

NEGOTIATING GUIDED READING DECISIONS: MAKING CONNECTIONS AND  
GROWING THROUGH REFLECTION

A Dissertation

by

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BS, University of Texas Pan American, 1998

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR of PHILOSOPHY

in

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi  
Corpus Christi, TX

May 2015

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May 2015

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This dissertation meets the standards for scope and quality of  
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and is hereby approved.

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## ABSTRACT

Teachers are keys to the success of their students. This study is significant because it provides an in-depth understanding of the experiences of teachers and how their self-efficacy influenced their practices as they engaged in the teaching of guided reading with struggling readers. The participants in the study participated in Coaching Effective Guided Reading Sessions under the Response to Intervention (RTI) Umbrella training and coaching sessions.

An interpretivism framework informed this case study inquiry along with the substantive framework of Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory and the concept of self-efficacy. The study explored how two elementary teachers negotiated their instructional decisions while conducting guided reading sessions with struggling readers. The study took place in two elementary schools in a South Texas district and data were collected through interviews, observations, artifacts, and the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Survey (TSES).

Participants rated their abilities for each of the 24 indicators in the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) at the beginning and at the end of the study. The results indicated that both participants had a high sense of efficacy in the areas of instructional strategies, student engagement, and classroom management at the beginning and at the end of the study. These findings were further supported in the themes that emerged for each participant from the data analysis. Participant one themes included: (a) A Sense of Urgency: Frontloading Students; (b) Reflection: A Key to Growth; and (c) A Provider: Catering to Students' Needs. Participant two themes were: (a) A Weaver of Knowledge: "What Good Readers Do;" (b) How They Learn: A Case of Subjectivity; and (c) A Guide: Modeling the Way.

The findings of this study raised questions about how the continuous support teachers receive through staff development influences the instructional decisions they make in guided reading and the ways in which teachers' interpretation of their experiences influences their self efficacy. Some questions to consider for further research include: How does the continuous support by an instructional coach influence the efficacy of teachers as they implement this guided reading approach? What are the experiences of middle school language arts teachers as they implement guided reading? In conclusion, when teachers have a high sense of self-efficacy in their ability to help all their students, they seek and implement different strategies and interventions that lead to student reading achievement.

## DEDICATION

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.” Proverbs 3:5-6

This dissertation is a dream God placed in my heart, and it was His faithfulness that guided me every step of the way through this journey. God placed people in my path at the correct time and place to make this dream a reality. Holy Spirit provided enlightenment, understanding, and inspiration throughout this process. His constant reminders of Jesus’ words encouraged and motivated me to keep moving forward. For this reason, I am grateful and dedicate this dissertation to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Father, your grace overwhelms me!

I also dedicate this dissertation to my family because they have been my support throughout this journey. First of all, I thank my parents, who since a young age instilled in me the importance of an education. I thank my father who willingly joined me in my long drives up to my night classes. The three hour drives were full of his childhood stories and listening to his music. Gracias, Papá! I want to thank my mom for her constant prayers. I still recall the Sunday when she prayed for me after I had shared with her my doubts of attending college after my high school graduation. Well, I attended college and look how far I have gotten. Gracias, Mamá!

I thank God for the greatest sisters ever, Mary and Sara, who cheered me all the way. Thank you, Mary for joining me in my trips to the university. You are a great traveling buddy! Thank you, Sara for your optimistic spirit and all your acts of kindness. I truly appreciate you, girl. You are one of a kind! I also thank my sister in Christ, Yolanda Perez, for all her words of encouragement. God always gave you the word to share with me at the right time. Girls, I appreciate you taking the time to read my papers and provide me with feedback. I cannot forget my older sister Luci and my bother-in-law John Jaramillo, who are also my spiritual parents, my

Pastors. Your continual prayers, support, and advice were felt and seen. Thank you for showing me that everything we do is for the Kingdom of God. I love you both!

I am grateful for every word of encouragement I received from my brothers and their wives. Thank you, Joe and Rachel, Johnny and Linda, and Michael and Ana Yanez. I cannot forget to mention my nieces and nephews. I am grateful for each one of you. You bring joy to my life. Thank you, Jacob, Shekinah, Joshua, and Hesed Jaramillo; Kayte, Stephanie, JT, Elizabeth, and Eli Yanez; Mike, Nathaniel, and Baby Faith Yanez; and Jovani and Joe Yanez. I pray that my story inspires you to dream and work to see those dreams become a reality because with God all things are possible!

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“Leadership is not about control but service. It’s not about power but empowerment. Leadership is not manipulation but Inspiration.” Dr. Myles Monroe

I would like to thank my dissertation committee for agreeing to be part of this journey. Thank you for your service, empowerment, and inspiration as I completed my dissertation. I am grateful for each one of you.

Dr. Sherrye Garrett, thank you for your willingness to work with me on this project and for all the guidance and advice you provided throughout the whole process. I will always be grateful for all of our Skype meetings.

Dr. Nancy Smith, I am very grateful for you. Thank you for being available every time I needed your guidance and input, even during holidays. You were always willing to get together and provide me with your qualitative knowledge. Coffee Waves will always be dear to me!

Dr. Frank Lucido, thank you for the feedback you provided. I appreciate you and your willingness to be part of my committee.

Dr. Fray, Bruun, I am appreciative of all your kind words and feedback. Thank you for being part of my dissertation committee.

Dr. Susan Garza, thank you for all your feedback and comments. They provided me with guidance in how to make my dissertation clear. I am grateful for you.

Finally, I would like to thank all my TAMUCC professors who throughout my course work provided me with their knowledge, guidance, and motivation that allowed me to complete what I started, Dr. Dan Pearce, Dr. Corinne Valadez, Dr. Bryant Griffith, Dr. Kamiar Kousekanani, and Dr. Kakali Bhattacharya. I will always be grateful for this experience!



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## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

An increase in federal accountability of education in the United States has turned the spotlight on teachers as the key to student achievement (Fox & Peters, 2013). Allington (2002a) has pointed out that effective teachers, not programs, make the difference in the classroom. Research has also pointed to teacher self-efficacy as another characteristic connected to student achievement (Hoy, 2000). In any given day, at any given time during instruction, a teacher makes numerous of decisions that affect student achievement (Griffith, Massey, & Atkinson, 2013). But what are the forces that guide teachers to make decisions?

Starko et al. (2003) differentiate between two types of teachers – the consumer teacher and the reflective teacher. The consumer teacher, whether by choice or circumstance, allows others to dictate how and what to instruct. This teacher allows the textbook and programs to guide the instruction. Often this teacher does not seek the advice and expertise of others, but relies on scripted lessons that nullify the creativity that brings the curriculum to life. In contrast, the reflective teacher is a decision-maker who utilizes “content standards to develop district and/or grade-level goals, clarifies the outcomes to be learned and ways of assessing them, creates units of study, and only then decides what instructional materials, activities, and assessments are appropriate” (Starko et al., 2003, p. 2).

Further, Starko et al. (2003) use the metaphor of a bridge to illustrate the factors that guide a reflective teacher’s decision-making. The first factor the teacher considers is the students’ backgrounds, prior experiences, and cultures when planning lessons. The teacher also takes into account the learning styles and the levels of development of students when planning lessons. The second factor the teacher takes into account is the subject matter or content. The teacher not only knows the content, but also is able to “translate” ideas in ways students will

understand them. The third factor that influences a teacher's decision-making is the teacher's knowledge of pedagogy, which includes "teaching, learning, assessment, and classroom management" (Starko et al., 2003, p. 7). The teacher also has knowledge of "human development, learning theory, multicultural education, assessment strategies, and teaching methods, to name a few" (Starko et al., 2003, p. 7). Another factor the reflective teacher considers in the decision-making process is the context which surrounds everyday classroom activities. This includes the social, cultural, and political factors that influence the curriculum. The final factors in the bridge building metaphor that shapes the teacher decision-making are the characteristics and beliefs of the teacher. A reflective teacher is cognizant of her/his personal beliefs and assumptions that influence the decisions made every day. The reflective teacher is "aware of the beliefs, values, and assumptions that undergird their teaching – and are able to reexamine those beliefs when appropriate" (Starko et al., 2003, p. 7).

However, if teachers lack knowledge in areas crucial to reflective decision-making, this presents a problem. Research on teacher effectiveness points to teacher preparation programs that fail to equip teachers with the knowledge to understand how children think and learn (Cooper, 2009). When teachers lack the understanding of children's learning processes, it affects their ability to make informed instructional decisions. Shulman's (1987) knowledge base of teaching includes categories of knowledge a teacher understands to promote students' comprehension. These categories include knowledge of content, pedagogy, curriculum, students, educational context, and educational ends.

Many studies have identified areas in which teachers need to be knowledgeable in order to be effective in teaching students to read. A study conducted by Griffith et al. (2013) utilized a conceptual framework that included the following external forces in the decision-making of a

teacher: “the standard-based movement, the adopted and/or mandated curricula, and student-centered beliefs” (p. 306). One of the participants was a Reading Recovery teacher who had just completed a master’s degree in reading and was working with a small group of at-risk first graders. Additionally, this participant attended professional development meetings twice a month and received coaching from a teacher leader. Her school implemented a balanced literacy program. The second participant was a first-grade teacher teaching a self-contained classroom. This teacher had a master’s degree in reading and was viewed as a teacher leader who often offered professional development trainings to teachers at her school. This participant did not have the support of an instructional coach. Even though the school had implemented a balanced literacy approach, there was the reminiscence of a traditional skill-based approach. The findings of Griffith et al. (2013) suggested that the context influenced the decision-making of the teacher. Participant one utilized her professional knowledge to guide her decisions while keeping student-centered in mind to address the mandated curriculum. This was not the case with the second participant because the mandated curriculum dictated her student-centered decisions. Thus, highlighting how knowledge of learner centered practices influences teacher’s beliefs of efficacy in such a way that the teacher feels confident to make informed decisions in the best interest of students (Hoy & Spero, 2005).

Another study by Taylor, Peterson, and Rodriguez (2002) looked at teachers’ instruction in eight high-poverty schools and found that teachers’ knowledge of the curricula components was not sufficient for delivery of effective instruction, but rather teachers needed to know how to deliver the instruction in effective ways to their students. This study also presented the need for ongoing training in reading strategies.



Pinnell, Lyons, DeFord, Bryk, and Seltzer (1994) compared the instructional model of Reading Recovery with three other models of reading instruction. Although the analysis highlighted one-to-one instruction as an important key in the success of the Reading Recovery model, it also suggested other important findings. For one, “the teacher’s ability to make spontaneous, effective decisions sustaining feedback and to provide prompts that simplify the demands of the task” (Pinnell et al., 1994, p. 36), made the difference across the four models examined. Teachers’ ability to make these spontaneous decisions during reading instruction was attributed to the continuous professional development teachers received.

In their study of an observation instrument, Gertsen, Baker, Haager, and Graves (2005), set out to investigate the nature and quality of beginning reading instruction. The results noted students made higher gains in reading when teachers provided explicit and differentiated instruction. Gertsen et al. (2005) also found that if teachers had difficulty working with struggling readers, then support on “intervention strategies and the intense nature of explicit instruction necessary for struggling readers is critical” (p. 205). Thus, the expectation is that the teacher will be an expert on how to accomplish teaching students to read. Teachers must be well informed regarding the stages involved in the reading process. If at any given point a student exhibits a reading problem, the knowledgeable teacher understands how to identify or diagnose the problem and offer the necessary interventions to help the student overcome this hurdle. The lack of professional development support teachers receive often inhibits their pedagogical decisions in the classroom (Gersten, 1999) and may influence how confident they feel towards the task at hand (Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009; Tschannen-Moran & Chen, 2014).

But what is the more effective type of professional development to continue to support teachers? The common one-day staff development has often proven insufficient for teachers to

internalize any new program at the level of efficiency required (Cooter, 2003). Instead, teachers benefit from the continual support of either a literacy coach or a mentor to continue growing in the art of teaching until they reach a level of “expertise and ability to coach others” (Cooter, 2003, p. 201).

Teachers need to address the needs of struggling readers and provide instructional practices that allow intensive and accelerated instruction (Clay, 1993), ample opportunities to read (Allington & Gabriel, 2012), and questioning based on authentic discussion of text (Peterson & Taylor, 2012). Ganske, Monroe, and Strickland’s (2003) survey inquired about the critical problems teachers face in working with struggling readers and writers. Based on the teachers’ responses, the authors identified nine problems and offered strategies to address these problems. Among the nine problems highlighted by the study, teachers cited time, organization, and management as areas of concern. One strategy suggested by the authors to assist teachers with these problems and to address the specific needs of struggling readers in the classroom was the use of guided reading.

Fountas and Pinnell (1996) define guided reading as a “context in which a teacher supports each reader’s development of effective strategies for processing novel texts at increasingly challenging levels of difficulty” (p. 2). In guided reading, support begins with the teacher gathering a small group of children who are reading similar level texts. Through coaching, the teacher enables children to apply and develop strategies. As children read the stories, they enjoy them because they can understand them. This making of meaning is only possible when children can access their own strategies. Thus, the goal of guided reading is to “help children learn how to use independent reading strategies successfully” (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, p. 2). Fountas and Pinnell (1996) explored the crucial role of the teacher in guided

reading, stating that “Teachers, based on their knowledge of children, possible texts, and the processes involved in reading and learning to read, make a series of complex decisions that influence and mediate literacy for the young children in the group” (p. 2). In guided reading sessions, teachers give students what they lack and strengthen what they already know. Teachers help children develop reading behaviors to lead them to become strategic readers. However, this can only happen when teachers know the reading behaviors to identify and support. Ford and Optiz (2008) reiterate that the teacher’s knowledge of the components and the implementation of guided reading is the catalyst to the success of this approach.

### **Rationale for the Study**

Juel’s (1988) longitudinal study revealed that students who enter school as poor readers in the first grade are still struggling readers when they reach the fourth grade. The demand in reading increases in the fourth grade (Chall, Jacobs, & Baldwin, 1990; Bornfreund, 2012), which puts pressure on the lower grade teachers to prepare students for this challenge. Many times, the traditional guided reading approach assumes students come with the foundational skills needed to begin reading. For struggling readers, this is not always the case. For this reason, teachers need to understand how to implement guided reading and interventions to address each reader’s specific needs. Research has shown that when teachers are not clear on what must be happening during guided reading instruction, they fail to make informed decisions to help their students learn to read (Fisher, 2008; Ford & Optiz, 2008; Schirmer & Schaffer, 2010; Skidmore, Perez-Parent, & Arnfield, 2003).

Even though teachers may feel confident about conducting guided reading, the actual practices demonstrate otherwise. Ford and Optiz (2008) conducted a study surveying more than 1,500 teachers. The responses revealed that teachers were not clear in the practices of guided

reading. These practices included the purpose of guided reading instruction in connecting it to the balanced reading program, in prompting, and in responding to students as they responded to texts. Teachers also lacked the knowledge in providing quality instruction during guided reading and in matching students with books at their instructional levels. Additionally, teachers needed assistance in strategically setting up literacy centers and in using assessments to inform instruction.

Studies have revealed teachers dominate the discussion during guided reading (Skidmore et al., 2003; Fisher, 2008) and fail to elicit from students their background experiences to develop comprehension of the text (Fisher, 2008). Previous studies have shown the inadequacies in the implementation of guided reading, and the need for training on such an approach to provide teachers the support they need to make decisions to implement guided reading effectively (Ford & Opitz, 2008; Fisher, 2008).

This study addressed the gap in literature focusing on how teachers negotiated their instructional decisions during guided reading sessions and how their self-efficacy influenced their decisions. Teachers at the district involved in the study participated in training and coaching sessions in *Coaching Effective Guided Reading Sessions under the RTI Umbrella*, which is an intensive, prescriptive intervention approach of guided reading instruction designed for struggling readers by Maggie Allen (2013). This format is an augment to the traditional Fountas and Pinnell (1996) guided reading format and is discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the inquiry was to explore how two South Texas teachers used guided reading to inform their instructional decisions after they participated in training and coaching sessions.

## **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How do the teachers describe the ways in which they negotiate guided reading instructional decision-making?
2. What are the experiences of the teachers in helping struggling readers during guided reading?

## **Operational Definitions**

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions apply:

- **Guided Reading:** a setting where the “teacher supports each reader’s development of effective strategies for processing novel texts at increasingly challenging levels of difficulty” in a small group setting (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, p. 2). The group consists of students who use similar reading processes and read text at the same level with the teacher’s support. The teacher introduces a new text, works with individual students, focuses on one or two teaching points, and might assign an extension activity.
- **Reading Strategies:** According to Clay (1991), reading strategies “are ways of working to locate information, or to work on information, or to relate it to things already known, or to transform it by some known procedure, or to produce a possible interpretation and a response” (p. 331).
- **Vocabulary:** knowing the key vocabulary in the text. It means developing a deep understanding of the American culture in order to comprehend the meaning of the words in the context of the story (Pang, 2013).

- Comprehension strategies: skills children apply to understand what they read. Skills such as summarizing what was read, retelling the story, among others (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2013)
- Phonics: children know that each phoneme represents a letter and these phonemes are blended together to form words. Children are able to use their knowledge of phonics to read unknown words (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2013).
- Instructional Interactions: the interaction between the teacher and the student during guided reading instruction. The teacher assists students with problem-solving strategies when students encounter difficulty with the text (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).
- Instructional Decisions: decisions the teacher makes based on her knowledge of the reading process in response to students needs during guided reading instruction and help students move towards reading independence (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Forsyth & Roller, 1997/ 1998).

### **Methodological Framework**

Qualitative research, often referred to as interpretive research, assumes reality is constructed. According to Crotty (1998), there is no such thing as truth, but rather meaning is constructed from engagements in daily experiences. There is no meaning without a human mind. Creswell (2007) defines qualitative research as a process that begins with “assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (p. 37).

An interpretivist framework informed this inquiry. In an interpretivist paradigm, the investigator’s intention is “to make sense (or interpret) the meanings others have about the

world” (Creswell, 2007, p. 21). Thus, on purpose of interpretivism is to understand “how people make sense of their lives, what they experience, how they interpret these experiences, how they structure their social worlds” (Merriam, 1998, p. 19). Therefore, the investigator’s goal was to have discussions and interactions with those being studied. Through open-ended questioning, the investigator initiated conversations to listen carefully to the dialogue of people. From these social interactions, the researcher made interpretations to construct knowledge (Creswell, 2007).

In this study, two teachers’ instructional practices in the implementation of the guided reading intervention were documented through interviews. Observations conducted during small group instruction and the collection of lesson plans augmented further findings to understand teachers’ perspectives and instructional experiences throughout the progression of the study. Understanding the meaning of the experience through the eyes of the participants was the purpose of this study as it attempted to: (1) understand the thought processes of teachers during the guided reading sessions, (2) give a voice to these teachers as to how they negotiated instructional decisions during guided reading instruction, and (3) gain an understanding of how teachers’ instructional decisions changed throughout the study.

Further, the design for this research was a case study. Case study “is an ideal design for understanding and interpreting observations of educational phenomena” (Merriam, 1988, p. 2). Because the purpose of this study was to explore how two teachers used guided reading to inform their instructional decisions after having participated in training and coaching sessions, case study design allowed for the investigation of this experience. Merriam (1988) posits research “focused on discovery, insight, and understanding from the perspectives of those being studied offers the greatest promise of making significant contributions to the knowledge base and

practice of education” (p. 3). For this reason, this study looked at the experiences of participants’ instructional decisions in helping students with reading strategies.

Creswell (2007) defines case study as an approach in which the “investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time” (p. 73). This study took place at two elementary schools and looked at two participants. For this study, detailed, in-depth data collection consisted of multiple sources of information including interviews, observations, and artifacts.

### **Substantive Framework**

The study was informed by Albert Bandura’s social cognitive theory, which centers on the concept of self-efficacy. Bandura’s (1997) view of personal self-efficacy refers to the “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (p. 3). Self-efficacy is seen whenever an individual sets a goal; it is the individual’s self-willpower that serves as a force to guide him/her to develop and carry out a plan to achieve the desired goal. Bandura (1997) contends, “A capability is only as good as its execution. The self-assurance with which people approach and manage difficult tasks determines whether they make good or poor use of their capabilities” (p. 35).

According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy beliefs are constructed from four principal sources of information:

- (1) enactive mastery experiences that serve as indicators of capability;
- (2) vicarious experiences that alter efficacy beliefs through transmission of competencies and comparison with the attainments of others;
- (3) verbal persuasion and allied types of social influences that one possesses certain capabilities; and



(4) physiological and affective states from which people partly judge their capableness, strength, and vulnerability to dysfunction. (p. 79)

Any belief that arises may do so through one or more of these sources. This concept of personal self-efficacy translates to teachers. Bandura (1997) states, “the task of creating learning environments conducive to development of cognitive competencies rests heavily on the talents and self-efficacy of teachers” (p. 240). Therefore, the perception teachers have about their instructional efficacy, to an extent, influences their instructional decisions and shapes their judgments about students’ cognitive abilities. The instructional decisions of a teacher with a high sense of self-efficacy will create a learning environment conducive to student achievement.

### **Significance of the Study**

Teachers are the key to the success of their students. This study is significant because it provides an in-depth understanding of the experiences of two teachers and how their self-efficacy influenced their practices as they engaged in the teaching of guided reading with struggling readers. Guided reading is an approach to reading that requires teachers to be knowledgeable in the complex cognitive process involved in learning to read. Through guided reading, teachers coach students as they learn to read. Teachers know their students’ needs and make the instructional decisions to support them as readers. The purpose of this study is to provide educators, administrators, and policy makers with an understanding of how the participants derived meaning from their surroundings and how this meaning influenced the instructional decisions they made during guided reading sessions.

### **Limitations**

This study tells the stories of two teachers engaged in guided reading sessions and how they negotiated their instructional decisions in a South Texas district. This study took place over

the course of four months. Because the study focused on *Coaching Effective Guided Reading Sessions under the RTI Umbrella*, the study is limited to the experiences of the two participants and not necessarily the experiences of all the teachers in this district. Interviews and observations took place in person and were conducted by the researcher. Krefting (1990) points out that “truth value is usually obtained from the discovery of human experiences as they are lived and perceived by the informants” (p. 215). The researcher established trust and rapport by using questions in the interview so participants did not feel intimidated and could relay their experiences comfortably. The researcher assumed that the participants were giving accurate information to the best of their ability and were not misleading her.

Another limitation present is the researcher’s subjectivity interwoven in the lines of these stories. Peshkin (1988) states that a researcher’s subjectivity is present in every moment of the inquiry. It behooves the researcher to acknowledge and become aware of it so that she knows how her “subjectivity maybe shaping [the] inquiry and [the] outcomes” (p. 17). The researcher was mindful of her strong beliefs in the importance of guided reading as an approach to help struggling readers. The researcher was open to the experiences of the participants in the study. In order to provide an accurate representation of the data, the researcher included the participants in every step of this study. Member checks and peer debriefing helped improve the trustworthiness and rigor of the study.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented background information to inform readers of the purpose of the study. The research questions were presented as well as the qualitative methodology that guided the study. Additionally, introductions of interpretivism and Bandura’s substantive frameworks, which informed the study, were discussed.

## CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter presents a review of research related to the study. The following topics are discussed: (a) substantive framework – Bandura’s Framework for Self-Efficacy, (b) historical precursors to balanced literacy, (c) balanced literacy, (d) current practices, (e) guided reading, (f) Coaching Effective Guided Reading Sessions under the RTI Umbrella, (g) literacy coaching: a model for professional development, and (h) response to intervention.

The purpose behind this discussion is to situate this study in the theoretical, historical, and current practices so findings from the study can contribute to the dialogue on how teachers negotiate instructional practice during guided reading instruction.

### **Substantive Framework – Bandura’s Framework for Self-Efficacy**

The U.S. Department of Education, under the No Child Left Behind Act (2002) set out to increase the academic achievement of students through several strategies. One of those strategies pertained to teachers. The act called for the improvement of teacher quality and the increase in the number of “highly qualified teachers in the classroom” (NCLB, 2002). Teachers make the difference. Allington (2002b) states that a series of studies have confirmed that “good teachers, effective teachers, matter much more than particular curriculum materials, pedagogical approaches, or ‘proven programs’” (p. 740). But what factors influence teachers to be effective in their instruction and lead to student success?

Bandura’s (1997) social cognitive theory and view of self-efficacy rely on an individual’s perception of competence rather than capabilities (Hoy & Spero, 2005; Jamil, Downer, & Pianta, 2012). Bandura’s (1997) view of personal self-efficacy refers to the “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). The desired outcome is achieved by the individual’s power to plan and execute it.

Bandura (1997) contends “a capability is only as good as its execution. The self-assurance with which people approach and manage difficult tasks determines whether they make good or poor use of their capabilities” (p. 35).

People’s lives are guided by their beliefs of personal efficacy. An individual with a high sense of self-efficacy will achieve more personal goals in life than an individual with a low sense of self-efficacy. Bandura’s (1993) presentation of agency highlights human beliefs as the central mechanism that leads humans to exercise control over their functions and events that influence their lives. According to Bandura (1993), efficacy beliefs influence people’s behaviors, emotions, thoughts, motivations, and even themselves from four major processes. These processes include the cognitive, motivational, affective, and selection processes (Bandura, 1993; Bandura 1997).

Self-efficacy beliefs influence individuals cognitively in that most processes of action begin with a thought. Individuals’ beliefs affect how they will carry out these actions to construct this thought and bring it to pass. Individuals with a high sense of efficacy set goals and work to accomplish them. On the other hand, those with a low sense of efficacy doubt their capabilities and focus on all the things that could go wrong, failing to achieve a set goal (Bandura, 1993; Bandura, 1997). The effects of self-efficacy beliefs in motivation can be seen in the following ways: “They determine the goals people set for themselves, how much effort they expend, how long they persevere in the face of difficulties, and their resilience to failures” (Bandura, 1993, p. 131). Any individual with a sense of low-self efficacy will give up easily.

Self-efficacy beliefs also affect the affective process. Depending on the capabilities of the individual, self-efficacy affects the levels of stress, depression, and motivation individuals experience in threatening or difficult situations. This is seen in occasions when an individual

with a high sense of self-efficacy experiences a threatening situation or is under pressure; this individual will usually learn to cope with the situation. On the other hand, an individual with a low self-efficacy and under such circumstances will experience stress, anxiety, and even depression. Bandura (1997) states, “They dwell on their coping deficiencies, magnify the severity of possible threats, and worry about perils that rarely (if ever) happen” (p. 140).

Bandura (1993) adds that “people are partly the product of their environment” (p. 135). Personal beliefs of self-efficacy influence the decisions individuals make which shape the course of their lives and influence their environments.

According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy beliefs are constructed from four principal sources of information. An individual’s belief of self-efficacy may be influenced by any of these sources of information which may come from personal experiences of success, accomplishments of others, verbal persuasion, and the physiological and affective state of an individual. Since teachers work in a collectively social environment interacting with others, this influences a teacher’s sense of efficacy. Teachers with a high sense of efficacy will motivate their students. Bandura (1997) states:

The task of creating learning environments conducive to development of cognitive competencies rests heavily on the talents and self-efficacy of teachers. Evidence indicates that teachers’ beliefs in their instructional efficacy partly determine how they structure academic activities in their classrooms and shape students’ evaluations of their intellectual capabilities. (p. 240)

Teachers’ beliefs in their capabilities influence their behavior as well as the decisions they make to engage students, deliver instructional strategies, and manage their classrooms.

Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) developed the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) to

assess teachers' levels of efficacy in the areas of student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management through the use of twenty-four questions. A teacher with a high sense of efficacy is more open-minded and willing to implement new ideas in the classroom, from how they plan and organize instruction to how they deliver instruction and how they relate to students (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Allinder (1994) asserted that when teachers possess a great belief that education makes a difference in students' lives, they hold an assurance in the effectiveness of their instructional practices. For example, a teacher with a high self-efficacy when encountering a student with discipline difficulties or low confidence will tend to find ways to work with this student (Midgley, Feldlaufer, & Eccles, 1989). However, a teacher with a low sense of efficacy perhaps will give up on the student. Thus, student achievement is influenced by a teacher's self-efficacy (Hoy, 2000).

