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Elementary Teachers' Beliefs of Using Guided Reading Pedagogy and Student Data

Ivonne Miranda
Walden University

Walden University

College of Education

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Ivonne Miranda

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Review Committee
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Dr. Paula Dawidowicz, Committee Member, Education Faculty
Dr. Gary Lacy, University Reviewer, Education Faculty

Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

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2018

Abstract

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MA, Walden University, 2007

BS, Lehman College, 2001

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

In today's classrooms, many teachers meet students' reading needs by providing guided reading. However, little is known about how teachers combine student data and pedagogical content knowledge to plan guided readings lessons. This study focused on understanding how elementary teachers use guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data when planning a guided reading lesson. The conceptual framework was based on Fountas and Pinnell's guided reading framework, and Clay's theory of data collection with respect to literacy processing. The research questions concerned how teachers' use, guide, and reflect on guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and students data when planning a guided reading lesson. A qualitative study using both phenomenological and case study aspects was utilized to capture insights of elementary teachers from a successful Title 1 school. This study included a single elementary school. Participants included 10 elementary teachers from grades K-5. Data sources included introductory and follow-up teacher interviews as well as teacher lesson plans. Data were analyzed using coding for identification of patterns. The findings revealed that teachers believe their success lies in searching for the right books use to differentiate their guided reading instruction based on each student's individual data. They also believe their success comes from providing background knowledge to students when teaching guided reading lessons to pique their students interest and help them better understand what they are reading. This study can contribute to positive social change by providing administration insights to how to prepare high quality professional development to help teachers plan guided reading lessons.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to God, to Jesus Christ who gave me strength, and to my family who were always there for me. Your love and support allowed me to persevere toward this personal goal. To my husband, Luis who has given me the motivation and encouragement to keep going and my three beautiful children, Matthew, Sahra, and Sky for understanding how busy I was during this educational journey. I pray that you may seek God to help you persevere in reaching your goals and know that I will always be there for you.

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I would first like to thank my Heavenly Father for being with me throughout this entire process. My husband Luis, and my three children, Matthew, Sahra, and Sky, for their love and support in my doctoral journey. For understanding how important this journey was for me.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Guided reading is an instructional approach to teaching reading in many of today's schools (Marchard-Martella et al., 2015). The purpose of guided reading is to gradually allow students to increase their responsibility when processing texts, a pedagogical approach that enhances students' ability to ask questions, problem solve, and increase comprehension (Shang, 2015). When implemented correctly, this research based program meets the needs of all learners (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Several studies have been conducted on the benefits of providing scientifically based instructional practices in Title 1 schools (Hays, 2013; Marks, 2014; Jerrim, 2015). According to the United States Department of Education (2016), the purpose of Title 1 is to provide a fair, equal, and high-quality education to all children. This purpose can be accomplished by providing enriched and accelerated programs, promoting the use of scientifically based instructional strategies, and professional development to teachers (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). One such program is guided reading instruction, an enriched and accelerated program.

Reutzel, Child, Jones, & Clark (2014), as well as Shang (2015) examined the benefits of guided reading instruction as an approach to teaching reading. They found that students learn best if they are guided through the use of strategies and skills when processing texts. Hattan et al., 2015, found that the quality of instruction such as using research-based practices like guided reading at Title 1 schools contributes to students reading achievement. Marchard-Martella, et al. (2015); Fountas and Pinnell (2013);

Morgan, Williams, Clark, Hattenberg, Hauptman, Kozel, & Paris, (2013) also found that when teachers took the time to scaffold instruction, a guiding process, it led to increased reading performance. This instructional practice aligned lessons with students' instructional levels. Guided reading not only allows teachers to focus on the skills that students do not know, but it gradually allows students to enhance and apply skills and strategies they know during independent work (Morgan et al., 2013). Additionally, student data provides important information that allows teachers to support students according to their reading needs (Kajitani, 2015). Using data is an ongoing process in which the teacher is constantly planning, implementing, and leading instruction (Thessin, 2015).

Although, many researchers have conducted studies on the benefits of guided reading instruction (Marchard-Martella, et al., 2015; Fountas and Pinnell, 2013; Morgan, Williams, Clark, Hattenberg, Hauptman, Kozel, & Paris, 2013), little is known about elementary teachers' beliefs of using guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data when planning reading lessons. More research is needed about how elementary teachers' beliefs led them to their decision of which reading strategies and skills to use. Therefore, this qualitative study was designed to unearth how elementary teachers think when using guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data while planning reading lessons at a Title 1 school in Eastern United States.

This qualitative study has the potential to provide positive social change nationally at Title 1 elementary schools, particularly in relation to how teachers integrate guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data when planning reading

lessons for readers. Also, this study provides educational stakeholders with a deeper understanding of the instructional practices that teachers at an elementary Title 1 school used to determine which guided reading strategies and skills along with what student data to use in relation to planning guided reading lessons.

In this study, I explored teachers' beliefs on the use of guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data when planning a guided reading lesson. In Chapter 1 of this qualitative study, I describe the background of the study, problem, purpose, questions that guide the research, conceptual framework, nature of the study, definitions, significance and limitations to the study.

Background

Today, in hundreds of classrooms across the nation, teachers' work with small group of students who are engaged in guided reading lessons (Marchard-Martella, Martella, & Lambert, 2015). Guided reading instruction is used to enhance reading by addressing specific skills and strategies that improves fluency and comprehension (Hank, 2014; Burkin & Croft, 2013; Johnson et al., 2012; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Guided reading is also used as an intervention method as part of a tier 2 framework to help close the achievement gap (Johnson & Boyd, 2012; Firmender et al., 2013). Additionally, Xu (2015) indicate that guided reading is an instructional stage in which students practice using reading skills and strategies until they become adept. Others use guided reading as a way to differentiate instruction (Firmender et al., 2013). In addition to addressing the reading needs of struggling readers, it is also used to enhance participation with texts (Weiss, 2013), and group discussions (Marchard-Martella et al., 2015). Despite how

guided reading is used, it is meant to address the reading needs of all students through scaffolds (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Shang (2015) indicates that scaffold is an instructional technique used to support students learning new concepts during guided reading.

Many researchers confirmed the effectiveness of guided reading instruction when implemented with fidelity and the effect it had on student reading achievement (Fletcher et al., 2012; Burkin & Croft, 2010; Carney & Indrisano, 2013; Burns, 2001; Burke and Hartzold, 2007; Kremer, 2013; Marchard-Martella, Martella, & Lambert, 2015; Massey, 2013, Saunder-Smith, 2009; Schulman, 2006; and Shang, 2015). Shang (2015) stated that guided reading enhances the ability to ask questions, problem-solve and comprehend when reading independently. Hanke (2014) claimed that guided reading instruction enables teachers to teach reading more efficiently, hence taking preference over other methods of teaching reading. According to Burkins and Croft (2010), guided reading is an area designated for connecting skills and strategies that have been previously modeled during whole group instruction, therefore enhancing reading performance. Gradually allowing students to take up more responsibility when processing texts independently (Shang, 2015).

Some researchers consistently indicate that many factors within schools can influence students' reading achievement (Jeynes, 2014; Blooms & Owens, 2016; Shin, et al., 2012) such as hiring of teachers, pedagogical knowledge, and experience. Blooms and Owens (2016) learned that principals from high achieving schools have more influence on hiring highly-qualified teachers, especially those teachers who possess

knowledge, experience, and are certified in content area subjects. Morgan et al. (2013) indicated that teachers with experience and knowledge in their content area as well as in student data had been able to support students.

In conjunction with guided reading knowledge, student data also enables teachers to access information about individual students in their classroom (Data Qualitative Campaign, 2015). Data allows teachers to learn about students' learning methods, struggles, and how students can be successful (Data Qualitative Campaign, 2015). In addition, Simmons et al. (2015) stated that data, when used, directs instruction and adjust instruction to the academic needs of students. Fisher and Frey (2016) found that when teachers get to know students' academic needs, they design lessons to meet those needs. Clay (2000) contended that using student data, collected from formative assessments and running records when planning guided reading lessons ensures teachers target the required reading needs of individual students. Delacruz (2014) learned that when teachers used their knowledge of guided reading along with student data, effective planning of guided reading took place because the reading needs of students were being met.

On the other hand, while principals from low achieving schools had more influence on school budget, they had no control over teacher qualification or hiring. Minor et al. (2014) found that teachers working at low socioeconomic schools did not always use research-based strategies when teaching. Instead, these teachers used a more procedural approach to teaching, and taught without the use of student data, than teachers at a higher socioeconomic school. Hanke (2014) indicated that guided reading can be ineffective due to improper implementation of instructional techniques and when teachers

are unclear about which strategies or skills to use with students during guided reading, they would revert to procedural teaching.

Firmender et al. (2013) noted that teachers need to understand the explicit reading needs of students in order to plan, implement, engage, and challenge all students from all reading levels. Some researchers indicate that teachers must have knowledge on all the critical components of reading in order to teach reading (Robertson, 2013; Saunders-Smith, 2009; Wilson et al., 2015; Parr& McNaughton, 2014; Chen et al., 2011). Other researchers indicate that student data is used to decide strategies and skills needed to meet the reading needs of students (Johnson & Boyd, 2012; Fisher & Frey, 2016; Burke & Hartzold, 2007; Kajitani, 2015; Thessin, 2015).

Although numerous researchers provide evidence supporting the effectiveness of guided reading instruction and the benefits of student data (Fountas and Pinnell, 1996; Burns, 2001; Burke and Hartzold, 2007; Burkins and Croft, 2010; Kremer, 2013; Marchard-Martella, Martella, & Lambert, 2015; Massey, 2013; Saunder-Smith, 2009; Schulman, 2006; Shang, 2015), it is difficult to identify which strategies and skills contributed to improve student reading achievement. Researchers such as Belland et al. (2015) and Robertson (2013) concluded that guided reading was more effective when teachers reflected and adjusted their instruction to meet the reading needs of students, but the why to the decisions about which reading skill and strategy to use is unknown. Little is known about how teachers think concerning guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data and if they use guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data when planning a reading lesson.

This study examined elementary teachers' beliefs about using guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data. It also examined the elements of guided reading pedagogical content knowledge used when planning a reading lesson. How and if teachers use student data was determined using content analysis and categorical aggregation descriptions. Understanding elementary teacher's beliefs about using guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data provided insight into the elementary teachers' experiences when planning a guided reading lesson.

Problem Statement

Although studies had examined the relationship between teacher pedagogical content knowledge and reading achievement (Puccioni, 2015), as well as the link with student data (Simmons et al., 2015), no studies had examined teachers' beliefs about the use of guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data simultaneously when planning a lesson, indicating a gap in the literature. Research also indicated that an increased understanding of scaffolding instruction was needed, particularly in relation to the use of skills and strategies to enhance comprehension (Shang, 2015; Muszynski & Jakubowski, 2015; Fuchs et al., 2014; Buckingham et al, 2014; Leu & Maykel, 2016; Johnson & Boyd, 2012). In addition, research indicated that teachers needed understanding on the critical components of guided reading in order to meet the reading needs of students (Firmender et al., 2013; Robertson, 2013; Saunders-Smith, 2009; Wilson et al., 2015; Parr& McNaughton, 2014; Chen et al., 2011). It is the teachers' approach to guided reading instruction that manifests the efficiency of teacher knowledge and data based decision-making (Jenkins et al., 2013).

Little was known about which skills and strategies elementary teachers use when they plan and execute a reading lesson, therefore, understanding elementary teachers ways of using guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data can provide insight to how teachers plan for a lesson and problems they face during execution. Therefore, more research was needed to understand what elementary teachers' beliefs are regarding their use of guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data simultaneously when planning a reading lesson.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand how elementary teachers' beliefs at a high performing Title 1 school used guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data when planning a guided reading lesson. To accomplish this purpose, the guided reading strategies posited by Fountas' and Pinnell's (1996) and Clay (2000) regarding student data was compared when exploring teachers' beliefs. For example, I explored how teachers use formative assessments, teacher observation, and running records to determine which reading skill and strategy was selected when planning a lesson. In addition, I examined teachers' use knowledge on guided reading components, scaffolds, and reading process to effectively plan a guided reading lesson.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided this study are stated below. This study strived to generate data related to elementary teachers' beliefs about the lived experience of planning reading lessons using guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and

student data at a successful Title 1 school. The questions were derived from the problem statement and are anchored in the purpose statement.

- What are elementary teachers' beliefs on the use of guided reading pedagogical content knowledge when planning a guided reading lesson?
- What are elementary teachers' beliefs on the use of student data knowledge when planning a guided reading lesson?
- How are elementary teachers' beliefs reflected in a guided reading lesson?
- How do teachers use lesson plans to guide them in effective instruction?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework in this study was based on Fountas and Pinnell's guided reading framework (1996) and Clay's theory of data collection (2000) with respect to literacy processing.

The Conceptual Framework of Guided Reading

Fountas and Pinnell developed an instructional theory of reading development that includes the role of reading process and scaffolds in the development of word solving, searching and using information, self-monitoring and correcting, summarizing information, maintaining fluency, adjusting for purpose of genre, predicting, making connections, synthesizing, inferring, analyzing, and critiquing during guided reading instruction (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012). Fountas and Pinnell's research about processing texts, particularly about scaffolding instruction helps readers use a variety of skills and strategies as they move through a gradient of texts (Fountas &Pinnell, 1996, 2013; Saunder-Smith, 2009). According to Fountas and Pinnell (1996), guided reading enables

teachers to provide effective support to students when introducing the text, reading the text, discussing the text, teaching points, word work, and extending understanding.

In relation to instruction, Fountas and Pinnell (1996, 2013) described the role of the reading process depending on a student's developmental reading stage. In particular, Fountas and Pinnell believed that important elements of instruction can promote reading comprehension by implementing visible and invisible information as students develop deep thinking of texts (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012, 2013). In relation to designing instruction, Fountas and Pinnell identified thinking within the text, thinking beyond the text, and thinking about the texts as critical components to develop high order thinking skills. Instructional components that are important in facilitating the development of high order thinking skills, Fountas and Pinnell stated are text discussions, scaffolds, and the role of the teacher. In relation to the role of the teacher, Fountas and Pinnell believe that collaboration between the teacher and student is essential, because the teacher needs to facilitate, activate prior knowledge, and provide scaffolds to support student learning (Belland, Burdo, & Gu, 2015).

The concept of scaffolding was essential to this study because in order to improve students reading comprehension, teachers must be able to determine the appropriate skills and strategies. This ability requires an understanding of students' reading process (Fountas and Pinnell, 1996; Burns, 2001; Burke and Hartzold, 2007; Burkins and Croft, 2010; Kremer, 2013; Marchard-Martella, Martella, & Lambert, 2015; Massey, 2013; Saunder-Smith, 2009; Schulman, 2006; Shang, 2015). In order to meet students reading needs, teachers also need to understand the reading skills and strategies that students need

to master to promote reading comprehension (Athanases & Oliveira, 2014). Researchers have found that enhancing students reading needs often enhances student reading performance (Fletcher et al., 2012; Burkin & Croft, 2010; Carney & Indrisano, 2013; Burns, 2001; Burke and Hartzold, 2007; Kremer, 2013; Marchard-Martella, Martella, & Lambert, 2015; Massey, 2013, Saunder-Smith, 2009; Schulman, 2006; Shang, 2015). Therefore, teachers need an understanding of students reading strengths and weaknesses while planning reading lessons. Scaffolding is a critical concept to understand and consider when planning guided reading lessons (Magan et al., 2013).

Conceptual Framework of Data Collection

According to Clay (1982), the theory of literacy processing captures evidence about students processing of texts. When implemented properly, teachers would be informed about students reading behaviors within the instructional site of guided reading (Johnston & Goatley, 2014). Clay's research emphasizes the recording of observable behaviors that could signal changes on how the brain is processing information. Processing refers to all the activity that is happening in a student's head when reading, which enables them to comprehend what the text is saying (Clay, 2001). Observations and collection of data allow teachers to be informed on how students process information in the text (Clay, 2001). Teachers learn to effectively identify students' reading needs through the use of student data (Nilsson, 2013). Through the use of running records, observations, and formative assessments, teachers can determine features of accuracy, fluency, and comprehension (McNaughton, 2014).

Data collection informs teachers on the instructional strategies and skills students are using with Clay's cueing system (2000). As a result, teachers' skilled use of data collection to drive instruction to plan guided reading lessons is a way that teachers can enhance reading performance (Simmons et al., 2015). According to McNaugton, an effective teacher is the one who is able to apply their expertise, their knowledge about what they do, how they do it, and why they do it, and they apply their practices with adeptness (McNaughton, 2014).

Nature of the Study

I used a qualitative approach using both phenomenological and case study aspects. Aspects of phenomenological interviewing methods was used as a guideline and aspects of case study design for triangulation and analysis of current reading plans as a source combined with interviews. Qualitative methods allow the researcher to analyze participants, thoughts, words, and feelings (Creswell, 2013). Creswell (2009) described qualitative research as a way to reveal a variety of behaviors and beliefs with reference to a problem or issue. A qualitative study is to understand how a person perceives their experiences (Moustakas, 1994). In addition, Merriam (1998) explained that qualitative research seeks to understand the meanings people develop, and how they make sense of their world. Creswell (2013) emphasized the importance that participants have experienced the phenomenon. Thus, the eligible criterion consisted of elementary teachers with direct involvement in guided reading planning.

According to Husserl (2012), exploring an individual's experiences can help us understand how these experiences have shaped an individual's ability to perceive their

reality, hence developing beliefs. Using a qualitative approach using both phenomenological and case study aspects to explore the research questions in this study is appropriate for generating rich, acceptable, descriptions, interpretations, and explanations (Maxwell, 2013).

A qualitative study using both phenomenological and case study aspects provided the understanding concerning teacher beliefs. Once IRB and participating school permission was granted, Survey Monkey was used to solicit permission to conduct interviews. In-depth web interviews and follow-up interviews were conducted through teachers' work email and with the use of Google Hangouts, as well as the request of lesson plans that were utilized to create an analysis tool that had headers indicating parts of an effective lesson plan. These sources of data provided triangulation for the study. Data were analyzed with the use of first cycle and second cycle coding, which determined themes and patterns.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined because they were used in this research study and may have different meanings for different readers.

Authentic Literature: Authentic literature refers to real fictional and nonfictional texts that can be found in libraries and are usually narrative and expository texts (Fountas & Pinnell, 2008).

Comprehension: Comprehension is a process in which the reader understands the meaning of words (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

Cue System: Cue system refers to students reading behaviors, such as semantics (meaning), syntax (grammar), and visual (Clay, 2000).

Differentiated Instruction: An instructional model that provides guidance for teachers in addressing students' academic needs (Tomlinson, 1995).

Explicit Instruction: Scaffolded instruction in which students are guided through the learning process with a clear use of skills and strategies (Reutzel, Child, Jones, & Clark, 2014).

Frustration Level: A level that is too hard for students to read; prevent students from progressing towards the next reading level (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

Gradual Release of Responsibility: A pedagogy method designed around the process of transferring responsibility within the learning process from the teacher to eventually to independently the student (Reutzel, Child, Jones, & Clark, 2014).

Guided Reading: A small group reading instruction designed to provide differentiated teaching that supports students developing reading proficiency. As students progress in their reading development, the focus changes from learning how to read to reading to learn new information (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

Guided Reading Pedagogical Content Knowledge: The knowledge teachers possess concerning guided reading instructional practices as discussed in this research.

Independent Level: A reading level where students are successful with the teacher's support (Robb, 2008).

Instructional Level: A level where students are reading independently, without any support (Robb, 2008).

Pedagogical Content Knowledge: The knowledge teachers possess about teaching strategies, methods, and instructional practices according to a specific content area (Robertson, 2013).

Processing Texts: The ability to understand and decode a text (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, 2013).

Reading Achievement: A student's ability to demonstrate growth on state reading assessments (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2016).

Reward High Progress: Highest 5% Title 1 school based on an aggregate progress in closing the achievement gap in reading for PSSA combined for all student groups (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2016).

Running Records: The capture of reading behaviors while a student is reading (Clay, 2000).

Scaffolding: An instructional technique whereby the teacher provides sufficient guidance and support to allow students to accomplish a goal or execute a strategy successful (Athanses & Oliveira, 2014).

Student Academic Needs: Identified reading skills that are in need of improvement as defined in this study about reading McNaughton, 2014).

Student Data: Assessments that can help identify students' academic needs, as used in this study (Simmons et al., 2015).

Title 1: A federally funded program, which is given to schools to help low-income children who are at risk of failure (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

Text Gradient: The level of texts that is found within a grade, which help teachers select appropriate books for guided reading lessons (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012).

Zone of Proximal Development: The zone of proximal developmental refers to the level in which the child requires assistance to be successful (Vygotsky, 1978).

Assumptions

This study was based on two assumptions. The first assumption was that all teachers who were web interviewed would be completely honest and open with their responses and would not be intimidated or influenced by the researcher in any way. This assumption was important because it impacted the trustworthiness of this study. The second assumption was that elementary teachers would be motivated to participate in this study due to an interest in the reading performance of all readers. This assumption was important because it also impacted the trustworthiness of this study. By stating these assumptions, reliability and validity of the findings were strengthened because all assumptions were strengthened by the voluntary signing of the consent form. Further, participants were assured they could withdraw from the study at any time. Also, the researcher had no supervisory relationship with any of the participants.

Scope and Delimitation

The scope of this qualitative study involved conducting web interviews with elementary teachers in one school district who had successful experience in using guided reading instruction. The focus of this qualitative study was on the beliefs teachers in this one district about the use of guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data when planning a guided reading lesson. In addition, the study involved only those

teachers who were currently using the guided reading approach to provide reading instruction during the time of the study. It did not include teachers who were not engaged in teaching guided reading. Individuals such as administrators and parents were excluded from the study. Tutors, aides, paraprofessionals, and principals were not included. For the purpose of this study, teachers from middle schools, high schools, and charter schools were also excluded.

This study also included inclusionary and exclusionary delimitations related to the school selected. This study confined itself to the exploration of 62 elementary teachers in just one public school within one school district in Pennsylvania. The participants in this study were restricted to teachers providing guided reading instruction within the school.

Limitations

The main limitations in this study were related to the transferability of the findings for this qualitative study. This study was conducted in only one school district in Pennsylvania. Participants were selected from only one school, which is not representative of the beliefs on instructional strategies for all teachers at a national, state, or county level. Participants were also selected based on convenience rather than criterion-based selection, so they may be less representative of all teachers in the school than if enough teachers were available to accommodate variation among participants based on gender, age, or years of experience. The results of this qualitative study might be transferable to urban elementary schools with similar student and teacher populations. The findings and conclusions of this study were limited to the context in which this study was conducted. Another limitation is that this study reflected only one period in time in

this one location. An additional limitation that occurred during the study was starting with a sample size of 10 and then having two participants leave. Although two participants left the study, qualitative studies allows in-depth explorations using small sample size (Creswell, 2007).

Significance

This study made an original contribution to educational research because researchers had conducted few studies at the elementary school level about what elementary teachers beliefs were regarding the use of guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data when planning a guided reading. This study also supported teachers in identifying specific instructional practices, incorporated in guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and using student data to improve reading achievement. This study can be significant to administrators and teachers who organize and deliver professional development programs related to teaching reading using guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data.

