has the short A sound while *cave* has the long A sound. Repeat these steps with the vowels I and O. Potential demonstration words include: *rip*, *ripe*, *dot*, and *tone*.
- 2). Display the following words on the board: mat, cap, cod, win, hat, bat, bit, cut. Have the students read the word, add an e to the end, and have the students read the new word. Explain to students how the vowel changed with the addition of the silent e. Explain how the meaning of the word changed when an e was added to the end.
- 3). Pass out a worksheet, and have students identify the words with the silent e and underline the vowel that makes the long vowel sound with the e. Students will work independently on the worksheet.

Facilitative Teaching (Learner-Centered) Phonics Lesson Plan

Grade Level: 1st Grade

Objective: Students will work with silent e and add a silent e to words in order to change the vowel sound and meaning of the word.

Activity:

- 1). Initiate a discussion with students by showing them a word both with and without the silent e. Ask them to talk with a shoulder partner about the differences they see between the two words. Walk around to monitor discussions. Accept all responses during the discussion period. Bring students attention back to you to solidify the discussion on the silent e and its purpose.
- 2). Display the following words on the board: mat, cap, cod, win, hat, bat, bit, cut. Have the students read the words. Then add an e to each of the word. After adding an e to each word, allow students to discuss and explain the effect the e had on the word. Select a student to come up and underline the vowel the was changed in the word
- 3). Have students work in groups in order to come up with lists of other words that have silent e's at the end. As they work, walk around and facilitate discussions. Allow groups time to present their words to the class and explain how the silent e effected the word.

Center activity: Have students read words to each other and then add a silent e at the end. Students will then explain to their partner how the silent e changes the word and why (it changes the vowel in the word).

Teacher Centered Fluency Lesson Plan

Grade Level: 2nd Grade

Objective: Students will practice using expression in their reading.

Activity:

- 1). Explain to students that reading fluently means students read quickly, accurately, and with expressions. Tell them that today you will be talking about and practicing reading with expressions. Provide several examples for students of statements that are said without expression and then with expression.
- 2). Select a book that you can read to students to model fluent reading. One suggestion would be to use Bill Martin Jr.'s books as students are generally familiar with them and they provide great opportunity for expressive reading. Read through the book modeling expressive and fluent reading.
- 3). Once you are done reading the book, have students choral read the book as a class using expressive and fluent reading. Walk around and monitor as they read as a class.

Facilitative Teaching (Learner-Centered) Fluency Lesson Plan

Grade Level: 3rd Grade

Objective: Students will practice using expression in their reading.

Activity:

- 1). Ask students to discuss what fluency means to them. What are the characteristics of a fluent reader? Allow the discussion to continue for a minute or two accepting all responses. Bring the discussion back and explain that fluent readers achieve three things – rate, accuracy, and expression. Ask them what it means to talk with expression. Allow them to discuss this for a minute or two. Tell students you are going to make a series of statements some with expression and some without. Once you are done with the statements, ask students to discuss what they noticed about the differences between the statements you said with expression and those you said without. Facilitate the discussion on this.
- 2). Select a book that you can read to students to model fluent reading. One suggestion would be to use Bill Martin Jr.'s books as students are generally familiar with them and they provide great opportunity for expressive reading. Before you begin to read, tell students to pay attention to what you are doing to read fluently.
Read through the book modeling expressive and fluent reading.
- 3). Have students work with their groups to determine the characteristics they noticed from your expressive reading. Walk around and monitor discussions. Allow students time to share with the class what their group discussed.

4). Provide a passage for students to practice reading fluently. Have students work with a partner to take turns reading to each other with expression.

Lesson Plans for Day 2 Activity: Converting a Teacher-Centered Lesson Plan to a Facilitative Learner-Centered Lesson Plan

Teacher Centered Vocabulary Lesson

Grade: 4th

Objective: Students will define and work with weekly vocabulary words.

Activity:

- 1). Introduce students to the vocabulary words that they will be working with for the week.
- 2). Ask students to pull out their reading/vocabulary journals. In their journals they will write the definition of each word and draw a picture of each word.
- 3). Go through words one at a time with students. For each word do the following:
 - a). Define the word
 - b). Use the word in a sentence
 - c). Draw a picture of the word

Students should be copying down the definition, sentence, and picture in their journals along with you.

- 4). Remind students that they will be tested over the words on Friday.

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Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. How do you define learner-centered instructional strategies?
2. How beneficial do you feel learner-centered instruction is when teaching reading?
3. How much exposure have you had to learner-centered instructional strategies in your teacher preparation program or through professional development?
4. How prepared do you feel to apply learner-centered instructional strategies in your reading instruction?
5. How confident are you in your ability to apply learner-centered instructional strategies when teaching reading?
6. Provide an example of how you teach phonological awareness in your classroom.
Probe: Why do you use this method?
7. Provide an example of how you teach phonics in your classroom. Probe: Why do you use this method?
8. Provide an example of how you teach fluency in your classroom. Probe: Why do you use this method?
9. Provide an example of how you teach vocabulary in your classroom. Probe: Why do you use this method?
10. Provide an example of how you teach comprehension in your classroom. Probe: Why do you use this method?
11. What obstacles have you encountered when applying learner-centered instructional strategies in your reading instruction?
12. Do you have anything else to add?