Hoy and Spero (2005) conducted a longitudinal study that looked at the efficacy of prospective and novice teachers. The participants were a cohort of elementary education majors in a mid-western public university. They traced 53 prospective participants from the beginning of their preparation program until after they completed their student teaching. They followed 29 of 53 prospective participants who went on to complete a year of teaching. The participants were given four questionnaires to complete after the completion of each facet already mentioned. The study found that teachers' efficacy rose during teacher preparation and student teaching, but declined with the actual experience as teachers. They found that with the support the subjects received during their student teaching experience, their efficacy levels were high, but decreased during the first year of teaching once this support was withdrawn. Their findings showed evidence that teacher support may be important to protect a high teacher-efficacy during early

teaching. They also found that schools need make special efforts to support new teachers who work with low-income students.

Jamil et al. (2012) studied the factors related to the self-efficacy beliefs of teachers as they transition from the pre-service stage to professional teachers. Their goal was to test a “predictive model which considers the joint contribution of mastery teaching experiences and teachers’ underlying psychological attributes of personality and beliefs to pre-service teacher self-efficacy” (p. 123). The participants were chosen from four cohorts. They included a total of 509 pre-service teachers in their final year of their teacher education program at a state university. Participants were required to complete surveys at the beginning of their student teaching experience and at the end. Participants were also observed by university supervisors using an instrument from which data was obtained. This study found that outgoing pre-service teachers had a higher sense of self-efficacy. Additionally, Jamil et al. (2012) found that pre-service teachers who exhibited negative affects and anxiety lacked the confidence to see themselves as successful teachers; however, pre-service teachers whose beliefs about how children learn embodied “constructivist and democratic” approaches felt a sense of higher self-efficacy. The study also found there was no relation between the mastery teaching performance observations by pre-service teachers and their self-efficacy. Overall, Jamil et al. (2012) concluded that given the limited time pre-service teachers spent in the classroom experience, the findings provided evidence to support the premise that “stable psychological attributes such as personality traits and beliefs may serve as important predictors of teacher self-efficacy even when accounting for mastery teaching experiences” (Jamil et al., 2012, p. 131).

Jamil et al., (2012) also identified three implications for consideration. First, teachers who are knowledgeable about child and adolescent development tend to have a higher self-

efficacy. Second, pre-service teachers need to be engaged in exploring their personalities and how they may affect their classrooms in different situations. The third implication “suggests that pre-service teachers need opportunities to receive accurate, yet constructive feedback about their teaching performance during field placements in order to make well-balanced judgments about effective and less effective teaching moments” (Jamil, et al., 2012, p. 133).

In another study, Goddard, Hoy, and Hoy (2000) studied 47 elementary schools through a series of tests and instruments to determine the influence of collective teacher efficacy on student achievement. The population consisted of elementary schools within a large urban Midwestern school district and data was collected from teachers and students in the 47 elementary schools. There were 452 teachers who completed surveys. One-half of the teachers completed surveys with questions on “collective efficacy and other social processes in school” (p. 493). The other half of the teachers completed surveys with “different questions, including a measure of instructional integrity” (p. 493). Data collected for students consisted of student achievement and demographic data from all the schools. The findings demonstrated a positive association between collective teacher efficacy and student achievement between schools. Goddard et al. (2000) define collective teacher efficacy as the “perception of teachers in a school that the efforts of the faculty as a whole will have a positive effect on students” (p. 503). In their study, they presented a theoretical model that expanded collective teacher efficacy from the individual teacher efficacy to the organizational level to explain the “influence of collective teacher efficacy on between-school differences in student achievement” (p. 502). Goddard et al. (2000) stated their study provided “additional evidence that teacher beliefs about the capabilities of their faculty are systematically related to student achievement” (p. 503).



### **Historical Precursors to Balanced Literacy**

The period after 1925 saw intense research and application in reading instruction and saw the emergence of two schools of thought. One school of thought believed learning occurred through sequential skills carefully planned by an adult. The other school of thought included the devotees of the “Activity Movement.” This philosophy resided in the idea that “learning best took place when the child was permitted to carry out his own purposes, meeting and solving attendant problems within the context of his own experiences and needs and through the medium of his own activities” (Smith, 1974, p. 197). During this time, the concept of reading as an integral part of the children’s total experience encouraged the teaching of reading in thematic units of interest to the children.

Moreover, the procedures used to teach phonics experienced a change during this time. Rather than teaching phonics in isolation it was taught in context. Smith (1974) summarized these changes:

When the sound of a new element is taught, the sound is usually to generalize from several known words containing that element, rather than being taught in isolation. In solving a new word, children are taught to think the sounds of separate elements rather than to say them orally before pronouncing the word as a whole. Children are frequently given training in finding out words through context clues as well as attacking them phonetically. (p. 235)

Phonics instruction was also taught only to those children who needed it.

After World War II, the emphasis turned to a systematic method of teaching phonics. Beginning teaching instruction for the first time considered reading readiness and the use of instruction in context clues and structural analysis in the teaching of reading. Skill development

came to the forefront and skills were listed under the following headings: “phonics, silent reading, oral reading, comprehension, skillful use of books, libraries and other sources of information” (Smith, 1974, p. 291).

According to Pearson (2002), “the underlying model of reading in the 1960s was still a pretty straightforward perceptual process; the simple view – that comprehension is the product of decoding and listening comprehension ( $RC=Dec*LCP$ )” (p. 7). However, major changes in reading instruction that influenced pedagogy resulted from two major studies: The First Grade Studies (Bond & Dykstra, 1997), funded by the Cooperative Research Branch of the United States of Education, and Jeanne Chall’s *Learning to Read: The Great Debate* (1967). The publication of the *First Grade Studies* showed that any instructional method applied to the instruction of beginning reading resulted in equal or better results compared to the methods utilized in the basals of the time (Pearson, 2002).

Chall (1994), “sought to find whether there was any evidence that certain beginning reading methods produce better results and help prevent reading failure” (p. 2). The existing research was analyzed by comparing the different methods used in beginning reading instruction. Chall (1967) found in her experimental studies:

1. The early emphasis on code learning produced better word recognition and spelling making the material understandable to the child at least up until the fourth grade (p. 83).
2. Methods proposed by most linguists were neither proved nor disproved as being more effective than other code-emphasis methods such as systematic phonics (p. 83).
3. There was no evidence to maintain that either a code-emphasis or a word method produced a greater love for reading in children (p. 83).

4. Evidence did show “children of below-average and average intelligence and children of lower socioeconomic background [did] better with an early code emphasis” (p. 84).
5. Correlational studies supported the findings that an initial code emphasis approach to reading instruction produced better readers and spellers (p. 84).

Chall (1967) found the effectiveness of a code emphasis in the lower grades produced effective results in reading and prevented reading difficulties in students up until the fourth grade.

However, a major shift occurred during the 1980s and 1990s when scholars in the fields of sociolinguistics and philosophy began to influence reading instruction. Their philosophies inspired the whole language approach to literacy. Scholars contended learning to read was as much a natural process as learning a language. Goodman (1976) refuted the idea that, “reading [was] a precise process...[involving] exact, detailed, sequential perception and identification of letters, words, spelling patterns and large language units” (p. 1). Instead, Goodman (1976) asserted that reading was a “psycholinguistic guessing game... [involving] an interaction between thought and language. Efficient reading [did] not result from precise perception and identification of all elements, but from skill in selecting the fewest, most productive cues necessary to produce guesses which [were] right the first time” (p. 2). This philosophical view towards reading emphasized the idea that when readers read, they are attuned to three cues: syntactic, semantic, and graphophonemic to decipher print as they make sense of the text.

Both Smith (2010) and Goodman (1976) viewed reading as the act of making sense of print and argued that the instruction of reading confused children in the first place. Smith (2010) contended, “Children aren’t usually confused by written language – until someone tries to instruct them on how to read...reading print is as natural as reading faces. Learning to read should be as natural as any other comprehensible aspect of existence” (p. 2-3). Smith (2010)

asserted that reading was simply using one's own experiences and background knowledge to make sense of it.

Whole language advocates contended language acquisition occurred as a whole and not in parts. The idea was founded on the idea that if children were immersed in print-rich environments with authentic literature, authentic writing experiences and reading would happen. Readers did not necessarily need to know every letter in the word, but based on the meaning of the sentence, the word could be figured out by the reader. Reading was viewed as a natural meaning-making process. Pressley (2006) defined whole language as “an approach to literacy education that emphasizes natural development of literacy competence” (p. 15).

Opponents of the whole language approach to literacy agreed with the importance of prior knowledge in comprehending the text, but disagreed with the idea that reading just occurred naturally. Pressley (2006) stated, “The scientific evidence is simply overwhelming that letter-sound cues are more important in recognizing words than either semantic or syntactic cues, despite the assertions to the contrary by Smith and Goodman” (p. 21).

Advocates for a middle ground between whole language and phonics called for a balance between both approaches. The emergence of research favored a balance between a holistic literacy approach and a skill-based approach to the instruction of reading.

### **Balanced Literacy**

A balanced approach to literacy involves a coherent integration of a whole language approach with skills instruction and immersing children in this environment (Pressley, Roehrig, Bogner, Raphael, & Dolezal, 2002; Wharton-McDonald, Pressley, Rankin, Mistretta, & Ettenberger, 1997; Spiegel, 1998). Advocates of balanced literacy approaches point to a set of

components that characterize the uniqueness and complexity of this approach. Spiegel (1998) posited that a balanced approach to literacy is characterized by the following:

- It is research based.
- Teachers play a vital role as informed decision makers.
- It is situated in a comprehensive view of literacy.

Spiegel (1998) concludes that teachers who implement a balanced approach are informed decision makers who are flexible and willing to accept responsibility for their decisions. These teachers possess a bag full of strategies and know when to use them. In addition, a comprehensive view of literacy includes the integration of reading and writing in a meaningful manner. Word identification is a component of reading; therefore, it may be necessary to equip students with instruction in word identification strategies and phonics. Reading takes the aesthetic and efferent modes (Rosenblatt, 1978). Students read for enjoyment and also for learning. During writing experiences, the focus is in communicating effectively, not in the instruction of mechanics in isolation. Mechanics are viewed as “the vehicle through which ideas are expressed” (Spiegel, 1998, p. 119). The goal is to develop lifelong learners who use reading and writing as the vehicles to acquire and transmit knowledge (Pressley et al., 2002 & Wharton-McDonald et al., 1997). Spiegel (1998) defines a balanced approach to literacy as:

a decision-making approach through which the teacher makes thoughtful choices each day about the best way to help each child become a better reader and writer. A balanced approach is not constrained by or reactive to a particular philosophy. It is responsive to new issues while maintaining what research as already shown to be effective. It is an approach that requires and frees a teacher to be a reflective decision maker and to fine

tune and modify what he or she is doing each day in order to meet the needs of each child. (p. 116)

Similarly, Wharton-McDonald et al. (1997) found in their study of practices that highly effective teachers utilize a balance between skills instruction and whole “authentic” literature in their reading instruction for students in primary grades. Classrooms were submerged into literacy experiences that were diverse and authentic. Wharton-McDonald et al. (1997) asserted, “Highly effective teachers reported using both immersion in authentic literacy-related experiences and extensive explicit teaching through modeling, explanation, and minilesson re-explanations, especially with respect to decoding and other skills” (p. 519). Instructional approaches used by teachers implementing a balanced approach to literacy incorporate a context of constructing meaning as students engaged in holistic teaching and skill-based instruction (Cantrell, 1999; Pressley et al., 2002; Pressley, 2006; Wharton-McDonald et al, 1997; Spiegel, 1998). Pressley et al. (2002) states, “Balanced reading programs include explicit teaching of comprehension strategies and self-monitoring, for these higher-order skills do not develop automatically from extensive reading” (p. 10).

It has been established that in a balanced approach to literacy, the teachers are decision makers who make informed decisions to ensure the success of each child. Providing a balanced approach to literacy instruction requires teachers to differentiate instruction and assess students skillfully to address the specific needs of a diverse population. Gambrell, Malloy, and Mazzoni (2011) wrote, “The classroom teacher must be adept at identifying student needs through ongoing formative assessments and providing appropriate whole-group, small group, and individual instruction” (p. 17). Wharton-McDonald et al. (1997) reported highly effective teachers “varied as to the format of instruction” from whole class to small group and

individualized (p. 519). Cantrell (1999) found that “grouping of students for reading instruction was another commonality among the effective teachers” (p. 375). Further, Capellini (2005), in *Balancing Reading & Language Learners*, stated that “guided reading and language development should be part of a carefully planned out, balanced program that supports children in a nonthreatening, welcoming environment” (p. xvii).

### **Current Practices**

Guided reading is a component of a balanced literacy approach. However, guided reading has changed since it was first introduced in the 1920s. Therefore, it is helpful to take an in-depth look at how it has transitioned into the guided reading of today. This section begins by presenting a historical timeline of guided reading. It continues by presenting literacy coaching as a model for professional development, which offers continuous support to teachers rather than the more common one-day staff development. The section concludes with response to intervention, a federal initiative that is a proactive approach offering early support to students with learning and behavioral needs.

### **Guided Reading**

Ford and Optiz (2011) provide a historical evolution of guided reading. Guided reading, as it is known today, was not always used for the same means or used with the same consistency. Further, its practices have changed. However, traces of guided reading are found in the basal readers of the past. For example, in the early 1950s, Emmett Betts’ Directed Reading Activity included guided reading as the second of four steps of the activity (Ford & Optiz, 2011). Step two, referred to as Guided First Reading, called for silent reading to precede oral reading along with the use of guided questions to promote “motivation” (Hoggard, 1955). Betts and William

Gray also introduced the concept of flexibility in grouping (Smith, 1974). Emmet Betts, in Smith (1974), quotes:

These groups are always flexible and tentative. Changes from one group to another are made throughout the year. Moreover, the pupils may work in one group for reading and in another group for art or music. Such flexible and tentative grouping of the pupils makes for better-rounded social and academic adjustments.... When a child begins to outrun other members of his group, he should be considered for another group. The change is made after a careful appraisal of his level of achievement and of his needs. If he can meet the challenge of another group, he is transferred. (p. 294)

This idea of flexibility is present in today's guided reading model. This idea adds dynamic grouping because it involves "ongoing, systematic observation" to regroup students based on their reading achievement (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, p. 105).

Ford and Optiz (2011) recorded that in 1957, Lillian Gray and Dora Reese focused on Bett's activity and used the term "guided reading" to describe the specifics of step two of the Directed Reading Activity. They provided the teacher with the specific questions to guide students in their reading (Ford & Optiz, 2011). In 1966, guided reading, known as the "Guiding Silent Reading," was the fourth step in the nine-step daily reading lesson plan developed by Bond and Wagner (Ford & Optiz, 2011). Later in 1980, according to Ford and Optiz (2011), George and Evelyn Spache, using the ideas presented earlier on guided reading, implemented a five-step plan "as part of a typical basal primary reading lesson" (p. 228). Guided reading made up the second component of this plan, which called for the teacher guiding students to set a purpose for reading. In the 1990s, Mooney (1995) brought guided reading to the forefront through her definition of the term as, "guided reading is when you and a small group of children,



or when you and a child, talk, think and read through a text which offers manageable challenges for each reader” (p. 54). Guided reading saw a major shift in 1996 when Fountas and Pinnell (1996) presented it as a way to define small group instruction rather than seeing it as an instructional technique to use with small groups, as it had been done in the past. Fountas and Pinnell (1996) define guided reading as:

a context in which a teacher supports each reader’s development of effective strategies for processing novel texts at increasingly challenging levels of difficulty. The teacher works with a small group of children who use similar reading processes and are able to read similar levels of text with support...The ultimate goal in guided reading is to help children learn how to use independent reading strategies successfully. Teachers, based on their knowledge of children, possible texts, and the processes involved in reading and learning to read, make a series of complex decisions that influence and mediate literacy for the young children in the group. (p. 2)

Therefore, the teacher’s knowledge of guided reading is prominent in the success of students’ literacy achievement. Betts (1950) cites the “differences in the levels of professional competence of teachers” (p. 7). This is interesting because it puts forth the realization that teachers, just as students, have different learning abilities and the teachers’ awareness of their abilities influences their self-efficacy beliefs. Betts (1950) goes on to say that teachers’ “professional competence, their motivation, their strengths and weaknesses” need to be taken into consideration so that the supervision of teachers can be differentiated (p. 7). Few studies have been conducted in how teachers negotiate their instructional decision during guided reading based on their knowledge of guided reading.

A United Kingdom (UK) study was conducted on five schools that were visited on three occasions over a six-month period to investigate the quality of teacher-student dialogue during guided reading sessions and its relationship to comprehension (Skidmore et al., 2003). The study found that, for the most part, teachers dominated the discussion in the lesson. The dialogue is what the authors refer to as Bakhtin's "pedagogical dialogue," because it resembles "someone who knows and possesses the truth instructs someone who is ignorant of it and in error" (p. 52). In this study, teachers perceive themselves as those who possess all the truth instructing those who are ignorant, which happen to be the students. Results from this study found that teachers failed to ask authentic questions. Teachers dominated who would answer questions by selecting and calling on students rather than allowing students to volunteer their thinking. The topic of conversation was teacher-guided, and the teacher did most of the talking. When students showed thinking outside the box, the teachers failed to expand on this and instead redirected students back to what they had determined as the topic of conversation. Teachers showed strong control over the conversations that occurred during the guided reading sessions.

A second study conducted in the UK by Fisher (2008) investigated the practices of teaching comprehension and critical literacy to fluent readers during the guided reading session. Three teachers were observed conducting guided reading sessions; then they were interviewed. Even though the three teachers asserted they followed the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) guidelines set out for guided reading instruction, this was not evident in the study. Even if the study was conducted on a small scale and generalizations could be made, it is interesting to bring to the forefront that all teachers observed spent three-quarters of the time listening to students read aloud. They failed to analyze how students made meaning and to teach "appropriate strategies to enhance this or [encourage] a personal, analytical and critical response" (Fisher,

2008, p. 26). Results indicated the goal of the discussion from the lesson was for students to derive the teacher's interpretation of the text. Students were not encouraged to use their own experiences and ask questions to interpret the text. Fisher (2008) concluded that teachers did not have a clear understanding of critical literacy or how to guide students in applying it in their reading.

Schirmer and Schaffer (2010) conducted a study to assess the effectiveness of guided reading as an instructional approach to the teaching of reading to elementary deaf students. This study found that even though elementary students showed progress in reading achievement, as measured by running records, the overall progress was limited. They attributed these modest gains to the inconsistency in the implementation of guided reading. Schirmer and Schaffer (2010) recommended a "greater amount of in-class coaching and offering regularized professional development sessions throughout the school year" to assist teachers as they instructed guided reading (p. 384).

Ford and Optiz (2008) surveyed 1,500 K through second-grade teachers on their understandings and practices on guided reading. Their survey addressed five general questions: "What is the purpose of guided reading groups? What grouping techniques should be used? What texts should be used? How is instruction planned with and away from the teacher? How are learners assessed during guided reading?" (p. 309). The results showed teachers were confused and did not have a clear understanding of the practices of guided reading. Ford and Optiz (2008) recommended the establishment of an in-depth professional development system to address the following areas to help teachers in the implementation of guided reading:

- helping teachers gain an understanding of the purpose of guided reading instruction,
- connecting guided reading instruction to the balanced reading program,

- prompting and responding to students as students responded to texts,
- providing quality instruction during guided reading,
- helping teachers to select texts that are at the students instructional levels and ensure they are reading an equal amount of fiction and nonfiction texts,
- helping teachers strategically set up literacy centers where students are engaged and learning is taking place,
- helping teachers use assessments to impact instruction. (p. 323-324)

Furthermore, in the dynamics of guided reading as defined by Fountas and Pinnell (n.d.), each student reads text to himself eliminating “round robin” reading. Books are selected by the teacher. Groups are flexible and change based on students’ needs and assessment results. Teachers provide instruction on strategies such as: “word solving, searching for and using information, self-monitoring and correcting, summarizing information, maintaining fluency, adjusting for purpose and genre, predicting, making connections (personal, other texts, and world knowledge), synthesizing, inferring, analyzing, and critiquing” (Fountas and Pinnell, n.d). Through discussion, meaning is derived from the text and thinking is expanded. From their readings, students complete authentic assignments rather than completing worksheets. Explicit instruction is provided through reading strategies. The introduction of the lesson is important since it promotes “critical thinking and deep comprehension” (Fountas and Pinnell, n.d). During the lesson, “the teacher incorporates explicit vocabulary instruction and phonics or word work” (Fountas and Pinnell, n.d). These are the characteristics at the core of *Coaching Effective Guided Reading Sessions under the RTI Umbrella* approach to guided reading.

## **Coaching Effective Guided Reading Sessions under the RTI Umbrella**

*Coaching Effective Guided Reading Sessions under the RTI Umbrella* is a guided reading professional development program developed by Maggie Allen (2003). This is a research-based approach to guided reading that explicitly and intentionally presents vocabulary, phonics, high frequency words, and the structure of the text in the introduction of the guided reading lesson. It is an intensive, prescriptive form of guided reading instruction designed for struggling readers. Because *Coaching Effective Guided Reading Sessions under the RTI Umbrella* (2013) offers explicit instruction and support with greater intensity than the traditional guided reading approach, this makes it an intervention that falls within the response to intervention umbrella. Part of the introduction also includes the picture walk of the text. After the guided reading lesson, students gather, without teacher intervention, to practice reading books at their independent reading level at the Book Club before moving to the literacy centers.

In this approach, the reading levels ranging from AA through Z have been grouped, and there are different coaching lesson formats for each group. In levels AA through D, students learn the basic reading skills. In levels E through I, students are coached to become strategic readers. In levels I and J, students are coached to read silently. In levels K through M, students read silently and are monitored by their teacher. Once students have mastered the fluency level as independent readers in levels N through Z, they continue growing as readers as they engage in silent reading and participate in activities such as novel studies and literature circles. Each guided reading lesson is approximately 20 to 25 minutes long and is structured to last two days. At all levels, teachers coach students to think critically about the text through questioning. Raphael (1984) described three levels of questions that help a reader understand the text. These questions range in levels from simple to difficult and include right there questions, think and

search questions, and on my own questions. Right there questions are the easiest type of questions because the answers are right there on the text, usually in the same sentence. Think and search questions require students to connect with the text and search for the answer in different sentences. On my own questions require higher order thinking skills, since students reflect on the text, use their prior knowledge to connect with the text, and consider different perspectives to provide a response. What follows is a description of the expectations for each level from AA through M.

**Levels AA through D – Basic reading skills.** Each guided reading lesson for reading levels AA through D consists of mini-lessons that provide support and build background knowledge before struggling readers approach the leveled texts. The mini-lessons introduce a phonics skill and high frequency words followed by the Reading-Readiness mini-lesson, which includes the vocabulary words. The picture walk follows and then the reading of the leveled text. Each skill lesson takes about two-to-three minutes and addresses phonics and high-frequency words. The teacher creates the phonics and high-frequency word cards beforehand and uses them during the mini-lesson. The Reading-Readiness mini-lesson, which usually takes ten to five minutes, serves as the introduction to the vocabulary words and pictures or visuals that represent the words students will encounter in the text. The teacher also creates vocabulary word cards ahead of time as well as a picture representation card for each vocabulary word. Sentence strips are used to introduce the structure or pattern of the text. The pattern is written out in a fill-in-the-blank format by the teacher. Students use the vocabulary word cards and pictures to fill in the blanks.

A word used by Allen (2013) to explain the purpose of using the structure of the text during the introduction of the book was “implant.” This word communicated the idea of

anchoring the text's structure in the students' minds before the reading of the text. Therefore, after the completion of the two mini-lessons, in order to implant the structure of the text in the students' minds and speech, the teacher introduces the leveled book and guides students through a picture walk speaking the structure of the text. The teacher conducts the first reading, and students are asked to read the second reading. In levels AA and B, the second reading is done as an echo chant reading. In levels C and D, in the first reading, the teacher starts the students reading and then fades out to listen to students read. During the second reading, the teacher listens to students read chorally a few pages at a time.

After the guided lesson is completed, students who are reading below level get to practice reading in their Book Club for ten minutes before going to any of the literacy workstations to complete the follow-up activity. The Book Club consists of students reading books they have previously read or new books that are one level below the students' instructional reading level. Students take responsibility of their reading since they conduct the Book Club away from the teacher. In the Book Club, students have a choice between three ways to read the book: one child reads to the whole group or conducts choral reading; each student reads alone phone style, where each child reads with the assistance of a whisper phone, or students can read in partner reading.

Before students can transition to levels E through H or any level, the teacher refers to the Reading Behaviors to Notice and Support (Appendix G) to assess if students have mastered the reading behaviors for each reading level. The teacher also uses these reading behaviors lists to plan his/her guided reading lessons.

**Levels E through H – Coaching strategies to become strategic readers.** The target for levels E through H is to coach students to become strategic readers. The format for the lesson consists of a mini-skills lesson that addresses a phonic skill and high frequency words

recognition skill, as needed, the Reading-Readiness lesson that addresses extended patterns and familiar structures of the text, and the vocabulary lesson. The teacher continues to create phonics, high frequency words, and vocabulary word cards as well as use sentence strips to write down sentence structures of the text.

The teacher provides a short introduction of the story and a picture walk. Because the target goal at these reading levels is to coach students in how to become strategic readers, one of the prompts embedded in the students' brains is, "That is what good readers do." Students learn to strategize because this is what good readers do during reading. Instruction in strategies is critical at this point. A strategy reminder and reinforcement is added to the lesson. The three strategies addressed involve word recognition, context analysis, and comprehension strategies. Students conduct a first reading at their own pace, or the reading can be done chorally with teacher support. A discussion over the literary elements, connections, or a retelling of the story follows. Students conduct a second reading independently. When necessary, the second reading can follow a paired reading or choral reading format. A follow-up activity can also be assigned to be completed at students' literacy work station. After the guided reading lesson, students who are reading below the reading level spend ten minutes practicing reading at the Book Club.

There are necessary focus skills students need to develop to begin silent reading at level I and beyond. The teacher refers to the Reading Behaviors to Notice and Support to assess if students have developed these focus skills and to plan his/her guided reading instruction.

**Levels I & J – Coached silent reading.** Once students reach the levels I and J, the teacher begins coaching students in silent reading. The lesson format for these levels is vital to reading preparation because it guides student to be independent readers and understand the text. Before students read, the teacher asks a focus question geared to help students recognize the



important information in each section. Students are given a purpose for reading so they learn to discriminate between important and unimportant information. After reading, questions are asked that target comprehension to help students remember what they read and make connections.

The lesson for the coached silent reading format consists of the mini-skills lessons, as needed. The teacher introduces the story and conducts a picture walk or chapter walk for books divided into chapters. The text is covered and students use the pictures to predict the story line. The teacher highlights key concepts and implants (identifies) unusual language structures in the text. At this point, teachers elicit reading strategies from students rather than telling them what good readers would do. Before beginning the first reading, the teacher presents a focus question to set the purpose for reading the first two pages. Students read with the teacher. After the reading, the teacher elicits responses from students. Students go back to re-read passages and cite the evidence from the text. The teacher continues to ask focus questions to develop the purpose of the book for the following pages in the text, and different levels of focus questions are asked. Students go back to the text to determine if the evidence is in the text, between the author and the reader, or inferential.

During the second reading, students re-read the story silently while the teacher observes and assists with strategies. After the reading, students engage in a discussion over literary elements or ideas and feelings about the story. Discussion over strategy development, vocabulary, literary elements, and language structure are conducted as needed. When connections are made, students are reminded about how these connections help them understand the text better. Independent reading is conducted using their reading bags and through the Book Clubs. An authentic follow-up activity may follow and is completed at the literacy center to strengthen skills and strategies developed during the guided reading lesson. The teacher refers to

the Reading Behaviors to Notice and Support to plan his/her lessons and assess if students have mastered the reading behaviors.

**Levels K through M – Monitored silent reading.** For lessons in levels K through M, the coached silent reading method with monitoring continues to be used to help students make the full transition to these levels of reading. The goal is to “Train the Brain to do what good readers do in silent reading so that they can work during a high pressure setting without teacher support and still be successful” (Allen, 2013, p. 45). During the first reading, students read silently while the teacher monitors. Students have a target question for their reading. After reading the assigned section or pages, they provide the answer to the question by going back to the text and reading orally the evidence that supports their answer. Students continue reading the book in sections with a focus question in mind for each of the sections. Each time they complete a section, they reread aloud the evidence that supports their responses. For the second reading, students read each section silently and then comprehension questions are asked to get them to determine the main idea of each section. A follow-up activity is assigned to be completed at the literacy workstation, after completing the reading practice in the Book Club.

In addition to learning new strategies such as Allen (2013), teachers also need continuous support to become reflective thinkers of their own practices as they implement instructional approaches to improve the reading strategies and skills of their students. One of those supports promoted in recent years by the International Reading Association (2004) is literacy coaching.