Furthermore, this study may also be significant in terms of social change in reading at the elementary level. It may provide new perspectives on the types of instructional practices needed at Title 1 schools to improve reading achievement for all students. Districts could use these findings to create future policies about instructional practices in reading at Title 1 elementary schools.

Summary

This chapter was an introduction to this qualitative study. I included background information related to the scope of the research literature as well as the problem statement

and the purpose of this study. The problem is that there was a gap in the literature related to how teachers think about the use of guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data simultaneously when planning a reading lesson. The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand elementary teachers' beliefs at a high performing Title 1 school and how they used guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data when planning a guided reading lesson. I based the conceptual framework on Fountas and Pinnell's (1996) guided reading framework, particularly in relation to processing texts through scaffolding, and Clay's theory of data collection (2000) with respect to literacy processing. The research method for this study was qualitative study using both phenomenological and case study aspects. In this chapter, I included definitions of key terms as well as assumptions, the scope of the study, and delimitations and limitations. This study was significant because it might advance knowledge about how elementary teachers decide which reading skills and strategies to use for students who are struggling readers.

In Chapter 2, I present a review of the documented literature that further highlights the conceptual frameworks, details the structure of a guided reading lesson, and discusses reading performance, instructional practices, planning process, and the importance of guided reading knowledge. My overall intent of Chapter 2 was to provide a comprehensive and exhaustive examination of the research in these areas to outline a clear rationale for Chapter 3, in which I describe the methodology, population, data analysis process, and validity of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand how elementary teachers' beliefs at a high performing Title 1 school used guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data when planning a guided reading lesson. Teachers have had success with guided reading instruction (Marchard-Martella, et al., 2015; Fountas and Pinnell, 2013; Morgan, Williams, Clark, Hattenberg, Hauptman, Kozel, & Paris, 2013), but little was known about teachers' beliefs on the use of guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data simultaneously when planning a guided reading lesson, indicating a gap in the literature. The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand elementary teachers' beliefs and how they used guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data when planning a guided reading lesson. The study was conducted at a Title 1 school, which has been successful in using guided reading pedagogy and student data when planning guided reading lessons.

Recent literature suggests the significance of this problem (Firmender et al., 2013; Robertson, 2013; Saunders-Smith, 2009; Wilson et al., 2015; Parr& McNaughton, 2014; Chen et al., 2011). Teachers have addressed the need to enhance reading performance by targeting specific reading needs of students (Johnson & Boyd, 2012; Fisher & Frey, 2016; Burke & Hartzold, 2007; Kajitani, 2015; Thessin, 2015). In meta-analyses of the literature, several researchers describe the importance of a teacher's knowledge in reading with the integration of student data to address reading needs (Nilsson, 2013; Johnston & Goatley, 2014; Sen & Temel, 2016; Wilson, McNeil, & Gillon, 2015).

Research on instructional practices in reading indicates that a teacher's pedagogical content knowledge in areas such as scaffolding, process of reading, and on understanding of complex text can determine a teacher's planning process (Massey, 2013; Hollenbeck, 2013; Scarparolo, 2014). However, even if teachers have a vast understanding of instructional reading practices, Delacruz (2014) concluded that the integration of student data is necessary to provide explicit instruction to improve comprehension. Sen and Temel (2016) found that the integration of pedagogical content knowledge and student data was needed in order to enhance student reading performance. It is this integration that was needed to select skills and strategies to improve reading comprehension.

In this chapter, I include a description of the literature search strategy that was used to lead this review and the conceptual framework that is the foundation of this qualitative study. In addition, I analyzed research about the importance of teacher knowledge and student data, and the effect it has on the planning process. I conclude with a summary and discussion of the major themes and gaps found in the review.

Literature Search Strategy

The research strategy for the literature review consisted of searching for current research articles that were peer-reviewed and published within the last five years. In addition, in cases where there was little current research, older research, though not older than 1995, was used to provide historical context of the study. Walden's University library was used to search educational databases such as, Academic Search Complete, ERIC, Sage Premier, EBSCO, Educational Research Complete, SocINDEX with full text, and Teacher Reference Center. To understand the concepts and theories related to the

research problem, different keywords were used to guide search strategy. They included *lesson plan, planning process, lesson plan preparation, explicit instruction, instructional practices, guided reading lesson plans, guided reading instruction, pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, scaffold,* and *student data. Other keywords used included reading comprehension, teacher knowledge, teacher perception, reading achievement, achievement gap, teacher reading perception, reading instructional practices, small groups, small group instruction, literacy,* and *differentiated instruction.* Studies on guided reading instruction and on its effectiveness were found, but finding studies on teachers' beliefs concerning the use of guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data was scarce due to limited research in this area.

Conceptual Frameworks

Two conceptual frameworks structured this study. One was based on the research of Fountas and Pinnell, whose theory of guided reading was set forth with the goal of helping students enhance their reading performance. The study was also framed by Clay's theory of data collection with respect to literacy processing, who assert's that the use of student information allows teachers to identify reading weaknesses and strengths. The conceptual frameworks for this study represented the knowledge and understanding that all teachers should possess of guided reading instruction and using student data to plan a procedurally accurate reading lesson (Fletcher, Greenwood, Grimley, Parkhill, Davis, 2012).

The Conceptual Framework of Guided Reading Instruction

According to Fountas and Pinnell (1996), the theory of guided reading instruction meets the needs of all learners. Guided reading instruction focuses on phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension, all factors that contributes to reading achievement (Fountas and Pinnell, 2013). Research on the effectiveness of guided reading is firmly embedded when followed with fidelity (Fountas & Pinnell, 2013). Fountas and Pinnell's research emphasized a philosophy of learning where students are supported with scaffolds when learning new skills and strategies and then use these newfound skills and strategies to process text independently. Fountas and Pinnell (1996, 2012) suggested that a teacher must attend to the elements of guided reading found before the reading of the text, during the reading of the text, and after the reading of the text. If any of these elements are neglected, then learning cannot occur.

Guided reading is an instructional approach that gives teachers an opportunity to tailor and direct instruction using student data to students' specific reading needs and to help deepen understanding when processing of a wide variety of texts (Schulman, 2006). According to Burkins and Croft (2010), guided reading is an area designated for connecting skills and strategies that have previously been modeled during whole group instruction. In a study on instructional practices, Reutzel et al. (2014) concluded that guided reading is part of the gradual release of responsibility model, in which the teacher scaffolds or successfully guides the student to apply and use strategies, skills, and concepts previously taught prior to having them practice them independently. Guided reading allows teachers to support the reading needs of all students in small groups by

focusing on specific skills and strategies that can enhance reading fluency and comprehension (Marchard-Martells, 2015; Reutzel et al., 2014).

Guided reading incorporates instructional strategies such as word solving, searching and using information, self-monitoring and correcting, summarizing information, maintaining fluency, adjusting for purpose of genre, predicting, making connections, synthesizing, inferring, analyzing, and critiquing (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012). Consequently, a teacher's guided reading pedagogical content knowledge along with the integration of student data is a way that teachers can support students when planning a lesson (Muszynski & Jakubowski, 2015). A study conducted by Montero, Newmaster, and Ledger (2014) stated that guided reading has the potential to help students, and even teenage ESL students with limited schooling are able to increase their English language and literacy skills with the support of student data and teacher knowledge. The research on the effectiveness of guided reading instruction calls for teachers planning of strategies and skills for each student and continuous assessment (Weiss, 2013; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

Moreover, Fountas and Pinnell's research on effective reading instructions calls for teachers to focus on planning for what they want their students to know, understand, and do (Marchard-Martella et al., 2014). As a result, teachers will need to implement a variety of instructional strategies such as word solving, searching and using information, self-monitoring and correcting, summarizing information, maintaining fluency, adjusting for purpose of genre, predicting, making connections, synthesizing, inferring, analyzing, and critiquing to meet objectives when structuring a guided reading lesson.

Structure of a Guided Reading Lesson

The structure of a guided reading lesson has the following components: selection of text, introduction to the text, reading the text, discussion of the text, teaching points, word work, and extending understanding (Fountas and Pinnell's (1996, 2010, 2013). These are the components expected in an effective guided reading lesson (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, 2010, & 2013). Although guided reading focuses on reading factors such as phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension (Kuhn, et al., 2014), Reutzel et al. (2014) asserts that guided reading shifts from a focus on decoding skills at the primary level to developing comprehension skills in the upper grades. The gradient of texts gives students the opportunity to be engaged in independent reading as they gradually increase the level of difficulty of texts (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, 2010, 2013). Parr and McNaughton (2014) emphasizes the importance of text selection and ensuring it serves to facilitate schema in order to support vocabulary, text features, and comprehension. Teachers' support of students' vocabulary contributes to students' knowledge of words found in text (Carlisle, Kelcey, and Berebitsky, 2013). A study conducted by Carlisle, et al. (2013) learned that a teacher's lack of vocabulary instruction affected students' reading comprehension (Carlisle, et al., 2013).

Fountas and Pinnell's (1996) work in guided reading increased the movement of understanding and meeting the reading strengths and weaknesses of students in elementary grade levels. Meeting students reading strengths such as interpreting the authors purpose and weaknesses such as confusing context clues requires teachers to possess content knowledge, understanding the process of reading, and know how to use

and implement student data when planning a lesson (Maloch et al., 2013). For this reason, Fountas and Pinnell (1996) developed the theory of guided reading, which includes components that teachers may follow when planning. Guided reading instruction is designed to teach children to learn a complex set of reading strategies so they can use them independently when reading a variety of texts (Maloch, Worthy, Jordand, Hungerford-Kresser, & Semingson, 2013). As previously stated, the structure of a guided reading lesson includes the following components: selection of text, introduction to the text, reading the text, discussion of the text, teaching points, word work, and extending understanding (Fountas and Pinnell's (1996, 2010, 2013). The next few paragraphs will explain each component citing current literature.

Introducing the text. In this component, Davila (2015) discussed the importance of activating prior knowledge in order to bridge new content with experiences and background information. Fountas and Pinnell (2006, 2011, 2013) stated that teachers should present enough information about the text for students to use processing skills and problem-solving strategies while reading. Activating prior knowledge is a pre-condition to promoting reading comprehension (Hattan et al., 2015; Eng, et al. 2016). According to Vygotsky, a student's learning can be enhanced when a connection of knowledge and skills already learned is used to learn new concepts as students think, reason, and problem solve (Petrova, 2013). Schulman (2006) stated that a student's thinking would be guided differently for the beginning readers and older readers. According to Burke and Hartzold (2007) and Marchard-Martella et al., (2014), beginning readers focus more on decoding words, while older students focus on thinking while reading the text. Similarly, Reutzel et

al. (2014) agreed that guided reading tends to shift from a decoding stage for young readers to a more analytical stage for older readers.

Reading the text. Here, Fountas and Pinnell (2006, 2011, 2013) asserted that students practice fluency, phonics, phonemic awareness, and vocabulary. According to Greulich et al. (2014), word identification, fluency, and phonological awareness are important factors for comprehension. Veenendaal et al. (2016) affirmed the interconnections between decoding efficiency, fluency, and phonics as factors related to prosody and comprehension, both reading dependents. During reading, scaffolds are used to problem-solve strategies that support student understanding of the text (Shang, 2015). Teachers are able to support students by scaffolding instruction and supporting student learning and thinking by asking higher order thinking questions, and scaffolding strategies needed to be explicit and purposeful so that students can be flexible when using strategies learned to comprehend text (Robertson, 2013; Marchard-Martella et al., 2014).

Discussing and revisiting the text. In this component, Fountas and Pinnell (2006, 2011) stated that students and teachers have meaningful conversations that allow thinking to be supported by evidence found in the text. Vygotsky (1986) implied that talking is an influential process in learning as social dialogue leads to cognitive development. Students acquire language through social interactions with teachers and peers (Massey, 2013). According to Vygotsky (1978) language is the connection between learning and development, because through language students communicate their thoughts with other students. In a quantitative study, Capotosto and Kim (2016) found that asking students questions on different texts contributed to enhancing their reading

comprehension, thus helping them become more proficient readers. Harvey and Daniels (2015) also describe having meaningful conversations as a way to use language when thinking deeply about the author's intention in the text. Similarly, Murphy et al. (2016) indicated that group discussions promoted students' comprehension and critical-analytical thinking. At certain moments when teachers lack pedagogical content knowledge in guided reading and student data, teachers can misjudge social dialogue to mean an extreme amount of asking questions instead of using questions to scaffold conversational discussions (Phillips, 2013). Robertson (2013) and Delacruz (2014) indicated that teachers who have guided reading experiences have been able to support students as they "talk, read, and think" about a variety of texts, which Fountas and Pinnell's (2013) describes as processing of texts.

Teaching for processing strategies. In regards to this component, Fountas and Pinnell (2006, 2011) emphasized the importance of knowing students reading needs to support them with appropriate strategies and skills. According to Robertson (2013), teachers need expert knowledge of the reading process to lead a guided reading lesson while supporting student development as proficient readers. Burke and Hartzold (2007) concurred that the strategies used in a lesson depend on the reading needs of the student. On the other hand, Saunders-Smith (2009) indicated that appropriate instructional practices should be made depending on the students' developmental stage, moving from learning how words work with the teacher to becoming independent readers.

Working with words. In this optional component, Fountas and Pinnell (2006, 2011, 2013) stated that students are guided with skills and strategies that help them solve

words when reading independently. Fountas and Pinnell (1996) refer to word solving as using strategies to help figure out the word.

Extending understanding of the text. Extending understanding of the text is also an optional component of a guided reading lesson, which Fountas and Pinnell (2006, 2011, 2013) presented as a way of having students reflect on their thinking about the text. Although this component is optional, it is essential in moving towards students understanding of the text, because students can demonstrate their comprehension of text when writing about the reading.

According to Fountas and Pinnell (2013), the goal of guided reading is to have students read a variety of texts independently with deep understanding. Fountas and Pinnell studied the need for helping students improve reading skills and how teachers can guide students on how to process texts, keeping in mind the variety of needs that can exist within grade levels, as well as within a classroom. Fountas and Pinnell's work in guided reading instruction has been imperative towards the understanding of the reading process and the role of the teacher and student during a lesson.

The Conceptual Framework of Data Collection Theory

Data provides information on what students are learning and areas where support is needed (Kajitani, 2015). Data projects academic achievement and identify students who may need support, so that instruction can be adjusted for the purpose of student success (Cho et al., 2015). Using data is an ongoing process in which the teacher is constantly planning, implementing, and leading instruction (Thessin, 2015). Other researchers such as Johnson et al. (2012) and Simmons et al. (2015) indicate that the

consistent collection of data can result in the improvement of reading performance due to the constant instructional changes in response to the data.

According to Clay's (2000) theory of data collection in regards to literacy processing, the information collected by the teacher concerning students' participation during a lesson is the information that is constantly modified to student academic needs. When student information is collected, it allows teachers to support students according to their specific reading needs specified by data collection (Kajitani, 2015). Clay's (1982), research captures evidence about early reading processes when observable behaviors are recorded.

The primary purpose for student data is to drive instruction (Delacruz, 2014), provide support (Thessin, 2015), and to place students in flexible group (Maloch, Worthy, Jordand, Hungerford-Kresser, & Semingson, 2013). When data is used properly, teachers are informed about their teaching practices, students' struggles, as well as their abilities of processing texts (Johnston & Goatley, 2014). Clays research emphasizes the recording of observable behaviors that could signal changes in how the brain is processing information. Processing refers to all the activity that is happening in a student's head, which enables them to make decisions about what the text is saying (Clay, 2001). In relation to classroom teachers, observation and collection of data allows teachers to be informed on how students are processing information in the text (Clay, 2001). Teachers learn to effectively identify students' reading needs through the use of student data (Nilsson, 2013). Student data such as running records, observations, and

formative assessments, can help teachers determine features of accuracy, fluency, and comprehension (McNaughton, 2014; von Frank, 2014; Wu et al. 2014).

Data collection informs teachers on the instructional strategies and skills students are using with Clay's cueing system (2000). Cueing system refers to meaning, syntax, and visual clues a student uses to comprehend the text (Clay, 200). The cueing system will be further explained with running records. As a result, teachers' use of data collection to drive instruction when planning guided reading lessons is a way that teachers can enhance reading performance (Simmons et al., 2015). According to Clay, an effective teacher is the one who is able to apply their expertise, their knowledge about what they do, how they do it, and why they do it, and they apply their practices with adeptness (McNaughton, 2014).

Findings in a study conducted by Yoon (2015) concerning assessment tools, revealed that assessments data served as means for grouping students according to their reading needs such as talk, cues, and comprehension. Flexible grouping is part of the guided reading framework and is meant to avoid ability-based grouping (Maloch et al. 2013). The running records and formative assessment are two major methods used in the collection of students' individual data, which in turn drives guided reading instruction and supports flexible grouping. The next few paragraphs will explain formative assessments and running records citing current literature.

Formative Assessment

"Formative assessment is a process used by teachers and students during instruction, which provides the necessary feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and

learning in order to improve students' usage of skills and strategies (Popham, 2008). Thessin (2015) noted that formative assessments are an ongoing process focused on different aspects of reading that continuously informs teachers about student's strengths and weakness. The purpose of formative assessment is to drive instruction and promote student learning by constantly checking what they know during a lesson with simple assessments such as questioning, observation, exit tickets, graphic organizers, and self-assessments to check student knowledge (Kajitani, 2015; von Frank, 2014). According to Nilsson. (2013), formative assessments help teachers with detailed information about a student regarding what needs to be retaught or when to move on to the next strategy or concept. The following figure explains the ongoing cycle of adjusting instruction depending on student data.

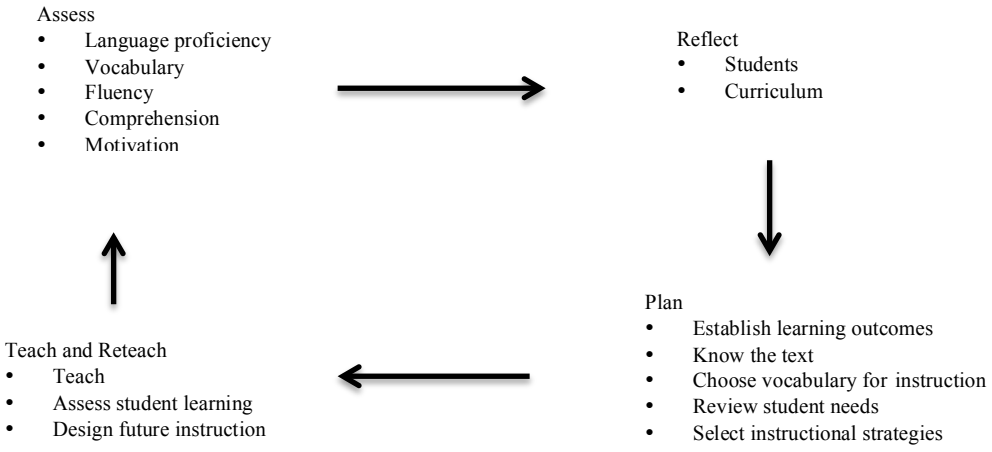


Figure 1: Cycle of Adjusting Instruction. Miller & Veatch (2010).

Running Records

Clay (2000) defines running records as a tool used to identify how students use knowledge with letters, sounds, and words, and allows teachers to see which strategies students are using to make meaning of texts. Running Records is a tool used to determine features of accuracy, fluency, and comprehension (McNaughton, 2014). According to Burkins and Croft (2010), running records inform teachers on the print or story cues that students use to gain meaning. Additionally, Johnson et al. (2012) and von Frank (2014) informed that running record is not only an effective way to inform teachers about students' progress at the individual level, but it can also be used to help a school mirror the overall efficacy of tiered instruction. The use of running records helps teachers determine which reading behaviors students are using to make meaning (Clay, 2000). According to Maloch et al. (2013) running records is used to constantly check student reading levels, reading needs, and groups, hence supporting flexible grouping of students according to their academic needs. Kajitani (2015) indicated that running records could also provide teachers with information on students' ability with comprehension, fluency, and retelling of a story. In addition, running records provide teachers with three sources of information also known as the cue system: meaning, syntax, and visual, which indicate how students process information (Clay, 2000).

Syntax refers to the understanding on how oral language is put together (Clay, 2000), which can affect fluency and comprehension. Images and thoughts created by words develop word meaning, thus the beginning of the link between words in order to improve the structure of language (Vygotsky, 1986). On the other hand, Bieber, Hulac,

and Schweihle (2015) indicate that oral reading fluency does not make a difference or help the student increase achievement. According to Rasinsk and Young (2014), a teacher must first identify students' weaknesses in fluency and then apply the student's needs to practice the skill or strategy under the guidance of the teacher. This learning process is critical towards the improvement of students reading comprehension (Rasinsk &Young, 2014).

Visual information comes from understanding the connection between oral language and letters and words (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, 2001). Both meaning and syntax correlates to Fountas and Pinnell's concept of invisible information, while visual cues correlate to visible information. Not only are running records used to analyze students understanding of letters, sounds, and words (Clay, 2000), it is also used to check how students are processing texts and as Burkin and Croft (2010) described as breaking away from inefficient reading habits. According to Kajitani (2015) when teachers understand the purpose of data and how to use it, teachers are better able to help students. Teachers' understanding of the guided reading framework and the use of student data have been linked to students' reading performance (Maloch, Worthy, Jordand, Hungerford-Kesser, & Semingson, 2013). Guided Reading has increasingly become an important literary component supporting all students at their instructional level (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996) or zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). Guided reading is an area designated for connecting skills and strategies to enhancing reading performance (Marchard-Martella, et al., 2015). According to the United States Department of Education (2016), students currently attending Title 1 schools should receive enriched

and accelerated programs that promote the use of scientifically based instructional strategies to enhance reading performance.

Reading Performance and Title 1 Schools

There is a strong connection between poverty and low achievement scores throughout the entire nation (NAEP, 2016). The continuous failure of reading assessments contributes to the integration and increasing gap of low socioeconomic and low achieving schools (Leu and Maykel, 2016). Despite the attempts to increase reading performance, students still fail to reach even a basic level of proficiency (Jeynes, 2014; Conradi et al., 2016). Marks (2014) claimed that the relationship between student reading achievement and socioeconomic background with schools depends on the effects of resources, instructional practices, and cultures. The use of commercial programs at Title 1 schools instead of research-based principles may affect students reading performance (Jenkins et al., 2013). Bloom and Owen (2012) suggested that hiring highly qualified teachers in low socioeconomic areas might help to increase student reading performance.