Appendix C: Observation Protocol

Teacher's Name (Pseudonym): _____

Grade Level: _____ Date: _____ Observation Start Time: _____ Observation

End Time: _____

Lesson Objective:

Comprehensive Reading Curriculum Components	Description of Teaching Strategy	Evidence of Learner-Centered Instruction? Y/N	If evident, description of Learner-Centered Instruction	Time Allotted
Phonological Awareness				
Phonics				
Fluency				

Vocabulary				
Comprehension				

Additional Notes from Observation

Appendix D: Research Question 1 Open Coding Code and Interview Transcript Excerpts

Open Code	Transcript Excerpt
Student-led	T4: Learner-centered instruction is student-led instruction. T7: Learner-centered instruction is when students lead the instruction.
Facilitator Role	T5: In a learner-centered classroom the teacher's role is to be a facilitator." T8: Learner-centered instruction is when the teacher serves as the facilitator in the classroom.
Choice	T4: Students should have choice in learner-centered classrooms and be able to choose between different assignments. T6: Student choice is important in a learner-centered classroom and it makes students more motivated.
Understanding content	T9: Learner-centered instruction allows students to have a better understanding of the content being taught. T2: When instruction is learner-centered, students are supposed to understand it better and retain the information.
Student Engagement	T3: One of the biggest benefits of a learner-centered classroom is that students are more engaged in their learning." T6: Students are more engaged and involved when instruction is learner-centered."
Assessment	T1: In a learner-centered classroom, assessment is authentic and purposeful. T8: Learner-centered assessment should be based on gaining meaning and should be authentic.
Benefits students	T9: Learner-centered instruction is supposed to be very beneficial to student learning because students are more involved in the lesson and they understand the lesson better than if it was teacher-centered. T7: There are a lot of benefits to students with learner-centered instruction. Students have choice, they are involved, and there is deeper thinking.
Unprepared	T5: I don't feel prepared to use learner-centered instruction. I'd like to, but I'm not there yet. T3: I just don't feel like I am ready and prepared yet to use learner-centered instruction with my students.
Uncomfortable	T8: I really love the idea of learner-centered instruction and students leading the discussion, but I am just not quite comfortable doing it yet.

	T5: I'll be truthful, stepping aside and being a facilitator in my own classroom makes me feel uncomfortable.
Overwhelmed in Professional Development	T3: I attended the professional development, but I was so overwhelmed the entire time. T4: The professional development was just overwhelming, and I wasn't the only one who thought so.
Broad Professional Development	T6: The professional development was so broad, I couldn't keep up with all of the information. T10: There was so much information in the professional development.
Lacking confidence	T1: I am not confident in preparing lessons in which I am the facilitator in the classroom. T2, T4, and T8: I just don't feel confident with learner-centered lessons quite yet.
Targeted professional development	T7: If the professional development wasn't so broad, and focused on being a facilitator, I think that would have been very beneficial. T3: I really felt like the training we received focused on using learner-centered instruction for math. It would be nice to see some reading examples.
Facilitator	T1: would like to become confident in being a facilitator in my classroom, but I am not there yet, so I use direct teaching instead. T5: I don't feel ready to use learner-centered instruction until I am comfortable being a facilitator in my classroom.
Collaboration	T1, T4, T6, and T7: I need time to collaborate with other teachers T9 and T10: Collaboration time is needed to be able to plan these lessons.
Time	T1, T3, T6, T9, T10: The biggest obstacle for me is finding the time to plan learner-centered instruction. T2, T5: I am so busy with everything, and I have a hard time finding the time to plan learner-centered lessons.
Responsibilities	T7: I already have so much to do each day, and planning learner-centered reading lessons takes a lot of time. T 10: As a new teacher, the amount of responsibilities I am getting used to is tremendous already.
Overwhelmed	T3: Honestly, I just feel overwhelmed with what I already have going on, and this is one more thing. T1: Learner-centered instruction is overwhelming to me because of everything I already have to do.
Planning	T2, T4, and T 9: I need time and help to plan lessons.