### **Literacy Coaching: A Model for Professional Development**

The role of a teacher in the effectiveness of literacy instruction has been documented in numerous studies (Allington, 2002a; Allington, 2002b; Wharton-McDonald et al., 1997). Specifically, if teachers working with students from low social economic backgrounds who

struggle with reading achievement have a high sense of efficacy in their knowledge of interventions, then the teacher can influence students' literacy achievement (Bandura, 1997). One way to build the knowledge of teachers is through effective professional development programs. NCLB (2002), in an effort to improve student reading skills, proposed as part of the Reading First funding to "provide assistance to State educational agencies and local educational agencies in preparing teachers, including special education teachers, through professional development." However, Murray, Ma, and Mazur (2008) posit that although educators and researchers know the importance of professional development, they "do not agree on which professional development models help teachers the most" (p. 203). Literacy coaching is one of the current trends of professional development currently in need of more research to correlate its practice with students' success.

In its publication, *The role and qualifications of the reading coach in the United States*, the International Reading Association (IRA, 2004) establishes literacy coaching as a means of ongoing professional development in school settings. Additionally, IRA (2004) established five requirements every literacy coach must have. A literacy coach must: (1) be an excellent reading teacher; (2) have in-depth knowledge about the reading process, acquisition, instruction and assessment; (3) have the experience in working with teachers; (4) be a group leader and an excellent presenter; and (5) be able to model, observe, and provide teachers with feedback about their instruction (IRA, 2004).

IRA (2004) also defines literacy coaches as individuals who engage in informal and formal tasks and who work with and support teachers. Informal tasks may include activities such as having conversations and study groups with teachers, developing curriculum, and working

with students. Formal tasks may include co-teaching lessons, holding team meetings, providing feedback to teachers, and analyzing data.

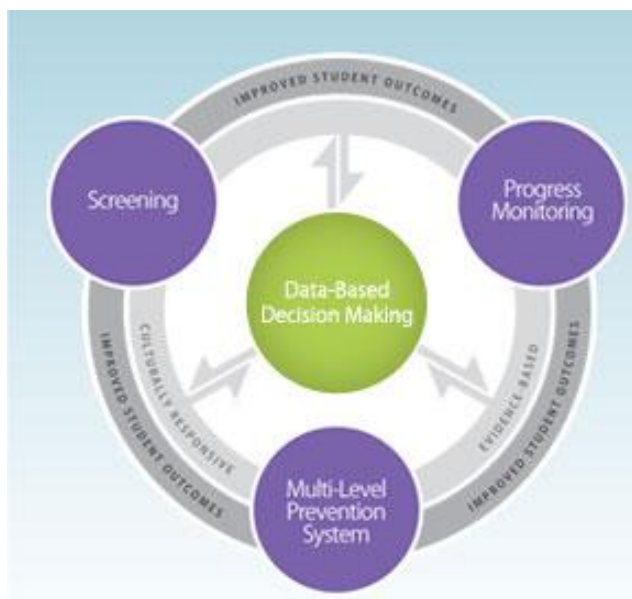
Additionally, Frost and Bean (2006) include all five requirements as established by the IRA (2004) as well as two additional requirements in their “Gold Standard” list for literacy coaches. Every literacy coach must have a Master’s degree in literacy and additional credentials in coaching. Frost and Bean (2006) encourage school districts to look for literacy coaches that meet the “Gold Standard” in order to assure student achievement in literacy. Further, Rodgers and Rodgers (2007) discussed the important role of language in coaching. In the context of working collaboratively, teachers and literacy coaches, through communication, establish a mutual relationship that leads to a deeper understanding and new learning in the teaching of reading. Because federal initiatives call for teachers to have a deeper understanding of how to teach reading, literacy coaching offers on-the-job training for teachers. One of these federal initiatives is Response to Intervention (RTI). According to Bean (2009), the “goal of RTI is to provide instruction that might prevent students from being identified as needing special education services” (p. 1).

### **Response to Intervention**

Response to Intervention (RTI) came about as a result of the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 (Bean & Lillenstein, 2012). With RTI in place, a major change occurred in the way students were identified for Special Education services. The requirement placed on schools to use a discrepancy model as a determinant for students to meet the “criteria for specific learning disability (SLD)” no longer applied (Bean & Lillenstein, 2012, p. 492). The new law stated that students could be identified as having a learning disability based on the way they responded to instruction and intervention. However,

under RTI, the goal was to reduce the number of students referred to special education services by providing research-based instruction and interventions for a reasonable amount of time, and by maintaining documentation before referring a student for special education services. RTI resulted from research that indicated struggling students who were taught with research-based interventions made gains that allowed them to catch up with their peers (Lyons 1998; Allington 2009).

According to the American Institutes for Research (2007), the essential components of RTI consist of screening, progress monitoring, multi-level prevention system, and data-based decision-making which occurs at all levels of RTI implementation (See Figure 1).



*Figure 1.* Essential components of RTI. Adapted from American Institutes for Research (2007).

Students are screened to identify those who may be at risk due to academic and behavior issues that may inhibit their learning. Progress monitoring occurs to assess the students' response to instruction and interventions and to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction. A multi-level prevention system consists of three tiers. Tier I consists of "high quality core instruction." Tier II consists of providing "evidence based interventions" with "moderate" intensity. Tier III

consists of intensive individualized interventions for students who show “minimal response” to Tier II interventions. Students in Tier III are those referred to receive special education services.

RTI was seen as the ideal framework to ensure no child was left behind. However, it has been ten years since its inception and there is still much work to be done. Under the new IDEA law of 2004, every state is given the option to implement an RTI framework model as a basis for eligibility in identifying a Specific Learning Disability (SLD). At the time of the study by Berkeley, Bender, Peaster, and Saunders (2009), several states indicated variations in the implementation of RTI. Berkeley et al. (2009) found that 15 states had adopted an RTI model. Twenty-two states were in the process of development, while 10 were already providing guidance to school districts. Three states were unclear about the RTI process.

Even though RTI is viewed very positively, there are factors that may contribute to its demise if it is not implemented properly. Noll (2013) points out that RTI will not work when educators rely on commercially-produced reading and intervention programs instead of teacher expertise or highly trained educators and ignore the importance of a high-quality Tier I instruction. Additionally, Noll (2013) emphasized that there is no such thing as quick fixes. Instead, the focus should be on providing teachers with regular, recurring professional development that is effective. Noll (2013) asserted that teachers need to be given the training and time to analyze data and plan instruction, stating that teachers can “lack time for this task, many also don’t know how to do this effectively” (p. 59). Teachers need to be knowledgeable in analyzing data to determine the most appropriate interventions that will offer the most effective instruction for their struggling students. Thus, teachers need to have a grasp of many evidence-based interventions to assist their struggling students (Lyons, 1998). RTI also stipulates “a team approach to setting goals, solving problems and making instructional decisions” and for

personnel with the expertise to address language and literacy needs, to administer and interpret assessment results, and “how cultural and linguistic differences influences students learning” (Bean & Lillensein, 2012, p. 493).

Martinez and Young (2011) conducted a study to examine how school personnel in rural and urban schools in South Eastern Texas implemented RTI and their perceptions of RTI. Administrators from 41 school districts were sent a link to a survey and asked to disseminate this survey link among their faculty. The survey was sent in March, and then again at the end of the school year. Based on the information collected, Martinez and Young (2011) found that teachers did have a system in place for the identification of students based on campus wide assessments. They were using a system of tiers to provide interventions by reading and math specialists; however, interventions were also being administered by instructional aides and peers. Even though collaboration was reported as a means to develop and monitor RTI, parents were often not part of the collaboration. One area of concern was the implementation of progress monitoring. Results showed that “objective measures were not necessarily always a part of data collection and student progress was not always monitored on a regular and consistent basis” (Martinez & Young, 2011, p. 51). Even though results showed educators felt positively towards RTI, they expressed that even before the requirement by the district to implement RTI, they were already using research-based interventions to address the needs of their struggling students. Educators also expressed frustration over the amount of paper work required to implement this requirement.

Another study, conducted by Spear-Swerling and Cheesman (2012), included participants from university graduate programs and local schools from the northeast and western United States. Ninety-eight participants were enrolled in a state university graduate program while forty-

four were from local schools. Participants were asked to complete a questionnaire and a knowledge survey while the researchers monitored the completion of both instruments. Results indicated that most of the participants knew about RTI and the three tier-models of instruction, along with the importance of early intervention; however, they lacked knowledge in how to interpret assessments and how to implement effective models of instruction. Participants also lacked knowledge in “decision-making about appropriate words to use in instruction” (Spear-Swerling & Cheesman, 2012, p. 1716). They also failed to recognize when a child was struggling with a text that was too difficult for read. In this study, many participants “not only lacked important pedagogical content knowledge for teaching reading, but they also were unfamiliar with research-based instructional programs and interventions that could serve as valuable resources for them in implementing RTI” (Spear-Swerling & Cheesman, 2012, p. 1716).

In another study, Bean and Lillenstein (2012) sent out questionnaires to principals in five elementary schools that had implemented an RTI framework for three years or more. They conducted on-site observations and interviewed personnel from the schools. Their results highlighted similar skills and competencies among the five schools. All personnel interviewed, regardless of their roles, emphasized the importance of having an in-depth knowledge of how literacy develops and the importance of delivery of instruction. They also recognized the importance of analyzing data for informed instructional decision-making and the importance of continued progress monitoring. Differentiated instruction was also recognized as the cornerstone of progressive change, along with collaboration among faculty and staff and a commitment to lifelong learning to achieve the common goal of student success. Leadership and interpersonal skills were also highlighted among key personnel that offered support to teachers along with the



importance of being technology savvy because this “facilitated the planning and instruction of teachers” (Bean & Lillenstein, 2012, p. 497). Results from this study show that RTI can be implemented effectively when schools work as communities of learners and when change happens in how “schools – and individuals within those schools – function” (Bean & Lillenstein, 2012, p. 499).

RTI is a positive approach to identify students who are in need of assistance and provide research-based interventions to help them to make gains that will allow them to be successful with the general education curriculum (Martinez & Young, 2011). A key is to equip teachers with the interventions that will allow them to help all their students. Professional development is needed to train teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to implement a successful RTI model (Berkeley et al., 2009). Reading interventions are “dependent on the customized instruction designed by a specially trained teacher who has developed a systematic knowledge and understating of possible progression in acquiring a reading and writing process” (Lyons, 1998, p. 82).

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter provided background and research information on topics relevant to this research. Research on the substantive framework for this study, Bandura’s self-efficacy theory was presented followed by historical precursors that trace the instructional methods used in reading instruction in the United States from phonics to whole language to the current trend of balanced literacy. Additionally, current practices that included guided reading, literacy coaching – a model for professional development, and response to intervention were discussed.

### CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology and procedures that guided this study. The sections discussed include (a) subjectivity, (b) case study as research design, (c) participant and site selection, (d) ethical considerations and reciprocity, (e) data collection methods, (f) interviews, (g) observations, (h) documents, (i) data management and analysis, and (j) trustworthiness and rigor.

A sound methodological approach is vital to an understanding of the ways in which elementary teachers negotiate their roles as reading teachers, their motivation for conducting guided reading lessons, and their instructional decisions and reading strategies for their students who are at different reading levels. The purpose of the study was to explore how two South Texas teachers used guided reading to inform their instructional decisions in two South Texas classrooms after they participated in training and coaching sessions. A qualitative approach was appropriate to explore the following questions:

1. How do the participants describe the ways in which they negotiate guided reading instructional decision-making?
2. What are the experiences of the participants in helping struggling readers during guided reading?

The participants in the study participated in the *Coaching Effective Guided Reading Sessions under the RTI Umbrella* training, which occurred in several professional development sessions according to the intervention program developed by Allen (2013). This approach to guided reading differed from the traditional guided reading approach because it supported struggling readers through an intense focus on skill development during the introduction of the

lesson. The rigid, prescriptive instruction made this guided reading approach an intervention approach that fell under the response to intervention (RTI) umbrella.

### **Interpretivism**

An interpretivist theoretical framework guided this study. Interpretivism emerges from the idea that knowledge is developed from the social interactions between humans (Prasad, 2005). O'Donoghue (2007), paraphrasing Habermas, explained that those engaged in interpretive research "are pursuing the second human cognitive interest, namely, the interest in understanding the meaning behind something" (p. 10). Creswell (2007) asserted that investigators are on a quest to "make sense (or interpret) the meanings others have about the world" (p. 20). These interpretations are influenced by the investigator's own experiences and background.

Human consciousness contains "reality," and only through social interaction and interpretation is the experience of this reality possible (Prasad, 2005). Hence, social reality is socially constructed through the constant interpretation and reinterpretation of human behavior. Prasad (2005) stated, "Although interpretive traditions uniformly subscribe to the belief that our worlds are socially created, they also assert that these constructions are possible only because of our ability to attach meanings to objects, events and interactions" (p.14). It is in this meaning making that the action of understanding occurs. Weber believed *verstehen*, or understanding, happened only when the researcher, through social interactions, was able to get in the heads of those individuals being studied (Travers, 2001). Crotty (1998) referred to the occurrence of these interactions as when the investigator assumes the role of an actor in the situation being studied and studies the social world from the perspective of those actors. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) position the investigator in an activity involving the interpretation of multiple practices

through the collection of multiple forms of data, such as field notes, interviews, and artifacts, to make the world visible.

### **Subjectivity**

Creswell (2007) contended, “In a qualitative study, the inquirers admit the value-laden nature of the study and actively report their values and biases as well as the value-laden nature of information gathered from the field” (p. 18). On this same note, Peshkin (1988) wrote, “One’s subjectivity is like a garment that cannot be removed. It is insistently present in both the research and nonresearch aspects of our life” (p. 18). Therefore, it behooves me to address my personal subjectivity in this study. I have worked in education for the past fifteen years. I spent eleven of those years teaching fourth and seventh-graders who were English Language Learners (ELL) or struggling readers. My experience with my students has influenced the decisions I have taken in my inquiry of finding ways to help them.

One particular fourth grader, Joseph, opened my eyes to the world of struggling readers during my first year of teaching. Joseph was a respectful child who loved math but was not fond of reading. Since kindergarten, he had been in bilingual classrooms where the primary language of instruction had been Spanish. Now, as a fourth grader, he was beginning his first year transitioning into English instruction. He disliked reading and voiced that opinion. Reading aloud in class would frustrate him and instead of reading during independent time, he liked to roam around the classroom and find other activities to do. He struggled to read material at his grade level. Once, as I listened to him read, Joseph came across the word “responsibility” and stopped for a moment. He began to sound out the word by calling out a letter at a time. I observed him for a while as he strung together the sounds. After several attempts, he deciphered the word. The expression on his face was priceless and is imprinted in my mind forever. His big

eyes opened up and a wide smile appeared on his face. He looked at me and exclaimed, “Oh that is how you spell responsibility!” Two eureka moments took place that day: Joseph’s and that of a first-year teacher.

Through Joseph’s experience, I learned that many of my students knew many English words orally, but were clueless as to the symbols that represented them. This was new to me, because my experience as a reader had been learning to read in Spanish. I arrived in the United States in the third grade knowing how to speak and read fluently in Spanish. Many times, I have asked myself when I learned to read and speak the English language. I cannot remember. I do remember translating English into Spanish to understand what I read and wrote, and then one day I found myself understanding most of what I read. I say most, because I still consider myself an ELL. As I continue to grow as a reader, I come across new words I have never seen; however, now I have strategies and tools that help me decipher their meanings. My life journey has been to equip ELLs and struggling readers with strategies and tools that will help them be successful as they grow as readers. For the past four years, I have worked at a school as a supervisor of language arts curriculum for grades kindergarten through fifth grade. In this role, I train and equip teachers with strategies who work with ELLs and with struggling readers. I also have the opportunity to observe teachers in their delivery of instruction.

Based on the personal attributes that make me who I am, I cannot deny that I came into this study with preconceived ideas. However, I also entered this study with an open mind in order to try to understand how teachers made sense of their lives through what they experienced, how they interpreted these experiences, and how they constructed their social worlds.

To gain an understanding of teacher experience, I employed a case study design. Yin (2009) states the “case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful

characteristics of real-life events” (p. 4). Therefore, the data collection procedures that I employed included formal interviews, observations, artifacts, and descriptions of conversations in the field journal, which allowed me the opportunity to interpret the meanings of the perceptions of the teachers.

### **Case Study as Research Design**

Merriam (1988) stated, “Case study is an ideal design for understanding and interpreting observations of educational phenomena” (p. 2). The goal for this research was to describe the experiences of two teachers regarding their instructional decisions in helping students with reading strategies and how their instructional decisions changed throughout the progression of the study as they participated in training and coaching sessions. For this reason, case study was the ideal research design for this study. Merriam (1988) stated that each case “is important for what it reveals about the phenomenon and for what it might represent” (p. 11). Based on the inquiry, I was interested in finding what this research would reveal about the teachers’ experiences and how these inform their instructional decisions. Case study is also a bounded system (Merriam, 1988; Stake, 2000; Creswell, 2007). According to Stake (2000), “It is common to recognize that certain features are within the system, within the boundaries of the case, other features outside. Some are significant as context” (p. 436). Creswell (2007) added, “Case study research involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system,” such as a setting or context (p. 73). For this study, the “case” was bounded by the place (the school) where the participants worked and the duration of the study (four months). Furthermore, the richness of case study design lies in its ability to use multiple sources of evidence, such as interviews, observations, documents, and artifacts, to uncover data that have not been manipulated by the researcher (Yin, 2009; Merriam, 1988). Therefore, I collected

multiple types of data consisting of interviews, videotaped sessions of observations, artifacts, and field notes. In determining the most appropriate research design for a study, I considered the nature of the research questions and the type of the research, whether historical or contemporary (Yin, 2009). For this study, I employed *what* and *how* research questions. I explored what happened during guided reading sessions after the teachers participated in coaching sessions. These factors made case study an appropriate methodology for this research study.

Furthermore, in case study research, by conducting empirical observations, the researcher tries to understand how people make sense of their lives through what they experience, how they interpret these experiences, and how they construct their social worlds. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) conceived the researcher as a *bricoleur*, or a quilt maker, meaning the researcher uses the “aesthetic and material tools of his or her craft,” such as the collection of field notes, interviews, and artifacts, to try to make the world visible (p. 4). The interpretive practices used are not preconceived but depend on the questions asked. In this research, I, as the researcher, took the role of a *bricoleur*, or actor, as I engaged in an exploration of how the instructional decisions of teachers changed as they engaged in guided reading.

Yin (2009) provided five components of case study research design: the research questions, propositions, the unit(s) of analysis, the logic linking the data to the propositions, and the criteria used for interpreting the results (p. 27). As the research questions guiding this study were mostly *how* in nature, this research study was exploratory and was guided by the proposition that coaching sessions received by the participants influenced the instructional practices of teachers. The data analysis for this research was inductive. In the linking of the data to the propositions, triangulation took place. Data was systematically analyzed to find themes.

This study is a collective case study employing a comparative cross-case method because it involved more than one example. The collection of interviews, observations, and artifacts from the two participants provided a “thick description” of how teachers’ instructional decisions during guided reading sessions changed as they participated in coaching sessions (Stake, 2000, p. 439).

### **Participant and Site Selection**

For the purpose of this study, selection of participants was by reputational-case selection (Merriam, 1988). Based on the recommendation of participants by an expert or leader, in this case the school principal, I met with each principal from two schools to inform them of the purpose of the study, the timeline, and data collection methods. I explained to the principals the study would focus on two teachers who taught at two different elementary schools in South Texas. Based on participant criteria (see Table 1), I asked the principals to recommend names of teachers who met the criteria so I could contact them to request their participation in the study. After each principal submitted at least two names, I had four possible names to email. I decided not to send out four emails at the same time, but rather, I randomly selected one name from each school and sent an email to them. My plan was that in case one or both of the teachers declined to participate in the study, I would email the other two teachers whose names were submitted. Fortunately, the two teachers who received the emails accepted the invitation to participate in the study. After I received their responses, I emailed the teachers to thank them for accepting and to set up an appointment to meet with them. During the meeting, I discussed the purpose of the study and the timeline and had the participants sign the consent forms. Participants were also notified they could withdraw from the study at any time.



Table 1  
*Participant Criteria*

Criteria	Participant One	Participant Two
Have between 1 to 5 years of teaching experience	✓	✓
Currently teaching reading to struggling readers	✓	✓
Participated in <i>Coaching Effective Guided Reading Sessions under the RTI Umbrella</i> training and coaching sessions	✓	✓

According to the criteria in Table 1, participants were selected because they took part in the *Coaching Effective Guided Reading Sessions under the RTI Umbrella* (Allen, 2013) professional development in the fall semester. This professional development consisted of training and coaching offered by Maggie Allen, who was hired by the campus to conduct the training in the months of August, October, and November. Part of the training consisted of the trainer coaching the participants as they conducted guided reading lessons with participants who took the role of students. Later, in the month of November, the trainer coached selected teachers who had attended the training as they conducted guided reading lessons with their students in their classrooms while the other participants observed these coaching sessions.

In conducting guided reading, teachers needed to understand the purpose and focus of guided reading, as well as how to conduct assessments, place students in appropriate groups, and match students with the appropriate text. Teachers also needed to decide what to do before the guided reading lesson, during the lesson, and after the lesson. They needed to understand the role the three cueing systems – semantic, syntactic, and graph-phonemic – play in the reading process. For the purpose of this study, I observed the teachers conducting guided reading lessons

to determine if the training and coaching sessions influenced the instructional decisions of both teachers in any way. The participating teachers in the study selected two groups of students they worked with throughout the duration of the study. However, due to the dynamics of groups in guided reading, several of these students moved from groups during the duration of the study; therefore, each participant was observed while she instructed struggling readers who were reading below level. These sessions were videotaped, and the focus was on the teachers and not students.

The sites for this study were purposefully selected by the researcher because of their locations. One of the campuses was located about ten minutes away from the researcher's job location, and the other campus was the campus where the researcher was currently employed. The two schools were part of a school district located in a town in South Texas. The town was situated seven miles from the Mexico-Texas border. The outskirts of this town were composed of *colonias*, or neighborhoods, and the children from these *colonias*, along with the children who live in the inner-part of the town, attended the 11 elementary schools and two high schools in the district. For the purpose of the study, the schools were given the following pseudo names: Hope Elementary and Destiny Elementary.

Hope Elementary enrolled close to 900 students per school year with a staff of 82 members. The population for this campus consisted of 97% Hispanic, 60% At-Risk, 76% economically disadvantaged, and had 37% of its students identified as Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

Destiny Elementary enrolled almost 800 students per school year with a staff of 72 members. Of the total students enrolled, 99.7% were Hispanic and 71.76% were economically

disadvantaged. Twenty one percent of the students were labeled limited English proficient and 63.4% of the student population was At-Risk.

Most of the funding for both schools came from Title I funds and 100% of the students received free lunch through the schools' lunch programs.

### **Ethical Considerations and Reciprocity**

Ethical considerations and reciprocity are critical to ensure the safety of all participants. Creswell (2007) noted, "We consciously consider ethical issues – seeking consent, avoiding the conundrum of deception, maintaining confidentiality, and protecting the anonymity of individuals with whom we speak" (p. 44). After the Institutional Review Board (IRB) granted permission for this study to be conducted (see Appendix A), to protect the participants, the following practices were conducted: (a) an oral and written description of the study was given to all participants invited to be part of this study, (b) informed consent letters were signed by participants and a copy was provided to them (see Appendix B), (c) the pseudonyms, Mary and Christine, were assigned to participants for use in all reports of the study, and (d) to protect the students who were videotaped, their faces were blocked by situating the camera to record the backs of the students' heads or only the teacher when possible. All participants were also informed and reassured that:

- (a) they could withdraw from the study at any point;
- (b) their participation in this study and the interviews, observations, and artifacts collected would not affect or influence in any way their *Professional Development Appraisal System* (PDAS) evaluations for the school year; and
- (c) they had opportunities to review their transcribed interviews for accuracy.

Reciprocity, as defined by Harrison and MacGibbon (2001), is the “give and take of social interactions [which] may be used to gain access to a particular setting” (p. 323). My commitment to reciprocity involved spending a considerable amount of time with the participants. The interactions included spending time during guided reading lessons and discussing the notes taken during the coaching and training sessions attended by teachers. I also provided the teachers with resources such as reading strips, vocabulary cards, and sentence strips. At the conclusion of the study, I also provided each participant with a \$100 gift card to redeem at local teacher’s supply store for their commitment to participate in the study.

### **Data Collection Methods**

Creswell (2007) stated, “Qualitative researchers collect data themselves through examining documents, observing behavior, and interviewing participants...the researchers are the ones who actually gather the information” (p. 38). In this study, I collected the data. Additionally, Yin (2009) suggested three tactics for increasing construct validity, or what qualitative researchers refer to as triangulation (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). The first tactic occurs through the collection of multiple sources of evidence. The second occurs by establishing a chain of evidence. The third tactic occurs by having the key informants review the case study report. Merriam (1988) further contended, “Methodological triangulation combines dissimilar methods such as interviews, observations, and physical evidence to study the same unit” (p. 69). For this study, I collected data through the following procedures: interviews, observations, and artifacts. I also maintained a fieldwork journal to record my personal reflections and interpretations. After each interview was transcribed, the participants received a copy of the transcript to review. The collection of data took four months. Table 2 provides an inventory of the data source, the amount, and the data collected from this study.

Table 2  
*Data Inventory*

Data Source	Number of pages per event	Number of pages in total
3 one-hour interviews per participant (2 participants)	15 – 20 pages per one hour of transcription	108 pages
6-(20 minutes) classroom observations	6 pages per observation	36 pages
Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES)	2 pages per participant	4 pages
Member check	20 pages per session	40 pages
Journal reflections	9 pages per interview	27 pages
	3-5 pages per observation	24 pages
Artifacts	6 classroom observations and Videotape, Lesson plans, Classroom context maps	120 pages
Peer Debriefing	6 interviews X 5 pages per Interview	30 pages
Total Pages of Data		389 pages

## **Interviews**

Data collection occurred through interviews. Seidman (1998) asserted that, “at the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience” (p. 3). However, the types of questions asked by the researcher determine the density of the response. Bhattacharya (2008) suggested that “researchers try to design interview questions in a way that allows the participants to describe their experiences” (p. 9). For this study, each participant participated in three semi-structured interviews. The questions were based on those outlined by Bhattacharya (2008): descriptive questions, grand tour questions, and specific grand tour questions. All interviews were audio-recorded.

The first interview took place during the first month of the study (see Appendix C). The second interview took place in the fourth month of the study, which was the mid-point of the study. I analyzed the first interview transcript and referred to the purpose of the study to derive questions for the second interview. After the second interview had been transcribed, I analyzed the transcript and reviewed the purpose of the study and research questions to develop questions for the final interview, which took place the last month of the study. See Appendix D containing the timeline of the study.

## **Observations**

Observing day-to-day events allowed for the collection of in-depth data. Guba and Lincoln (1981) posited:

Observation (particularly participant observation) maximizes the inquirer's ability to grasp motives, beliefs, concerns, interests, unconscious behaviors, customs, and the like; observation (particularly participant observation) allows the inquirer to see the world as his subjects see it, to live in their time frames, to capture the phenomenon in and on its own terms, and to grasp the culture in its own natural, ongoing environment; observation (particularly participant observation) provides the inquirer with access to the emotional reactions of the group introspectively – that is, in a real sense it permits the observer to use himself as a data source; and observation (particularly participant observation) allows the observer to build on tacit knowledge, both his own and that of members of the group. (p. 193)

During the observations, I assumed the role of participant observer. This role maximized my ability to understand the world as the participants saw it as I interacted with them during the guided reading session. Merriam (1988) includes a list of elements present in an observation:

- the setting,
- the participants,
- activities and interactions,
- frequency and duration,
- subtle factors,
- unobtrusive measures such as physical clues, and
- what does not happen when it should have happen (p. 91).

As a participant observer, I was able to engage with each of these elements from the perspective of those involved in the group.

I observed and used an iPad to video record the teachers conducting the guided reading lessons in their classrooms. Each guided reading lesson lasted about 20 to 25 minutes and was taught over two days. Then I transcribed the observations, taking into account Merriam's (1988) list of elements. Afterwards, I viewed the recordings and transcribed them. I also drew context maps of the layout of each classroom (See Figure 2). Guba and Lincoln (1981) explained the concept of context maps:

These are maps, sketches, or diagrams of the context within which the observation takes place, for example, the classroom layout...a context map is useful because it allows for shorthand entries in notes and facilitates reference to the position of a subject, the relative position of several subjects, the content of the visual field of a subject, the visual field of an observer, and so on. (p. 204)

Context maps of Mary's and Christine's classrooms are shown in Figures 2 and 3.