Several studies have been conducted on student reading performance in Title 1 schools (Hays, 2013; Marks, 2014; Jerrim, 2015). For example, Merry (2013) studied reading achievement at Title 1 schools and found that teacher quality, teacher preparation, and teacher influence on student learning was essential to enhancing reading performance. In their study, Puccioni (2015) and Hattan et al. (2015) found that the quality of instruction at Title 1 schools were factors that contributed to students reading achievement. Bloom and Owens (2016), Shin et al. (2012), and Quinn (2015) found reading success at Title 1 schools to be lacking compared to schools of higher economic

status. There were significant differences in reading achievement between those Title 1 elementary schools, which had high-quality teachers versus low-quality teachers (Merry, 2013). Salteh et al. (2015) found that most teachers relied more on their experiences and beliefs rather than research based practices. Sin et al. (2012) found that the effectiveness of reading instruction in schools depended on teacher pedagogical knowledge, which contributes to reading performance. Hattan et al. (2015) also found that students from low socioeconomic background need to have consistent relevant teaching that activates students' prior knowledge, an essential skill for teachers during guided reading. Additionally, Benner et al. (2013) found that providing explicit instruction and language skills would help increase student's reading performance in Title 1 schools.

The literature review, also indicated that students from low socioeconomic background need explicit and systematic approach when taught reading, which is critical to the success of reading achievement with at-risk students. In a cross-sectional study, Polidano, et al. (2013) found that early interventions provided students with the accumulative learning needed to enhance reading performance. In a quantitative study, Muszynski and Jakubowski (2015) investigated the effectiveness of metacognitive strategies and learning habits to assist low readers, and found significant improvement in students reading comprehension. In a mixed-method study, Conradi et al. (2016) found great significance between fluency and silent reading comprehension. However, in the same study, Conradi et al. (2016) also found that fluency hindered oral reading comprehension, since semantic knowledge influenced comprehension.

Instructional Practices in Reading

The National Reading Panel (2015) concluded that the best approach to reading instruction is one that incorporates: explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, systematic phonics instruction, and methods to improve fluency, and ways to enhance comprehension (Rasinski, 2016). The National Reading Panel also believes that teachers should possess a variety of instructional methods to enhance comprehension adeptly, (Shanahan et al., 2010) hence, making five recommendations. The first is to teach students how to use comprehension strategies such as activating prior knowledge, questioning, visualizing, monitoring, inferring, and summarizing. The second recommendation is to teach students how to identify and use the texts' organizational structure to comprehend, learn, and remember content. The third recommendation is to guide students through focused, high quality discussions on the meaning of the text. The fourth recommendation is to select texts purposefully to support comprehension development, and the last recommendation is to establish an engaging and motivating context in which to teach reading comprehension. Fountas and Pinnel's (1996) guided reading instructional approach targets the areas recommended by The National Reading Panel (2015).

Scaffolding

In order for a child to learn new skills, the teacher must provide students with guided assistance at a level beyond their independent learning but within their instructional learning (Vygotsky, 1978). Scaffolding is an instructional technique used to support students when they are learning new concepts (Shang, 2015). Scaffolds are the

supports that teachers put in place to aid the learning of a new concept (Ankrum et al., 2013). Scaffolding or guided support requires interaction between the teacher and the student when the student is learning new concepts (Belland, Burdo, & Gu, 2015). Through collaboration, students learn and adapt model behaviors such as language skills, social interaction, and behavioral actions. Each scaffold pertains to the individual academic need of the student (Athanases & Oliveira, 2014). Through scaffolds, teachers are able to guide students through their learning (Shang, 2015). In scaffolding, the assignment itself does not change but the level of support, which can be low levels or high levels, the teacher provides to the student (Ankrum et al., 2014). Scaffolds are gradually withdrawn as student begin to master skills and strategies taught, thus taking the student from where they are academically to where they need to be (Reutzel et al., 2014). Expert teachers' builds various scaffolds into instruction then gradually takes them away as the student takes more responsibility (Ankrum et al., 2014). Thus, taking the student from an instructional level to an independent level (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky (1978) urge teachers to teach at students' instructional level by way of modeling, guiding, or scaffolding students' learning (Smit et al., 2013). In a quantitative study, Quinn (2015) found that focusing on instructional processes and activating student prior knowledge and experiences helped prepare students for successful learning. According to Petrova (2013), teaching at the students' instructional stage can benefit their learning.

The Process of Reading

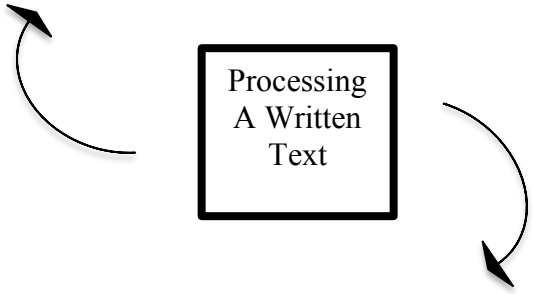
Fountas and Pinnell (1996) posit that although reading is the hardest cognitive task to learn, students are expected to comprehend texts. Saunders-Smith (2007) contends

that the reading process depends on students' developmental stage in reading. While Scarparolo (2014) define the reading process, as the knowledge students' possess concerning literacy strategies used to comprehend texts. Similarly, Leeuw et al. (2016) concluded that decoding, vocabulary, knowledge, and text related characteristics promoted reading comprehension.

According to a qualitative study conducted by Whitehead and de Jonge (2014) on the utilization of processing science texts as used in guided reading, students were able to think critically, enhance their comprehension, and make connections to graphics when prior knowledge was activated and thinking questions applied.

Fountas and Pinnell (2006) argued that a reader processes text in two different ways: visible information and invisible information. Figure 1 provides a summary on how readers process text (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006, p.18).

Visible Information **(In the Text)**
• **Symbols and signs** – letters, words • **Print conventions** – left to right, use of space, layout, font, punctuation, italics, and boldface • **Text tools** –organizational tools (headings, table of contents), informational tools (captions, glossary, pronunciation guides)



Invisible Information **(In the Readers' Head)**
• **Language knowledge** – phonology (sounds), vocabulary, syntax (language structure), phrases, sentences, whole texts, literary language • **Content knowledge** – facts, concepts, categories • **Personal knowledge** – emotions, memories, images, culture • **Textual knowledge** – how texts are organized (narrative, expository), genre, literary elements (character, setting, plot)

Figure 2. Summary of Invisible and Visible Information. Fountas & Pinnell (2006).

Visible information. Visible information depends on how a student interprets information seen in the text. Fountas and Pinnell (2006) defined visible information as

the knowledge a student has with text tools, print, visual signs, and artistic information. This information is categorized by the layout of text features, such as the table of content, glossary, headings, sub-headings, captions, and table of content. Additionally, categorization of information is further done based on how students see print in texts, such as spaces, the layout of sentences and paragraphs, punctuation, italics and bold print. Fountas and Pinnell assert that looking at letters, words and how they are organized influences a students' interpretation of a text.

Invisible information. Fountas and Pinnell (2006) defined invisible information as what is in the reader's head when reading, which includes all the thinking readers do and the language used for reading. Invisible information pertains to the knowledge of personal experience, including emotions, memories, and culture. Invisible information also encompasses the content, which include facts, concepts, images, and categories of information. The text is comprised of the structure of fiction, nonfiction texts, and genres, while language encompasses the phonology, syntax, vocabulary, meaning, and literary language, a reader has. According to Massey (2013), students acquire language through the support of scaffold instruction. Scaffolding complex language for students is the beginning and integration of book language into discussions (Massey, 2013).

The study conducted by Nayak and Sylva (2013) on the guided reading framework with Chinese ESL students resulted in the enhancement of student reading comprehension in English. The study led to students using reading strategies that enhanced thinking and understanding of texts. Guided reading with expository texts helps

students to develop more coherent representations of narrative texts (Lenhard, Baier, Schneider, and Hoffmann, 2013).

Fountas and Pinnell (2006) stated that visible and invisible information are key components of reading that allow teachers to understand how students process texts. The integration of these two concepts allows teachers to provide and assist students when processing texts (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006). Comprehending texts is the goal of reading and of reading instruction (Lenhard, et al., 2013), which is why it is important to understand students reading needs when planning a guided reading lesson.

Levels of Text

According to Clay (1991), a student's ability to use a gradient level of texts, and a range of strategies is considered "the heart" of the learning process. Saunders-Smith (2009) argues that matching books to a reader's reading level is crucial when processing texts. Matching texts to students is an important aspect of teacher knowledge of guided reading in conjunction with how components of guided reading and student data are used when planning lessons (Fountas & Pinnell, 2010; 2013). According to Sulkunen (2013), skills and strategies are practiced when students are engaged in reading diverse sets of texts. A teacher's pedagogical content knowledge on levels of text supports the practice and growth of students' when processing texts. It is important for teachers to know the quantitative formula (level) for each text so that each student can be matched appropriately with the correct text level, hence moving forward from their individual starting point (Delacruz, 2014). Fountas and Pinnell (2006, 2011, 2013) defined text gradient as a collection of leveled books used towards the readers reading continuum.

Fountas and Pinnell leveled readers are represented by letters of the alphabet, therefore, a student can fall between levels A – Z. Each grade level represents a range of book levels, but the academic struggles that some students have causes them to fall out of these grade ranges and into other grade ranges. The text gradient allows students to experience a learning continuum towards students' reading progress. The text gradient, according to Fountas and Pinnell (2011) is seen in figure 3:

Text Gradient

Grade Level	Fountas & Pinnell Levels
K	A - D
1	D - K
2	J - N
3	N - Q
4	Q - T
5	T - W
6	W - Z
7 & 8	Z
High School/Adult	Z+

Figure 3. Fountas and Pinnell Text Gradient Levels. Fountas and Pinnell (2011).

Deep Thinking

Fountas and Pinnell's (2013) research on guided reading has led to the understanding of deep thinking of texts. Deep thinking is a process in which students demonstrate higher order thinking skills when analyzing texts (Burkins & Croft, 2010).

Similarly, giving students the opportunity to think and talk about books enhances students reading comprehension (Hollenbeck, 2013). Depending on the developmental stage of the student, teachers select texts and guide students towards analyzing of the text (Schulman, 2006).

Thinking within the text. Fountas and Pinnell (2006) described this concept as a literal understanding within the text. In other words, thinking within the text refers to information that requires students to have a broad understanding of syntax and semantics. Decoding words and understanding words within a sentence, paragraph, or section of a text are examples of thinking within the text. According to Massey (2013), proficient readers are those who have high skills in word recognition and comprehension. Comprehensive language consists of syntax, semantics, and the ability to retell stories (Massey, 2013; Clay, 2000).

Thinking beyond the text. Fountas and Pinnell (2006) referred to this concept as acquiring a deep understanding of a text by using the literal information as evidence to support the readers' thoughts when thinking about a character, setting, and plot, or using text features such as headings, labels, captions, photographs, and diagrams to aid comprehension.

Thinking about a text. According to Fountas and Pinnell (2006), thinking about a text refers to reader's ability to think about what they are reading while analyzing the text, it is a higher level of thinking. According to Pennell (2014) higher level of thinking is capable by all readers even struggling readers, but with the support of scaffolds from a knowledgeable teacher. For students to be able to think within the text, think beyond the

text, and think about the text, they must learn to use comprehension strategies that will help them gain information (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006). Figure 4 explains the strategies teachers use to guide students while thinking within the text, thinking beyond the text, and thinking about the text (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006, p. 42).

Systems of Strategic Action for Thinking Within, Beyond, and About the Text	
Ways of Thinking About the Text	**Strategic Actions for Processing Written Texts**
Thinking Within the Text	**Solving Words** – Using a range of strategies to take words apart and understand what words mean while reading continuous text.
	Monitoring and Correcting – Checking on whether reading sounds right, looks right, and make sense.
	Searching for and Using Information – Searching for and using all kinds of information in a text.
	Summarizing – Putting together important information while reading and disregarding irrelevant information
	Maintaining Fluency – Integrating sources of information in a smoothly operating process that results in expressive, phrased reading
	Adjusting – Reading in different ways as appropriate to purpose for reading and type of text
Thinking Beyond the Text	**Predicting** – Thinking about what will follow while reading continuous text.
	Making Connections: Personal, World, and Text – Searching for and using connections to knowledge that the readers gained through their personal experiences, learning about the world, and reading other texts
	Inferring- Going beyond the literal meaning of a text to think about what is not there but is implied by the writer.
	Synthesize – Putting together information from the text and from the reader's own background knowledge in order to create new understanding
Thinking About the Text	**Analyzing** – Examining elements of a text to know more about how it is constructed.
	Critiquing – Evaluating a text based on the reader's personal, environmental, or textual knowledge.

Figure 4. Strategies for thinking within the text, thinking beyond the text, and thinking about the text (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006, p. 42).

A teacher's knowledge in both text and reading can contribute to the student's progress in reading and the level of visible and invisible information used while reading (Barone & Mallette, 2012). According to Fountas and Pinnell (2006, p.30), a student becomes a proficient reader when they have developed an integrated system depending on:

- The variety of texts experienced
- The suitability of texts offering opportunities to learn and expand the processing system
- The instruction that accompanies reading, including interesting and meaningful talk and writing that surround reading and deepen understanding.
- The opportunities individuals have to extend systems through talk and writing.

While a teacher's knowledge about guided reading can influence the development and delivery of a guided reading lesson (Burkins & Croft, 2011), Kretflow and Helf (2013) have suggested that some elementary teachers lack the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively teach students reading. The use of student data allows the identification of students reading needs (Fountas & Pinnell. 1996). Additionally, student data can influence the grouping, text selection, and use of strategies and skills (Saunders-Smith, 2009).

Teacher Knowledge

Teacher knowledge can be classified in two forms, pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge (Griffith et al., 2015). Pedagogical knowledge refers to the skills and practices a teacher possesses, while pedagogical content knowledge refers

to the knowledge a teacher possesses in a subject area of teaching (Carney & Indrisano, 2013). Sen and Temel (2016) found significant contributions between pedagogical content knowledge and students assessment scores. In a qualitative study about teacher knowledge, Wilson, McNeil, & Gillon (2015) argued that a student's success depended on the teacher's capacity to use knowledge and skills to plan and deliver a lesson. Hattan et al. (2015) asserted if teachers did not activate students' prior knowledge accurately, it would hinder rather than aide students reading comprehension. Similarly, Wall (2014) found that teachers who did not support students with strategies were not making reading progress and instead the reading became stagnant. Griffith and Bauml (2015) also proposed that a teacher's pedagogical content knowledge during small group led to a lot of teacher decisions enhancing students reading achievement. Also, Simmons et al. (2015) suggested that the use of student data to adjust instruction increased reading performance. Many researchers such as Parr and McNaughton (2014), Greenfield and Hartfold (2016) indicated that students' success is highly dependent on the content knowledge and background teachers possess and how well they are able to apply it. Hanke (2014) argued that pedagogical content knowledge was a critical element that can affect the delivery of instruction, hence affecting students' reading performance.

Parr and McNaughton (2014) cautioned that not only was it necessary for teachers to possess guided reading knowledge, but to use that knowledge in conjunction with student data to support student learning.

Robertson (2013) further asserted that the use of formative assessments enable teachers to choose strategies that facilitate students' learning according to their reading

needs. Chen and Yee (2012) posits that teachers who increases pedagogical content knowledge by exploring self-reflection and adjusting lessons become aware of instructional vocabulary, differentiated instruction, and knowledge in student learning. A study conducted by Fletcher, Greenwood, Grimley, Parkhill, and Davis (2012) found that effective teachers were still able to self-reflect and improve on student-led discussions and move away from teacher directed groups. Reflective thinking about teaching along with formative assessments, running records, and student observations improves teachers planning and instructional practices (Burkins & Croft, 2010). Teachers who reflect on teaching experiences continuously make connections between adjusting instruction and student data (Thessin, 2015). As teachers continuously verify and clarify student understanding, instruction is constantly modified to students reading needs (Arya, Christ, Chiu, 2014).

A teacher's pedagogical knowledge relies on reasoning, content, schema, and improvisational, and that knowledge is pivotal in producing successful learners (Carney & Indrisano, 2013). Pedagogical knowledge affects students learning, as well as teachers' delivery of instruction justifying the need to ensure that teachers have the opportunity to plan and produce effective guided reading lesson plans (Carney & Indrisano, 2013). As Chen and Yee (2012) indicated, effective teaching is a product of a planning process. If teachers are to increase students' learning by planning effective lesson plans, then knowledge on student data, guided reading, scaffolds, and on the integration of these components in the planning process can meet the academic needs of students.

Planning Process

Chen and Yee (2012) indicated that teachers' first need to reflect on the outcome of a previous lesson, in order to revise and implement modifications in new lessons. Among the many decisions a teacher makes, exploration of the lesson planning is the most critical since it leads to student learning and grouping (Maloch et al., 2013).

A guided reading lesson can influence students' learning depending on how teachers' use guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data in the planning process (Olander & Ljung-Djarf, 2012). However, it does not indicate how a teacher comes to the point of making the decision, hence the need to explore teachers perception of using guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data when planning a reading lesson. Olander and Ljung-Djarf (2012) contended that lesson plans that are planned, and which utilizes pedagogical content knowledge and student data increases reading performance. The planning process of a lesson requires the exploration of how teachers decide, the skills and strategies they use to target students' individual needs (Sarigoz, 2012), and the teacher reflection (Thessin, 2015), which is something that is yet unknown.

Hanke (2014) stated that teachers who lack planning experience cause students to struggle in developing literary skills. In some cases, students learn wrong, which is why it is important for teachers to scaffold instruction and support students reading needs (Belland et al., 2015). Hollenbeck (2013) also indicated that teachers who are considered to be explicit are not always able to teach comprehension. The experience that teachers gain from the planning process helps them in making the decision regarding the strategies

that can meet the specific academic needs of students, and the methodology used in the delivery of such strategies during the instructional process (Belland et al., 2015). Providing explicit instructions based on student data can influence student learning, teacher self-efficacy, and teacher effectiveness (Reutzel, Child, Jones, & Clark, 2014).

Delivery of Instruction

According to Fountas and Pinnell (1996), researchers perceive guided reading as a method that guides students to use strategies and skills while comprehending texts through scaffolds. Scaffolds offer students the opportunity to use comprehension strategies with guided support from the teacher (Fountas and Pinnell (1996). According to Massey (2013), a teacher's scaffolds using concrete and abstract language may serve to teach and model higher levels of thinking as well as to allow students to display knowledge on the usage of vocabulary, and sentence knowledge in order to express language. Hanke (2014) argued that although the delivery of guided reading was accomplished through scaffold instruction, teachers' perspectives on guided reading and delivery of instruction is misconstrued, indicating a need to explore teachers' perceptions of using guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data when planning a reading lesson.

Burkins and Croft (2011) asserted that although some teachers knew how to scaffold the text, they still managed to do more work than the student. Hanke (2013) claimed that strategies such as scaffolding are misused because of lack of pedagogical content knowledge and teaching skills that pertain to guided reading. A teacher's

perspective on how they use professional knowledge and student data in planning guided reading affects students learning.

Summary

Based on the literature analyzed in this section, it was important to view all the connecting elements that contributed to planning a guided reading lesson (Burkins & Croft, 2011). While teachers' guided reading knowledge determines student's success as readers (Fountas & Pinnell, 2013), beliefs on the use of guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data are unknown. According to Carney and Indrisano (2013) findings, effective lesson planning depends on how the teacher uses pedagogical content knowledge and student data. More importantly, a teacher's knowledge of pedagogical strategies and use of student data influences the effectiveness of a guided reading lesson, hence affecting students reading performance (Burkins & Croft, 2011; Shang, 2015). The need to understand a teacher's belief concerning pedagogical content knowledge and student data made it imperative to understand how decisions are made when planning a guided reading lesson to serve learners from a diversified background (Clay, 1991).

Reading experts, such as Clay (1991), Fountas and Pinnell (1996), Burkins and Croft (2011), and Parr and McNaughton (2014) considered guided reading as an instructional means to support students processing of texts, by facilitating schema in order to enhance comprehension of texts through scaffolds. Because teachers' beliefs on the use of guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data when planning of a guided reading lesson are unknown, this study focused on the exploration of those

teachers who had experience with the phenomenon. Chapter 2 of this proposal specifies the benefits of guided reading when applied with fidelity, planning process, guided reading knowledge, and the use of student data. Additionally, it examined how a guided reading lesson affected students' reading performance. From the review, it was apparent that teachers' knowledge in guided reading and student data influenced student learning.

In spite of the documented success with guided reading instruction, beliefs of teachers' experiences on the simultaneous use of pedagogical content knowledge and students' data had been overlooked in the research. While there was plethora of studies identifying guided reading instruction as a technique for enhancing reading performance, there were no qualitative studies exploring the beliefs of elementary teachers regarding the use of guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data. Burkins, Croft, 2010, Hanke (2014) opined that even though guided reading enhances students' reading performance, teachers were sometimes misconstrued, hence negatively affecting students reading performance, indicating the need to explore teachers' beliefs of using guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data when planning a reading lesson.

In Chapter 3 of this study, I provided a rationale for the use of a qualitative study to explore elementary teachers' beliefs on the use of guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data. Additionally, it provided possible insights into the perspectives of elementary teachers on the strengths and limitations of the planning of a guided reading lesson.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand how elementary teachers' beliefs at a high performing Title 1 school used guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data when planning a guided reading lesson. To accomplish this purpose, the guided reading strategies posited by Fountas' and Pinnell's and Clay regarding student data were explored. For example, I explored how teachers used formative assessments, teacher observation, and running records to determine which reading skill and strategy was selected when planning a lesson. In addition, I assessed how teachers used knowledge on guided reading components, scaffolds, and reading process to effectively plan a guided reading lesson.

The major sections of Chapter 3 include a description of the research design and rationale, the role of the researcher, research questions, including participant selection and instrumentation. In addition, procedures for recruitment, participation, data collection procedures, data analysis, issues of trustworthiness, and ethical procedures are described. Qualitative studies provide data from which themes about shared experiences can be generated (Moustakas, 1990).

Research Design and Rationale

The research questions that guided this study are stated below. This study strived to generate data related to elementary teachers' beliefs of planning reading lessons using guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data at a successful Title 1

elementary school. The questions were derived from the problem statement and were anchored in the purpose statement.

- What are elementary teachers' beliefs on the use of guided reading pedagogical content knowledge when planning a guided reading lesson?
- What are elementary teachers' beliefs on the use of student data knowledge when planning a guided reading lesson?
- How are elementary teachers' beliefs reflected in a guided reading lesson?
- How do teachers use lesson plans to guide them in effective instruction?

A qualitative research design was used with both phenomenological and case study aspects. Aspects of phenomenological interviewing methods was used as a guideline and aspects of case study design for triangulation and analysis of current reading plans as a source combined with interviews was selected to answer the research questions in this investigation. According to Maxwell (2013, p.53), "to be genuinely qualitative research, a study must take account of the theories and perspectives of those studied." A qualitative study is the understanding of a person's experiences and how that person perceives those experiences (Moustakas, 1994). According to Husserl (2012), understanding an individual's experiences can help us understand how these experiences have shaped an individual's ability to perceive their reality, hence developing beliefs. According to Merriam (1998), beliefs can best be explored with a qualitative study.

A qualitative study explores real life situations while accounting the interrelated conditions of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Yin (2009) argued that case studies are a good design to use when the researcher is trying to explain, describe, illustrate, or

enlighten in relation to the phenomenon that happened within a given situation (Creswell, 2013). A case study approach involves the collection of multiple sources of information such as interviews, audiovisual materials, documents, as well as a conceptual framework to guide data collection. Yin (2009) noted that the most important purpose of case study research is to explain the presumed casual links in real-life interventions that are too complex for surveys (Creswell, 2013).