	T5: If I had help with lesson planning, I'd be more willing to give it a try.
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Appendix E: Research Question 2 Open Coding Code and Interview Transcript Excerpts

Open Code	Transcript Excerpt
Lecture	T3: When I introduce a new topic, like a new vocabulary, I tend to lecture. T6: I've been known to do lecture with my class, but it seems to work okay with comprehension.
Teacher Directed	T9: I direct the instruction in my classroom. Comprehension conversations are definitely directed. T7: I have tried to act as a facilitator when doing comprehension lessons, but I fall back on teacher directed questioning.
Teacher-Centered	T1: Comprehension instruction is teacher-centered in my room. I ask questions and students answer the questions. They all participate, but I do all the asking. T3: Most of my instruction is teacher-centered, but it is working for me right now.
Teacher Explain	T4: The method that is easiest for me is to talk students through the phonics rule I am teaching. I explain the rule. T5: I explain the thinking for the students. That's what I was taught, and it worked for me.
Teacher Examples	T10: I provide students with examples of rhyming words that I had created ahead of time. T8: I like to provide the examples for students when I am teaching any kind of lesson whether it is reading or math.
Teacher Demonstrates	T3: I explain the rule, provide examples, and let them see me underline the rule in a few different words. T1: I demonstrate for my students what to do with new phonics rules so that I know they really understand.
Teacher Selected	T8: When it comes to choosing a book, I make the choice for them. T9: Students don't always know what level they should be reading at, so it's better if I choose the books for them
Teacher Provided	T3: I provide the instructional materials in my classroom, so I make the choice as to the books and assignments. T2: I provide explanation and examples to my students so we don't waste time waiting for them to come up with some.
Tests	T1: The best way to test student knowledge of phonics, vocabulary, or comprehension is through a test. T4: Tests are one of the methods I rely on the most because it helps me to be sure they understand what I need them to.

Vocabulary Tests	<p>T10: If they do well on their test, then I assume they must know the words.</p> <p>T5: We have weekly vocabulary tests. Students study at home and then I test them Friday so I know if they know the words.</p>
Comprehension Tests	<p>T3: To make sure my students comprehend what they read, I ask them questions about the reading. I'll either ask the questions out loud, or I'll give them a worksheet. I know if they comprehended the story when they do well on their test.</p> <p>T4: I always give my students comprehension tests on Friday to make sure they know the material.</p>
Control	<p>T6: I teach the way I do because I need to feel like I am in control in my classroom.</p> <p>T8: I have better control if I ask the questions.</p>
Management	<p>T2: As a new teacher, I am nervous about classroom management. I have better management when my instruction is teacher directed.</p> <p>T7: I lecture because it leads to better management in my classroom.</p>
Familiar	<p>T4: My teachers all used teacher-centered instruction, and lecture was really popular, so that is what I am familiar with. It helps me feel in control.</p> <p>T9: Everyone I have spent time in the classroom with has used teacher led instruction, so that's what I have the easiest time with.</p>
Comfortable	<p>T10: I just feel more comfortable and in control using teacher-centered methods, so that's what I use.</p> <p>T1 and T3: I am willing and even excited to use learner-centered teaching, but first I have to get comfortable giving up some control.</p>

Appendix F: Research Question 2 Open Coding Code and Observation Data Excerpts

Open Code	Transcript Excerpt
Teacher-Centered Questioning	<p>T1: During comprehension lesson teacher asks questions, 1 student responds, teacher asks next question. No discussion about questions.</p> <p>T3: After reading text, all students handed a worksheet with comprehension questions to answer individually. No discussion of questions or text.</p>
Teacher-Centered Explanations	<p>T6: Teacher provided phonics explanations. No student elaboration on phonics rules.</p> <p>T9: Teacher provided correct answers to comprehension questions from text when reviewing questions students answered. No student discussion or input.</p> <p>T3: A student asked a question about a text and the teacher answered although another student started to answer.</p>
Teacher-Centered Instruction	<p>T8: Teacher led fluency instruction with teacher explaining and leading conversation on techniques.</p> <p>T1: Teacher explains each time a student has an answer correct and why it is a correct answer without inviting student explanations.</p>
Teacher Examples	<p>T6: During phonics lesson teacher provided all example even when students tried to volunteer examples.</p> <p>T4: During a rhyming lesson, teacher provided examples of rhyming words.</p>
Teacher Demonstrates	<p>T5: Teacher demonstrated adding silent e to words to change the words. Students were not asked to participate in demonstration.</p> <p>T8: Teacher demonstrates fluency technique of using expression.</p>
Rapid fire questioning	<p>T10: After reading a text, teacher asked series of questions with no elaboration or discussion.</p> <p>T8: After reading a book to student, the teacher asked a series questions with no discussion of questions.</p>
Teacher asking questions	<p>T9: Comprehension questions generated by teacher. Students did not ask any questions about the text.</p> <p>T6: Teacher asked questions the book that was read with no time for students to ask question although students attempted to ask.</p>
Teacher selected examples	<p>T4: Examples of rhyming words selected by the teacher.</p> <p>T10: Examples of text to world connections in comprehension selected by the teacher.</p> <p>T9: Examples of making text predictions selected by teacher.</p>

Teacher selected books	T2: Books pre-selected for read aloud by teacher. T7: Guided reading books selected by teacher. T6: Browse box books selected by teacher.
Teacher selected activities	T1-T10: Students completed activities selected by teacher with no choice or student input.
Worksheets	T9 and T10: Students all completed the same comprehension questions and activity while working individually. T8: Students all looked up vocabulary words independently
Same text	T1, T2, T3, T6, T7, T8, T9, T10: All students reading the same text.