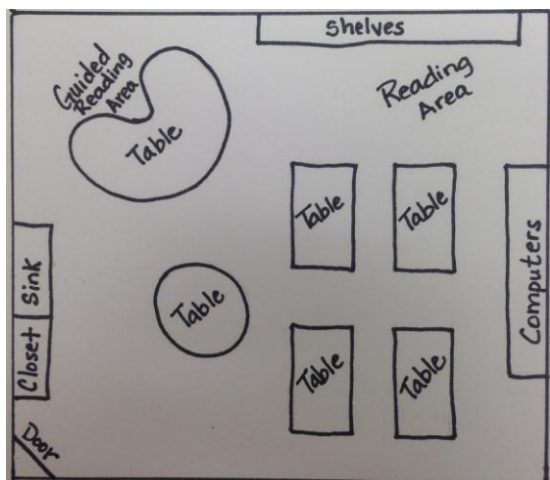


Figure 2. Mary's context map shows the layout of her classroom.

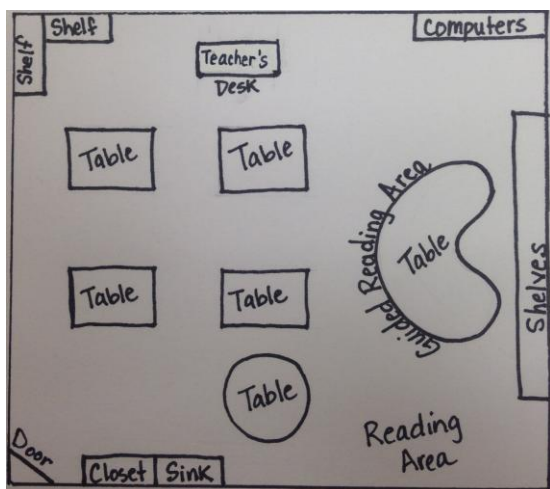


Figure 3. Christine's context map shows the layout of her classroom.

Additionally, Merriam (1988) stated that researchers often separate their personal comments from the “narrative account of the observation through the use of a fieldwork journal” (p. 98). This being the case, I separated my personal comments in the fieldwork journal. Observations occurred periodically so I could observe changes in the teachers’ instructional behaviors while they conducted guided reading lessons. After I transcribed the observations, I met with the teachers to review the observation and the transcribed notes. I also utilized the



observation to derive questions for the second interview. The lesson plans were also compared to the observations in an effort to identify any deviations in the teachers' instructional decisions.

## **Documents**

Documents are a form of artifacts collected to analyze and extract data in research. For this study, lesson plans and questionnaires were collected for each participant. Because each participant was observed for three guided reading lessons over the course of two days, three lesson plans were collected. Further, concerning document analysis, Guba and Lincoln (1981) pointed out:

An investigator might also want to carry out document analysis because he has come into possession of a series of documents that contain valuable information about some inquiry problem of interest or because he has sought out such documents as part of an inquiry that he thinks might lend greater clarity to his understanding of the research setting. (p. 237)

Throughout the four months of data collection, I viewed and transcribed the participants' videotaped guided reading sessions, reviewed their lesson plans for evidence of changes in the instructional decisions, and questioned participants about influences the training and coaching sessions had in their instructional decisions. Because these conversations were part of the data collection, descriptions were recorded in my fieldwork journal, which I kept secured in my computer under a file name Fieldwork Journal.

To gather additional demographic and descriptive information, each participant was asked to complete the Teacher's Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) (see Appendix E), an instrument developed by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) at the beginning of the study and the end. Because Bandura's (1997) belief of personal self-efficacy involves an individual's belief in

his or her ability to plan and execute the plan to obtain the desired outcome, the TSES provided data that served for triangulation of findings and understandings acquired. The TSES is a questionnaire containing 24 questions (see Appendix E). For each question, participants choose from a scale of 1 to 9: one being “nothing,” three “very little,” five “some influence,” seven “quite a bit,” and nine “a great deal.” The TSES has questions that assess three factors important to the success of every classroom that a teacher’s sense of self-efficacy influences. These three factors are student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. The purpose of having the participants complete the TSES at the beginning of the study and then at end was to gain an awareness of the participants’ self-efficacy in the three factors identified throughout the course of the study. I include further discussion and interpretation of these responses in Chapter 4. After the completion of each questionnaire, I analyzed the results to determine the level of efficacy in each of three components. To obtain permission to use the scale for the study, I contacted the authors of the scale. The letter granting permission is included in Appendix F.

### **Data Management and Analysis**

I managed the data by organizing it in colored folders and by the date it was collected. I assigned the color purple to Participant one and the color green to Participant two. Additionally, interview and observation transcripts were printed on different color paper. Copies of the transcripts, along with the Post-it, memos, lesson plan, and any notes made by me were placed in each of the folders respectively. Videos of the observations and the audio recording of the interviews were stored in my personal computer under a main folder labeled “Data.” In this main folder, I created two folders, one for Mary and one for Christine. Under each participant folder, I

created a folder labeled “audio” and a second labeled “video” to save each recording according to the date of the interview and observation.

I analyzed data following the constant comparative method, which is inductive and comparative. According to Merriam (2009) this method starts “comparing one segment of data with another to determine similarities and differences. Data are grouped together on a similar dimension. The dimension is tentatively given a name; it then becomes a category [...] to identify patterns in the data (p. 30). In order to avoid feeling overwhelmed by the amount of data to analyze, I took Merriam’s (2009) advice of simultaneously analyzing data as it was being collected.

After the transcription of the first interview, before I began analyzing the data, I went back to review the purpose of the study and the research questions. Guided by this information, I took the first interview and utilized first cycle coding to develop interview questions for the next interview (Saldana, 2013). This ensured that data collected addressed the purpose of the study. I conducted the second interview using the questions derived from the first interview. After the second interview was transcribed, I used first cycle coding to develop questions for the third interview. Coding is the process where the researcher breaks “the data down into small units of meaning by labeling words, phrases, paragraphs in order to further organize similar codes into a larger category” (Bhattacharya, 2008, p. 7). Additionally, Saldana (2013) describes coding as a “researcher-generated construct that symbolizes and thus attributes interpreted meaning to each individual datum for later purposes of pattern detection, categorization, theory building, and other analytic processes” (p. 4).

For the first cycle coding, I utilized descriptive coding. Saldana (2013) states that descriptive coding “summarizes in a word or short phrase – most often as a noun – the basic

topic of a passage” (p. 88). I read the data several times from beginning to end writing down any notes, comments, observations, questions, in the margins. In Vivo Coding was also used simultaneously with descriptive coding during the first cycle coding. In Vivo, “refers to a word or short phrase from the actual language found” in the data (Saldana, 2013, p. 91). As I analyzed the data, writing down descriptive and In Vivo Codes in the margins, I paid attention to “words and phrases that [seemed] to call for bolding, underlining, italicizing, highlighting, or vocal emphasis if spoken aloud” (Saldana, 2013, p. 92). I then took the first and second interview transcripts and conducted second cycle coding. I continued to use descriptive and In Vivo Coding. Once the third interview was transcribed, I conducted first cycle coding and then a second cycle coding. After the first and second cycle coding, I reread the transcripts a third and a fourth time to find any more descriptive and In Vivo Codes. Each time I reread the transcripts, new codes continued to emerge, and I wrote them down in the margins. After the third and fourth cycle coding, the codes seemed to exhaust and repeat. Figure 4 shows a sample of codes for Christine’s interview transcript.

<p>C: Uh, a teacher needs to be able to divide instruction depending on students' needs. All the <u>students come in with different, uh, strengths and weaknesses</u>, so we as teachers need to be able to, <u>to differentiate</u> or, or to be <u>able to assess what each one of our students' needs</u>, and find strategies that are going to work for that one student and even students with the same needs also have <u>different ways of learning</u>. So we <u>need to be able to cater or find that one strategy that works for that one student</u>. So that's what we need to, I think, um, <u>teachers need to have to be able to read our students and understand what they need and cater to what their instructional needs are</u>.</p> <p>MY: If those are the skills then how does the teacher develop those skills to become effective in the teaching of reading?</p> <p>C: I think that it <u>comes with experience</u> of being able to, to <u>learn the student</u>. It comes with experience, and even with experience. <u>Each year students are different</u>. So it comes to...<u>reading or learning that student</u>, working with that student over a period of time, and <u>even that one student, changes over time as the year progresses</u>. So, there's <u>not like one set format that works</u>. So, say for example, at the <u>beginning of the year, my student needs this, so I work with that student depending on what they need, but as the time progresses, it changes because they progress and they grow</u>. So then...it, it's always like uh, you <u>have to know your students</u> at that day at that time. <u>Yes, we know where we started; we have to know where they're going by the end of the year</u>. But, but we need to always be <u>constantly checking what is it that they need today</u>.</p> <p>MY: Kind of like reading the student? Describe to me how a teacher becomes an effective teacher?</p> <p>C: A teacher becomes an effective teacher by...by being able to <u>differentiate instruction</u>, we have such a large spectrum of students and...<u>it's sort of like a recipe that you sort of have to come up with for each student</u>. So yes, they all have to <u>get to the same place</u>, but it doesn't work the <u>same for each child...</u>So to be effective, you have to <u>be able to reach everyone</u>.</p>	<p>students are different</p> <p>"to differentiate"</p> <p>assessment</p> <p>"students' needs"/differentiation</p> <p>Different learning styles</p> <p>"need to be able to cater"</p> <p>effective strategy</p> <p>"be able to read our students"</p> <p>understand students' needs</p> <p>cater to instructional needs</p> <p>teacher experience</p> <p>"learn the student"</p> <p>students are different</p> <p>"reading or learning that student"</p> <p>students change/grow</p> <p>no one size fits all</p> <p>students change/grow</p> <p>know your students/reflection</p> <p>reflective teacher</p> <p>Constant assessment</p> <p>"differentiate instruction"</p> <p>personal recipe</p> <p>no one size fits all</p> <p>Effectiveness: reach everyone</p>
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Figure 4. Sample of coding for Christine's interview.

The brief example above illustrates the process I implemented in coding the interviews.

The coding was based on my knowledge of the participants and my substantive knowledge of

best practices in reading instruction. I assigned codes that stood out regarding the participants' instructional decisions in their teaching of reading. For example, the codes on differentiation were grouped under "differentiated instruction." This is one important trait in guided reading because it occurs in a small group setting and students are grouped based on similar needs, allowing the teacher the opportunity to differentiate instruction while working with a smaller number of students. Codes related to reading the students' facial expressions, or when the teacher stepped back to think about a successful or not-so-successful lesson, were assigned to the category of "reflective teacher or decision maker." Teacher reflection is a crucial piece in the instructional decisions a teacher makes. If the teacher instructs with the end in mind, then every instructional decision is geared towards that end.

After analyzing and coding the interviews, I continued the analysis process with the observations. Soon after leaving each observation, I recorded my notes and thoughts in my journal. This allowed me time to reflect on what I was observing and to write down any questions I had about the observation. I have included a reflection I wrote after observing Mary and Christine conduct a guided reading lesson in Figures 5 and 6.

Mary is a reflective teacher. She knows where she is heading as she questions her students. Her questioning strategies are geared to have students become critical readers. When one of her students shared his thinking, it was evident the student was sharing only what he was seeing in the picture. Mary prompted the students to think about his schema, his prior knowledge, to determine why the character was smiling in the picture. The students thought deeper about the character's actions and made a meaningful connection. Mary has high expectations for her students and expects them to be critical readers.

*Figure 5. Excerpt of researcher's journal regarding Mary.*

Christine believes a teacher needs to have the skills to teach reading to ensure students comprehend what they read. This is Christine's first year of teaching and her eagerness to learn these skills is evident as she attends trainings and implements what she learns in her classroom. As she works with her students, her target goal is for students to learn to read by comprehending

what they read. She focuses on repetition and constant questioning.

Figure 6. Excerpt of researcher's journal regarding Christine.

My journaling provided me a space to record my immediate thoughts, questions, or comments about the interviews and observations. As I conducted the observations, I recorded notes. When I began to analyze the observations, I focused on two things. First, I referred back to my notes and recorded the sequence the teacher followed for each lesson. Because each guided reading lesson occurs in a two-day period, I ended up with six observations that lasted 20-25 minutes each. By organizing the observations in this manner, I was able to see if the participants included the components of the guided reading lesson and if they followed the same steps for each lesson. I have included the lesson plans for each participant (See Figures 7 and 8).

<p><b>Lesson Goal:</b> Coached Silent Reading</p> <p><b>Book Title:</b> The Map and the Treasure</p> <p><b>Level:</b> I-M</p> <p><b>Skills Lesson (2-3 minutes)</b></p> <p>Phonics Lesson:</p> <p>High Frequency Words:</p> <p><b>Reading Readiness Mini-Lesson (3-5 min)</b></p> <p>Vocabulary Words &amp; Pictures: twig, cactus, hole, rocks, treasure box, map</p> <p><b>Sentence Frame:</b></p> <p><b>Leveled Book Lesson</b></p> <p><b>Introduction:</b></p> <p>Today I brought some items that I want to show you. See (sh) is a map. Today we will read a story that includes these and c "Treasure." Let's read to find out what happens in the story.</p> <p><b>Picture Walk/Story Walk:</b> (Teacher is the only one with the pictures. Teacher then distributes the books to students.) Have students read pictures from cover using Thinking Stars.</p> <p><b>* Strategy Reminder: BECAUSE THAT'S</b></p> <p><b>X Word Recognition Reminder</b></p> <p><b>Text Feature Analysis Reminder</b></p> <p><b>Comprehension Reminder</b></p> <p><b>First Reading</b> (Teacher highlights anyone using the strategy of simultaneous oral reading at own pace or chorally; prompt/praise)</p> <p><b>Strategy Reinforcer</b> (Purpose: always target comprehension)</p> <p>***Explain why making connections is important to the reader.</p> <p><b>Discussion</b> (develops comprehension)</p> <p>(Discuss literary elements. Make connections &amp; discuss why literary elements are important.)</p> <p><b>Literary Elements:</b> (e.g., plot, point of view, etc.)</p> <p><b>Comprehension Questions</b></p>	<p><b>Lesson Goal:</b> Become Strategic Readers</p> <p><b>Book Title:</b> Biscuit</p> <p><b>Level:</b> G</p> <p><b>Skills Lesson (2-3 minutes)</b></p> <p>Phonics Lesson: -oo</p> <p>High Frequency Words: to, a, his, up, it</p> <p><b>Reading Readiness Mini-Lesson (3-5 min)</b></p> <p>Vocabulary Words &amp; Pictures: snack, drink, hear a story, blanket, doll, h</p> <p><b>Sentence Frame:</b></p> <p>Time for bed, Biscuit!</p> <p>Woof, woof!</p> <p>Biscuit wants _____.</p> <p><b>Leveled Book Lesson</b></p> <p><b>Introduction:</b> This is a picture of my dog! Who remembers pet Chubbie? Pets need a lot of attention and care. They have many and find what types of things Biscuit wants in this story.</p> <p><b>Picture Walk/Story Walk:</b> (Teacher is the only one with the pictures. Teacher then distributes the books to students.) Read pictures of cover and book using thinking stars.</p> <p><b>* Strategy Reminder: BECAUSE THAT'S W</b></p> <p><b>X Word Recognition Reminder</b></p> <p><b>Text Feature Analysis Reminder</b></p> <p><b>Comprehension Reminder</b></p> <p><b>First Reading</b> (Teacher highlights anyone using the strategy of simultaneous oral reading at own pace or chorally; prompt/praise)</p> <p><b>Strategy Reinforcer</b> (Purpose: always target comprehension)</p> <p>***Explain why making connections is important to the reader.</p>	<p><b>Lesson Goal:</b> Become Strategic Readers</p> <p><b>Book Title:</b> Where is Cow's Lunch?</p> <p><b>Level:</b> H</p> <p><b>Skills Lesson (2-3 minutes)</b></p> <p>Phonics Lesson: -ed, -ing</p> <p>looked, walked, opened, digging, singing, going</p> <p>High Frequency Words: idea, leaves, any, gone, almost, hello, behind</p> <p><b>Reading Readiness Mini-Lesson (3-5 minutes)</b></p> <p>Vocabulary Words &amp; Pictures: sandwich, Squirrel, apple, the man, juice, Bird</p> <p><b>Sentence Frame:</b></p> <p>Cow looked in her lunchbox.</p> <p>"I have an idea," said Cow.</p> <p>"You can eat my _____!"</p> <p>"Thank you," said the _____.</p> <p><b>Leveled Book Lesson</b></p> <p><b>Introduction:</b> Today I brought some items left from my lunch. See (show lunch bag - start taking out few items to see) This is my lunch box. This is a sandwich. This is an apple. This is a juice. Today we will read a story that includes these and other lunch words. The book we will read today is titled "Where is Cow's Lunch?". Let's read to find out what happened to his lunch.</p> <p><b>Picture Walk/Story Walk:</b> (Teacher is the only one with the book. Words are covered. Students predict story line by using the pictures. Teacher then distributes the books to students.) Have students read pictures from cover using Thinking Stars.</p> <p><b>* Strategy Reminder: BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT GOOD READERS DO!</b></p> <p><b>X Word Recognition Reminder</b></p> <p><b>Text Feature Analysis Reminder</b></p> <p><b>Comprehension Reminder</b></p> <p><b>First Reading</b> (Teacher highlights anyone using the strategy to reinforce THAT'S WHAT GOOD READERS DO! Use of simultaneous oral reading at own pace or chorally; prompt/praise to support strategy development.)</p> <p><b>Strategy Reinforcer</b> (Purpose: always target comprehension/BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT GOOD READERS DO!)</p> <p>***Explain why making connections is important to the reader.</p>
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Figure 7. Mary's lesson plans for each three lessons.

<p>Lesson Goal: Coached Silent Reading</p> <p>Book Title: Larry the Singing Chicken</p> <p>Level: J Skill: Story Structure Genre: fiction</p> <p>Skills Lesson (2-3 minutes)</p> <p>Phonics Lesson: counted, drooped, counted, boomed, laughed</p> <p>High Frequency Words: found, every, quiet, window, reason</p> <p>Reading Readiness Mini- Lesson (3-5 minutes)</p> <p>Vocabulary words: confused, control, u, henhouse, road</p> <p>Leveled Book Lesson (17 to 20 minutes)</p> <p>Story Introduction (needs to be thorough): TW introduce the book. This is a story about a henhouse, where the other chicken of the henhouse, has a problem with Larry the Singing Chicken.</p> <p>Picture Walk/Story Talk: (Teacher is the only one with the book. Words are covered. Students predict story line by using the pictures. Teacher then distributes the books to students.)</p> <p>Teacher will show students cover of the book. Students will discuss what they think might be happening in the picture. Teacher will have students examine details in each of the pictures. Students will be able to infer what is happening in the story.</p> <p>* Strategy Reminder: BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT GOOD READERS DO!</p> <p>X Word Recognition Reminder</p> <table> <tr> <th>What child is having trouble with</th><th>Possible Teacher Prompts</th></tr> <tr> <td>Revised the sentence</td><td>"I want you to read the sentence and then I will ask you what it means."</td></tr> <tr> <td>X Sound through the word</td><td>"Show students how to blend the sounds on syllables of the word together and to be sure they are in the right order."</td></tr> <tr> <td>Use picture clues</td><td>"Let's review the pictures on the page and see if the pictures provide any clues to help you figure out the unknown word."</td></tr> <tr> <td>Look for "chunks" in the word</td><td>"Let's look for letter chunks (parts) in the word that might be familiar. I want you to read each chunk separately. Now let's blend the chunks together to read the entire word. For example, the word 'chicken' is: ch-icken. Let's look for chunks of parts in the word 'hen'."</td></tr> <tr> <td>Connect to a word you know</td><td>"I want you to think of a word that is similar to the word you are reading. For example, the word 'hen' is like 'hen'."</td></tr> </table>	What child is having trouble with	Possible Teacher Prompts	Revised the sentence	"I want you to read the sentence and then I will ask you what it means."	X Sound through the word	"Show students how to blend the sounds on syllables of the word together and to be sure they are in the right order."	Use picture clues	"Let's review the pictures on the page and see if the pictures provide any clues to help you figure out the unknown word."	Look for "chunks" in the word	"Let's look for letter chunks (parts) in the word that might be familiar. I want you to read each chunk separately. Now let's blend the chunks together to read the entire word. For example, the word 'chicken' is: ch-icken. Let's look for chunks of parts in the word 'hen'."	Connect to a word you know	"I want you to think of a word that is similar to the word you are reading. For example, the word 'hen' is like 'hen'."	<p>Lesson Goal: Coached Silent Reading</p> <p>Book Title: Let's Make Music</p> <p>Level: I Skill: Sequence of Events Genre: fiction</p> <p>Skills Lesson (2-3 minutes)</p> <p>Phonics Lesson: Blends (pl, str, fl, st, Play, blow, clarinet, flute, small, s)</p> <p>High Frequency Words: make, made, play, blow, clarinet, flute, small, s</p> <p>Reading Readiness Mini- Lesson (3-5 minutes)</p> <p>Sentence Frame: EXAMPLE</p> <p>1. Music is better if you don't play 2. Baby Jess liked to _____ her rattle. 3. Jake had seen someone make music with a tub 4. They played for _____</p> <p>Leveled Book Lesson (17 to 20 minutes)</p> <p>Story Introduction (needs to be thorough): TTW draw on children's musical knowledge. TTW show the students the cover of the book. TTW guide children through the pictures. TTW help children think with unfamiliar language and use the text successfully.</p> <p>Picture Walk/Story Talk: (Teacher is the only one with the book. Words are covered. Students predict story line by using the pictures. Teacher then distributes the books to students.)</p> <p>Teacher will show students cover of the book. Students will discuss what they think might be happening in the picture. Teacher will have students examine details in each of the pictures. Students will be able to infer what is happening in the story.</p> <p>* Strategy Reminder: BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT GOOD READERS DO!</p> <p>X Word Recognition Reminder</p> <table> <tr> <th>What child is having trouble with</th><th>Possible Teacher Prompts</th></tr> <tr> <td>Revised the sentence</td><td>"I want you to read the sentence and then I will ask you what it means."</td></tr> <tr> <td>X Sound through the word</td><td>"Show students how to blend the sounds on syllables of the word together and to be sure they are in the right order."</td></tr> <tr> <td>Use picture clues</td><td>"Let's review the pictures on the page and see if the pictures provide any clues to help you figure out the unknown word."</td></tr> <tr> <td>Look for "chunks" in the word</td><td>"Let's look for letter chunks (parts) in the word that might be familiar. I want you to read each chunk separately. Now let's blend the chunks together to read the entire word. For example, the word 'chicken' is: ch-icken. 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Connect to a word you know	"I want you to think of a word that is similar to the word you are reading. For example, the word 'hen' is like 'hen'."	<p>Lesson Goal: Coached Silent Reading</p> <p>Book Title: Storms</p> <p>Level: F Skill: Compare &amp; Contrast Genre: science (informational text)</p> <p>Skills Lesson (2-3 minutes)</p> <p>Phonics Lesson: R controlled vowels</p> <p>High Frequency Words: one, kind, gives, them, and, that, there, from, with, then, another very</p> <p>Reading Readiness Mini- Lesson (3-5 minutes)</p> <p>Vocabulary words: storm, weather, useful, dangerous, rain, plants, animals, thunderstorm, flood, rise, snow, trees, snowman, blizzard, ice, wind, seeds, dry, tornado, spins, dust, rip</p> <p>Sentence Frame: EXAMPLE</p> <p>One kind of weather is _____. Rain, wind, snow One kind of storm is _____. Thunderstorm, blizzard, tornado</p> <p>Leveled Book Lesson (17 to 20 minutes)</p> <p>Story Introduction (needs to be thorough): TW introduce the book. TW ask about what kind of storms we have in this region. TW discuss.</p> <p>Picture Walk/Story Talk: (Teacher is the only one with the book. Words are covered. Students predict story line by using the pictures. Teacher then distributes the books to students.)</p> <p>Teacher will show students cover of the book. Students will discuss what they think might be happening in the picture. Students will tell the time of the year this might be happening. Teacher will have students examine details in each of the pictures. Students will be able to infer what is happening in the story.</p> <p>* Strategy Reminder: BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT GOOD READERS DO!</p> <p>X Word Recognition Reminder</p> <table> <tr> <th>What child is having trouble with</th><th>Possible Teacher Prompts</th></tr> <tr> <td>Revised the sentence</td><td>"I want you to read the sentence and then I will ask you what it means."</td></tr> <tr> <td>X Sound through the word</td><td>"Show students how to blend the sounds on syllables of the word together and to be sure they are in the right order."</td></tr> <tr> <td>Use picture clues</td><td>"Let's review the pictures on the page and see if the pictures provide any clues to help you figure out the unknown word."</td></tr> <tr> <td>Look for "chunks" in the word</td><td>"Let's look for letter chunks (parts) in the word that might be familiar. I want you to read each chunk separately. Now let's blend the chunks together to read the entire word. For example, the word 'chicken' is: ch-icken. Let's look for chunks of parts in the word 'hen'."</td></tr> <tr> <td>Connect to a word you know</td><td>"I want you to think of a word that is similar to the word you are reading. For example, the word 'hen' is like 'hen'."</td></tr> </table>	What child is having trouble with	Possible Teacher Prompts	Revised the sentence	"I want you to read the sentence and then I will ask you what it means."	X Sound through the word	"Show students how to blend the sounds on syllables of the word together and to be sure they are in the right order."	Use picture clues	"Let's review the pictures on the page and see if the pictures provide any clues to help you figure out the unknown word."	Look for "chunks" in the word	"Let's look for letter chunks (parts) in the word that might be familiar. I want you to read each chunk separately. Now let's blend the chunks together to read the entire word. For example, the word 'chicken' is: ch-icken. Let's look for chunks of parts in the word 'hen'."	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Connect to a word you know	"I want you to think of a word that is similar to the word you are reading. For example, the word 'hen' is like 'hen'."																																					

Figure 8. Christine's lesson plans for three lessons.

From each of my observations, I developed a sequence for each lesson organized by day one and day two for each participant (see Figures 9 and 10).



Observation 1 Day 1	Observation 1 Day 2	Observation 2 Day 1	Observation 2 Day 2	Observation 3 Day 1	Observation 3 Day 2
Welcomes students - Uses realia – to activate / background knowledge - lunchbox	Welcomes students, reviews, reads sentence strips, fill in the blanks, choral read, teacher models	Welcomes students - Realia – to activate schema / background knowledge – picture of her puppy – making connections, building schema	Welcomes students - Students review high frequency words by playing game: Feed the Monster	Welcomes students – shows students the book and bring realia – cactus, map	Welcomes students and tells them that today they will find out what happens in the story.
High frequency words Game: Feed the Monster	Continues with picture walk, introduces a new character	Phonics skill – “oo” makes the “u” sound – shows a card with the “oo” written on it	Reviews Phonics skill – “oo”	Introduces high frequency words; students play game: Feed the Monster	Teacher asks students if they have changed their predictions from yesterday
Phonics Lesson – categorize words strategy – find smaller words	Students read title, students read chorally, teacher listens to students read one student at a time, students are reminded what good readers do; Stops students on certain page and asks them to make predictions; points to highlighted words; Point to the word, reread the word; teacher checks for understanding,	High frequency words - Game: Feed the Monster	Reviews vocabulary words/Reviews sentence stems; students fill in the blanks using the vocabulary cards	Introduces vocabulary words with visuals (pictures)	Teacher reviews high frequency words by having students play game: Feed the Monster
Vocabulary words – picture, visual, proper noun mini-lesson	After first reading, teacher asks students to confirm their predictions	Vocabulary Words – cards with pictures and words	Teacher reviews words “tucked” and “curly” before students begin to read the book	Teacher reads the pictures with students. As students read book, they make predictions using thinking stems. Introduces label text feature	Teacher reviews the vocabulary words. She shows the cards and the pictures in the pocket chart.
Sentence stem – read sentence strip, reading w/out intonation, quotation marks, read with emotion, teacher models, praises students, student models reading	Students are asked to read the book a second time; teacher writes down notes in a binder; teacher listens to each student individual read	Sentence Stems – going over sentences in the book; Students fill in the blanks with the vocabulary words	Teacher hands out books. Students begin to read book. Teacher observes students as they read. Teacher directs students to turn the page and read together. One of the students cannot read together with the group. Teacher allows student to read on his own. Teacher listens to each student read. She works on building students with individual strategies. Asks one student to go back and reread the sentence and try to determine the word, “light.” Teacher directs students to read the book a second time and listens to them read. She instructs students to read the book this time with no interruptions.	Students get a book and they begin to read. Students read their book in unison. Teacher listens to each student read. Before students read the last page, teacher asks students to stop reading and tomorrow they will find out what the treasure was. Students are eager to find out. They are disappointed they have to stop reading.	Teacher reminds students that today they are going to find out what the treasure is. Teacher asks students what good readers do, if they have read a previous selection. One of the student mentions that they go back and reread. Teacher hands out the book and a highlighter book mark. Students read the book as teacher observes. After students are done reading the last page, teacher asks each student if their predictions were correct.
Reading the pictures – post its cover the text – “good readers always read the pictures first” – students use thinking stems	Teacher directs students to go back to their desks and make connections and draw a mental image that matches their story. She goes over a handout before sending students back to their seats	Teacher redirects students who get unfocused; introduces the book to students.	Teacher questions students to activate their schema and make connections.		Teacher hands out a paper to each student and asks each student to answer questions: Why did Liz say this is not treasure? Explain how she changed her mind? After a couple of minutes, teacher asks students to stop answering questions, now is time to share what they learned. Students struggle answering questions, so teacher rewords the question and asks them if they can think of something that is treasure to them but might not be treasure to someone else? After discussion, teacher asks student to take their paper to their desk and complete it. Later, they will discuss it.
Reading the pictures – students read in their minds – mini-lesson on labels – text features		Conducts Picture Walk/ students read the pictures and use thinking stems	Teacher directs students to go back to their seats and complete a graphic organizer for the story structure.		