Interviewing methods of both phenomenological and case study were selected because its design allowed the researcher to explore within a specific site the why and how of a high-performing Title 1 school on the use of guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data. A qualitative study using both phenomenological and case study aspects were selected as the best design because it allowed this researcher to understand teachers' beliefs concerning the phenomenon. This process allowed the exploration of the why and how behind teachers' beliefs about using guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data to plan reading lessons. Data gathered stated the questions in narrative form.

The choice of a qualitative study using both phenomenological and case study aspects rested on the fact that the identified problem and research questions called for a design that can critically examine the essence of meaning that participants make of their experiences. In this approach, the researcher gained teacher's viewpoints about their use of guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data when planning a lesson.

A quantitative method determined the significance of a relationship between variables based on an existing theory (Yilmaz, 2013). A quantitative method was not appropriate because this study sought to understand an ongoing phenomenon. A mixed method study required the use of both qualitative and quantitative traits in order to obtain a wide spectrum of information for evaluation (Creswell, 2014). A mixed-method was not appropriate due to the inclusion of quantitative traits, which was inconsistent with the purpose of this study.

Other qualitative approaches and designs were considered during the design phase, such as grounded, ethnography, narrative, research in order to determine the appropriate method to pursue. The selection of research design was based on the purpose of study and the types of data that were collected. A grounded approach was not appropriate because the study did not seek to generate a theory from collected data instead the researcher sought to understand an ongoing phenomenon (Yin, 2014). The narrative approach was not selected because it focused on a detailed life story of a participant (Creswell, 2013). The ethnographic approach was not appropriate because it required a long-term observation of a cultural group, thus making it inadequate to address the research questions of this study.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand how elementary teachers' beliefs at a high performing Title 1 school used guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data when planning a guided reading lesson. Because individual experiences guided actions and responses to the phenomena within a specific site, a qualitative study approach using both phenomenological and case study aspects was

determined to be the best design for this study.

Role of the Researcher

As the researcher in this study, I was responsible for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting all data related to the study. Potential biases was addressed by implementing strategies to enhance the trustworthiness of this qualitative study, including the use of triangulation, member checking, as well as taking precautions to make sure that the data was collected until saturation had been reached.

I am currently a second-grade teacher in an Eastern Urban district, and although I did not know the teachers who decided to participate in the study, I might have had previous professional connections, at some point, with possible participants since some may have taught at my current teaching site or we may had attended the same professional development sessions. While this introduced the possibility for bias (Creswell, 2013), a well-developed interview protocol (Appendix B), reduced this potential. As the researcher, I conducted all interviews in this qualitative study through the use of a well-developed interview protocol, which ensured that all participants are treated the same and are asked the same questions. Follow-up questions were asked based on participants' response. All participants were instructed on the purpose of the study as well as their role as participants. As the researcher, I transcribed all recorded interviews and invited participants to review those transcriptions to create clarity on the topic. I provided a copy of the transcripts to participants by email and had them returned by email when participants felt their responses were accurate. This strategy was called

member checking. In addition to interviewing and follow-up questions, I also requested archived or current lesson plans.

I was also responsible for coding the collected data and analyzing it into themes and patterns. In this study, securing confidentiality and extracting any information that revealed a participants' identity assured privacy.

Methodology

In this qualitative study, I used web interviews, archived and current lesson plans, and follow-up questions with participants to find out their beliefs regarding their use of guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data when planning a guided reading lesson. That is, I sought to understand what their beliefs were regarding their usage. I provided follow-up questions to each of the participants based on initial responses.

Participant Selection Logic

Qualitative studies required using participants with previous experience and knowledge of the problem (Yin, 2014). Creswell (2013) emphasized the importance that participants have experienced the phenomenon. Thus, the eligible criteria consisted of elementary teachers with direct involvement of guided reading planning.

All of the elementary teachers from the participating site currently provided guided reading instruction. The participants in this study were elementary teachers from grades kindergarten through fifth grade. Years of teaching varied thus impacting the effectiveness of a lesson.

The goal was to collect data from selected participants in order to understand teachers' beliefs on the use of guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data when planning a lesson. Based on that goal, purposeful selection was used to recruit six to ten participants with appropriate experience and knowledge. These participants were selected, since they provided in-depth understanding and explicit, contextual information (Maxwell, 2013). This study allowed the gathering of in-depth information through open-ended questions on the interview in order to gain a deep understanding of the evidence presented (Maxwell, 2013).

The purposeful sampling method was the most suitable because the researcher selected participants who met the specific criteria and provided the information to support the research questions. Purposeful sampling allowed the particular selection of a setting and persons to provide information that was relevant to research questions and goals, which cannot be gotten from other choices (Maxwell, 2013). Creswell (2009) explained that sample size may be small for new researchers, which it often involves only a few participants. For this reason, selected participants that were aware of guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data were included in the sample size in this qualitative study at the participating site.

According to a study on how teachers implement Tier 1 and Tier 2 reading interventions by Barry (2016), a sample size of five teachers was used to collect the necessary data to understand how teachers provided these interventions in their classroom. Although saturation might not be reached, a sample size of six to ten elementary teachers from a Title 1 school was suffice to answer the research questions.

Participants currently provided guided reading instruction. The participants in this study were elementary teachers from grades kindergarten through fifth grade, and with diverse years of experience.

According to Patton (2015) and Maxwell (2013), small sample size can be used to represent the population relevant to the research questions. According to Patton (2015) there are no rules to sample size. The first six to ten teachers who agree to participate were selected. A small sample size, six to ten, allowed the researcher to seek in-depth information on how teachers' use guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data. Saturation occurred when participants offered no new ideas or emergent patterns are no longer feasible (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012). Thus, when information gathered from participants was beginning to become redundant, that is usually an indication of saturation, but this was an anticipation that was not taken due to the small sample size in this research.

Instrumentation

For this study, I designed one instrument. The instrument was the interview protocol that was used to conduct individual web interviews (Appendix B) through teachers work emails. The interview protocol attempted to explore teachers' belief on the phenomenon of using pedagogical content knowledge and student data. According to van Manen (1997), the concept of phenomenon primarily deals with the understanding of people experience by describing the meaning in their experiences, hence affecting beliefs. In a qualitative study, interview data is often used to describe those beliefs. Also, follow-up questions allowed me to explore more about teachers' responses from initial interview

questions. The second instrument was a guided reading lesson plan to determine teachers' thoughts on their use of guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data. In addition, I have also aligned these instruments with the research questions.

Interview Protocol

The purpose of this instrument was to understand elementary teachers' beliefs of how they used guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data when planning a guided reading lesson. The interview protocol was a 10-open-ended question that seeks to understand elementary teachers' beliefs of how they used guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data when planning a guided reading lesson. Table 1 provided interview questions that pertained to the research questions. This allowed the researcher to develop a thorough description of specific content instead of unnecessary themes that did not pertain to planning a guided reading lesson.

In this study, I used teachers' work emails to send them the initial interview questions by sending a Survey Monkey link. For the second interview, which was the follow-up questions, I used Google Hangouts or other communication methods that was convenient to the participant. Survey Monkey is a data tool that allows researchers to send their interviewing questions through email to the intended participants. Google hangouts allowed me to video call, phone, or message participants who gave consent to participate and had completed the first interviewing questions. Video call allowed me to have one to one conversations with the participant, and use the Hangout app "Draw or Effects" which also provided confidentiality. It was a method in which the researcher did not have to worry about misinterpretations or misconstruing information (Aborisade,

2013).

I web interviewed elementary teachers who provided guided reading instruction for students in grades K-5 at the proposed research site. Web interview is when the researcher uses some type of web communication system to interview participants (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). According to Rubin and Rubin (2012), web interviewing has pros and cons. This type of interviewing eliminated the complications of travel distance differential for the researcher and participants, as well as allowed the participant to feel comfortable about responses given to questions without the confinements of time or the uncomfortable moments of face-to-face interviews. Rubin and Rubin (2012) noted that web interview enabled the researcher to develop a follow-up, besides offering privacy and more time to the participants to think without feeling judged or criticized. Nevertheless, Rubin and Rubin contended that interviews are slow, and the researcher had to wait for days before he or she gets a response. On the other hand, Janesick (2011) argued that electronic interview helped researchers to get rid of hassles that can prevent the interviewee from participating in the interview process. Web interviewing was the appropriate method for those individuals whose time was limited, travel was a problem, or are updated with use of modern ways of communication (Aborisade, 2013).

Table 1

Interviewing Questions to Research Questions

Interview Questions	Research Question1	Research Question 2	Research Question 3	Research question 4
1.	X			
2.		X		
3.			X	
4.				X
5.			X	
6.				X
7.		X		
8.	X			
9.	X			
10.	X			

Guided Reading Lesson Plan

In addition to in-depths interviews and follow-up questions, I requested lesson plans related to guided reading instruction. The request of a guided reading lesson plan was one way of learning if there was a match between what teachers indicated in their interview versus what was found in archived lesson plans. This study sought to understand experiences as believed by "teachers reflecting on, and describing" (Van Manen, 1997) the phenomenon of using guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data. Van Manen (1997) asserted that in a qualitative study, the researcher

sought to understand experiences as perceived by the individual, reflecting, and describing the phenomena (van Manen, 1997). The request of an archived or current guided reading lesson plan provided insight into a teacher's use of guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data. In this study, an excel spreadsheet was used to create a matrix/ analysis tool that had headers that indicated each component of an effective guided reading lesson. The headers were guided reading components: selection of text, introduction to the text, reading the text, discussion of the text, teaching points, word work, and extending understanding (Fountas and Pinnell's (1996, 2010, 2013). These are the components expected in an effective guided reading lesson (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, 2010, & 2013). The lesson plan was then analyzed to identify guided reading components, which was then copied into the appropriate header of the matrix. Lesson plans that had all the components of an effective guided reading lesson were classified as an effective lesson. Lesson plans that did not have all components were classified as an ineffective lesson.

Procedures For Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

For the purpose of this study, the researcher selected a Title 1 school, School XYZ, which had demonstrated a significant increase in reading achievement using the guided reading approach.

Once IRB and district permission were granted, an invitation through Survey Monkey was sent to the K-5 elementary teachers' work email of the participating site. The invitation requested elementary teachers to participate with a link to the online interview questions, and the request of a guided reading lesson plan. The consent form,

which was sent by email, included information about the study, indicating that the study was strictly voluntary. Information about the University was also included. These teachers were invited to discuss their beliefs of using guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data by asking them to reflect on and describe their experiences in their use of guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data. Information about the University was also included. The invitation included a Survey Monkey link to information about the study, the school, contact information, and to the first interviewing questions. Each interview was about 30 to 45 minutes. Participants were given one week to respond to the invitation and email responses. After a week, a friendly reminder was sent that if there were still interested in participating that they could still respond.

Teachers who agreed to participate and complete the online interview questions were contacted by phone or email to establish a time for the second interview. Each interview was about 30 to 45 minutes. The second interview will be the follow-up questions through Google Hangouts during a time that was convenient for participants. Participants in this study included elementary teachers who were responsible for providing guided reading instruction at the proposed site.

At the beginning of data collection, participants were once again informed of the purpose of study and that it is strictly voluntarily. As the researcher, I ensured that proper description of features and connections on the collected data was well supported to validate the study (Maxwell, 2013). At the end of the interview, I explained that questions with responses would be emailed back to them to see if they had anything to add. Participants had a week to email back responses with any changes or not which

would then be an indication that responses were accepted. In addition, I collected a guided reading lesson plan already written in relation to the use of guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data from teachers that participated.

Data Analysis

Once the data were collected, it was then manually coded and analyzed (Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, 2014). Coding was done in two major stages: first cycle and second cycle (Miles et al., 2014). First Cycle of coding pertained to assigning data to patterns (Miles et al., 2014). The approach that was taken was In Vivo coding. In Vivo analysis allowed the researcher to use participants own words to code the data. For the Second Cycle coding, according to Miles et al. (2014) was pattern coding. Codes that were similar were grouped into themes in order to form major ideas. These two approaches helped me identify themes and patterns to my research questions that pertained to participants' experiences concerning the phenomenon. Also, an excel spreadsheet was used to create a matrix using headers from guided reading components of a lesson plan in order to analyze data found in each lesson plan (Appendix D). This matrix allowed the researcher to compare the lesson plans to components and established effectiveness or not according to Fountas and Pinnell (1996) guidelines of a guided reading lesson.

I analyzed and interpreted these findings in relation to the research questions of this study using the conceptual framework of Fountas and Pinnell guided reading and Clays' framework of data collection (2000) with respect to literacy processing, and wrote a description of the essence of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994) by coding the data

and developing patterns and themes. I also analyzed data that did not pertain to the research questions. If discrepant information appeared, then as the researcher, I asked myself what kind of alternative case these bits of information pertained to and then checked them out for future study.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Patton (2015) indicated that in order to obtain trustworthiness in a qualitative study, the researcher must adopt a stance of neutrality with regard to the phenomenon under study. In other words, the researcher must obtain from selective perceptions, personal bias, and theoretic tendencies (Patton, 2015), which is why strategies in relation to credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are described.

Credibility

To establish credibility, the researcher used strategies to document accuracy of the study. Creswell (2013) recommended the researcher to use the strategies of triangulation, member checking, and clarifying researcher bias. For this study, I used triangulation by using several sources of data such as interviews, follow-up question interviews, and the request of guided reading lesson plans. I also used the strategy of member checking, which also provided credibility to findings and interpretations by ensuring that the participant had reviewed their responses while providing the opportunity to alternate answers if needed, reducing any misinterpretations or bias from the researcher (Miles et al., 2014). I also clarified bias that existed by communicating biases, experiences, or prejudices by keeping a reflective journal.

Transferability

The appropriate precautions, such as thoroughly describing research context and the essential research assumptions ensured that the findings of this study were transferable to other similar settings. By using rich, thick description strategy, which is an explicit description of the participants, setting, and findings of the study, readers were able to decide whether these specific details were transferable to other teachers in the United States.

Dependability

To achieve dependability in this study, the researcher ensured that all interview data was transcribed verbatim, an interview protocol was used, and researcher potential bias was known. I also used the strategy of triangulation and member checking to improve dependability. To establish triangulation, I used several sources of data such as web interviews, follow-up questions, and archived or current lesson plans. Also, to minimize potential bias, all interviews were recorded and then sent back to participant for review of transcribed verbatim responses (member checking). I also clarified bias that existed by communicating biases, experiences, or prejudices by keeping a reflective journal.

Confirmability

According to Patton (2015), confirmability is an equivalent to objectivity. In order to improve confirmability, I clarified bias that existed by communicating biases, experiences, or prejudices. As a second-grade teacher who provided guided reading instruction, I needed to be careful that my own experiences did not interfere with data

collection and data analysis. Researchers avoided using their bias by using the "bracketing" approach, which meant researching the phenomena while avoiding assumptions or interpretations (Hatch, 2002). The bracketing ensured that the researcher's opinion did not interfere with the participants' point of view (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) and developed correlated themes. To minimize this potential bias, all interviews were recorded and then sent back to participants for review of transcribed verbatim responses (member checking). I also clarified bias that existed by communicating biases, experiences, or prejudices by keeping a reflective journal.

Ethical Procedures

The participating district required an application requesting permission to conduct research (Appendix A). As indicated in the website, the district's policy for conducting research stated "whoever seeks to conduct research in the months after January of that year, the application permission must be submitted by September of the previous year." Upon IRB approval, stakeholders received an email explaining the objective of the study and requesting support in establishing contact with possible participants. Once IRB and district permission were granted, an invitation through Survey Monkey was sent requesting elementary teachers to participate including separate links, one indicating consent to participate with access to survey and the other to participate in the interview with request for contact information. The consent form included information about the study, indicating that the study was strictly voluntary. Information about the University was also included.

Upon Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, signed consent forms from each participant ensured that participation in this study was voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Every effort was made to ensure confidentiality of the participants' information. Participants' name was replaced using Pseudonyms to protect the identity of teachers, students, the school, and the district. All responses were confidential and interviewees were not identified by name or by any information in the data.

Since there can be ethical concerns relating to data collection, protection of human research subjects and threats, approval from Walden's University Institutional Review Board was needed to conduct this research before data collection. The researcher took the necessary steps to stay updated with the policy and ethical concerns of human research subjects by taking the necessary hours required by the National Institute of Health (Appendix C). Participation in this study was purely voluntary as assured by the signed consent form and the participants had the right to withdraw from the study anytime. Participants were given the opportunity to review and verify all transcribed and written data to avoid any conflict or misinterpretation.

Summary

This section outlined the justification for the qualitative approach and study to explore the experiences of elementary teachers who had used guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data when planning a lesson. The benefits of a qualitative study in the field of education are well documented. In Chapter 3, I provided an overview of the methodology that was used in this research study. I also addressed research design

and rationale, the role of the researcher, participant selection logic, instrumentation, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness, and ethical issues. I also included descriptions of the strategies that were used to establish credibility and dependability. Finally, this section provided a description of the plans that were used to ensure all participants understand their rights as voluntary participants in this study.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

I developed the research questions for this qualitative study to address the gap in the literature related to how teachers think about the use of guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data simultaneously when planning a reading lesson. The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand how elementary teachers' beliefs at a high performing Title 1 school used guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data when planning a guided reading lesson. To accomplish this purpose, I examined how these teachers used guided reading strategies and diagnostic assessment to determine which skills and strategies were selected when planning a lesson. Additionally, I collected and compared archived guided reading lesson plans with Fountas and Pinnell's guided reading components and with participants' responses. The research questions for this study were:

- RQ1: What are elementary teachers' beliefs on the use of guided reading pedagogical content knowledge when planning a guided reading lesson?
- RQ2: What are elementary teachers' beliefs on the use of student data knowledge when planning a guided reading lesson?
- RQ3: How are elementary teachers' beliefs reflected in a guided reading lesson?
- RQ4: How do teachers use lesson plans to guide them in effective instruction?

In this chapter, I present the results of this qualitative study. I describe the setting of the study, the demographics of the research participants, and the procedures used to

collect data. In addition, I include a description of the data analysis procedures for my qualitative study in relation to each specific data source in order to determine key findings, which were analyzed in relation to the research questions. I also include a discussion of the evidence of trustworthiness as it relates to my qualitative study.

Setting

The research site for this qualitative study was XYZ Elementary School (pseudonym), which is located in Eastern region of the United States. Educators in this district implemented state standards and assessments in reading according to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts beginning in 2013. The state in which the District was located required K-12 schools to implement statewide assessments in reading beginning in Grade 3. All students in grades 3- 8 took the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) in Reading. As a district, ABC School District did not meet the progress requirements in reading, but in 2015-2016 XYZ Elementary School did meet reading requirements labeling them as a "High Progress" school (School District Website, 2017). In 2015-2106, students reading performance in XYZ Elementary School averaged at 14.8% at Below Basic; 29.6% at Basic; 45.4% at Proficient; and 10.2% at Advanced.

One research site in the ABC School District (pseudonym) was selected for this qualitative study. This research site was XYZ Elementary School which, according to its website, enrolled a total of 446 students in grades K-5 during the 2015- 2016 school year. According to the school website, the special education population comprised 19.6% of

the student population including ESL students. Students' demographics indicated that 27.4% of students identified as white; 0% as Native American; 55.8% as Hispanic; 2.0% as Asian American; 9.9% as African American; 0.2% as Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander and 4.7% as Multi-Racial. The districts website noted that students who qualified for the free or reduced lunch compromised 52.9% of the population.

During 2015-2016, XYZ Elementary School enrolled 446 students in five classrooms for Kindergarten, five Grade 1 classrooms, three Grade 2 classrooms, three Grade 3 classrooms, three Grade 4 classrooms, and three Grade 5 classrooms. According to the school website, the average class size for these classrooms were about 20 students per class.

According to the district website, for 2015-2016 school year, XYZ Elementary School received the designation of a Reward High Progress School under the federal guidelines for Title 1 Schools, which meant that all annual measurable objectives were met and was the highest 5% of the Title 1 schools based on aggregate math and reading PSSA or Keystone scores. According to the district website, to attain a Reward- High Progress School designation, XYZ School had to meet the elementary-level applicable requirements including be in the highest 5% of all Title 1 schools based aggregate progress in closing the achievement gap in Reading and Mathematics for PSSA and/ or Algebra 1/ Literature for Keystone Exams combined for all student groups and the historically underperforming student groups.

During 2012-2013, a district wide English Language Arts and reading curriculum

titled *Journeys* was mandated for whole class instruction and guided reading in grades K-5. The instructional reading program for students in Grades K-5 was aligned to the state's Common Core State Standards. Therefore, teachers in the district have used the *Journeys* reading program for five years. The *Journeys* program was a K-6 comprehensive, research-based English Language Arts program built on the foundation of the proven *Journeys* instructional design that provides all students with a path to achieving rigorous standards with print and state-of-the-art digital components (Hougen, M. et al, 2013). With the *Journeys* program, students were empowered by skill mastery, inspired by authentic text, became confident in their problem-solving and critical-thinking skills, confident in their ability to analyze complex text, and was confident to build skills needed for college and career (Hougen, M. et al, 2013).

Participants Demographics

At XYZ Elementary School, ten teachers participated in this study. All ten were classroom teachers. The teacher participants had teaching experience that ranged from 2 to 38 years. Experience at various grade levels in the K-5 band was represented within the study. Each of the teachers was a regular education teacher and taught guided reading as one of their curriculum requirements. The 10 participants consisted of three male teachers and seven female teachers. All 10 teachers, assigned in grades K-5, taught all subject areas required by the state and district.

These teachers were selected based on a criterion sampling logic because they expressed interest in participating in this study and because they met the following inclusion criteria: (a) all of the elementary teachers from the participating site currently

provided guided reading instruction, (b) the participants in this study were elementary teachers from grades kindergarten through fifth grade, (c) years of teaching varied thus impacting the effectiveness of a lesson.

Table 2

Participants' Demographics

Name	Employment assignment	Years of experience
Teacher 1	Grade 4	38
Teacher 2	Grade 2	5
Teacher 3	Grade 5	9
Teacher 4	Grade 2	15
Teacher 5	Grade 5	25
Teacher 6	Grade 3	2
Teacher 7	Grade 5	9
Teacher 8	Grade 2	20
Teacher 9	Grade 4	23
Teacher 10	Grade 2	8

Data Collection

Data collection began after securing a letter of cooperation from the district and obtaining IRB approval from Walden University (#07-07-17-0040329). For this qualitative study, I collected data from multiple sources, including interviews with ten elementary classroom teachers and follow-up interviews related to guided reading planning and student data. Lesson plans related to guided reading instruction at this site were also collected from teachers. Email invitations were sent to elementary teachers within the participating site. Faculty names and contact information was available on the school web site. I also used on the school web site to identify the grade level of the participants.

A total of twenty-three elementary teachers from XYZ School were initially asked to participate in the study. An invitation email with information about the study and research methods was sent to all teachers who provide guided reading instruction at XYZ Elementary School. The invitation email was sent in the summer when school was not in session, therefore teachers did not respond as quickly as when they are in school. Teachers from XYZ School were provided the approximate time needed to participate in the study and the data collection process was explained. The teachers were assured their participation would be confidential and they could withdraw from the study at any time. Ten teachers agreed to participate in the study.