Figure 9. Mary’s sequence of guided reading lessons with two observations for each.

Observation 1 Day 1	Observation 1 Day 2	Observation 2 Day 1	Observation 2 Day 2	Observation 3 Day 1	Observation 3 Day 2
Tells students they are going to read a book titled, <u>Storms</u>	Welcomes students and passes out books	Tells students they are going to be reading book, <u>Let's Make Music</u>	Reviews discussion from yesterday about book, <u>Let's Make Music</u>	Tells students they are going to be reading book, <u>Larry the Singing Chicken</u>	Tells student they are going to read book
She asks students what they know about storms.	Reviews high frequency words	Introduces high frequency words	Retells vocabulary words – weaves story	Introduces phonics cards	Reviews phonic words, high frequency words
Introduces frequency words	Retells story with vocabulary words. Has one of the students retell story using vocabulary words	Weaves a story with vocabulary words; as she does, she builds background knowledge and makes connections	Reviews high frequency words	Introduces high frequency words	Retells story with vocabulary words
Introduces vocabulary words and pictures by weaving a story	Teacher models t-chart students will create as they read	Picture walk/picture talk Building background knowledge and making connections	1 <sup>st</sup> reading – focus questions for every 2 pages read	Uses vocabulary words to orally weave story	1 <sup>st</sup> reading of book, teacher asks focus questions for every two pages read
Throughout story teacher asks students lower level questions	1 <sup>st</sup> reading Answer focus question for every 2 pages read	First reading of book – 2 pages only Tells students they will finish reading the book tomorrow	Sentence structure – fill in the blanks Follow up activity: Venn Diagram Compare and Contrast	Picture walk/picture talk Students make predictions Notifies details in pictures	Activity: Students organizes events in order
Picture walk/picture talk	Sentence structure activity: students fill in the blanks w/vocabulary words  Follow up activity: Students are asked to construct sentences at their desks				Follow up activity: answer to questions from the book.

Figure 10. Christine's sequence of guided reading lessons with two observations for each.

Secondly, I referred back to the observation notes and began the coding process. Just as in the analysis of the interviews, I read and reread the observation notes and coded for any data that stood out. An example of the coding for Christine's first observation for day one is shown in Figure 11.

During the picture walk and picture talk part of the lesson, Christine passes out a book to each student and tells them they are going to read the book, <u>Storm</u> , that <u>tells them all the useful and not useful things about weather</u> .	Introduction of text Purpose for reading
She has students read the title of the book and the author's name. She reminds students that <u>by now they should have an idea what the book is about since they reviewed the vocabulary words already</u> . During the picture walk and picture talk <u>Christine asked numerous questions: What do you see on the cover?</u>	connects vocabulary words  Questions Factual Question
One of the students answered a tornado. <u>How do you know is a tornado?</u>	Factual Question
Another student began to answer, but stumbled. Christine helped out the student by asking her, <u>"What is one of my vocabulary words?"</u>	Student stumbled  Provides assistance
The student responded, "Is spin." Christine clarifies by agreeing and answering, <u>"Is spinning."</u>	Clarifies response
<u>What do you think causes a tornado?</u>	Probing Question
<u>Where does it come from?</u>	Probing Question
<u>Does it come from the dirt or does it come from the top?</u>	Probing Question
One of the students responds, <u>"Top."</u>	Picture evidence
The other student answers, <u>"From the wind and the clouds."</u>	Picture evidence
<u>What is the kid carrying?</u>	Factual Question
Student responds, "An umbrella." Why do you think he is carrying an umbrella?	Probing Question
Student answers, <u>"Probably because he wants to go outside"</u>	Prediction
Why does he have to carry an umbrella outside?	Probing Question

*Figure 11.* Sample of coding observation for Christine.

During the analysis of codes, relationships among the codes emerge. Similar codes were grouped into categories. Once I completed the coding cycles, I used Excel spreadsheets to determine the relationship among the codes. In one spreadsheet, I organized the codes by

interviews. In a separate spreadsheet, I organized the codes for the observation transcripts. Each participant had two spreadsheets of codes. See Figure 12 below for an example of a spreadsheet.

Mary's Codes		
Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 3
students are different	understand students' thinking	self-confident
"to differentiate"	assessing students	"I've taught them to question the norm"
assessment	"reading their responses"	"just question everything"
"students' needs"/differentiation	reflective teacher	"solid concrete answer"
different learning styles	vignette	"feel confident" about the answer
"need to be able to cater"	connection to personal experience	"let's find out"
effective strategy	"readers are thinking"	"excited when my students pose a question"
"be able to read our students"	good readers' strategies	give responsibility to students
understand students' needs	reflective teacher	"give it to a student"
cater to instructional needs	consider factors	"I'll let them do it"
teacher experience	"it's always a combination"	provides assistance
"learn the student"	"go back"	monitors students
students are different	"think about it"	"glimpse to make sure we're on"
"reading or learning that student"	"you have to think"	models for students
students change/grow	make connections	equipping students
no one size fits all	good readers' strategies	empowering students
students change/grow	decoding	"find the resources"
know your students/reflection	missed processing for comprehension	teaching students to find resources
reflective teacher	"right recipe for each student"	"it's a combination"
constant assessment	"general recipe for all of them"	"gauge responses by writing"
"differentiate instruction"	reflective decision maker	"gauging how well they grasp the concept"
personal recipe	encouragement	engaging students

Figure 12. Organization of codes

After all the codes were typed, I printed the spreadsheets and analyzed data using the generated codes. I looked for patterns, relationships, and the number of times similar codes appeared. By constantly going back to look at the codes and considering their similarities and the relationship among them, specific categories emerged (see Table 3).

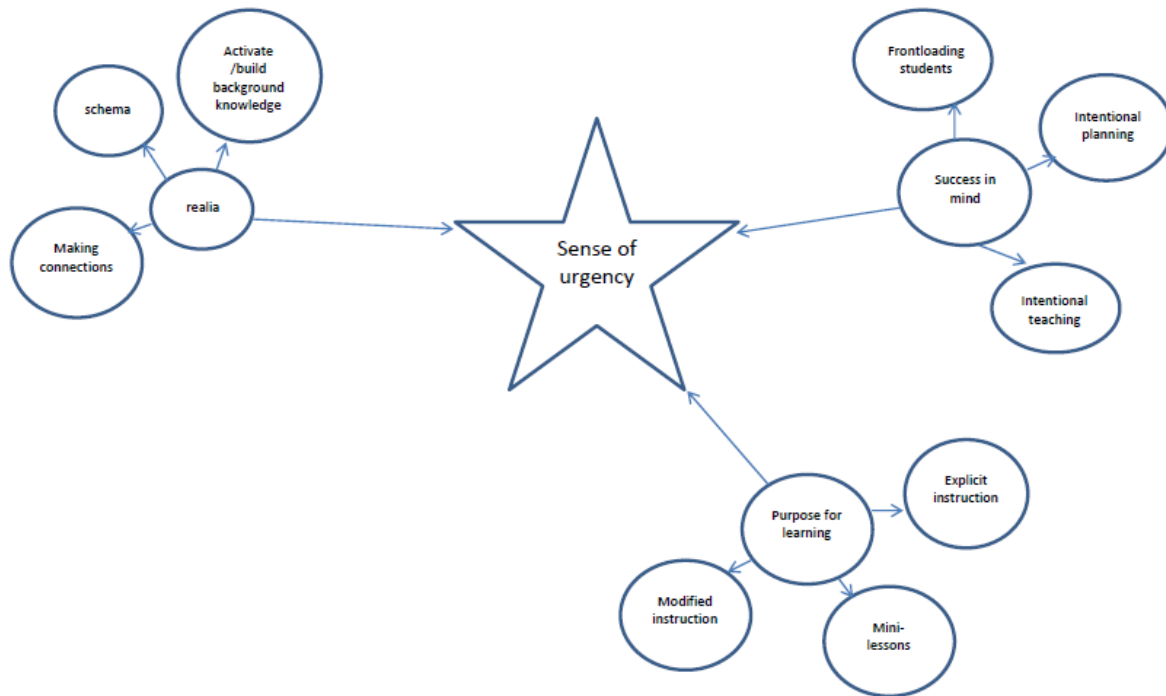
Table 3  
*Participants' Categories*

Mary's Categories	Christine's Categories
MI1 – no one size fits all, metacognition, combination of best practices (building schema, deeper meaning) differentiation, vocabulary: key to comprehension, front-loading students	CI1 –comprehension, differentiation, lifelong learners, plans with students in mind, reflective teacher, questioning
MO1 – models expectations, prompting, intentional instruction, provides support, good reader strategies	CO1 – build background knowledge, prompting, focus questions, weaves story with vocabulary, textual evidence
MI2 –sense of urgency, reflective decision maker, change inevitable, encouragement, make connections	CI2 – “put myself in their shoes,” making connections, motivate students, reflective decision maker
MO2 – reflective questioning, observing students, strategic instruction, scaffoldings, reflective thinker	CO2 – making connections, redirects students, textual features
MI3 – caters to students' needs, celebrating the student, models, reflective teacher: multitask, positive reinforcement, questioning, skills	CI3 – student's choice, guided reading process, modeling, different learning styles, high expectations, classroom management
MO3 – purpose for learning, confirms predictions, explicit instruction, modified instruction	CO3 – notice details in text, observing students

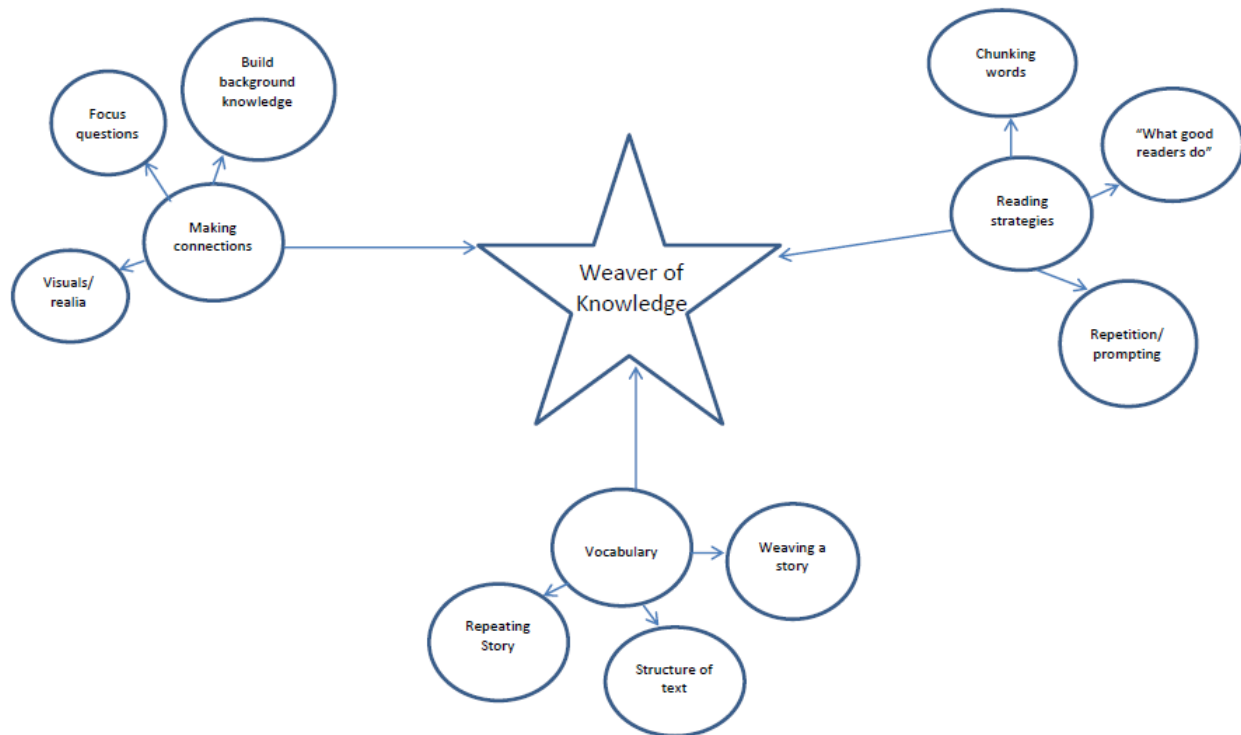
As I analyzed these categories, I used semantic relationships to identify patterns and connect categories. Saldana (2013) contended that some categories may need to be refined into subcategories. When the major categories are analyzed, this leads to themes, concepts, assertions, or theories. Not all data leads to the development of theories, but the results can lead to key assertions that can provide a “statement that proposes a summative, interpretive observation of the local contexts of a study” (p. 14).

As I analyzed the data, I used Merriam's (2009) constant comparative method and looked at Bandura's substantive framework of self-efficacy to determine how it influenced the teachers' instructional decisions. Merriam (1988) stated, “Each case in a cross-case analysis is first treated as a comprehensive case in and of itself” (p. 154). Therefore, I analyzed each case individually

before comparing both. As I analyzed each case, I created graphic organizers to help me see the relationship among the codes and determine themes. (See Figures 13 and 14 below)



*Figure 13.* Mary's development of themes.



*Figure 14.* Christine’s development of themes.

After I analyzed the organization of codes and categories, I identified specific themes for each of the participants. Mary’s case themes included: (a) A Sense of Urgency: Frontloading Students; (b) Reflection: A Key to Growth; and (c) A Provider: Catering to Students’ Needs. Christine’s case themes included: (a) A Weaver of Knowledge: “What Good Readers Do;” (b) How They Learn: A Case of Subjectivity; and (c) A Guide: Modeling the Way.

After analyzing each one of the cases, I conducted a cross-case comparison to find similarities and differences in the themes across the two cases (Stake, 2006). From this analysis, the following two themes resulted: (a) Making Connections: Picking your Brain, and (b) Growing through Reflection.

In chapter four, I present the report of each case in a narrative manner telling the story of each participant. I also present the similarities and differences found in the cross-case comparison.

### **Trustworthiness and Rigor**

In order to establish accuracy, credibility, trustworthiness, and rigor in this study, a number of activities were conducted. To establish validity, or triangulation, multiple sources of evidence were collected through interviews, observations, artifacts, and field notes (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2009). I also kept a fieldwork journal to record and reflect interpretations. Cross-checking, or member checking, of data was conducted during the interview process and after the analysis by allowing the participants to check the authenticity of the transcriptions and the findings. Participants were encouraged to critically analyze the findings and provide feedback as to whether the findings reflect their experiences. Additionally, the observations were videotaped with sufficient time. Peer debriefing sessions took place with a qualitative professor who was knowledgeable of the subject matter and held an impartial view of the research. Transcripts and documents were examined to avoid data being over-or-under emphasized or to highlight biases made by the researcher or any errors in the data. The findings were also reviewed for vague descriptions. Feedback provided by the professor provided an additional layer of credibility and validity.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter has presented the methodology this research followed. Interpretivism as the theoretical framework followed by a case study design guided this study. Detailed descriptions of how data was collected as well as the analysis of the data procedures were presented. Furthermore, tables and figures were presented to explain and illustrate data collection to ensure the validity of the study.



## CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

This chapter includes findings from the study. It begins by presenting the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) results along with a discussion for each participant followed by each case's findings. Mary's case is organized in the following order: (a) Mary: high expectations, (b) a sense of urgency: frontloading students, (c) reflection: the key to learning, and (d) a provider: catering to students' needs. Christine's case includes the following: (a) Christine's eager to learn, eager to teach, (b) a weaver of knowledge: "what good readers do," (c) how they learn: a case of subjectivity, (d) a guide: modeling the way. Lastly, a cross-case comparison was conducted and the following themes are discussed: (a) making connections: picking your brain, and (b) growing through reflection.

An interpretivist theoretical framework guides this study. This framework considers human social interactions as the place where knowledge develops because investigators utilize these interactions to interpret how humans make meaning of their world (Creswell, 2007). The purpose of the study was to explore how two South Texas teachers, Mary and Christine, used guided reading to inform their instructional decision-making after they participated in training and coaching sessions in two South Texas classrooms. The research questions that guided this study were:

1. How do participants describe the ways in which they negotiate guided reading instructional decision-making?
2. What are the experiences of the participants in helping struggling readers during guided reading?

The following three themes define Mary's case: (a) A Sense of Urgency: Frontloading Students, (b) Reflection: The Key to Growth, and (c) A Provider: Catering to Students' Needs.

Christine's case includes the following three themes: (a) A Weaver of Knowledge: What Good Readers Do, (B) How They Learn: A Case of Subjectivity, (C) A Guide: Modeling the Way.

### **Teachers' Sense of Self-Efficacy**

At the center of Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory is the concept of self-efficacy. To assess the self-efficacy of the two participants, both were asked to complete the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) at the beginning and at the end of the study. The TSES questions evaluate a teacher's levels of confidence in three factors that impact student achievement. These three factors include student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. The purpose of having the participants complete the TSES before and after the study was to gain an awareness of the participants self-efficacy in the three factors mentioned throughout the course of the study. Since Bandura's (1997) belief of personal self-efficacy involves an individual's belief in his or her ability to plan and execute the plan to obtain the desired outcome, the TSES provided data that served for triangulation of findings and understandings acquired. The TSES included 24 questions that assessed how teachers viewed their abilities to perform in the areas of student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. Teachers selected from within a range of one to nine for each question. One was "nothing," three "very little," five "some influence," seven "quite a bit," and nine "a great deal." Selecting a one indicated a low sense of efficacy and a nine indicated a high sense of efficacy. For this study, responses of a six and above were considered high levels of efficacy. Any responses of a five and below demonstrated a low sense of efficacy. Table 4 was drawn from the form in Appendix E and shows the results for each participant in the abilities assessed by each question.

Table 4  
*TSES Results for Mary and Christine*

<b>TSES Results for Mary and Christine</b>				
<b>Teacher Beliefs</b>	<b>Mary's</b>		<b>Christine's</b>	
	<b>Before</b>	<b>After</b>	<b>Before</b>	<b>After</b>
<b>Efficacy in Student Engagement</b>				
1. How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students?	7	7	9	8
2. How much can you do to help your students think critically?	7	9	7	8
3. How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?	7	8	9	7
4. How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?	9	8	9	9
5. How much can you do to help your students value learning?	7	9	9	9
6. How much can you do to foster student creativity?	9	8	8	8
7. How much can you do to improve the understanding of a student who is failing?	9	8	8	8
8. How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?	7	8	7	7
<b>Efficacy in Instructional Strategies</b>				
1. How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students?	9	9	8	7
2. How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught?	8	8	7	8
3. To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?	7	8	7	9
4. How much can you do to adjust your lessons to the proper level for individual students?	8	8	8	9
5. How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies?	8	9	9	8
6. To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?	8	8	8	8
7. How well can you implement strategies in your classroom?	8	9	9	9
8. How well can you provide appropriate challenges for very capable students?	8	9	9	9
<b>Efficacy in Classroom Management</b>				
1. How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?	7	7	6	8
2. To what extent can you make your expectations clear about student behavior?	7	8	8	9
3. How well can you establish routines to keep activities running smoothly?	6	9	9	8

4. How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?	7	8	9	8
5. How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?	7	8	7	8
6. How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?	7	8	8	9
7. How well can you keep a few problem students from ruining an entire lesson?	6	8	7	8
8. How well can you respond to defiant students?	7	8	6	9

What follows is a detailed description of the participants' responses before and after TSES results. Further discussion and interpretation of these responses are in Chapter 5.

### **Mary's TSES Results**

Mary's awareness of her sense of self-efficacy highlighted changes in her responses to the TSES from the beginning to the end of the study. However, her responses from before and after the study fell within the high efficacy range of the scale.

**Efficacy in student engagement.** For the first question in the area of student engagement, Mary selected "quite a bit" for her ability to do much to get through her most difficult students at the beginning and end of the study. Mary felt she could do "quite a bit" to help her most difficult students. There was a change in her responses with the other questions from her before and after TSES results. In the before study TSES results, Mary selected "a great deal" in her ability to do much to get students to believe they could do well in school work, foster student creativity, and improve the understanding of students who were failing. In the after TSES results, she selected between the range of "quite a bit" and "a great deal" for these three abilities. In her ability to do much to motivate students who showed low interest in school work and assist families in helping their children do well in school, Mary selected "quite a bit" in the before study TSES results. In the after TSES results, Mary selected between "quite a bit" and "a great deal" for both questions. Mary considered she could do much to help her students think

critically and value their learning. She selected “quite a bit” in the before TSES results. The after study TSES results revealed Mary selected “a great deal.”

**Efficacy in instructional strategies.** In the area of instructional strategies, Mary selected “a great deal” in her ability to respond to difficult questions from her students at both the beginning and end. The before and after study TSES results showed Mary’s responses between “quite a bit” and “a great deal” in her ability to gauge student comprehension of what she had taught, to adjust her lessons to the proper level for individual students, and to provide an alternative explanation or an example when students were confused. In her ability to craft good questions for her students, Mary selected “quite a bit” in the before study TSES results; however, in the after TSES results, she expressed between “quite a bit” and “a great deal” range. When considering her ability to use a variety of assessment strategies, implement alternative strategies in her classroom, and provide appropriate challenges for very capable students, Mary selected between “quite a bit” and “a great deal” range in the before TSES results. The results from the completion of TSES after the study pointed out Mary felt she could do “a great deal” for these three abilities.

**Efficacy in classroom management.** In the area of classroom management, Mary selected “quite a bit” in her ability to do much to control disruptive behavior in the classroom in the before and after study TSES. For the following activities, Mary selected “quite a bit” for the before study TSES, in the after study TSES she selected between the range “quite a bit” and “a great deal”: making her expectations clear about student behavior, getting children to follow classroom rules, calming a disruptive or noisy student, establishing a classroom management system with each group of students, and responding to defiant students. In the before study TSES, Mary selected between the “some influence” and “quite a bit” in her ability to respond to

defiant students; however, in the after TSES, Mary selected between “quite a bit” and “a great deal” range. A similar change was seen in her ability to establish routines to keep activities running smoothly. In the before study TSES results, Mary selected between “some influence” and “quite a bit” range, but in the after study TSES results, Mary selected “a great deal.”

Overall, Mary’s beliefs about her capabilities in the three areas demonstrated high efficacy levels that affected the delivery of her instruction.

### **Christine’s TSES Results**

Christine’s awareness of her sense of self-efficacy also indicated differences in her responses in the TSES from the beginning to the end of the study. However, both times her responses fell within the high efficacy range of the scale.

**Efficacy in student engagement.** In the area of student engagement, in her ability to get students to believe they could do well in school work and in helping them value learning, Christine selected “a great deal” in the before and after study TSES. For her ability to foster student creativity and get children to follow classroom rules, Christine chose between “quite a bit” and “a great deal” range for both before and after study TSES. For the before study TSES results, Christine selected “quite a bit” in her ability to do much to help her students think critically and assist families in helping their children do well in school; however, in the after study TSES, she selected between “quite a bit” and “a great deal” range. In her ability to get through the most difficult students, Christine selected “a great deal” in the before study TSES, but in the after TSES, she selected between “quite a bit” and “a great deal” range. For her ability to motivate students who showed low interest in schoolwork in the before study TSES, Christine felt she could do this “a great deal,” but in the after study TSES, Christine selected “quite a bit.”

**Efficacy in instructional strategies.** In the area of instructional strategies, the before and after study TSES results indicated Christine felt she could do “a great deal” in implementing alternative strategies in her classroom and providing appropriate challenges for very capable students. In the area of providing an alternative explanation or example to confused students, for the before and after study TSES results, Christine selected between the “quite a bit” and “a great deal” range. For responding to difficult questions from her students, in the before study TSES, Christine selected between “quite a bit” and “a great deal” range, but in the after study TSES, she selected “quite a bit.” When completing the before study TSES, Christine felt she could do “quite a bit” in gauging student comprehension of what she had taught and crafting good questions for her students; however, in the after study TSES, she indicated between “quite a bit” and “a great deal” range for her ability to gauge student comprehension and “a great deal” in crafting good questions. In the before study TSES, Christine selected between “quite a bit” and “a great deal” range to indicate her ability to adjust lessons to the proper level for individual students, but in the after study TSES, she selected “a great deal.” The opposite was seen in her ability to use a variety of assessment strategies. Christine’s before study TSES indicated she selected “a great deal,” but in the after study TSES, she selected between “quite a bit” and “a great deal” range.

**Efficacy in classroom management.** For classroom management, in the before TSES Christine selected between “quite a bit” and “a great deal,” but in the after study TSES, she selected “a great deal” in her ability to make her expectations clear about student behavior and to establish a classroom management system with each group of students. Christine selected “a great deal” for the before study TSES and between “quite a bit” and “a great deal” range in the after study TSES for the following areas: establishing routines to keep activities running

smoothly and getting children to follow classroom rules. In calming a disruptive or noisy student and keeping a few problem students from ruining an entire lesson, Christine selected “quite a bit” in the before study TSES, but in the after study TSES she selected between “quite a bit” and “a great deal” range. In her ability to get control of disruptive behavior in the classroom and respond to defiant students in the after study TSES, Christine indicated between “quite a bit” and “a great deal,” but in the before study TSES, she selected between “some influence” and “quite a bit” range in her ability to control disruptive behavior and “a great deal” in her ability to respond to defiant students.

In summary, Christine’s responses indicated confidence in her abilities to engage students, provide strategies, and have good classroom management.

Both teachers rated their abilities for each of the 24 indicators in the TSES at the beginning and at the end of the study. Although some of their responses varied between the beginning results to the end results, their responses fell within the high efficacy range both times. These results indicated that both participants had a high sense of efficacy in the areas of instructional strategies, student engagement, and classroom management at the beginning and at the end of the study. These findings are further supported in the themes that emerged for each participant from the data analysis. Table 5 presents the participants and the cross-case analysis themes. What follows are the discussions of these themes for Mary’s case, Christine’s case, and the cross-case analysis themes.