The teachers who participated in the study were provided the Survey Monkey link, which provided the consent form, the interview questions and a brief explanation of the study. For the follow-up interview, a time and interview method that was convenient for the participant was set up. Two teachers indicated that they could no longer participate. I thanked them for their time. Following the interviews, I asked the rest of the participants for a lesson plan. Teachers sent a copy of lesson plans embedded in the literacy program Journey. All interview sessions were transcribed on the computer. A copy of the transcribed interviews was sent to each participant via email to review and look over. A week was given for participants to send back responses if any additions were made, otherwise it was indicated as acceptable.

Interviews

In July 07, 2017, I received approval to collect data for this study. Therefore, in July 2017, I emailed Mary Kate (pseudonym), the principal of XYZ Elementary School,

to push out my email invitation to all elementary teachers in grades K-5 at the participating site. I collected individual interview data about guided reading and student data from ten classroom teachers at XYZ Elementary School. All initial interviews were through email using Survey Monkey Link. On August 18, 2017, Teacher #1 indicated that she was interested in participating in the study. I sent her the link on August 18, 2017. Teacher #1 responded to the questions on August 23, 2017. On August 21, 2017, Teacher #2 indicated that he was interested in participating in the study. I sent him the link on August 21, 2017. Teacher #2 responded to the questions on August 30, 2017. On August 26, 2017, Teacher #3 indicated she wanted to participate in the study. I sent her the link on August 26, 2017. Teacher #3 responded to the questions on September 5, 2017. On August 27, 2017, Teacher #4 indicated the she was interested in participating in the study. I sent her the link on August 27, 2017. Teacher #4 responded to the questions on September 5, 2017. On August 28, 2017, Teacher #5 indicated that he was interested in participating in the study. I sent him the link on August 28, 2017. Teacher #5 responded to the questions on September 6, 2017. On August 31, 2017, Teacher #6 indicated that he was interested in participating in the study. I sent him the link on August 31, 2017. Teacher #6 responded to the questions on September 8, 2017. On September 1, 2017, Teacher #7 indicated that she was interested in participating in the study. I sent her the link on September 1, 2017. Teacher #7 responded to the questions on September 4, 2017. On September 1, 2017, Teacher #8 indicated that she was interested in participating in the study. I sent her the link on September 1, 2017. Teacher #8 responded to the questions on September 3. On September 1, 2017, Teacher #9 indicated that she was

interested in participating in the study. I sent her the link on September 1, 2017. Teacher #9 responded to the question on September 8, 2017. On September 3, 2017, Teacher #10 indicated that she was interested in participating in the study. I sent her the link on September 30, 2017. Teacher #10 responded to the questions on September 6, 2017.

I conducted the majority of the interviews during the summer when school was not in session so initial interviews were not returned quickly as they might have been during the school year.

Follow-up Interviews

Following the interviews, I emailed teachers to set up a time for the follow-up interviews and used an interviewing method that was convenient for the participant. Some participants requested that data collection of the follow-up interview take place via phone, face time, or email. All collected data was audio taped or emailed. I conducted follow-up interviews with eight of the elementary teachers who participated in the study from XYZ Elementary School. At this point, two teachers decided to withdraw from the study. The first follow-up interview that I conducted took place with Teacher #1 on September 8, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. through the phone, it lasted 40 minutes. The second follow-up interview that I conducted was with Teacher #2 and he requested that the questions be emailed to him. On August 29, 2017, I sent him the follow-up questions. Teacher #2 sent the questions back with the responses on September 2, 2017. Teacher #3 and Teacher #4 withdrew from the study. The third interview that I conducted was with Teacher #5 on September 9, 2017 at 5:00 p.m. through the phone, it lasted 43 minutes. The fourth follow-up interview that I conducted was with Teacher #6 on September 15,

2017 at 5:30 p.m. through the phone, it lasted 35 minutes. The fifth follow-up interview that I conducted was with Teacher #7 on September 22, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. through the phone, it lasted 39 minutes. The sixth follow-up interview I conducted was with Teacher #8 on September 25, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. through face time, it lasted 40 minutes. The seventh follow-up interview that I conducted was with Teacher #9 on September 25, 2017 at 8:00 p.m. through the phone, it lasted 39 minutes. The eighth follow-up interview that I conducted was with Teacher #10 on September 26, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. through face time; it lasted 42 minutes.

Lesson Plans

Following the follow-up interviews, I emailed each participant requesting a lesson plan they used previously or recently. All were sent within a week. I emailed Teacher #1 requesting a lesson plan on September 9, 2017 after the follow-up interview and received the lesson plan on September 11, 2017. I emailed Teacher #2 requesting a lesson plan on September 2, 2017 after receiving email responses to follow-up interview and received the lesson plan on September 8, 2017. I emailed Teacher #5 requesting a lesson plan on September 10, 2017 after the follow-up interview and received the lesson plan on September 16, 2017. I emailed Teacher #6 requesting a lesson plan on September 16, 2017 after the follow-up interview and received the lesson plan on September 17, 2017. I emailed Teacher #7 requesting a lesson plan on September 23, 2017 after the follow-up interview and received the lesson plan on September 29, 2017. I emailed Teacher #8 requesting a lesson plan on September 26, 2017 after the follow-up interview and received the lesson plan on September 28, 2017. I emailed Teacher #9 requesting a lesson

plan on September 26, 2017 after the follow-up interview and received the lesson plan on September 30, 2017. I emailed Teacher #10 requesting a lesson plan on September 26, 2017 after the follow-up interview and received her lesson plan on September 29, 2017. I did not ask Teacher #3 or Teacher #4 since they withdrew from the study. The lesson plans the participants sent me were part of the district's literacy program called Journeys. The lesson plans were embedded in the curriculum.

Data Analysis

Data were collected by phone, face-time, and email interviews from elementary teachers from XYZ Elementary School to answer research questions.

Interview Transcript Analysis

During the data collection process, I conducted all of the email, phone, and face-time interviews and transcribed all of the audiotaped interviews. This helped me become more familiar with the data and the themes that emerged. During this time, I also took notes alongside the transcription in attempt to identify bias or interpret meaning. Once the data was collected, it was then manually coded and analyzed (Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, 2014). According to coding guidelines suggested by Miles et al. (2014), responses to these questions were coded and classified into groups to search for relevant patterns or themes. First Cycle of coding pertained to assigning data to patterns (Miles et al., 2014). The approach that was taken was In Vivo coding. Using In Vivo analysis, I was allowed to use participants' own words to code the data into two cycles.

The First Cycle of coding occurred after each interview was transcribed and were

classified according to interview questions. While reading the transcripts, codes words or phrases were assigned to the data. This process was repeated several times where new information was discovered or codes were added merged or reclassified. Some of the codes used to code the data were vocabulary, comprehension, phonics, small groups, student needs, and background knowledge. These were words that were consistently used by the participants, and are part of the guided reading framework. Fountas and Pinnell (1996) set forth vocabulary, comprehension, phonics, and background knowledge as key concepts in Guided Reading. Clay (2000) has set forth to meet student needs by collecting data from these guided reading components during small group. For the Second Cycle coding, each transcript was reviewed using codes from the first cycle. Codes that were similar were grouped into themes until major ideas were formed. These two approaches helped me identify themes and patterns that pertained to my research questions.

Lesson Plan Analysis

Lesson plans were compared using a matrix with headers from guided reading components in order to analyze data found in each lesson plan. These are the components expected in an effective guided reading lesson (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, 2010, & 2013). The lesson plan was then analyzed to identify guided reading components, which was then copied into the appropriate header of the matrix. The request of a guided reading lesson plan was one way of learning if there was a match between what teachers indicated in their interview versus what was found in archived lesson plans. I was able to compare the lesson plans to components and determine effectiveness or not according to

Fountas and Pinnell (1996) guidelines of a guided reading lesson. The lesson plans that were analyzed for this study ranges from a guided reading level D to a guided reading level S. All lesson plans were embedded in the Journey's reading program. Lesson plans that had all the components of an effective guided reading lesson were classified as an effective lesson. Lesson plans that did not have all components were classified as an ineffective lesson. All of the lesson plans collected had all of the components theorized by Fountas and Pinnell and therefore, were classified as effective lesson plans.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Credibility was maintained by establishing strategies to document accuracy in the study by deriving core themes from participants actual wording. I also followed Creswell's (2013) trustworthiness recommendation by using strategies of triangulation, member checking, and clarifying researcher bias. I approached each interview with an awareness of my own bias, experiences, and prejudices by keeping a reflective journal. I recorded, saved and transcribed each interview personally to ensure consistency. I triangulated the data by using several sources of data. Data sources used were interviews, follow-up question interviews, and guided reading lesson plans. I also used the strategy of member checking, by sending participants their interview transcript for review and providing them with the opportunity to alter answers if needed. This reduced the likelihood of misinterpretation or bias influencing data analysis and study findings (Miles et al., 2014).

Transferability

Detailed descriptions were provided answering the qualitative research questions. The descriptions provided readers the opportunity to understand guided reading planning in a successful Title 1 School. Understanding how the research occurred provided the reader the opportunity to decide whether these specific details were transferable to other teachers in the United States.

Dependability

Dependability of data was maintained throughout the interview process. I transcribed all interviews verbatim, an interview protocol was used, and researcher potential bias was known. I made an initial interpretation of the data after coding each transcript. This included identifying themes in context to the research questions and triangulation data. To establish triangulation, I used several sources of data such as web interviews, follow-up questions, and archived or current lesson plans. Each transcript was then cross-analyzed with other transcripts in order to identify themes. Rich description of content and InVivo excerpts from the transcripts were used to support findings.

Confirmability

According to Patton (2015), confirmability is an equivalent to objectivity. In order to improve confirmability, I used the bracketing strategy described, defined, designed by Rubin & Rubin (2005) and developed correlated themes. Bracketing ensured that my opinion did not interfere with the participants' point of view (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). I also used a reflective journal to help me identify bias that might exist. In the reflective journal, I recorded the dates in which I sent email invitation, emailed questions, set-up

follow-up interviews, sent responses, and requested lesson plans, as well as dates when participants responded back to me. I also recorded my opinions about the entire experience of data collection. I also used member-checking strategy to ensure that my own bias did not influence the data. Elementary teachers reviewed their responses for accuracy. None of the teachers suggested any changes to their interview or follow-up interview responses. Data were collected and organized according to the interview questions that supported each research question. I also analyzed transcripts by using In Vivo coding to determine themes.

Results

Results for Interviews

I analyzed the data to generate descriptions and themes. As I analyzed and interpreted the information, four major themes emerged. The four emerging themes were: (a) experiences, (b) decision making, (c) beliefs, and (d) awareness. Responses such as, “has also helped me share different experiences with my students,” led me to the theme *experiences*. Responses such as, “I determine groups using data as well as create assignments based on reading levels and other data,” has led me to the theme *decision making.* Responses such as, “I believe that students would benefit from resources that focus their attention on vocab,” has led me to the theme *belief.* Responses such as, " I would like more guidance on how to help them in a more effective way,” has led me to the theme awareness. These themes reflect the beliefs and opinions shared by teachers during the interviews. Below I detailed the themes in a qualitative narrative. The narrative conveyed my findings from data collection and analysis that enabled me to

answer the study's guiding research questions in a final narrative (Creswell, 2013). A part of my findings included direct quotes from the participants, which proved profitable in sorting through the transcription for common, themes, beliefs, and attitudes.

Table 3 contains the breakdown of the major themes discovered from the data analysis, addressing the four research questions of the study.

Table 3

Summary of Results

Research Questions	*Themes: sub-themes*
RQ1	Experience: - Professional development - knowledge - instructional materials - student needs
RQ2	Decision Making: - grouping students - more books - training
RQ3	Belief: - reading strategies - adjusting instruction - student engagement
RQ4	Awareness: - on task - barriers - time

Theme 1: Experiences with Planning a Guided Reading Lesson

Theme 1 addressed the first research question of: "What are elementary teachers' beliefs on the use of guided reading pedagogical content knowledge when planning a guided reading lesson? The following questions were included in the interview protocol and follow-up interview to support the findings for the guided research question. The

following responses that led me to the major theme are also included:

Interview Question 1 was: *Please share examples of the ways you have used guided reading pedagogical content knowledge in reading for students?*

Concerning the use of guided reading pedagogical content knowledge, all of the teachers who participated in this study indicated that their teaching experience had led them to use their pedagogical content knowledge to help meet students needs in various ways. One way of helping students make connections to books or real life is stated by Teacher 1, "I always try to teach in a way that the students can make connections to real life situations. If they can't connect to the materials, it is difficult to engage them. I also try to get the students excited to read. I love reading and I try to extend that love to the kids. I read when they are reading and demonstrate what good readers do."

Building background knowledge, selecting texts, and supporting students to work independently is another way pedagogical content knowledge was used. For example Teacher 6 said, "Able to have students analyze readings, looking for more in depth details, inferring, character feelings, etc." And Teacher 7 said, "With our type of students, it is very important to increase their background knowledge. I find different ways to increase that knowledge before and during their reading. I have used short videos, other stories or stories from my own life. After reading, I usually have students do some sort of follow up activity to extend their learning." While Teacher 9 added, "I've used this knowledge to determine what my students need. What I need to teach. For example, if students have trouble with new words, I might do extra phonics lessons. If students drop the "s" at the end of a word, I will conduct a short lesson on this skill."

On the other hand, feeling unsatisfied with district training, Teacher 8 expressed that she gained her knowledge by reading about current educational reforms and then applying it to her teaching methods, "I often use professional books to expand my knowledge of current research trends and how that translates into classroom applications."

Follow-up Question 1: *How have these examples helped you use pedagogical content knowledge in a more effective way?*

In terms of using pedagogical content more effectively, all of the teachers expressed that they want their knowledge to help meet students' reading needs. For example Teacher 1 said, "I hope that by sharing my knowledge and background with the kids, it will help get them excited about reading. I don't want them to feel like it is a boring task. It should be fun and exciting for them." Teacher 5 added, "I am able to provide the support my students need to be successful." While Teacher 6 said, "To help students to better understand reading / passages. To read for understanding, not list reading."

Interview Question 8 was: *Classroom teachers use a variety of instructional materials, skills and strategies to improve reading achievement for their students. What specific skills, strategies and materials do you believe have improved reading performance for students?*

Unsatisfied with only the reading program materials, Teacher 1 bought extra materials that would benefit her students, "I have purchased materials about guided reading to do more research of my own. I use different materials for different leveled

groups. I have to do more phonics work with my lower groups. With my higher groups, I am able to use more of the Journeys supplemental materials and guided reading books to focus on strategies for that week."

The use of books for literature circles is another way teachers have used instructional materials. For example, Teacher 6 said, "I have had a great deal of success later in the year with literature circles. The students enjoy being able to choose their books to read and having a discussion with their peers. I also have seen a lot of success with the implementation of technology in reading." And Teacher 8 added, "A wide variety of just-right books for teaching and independent reading. I believe strong routines in the classroom lead to improved learning."

Utilizing materials during small groups and independent literacy station has been a focus for Teacher 7, "Having the knowledge to implement small group instruction with stations has been my success with guided reading. It is not an easy task to teach the students to work efficiently while I am with a small group. Since I began teaching, I have been working on finding the most effective way to provide guided reading instruction." Follow-up Question 8 was: *What are other skills, strategies, and materials you would like to share?*

Digital books have been a resource many teachers have used to provide additional literacy support for their students and to compensate for the lack of books in their classroom. Teacher 6 stated, "This allows students more access to books and often provides them with instant feedback (RAZ Kids)." Also Teacher 7 said, "Having a

curriculum with all of the resources that Journeys contains has been great, as well. Resources are key when implementing any component of teaching."

Interview Question 9 was: *What pre-service preparation, training, or professional development helped to prepare you for planning guided reading lessons for readers?*

District training has been the main source of staying updated with educational changes for many teachers such as Teacher 7, "Professional development sessions I have been involved in are: How to complete a running record, STAR, and Journeys. Other sessions that were helpful were several different technology sessions that provided training on station work for students."

Despite the consistent training given by the district, many teachers felt that the quality of training should be better, like Teacher 6 expressed "District professional development is often lacking in quality. I have had district training on running records and Journeys implementation. I have had no real training on guided reading," they still had some understanding of the guided reading framework. Teacher 9 also agreed, "District professional development is often lacking in quality. I have had district training on running records and Journeys implementation. I have had no real training on guided reading."

Many of the teachers who were not satisfied with the district's training sought additional help such as observing other teachers, reading professional books, or doing their Master's in Reading. Teacher 1 mentioned how learning from colleagues had helped her understand the selection of strategies and skills she could use when teaching reading, "I have gone to some professional development to learn more about how I can be

effective teaching guided reading. I also try to observe other teachers during our learning walks. I try to be as prepared as possible."

Other teachers have felt the need to pursue their graduate school in Reading, like Teacher 5 indicated "Masters in Reading program I completed."

Follow-up Question 9 was: *Please tell me more about the: preservice preparation, training, or professional development?*

The belief in lack of training, many teachers have learned to identify good teachers and observe them, or take it upon them to do their own research and apply what they learn. Like Teacher 6 said, "The trainings have not been so helpful. Most of the learning has come from my own self reading, research or colleagues." And Teacher 9 stated, "The trainings have not been so helpful. Most of the learning has come from my own self reading, research or colleagues."

Those teachers that though that training was good believed that they have more knowledge to use to help their students, For example Teacher 7 said, "The sessions were informative and helpful." Agreeing was Teacher 1 said, "Knowing my students and using the data that I have collected is extremely helpful." Teacher 5 added, "It gave me an opportunity to think in a more in depth way about literacy instruction and meeting their needs."

Interview Question 10 was: *What else could you say about addressing the needs of students in reading that I did not ask that you would like to talk about?*

Reading at home is a factor that many teachers believe should be addressed by parents for example Teacher 2 said, "students don't practice reading at home, many have never been

read to. How can we get books into the kids hands earlier, get parents to read to kids, how do we get kids to love reading?" Also, Teacher 3 added, "Reading is the foundation of learning for all students. They must learn the fundamentals of this in order to be successful life-long learners."

Follow-up Question 10 was: *What else on the topic of guided reading pedagogical content knowledge or student data that you would like to share today, before we end this interview?*

Another detail that Teacher 2 wanted to share about guided reading pedagogical content knowledge was, "A teacher must know all the components to reading. Teachers must like reading and know reading, before they can teach reading."

Based on participants' responses I was able to identify four indicators affecting teachers' use of guided reading pedagogical content knowledge when planning a guided reading lesson, which were; (a) professional development, (b) knowledge, (c), instructional materials and (d) student needs. Next, these indicators became the sub-themes to which I provided detailed descriptions captured from the participants' view. Based on teachers' responses, I discovered that the sub-themes were indicators teachers perceived to be valuable when planning a guided reading lesson. The context of the specific responses for each theme was discussed below.

Professional development. Teachers in XYZ Elementary School received professional development that had been already embedded in the school year calendar. Based on the data, all participants stated that they received training from the district on guided reading, running records, Journey's, and student data. Teacher 2, 5, 8, 9, and 10

felt that the district training in guided reading lacked in quality so they sought additional help such as observing other teachers, reading professional books, or doing their Master's in Reading. Teacher 6 mentioned that having more guidance/ professional development pertaining to guided reading would be extremely helpful to him. He also mentioned that he went to a professional development over the summer for analyzing running records, and he concluded that it was ok, but didn't feel like it went into depth enough about the analyzing aspects. Teacher 3 and 7 felt that talking to colleagues about guided reading and student data had given them a better understanding about ideas and strategies. Teacher 1 mentioned that training on how to use student data had helped her with knowing her students' needs, but that more training was needed. This reflected the importance of how professional development could be used to support the teachers deeper understanding of the components of guided reading, and how to write effective guided reading lesson plans.

Knowledge. Based on the data, all participants stated that activating students' background knowledge prior to the reading of the book was needed in order to help students comprehend when reading the book. Teacher 4, 6, 7, and 8 mentioned that the knowledge they possess on how to plan guided reading lessons had been through district professional training or by observing other teachers. Teacher 1, 5, 9, and 10 stated that they depend on their knowledge gained from experience to help form groups or change them if needed. Teacher 3 mentioned that using her experience over the years with guided reading has helped her figure out what works with students and target her students' needs. The concern was whether or not students actually possessed the

background knowledge necessary to be successful with a book and without background knowledge teachers were left to share their own knowledge changing their lesson from being student driven to teacher driven. It was important to understand that a teacher's knowledge was necessary to follow with fidelity the components of a guided reading lesson.

Instructional materials. Nearly, all participants stated that a guided reading lesson had been successful when they had the resources they needed to meet the needs of their students and felt confident with their own teaching knowledge to help the student. Teacher 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 10 believed that having the "just right" books can help students make real life connections or connections to other books enhancing comprehension. Teacher 5 mentioned that having sticky-notes available was very helpful to students to keep track of their thinking as they read. Teacher 2 stated that having students work with "Readers Theatre" and "Literature Circles" gave them the opportunity to peer discuss more books. Teacher 3 mentioned that not only are books necessary for success but that students had a lot of success with the implementation of technology in reading. Teacher 9 explained that she used Raz-Kids with her students as a station. This digital reading program allowed students more access to on level books and often provides them with instant feedback on their comprehension. It is important to understand that having the necessary materials to plan a guided reading lesson affected the efficiency of the lesson.

Student needs. Participants stated that a teacher must be ready to help students with vocabulary words, background knowledge, phonics, making connections, close reading and decoding by providing scaffolds. Teacher 10 stated that knowing how to help

students with their reading struggle for example a student that can decode very well but cannot comprehend, was an area that needed to be addressed by the district. Teachers 2, 5, and 6 also shared that to meet student needs they must have the resources such as having books available on different topics and levels, digital books, and online reading programs for students to use when they are not in small groups. All of the teachers stated that students should have access to books and reading all the time, even at home. Teacher 1 and 3 stated that stressing the importance of reading to parents was also important. One concern was not having enough professional development for students that are entering school already behind. Some other concerns that some of the teachers had that they felt could hinder meeting student needs was having a large class size and going at a fast pace with the curriculum. Teacher 4, 7,8, and 9 felt that a slower pace was needed with the Journeys reading program. It was important to understand the needs of students to plan effective guided reading lesson plans.

Theme 2: Decision Making on Planning a Guided Reading Lesson

Theme 2 addressed the second research question of: "What are elementary teachers' beliefs on the use of student data knowledge when planning a guided reading lesson? The following questions were included in the interview protocol and follow-up interview to support the findings for the second research question. The following responses that led me to the major theme are also included:

Interview Question 2 was: *Please share examples of the ways you have used student data in lessons to help your students?*

Flexible grouping, selection of text, and adjustment of instruction are ways teachers have used student data. For example, Teacher 1 said, “I use student data to guide all of my instruction. I determine groups using data as well as create assignments based on reading levels and other data. I keep records of reading levels, comprehension growth, and vocabulary. I also use data to adjust groups that may not be working. There are students that may have a lower reading level than most in the group, but performs on their level in other ways, so I adjust accordingly. I feel like looking at data is an everyday thing. I use it constantly to adjust to the needs of my students.” Also, Teacher 5 stated, “I use data daily in guided reading. Examples of the data that I use during guided reading are running records, teacher observations, and weekly reading skills assessments. After completing a running record, I use that data to move students in and out of reading groups, plan what that student needs in guided reading and design station activities.”