Table 5

*Participants and Cross-Case Analysis Themes*

<b>Mary's Individual Themes</b>	<b>A Sense of Urgency: Frontloading Students</b>	<b>Reflection: The Key to Learning</b>	<b>A Provider: Catering to Students' Needs</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of vocabulary &amp; schema inhibit comprehension</li> <li>• Realia activates &amp; builds background knowledge</li> <li>• Sense of urgency builds a feeling of excitement in the presentation of mini-lessons</li> <li>• Considered mini-lesson as a way to frontload students</li> <li>• Use of novelty – <i>Feed the Monster</i></li> <li>• Mini-lessons provide support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflected on her personal growth as a teacher</li> <li>• Implemented guided reading based on how she was taught, “I went through the steps...like going through the motion”</li> <li>• Her teaching was more “universal in [her] mind”</li> <li>• She considered herself a better teacher due to experiences, numerous trainings, workshops, and observations</li> <li>• Open minded</li> <li>• “Reading her students”</li> <li>• Expectations was on meaningful connections, understanding the text, being reflective thinkers</li> <li>• Reading a complex process</li> <li>• Her instructional decisions were based on students’ needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students have different strengths and weaknesses</li> <li>• Intervention – differentiation</li> <li>• Cater to student’s needs: thinking stems</li> <li>• Student’s growth from beginning of school year</li> <li>• Provided the prompting and coaching to elicit connections and deeper comprehension</li> <li>• Right recipe for each student evolved</li> <li>• Comprehension takes care of reading skills</li> </ul>
<b>Christine's Individual Themes</b>	<b>A Weaver of Knowledge: “What Good Readers Do”</b>	<b>How They Learn: A Case of Subjectivity</b>	<b>A Guide Modeling the Way</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A teacher does not know it all</li> <li>• Conduct her own research</li> <li>• What good readers do</li> <li>• Use of strategies such as repetition, visuals (realia), and making connections</li> <li>• Credited training for learning these strategies</li> <li>• Used vocabulary to weave story line of text</li> <li>• Considered visuals and realia critical</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflected on how she learned to try to understand how her students learned.</li> <li>• This guided her instructional practices.</li> <li>• Based instruction on her intuition and experience.</li> <li>• Relied on students’ facial expressions to determine comprehension.</li> <li>• Target was to activate students’ prior knowledge and develop their comprehension.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An effective teacher knows how to teach reading, comprehension, and phonics.</li> <li>• Reading: a lifelong skill</li> <li>• Understood the power of visuals</li> <li>• Questioning was prominent</li> <li>• Goal was to build students’ confidence</li> <li>• Guide and teach students how to select a good fit book</li> </ul>
<b>Themes</b>	<b>Making Connections: Picking Your Brain Growing Through Reflection</b>		

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<b>from Cross-Case of Mary and Christine</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supported by the TSES results</li> <li>• Both participants indicated a high sense of self-efficacy</li> <li>• Readers use metacognitive skills to develop comprehension</li> <li>• Mary provided a scaffold of support through the use of thinking stems</li> <li>• Christine provided questions to elicit students' comprehension</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants had high levels of efficacy in the areas of instructional strategies, student engagement, and classroom management.</li> <li>• Participants were constantly reflecting on these three areas as they planned, delivered instruction, and assessed their students.</li> <li>• Their decisions revolved around their confidence in their abilities to implement strategies to engage students and lead to good classroom management.</li> <li>• Both participants engaged in reflective thinking that influenced their decisions.</li> <li>• Both shared they had grown in their knowledge in their reading instruction.</li> </ul>
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### **Mary: High Expectations**

I met with Mary and was greeted by an excited teacher who loved teaching reading to her first graders. Mary shared with me her teaching experiences, which consisted of kindergarten and first grade. Prior to teaching first grade, she had taught kindergarten. This year was her fifth year in education and in the same school. For this particular year, her class composition consisted of 19 first graders. As I conversed with Mary, I soon realized that she set high expectations for herself. Her dedication to the profession led her to continually seek opportunities to learn because she understood the responsibility she had in her hands every year with the first graders entrusted to her. After attending the trainings, she felt excited and confident in teaching guided reading with the support recommended. Further, Mary expressed that it was through trainings, peer observations, and reading professional books that she had grown in her profession. She considered her job a professional responsibility to ensure that each one of her students left first grade reading on level or higher by the end of the school year. She set high expectations not only for herself, but also for her students. She commented, "I think we have a professional

responsibility to be accountable to everyone... My personal goal is to get them at least one or two levels higher.”

From my regular meetings with Mary and my observations during guided reading, I noticed her relationship with her students was always the same. She talked to her students like little adults and expected the politeness and manners she modeled for them. At no time did she ever raise her voice. In the occasions when a student needed redirection, she would simply attract the attention of the student by calling him/her by name in her normal pitched voice. Her students knew she had high expectations for each one of them. This was evident in the way she related with them. During the guided reading lessons, whenever students would provide a response or share a comment, Mary expected them to reply with a complete statement. Students were aware of this, but whenever one of them would respond with one word, Mary would nicely remind him/her of her expectations. The students would then respond with a complete sentence. Mary had created a risk-free environment where her students shared their ideas and would not hold back. Every response was received with a pleasant smile. Whenever a student needed clarification, Mary would make the student think about his/her response and then guide him to the correct answer. In every conversation I had with Mary, her positive outlook about her students’ ability to succeed in reading, including her struggling readers, was present. This motivated her to accomplish her expectations for herself and for her students.

Mary saw growing in her profession as a professional responsibility. For this reason, she enjoyed attending the guided reading training and learning new ideas to support her students’ learning during guided reading. This section illustrates the themes developed from the experiences Mary encountered as she negotiated instructional decisions during guided reading instruction. The following themes resulted from data analysis: (a) A Sense of Urgency:

Frontloading Students, (b) Reflection: The Key to Learning, and (c) A Provider: Catering to Students' Needs. Through these themes, I provided a detailed description of Mary's experiences, struggles, and successes as she conducted guided reading lessons implementing the training she received.

### **A Sense of Urgency: Frontloading Students**

Mary understood that efficiency is important to success, and this knowledge led her to plan and prepare the materials for her guided reading lessons ahead of time. As she planned her lessons, she considered the fact that her students came with different background knowledge and limited experiences. She understood that activating and building background knowledge was important to students' understanding of the text, so in her lesson introductions, she utilized realia. Realia are objects and materials from everyday life used as teaching aids. Mary expressed that vocabulary and schema were two of the factors that inhibited comprehension for her students. For example, Mary recalled a book students read about skiing. Mary confessed that, even as an adult, she had never been skiing. Mary researched and presented pictures to students about this topic as they discussed the vocabulary before reading the text. She believed that by utilizing realia she could assess students' prior knowledge and build any schema they lacked. It also allowed her struggling readers an opportunity to build vocabulary.

During the lesson, as realia were introduced, a large amount of discussion occurred among the students and the teacher. Students shared their personal experiences and stories that the objects evoked in their minds. For example, during the first observation, after Mary welcomed her students, she began by placing a lunch box at the center of the table. She opened the lunch box and asked students to identify and name each of the items she was going to take out. She took out half a sandwich wrapped in a Subway wrapper, a juice pouch, and an apple.

She told students that these items appeared in the book, *Where is Cow's Lunch*. She shared with her students that when she read the book it reminded her of her lunch. On the second observation, to introduce *Biscuit*, a book about a pet puppy, Mary showed her students a picture of her pet she had on her cell phone picture file. She shared with her students the things her pet was afraid of and things that he liked. Students shared about their pets as well. During the third observation, for the book, *The Map and the Treasure*, Mary presented a decorative cactus plant and asked students if they had ever seen a plant like this or if they knew the name. Most of the students did not know the name of the plant, so Mary told them that it was a cactus plant and shared with them information about cactuses. She also took out a crumbled piece of brown paper sack that she had turned into a map by drawing a route and a big X. After students identified this item as a treasure map, she proceeded to explain they would come across similar objects in the book they would read.

Using these items, Mary helped her students build vocabulary and experiences and make connections with the story lines of the books. Mary kept students on topic by constantly prompting them and bringing them back to the text whenever a student would drift away from the topic of discussion. Mary efficiently kept the presentation and discussion of realia to no more than five minutes and then proceeded to the next part of the lesson.

Mary's sense of urgency built a feeling of excitement as she presented the mini-lessons for phonics skills, high frequency words, and vocabulary cards. Her style of presentation was upbeat as she guided her students to the desired learning outcome through the use of prompting. Mary considered the use of these mini-lessons as a way to frontload her students with the support they needed before the actual reading of the text. Mary stated:

I kind of never planned or even considered of front-loading them. That was just so obvious. Why not give them the answers to be successful? Why not? Why not give them all the hints they need to know before the book. Why not? They are going to be successful.

This frontloading of information provided the scaffolding that allowed students to be successful in their reading. Mary expressed that after frontloading, her students were ready to read the text. Once she placed the actual books in their hands, they were ready to read. Their reading was smooth. It flowed. Students were not stopping to ask for an unknown word; this was the goal of the mini-lessons taught before the actual reading of the text in guided reading. When referring to *Coaching Effective Guided Reading Sessions under the RTI Umbrella* and the planning, preparation and mini-lesson instruction she did before the actual reading of the text, Mary shared:

Let's warm you [students] up so that when you get to the book it's that much more simple until it becomes second nature until it becomes, "Oh was this all?" It's, it's, um, not as challenging compared to if we would have done the guided reading way "Oh, okay now so now highlight it." With the response to intervention you just work them up so much more, you, you work at it so much more before they even get to the book so it become that much more simpler.

Mary expressed that before she received this training, she would leave to chance the success of her students with the text they would read. Now, the planning and preparation of materials allowed her to analyze the text before her students read the text. This provided her with direction and allowed her to make decisions on the spot during the guided reading lesson.

When planning for the phonics skill lesson, Mary expressed that she followed the book adoption sequence because, most of the time, it correlated with the guided reading book; however, sometimes her students had mastered the phonics skill for the week. If this was the case, then she would have to select another phonics skill that her students needed to practice. For example, if the skill in the adoption was the “ending –ing,” and most of her students had mastered it, but her students still lacked mastery of the “silent e,” then she would focus on that skill instead. According to Mary, knowledge of her students’ needs helped her to plan lessons and focus on specific skills until her students mastered them.

Mary also utilized novelty to encourage and make the lesson fun for her students. During the high frequency word mini-lesson, she played the game *Feed the Monster* with the students to encourage them to read the word correctly. This game consisted of each student receiving a high frequency word flashcard, reading the word, showing it to the rest of the group, and then placing it inside a sack decorated as a monster. The goal was for each student to correctly identify and read the high frequency word. Depending on the number of words per lesson, each read one to two words. On the occasions observed, the students who experienced difficulty with words were given the word by Mary. They repeated the word, placed it in the bag, and continued with the lesson. Each time students were handed a card, they would read it, and place it in the sack (see Figure 15)



*Figure 15.* Feed the monster sack from Mary's observation

When delivering the vocabulary mini-lesson, Mary presented the words in flashcards with a picture representation of each word. Mary used each word to present either the story line of a fiction text or the main ideas of a non-fiction text. After presenting the vocabulary words, sentence structures from the text were presented to students in sentence strips. The sentences were written in fill-in-the-blank format. Mary would guide students in reading the sentences and fill in the blanks with the vocabulary words (see Figure 16).



*Figure 16.* Vocabulary words and sentence stems in Mary's classroom.

Mary thought ahead of time about the skills she wanted her students to identify and learn from each activity she presented. Therefore, during the lesson, she made decisions to guide her students to success. For example, during one of the vocabulary mini-lessons, Mary placed the



vocabulary words with the pictures along with the following sentence structures in the pocket chart.

“Cow looked in her lunchbox.”

“I have an idea,” said \_\_\_\_\_.

“You can eat my \_\_\_\_\_!”

“Thank you,” said \_\_\_\_\_.

She introduced the following vocabulary words: *sandwich*, *Squirrel*, *apple*, *the man*, *juice*, and *Bird*. She then showed students the word “Squirrel” and asked students if they noticed anything different about the word. She then pulled out the card with the word “apple.” She had students notice both words. One of the students pointed that both words were spelled differently. Mary told students that it was not so much about the spelling, but she wanted them to think about grammar rules. “Think about nouns, proper nouns, the names of people. The names of people or special characters begin with a capital letter,” Mary pointed out to students. Mary told students that in this case the name of the character in the story was Squirrel; that is why the word had a capital “S” because it was a proper noun.

In this mini-lesson, Mary highlighted the beginning letter of each word and explained how the capital “S” in squirrel changed the common noun to a proper noun. As she continued to go over the vocabulary words and came across the word *Bird*, she asked students what they could tell her about the word. One of the students this time pointed out that it was a name of a character. Mary acknowledged the correct response.

Mary considered her instruction validated whenever her students applied problem-solving skills in their learning. For example, in the second observation, Mary once again introduced the following vocabulary words with visuals: *drink*, *hear a story*, *blanket*, *doll*, *hug*, *kiss*, and *light*.

She read the words and asked students to repeat after her. She then turned to the sentence stems that were posted in the pocket chart:

Time for bed Biscuit!

Woof, woof!

Biscuit wants \_\_\_\_\_.

She had her students use the vocabulary words to fill in the blanks. At one point, as the students read the sentences and filled in the blanks with the vocabulary words, they realized the sentence was not making sense because it was missing the word “a.” One of the students suggested that the word card “a” they had gone over during the high frequency mini-lesson could be taken out of the *Feed the Monster* bag to fill in the gap where it was missing in the sentence. Mary agreed with that recommendation.

Mary understood the importance of these mini-lessons because they provided the support students needed. She also understood that students needed ample opportunities to read. For this reason, during her guided reading lessons, she had an upbeat style of presentation and spent about five to six minutes in each mini-lesson. This provided students time to complete the first reading on the first day of the guided reading lesson.

### **Reflection: The Key to Learning**

Mary stopped often to reflect on her personal growth as a teacher. She looked back at her beginning years and reflected on where she was four years later. She told me during her first year of teaching she implemented guided reading based on how she was taught. Mary recalled, “I went through the steps, so it was more like going through the motion of going through the lesson, or going more through the motion of what they told me that I should do.” At this point, it was her fifth year of teaching, and she considered herself a better reading teacher. She credited this to

her ability to gauge where her students were at any point and to know what decisions to make on the spot. She attributed this growth to her experiences with working with students and teachers, along with the numerous trainings and workshops she had attended over the years. Mary also enjoyed reading professional books that provided her with strategies and ideas to implement with her students. Over the years, she had also observed teachers who had modeled lessons for her.

Mary stated:

As years go by, well, yes, I continue working with my mentor, and but as time progressed, I got to also work with other teachers, and got to observe their teaching styles, and got to observe how they did things. So now it's like, "Oh, now I get to choose. Now I get to see what's best for my students," So I think I end up being a combination of what I think have been better practices, well for my mentor teacher and from other colleagues that I have worked with. Not doing it one way or the other, but a combination of what I think works best for my students.

Mary believed the staff development opportunities she had attended over the years had provided her with a wide range of knowledge, ideas, and better practices from which she could choose.

Mary shared with me that when she started her career, her style of teaching followed the way she was taught. She stated that it was more, "universal in [her] mind." Her teaching consisted of having students sitting down working with paper and pencil activities and repeated readings. This created discipline problems in the classroom. It wasn't until Mary attended several trainings that she learned to become more open-minded to implementing different activities and strategies, which led to improvement in her classroom management. One of those ideas was the use of foldables to help her students reinforce and retain skills. By implementing these activities, Mary noticed student engagement soar during literacy centers. However, she was cautious about

overusing these activities because when not implemented properly, they could create disruptive problems in the classroom. Mary's opinion consisted of a balance between paper and pencil instruction and creating foldables. She stated, "To me it's about you [having] a balance of both." I was able to see this in the follow-up activities she assigned after each guided reading lesson. No activity was ever the same. For lesson one, students were asked to write about a time when they lost something and then draw a mental image to support their writing. For lesson two, students were asked to write the sentence structure of the story they read. At the end of lesson three, students had to answer open-ended questions from the story.

As she delivered instruction, Mary was in constant reflective mode, observing her students' behaviors and facial expressions for any sign of confusion. In my conversations with Mary, she often referred to this as her ability to "read her students," which expressed the idea that by looking at her students she could tell if they had comprehension of the subject matter. Questions such as, "Do I see surprised faces? Do I see upset faces?" constantly fill her mind. Whenever her students showed any signs of confusion, Mary went back to reteach. Other times when her students were excited about the lesson and were eager to share their ideas, Mary took a different approach:

I'll give them a shoulder-shoulder-knee time which means you can talk to somebody beside you because you can't wait to get it out. So that is one of the things that I use, is like okay you really have to get it out so I'll let you talk for now and now is time to come back together again and let's do it again.

"Reading her students" became a common practice for Mary. Before the actual reading of the text, she conducted a picture walk of the text. Mary showed students a page at a time eliciting their predictions and encouraging them to read each picture in detail, while observing for any

signs of confusion. As Mary worked with her students in the guided reading lesson, I noticed students responding in complete sentences to her questions. When I asked Mary how she had accomplished this task, she commented that at the beginning of the school year she began with guided reading by introducing sentence stems to her students. She created an anchor chart that hung behind her guided reading area. From that day forward, students were expected to share their thinking and predictions using the following thinking stems: “I am thinking...,” “I am wondering...,” or “I am noticing...” These thinking stems provide students with the tools they need to respond to Mary’s expectation that they respond in complete sentences.

Mary paid close attention to her students’ responses, and she elicited deeper thinking from her students when necessary. She expected her students to make meaningful connections to the text. An example of this expectation occurred during the picture walk of a lesson. The following scenario was an example of Mary digging deeper into the student’s thinking.

STUDENT: I am noticing that the cow is happy.

MARY: Why do you think she is happy?

STUDENT: Because she is smiling.

MARY: Because she has a smiling face. How about schema? Do you have schema about being outside? How does that make you feel?

STUDENT: Happy.

MARY: Happy right. That is probably why you said the cow is feeling happy aside from her having a happy face that is true.

In this scenario, Mary activated the student’s schema by asking him how it made him feel being outside. The student thought deeper about his connection and related to how being outside in a

sunny day made him feel. The student could connect the way the character felt at this point in the story. When I asked what led her to make this instructional decision, she shared:

I think when he gave me the response, I kind of self-checked that. I kind of checked my question again... When he gave me happy as a response, I go back and check myself as a teacher: did I give him the right question? It wasn't the right question by my part. I could have asked differently. So when I find out it was a very basic... in the higher order thinking, it was too simple... And I realized that, at that point... I should have asked it differently.

During her planning and delivery of instruction, Mary continually reflected on the decisions she made and how those decisions helped her students become critical thinkers. To her, it was about students making connections as they read, understanding the text, and being reflective thinkers. She understood that reading was a complex process which required a balancing act between phonics and comprehension. She felt that it could not be one without the other. Mary stated, "You can sound it out phonetically and read it beautifully [but] it's not good enough for me if you don't comprehend." Mary believed that lifting words out of a page was not enough, but comprehension had to take place for students to succeed in reading. Because being reflective was one of Mary's characteristics, she often found herself asking,

Did I develop enough schema for the story? Did I, as a teacher, help them make that personal connection to that story? If they have none, if they have no personal interest, it's [going to] be that more challenging for me as a teacher to make them work for me or to make them read.

According to Mary, as she reflected on her instruction and on her students' responses and behaviors, she was able to determine the needs of her students. Her instructional decisions were based on these needs.

### **A Provider: Catering to Students' Needs**

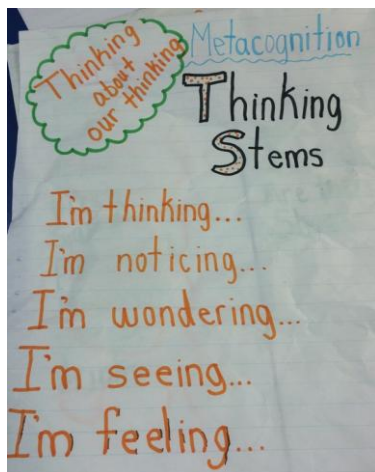
Mary knew that students had different strengths and weaknesses, and it was her responsibility to diagnose and plan adequate instruction that met those needs. One of Mary's interventions to meet the needs of her students relied on differentiation. She understood that an effective reading teacher was one who assessed her students to determine what each one needed and was able to differentiate instruction. Mary recognized that even though students had similar needs, they learned differently. It was her responsibility to get to know each one of her students and know where they were on a daily basis. Mary shared:

Each year students are different. So it comes to...reading or learning that student, working with that student over a period of time, and even that one student, changes over time as the year progresses. So, there's not like one set format that works. So, say for example, at the beginning of the year, my student needs this, so I work with that student depending on what they need, but as the time progresses, it changes because they progress and they grow. So then, it's always like, you have to know your student at that day at that time. Yes, we know where we started; we have to know where they're going by the end of the year. But, but we need to always be constantly checking what is it that they need today.

Mary knew that being knowledgeable about each student and knowing how to help every learner was critical. She expressed:

We need to be able to cater or find that one strategy that works for that one student...Teacher...needs to...be able to read our students and understand what they need and cater to what their instructional needs are.

Mary's priority was preparing students to be successful. An example of how she facilitated learning for students occurred at the beginning of the school year when she taught her students thinking stems. She challenged her students to use these thinking stems as the initial part of the sentences when they shared their thinking. These stems consisted of: "I am thinking...", "I am noticing...", and "I am wondering..." (see Figure 17).



*Figure 17.* Thinking stems displayed to promote thinking in complete sentences.

Students used these thinking stems to share their thinking in complete sentences. This is one of the comprehension strategies that she taught her students. Mary shared that she saw growth in her students. At the beginning of the school year, students' thinking consisted of what they saw in the picture. Mary's coaching allowed her students to develop deeper thinking by this part of the year. Mary acknowledged their thinking by providing the prompting and coaching to get them to make connections and develop deeper comprehension. Mary was constantly wondering and considering if students were comprehending:



Are you really comprehending the book not only by the title, not only by what you're seeing, but it's a combination: I need you to wonder, I need you to think, I need you to feel, I need you to notice, I need you to read the top part of the story and if you can't notice anything in the story then you really don't get it. You are not thinking about the story. If you are really not getting any of those thinking stems, you're really lost.

Mary prompted and reminded students about the behaviors of good readers. She reminded them to go back and think about what they read and to make connections as they read. They had to think and use strategies. Mary believed that the right recipe for each student evolved. She shared the case of one of her students who was having difficulty retaining high frequency words and understanding sentence structure. With this student, Mary had to rely on constant repetition of the concept or words being taught. Aside from the repetition, Mary had to provide a lot of encouragement through praise and celebration. In addition, she made phone calls to the student's parents to inform them how proud she was of his progress. For this student, the strategies of reading the pictures, knowing the high frequency words, reading the sentences, rereading, and reading with fluency did not work; therefore, the teacher had to provide encouragement, praise, celebration, and parent phone calls. The process was long for this student, but he bloomed. Mary recalled her experience working with this student:

With that one student it was, let's read the papers and it's so much repetition, so much repetition, and that alone didn't do it. I had to, for him, add a lot of encouragement. So for that one student, it was repetition, it was encouragement. It was a lot of building. You can do it. Some of the other students had moved on and for him it was, "You can do it, yes you can." "Teacher, but I don't know how to read." Other students had got in other reading books, and he hadn't so it was a lot of, "Yes you can," "Yes you can,"

“We’re going to do it together,” and it was a lot of celebration and praise for him when he finally did master one story, and I made it a point to be dramatic and you know, a louder voice in my table when I was reading with him alone, and make such a big point to say, “I’m so proud of you. You did so well.” And I think for him it was just the celebration and the praising and congratulating him. I had to make a few phone calls at home and say I’m very proud, we’re doing progress, and I want to tell you that your child is doing better. So I think for him it was that. It was a lot of repetition and praising and celebration, and that worked for him because the pictures alone didn’t work because the reading alone didn’t work so I had to find out what is going to work.

Another student, after reading and doing a great job calling out words and reading fluently, failed to comprehend what he was reading. After his reading, Mary asked him to retell the story. The student could not recall what he had read. When she asked the student if he had been thinking about the story as he read, the student replied, “No.” Mary had to remind him that good readers think as they read, “Good readers read the pictures. Good readers use what they know and bring up those strategies.” Based on the student’s facial expression, Mary could tell that he was not processing and thinking as he read. She had to stop the students and redirect.

Mary understood that at any point a student might have a need that required her to change her instructions. For example, during one of the observations, Mary instructed the students to begin reading aloud together. As students read aloud, one of the students suddenly stopped, and frustrated, exclaimed, “I can’t read together.” This student was having a hard time concentrating on his reading due to his peers’ reading aloud. Mary responded to the student, “If you can’t read together, then go ahead and read on your own.” Mary then turned to the rest of the students and instructed them to read at their own pace. The students began to read on their own as Mary

listened to them. Mary has realized that students have different learning styles. Her instruction is guided by a “no one size fits all” approach. She considers each child’s need and caters to that need. When I asked Mary about this decision, Mary shared:

Yeah, I could tell he was frustrated. It was obvious, I can’t read together, it bothered him, it didn’t work for him. He can do it when it’s with one other person but as a group I think it was too much noise in his brain to where he can’t think and understand it...so if it just wasn’t working for him, I can see how the rest were [going to] benefit from reading it on their own pace. So that was just better for the time, so then why not if that was [going to] help him.

When I asked Mary about her strategy for listening to each student read during guided reading, she shared that she momentarily focused on one student reading at a time. If the student read at least half page accurately, then she moved to listen to the next student. Whenever she heard a word mispronounced, she would stop the student and ask him to go back and reread the sentence. She provided the support and had the student move on. As the students read, she gauged their comprehension by asking them questions. She would have her students refer back to the text to provide answers. Most of the time, Mary’s questions required students to make inferences from the story. She reflected, “I think it’s more about are they really understanding the text, do they really, really get it. Because if they really, really get it I think cause and effect will be insignificant. It will be so easy.” Mary believed that if students made connections and understood their reading, then reading skills such as cause and effect or main idea would come more naturally to students.

### **Christine: Eager to Learn, Eager to Teach**

In every meeting I had with Christine, her enthusiasm for her profession and her eagerness to learn radiated from her conversations and actions. Christine carried with her a smile and a positive outlook towards all the things she was doing as a first-year teacher. She loved her 21 second graders and cared deeply about them. Christine taught in a self-contained classroom and, because this was her first year teaching, she was very open to new strategies and ideas that would help her instruction. Previously, she conducted her student teaching practicum in a language arts fifth-grade classroom in the same school where she currently taught. On several occasions, Christine shared with me that her passion was teaching and seeing her students learn. Christine said, “I really like teaching kids...I enjoy working with them and their “Aha moments!” like when they get it. It makes me proud, like I am doing something good.”

As a new teacher, Christine understood that an effective teacher was one that continued to seek learning opportunities and set this as her personal goal. On more than one occasion, she described her willingness to attend trainings and observe teachers conducting lessons as opportunities that would help her continue to learn new things. When I asked her to describe how a teacher becomes an effective teacher, Christine shared from her personal experience, “I’ve learned a lot with the trainings and knowing what the principal...wants, so once I am taught to do that, then I can teach my child or student.” Christine considered the philosophy of the principal at her school a driving force in dictating what her students should know. Based on the student achievement scores in the area of reading for the lower grades, Christine’s school saw the need to train the lower grade teachers in a guided reading approach that offered support to all students reading at a level below their grade level. Teachers received intensive training in this initiative. When Christine was hired as a second grade teacher, she was asked to attend the

*Coaching Effective Guided Reading Sessions under the RTI Umbrella* training. As Christine attended the training, she felt like a sponge absorbing the information being provided. She took down notes and videotaped the presenter on occasions. Christine felt that if it was important for a teacher to teach a new initiative their school was promoting, then he/she needed to be trained to implement it. This was the case with the guided reading training Christine attended. This training was significant for Christine because it taught her a new approach to teach reading. After the training, she felt better prepared to help her students become readers. Christine's eagerness for learning was the driving force that motivated her to implement the ideas she learned from the trainings. She realized that an effective teacher could never stop growing in her profession. With this in mind, Christine welcomed any opportunity to help expand her knowledge.

This section includes the themes that resulted from the experiences Christine encountered as she negotiated instructional decisions during guided reading instruction. Three themes resulted from data analysis: (a) A Weaver of Knowledge: "What Good Readers Do," (b) How They Learn: A Case of Subjectivity, and (c) A Guide: Modeling the Way.

### **A Weaver of Knowledge: "What Good Readers Do"**

Christine shared that a teacher does not know it all. Therefore, she believed that a teacher should always plan ahead of time and know her content to prepare and guide students in learning. When she planned her guided reading lessons, she ensured that she knew enough information about the topic. She confessed there were times when she was not familiar with the topic presented in the text. She then had to conduct her own research on the material beforehand so she could be prepared for the lesson. She stated, "If I don't know something, I have to research and then I get the information of what I'm going to teach them." As she planned, she was also critical about analyzing the texts for areas that might present problems for her students.

Through this preparation, Christine was able to provide further explanation and build background knowledge for her students. Christine shared there had been times when her students had asked questions she did not have the answers to. When these situations arose, Christine relied on her iPad to search for an answer to her students' questions. There had also been instances when she had told her students she would get back to them with the answer.

A key factor Christine considered important to ensure the success of her students as readers was teaching them the strategies and behaviors that good readers use. Therefore, when she worked with her students, she used the phrase, "What good readers do," to remind students of their goal to become good readers. In her guided reading lessons, Christine used strategies such as the use of repetition, visuals (realia), and making connections to model for her students what good readers do when they read.