Determining a student’s reading level to place in the proper reading group has been the focus of some teachers. For example, Teacher 2 said, “I’ve used running records/ comprehension to create guided reading groups.” And Teacher 4 said, “Grouping my students based on data. Reteaching / enriching when I can.” Teacher 8 added, “Student data guides the groups I make for students, the way I approach what to teach next, and student success.” Also Teacher 9 said, “I use student data to group students based on what they know or are still struggling with. I might use data to reteach a skill a student/s didn't understand while the rest of class did.”

Teacher 6 claimed that looking at data from running records, and comprehension assessments ensures they were meeting student needs. Teacher 6 said, "I utilize data on a daily basis to guide my teaching. I feel that it is imperative to each individual student's success for me to examine data on assessments (formative/summative) to drive my instruction. For example, after conducting a running record on my students I look for areas they struggled with and then utilize that data to drive my guided reading instruction. Furthermore, I will utilize that data to plan station activities for my students to complete independently."

Follow-up Question 2 was: *How has these examples helped you use student data in a more effective way?*

Running records and comprehension assessments have helped pinpoint areas where students' had growth and areas that still need to improve and based on that following a continuity with the students, for example Teacher 1 said, "They help me see who will work best together and it also helps the students grow instead of struggling with material they are not ready for or material that is too easy. It also helps me see growth and identify readers that are not progressing. I can then try different strategies and interventions. In agreement, Teacher 6 said, "Utilizing student data gives me my purpose for teaching. It allows me to provide individualized instruction for my students." Teacher 8 stated, "Based on student data the teacher can successfully determine where to go next when teaching a student or group of students. Teacher 9 said, "I can identify student needs quicker and gather more accurate data.

IQ7: *What do you think would help you better meet the needs of your readers?*

Professional training was a main factor that some teachers believe needs to improve for example Teacher 1 said, “I believe having more guidance/professional development pertaining to guided reading would be extremely helpful to me. I went to a professional development over the summer for analyzing running records. It was great and I learned a lot, but I don’t feel like it went into depth enough about the analyzing aspect.”

Other teachers like Teacher 3, 4, and 5 indicated that they would prefer the necessary materials to meet students from all levels. Teacher 3 said, “I believe that a better selection in my text in our reading program would be beneficial.” And, Teacher 4 said, “More books that they are interested in reading.” Teacher 5 added, “It is important to have the proper tools ad materials for providing guided reading instruction and stations that occur during guided reading.”

Follow-up Question 7 was: *How would you like to receive that support to become more aware of your students needs?*

Receiving the necessary materials to plan and provide effective guided reading lessons was what some teachers expressed was needed to support their students, for example Teacher 5 said, “It is important to have the proper tools ad materials for providing guided reading instruction and stations that occur during guided reading.”

Other teachers expressed the need to have a slower pace in their instructional calendar, like Teacher 4 said, “Also, slow the pace of Journeys down.” And Teacher 9 said, “A training about how to deal with pacing issues.”

Based on participants’ responses I was able to identify three ways teachers

decided to use student data. They include (a) grouping students, (b) more books, and (c) adjusting instruction. Those experiences were about how teachers decided to use student data when planning a guided reading lesson. The context of the specific responses for each sub-theme is discussed below.

Grouping students. All of the teachers stated that they have used student data to determine groups. Teacher 1, 4, 5, 9, and 10 mentioned that the grouping of students depends on their reading level and of their running records data. Teacher 7 stated that she's used running records and comprehension to create guided reading groups, while another stated that comprehension test scores enabled her to regroup students or change her mini guided reading lesson to help students with details in reading. Teacher 2 mentioned that comprehension data from assessments is what helps create realistic groups. Other forms of data used such as anecdotal notes and observing reading behaviors were used to monitor reading progress. Teacher 6 stated that looking at data was an every day thing. The data collected had allowed her to form flexible groups. It was important to group students according to the data to help students process texts efficiently.

More books. Teacher 2, 3, 7, and 9 felt that having a vast amount of books was necessary to support students with background knowledge, motivation, interest, and most importantly be able to meet with groups that were on different reading levels. All of the teachers mentioned that most of their students were ELL (English Language Learners) students that had come from a different country and do not possess the knowledge that most kids have growing up in the States, so she would like to have books that her

students can be successful comprehending while learning English. Teacher 1, 10 and 4 mentioned that picking a book for a guided reading group would depend if the book lends itself for the strategy they were working with that particular group. Teacher 6 mentioned that having a better selection of texts in their reading program Journey's would be beneficial to the students. It was important to have a wide variety of texts to increase students' knowledge of topics, vocabulary words, and comprehend books from different genres.

Adjusting instruction. All of the teachers stated that all of the data they collect from comprehension assessments, running records, observations, and anecdotal notes drives their instruction. Teacher 9 mentioned that the data she collected determines her groups and the assignments she creates for those groups. She also mentioned that she adjusts her groups when the data indicated that the group was no longer working. Data were being collected during guided reading with running records, observations, or weekly assessments, which was then used to move students in and out of reading groups, plan what the students needs in guided reading and design station activities. Teacher 7 mentioned that the collected data gave her information on what the student knows or if they are still struggling with something, or if she needs to reteach a skill. Teacher 2 stated that utilizing student data gave him purpose for teaching, and that it allowed him to provide individualized instruction for his students. It was important to use data to adjust instruction to meet the needs of the students to execute an effective guided reading lesson.

Theme 3: Beliefs on How To Plan A Guided Reading Lesson

Theme 3 addressed the third research question of: "How are elementary teachers' beliefs reflected in a guided reading lesson? The following questions were included in the interview protocol and follow-up interview to support the findings for the third research question:

Interview Question 3 was: *What are some characteristics that you believe should or not be included in a guided reading lesson?*

Vocabulary, reading strategies, scaffolds, comprehension, and independent work are key components that many teachers like Teacher 1, 4, 5, and 9 believe should always be a part of a guided reading lesson. Teacher 1 said, "I think guided reading should help develop reading strategies for good readers. They can work on comprehension (which is a constant struggle), story structure, etc… For very low readers, I think phonics also has to play a part." Teacher 4 stated, "Vocabulary, reading strategies and comprehension need to be included. There should also be independent work." And Teacher 5 said, "I use all things in small guided reading groups – main idea, characters, inferring, vocab, antonym/ synonyms, figurative language." Agreeing as well Teacher 9 added, "Running record, introduction/ orientation book, on the spot teaching while listening to reading, vocabulary discussions, comprehension checks, follow-up assignments, such as writing, response to reading, etc."

Other teachers believe in the importance of independent reading for those students' who are not involved in small group during guided reading, for example Teacher 6 said, "I believe that independent reading is an important part of guided reading.

While students are reading to themselves, I am listening to other students in the group read. I also give students opportunity to complete follow up activities to extend their learning." And Teacher 8 said, "Independent reading should always be a component for guided reading so that I have an opportunity to listen to the students read. I use guided reading time to reteach the strategy that was taught during the whole group core instruction lesson."

Follow-up Question 3 was: *How has including or excluding guided reading components helped you use lesson plans more effectively?*

The inclusion of reading strategies in guided reading lesson plans was the belief of many teachers in meeting the reading needs of their students. Teacher 2 said, "Guided reading components have helped me create flexible grouping." Teacher 5 stated, "Including reading components will help all students." And Teacher 6 said, "The examples allow me to meet my students needs and provide more individualized instruction." Teacher 8 added, "Using my experience over the years with my guided reading instruction, I have been able to figure out what works best with students. Guided reading has helped me to target my students' needs."

Interview Question 5 was: *What situations have led you to deviate from your lesson plan?*

Noticing the lost expression in students during the lesson has caused Teacher 1, 2, and 10 to deviate from the first teaching approach and try another. For example Teacher 1 said, "There have been times when the students just weren't getting what I was teaching. I've had to completely stop and take a few steps back. I would reteach a previously taught skill that they may not have grasped or just go back to drilling the skill we are

working on. If a student doesn't understand something, I have to rethink the way I am teaching it. I may have to slow my lessons down for the group and focus on the needs of my students." Teacher 2 said, "If students are not understanding story/ skills taught, I have chosen other stories and used those stories to teach a particular skill." Teacher 6 stated, "When students lack the background knowledge, I have to stop and provide that for them so they can be successful with the story." Teacher 10 added, "Student need, when the needs of the students don't match what I have planned or when they don't understand, I will change my plan."

The lack of interest has been another reason why some teachers deviate from the lesson. Like Teacher 7 said, "Situations often arise that require me to deviate from my lesson plan—it could be anything from a school event that requires me to alter my schedule to a group of students not responding to my lesson. It is important, as a teacher, to monitor student engagement while teaching. If my students are not engaged, they are not learning." And Teacher 8 said, "I like to use opportune moments to teach, when the students are going in a different direction that I planned I usually try to adjust lesson flow to keep students engaged."

Follow-up Question 5 was: *How has deviating from your lesson plan been positive or negative teachable moment? Explain.*

In relation to deviating from a lesson plan, all of the teachers had found deviating from their lesson to be positive, but only if it was necessary to help the student, like Teacher 1 stated, "To me it is always positive because it means I am paying attention to the needs of my students. I never want to just keep teaching something or move on if

they are totally lost. Nothing can be gained from that." Teacher 6 said, "I believe teachers need to be flexible and do what is best for kids. When I deviate from my lesson plan it is to give my students something that they need!" Teacher 7 said, " Deviating from my lesson plans has taught me to be flexible and better at improvising. My lesson plans provide me with my framework for teaching, but the daily happenings determine how the teaching occurs." And Teacher 10 added, "I believe deviating, for the most part is a positive teachable moment because I can relate what I am teaching to the students' knowledge."

Based on participants' responses I was able to identify three indicators providing insight to which reading components were being used by teachers. They include: (a) reading strategies, (b) student needs, and (c) student engagement. The context of the specific responses for each sub-theme is discussed below.

Reading strategies. All of the participants stated that reading strategies should be included in every guided reading lesson as well as comprehension. Teacher 2, 4, 5, 7 and 10 believe that vocabulary, reading strategies, scaffolds, comprehension, and independent work are key components for creating flexible grouping and spending time with students efficiently. Teacher 3 stated that she uses main idea, characters, inferring, vocabulary, antonyms, synonyms, and figurative language with her guided reading groups. Teacher 9 believed that independent reading was an important part of guided reading. While students were reading to themselves, she was listening to other students in the group read. She also gave students the opportunity to complete follow-up activities to extend their learning. Including all of these components had allowed her to individualized instruction.

Teacher 8 believed that each guided reading lesson should include instruction before, during, and after reading, while taking notes and identifying the strengths and weakness of each student. Teacher 1 mentioned that while doing guided reading, she also does running records, introduction / orientation book, on the spot while listening to reading, vocabulary discussions, comprehension checks, follow-up assignments (writing responses to reading. It was important to use reading strategies that fit the needs of the students according to the data collected.

Student needs. Teacher 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 9 stated that following a guided reading lesson had helped them to identify students' needs quicker and gather more accurate data. Teacher 10 felt that it was imperative to each individual students' success for her to examine data on assessments such as formative and summative, to drive instruction. For example, after conducting a running record on her students, she looked for areas they struggled with and then utilize that data to drive instruction. Furthermore, she used that data to plan station activities for her students to complete independently. Teacher 1 stated that when the needs of the students do not match what he had planned or when they do not understand, he changes his plan. Teacher 8 stated that there had been times when the students just weren't getting what she was teaching, so would stop the lesson and take a few steps back. She would reteach a previously taught skill that they might not had grasped or just go back to drilling the skill they were working on. If a student did not understand something, she had to rethink the way she was teaching it, by slowing down the lesson and focusing on the needs of the students. Teacher 3 mentioned if students did not understand the story or skills taught, then she chose other stories to teach that

particular skill. It was important to use data collected from students to implements their reading needs in the guided reading lesson plan.

Student engagement. All of the participants indicated having concerns to whether their students were engaged enough during their lesson. Teacher 5 stated it was important, as a teacher, to monitor student engagement while teaching. If they were not engaged then they were not learning. Teacher 9 stated that many times as educators we are unsure of how students' behaviors might affect their lesson. Teacher 2, 6, and 9 mentioned that they do not like to keep teaching something if their students were not paying attention or if they were completely lost. It was important to have students engaged in the lesson because it was an indication that needs were being met when they are paying attention to the lesson.

Theme 4: Awareness When Planning a Guided Reading Lesson

Theme 4 addressed the fourth research question of: "How do teachers use lesson plans to guide them in effective instruction? The following questions were included in the interview protocol and follow-up interview to support the findings for the third research question. The following responses that led me to the major theme are also included: Interview Question 4 was: *How have you used lesson plans to guide your instruction?*

Many teachers believe that using lesson plans has helped them stay on track and organized. Teacher 1 said, "I create lesson plans to keep my day organized and I refer to them very little. They help me stay on task and complete things that I really want to complete for the day. I do not add too many details to them because I use my teaching guides for that." Teacher 5 stated, "Lesson plans keep me on track as to what I have

taught, what needs to be taught, what needs to retaught." Teacher 6 said, "Lesson plans allow me to have a goal in mind with what I want my students to learn." And Teacher 7 added, "My lesson plans give me the framework for my daily teaching.

Other than staying on track and organized, some teachers believe that lesson plans has helped them reflect on their teaching, like Teacher 8 said, "Lesson plans help me to review previous lessons taught and plan for important points to touch during current lessons." And Teacher 3 said, "My lesson plans has allowed me to reflect on my planning and as well as my teaching." Also Teacher 4 stated, "Choosing how much support each group will get before reading the story and what strategy we will be working on."

Follow-up Question 4 was: *Please tell me about a time that you believe that your instruction was effective due to your planning?*

Having a lesson well prepared beforehand was the belief of Teacher 1, 6, and 7 to be an effective lesson. Teacher 1 said, "Planning and having tasks and materials ready for the day makes everything run much more smoothly. I would always rather over plan than not have enough thought out for the day." Teacher 6 stated, "Before I start a guided reading book I always read the story. I look for areas that my students are going to struggle like content and vocabulary. For example, last year we read a story about the Titanic. The students had never heard of the Titanic. I had to provide a lot of background information before reading and a lot of support while reading. Since I had planned this book, I was able to help my students read and understand effectively." And Teacher 7 added, "My daily instruction is effective due to my planning. Proper planning prevents poor performance."

Interview Question 6 was: *What difficulties or obstacles do you face when providing guided reading instruction to readers?*

Locating texts out of grade range has been an obstacle for many teachers like Teacher 1 and 2. Teacher 1 stated, "It's very difficult sometimes finding the materials you need for almost an entire class that is a grade or even two grades below reading level. It also is difficult teaching second grade material when they are just not on a second grade reading level yet. They struggle with all of the stories each week and feel down about not being able to read them." Teacher 2 said, "I have too many different reading levels. I don't get to work with the guided reading groups as often as I would like."

Other teachers believed that it is more difficult to teach when students are not aware of any reading strategies. For example, Teacher 3 said, "I often find vocabulary is complex during guided reading." Teacher 5 added, "Staying focused with the work the group I'm instructing when the rest of the class is not staying on task." Teacher 7 said, "Some of the difficulties during guided reading are students who lack background information, decoding skills and who struggle with comprehension. Time and small guided reading groups!"

Disruptions and student behavior are non-controlling situations that are challenging for teachers when trying to teach. For example, Teacher 8 said, "Disruptions in classroom environment such as behavior issues, incoming phone calls, students needed support."

Follow-up Question 6 was: *What do you believe you need in order to overcome your difficulties or obstacles? What are other support or obstacles you would like to share?*

Many of the teachers had different ideas to what could be a possible solution to their obstacles, like Teacher 1 said, "I would like more guidance on how to help them in a more effective way. Many of our parents do not speak English, which makes it impossible to help their children read at home. They come to us on a kindergarten/first grade reading level, and are doing very little at home. Even some of my English-speaking parents work full-time and may not be home in the evening to check their child's book bag. It is a constant struggle to get the students to do work outside of school." Teacher 2 said, "Less students." And Teacher 7 said, "In order to overcome those obstacles, I need more time with my students. It is very hard sometimes to get a quality lesson in 15 minutes."

Based on participants' responses I was able to identify three ways teachers used their lesson plans to guide their instruction. The sub-themes are: (a) on task, (b) barriers, and (c) time. The context of the specific responses for each sub-theme is discussed below.

On task. All of the participants stated that using lesson plans helped them to keep track of what they, as teachers needed to do. Teacher 1 and 6 stated that lesson plans kept their day organized and stayed on task. Teacher 4 stated that lesson plans had allowed her to reflect on her planning and as well as her teaching. Like what she had taught, what needed to be taught, or what needed to be retaught. Teacher 5 stated that lesson plans gave him the framework for the daily teaching. His daily instruction was effective due to planning. Proper planning prevented poor performance. Teacher 3 stated that her lesson plan determined how much support each group was getting before reading the story and what strategy they used. Teacher 2 and 10 stated that using lesson plans helped them

prepare ahead of time with materials and questions so that their day went smoothly. Teacher 7 and 9 stated that lesson plans helped them know what to teach that day. They rather over plan then not have enough thought out for the day. It was important to stay on task because it allows teachers to track student progress and reflect on their own teaching.

Barriers. All of the teachers stated that they had face some type of barrier that interfered with their guided reading lesson. Teacher 1 stated that finding materials needed for an entire class that was a grade or even two grades below reading level was very difficult. Students struggled with stories when they can't read that book level. One of the other struggles teachers face was when students that were suppose to be doing station work start distracting other students. Teacher 4 stated that it was hard staying focused with her small group when the rest of the class was not staying on task. Teacher 3 mentioned that one of the obstacles she faced was not being able to communicate with the parents due to language barrier. She felt that it was very important to have parents involved with students' reading. All of the teachers shared the same concern of class size. Teacher 8 stated smaller class size was needed so when working with 6 students you do not have 22 other students on their own. Teacher 5 mentioned that smaller class size might also lead to a much smaller guided reading group. The other concern that teacher 2, 7, and10 shared was the disruptions in classroom environment such as incoming phone calls, behavior issues, and when students needed support with independent work. It was important to understand that barriers in the class can affect student performance.

Time. Time was a factor that all teachers stated they needed. Teacher 2 stated in

order to overcome obstacles he needed time with his students. He also said that it was hard to get a quality lesson in 15 minutes. Teacher 7 also stated that she needed more time with her students to learn their strengths and weaknesses. So she then can plan for their individualized instruction in a more effective way. In agreement, Teacher 10 expressed that time was always something there was never enough of. She also mentioned that more time was always needed especially when students were struggling with a concept and could not because of the pacing calendar. Teachers 3, 4, and 9 stated that it would be great if they can slow down their pacing guide. Time was important because it was an obstacle that all of the teachers felt hindered their guided reading lesson and students' reading performance.

Results for Lesson Plans

Guided reading lesson plan level D, I, J, M, O, P, R, and S provided insight to what teachers indicated in their interview versus what was found in archived lesson plans. The headers for the guided reading components were: selection of text, introduction to the text, reading the text, discussion of the text, teaching points, word work, and extending understanding.

Selection of the text. All of the guided reading lesson plans that were sent by the teachers indicated the lesson it went with, instructional level, the genre, and a brief summary of the text. This benefited many of the teachers because the lesson plan already indicated the genre, level, and the summary. The only concern with this lesson was that not all of the students were at the guided reading level the curriculum offered and teachers were expected to use the guided reading plans and texts that went with the

weekly lesson and theme. Table 4 provides a summary of guided reading component: selection of text in different levels.

Table 4

Summary of Selection of Text

Level	Genre	Summary
D	Fiction	The children help Mr. Horse pass out and collect materials in their classroom. Finally, the Little Elephant helps them all have fun by turning his trunk into a slide.
I	Informational	The author describes various musical instrumentals, tells how they are played, and invites the reader to play them. She ends by encouraging readers to spend time making music – perhaps with friends.
J	Informational	This selection discusses birthday customs around the world: special birthday foods in China, India, Ghana; the German origins of cakes with candles; birthday parties in general; and special birthdays, such as the ones for 15-year-old Mexican girls. The selection ends with a map highlighting the various countries mentioned.
M	Realistic Fiction	Ella visits a farm and enjoys caring for Toffee, a pony. At home, she misses Toffee and asks for a pony. Mom and Dad say she can choose a pet that will fit their apartment. At the pet store, Ella considers many animals. Her first choice, a puppy, would take too much space. Finally Ella chooses a yellow canary and names him Sunny.
O	Humorous Fiction	To commemorate the school cook's retirement, fifth grade classes compete to develop a tasty dish. The cook combines all the dishes entered in the contest to create one winner.
P	Play	Caroline visits the Animal Shelter every Saturday and wants to adopt Jinks, an injured dog. Hearing that the shelter will close for lack of funds, Caroline and her friends organize a fair to raise money. Caroline bakes and sells cookies, which are a great success as doggie treats.

(table continues)

Level	Genre	Summary
R	Realistic Fiction	Some students in Ms. Price's class, especially Tracey, are wary when they become pen pals with sight-impaired students. A shared field trip to the zoo, where one of the sight-impaired students prevents an accident, helps them learn that sight-impaired individuals are not so different after all.
S	Biography	This biography covers the life and career of Thurgood Marshall, from his boyhood to retirement. He became the first African-American judge on the Supreme Court, realizing his dream of equal rights for all Americans.

Introduction of Text. Many of the teachers mentioned the importance of activating students' background knowledge. In all of the lesson plans there was a component called "Introducing the Text and Build Background." These both components guided teachers on what to say during the instruction of text by indicating page numbers and the questions that should be said. Once introducing the text was over, the Introducing the Text component end with comprehension questions students are given to think about as they are reading the text. Introduce the Texts guides the teacher through the text to support students' comprehension. All lesson plans follow the same pattern of detail for the teacher to follow. Table 5 provides a summary of guided reading component: introducing the text in different levels.

Table 5

Summary of Introducing the Text

Level	Introducing the Text
D	Guide children through the text, noting important ideas, and helping with unfamiliar language and vocabulary. Explain important text features such as words that are spoken by the story characters. Point out the repetition of sentences and phrases. Here are some suggestions: Page 2: Explain that in this story the animals help their teacher, Mr. Horse, do certain jobs in the classroom. In this book the characters are animals who talk and act just like people. Suggested language: Turn to page 2. Here is Mr. Horse behind his desk. What is he holding? Mr. Horse says: "You can all help me." Now say Horse. What letter would you expect to see first in Horse? You can see that Horse begins with uppercase H because it is a name. Put your finger under Horse and say it. Point out that the word Mr. is an abbreviation for Mister. Page 3: Remind children to use the information in the pictures to help them read. Turn to page 3. Mr. Horse says: "You can help. You can pass out the books." How do you think the monkey feels about helping Mr. Horse? Page 6: Who is in the picture on this page? Mr. Horse says to the kangaroo: " You can pick up the crayons." What is the kangaroo doing? Why do you think it is important to pick up the crayons? Page 8: Turn to page 8. Little Elephant says: "I like to help." Because it is his name, Elephant begins with the uppercase letter E. Find the word Elephant. What do you think Little Elephant will do to help? Do you think it is funny that he is called Little Elephant? Why? Now turn back to the beginning and read to find out what the different animals do to help Mr. Horse.
I	Guide children through the text, noting important ideas, and helping with unfamiliar language and vocabulary so they can read the text successfully. Here are some suggestions: Page 2: Explain that the pictures in the book have labels to name the instruments. Suggested language: What instrument is the boy in the picture playing? The label says: A clarinet. How is the boy playing the clarinet? Page 3: Point to the photo and ask: What is this instrument? Is it played like the clarinet? How can you tell? Pages 4–5: Read the names of these instruments. How do these instruments look alike? How are they different? Page 7: Point out that the piano has both keys and strings. Have you ever heard someone play the piano? Depending on how hard a musician presses down on the keys, the sound can be quite different! Page 10: Look at this picture. These children spend a lot of time practicing these instruments so they can play them well. Would you like to spend time learning how to play an instrument? Why or why not? Now turn back to the beginning of the book and read to find out how to play some musical instruments.

(table continues)

Level	Introducing the Text
J	Guide children through the text, noting important ideas, and helping with unfamiliar language and vocabulary so they can read the text successfully. Here are some suggestions: Pages 2-3: Explain that this book tells how birthdays are celebrated in different places around the world. Suggested language: The heading says: Happy Birthday. Which person is celebrating a birthday? What can you tell from the picture about how she feels? Pages 4-5: Use the pictures to identify the foods for children. This heading says: Birthday Food. People in different countries eat different foods on their birthdays. Which of these foods have you eaten? Which would you like to try? Page 6: Point out the singing in the photo on page 6. What is happening at this party? Why might a piano be helpful right now? Pages 8-9: Draw attention to the photo. Look at the girl wearing the long white dress. Why do you think she is wearing a crown on her head? Page 10: This map shows countries you will read about in this book. Let's point to each one on the map: India, China, United States, Mexico, Ghana, and Germany. Now turn back to the beginning of the book and read to find out how birthdays are celebrated in many countries around the world.
M	Guide children through the text, noting important ideas, and helping with unfamiliar language and vocabulary so they can read the text successfully. Here are some suggestions: Page 3: Explain that this is a story about a girl named Ella. She visits her cousin's farm and falls in love with a pony. Suggested language: Turn to page 3. Let's read the first two sentences: Ella spent her vacation on the farm where her cousin Grace lived. Grace had a pony called Toffee. Toffee is a kind of chewy candy. What color is toffee? If you're not sure, just look at the pony! Page 5: Direct children to look at the picture. Where is Ella now? She is at home with her parents. Ella's dad says: "We can't keep a pony in our apartment." Why would it be more difficult to have a pony in an apartment than a house? Page 9: Point out the illustration. Where do you think Ella is now? Read the last sentence: Ella stood and looked at kittens, frogs, turtles, birds, goldfish, rabbits, and even mice with curly tails! How many of those pets can you see in the picture? Now turn back to the beginning of the story and read to find out how Ella finds the perfect pet.
O	Guide students through the text, noting important ideas, and helping with unfamiliar language and vocabulary so they can read the text successfully. Here are some suggestions: Page 2: Explain that this is a story about three classes who compete to create a dish that will honor the school's cook, Mrs. Hill. Suggested language: Look at page 2 of this book. Read these sentences: Each fifth-grade class would make a tasty dish. Mrs. Hill would sample each one and choose a winner. Since this story is humorous, what can you expect to happen during the cooking competition? Page 5: Have students look at the illustration. Explain that Amy struggled to hold her temper after Alexi mistook zucchini for ziti. Ask: Why do you think it was a struggle for Amy to control her temper? Have students find the word substitutes in the last paragraph. Ask: What do you think it means to make a substitution when cooking? Page 6: Have students look at the illustration and read the caption, which says Rob, Chima, and Diego make macaroni and cheese. Suggested Language: The text says Mr. Trueblood's class was busy making a specialty worthy of their favorite cook. What is the specialty this class is making? One of Mr. Trueblood's students, Diego, tells another, Chima not to add more cheese or she'll bury the macaroni. How would cheese bury the macaroni? Now go back to the beginning and read to find out what happens when the classes compete to honor Mrs. Hill.

(table continues)

Level	Introducing the Text
P	Guide students through the text, noting important ideas, and helping with unfamiliar language and vocabulary so they can read the text successfully. Here are some suggestions: Page 3: Explain that this page shows the play's cast of eight characters. Ask students why the cast is always listed at the beginning of a play. Pages 4–5: Explain that in this story, a class of students is going to be pen pals with another class that happens to be sight-impaired. Have students read the stage direction, (Deflated), that comes before Tracey's dialogue on page 4. Suggested language: The stage directions give information about how the character's feel or speak their lines. Ask: How would an actor reading Tracey's part show that Tracey is deflated? On page 5, Ms. Price, the teacher, says all of the sight-impaired students are proficient in Braille. Ask: What does it mean to be proficient in Braille? Page 7: The stage direction on page 7 says the batter, Ian, misjudges a pitch. Ask: What usually happens if you misjudge a pitch? Page 9: One of the students, Ian, wonders aloud to his sight-impaired friend Syd if there is a way he can convince his classmates that sight-impaired people aren't really that different. Read students the last line on page 9. Ask: What does Syd mean by saying Ian has an enterprising mind? Now turn back to the beginning of the story to learn how about these students learned to be friends.
R	Guide students through the text, noting important ideas, and helping with unfamiliar language and vocabulary so they can read the text successfully. Here are some suggestions: Page 2: Explain that this is a story about a girl named Caroline. She loves animals and she visits the animals at the local animal shelter every week. Suggested language: Turn to page 2. Here is a picture of Caroline holding a puppy at the animal shelter. What do you see on the puppy's leg? Pages 4-5: Caroline has just heard that the animal shelter might have to close. Read what she says in the last paragraph on page 4: "But the shelter can't close. What will happen to all of the animals there?" What do you think might happen next? What do you think Caroline and her mom can do? Page 7: Ask students to read the sentence with the highlighted word publicity. Why might Caroline and her friend Maria want to get people in the public interested in the fair? Do you think publicity will help? Page 12: The two highlighted words on this page describe how Caroline is feeling at this point in the story. Read the words: exhausted, discouraged. What do these words mean? Have you ever felt very tired and about to give up? I wonder why Caroline feels so exhausted and discouraged. Turn back to the beginning of the story and read to find out if Caroline saves the animal shelter.
S	Guide students through the text, reading the captions, noting important ideas, and helping with unfamiliar language and vocabulary so they can read the text successfully. Call their attention to any important labels. Here are some suggestions: Page 4: Explain that this is a biography about Thurgood Marshall, who worked to make sure that the law was equal for all Americans. Page 7: Read the caption under the photograph and the label. Make sure students understand the term separate. Ask: What other types of segregation do you think that Marshall spoke out against? Page 8: Explain that Charles Houston was a teacher at Howard University who captured Marshall's attention and who offered a strong example for Marshall. Ask: How do you think this teacher caught Marshall's interest? Why might Houston have been a strong role model for his student? Pages 10–11: Cultural Support: Briefly describe the Supreme Court. Draw students' attention to the timeline and ask why the author included it. Suggested language: Why do you think that the author included this timeline with numerous items in the middle of the biography? Now go back to the beginning and read to find out how Thurgood Marshall realized his childhood dream of fighting for equality for all Americans.

Reading the text. All of the lesson plans, has the component "Read", which suggested that students should read while teachers listen in ready with a set of questions supporting the strategy of the week. The lesson plan for level D was the only plan that did not suggest a strategy, instead it suggests to focus on language to problem solve. The lesson plan did not indicate which skill to use. Table 6 provides a summary of guided reading component: reading the text in different levels.

Table 6

Summary of Reading the Text

Level	Strategy
D	As the children read, observe them carefully. Guide them as needed, using language that supports their problem solving ability.
I	As the children read the book, observe them carefully. Guide them as needed, using language that supports their problem-solving ability. Remind children to use the Question Strategy, and to think of questions as they read.
J	As the children read, observe them carefully. Guide them as needed, using language that supports their problem-solving ability. Remind children to use the Question Strategy, asking themselves questions about what they are reading.
M	Have children read A Pet That Fits silently while you listen to individual children read. Support their problem solving and fluency as needed. Remind children to use the Infer/Predict Strategy and use clues to figure out more about story parts as they read.
O	Have students read silently while you listen to individual students read aloud. Support their problem solving and fluency as needed. Remind students to use the Summarize Strategy and to identify the most important events and details of the story in their own words.
P	Have students read silently while you listen to individual students read aloud. Support their understanding of the story as needed. Remind students to use the Analyze/Evaluate Strategy and to think about what the students, especially Tracey, might learn in the play.
R	Have students read Caroline's Treats silently while you listen to individual students read. Support their problem solving and fluency as needed. Remind students to use the Analyze/Evaluate Strategy and to form opinions about what they read.
S	Have students read silently while you listen to individual students read aloud. Support their understanding of the text as needed. Remind students to use the Monitor/Clarify Strategy, and to think of questions as they read.

Discussing and revisiting the text. All of the lesson plans had the component "Discussing and Revisiting the Text", but it was identified as "Respond to the Text" for level D. The lesson plan provided a prompting question for teachers to ask students to initiate conversation. The lesson plan also provided teaching points to help students understand the text better. The lesson plan provided teaching points in thinking within the text, thinking beyond the text, and thinking about the text. Table 7 provides a summary of guided reading component: discussing and revisiting the text in different levels.

Table 7

Summary of Discussing and Revisiting the Text

Level	Prompting Question	Teaching Points
D	How do you think the animals felt about helping Mr. Horse? How do you think Little Elephant felt about helping everyone in the class?	**Thinking within the Text:** How do you think the animals felt about helping Mr. Horse? How do you think Little Elephant felt about helping everyone in the class? **Thinking Beyond the Text:** It's important to help your teacher pass out and pick up supplies. Children should work together in their classroom. Everyone has something they are good at. **Thinking About the Text:** The pictures show what is happening in the story. The words sound the way teachers and students talk. It's funny to read how Little Elephant helps everyone have fun.
I	Which musical instrument would you like to play? Why?	**Thinking within the Text:** Each of these instruments looks different and has certain parts that may include keys or strings. Each of these instruments is played in a different way. You can play musical instruments by yourself or with others. **Thinking Beyond the Text:** There are many ways to make music. Making music is a great thing for a child or adult to do — alone or with others. **Thinking About the Text:** The author's purpose is to inform readers about musical instruments and playing them. On the first seven pages, there is one instrument per text page. At the bottom of the pages, a photograph shows someone playing the instrument and includes a label.

(table continues)

Level	Prompting Question	Teaching Points
J	Why do you think birthdays are special celebrations in many parts of the world?	**Thinking Within the Text:** Everyone has a birthday, and many people celebrate birthdays all around the world. People eat different special foods on birthdays, such as cake, dumplings, chocolate, and oto. People have parties, and some children have special birthdays at certain ages. **Thinking Beyond the Text:** A birthday is a special day for people around the world. Birthday celebrations around the world are alike in some ways and different in others. We should celebrate the ways in which we are alike and the ways in which we are different. **Thinking About the Text:** The author's purpose is informing readers about birthday celebrations around the world. The author asks the reader questions, as if the reader and the author are talking. The author has included a map so that readers can locate the countries mentioned in the text.
M	What do you think about the pet Ella chose for her family? Why was (or wasn't) it a good choice?	**Thinking Within the Text:** Ella likes her cousin's pony and wants a pony of her own. Ella and her parents live in a small apartment. Ella needs to choose a pet that fits in her family's home. **Thinking Beyond the Text:** People live in different kinds of places. If you live in the city, you have to do things differently than if you live in the country. It's important to think carefully when you have a choice to make. **Thinking About the Text:** The story is realistic, and the problem is solved in a way that could really happen. The story has more than one setting (the farm, the apartment, the pet store).
O	Have you ever worked in a group with other students to accomplish a task? What do you think that the students in the three fifth-grade classes learned about working as part of a group?	**Thinking Within the Text:** Three teams of fifth-grade students compete in a cooking contest, but they make mistakes during the competition. Mrs. Hill judges the cafeteria contest, but instead of picking just one winner she uses the best features from each recipe to create a new dish called Mrs. Hill's Choice. **Thinking Beyond the Text:** It's possible to make mistakes, but also to learn from them and create something new. Good sportsmanship and a sense of humor are key aspects of successful collaboration. **Thinking About the Text:** The dialogue sounds very realistic, the way that fifth-grade students talk among themselves. The humorous situations inspire readers to keep reading. The author includes interesting details about creating recipes to appeal to the reader's senses.

(table continues)

Level	Prompting Question	Teaching Points
P	What important things do these students learn about each other?	**Thinking Within the Text:** Ms. Price's class participates in a letter exchange with sight-impaired students at another school. Some students, especially Tracey, are uneasy about exchanging letters with sight-impaired students. The students go on a field trip with their sight-impaired pen-pals. **Thinking Beyond the Text:** One reason that people are uncomfortable with situations is because they are not familiar with them. Sight-impaired people are not so different after all. **Thinking About the Text:** The characters in the play react as real students might react. The author uses the characters of Syd and Ian to help readers understand people who are sight-impaired.
R	How do you think Caroline felt when she learned she had helped save the animal shelter?	**Thinking Within the Text:** Caroline loves visiting the animals at the shelter. She knows the shelter is important, and determines to save it from closing. Caroline's treats get the attention of a pet store owner who then gives money to save the shelter. **Thinking Beyond the Text:** People should work hard for things that are important to them and their community. Children can make a difference. Determination and hard work pay off. Love of animals is universal. **Thinking About the Text:** The dialogue in the story sounds very realistic, the way children really sound. The plot has some surprises; for example, no one wants to eat Caroline's cookies, but they sell quickly as doggie treats and the pet store wants to sell them, too. The writer's attitude is that people should be involved in their community.
S	What did Thurgood Marshall want to change? What did he do to correct the situation?	**Thinking Within the Text:** Marshall had a strong conviction that equal rights should encompass all Americans. Marshall's law background helped him to fight segregation in the education system. **Thinking Beyond the Text:** It is possible to make a dream about your future come true, especially through hard work and determination. A strong role model can be invaluable in helping you attain your goals. **Thinking About the Text:** The historic photographs offer additional insight into the text. The timeline of important dates summarizes key events. The narrative tells about Marshall's convictions and has a beginning, middle, and end.

Teaching for processing texts. The lesson plan indicated a section that provided further support by giving the reading strategies that were used with the guided reading book. All of the participants mentioned helping students with vocabulary, comprehension, and decoding, skills necessary to be proficient readers. The lesson plan for level D provided strategies for concept of print, phonemic awareness, and word work, everything that dealt with letters recognition, sound, and decoding. The rest of the lesson plans provided the same reading strategies of fluency, comprehension, and phonics/ word work. Table 8 provides a summary of guided reading component: teaching for processing texts in different levels.

Table 8

Summary of Teaching for Processing Texts

Level	Strategies
D	Concepts of print Phonemic Awareness Word work
I	Fluency Comprehension Phonics/ Word work
J	Fluency Comprehension Phonics/ Word work
M	Fluency Comprehension Phonics/ Word work
O	Fluency Comprehension Phonics/ Word work

(table continues)

Level	Strategies
P	Fluency Comprehension Phonics/ Word work
R	Fluency Comprehension Phonics/ Word work
S	Fluency Comprehension Phonics/ Word work

Working with words. This was an optional component in the guided reading structure. All lesson plans had word work as part of reading strategies. The lesson plan indicated specifically whether the skill was prefix, letter sounds, blends, or understanding how to break words apart to figure out harder words. Table 9 provides a summary of guided reading component: word work in different levels.

Table 9

Summary of Word Work

Level	Decoding strategy
D	Clapping Syllables Have children hear and say syllables in words from the book: helping, horse, pass, pencils, little, elephant, pick, crayons, blocks. Have them clap on each syllable: help-ing; horse; pass; pen-cils; lit-tle; el-e-phant; pick; cray-ons; blocks. • Blend the Sounds Say words sound by sound and ask children to say the words. Begin with /c/ /aˇ/ /n/. What is the word? (can). Continue with these words: /p/ /aˇ/ /s/ (pass); /h/ /eˇ/ /lp/ (help); /bl/ /oˇ/ /ks/ (blocks); /p/ / ɪˇ/ /k/ (pick).
I	Fluency Have children choose a sentence from the book to practice their phrased reading. Remind them that when they read a long sentence, they should look for ways to group words together, as in: You blow / into the end / and move / the keys. • Comprehension Based on your observations of the children's reading and discussion, revisit parts of the text to clarify or extend comprehension. Remind children to go back to the text to support their ideas. • Phonics /Word Work Provide practice as needed with words and word parts, using examples from the text. Remind children that some words end with two consonant sounds. Display the word end (p. 2). Have children identify the two consonants. Say end slowly with children, emphasizing the n and d sounds. Display these words from the text: and, hand, stand, spend and follow the same procedure. Help children think of other -nd words that rhyme with and and end—such as land, sand, band; bend, blend, send.

(table continues)

Level	Decoding strategy
J	Fluency Have children echo-read as you read the text on p. 10, sentence by sentence. Remind children to listen to how you read a sentence and to imitate you as they read it. Comprehension Based on your observations of the children's reading and discussion, revisit parts of the text to clarify or extend comprehension. Remind children to go back to the text to support their ideas. Phonics/Word Work Provide practice as needed with words and word parts, using examples from the text. Remind children that when -s is added to a naming word, it means "more than one." Have children read these words from the text and identify the ending that means "more than one:" presents, foods, eggs, games, boys, girls. Then have them practice forming plurals for these words from the text: cake, coin, treat, dinner, day.
M	• Fluency Invite children to choose a passage from the text to read silently and orally. Remind them to read at an appropriate rate, not too fast and not too slowly. • Comprehension Based on your observations of the children's reading and discussion, revisit parts of the text to clarify or extend comprehension. Remind children to go back to the text to support their ideas. • Phonics/Word Work Provide practice as needed with words and word parts, using examples from the text. Remind children that contractions are words that are made by combining two shorter words. For example, Dad says, "We can't keep a pony in our apartment," and Ella was sad that she couldn't have a pony. Have children make a list of the contractions used in the story, and write the shorter words they are made from.
O	Fluency Invite students to choose scene from the story to act out in a readers' theater. Remind them to pay attention to voice projection and to emphasize humor in the situation. • Comprehension Based on your observations of the students' reading and discussion, revisit parts of the text to clarify or extend comprehension. Remind students to go back to the text to support their ideas. • Phonics/Word Work Provide practice as needed with words and word parts, using examples from the text. Remind students that learning common prefixes found in words such as undercook, overcook, and midair can help them determine the meaning of the new word.
P	Fluency Invite students to act out a scene from the play. Remind them to pay attention to punctuation, and to use appropriate intonation, rate, and volume as they read to make the dialogue sound like natural speech. • Comprehension Based on your observations of the students' reading and discussion, revisit parts of the text to clarify or extend comprehension. Remind students to go back to the text to support their ideas. • Phonics/Word Work Provide practice as needed with words and word parts, using examples from the text. Tell students that differently on page 8 begins with the root word different. Adding -ly makes the word an adverb, a word describing a verb (in this case, the verb do). Have students locate other -ly adverbs in the story and/or practice making adverbs using other base words.

(table continues)

Level	Decoding strategy
R	Fluency Invite students to choose a passage from the text to read aloud. Remind them to pay attention to the characters' feelings as they speak so that the conversations have expression and sound realistic. • Comprehension Based on your observations of the students' reading and discussion, revisit parts of the text to clarify or extend comprehension. Remind students to go back to the text to support their ideas. • Phonics/Word Work Provide practice as needed with words and word parts, using examples from the text. Remind students that word parts that they know can help them to read and understand new, longer words. Give examples such as public/ publicity, suggest/suggestion, type/typical, courage/discouraged. Have students find other examples.
S	Fluency Invite students to choral read a passage from the text and demonstrate phrased fluent reading. Remind them to pay attention to punctuation and to vary tone, pitch, and volume to attract and hold their audience's attention. • Comprehension Based on your observations of the students' reading and discussion, revisit parts of the text to clarify or extend comprehension. Remind students to go back to the text to support their ideas. • Phonics/Word Work Provide practice as needed with words and word parts, using examples from the text. Remind students that learning common prefixes found in words such as injustice and unfair can help them discern the meaning of the new word. Remind students that the root word just from injustice comes from the Latin word iu_stus.

Extending understanding of the text. This was an optional component in the guided reading structure. In all of the lesson plans, writing about reading had activities that targets critical thinking, responding to literature, comprehension, practice the skill, a writing prompt, and assessment prompts, except lesson plan D. Table 10 provides a summary of guided reading component: extending of the text in different levels.

Table 10

Summary of Extending Understanding of the Text

Level	Responding to Literature
D	Critical Thinking Read the directions for children on BLM 2.4 and guide them in answering the questions. Responding Read aloud the questions at the back of the book and help children complete the activities. Target Comprehension Skill Understanding Characters Tell children that characters are the people or animals who do and say things in the story. Reading carefully and looking at the pictures help readers understand story characters. Model understanding characters: Think Aloud How can I understand the characters in this story? I will read the words and look at the pictures. I read that different animals are helping Mr. Horse in class. Some pass out things; some pick up things. Little Elephant helps the class have fun. Now I understand the characters. They are all helping Mr. Horse in the classroom in different ways. Practice the Skill Have children think of another story they have read. Guide them in understanding the characters in the book. Writing Prompt Read aloud the following prompt. Have children write their response, using the writing prompt on page 6. How do you think everyone felt about Little Elephant? Write about how you can you tell. 4
I	Critical Thinking Have children complete the Critical Thinking questions on BLM 2.7. Responding Have children complete the activities at the back of the book. Use the instruction below as needed to reinforce or extend understanding of the comprehension skill. Target Comprehension Skill Compare and Contrast Remind children that one way to think about information in a book is to think about how two things in the book are alike and how they are different. Model the skill, using a "Think Aloud" like the one below: Think Aloud I think I'll understand some musical instruments better if I think about how they are alike and different. I can compare the clarinet and the flute. One way they are alike is that they both have metal keys that you move with your fingers. Also you blow into both of them. One way they are different is that you blow into a hole at the end of the clarinet. On the flute, the hole you blow into is on the side. Practice the Skill Invite children to tell one way the violin and the double bass are alike. Then have them tell one way the two are different. Writing Prompt: Thinking Beyond the Text Have children respond to the prompt on page 6. Remind them that when they think beyond the text, they use what they know and their own experience to think about the information in the book. Assessment Prompts • Which words on page 7 help readers understand the word piano? • What did you learn about playing the drums?