Christine stated that from the guided reading training, she learned struggling readers needed to hear the information multiple times before they actually internalized it. Now she knew repetition during instruction was critical in the retention of the material taught. Christine said of the training, "She taught us that we were supposed to repeat...the words or whatever we want to teach them." During my observation of Christine conducting the guided reading lessons, she used this strategy when introducing the vocabulary words for the text. On day one, she introduced the vocabulary words through a story she created. With every new word she presented, she would go back and review the previous words she had presented as she wove her story. Afterwards, she would ask for volunteers to use the words to retell the story orally. On day two of the lesson, Christine once again reviewed the vocabulary words as she recalled the story told the day before. This repetition allowed the students to recognize the words and read them

without difficulty. It also provided them the structure of the text that allowed them to be successful with the text at hand.

Part of the guided reading lesson involved introducing the vocabulary words with pictures. Christina considered visuals and realia critical in building background knowledge and vocabulary because they are physical representations of concepts that provide assistance in the comprehension and understanding for struggling readers. She felt these were excellent tools that helped students retain information. Christine acknowledged, “It [the information] can stay with them and they can learn it forever” through using visuals and/or realia. Christine recalled the time when one of the guided reading texts mentioned the word “rattle.” To ensure students learned the word she decided to create a rattle out of a soda can by filling it with several small items, and wrapping it up with paper. Christine stated, “I built a can and decorated it and put something inside and just covered it on the top so they can hear like the rattle.” Christine stated the lesson became more personal to the students because they were able to make a connection. On another occasion, while I observed the lesson on a non-fiction book about music instruments, Christine surprised her students by taking out a violin case from under her table and placing it on the table. She placed the violin in front of her students and allowed them to touch it which allowed her students the opportunity to have firsthand experience with this musical instrument. There was a photograph of a young girl playing a cello in one of the pages of the book; the students were able to see the differences between a violin and a cello.

When I observed Christine introduce the vocabulary words, she would begin by placing each card on the table and the matching picture or photograph next to each word. Christine instructed her students to listen to the story she was going to tell them using each of the vocabulary words. Students were expected to listen carefully because then it would be their turn

to retell her story using each one of the vocabulary words. The stories Christine orally wove with the vocabulary words were short synopses of the text students were going to read. Her purpose was to introduce students to the structure of the text they were going to read. As Christine shared the story, the students would share their thinking by asking questions or simply commenting on the pictures or photographs being presented to them (see Figure 18). Throughout the lesson, Christine acknowledged their responses, but brought back to the story line of the book. This re-focusing was evident in the following excerpt, in which the vocabulary words are underlined:

CHRISTINE: We have different kinds of weather that we see.

STUDENT: That is a hurricane.

CHRISTINE: Maybe. So one type of weather is rain. Sometimes we can see rain outside when it's cloudy. Rain is very useful to us. Why? Because it helps plants grow. The plants need water to grow and in order for them to get water, it has to rain. The rain also helps animals drink water, but when we have lots of rain we can also get storms.

STUDENT: Thunderstorms.

CHRISTINE: When we get storms, that's when we have lightning. This is one type of storm, a thunderstorm. And when we have thunderstorms and lots of rain we can sometimes also get floods and when we get floods is that good or bad?

STUDENT: Bad. That can carry sharks.

CHRISTINE: That is really, really bad, but that water will rise up. Remember we talked about rising up. It's called evaporation. It rises up. That can also be very dangerous

STUDENT: Because sometimes we open the door all the water could get in.

CHRISTINE: Of course and then your house gets destroyed and you don't want to see your house destroyed. Another type of weather is snow.





*Figure 18. Weaving a story with vocabulary.*

Because the vocabulary mini-lesson was intended to take place within five to six minutes, Christine would try to keep her lesson within that time. However, due to Christine having the students recall her story orally after she was done with her story, it often took the remaining time of the guided reading lesson. In one of the observations, I observed how Christine redirected a student back to the vocabulary lesson. Christine presented the vocabulary words for an emergent text they were going to read. The text presented a cause and effect scenario about what could happen in rainstorms, blizzards, and tornadoes. Unfortunately, the book did not provide information on how these storms form. The following excerpt was the conversation that occurred between the student and Christine:

STUDENT: How do blizzards start?

CHRISTINE: Honey, you need to listen to my story. When it snows a lot, you can build your own snowman and we are always very excited to build that snowman, but when there is a lot, a lot of snow we have another storm called blizzard, so we want to see blizzards? Not really because they are very dangerous. A blizzard has ice and snow. And another type of weather is wind.

Christine felt she needed to redirect the student to the story she was weaving because the book did not talk about how blizzards began. Vocabulary was an important component of

comprehension. Therefore, during Christine's vocabulary mini-lessons she expected her students to pay attention because she expected them to learn the words and be able to use them in context. She wanted her students to stay within the context of the book. Concerning the vocabulary mini-lessons, Christine shared that she had noticed the excitement in her students as soon as she began to place the vocabulary cards on the table and began with her story. She expressed:

I can tell that they are looking at my lips of how I am going to say it, and my hands, and my motions because when I tell them to repeat it, I can tell they are doing the hands motions too like how I would do it.

Christine knew that making connections was another strategy involved in comprehension. When students read any text, she expected them to make personal connections to self, to other books they had read, or to events in the world. At times, when students failed to make these connections, Christine felt it was because they lacked the schema, which would present a problem with comprehension. Therefore, as Christine introduced the vocabulary words for the text through the story, she elicited connections from her students.

Christine taught her students word strategies to help them with unknown words they encountered in their readings. Students were taught to use context clues whenever they came across words they did not know. Whenever they encountered multisyllabic words, students were encouraged to attack the word or break it down. On more than one occasion, I observed Christine guide her students in decoding unknown words by telling them, "Let's attack it differently. Let's break it down. How do you say this? A-T, at, and the next part... Blend it together, put it together, how does it sound?" All along, the students would follow her directions.

A strategy that Christine preferred, because she had seen it help her students reinforce multiple strategies, was the sentence structure activity. This activity consisted of selecting a

sentence from the text being read. The teacher wrote down the sentence in a sentence strip and then cut up each word. As a follow up activity, students would then put the sentence back together and refer to the book to check their work. Christine commented that this activity had helped her students with grammar skills such as noticing capital letters at beginning of sentences, punctuation, and subject/verb agreement. Other follow-up activities I observed consisted of students completing a Venn diagram to compare and contrast information and answer questions from their reading.

### **How They Learn: A Case of Subjectivity**

Christine worked at an elementary campus where all language arts teachers received training on an approach to guided reading to support struggling readers. This approach to guided reading differed from the traditional guided reading in that it required additional forefront planning by the teacher to support students with the presentation of phonics, high frequency words, and vocabulary words prior to reading the text. Because this was Christine's first year teaching, she had not attended any trainings prior to being hired as a second grade teacher. She began the school year unaware of any approach to teaching students how to read, so for the first two weeks she would move around the classroom listening to each student read. Christine shared:

I would actually let them read individually and then I would go...like to each table and I would read with one child...I would sit with one child and I would tell him, "Read to me," and they would read to me and then I would ask them questions, so I would try to hit like the whole five tables like the whole week so I would be with one for ten minutes and then the other ten minutes...I was like, very overwhelmed because sometimes I had

to read ahead of what they were reading to make sure I was going to ask them something...that connects with the story...it was kind of overwhelming.

After attending *Coaching Effective Guided Reading Sessions under the RTI Umbrella* first training, Christine expressed that during the implementation phase, she had questions about the process of guided reading so she would ask her fellow teachers for clarification. However, Christine came to find out that her fellow teachers also had questions and were unsure of particular areas of the guided reading process for which they had received training. It was not until the second training she attended that her questions were answered because she was able to observe her co-workers teaching guided reading lessons as they were being coached by the trainer. She learned a lot from the trainings, and although she perceived that it took time for her to understand the process of guided reading, she knew how to start the beginning of the next school year.

I already know how to start the beginning of the year...I wish I would have known everything I know right now from the beginning. It would have been more knowledge, more growth.

Christine reflected on how she learned to try to understand how her students learn and decide on her instructional practices. Christine put herself in her students' shoes. "But how do I know what questions I am going to ask? I...put myself in their shoes...how would they comprehend what they're reading." Based on her intuition and experience as a learner, she decided how she was going to proceed with her instruction. Christine also relied on what she felt her students needed:

The way I felt, since I had already read with some of the students the way that I felt that they should be...I just felt like with this group I should be handling more the vocabulary

because I felt they were lacking on vocabulary and with this group I felt like I should be working more on high frequency words.

Christine's philosophy involved teaching students to read with comprehension because reading helped them become lifelong learners. This philosophy drove her instructional decisions during guided reading. When asked about her instructional decisions, Christine stated that during the guided reading lesson she relied on her students' facial expressions to let her know if they understood or not. For the most part, she also based her decisions on activities for her guided reading groups on what she was covering with the whole class. She reflected:

I kind of like to base it on what we're doing for the week, like if we're teaching let's say, sequencing, I like to tie it, because I'm already teaching that so then they get to do the guided reading, they get to practice what we're teaching that week.

A typical guided reading lesson for Christine followed a set pattern. Christine sat at her kidney-shaped table with students facing her. She began her lesson by informing students of the book they would be reading. She encouraged students to share their thinking and welcomed their responses. Christine then introduced the high frequency words they would come across as they read the text. She used the pocket chart to post the high frequency cards. With a pointer, Christine pointed the words and students read them. During the three observations, when students had difficulty with some of the high frequency words, it was common for Christine to read the word and have students repeat it aloud.

It was common that after Christine reviewed the vocabulary words, she passed each student a book and asked them to read the title. She informed her students that they were going to do a picture walk and picture talk. This meant students read the pictures in the book by sharing their thinking. The guided reading lesson usually lasted from twenty to twenty-five minutes.

During Christine's lesson, the picture walk, picture talk discussion usually lasted for the remaining of the time for day one. The following excerpt from a guided reading lesson showed a typical picture walk, picture talk discussion:

Christine asked one student to read the title of the book. She asked one of the students what she thought the story was going to be about. The student responded, "Music."

Christine then asked students, "What are we doing with the music?" One of the students responds, "Playing." Christine asked the student what gave her that clue.

Student responded, "Because there is a girl playing the drums in the cover page."

Christine acknowledged the good observation. She asked the student, "What is the girl playing?" The student responded, "The drums." One of the students responded, "With pencils." Christine asked student, "With pencils?" and asked students to look closely at the picture. She asked them if they saw lead at the end points. Students disagreed and instead answered that the sticks have circles at the end. Christine told students that those are called sticks, drumsticks.

For each page, Christine asked students questions related to the pictures if it was a fiction book or photographs if it was a nonfiction book. Christine's target through the picture walk and picture talk was to activate students' prior knowledge and develop their comprehension.

### **A Guide: Modeling the Way**

Christine believed that an effective teacher should have the knowledge of how to teach reading and be able to teach comprehension skills. A teacher should also know how to teach phonics to help students decode words. A teacher should be a guide to assist the child in comprehension and be successful not only in the current grade level, but in other grade levels. Christine shared:

The skills that I believe a teacher should have in order for her to teach reading, well, basically, the knowledge of how to teach reading, and the skills that she should teach the child is the comprehension skills, so she should have background knowledge of how to teach comprehension skills, also, phonics. How to introduce phonics, how to introduce the blends, and so she can allow the child to, or show the child how to read the word.

Christine believed students needed to learn to read because reading was what they were going to need for the rest of their lives. They would need reading for all the subject areas.

Christine understood that visuals had the power to elicit students' background knowledge and lead them to make connections. "I can show them pictures or a little film about an animal...give them a little bit more knowledge so they can have that...to refer back to." Part of every guided reading lesson was the routine of the picture walk and picture talk. Students were taught to read the pictures before reading the text and use the pictures to predict or infer what the text would be about.

Christine also learned to read her students' facial expressions and behaviors when measuring comprehension. Christine felt that students could read every single word on the page but still not understand. For this reason, questioning was prominent during her guided reading lessons. Christine shared that when her struggling readers did not understand her questions, they would start looking to the side and avoided eye contact. She recalled the behaviors she had seen her struggling readers exhibit:

They start looking to the side. When they don't understand something, the low readers, they're a little bit shy, they don't automatically tell me – I guess they don't feel confident enough to tell me, like, I have no idea what you're telling me, you know? But I notice that they start looking to the side like, I don't know, you know, like, I don't know what

she's asking me or I'm not sure how to answer this question, so then I start kind of helping them, OK, try this. What do you not understand? I am the one that has to look for the answer, OK, what's going on here, you know?

This was one of the areas where Christine noticed the difference between her struggling readers and high readers. Her high readers had confidence to provide answers to the questions she asked without hesitation. Christine stated that her low readers lacked self-confidence. Therefore, with every question Christine asked, she was intentional in how she asked it as well as the type of feedback she provided. Her goal was to build her students' confidence. Christine expressed:

Well, they understand more, you know? Sometimes they do kind of, they don't want to participate because I guess they feel like no one is ever going to understand me, but when I ask them and then they answer the question correct, I'm like, "You see? You got it, you can do it," and they're like, "OK, I can do it," and then they get a little bit of confidence back...I feel like if I motivate them and build up their confidence they'll grow more."

Christine shared a situation she encountered with one of her students who was reading at a kindergarten level. Through the guided reading lessons, Christine began to notice the students' growth not only in her reading but also in her writing. Even though the student was not writing at a second grade level, her writing and self-confidence improved. According to Christine, now whenever this student came across an unknown word, she would try to figure it out without Christine prompting. Christine explained:

She starts getting more straight, and she starts like trying to read better, and if she doesn't, she'll attack it by herself. She doesn't even wait for me to tell her...she automatically starts like to break down the word on her own.



During the three lessons observed, the first reading of the book usually occurred during the second day. During the reading, Christine presented a focus question for every page her students read. Students read the assigned page or pages aloud and after the reading, Christine repeated the focus question again and waited for her students to provide the answer. She then guided them to refer back to the text to provide evidence from the text.

Christine felt that she had to ask every student a question because this was the way she could assess if her students understood the story. According to Christine, the level of questions she asked depended on her students and their reading levels. The following were the types of questions Christine asked her students during the third observation.

- Who is the boss of the hen house?
- How do you know?
- What does Rose want Larry to do?
- Why do you think Rose wants Larry to sit on the nest?
- What does Larry do in the hen house?
- Why is Rose upset?
- On page 9, where does Rose want to put Larry?
- Is Larry really a chicken?

Additionally, Christine believed that the choice of books students selected for independent reading needed to match the students' current interest and reading level, and Christine felt it was her task to guide and teach students how to find good fit books. When students went to library and selected books that were at a higher reading level than their current one, Christine often negotiated with her students. She pointed out to her students that these books

were at a higher reading level. Christine went to the library with her students to guide them in selecting a good fit for a book at each of their reading levels.

### **Cross-Case Comparison**

Upon the completion of reporting the findings for each participant's data, I analyzed the themes and codes for both cases. I conducted a cross-case comparison to determine similarities and differences in the data. Afterward, I considered Bandura's (1997) sense of self-efficacy and referred to the TSES to support the themes that emerged. From this organization, the following cross-case themes resulted: (a) Making Connections: Picking your Brain, and (b) Growing through Reflection. The comparisons are shown in Table 6.

Table 6  
*Comparison across Participants*

Cross-Case Themes Comparison	Mary	Christine	Cross-Case Comparison	Sense of Efficacy
Making Connections: Picking your Brain	Values making connections and picking students' brains as means for reading comprehension.	Getting students to make connections through questioning during "picture walk, picture talk" activity for comprehension.	Both participants' instructional decisions focus on making connections through probing and/or questioning. Their target is comprehension.	Efficacy in instructional strategies and student engagement are evidence that supports this theme
Growing through Reflection	Different staff development opportunities have increased the knowledge of best practices.	Staff development increased her knowledge of guided reading instruction.	Reflection on how staff development has led to their professional growth and impacted their students' reading performance.	Efficacy in all three areas supports this theme because participants reflect on student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management when planning for guided reading intervention

## **Making Connections: Picking Your Brain**

The theme, Making Connections: Picking Your Brain, was supported by the TSES results of both participants. For the Efficacy in Instructional Strategies factor, both participants indicated a high level of confidence in their ability to create good questions. They utilized these questions to gauge the comprehension of their students as they participated in guided reading.

Additionally, the participants' results indicated a high sense of self-efficacy in the area of student engagement. Both participants expressed confidence in their ability to help their most difficult students. They also felt they could do much to help their students think critically. The evidence gathered by the TSES demonstrated that both participants' high sense of self-efficacy influenced their decisions and the implementation of instructional strategies that lead to student engagement during guided reading instruction.

Readers use metacognitive skills to develop comprehension in their reading. As they read, connections to their prior experiences and knowledge shape their comprehension of the text. Both Christine and Mary believed that as readers interacted with the text, they made connections to personal experiences, to books or movies they had read or seen, or to world events that helped them with their comprehension. This philosophy guided and supported their planning as well as their instructional decisions during guided reading instruction. However, the ways in which each achieved this task varied between the two participants.

Mary focused on providing a scaffold of support through the use of thinking stems for students to use when sharing their connections. At the beginning of the school year, Mary concentrated on delivering lessons on metacognition. Her concentration was on developing critical readers as they thought about their thinking from the reading of the pictures and the text. Mary stated:

If we are working on comprehension, I kind of work my students at the beginning of the year to use something called what I use as thinking stems and they are like initial words or initial stems like “I am thinking,” as a way to, “I am thinking,” is the initial part of the sentence to where they can tell me what they are thinking about the story. We’ll use like, “I am noticing,” to where they can tell me what they are reading about in the picture not noticing only with their eyes. Now, they can tell me what they are noticing happening in the picture, so they are good at that now, um, I am wondering what they are wondering about what the story is going to be about, um, seeing the front cover. Well, I am wondering not only what the story is going to be about because that one I think was a very easy monotone, “Oh, I am wondering what the story is going to be about.” Now it’s more like, that is not good enough, “I am wondering why the character has the face like that or I am wondering if whatever it is on that picture.” Is not about what I wonder what the story is about. They have to take it for me deeper now, so that is one of the strategies how I measure comprehension.

These thinking stems acted as a support for the students when they expressed their ideas during guided reading. Students in Mary’s classroom knew their thinking was valued so they freely shared their ideas. During my observations, I noticed students who were not hesitant to share their ideas. I could tell the thinking stems had become part of their daily guided reading discussions because they used them as they shared their responses with the group. Students sounded confident and they were able to express their thoughts in complete sentences. They were comfortable sharing their connections, and I could tell they had a sense of success. Moreover, they respected each others’ responses as they took turns sharing their ideas. It was evident students had taken ownership of these thinking stems.

Mary's expectations for her students included having students read and think critically. Mary shared that her goal for her students was for them to be critical readers. She recalled that at the beginning of the school year, students' thinking involved literal observations. Mary's goal was to get her students to read the text and be able to make inferences and draw conclusions. If her students comprehended the text, then they should be able to master reading skills such as main idea, sequence, and cause and effect without difficulty.

On the other hand, Christine's journey differed from Mary's in that her focus during the "picture walk, picture talk" activity was to guide her students through the use of questions in reading the pictures or photographs in each page of the book. She continually asked them questions to elicit their connections and assess their understanding. Through questioning, Christine guided her students to think about the text and refer to the text for evidence. Even though an anchor chart with thinking stems similar to Mary's hung in Christine's room behind her guided reading gathering place, her students were not expected to use the thinking stems in their responses. Instead, their responses consisted of short phrases, single words, and the occasional complete sentence. During the "picture walk, picture talk" activity, Christine focused on having students concentrate on the pictures and notice the details. If students read the pictures and made connections and predictions, then Christine believed they should be able to connect to the words in the text, to the paragraphs, and passages. When students would get ahead and read the text during the "picture walk, picture talk" activity, Christine redirected them to read the pictures. During this activity, Christine also gauged the level of schema students had on the topic. If they lacked schema, Christine would provide opportunities to build their experiences and vocabulary on the topic through the use of visuals or realia.

## **Growing through Reflection**

Reflection is an active process in which a teacher engages. Before, during, and after a lesson, a reflective teacher has the following questions in mind: What is the most effective way to teach this concept? Do they understand how the character changes throughout the story? Did they think critically and understand the themes presented in the story? Based on the TSES results, it was evident that both Mary and Christine were reflective teachers. The results indicated high levels of efficacy in the areas of instructional strategies, student engagement, and classroom management. This means that if both participants possessed high levels of efficacy in these three factors then they were constantly reflecting on them as they planned, delivered instruction, and assessed their students. Everything they did revolved around the confidence they had in their abilities to implement strategies that engaged students and resulted in good classroom management. This allowed guided reading lessons to run smoothly without interruption. The following evidence illustrated how both participants' high sense of efficacy motivated them to reflect and continue to grow in their professions. In their interviews and observations, both participants engaged in reflective thinking, which influenced the decisions they made. Both participants shared they had grown in their knowledge and in their effectiveness as reading teachers. Staff development opportunities such as trainings, observations, professional reading, and coaching had broadened their understanding in their craft as teachers.

When Mary began teaching, she was assigned a mentor who took her under her wing and taught her how to conduct a guided reading lesson. As a first year teacher, Mary followed the steps in a manner that she described "as going through the motion," in a rote manner, not deviating from the steps she was instructed to follow. She really did not know the "why" of each step involved in a guided reading lesson. However, in the following years, as she engaged in

reading professional books and in observing fellow teachers, she understood what the students needed. She learned to see reading as a process that takes probing and, as she stated, “poking the right button in the brain” during guided reading. Mary also began to adopt practices she learned. She realized there were other effective ways that instruction could be delivered, and she began to implement them.

Most recently, the training and coaching she received through the *Coaching Effective Guided Reading Sessions under the RTI Umbrella* intervention made her acknowledge the importance of providing structured skill development instruction through mini-lessons in phonics, high frequency words, and vocabulary before the actual reading of the text or story – something Mary had never considered doing. Through years of experience, Mary had attained a bag full of best practices from which she picked and chose what worked best for her students to be successful. These best practices were visible during her guided reading lessons as she guided her students to become critical readers. Her target was to have students think and analyze the text critically, so as she conducted the lesson, she constantly reflected on her probing and how students responded. She would ask herself questions such as:

- Do they really get it?
- Do they really understand?
- Do I need to provide it in all English now?
- Do I need to provide it in a probing kind of way...?
- Do I see surprised faces?
- Do I see upset faces? Are they really getting what the book is about?
- Why not give them the answers to be successful?
- Why not give them all the hints they need to know before the book?

- What skill are they lacking?
- Was it a high frequency word?
- Was it vocabulary?

These questions provided two assessments. The first was a personal assessment. This occurred when she reflected on the effectiveness of her instruction based on her students' responses. At times, she made changes to improve her delivery of instruction. The second assessment was of her students. By observing their behaviors and responses, Mary decided the probing questions or statements she needed to ask or say at that moment to develop comprehension in her students.

Christine, being a first year teacher, approached the instruction of reading by relying on how she remembered learning to read. She would read with one student at a time. She admitted that this was overwhelming. Moreover, discovering that some of her students attempted to read books that were too difficult concerned her. It was not until she attended *Coaching Effective Guided Reading Sessions under the RTI Umbrella* training sessions offered by her school that the world of guided reading was opened to her. As she reflected, she wished her undergraduate course work would have taught her approaches on how to teach reading. She would have been better prepared to serve her students. Christine knew she still had much growing to do. After attending the first training, Christine admitted she was left with questions about the guided reading approach. She sought answers among her fellow coworkers, but soon discovered they also had questions. It was not until the second training when she observed the trainer coaching teachers as they conducted guided reading lessons with students that her questions were answered.

During her guided reading lessons, Christine based her instructional decisions on the answers provided by students in response to questions asked about the text. Christine explained



that whenever students provided an incorrect response, she automatically reflected on how to re-teach the concept and address it with her students. She reflected and put herself in her students' shoes. She asked herself, "How would they comprehend what they're reading?" Based on her students' thinking known from their responses, she made her decisions.

Because Christine did her student teaching in a fifth-grade classroom, she reflected on these experiences to guide her instruction as a second-grade teacher. She recalled how some of the fifth graders lacked knowledge of concepts they should have learned in second grade. Consequently, she planned lessons to ensure her second graders learned the concepts in depth. She did not want her second graders to struggle as her fifth graders did during her student teaching experience. Even though Christine had much growing to do in her profession, she was eager to learn. Her reflections were based on helping her students grow as readers. This was also what she considered an effective teacher to be, someone who on a daily basis focused on helping the child and asked, "How can I make this child grow more?"

### **Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I have presented the themes that resulted from coding the data collected from the two participants. A detailed account of Mary's themes: (a) A Sense of Urgency: Front-loading Students, (b) Reflection: The Key to Learning, and (c) A Provider: Catering to Students' Needs, and Christine's themes: (a) A Weaver of Knowledge: "What Good Readers Do," (b) How They Learn: A Case of Subjectivity, and (c) A Guide: Modeling the Way were presented. The results of a cross-case comparison of the two cases were also presented through the themes: (a) Making Connections: Picking your Brain, and (b) Growing through Reflection.

## CHAPTER V: DISCUSSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter presents the implications of this study. The following topics are discussed:

(a) connections to theoretical frameworks, (b) connections to Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, (c) connections to literature, (d) implications, and (e) future directions for research.

Clay (2001) asserted that poor readers need to be explicitly taught reading concepts and provided with appropriate interventions during the early years to prevent them from experiencing reading problems in the upper grades. Students in the early years are expected to "learn to read" so by the time they reach the third grade, they can make the transition to "read to learn." However, research continues to show an increase in the number of fourth graders who read below the proficient level and are still learning to read (Bornfreund, 2012). Moreover, the accountability factors imposed on schools by state standard assessments hold every stakeholder responsible for each child's education. All lower grade teachers have a responsibility to ensure every child leaves their grade level reading on level.

Due to the low reading scores of the schools involved in this study, lower grade teachers were trained in *Coaching Effective Guided Reading Sessions under the RTI Umbrella* approach. Christine, one of the participants in the study, was a teacher in the school that hosted the training. Mary, who belonged to the group of lower grade teachers from another elementary school within the same district, attended this training as well. Because my role as an administrator allowed me the opportunity to observe lower grade teachers teaching reading using different approaches, I began to inquire how teachers managed this guided reading approach on which they were trained. This awareness motivated me to investigate the experiences of teachers as they negotiated instructional decisions during their guided reading lessons. In chapter four, I presented the experiences of Mary and Christine, the two participants of the study, as they

implemented the guided reading training they received during the guided reading block. In order to provide an in-depth understanding of the experiences of both participants in the implementation of the guided reading lessons, these two teachers were selected based on a set of pre-determined criteria. The study was grounded in an interpretivism framework and on Bandura's substantive framework. The following questions guided this study:

1. How do the participants describe the ways in which they negotiate guided reading instructional decision-making?
2. What are the experiences of the participants in helping struggling readers during guided reading?

### **Connections to Theoretical Frameworks**

The theoretical framework for this study was based upon the substantive framework of Bandura's social cognitive theory, which gives emphasis to the "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). People's self-assurance in their ability to accomplish tasks no matter the difficulty translates to a high level of self-efficacy. The higher the self-efficacy of an individual, the greater the assurance the individual will make effective use of his capabilities to accomplish a task. In the following section, I discuss the findings of this study in connection to the substantive framework of Bandura's social cognitive theory.

### **Connections to Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory**

As discussed in chapter two, Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory has at its center people's efficacy beliefs, which consist of how capable they view themselves to accomplish set goals or tasks. Bandura (1997) believed that "a capability is only as good as its execution. The self-assurance with which people approach and manage difficult tasks determines whether they

make good or poor use of their capabilities” (p. 35). These efficacy beliefs influence the decisions individuals make because the way they view or feel about themselves determines their performance. Additionally, a teacher with a high sense of efficacy also influences the efficacy beliefs of students. Students with low confidence benefit from teachers with a high sense of efficacy (Midgley et al., 1989). Therefore, a teacher’s perception of her ability to deliver effective instruction influences her decisions and shapes her judgments about her students’ cognitive ability. A teacher with high confidence creates a learning environment conducive to learning that influences students’ achievement (Hoy, 2000).