(table continues)

Level	Responding to Literature
J	Critical Thinking Have children complete the Critical Thinking questions on BLM 2.8. Responding Have children complete the activities at the back of the book. Use the instruction below as needed to reinforce or extend understanding of the comprehension skill. Target Comprehension Skill Compare and Contrast Remind children that one way to think about information in a book is to think about how two things in the book are alike and how they are different. Model the skill, using a "Think Aloud" like the one below: Think Aloud I can remember what I have learned in this book by thinking about how birthdays in different countries are alike and different. The book tells about birthday parties for girls in India and Mexico. One way they are like is that girls in India and in Mexico wear special dresses. One way they are different is that, in Mexico, girls wear crowns, too. Another way they are different is that in India, girls give their friends chocolate. Practice the Skill Invite children to look at the photos on page 4 and on page 7. Then have them tell one way the photos are alike and one way they are different. Writing Prompt: Thinking About the Text Have children respond to the prompt on page 6. Remind them that when they think about informational text, they think about how the author presents the information and what words the author uses. Assessment Prompts • What is the selection mainly about? • Which words on page 5 help you understand what oto is?
M	Critical Thinking Have children complete the Critical Thinking questions on BLM 1.9. Responding Have children complete the activities at the back of the book. Use the instruction below as needed to reinforce or extend understanding of the comprehension skill. Target Comprehension Skill Sequence of Events Remind children that to understand a story, it is important to pay attention to the order in which things happen. Model the skill, using a "Think Aloud" like the one below: Think Aloud How do I fill out the chart on page 15? I think about the events in the story. First, Ella asks Mom and Dad if she can have a pony. Next, her parents tell her a pony is too big for their apartment, but she can choose a different pet. Last, she finds a wonderful pet at the pet store. Now I know three sentences to put in the three boxes in the chart. Practice the Skill Ask children to think of a story they read recently. Have them write three sentences telling what happens first, next, and last in the story. Writing Prompt: Thinking Beyond the Text Have children write a response to the prompt on page 6. Remind them that when they think beyond the text, they use what they know and their own experience to think about what happens in the story. Assessment Prompts • The word squawking means _____. • How do Ella's ideas change at the end of the story?

(table continues)

Level	Responding to Literature
O	Critical Thinking Have students complete the Critical Thinking questions on BLM 1.7. Responding Have students complete the activities at the back of the book, using their Reader's Notebook. Use the instruction below as needed to reinforce or extend understanding of the comprehension skill. Target Comprehension Skill Story Structure Remind students that they can analyze and evaluate the development of the plot, or sequence of events, problem/conflict, and solution/resolution. They can also generate alternative endings to the story. Model how to add details to the Graphic Organizer, using a "Think Aloud" like the one below: Think Aloud The problem is the judge will need to choose a winning dish. One of the events is that all of the students make mistakes in their recipes. Add that in the Events space. This event leads to Louisa's interesting solution: to mix the dishes together. Practice the Skill Encourage students to share their examples of another book that features humorous situations in its story structure. Writing Prompt: Thinking Beyond the Text Have students write a response to the writing prompt on page 6. Remind them that when they think beyond the text, they use their personal knowledge to reach new understandings. Assessment Prompts • Which sentences on page 3 show that the students use humor to overcome their cooking mistakes? • What is the meaning of staggered on page 7? • What can the reader conclude about Mrs. Hill? Why do you think that?
P	Critical Thinking Have students complete the Critical Thinking questions on BLM 4.8. Responding Have students complete the activities at the back of the book, using their Reader's Notebook. Use the instruction below as needed to reinforce or extend understanding of the comprehension skill. Target Comprehension Skill Theme Remind students that they can examine characters' qualities and motives to recognize the theme of the play. Model how to add details to the Graphic Organizer using a "Think Aloud" like the one below: Think Aloud A detail listed is that "Syd could babysit Ian." Tracey and Julia both enjoy the visit to the nature conservatory. Put that in one of the detail boxes. Syd and Ian both like to read. Put that in another detail box. These details support the theme that "people who are sight-impaired aren't really so different." Practice the Skill Have students share an example of a story in which they analyzed a character's motives and qualities to determine a story's theme. Writing Prompt: Thinking Beyond the Text Have students write a response to the prompt on page 6. Remind them that when they think beyond the text, they use their personal knowledge to reach new understandings. Assessment Prompts • On page 11, what does the word chaperone mean? • Why does Tracey feel uncomfortable with Julia at first? • What do you think will happen in the future when students from Mrs. Price's class meet others with disabilities? Why do you think that?

(table continues)

Level	Responding to Literature
R	Critical Thinking Have students complete the Critical Thinking questions on BLM 3.9. Responding Have students complete the activities at the back of the book. Use the instruction below as needed to reinforce or extend understanding of the comprehension skill. Target Comprehension Skill Understanding Characters Remind students that to understand a character, it is important to notice what the character says and what the character does. Model the skill, using a "Think Aloud" like the one below: Think Aloud The animal shelter is important to Caroline. In one story detail, her Mom says the shelter is about to close. How does Caroline react? In my experience, most people would just accept the news. Does Caroline think it's an adult decision that's none of her business? No! She smiles and says, "We'll just have to raise the money to save it!" I think Caroline's mother is right: Caroline is determined. Practice the Skill Ask students to find another detail in the story that shows something about Caroline's character. Have students write two sentences about why Caroline acts as she does. Writing Prompt: Thinking Beyond the Text Have students write a response to the prompt on page 6. Remind them that when they think beyond the text, they use what they know and their own experience to think about what happens in the story. Assessment Prompts • In paragraph 2 on page 3, find the word that means almost the same as delighted. • In paragraph 2 on page 13, which words help the reader know the meaning of contribute? • Compete this sentence about what is likely to happen after this story:
S	Critical Thinking Have students complete the Critical Thinking questions on BLM 2.10. Responding Have students complete the activities at the back of the book, using their Reader's Notebook. Use the instruction below as needed to reinforce or extend understanding of the comprehension skill. Target Comprehension Skill Author's Purpose Have students identify the author's general purpose for writing: to inform, entertain, persuade, express, or describe. Remind students that the author had a purpose in mind in choosing to write this biography. Model how to add details to the Graphic Organizer, using a "Think Aloud" like the one below: Think Aloud On page 3, the author explains that sixty years ago it was difficult for African Americans to live out their dreams. Later she explains that Thurgood Marshall held onto his dreams to defend the rights of African Americans and became the first African American judge on the Supreme Court. These details support the author's purpose. Practice the Skill Encourage students to share their examples of another book in which the Author's Purpose is to bring an inspiring message to readers. Writing Prompt: Thinking Beyond the Text Have students write a response to the writing prompt on page 6. Remind them that when they think beyond the text, they use their personal knowledge to reach new understanding. Assessment Prompts • Choose one word that best describes how Thurgood Marshall felt about injustice. • How does it say, on page 14, that Thurgood Marshall tried to protect the rights of African Americans? • Complete this sentence in your own words: This biography was most likely written..

Summary

The data that were gathered from the 10 participants disclosed themes that represented their thoughts, feelings, beliefs and practices towards their guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data when planning a guided reading lesson. Their responses from the interview questions were transcribed and the transcription was used to develop the themes of the study. I was then able to connect common themes and patterns, which led to addressing the research questions. The first major theme showed me the attitudes and beliefs about how teachers' gained their knowledge and how that knowledge was used. Meanwhile, the second major theme dealt with the teachers' perceptions regarding student data and how it was constantly collected to adjust their lesson plan, as students' reading needs changed. The third theme showed me teachers' beliefs on how a guided reading lesson should be planned. Finally, fourth major theme revealed teachers' beliefs of what can hinder a guided reading lesson.

The data collected from the interviews confirmed that the participants had different beliefs and opinions regarding the planning of a guided reading lesson. Teachers also believed that obtaining the instructional materials to plan for an effective guided reading lesson was important. They also believed that having a vast amount of books in levels and genres was necessary to enhance students' background knowledge and comprehension. All of the teachers felt that many of the students did not have enough background knowledge. Teachers used guided reading knowledge and student data to identify which reading strategies would help students enhance their reading.

Teachers also believed that there were several factors that affect the effectiveness of a guided reading lesson. They had different belief about what hinders their guided reading lessons, some believed that time was a problem, others believed that the interruptions in the classroom was a problem. Teachers also agreed that the lack of quality in training also hindered the effectiveness of a guided reading lesson. Furthermore, all participants agreed that enhancing the quality of professional development was necessary.

In Chapter 4, I report the results of this study. Included in this chapter are the major themes that surfaced from the data analysis. In Chapter 5, I will interpret the data with respect to the purpose of the study, possible interpretations of the data, and how the results are related to the conceptual framework, which informed this study, namely Fountas and Pinnell's guided reading framework (1996) and Clay's theory of data collection (2000) with respect to literacy processing, and included interpretation of the findings, limitations, recommendations, implications, and conclusion.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand how elementary teachers' beliefs at a high performing Title 1 school used guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data when planning a guided reading lesson. This qualitative research design used both phenomenological and case study aspects to explore teachers' beliefs on the usage of teacher knowledge and student data in a lesson plan. This qualitative research study was undertaken to explore how teachers used guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data in a northern eastern school. The study included interviews with participants from a successful Title 1 school. The purposeful sample, which included 10 elementary teachers, was used to collect relevant data and add confidence to the findings. In the framework and methods synthesis within Chapter 2, I reported that the other researchers have conducted quantitative and qualitative studies on the effectiveness of guided reading and on the importance of student data. However, few studies were found exploring the beliefs of elementary teachers regarding the use of guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data.

In addition, Fountas and Pinnell's guided reading framework (1996) and Clay's theory of data collection (2000) with respect to literacy processing was the most common lens derived from the framework and methods synthesis within Chapter 2 of this study. Furthermore, in the findings of this study, I presented teachers' beliefs on the use of guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data through the lens of the guided reading framework and data collection theory. Lastly, I discuss how the guided

reading framework and data collection theory was used to interpret the data for this study within the successive sections.

For the first research question, I found that teachers believe in the importance to use what they had previously learned about guided reading components to develop lesson plans that would meet the needs of their students. Teachers believed that using the right materials to support their guided reading lesson was crucial. Also notable to these findings is that teachers were able to plan effective guided reading lesson plans.

For the second research question, I found that teachers believed in reflecting and adjusting instruction has helped them successfully plan guided reading lessons. Teachers indicated that data from formative assessments allowed them to know a student's strengths and weaknesses. Lastly, teachers constantly used data to adapt their lesson, seek materials, and form groups.

For the third research question, I found that teachers believed in following Fountas and Pinnell guided reading framework was crucial to the success of students regarding reading performance. Teachers are consistently using formative assessments to get accurate data to ensure meeting the reading needs of students. Teachers believed that looking for leveled texts that would match their small group is an important part of the success of guided reading.

Lastly for the fourth research question, I found that teachers believed that guided reading lesson plans drive their instruction when reflecting on their own teaching or when adjusting them to students' changing needs. Teachers face challenges that hinder their teaching and therefore affecting student learning. However, teachers believe that

following the guided reading framework with the integration of student data helps them meet students' needs. The findings for this study are discussed in greater detail in the subsequent interpretations of the findings section. In this chapter, I also report limitations of the study. I will also elaborate on the study's implications on positive social change and recommendations for further research. I will end the chapter and the study with a conclusion for the study.

Interpretation of the Findings

The findings for this qualitative study are interpreted in relation to the literature review and conceptual framework. The triangulation of the data provided insight into themes that emerged for each research questions. The conceptual framework that informed this study included Fountas and Pinnell's guided reading framework (1996) and Clay's theory of data collection (2000) with respect to literacy processing. The research questions explored how teachers used guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data when planning a guided reading lesson. The findings revealed that teachers who used guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data when planning a guided reading lesson were better able to make decisions about selecting proper texts, forming groups, and including appropriate strategies to teach reading skills.

The key finding for RQ1 was that teachers believed on the importance of their experiences with guided reading by searching for the right books and providing background knowledge when teaching a lesson. Wilson, McNeil, & Gillon (2015) argued that a student's success depends on the teacher's capacity to use knowledge and skills to plan and deliver a lesson. Also, according to Davila (2015) it is important to activate

prior knowledge in order to bridge new content with experiences and background information.

In my study, many teachers believed that most of the books provided by their Journey's program were either too hard or were not available because the guided reading level of the student would be out of grade range. Fountas & Pinnell (2010; 2013) stated that matching texts to students was an important aspect of teacher knowledge of guided reading in conjunction with how components of guided reading and student data were used when planning lessons.

The key finding for RQ2 was that teachers believed that student data helps adjust instruction, form groups and select books. Many teachers adjusted groups according to students' reading needs and how they well students work in the group. According to Delacruz (2014) and Thessin (2015) the primary purpose for student data was to drive instruction, provide support, and to place students in flexible groups. In my study, many of the teachers believed in collecting data from various sources such as comprehension assessments, running records, observations, and anecdotal notes to drive their instruction and to be consistently updating the reading needs of students. Many teachers mentioned using running records as a main source of student data. According to Kajitani (2015) running records also provided teachers with information on students' ability with comprehension, fluency, and retelling of a story.

Data also helped teachers with detailed information about a student regardless of what needs to be retaught or when to move on to the next strategy or concept (Nilsson, 2013). One teacher mentioned that the collected data gave her information about what the

student knows or if they were still struggling with something, or if she needed to reteach a skill. Nilsson (2013) stated that when teachers reflected on their instruction and plans, it gave them information on what to teach for the next lesson.

The key finding for RQ3 was that teachers believed that guided reading components should be included in every lesson. Many of the teachers expressed the importance of knowing the guided reading components in order to teach reading. According to Fountas & Pinnell (2013), if any of these elements were neglected, then learning would not occur. In my study, all of the teachers believed that reading strategies and comprehension strategies should also be included in every guided reading lesson. Belland et al. (2015) expressed that the experience teachers gained from the planning process helped them make the decision regarding the strategies that met the needs of students.

The key finding for RQ4 was that teachers believed that lesson plans are for driving instruction and making adjustments to instruction when needed. One teacher mentioned that there had been times when students just weren't learning the lesson, so she would stop the lesson and take a few steps back. Thessin (2015) indicated that teachers who reflected on teaching experiences continuously made connections between adjusting instruction and student data.

In my study, I found that teachers continuously overcome many instructional challenges in order to meet the reading needs of students. One of these challenges was locating out of grade range level texts. Saunders-Smith (2009) argues that matching books to a reader's reading level is crucial when processing texts. Time was another

challenge for teachers because teachers believed that a more prolonged time with groups would be beneficial to the students. Time was important because teachers felt it hindered their guided reading lesson and students' reading time.

The last key finding was based on the comparison of the lesson plans teachers used with Fountas and Pinnells' guided reading framework. The findings of the lesson plan indicated that teachers followed a scripted lesson plan that was provided to them by their district Journeys' curriculum. The scripted lesson plan provided teachers talking points from beginning to end of a guided reading lesson, which gave the exposure to what a guided reading lesson should look like and how it should be followed.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study were related to the research design. The first limitation was related to the transferability of the findings for this qualitative study. This study was conducted in only one urban elementary school in the Eastern region of the United States with a total enrollment of 446 students in grades K-5 during the 2015- 2016 school year. Participants included ten elementary teachers at this elementary school who provided guided reading instruction. Therefore, the results of this qualitative study may be transferable only to urban elementary schools with similar student teacher populations.

The second limitation was related to the amount of time that I, as a single researcher, was able to spend collecting data from the research site. I electronically interviewed these teachers twice, and I collected one guided reading lesson from eight teachers and impacted the findings of this study. This qualitative study might have

produced richer findings if I had collected data from observations over a longer period of time.

The third limitation was related to participants. In particular, the withdrawal of two teachers who provide guided reading instruction might have been richer if all of the ten elementary teachers, rather than only eight teachers, had participated in this study.

Recommendations for Research

The recommendations for this study are related to the strengths, limitations, findings, and literature review of this study. The first recommendation is that researchers should replicate this study over a longer period of time, include reading specialists, intervention specialists, and ESOL teachers, and recruit a larger participant sample that includes more than one elementary school. The items listed within the first recommendation could provide better understanding on how a teacher uses guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data to meet the needs of all readers.

The second recommendation is to replicate this study in non Title 1 urban schools or rural school. This study was conducted in a low socioeconomic high-performing Title 1 school in an urban area. Teacher participants in this study received guided reading professional development, but not to teachers quality demand. Participants with a more satisfying professional development may report different beliefs towards the use of guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data.

A third recommendation is to replicate this study at a different time of the school year. This study was conducted in the middle of the summer near the starting if the school year 2017-2018. Teachers did not begin to respond until the end of the summer.

Conducting this study at a different point of the school year could yield a better understanding on teachers' beliefs of their use of guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data.

Implications for Social Change

This study contributed positive social change several ways. The first contribution to social change was that this study made an original contribution to educational research by revealing teachers' beliefs of utilizing guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data when planning guided reading lessons. The findings for this study expand the understanding and significance of the interrelation of guided reading knowledge and student data to meet the reading needs of students. This study also advances the profession of teaching reading by reporting comments from teachers about how guided reading components and student data is consistently adjusted to improve instruction. The findings of this study yielded teachers' beliefs that describe the importance of guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data in improving reading achievement. In addition, this study advances knowledge about the quality of professional development teachers feel they need.

The second contribution that this study made to positive social change is to provide teachers with an increased repertoire of instructional strategies and data collection methods to help meet the needs of students. The findings of this study reported several reading components used simultaneously and constant adjustment of instruction from different formative assessments. Teachers were able to plan guided reading lessons by relying on their experience and resources while maintaining the fidelity of the guided

reading framework. In addition, the consistent integration of student data with guided reading pedagogical content knowledge increases students' reading performance. Thus, these practices have the potential to improve professional practices related to guided reading planning.

The third contribution of this study to positive social change is to advance knowledge about how to prepare high quality professional development to help teachers plan guided reading lessons. Professional development is the resources that allow teachers to stay updated to new educational changes or refresh current ones. Teachers are required to teach students to read by meeting their individualized reading needs, hence increase their reading performance. This study explored teachers' beliefs and experiences on the use of guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data when planning a lesson. Furthermore, this study provided the opportunity for teachers to have a voice in sharing their beliefs when planning a guided reading lesson. Therefore, this study assists in improving teachers' experiences with utilizing guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data when planning a lesson.

Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand how elementary teachers' beliefs at a high performing Title 1 school used guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data when planning a guided reading lesson. The results from this study add to the literature of guided reading instruction about how teachers make decisions based on their experiences and resources to meet the needs of their students. This study revealed that teachers believed guided reading components and student data

are both needed when planning a lesson. In addition, this study revealed that lesson plans helped teachers drive their instruction based on the data collected from students, which help teachers stay on task on meeting students' reading needs. However, the results of this study were limited to one school with a small sample of teachers. Therefore, the results of this study may not reflect the beliefs of teachers in different settings.

This study also reveals the understanding of guided reading instruction and meeting individualized reading needs. Guided reading instruction has the ability to help students become better readers. I believe the integration of guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data provide the instructional needs a student requires to enhance their reading performance.

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A: School District Permission Application

XXX Office of Accountability and Assessment

RESEARCH APPLICATION

Name: Ivonne Miranda	**Telephone: xxxx** **Alt. Telephone:**
Mailing Address: xxxxx	**Primary Email address:** Ivonne.miranda@waldenu.edu.
Title of Study Elementary Teachers' Beliefs of Using Guided Reading Pedagogy and Student Data	**Duration of Study** One month, from May 2017 to June 2017.

Identify all schools, divisions, and offices involved and briefly describe this involvement. (Attach one extra sheet if necessary)

[redacted] School District Elementary Schools:

- [redacted] Elementary School

The Title 1 school has demonstrated a significant increase in reading achievement using guided the reading approach, which is why they have been invited to discuss their beliefs of using guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data by asking them to reflect on and describe their experiences in their use of guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data.

Have you contacted any schools or individuals? No. If yes, whom?

Write a brief statement of purpose of research, and indicate what assistance, if any, is being requested from the district, beyond permission to conduct the study. (THIS SPACE ONLY):

The purpose of this qualitative study is to understand elementary teachers' beliefs at a high performing Title 1 school of how they used guided reading pedagogical content knowledge and student data when planning a guided reading lesson. To accomplish this purpose, the guided reading strategies posited by Fountas' and Pinnell's (1996) and Clay (2000) regarding student data will be determined when exploring teachers' beliefs. For example, how teachers use formative assessments, teacher observation, and running records to determine which reading skill and strategy is selected when planning a lesson will be explored. In addition, how teachers use knowledge on guided reading components, scaffolds, and reading process to effectively plan a guided reading lesson will also be explored.

The assistance that I am requesting other than permission to conduct a research study is allowed to unison email the interview questions to teachers using the school email addresses.

How and to which goal(s) does this research align?
This research study is aligned to the district Goal 2: Balance Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment by exploring the integration of teacher knowledge and instruction of guided reading lessons.

Signature of Applicant:	**Date Submitted:**

For OAT use only

Date received: **RRC Proposal Number:** _____
Date Reviewed:

Type of Submission:	**Action Taken:**
[] New [ ] Amended [ ] Continuation [ ] Expanded [ ] Other_____	[] Approved as Submitted [ ] Declined/Rejected Date:

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

1. Please share examples of the ways you have used guided reading pedagogical content knowledge in reading for students? Research Question 1

2. Please share examples of the ways you have used student data in lessons to help your students? Research Question 2

3. What are some characteristics that you believe should or not be included in a guided reading lesson? Research Question 3

4. How have you used lesson plans to guide your instruction? Research Question 4

5. What situations have led you to deviate from your lesson plan?

6. What difficulties or obstacles do you face when providing guided reading instruction to readers?

7. What do you think would help you better meet the needs of your readers?

8. Classroom teachers use a variety of instructional materials, skills and strategies to improve reading achievement for their students. What specific skills, strategies and materials do you believe have improved reading performance for students?

9. What pre-service preparation, training, or professional development helped to prepare you for planning guided reading lessons for readers?

10. What else could you say about addressing the needs of students in reading that I did not ask that you would like to talk about?

Thank you for your time and honest answers!

Follow-up Questions

1. How have these examples helped you use pedagogical content knowledge in a more effective way?
2. How has these examples helped you use student data in a more effective way?
3. How has including or excluding guided reading components helped you use lesson plans more effectively?
4. Please tell me about a time that you believe that your instruction was effective due to your planning?
5. How has deviating from your lesson plan been positive or negative teachable moment? Explain.
6. What do you believe you need in order to overcome your difficulties or obstacles?
    a. What are other support or obstacles you would like to share?
7. How would you like to receive that support to become more aware of your students needs?
8. What are other skills, strategies, and materials you would like to share?
9. Please tell me more about the: preservice preparation, training, or professional development?
10. What else on the topic of guided reading pedagogical content knowledge or student data that you would like to share today, before we end this interview?

Thank you so much for participating in this interview, I greatly appreciate your time.

Appendix C: The National Institute of Health Certificate

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Ivonne Miranda** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants".

Date of completion: 01/20/2014

Certification Number: 1364359

Appendix D: Guided Reading Components Matrix

Guided Reading Lesson Components															
Lesson Plans															
	Introducing the Text		Reading the Text		Discussing and Revisiting the Text			Teaching for Processing Strategies			Working with Words		Extending Understanding of the Text		
#1															
#2															
#3															
#4															
#6															