In the beginning and at the end of the study, participants were asked to complete the Teacher’s Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) in order to gain an understanding of each participant’s sense of efficacy in the areas of student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. These factors are important to the success of every guided reading lesson. First, teachers need to plan lessons that will engage and motivate students in the process of learning to read. Also, knowledge of instructional strategies grants teachers the ability to make decisions on the spot about how to guide students to success in their reading. Third, good classroom management needs to be in place for guided reading lessons to be conducted without interruptions. Good classroom management facilitates a teacher meeting with a small group of students for guided reading instruction as the rest of the class works productively in their literacy centers. A summary of the results of the scale for each participant was presented in chapter Four. Observations and interviews with the participants were conducted over a four-month period. For the next two months, I continued to talk to the participants for further clarification on data collected and for accuracy in the interpretations I made. However, as I analyzed the data, I began to notice discrepancies between the participants’ scale results, my observations, and the data

collected in the interviews. In the following section, I provided a summary of each participant's scale responses by each factor: student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management.

**Efficacy in Student Engagement.** Bandura (1997) believed the high level of self-efficacy of an educator resulted in the development of learning environments that were conducive to learning. A factor considered critical to this learning environment was student engagement. Teachers with a high sense of efficacy plan engaging lessons to capture their students' motivation, interest, and participation. For Mary and Christine, their responses in the TSES fell within the "quite a bit" and "a great deal" range. This translated to both participants having a high sense of efficacy in this area.

Mary carried out her ability to help her difficult students on a daily basis as she met and worked with them during her guided reading lessons. She recalled her experience working with a student who at the beginning of the school year was having a hard time making gains in his reading. She tried multiple strategies, plus a lot of encouragement, repetition, and praise. Aside from strategies, she focused on building his confidence and getting him to believe in his ability to learn to read. Along with constant classroom celebrations, Mary kept an open bridge of communication with the student's parents. She would call them to inform them of how proud she was of their child's progress. Often, Mary would encourage her student with statements such as, "Yes, you can; we're going to do it together; I'm so proud of you. You did so well." Finally, her student saw his breakthrough. He stopped looking and waiting for Mary's approval after every word he read. Instead, he began to read on his own. During one of my observations, I captured Mary working with one of her struggling readers who was having difficulty reading the word "sleepy." She had the student stop and look at the word. She acknowledged that she liked how he

was able to locate the word “sleep” in the word “sleepy” but pointed that the word had the “y” at the end. She asked the student to think about what other word that word could be since the “y” was at the end of the word. The student responded that when there is a “y” at the end of the word it is supposed to make the short “I” sound. Mary asked the student to read the word. The student thought about it and combined the sounds to read the word correctly. Mary gave him a big smile and told him he had done a great job. Mary reminded the student that good readers go back to reread; consequently, the student went back to read the text. These successful experiences gave Mary a high sense of achievement in her ability to work with difficult students and provide guidance and motivation to help them believe in themselves and grow as readers.

Similar to Mary, Christine was confident enough in her ability to do much to get through her most difficult students. Christine shared about one of her students who came into second grade reading at a kindergarten level and had problems with comprehension. At first, Christine admitted that it was difficult for her to reach her student because it felt like if she was not retaining what Christine was teaching her. She would do well one day, but the following day, she seemed to forget what had been taught the day before. Christine sought assistance from other teachers, and she continued to work with the student by providing phonics instruction and guided reading until she began to notice improvement in her student’s reading. Before, her student would not take the initiative to decode words on her own. When she would encounter a word she did not know, she would remain silent and look at Christine to provide her the word. However, all that changed one day when Christine noticed her student come across a word she did not know. She did not even lift her eyes from the text instead she began to apply the decoding chunking strategy that Christine had taught her. When Christine saw her student applying this strategy, her confidence in her ability to motivate her students and encourage them to believe in

themselves translated to a high sense of self-efficacy. Christine was able to encourage her struggling readers to believe in themselves and value their education. As I observed Christine conduct a guided reading lesson, I noticed that when students would struggle with a concept or with a word, Christine guided her students to break the word into syllables, and she would read it with them. She would cover part of the word as she directed them to read the syllables and then blend the sounds. Throughout the process her positive spirit kept guiding and motivating students to blend sounds together and read through the words. Often, Christine would encourage her students with positive “You can do it!” phrases. She would guide them to ensure they were successful. This gave her a high sense of self-efficacy in her ability to engage her students.

Overall, in the area of efficacy in student engagement Mary and Christine had a high sense of efficacy. Both participants’ responses in the TSES indicated their high confidence levels in this area, and it was evident in the successful stories both participants shared about their students.

**Efficacy in Instructional Strategies.** Instructional strategies assist teachers in the delivery of instruction. Bandura (1997) viewed a teacher’s personal self-efficacy as her belief in her own capabilities to execute the action to accomplish the end product. When teachers possess a great belief that education makes a difference in students’ lives, they have the assurance in the effectiveness of their instructional practices (Allinder, 1994). Thus, teachers with a high belief in their ability to deliver effective instructional strategies will make decisions to improve student reading achievement. In the area of instructional strategies, both participants highlighted a high sense of efficacy.

Mary’s confidence perhaps related to her awareness of the multiple instructional strategies she had learned through trainings, observing other teachers, and professional readings.

Mary described instructional strategies as her bag of magic tricks. She used this expression to refer to a series of strategies she could choose from if one did not work. In my observations, I noticed Mary prompting students to make personal connections to the text and connections within the text. She considered making connections and activating schema important for comprehension. Often she questioned students to guide them to make connections. At one point, I noticed Mary questioned a student to get him to think critically about a connection he made. Her questioning helped him connect his prior knowledge to how the character was feeling in the story. Raphael (1984) described three levels of questions ranging in levels of difficulty from simple to higher order thinking. These questions included right there, think and search, and on my own. I observed Mary using questions to assess her students' comprehension of the text. During her picture walk, she had her students read the picture and think about why the illustrator included what he did in the illustrations. While reading, she would also stop students and ask them questions that required them to make inferences. In my observations, I noticed Mary used the right there questions and think and search questions most often. She attempted to ask the on my own questions every now and then. Students were able to provide responses for these questions; however, they struggled and needed more support and prompting when attempting to answer the on my own questions.

Another of Mary's goals for her students was to have them question the norm, and she encouraged them to ask questions. She felt confident in responding to difficult questions from her students. Whenever she did not have the answer, she let her students know that she would get back to them with the answer. Other times, she used her iPad to research the subject matter online and provide the response to her students. Her purpose was to model that there were



multiple ways and resources that could assist students in answering their questions. These experiences gave Mary a high sense of efficacy.

During Christine's guided reading lesson, I observed her utilize instructional strategies which included prompting, questioning to check for understanding, drill and practice, demonstration, cueing students, and graphic organizers. For example, during one of my observations, Christine wanted students to practice the strategy of note taking while they read. Christine had students create two lists to include the types of weather and storms the text mentioned. I observed Christine as she modeled for her students note taking while reading. As students read, Christine prompted students to identify the weather and storms mentioned and to write them down in the correct list. Students identified rain as type of weather while blizzards were a type of storms. During another lesson, I observed Christine guiding students in pronouncing the high frequency words; as she pointed to the words, students read them correctly. When she pointed to the word "clarinet," there was complete silence. Christine turned to look at the students and one of them said, "Attack it." Christine acknowledged the student and instructed them to attack the word. Using the pointer, Christine broke the word into syllables and guided them in pronouncing the word. She spent a couple of seconds talking about the clarinet. Once she finished introducing the words, she pointed to the word clarinet again and students were able to read it. Another strategy Christine used to assess comprehension was asking questions. Interestingly, Christine felt a high sense of efficacy in her ability to assess comprehension based on the responses of her students to the questions she was asking. I noticed that the majority of Christine's questions consisted of right there questions and very few think and search questions. Often Christine would ask students to point to the sentence where they had found the answer to the question. Students would locate the evidence in the text and read it back.

The majority of the time students would answer the questions correctly because the answers were on the text. Christine felt her students had comprehension of the text. This gave her confidence to believe in her ability to assess comprehension.

Allington (2002) stated, “Students need enormous quantities of successful reading to become independent, proficient readers.” A reader becomes a better reader by reading. The majority of the day one lesson consisted of high-frequency words, phonics skills, and vocabulary words mini-lessons along with the picture walk, picture talk. On day two, students read the book once and were then assigned a follow-up activity. Christine followed the sequence of the guided reading lesson; however, students only got one opportunity to practice reading the text. Students’ ability to locate the evidence for the questions they were asked gave Christine a high sense of efficacy in her ability to help students be successful in reading.

In summary, both participants indicated a high sense of confidence in the area of instructional strategies. However, there was a difference in the levels of questions asked by each participant during their guided reading instruction. Based on Raphael’s (1984) three levels of questions, most of the questions asked by Christine consisted of level one with a few level two. Mary asked level one and level two and attempted to ask level three questions.

**Efficacy in classroom management.** An effective classroom management plan not only assists teachers in delivering smooth lessons without interruptions, but also increases a teacher’s self-confidence. Bandura (1997) considered “mastery experiences” as a source that helped construct people’s self-efficacy beliefs. Therefore, the mastery of establishing a classroom environment with an effective classroom management plan influences teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs. In this category, both Mary and Christine responded within the “some influence” to “a

great deal” range. Both demonstrated a high sense of efficacy in their ability to create classrooms with an effective management plan.

Mary had established a classroom management plan that assisted her during guided reading instruction. During the observations I conducted, Mary’s students were engaged working in their literacy centers. While Mary conducted the guided reading lessons with the small group of students, the rest of her class worked at different literacy centers. Some worked in the computers while others worked at their desks. The noise level in the classroom was minimal. Students were not seen coming up to Mary and asking her questions about what was expected of them do or questions about their work. Students were self-directed. As I observed Mary, while she had her students play the game *Feed the Monster*, one of her students kept stretching his body trying to grab the *Feed the Monster* bag. Christine made eye contact with the student and politely asked him to sit down. Later, as Mary had students read the sentences from the pocket chart, this same student grabbed Mary’s timer. Mary politely asked him for the timer. The student handed her the timer. She once again redirected him to the lesson. As she continued with the mini-lesson, Mary tried not to turn her back to her students as she pointed to each sentence strip but instead kept her attention on each student. Throughout the lesson, there were several times that Mary redirected the student. Interestingly, this student never gave her a defiant attitude, talked back, or complained. He would simply be reminded of the expected behaviors, and he would follow through. Mary shared that, at the beginning of the school year, this same student could not stay still. When it was carpet time, he would go back to his desk and when he needed to be at his desk he would be at the carpet. Mary captured his attention with the read alouds. He enjoyed being read to. Preferential seating close to Mary and highlighting every time

he behaved positively also contributed to improving his behavior. At this point in the school year, she felt a sense of accomplishment for the student's change in behavior.

Christine also had a high sense of self-efficacy in the area of classroom management. Her ability to establish routines to keep activities running smoothly were evident in my observations. Students working at the literacy centers did not interrupt Christine as she worked with her guided reading group. Her routine during guided reading time was established and known by her students. During my observations, I did not observe Christine stopping her lessons to redirect her students who worked at literacy centers or to go explain how to work on an activity. Christine had created a classroom environment where students took leadership roles and were self-directed. She shared with me the system she established to ensure her class would run smoothly. Christine shared that she had implemented a point system in her classroom to manage behavior. If students failed to show good conduct, they would lose points. Whenever students lost a point, Christine wrote notes to parents to notify them of their child's behavior. According to Christine, this usually took care of the problem. However, when it did not, she contacted parents to determine if there were other problems. Christine shared that problems at home usually triggered the misbehavior in the classroom. When this was the case, Christine had conversations with her students on an individual basis. She informed them that she was aware of what was happening, but she really needed their attention and effort in class. Christine shared that this worked for her. She also established a management system in which she assigned the role of a leader to a different student each week. Because students sat at tables, there was a leader at each table. The leader was in charge of keeping the group under control and the seating area clean. Christine empowered her students because the leader was allowed to give warnings to the group members.

If a leader felt a group member needed to lose a point, he/she would present evidence to Christine, who had the final decision.

Overall, Mary and Christine shared a high sense of efficacy in their ability to manage their classrooms. Mary felt a sense of accomplishment after seeing the change in behavior from one of her students. Christine shared her experiences with assigning leadership roles to her students.

### **Connections to Literature**

Empirical evidence suggests that a teacher's high sense of self-efficacy leads to a higher performance in the classroom (Bandura, 1997; Jamil et al., 2012). Additionally, regular support through coaching, a form of professional development, also increases and maintains a teacher's efficacy level at a high standard (Hoy & Spero, 2005; Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009; Tschannen-Moran & Chen, 2014). A teacher's high sense of self-efficacy is related to student achievement (Goddard et al., 2000; Hoy, 2000), especially influencing the attitudes of low-achieving students in the classroom (Midgley et al., 1989). However, how teachers interpret their experiences influences their sense of efficacy. Merriam (1998) stated the purpose of interpretivism research is to understand how people make sense of their experiences and their interpretations of these experiences.

### **Connections from Cross Case Themes**

Mary and Christine interpreted their experiences as they participated and implemented *Coaching Effective Guided Reading Sessions under the RTI Umbrella* training in both similar and different ways. They shared the similar experiences with teaching students reading below their grade level, with receiving training and coaching to support the implementation of guided reading, with omitting portions of the intervention, with providing quality instruction, with

developing questions for students, and with considering reading behaviors before moving students to the next reading level.

**Teaching students reading below their grade level.** Both Mary and Christine shared similar experiences when working with students who read below the expected reading level. In both cases, the students came into Mary's and Christine's classrooms reading two grades below the expected level. Mary and Christine did not give up on the students, but continued to work on skills and different intense strategies needed to reach both learners. Both expressed that it was a combination of strategies and constant motivation that led to a breakthrough for these learners. Through constant motivation and reinforcement, both teachers changed the attitude of these students who had low self-confidence. Mary and Christine shared the same feeling of success when their students gained the confidence to apply the reading strategies in their reading and no longer waited on the approval of the teacher when reading.

**Receiving training and coaching to support the implementation of guided reading.** As a first year teacher, Christine came into the classroom not knowing how to teach reading to her group of second graders. At first, she expressed it was overwhelming because she would go around the classroom reading with each student individually. She found this was time-consuming, and she was unable to read individually with all her students in the time allotted for reading. Christine expressed her undergraduate reading courses failed to prepare her for teaching struggling readers. She felt that if she would have been taught how to teach reading, she would have been better prepared to help her students since day one. However, after going through the first guided reading coaching session, she had an understanding on how to conduct guided reading. She applied the training, but soon discovered she had questions in areas of the lessons. The coaching sessions that followed provided Christine with clarification and answers to

questions she still had. This ongoing support offered through the coaching sessions supports the International Reading Association (IRA) view of establishing literacy coaching as a means of ongoing professional development (IRA, 2004).

The effectiveness of one day training usually leaves teachers with questions and if support is not provided, teachers will likely fail to implement the training they received and revert to what they were doing before the training. Therefore, teachers need frequent professional development to ensure the effective implementation of trainings they receive (Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009; Tschannen-Moran & Chen, 2014). Additionally, Hoy and Spero (2005) asserted that teacher support can help to protect a teacher's high efficacy levels during early teaching years. Mary was in her fifth year of teaching and her efficacy levels were still high. Support through trainings and observing colleagues had given Mary knowledge that she could apply in the classroom. Before attending the *Coaching Effective Guided Reading Sessions under the RTI Umbrella* training, Mary was already conducting guided reading sessions with her students, but without the structured intensive skill development support this new approach required. Her experiences while applying the training she received were positive. She often referred to the mini-lessons as the act of frontloading her students before the actual reading of the text. This facilitated the reading of text for her struggling readers.

Further, the reauthorization of IDEA in 2004 saw the birth of Response to Intervention (RTI), which has at its core the goal of limiting the number of students referred to special education by providing research-based instruction and interventions for a reasonable amount of time (Bean & Lillenstein, 2012). In order for RTI to be effective, several factors need to be taken into consideration. First, realization that there are no quick fixes; instead, there must be continual professional development to support teachers. Research has suggested that teachers also need a

vast array of research-based interventions to assist their struggling readers (Lyons, 1998; Martinez & Young, 2011). The training both participants received, *Coaching Effective Guided Reading Sessions under the RTI Umbrella*, provided a new form of intervention that fell within the response to intervention umbrella because it offered explicit instruction and support with greater intensity than the traditional guided reading approach. Struggling readers need specific intense skill development, and this approach to guided reading provides this type of intervention.

Research has noted that in a balanced approach to literacy, children are immersed in an environment where the integration of a whole language approach with skill instruction exists (Pressley et al., 2002; Wharton-McDonald et al., 1997; Spiegel, 1998). Teachers utilize a balance in both skills instruction and authentic literature experiences. Both participants shared these similar beliefs in their teaching of reading. Both believed in the importance of teaching phonics to students and teaching skills to help them decode unknown words. Both targeted comprehension by questioning students and having discussion of ideas. Further, during guided reading instruction, both participants introduced and modeled skills and allowed time for students to apply them. Mary believed that if her students read fluently and comprehended the text, then they should not have any problem developing skills such as main idea and cause and effect. To Mary, these skills would come naturally once students had comprehension of the text. After the guided reading lessons, both teachers assigned follow up activities that assessed skills, such as compare and contrast and discussing ideas and summarizing.

**Omitting portions of the intervention.** Ford and Optiz (2008) demonstrated that teachers were confused and did not have a clear understanding of the practices of guided reading. He recommended in-depth staff development to assist teachers in the following areas: understanding the purpose of guided reading, connecting guided reading to the balanced reading



program, prompting and responding to students response to texts, providing quality instruction during guided reading, helping teachers to select text that are the students instructional levels, helping teachers set up literacy centers, and helping teachers use assessment to inform and impact instruction (p. 323-324).

*Coaching Effective Guided Reading Sessions under the RTI Umbrella* training sessions assisted the participants in understanding the steps of guided reading intervention.

However, both Mary and Christine skipped portions of some areas of the intervention, which indicated a lack of understanding of the purpose of the specific components of the guided reading instruction, which makes it an effective intervention. For example, during the third observation, Mary did not teach a phonics mini-lesson. There was also no presentation of a sentence stem to introduce the structure of the text and implant vocabulary words in context. Christine, on the other hand, for observations one and two did not teach a phonics lesson. This indicates the need of providing an on-the-job literacy coach who has a deep understanding on how to teach reading (Frost & Bean, 2006).

**Providing quality instruction.** Moreover, even though both participants put every effort into providing quality instruction, both differed in their attempts when it came to the amount of time students spent reading during the guided reading lesson. This approach to guided reading included the mini-lessons, the picture walk, and having students do the first reading of the text on day one. Day two of the lesson included a short review of the mini-lessons followed by students rereading the text at least twice. According to Clay (2001), struggling readers need abundant opportunities to practice reading and be successful when doing so. A component of *Coaching Effective Guided Reading Sessions under the RTI Umbrella* intervention was to teach the mini-lessons in a quick manner to allow time for students to begin reading the text. Mary allowed her

students to conduct the first reading on day one. On day two, she would have her students conduct repeated readings of the text aloud as she listened to each student read. Once she had listened to all students read, she would ask her students to stop reading.

On the other hand, Christine would conduct the mini-lessons and then the picture walk. Most of day one was spent going over the vocabulary words. Christine would introduce the words by embedding the structure of the text in a story she would weave. She would then ask students to use the vocabulary words to repeat her story. This mini-lesson took the majority of time available on day one, which took away time from other activities. On day one, students had enough time to read the first two pages of the book. On day two, Christine would review the mini-lessons and spent time reviewing the vocabulary words. Students would then read the text from beginning to end once. Before reading each page from the book, Christine would ask students a focus question. They would stop after each page and answer the focus question by pointing to the evidence in the page they had just read. Students in Christine's group read the text once with focus questions included for each page.

**Developing questions for students.** Mary and Christine both provided guidance as they prompted, questioned, and guided students to make connections with the text. Both participants differed in the level of questions used in their instruction. While Mary asked more inferential questions, Christine's questions were mainly basic questions that assessed the lower level of thinking. Few questions required students to infer from the reading. Both participants needed to raise the level of questions to have students analyze the text critically and teach student to think this way about the text. Students were able to locate answers in the text and infer prediction questions. This transmitted a sense of accomplishment to the teachers in students'

comprehension; however, questions to get students to think critically about the text were not commonly asked.

**Considering reading behaviors.** *Coaching Effective Guided Reading Sessions under the RTI Umbrella* intervention provided teachers with Reading Behaviors to Notice and Support for each reading level (see Appendix G). These reading behaviors served as assessment guidelines teachers could use to determine whether a student had mastered the behaviors for their current reading level. Once the student mastered the behaviors, he/she could be moved to the next reading level. Another purpose for the reading behaviors was for teachers to plan guided reading lessons based on behaviors and skills students had not mastered. I concluded from my findings that both participants were not referring to the reading behaviors for assessment or planning. When I asked both participants how they decided on what skills to teach during guided reading and how they moved their students to the next reading level, neither participant referred to the Reading Behaviors to Notice and Support. Instead, Mary and Christine based their planning of guided reading lessons on what they felt their students needed to learn at that point. Both expressed they would also rely on the textbook adoption to determine the skill to teach in their guided reading lessons. To determine if students were ready to move up a reading level, both participants used different assessments. Mary, on one hand, based her decision on whether the student could read the current level with minimal or no errors and with fluency. Other times, Mary used her judgment to decide whether to move the student up a level. If the student's fluency hindered comprehension, even if the student made no errors, Mary would hold the child in the current level and continue to work on comprehension strategies with that student. On the other hand, Christine would read two stories of the same reading level, usually one fiction and

one non-fiction. If the students understood the story and read with fluency, then she would move them to the next reading level.

Overall, Mary's and Christine's experiences, which included successful stories with their struggling readers as well as ongoing professional development, fostered a high sense of self-efficacy in both participants. Even though there were areas where each participant differed in the delivery of this intervention approach to guided reading, both felt confident in their delivery of instruction and sincerely felt they were doing their best to help their struggling readers. In this study, the instructional decisions teachers negotiated during their guided reading lessons were influenced by how they interpreted their experiences, and this influenced their sense of efficacy. In an effort to ensure the delivery of effective guided reading lessons, questions for future consideration arose.

### **Implications**

The findings of this study refer to the instructional decisions teachers made during the planning, the preparation, and the actual delivery of guided reading lessons following the training they received. The purpose and goals of the teachers in this study were to continue learning and applying this knowledge in the planning and delivery of their lessons. The implications of this study raise questions about how the continuous support teachers receive through staff development influences the instructional decisions they make in guided reading as well as how teachers' interpretation of their experiences influences their self-efficacy. A conversation between relevant stakeholders, who are general education teachers, campus and district administrators, literacy coaches, and university and teacher education programs, is needed to address these questions.

Any implication connected with the continual support of teachers through professional development evokes the attention of campus and district administration at the campus and district level. Administrators must conduct a needs assessment of either their campus or district and design professional development that is continual and research based to address those needs. Several factors to consider would be time, regular support, and resources. Administrators must allot time not only for teachers to attend the training, but also for teachers to process what they have learned and begin applying it in their planning. Every effort must be made to continue to provide support through a literacy coach. A literacy coach works side by side with teachers to provide guidance and assistance in the planning of lessons and in the assessment of students. Literacy coaches observe teachers and model lessons for them. They work in solidarity with teachers and develop a relationship of trust. As a result, teachers know they are approachable and seek them for assistance. In addition, resources need to be made available to teachers for preparation of materials. Administrators must continue to follow up with teachers and provide constructive feedback after every walkthrough. In order to provide effective feedback, administrators must be knowledgeable about the *Coaching Effective Guided Reading Sessions under the RTI Umbrella* intervention. They need to support reading teachers as they work with students during guided reading.

Additionally, the university and teacher education programs are also stakeholders. They must examine their education programs and perhaps consider including in their reading courses experiences where pre-service teachers learn how to teach reading. Traditionally, university courses or teacher education programs are designed to present the theoretical aspects of reading or literacy instruction. However, courses where pre-service teachers are taught how to plan, prepare, and deliver reading lessons would better prepare pre-service teachers. Teachers also

need to be taught how to think critically through a text so they are able to teach their students how to think critically in their own reading. They need to know how to guide and teach students to think ahead in the text. Teachers need to know how to present information during the whole group instruction and then bring it to the small group instruction. Students need to be able to read a text and know how to think critically about it, and students need to be taught how to think at this level. In my study, the level of questions used by both participants consisted of basic level questions and some inferential questions. Further, both participants shared their experiences as first year teachers. Both expressed that their university courses did not teach them how to teach reading. Mary was taught a guided reading approach by her mentor teacher, while Christine was not familiar with any guided reading approach until after attending the training and learning the *Coaching Effective Guided Reading Sessions under the RTI Umbrella* intervention. Christine shared that if her undergraduate courses would have taught her how to teach reading, she would have been better prepared to help her students. These issues raise questions about the current teacher preparation programs. In what ways do teacher education programs train pre-service teachers in teaching reading? In what ways and how are the principles of guided reading being integrated and modeled to pre-service teachers in their reading courses? What might teacher education programs do to ensure pre-service teachers have a high efficacy in their ability to teach reading to struggling readers?

### **Future Directions for Research**

In this section, I present several considerations for future research. This qualitative study was grounded in the substantive framework of Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which centers on the concept of self-efficacy. I presented a deep, rich understanding of Mary's and

Christine's experiences as they negotiated instructional decisions during guided reading. In what follows, I provide future considerations for research.

First, it is recommended that several or all participants who attended the *Coaching Effective Guided Reading Sessions under the RTI Umbrella* training be selected as part of a focus group. The results of this study would provide additional understanding of teachers' experiences learning and implementing this instructional approach. It would also provide a deeper understanding of how teachers' sense of self-efficacy influences the implementation of this approach. How do teachers describe the ways they negotiate guided reading instructional decision-making? What are the teachers' experiences in helping struggling readers during guided reading? How does the regular support by an instructional coach influence the efficacy of teachers as they implement this guided reading approach?

Second, another study researching the experiences of students who have participated in the *Coaching Effective Guided Reading Sessions under the RTI Umbrella* intervention would allow a deeper understanding of the implications of the lesson from the perspective of students. Future issues to explore would be the effectiveness of the lessons as well as how students' sense of self-efficacy influences their learning. How do students describe their experiences while participating in guided reading? How do students' sense of self-efficacy is influenced by participating in guided reading?

Third, a broader study could be conducted to research how teachers' sense of self-efficacy influence the implementation of this intervention approach to guided reading in the classroom. What are the participants' perceptions on the use of this intervention guided reading approach? In what ways does the teachers' self-efficacy influence the implementation of this new guided reading approach?

Finally, a study on the use of this guided reading approach with middle school language arts teachers is recommended. This study would be beneficial in providing districts with an understanding of middle school teachers' perspectives of guided reading and how this approach assists them in working with struggling readers. It would also provide an understanding of how middle school language arts teachers' confidence is influenced by the support of a literacy coach as they implement this guided reading approach. Questions to explore would include: What are the experiences of middle school language arts teachers as they implement guided reading? In what ways do literacy coaches influence the confidence level of middle school language arts teachers as they implement this guided reading approach? How does a middle school language arts teacher's confidence change with the implementation of this guided reading approach?

The discussion, connection to theoretical frameworks, connections to literature, conclusion, implications, and future directions for research all point to the importance of a teacher's sense of self-efficacy in the implementation of this guided reading approach. When teachers have a high sense of efficacy, they put their best effort to implement the trainings they received and make it work. Additionally, the support of the coach increases teachers' confidence as they deliver this instructional approach. A literacy coach assists teachers in clarifying any misconceptions they might have. Therefore, when teachers are confident about their ability to help all their students, they will ensure that none of their students are left behind. Teachers will seek and implement different strategies and interventions that will lead to student reading achievement.

### **Chapter Summary**

The focus of this study has been to provide a deep understanding of how two teachers describe the ways in which they negotiated guided reading instructional decision-making. I



provided the experiences of the teachers in helping their struggling readers during guided reading and seeing them flourish into readers. In this chapter, I have presented a short summary of the results of the study and the connections to literature. To end the chapter, I provided the implications of the study. Based on the findings of this study, I also provide recommendations for future direction for research. I encourage the reader to understand the experiences of the teachers in this study as they negotiated instructional decisions during guided reading instruction and how this influenced their sense of efficacy. In addition, I encourage the reader to look for ways to support reading teachers as they implement this intervention of guided reading in the classroom.

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## APPENDIX A



OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE  
Division of Research, Commercialization and Outreach

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Human Subjects Protection Program		Institutional Review Board
APPROVAL DATE:	February 20, 2014	
TO:	Ms. Mercedes Yanez	
CC:	Dr. Sherrye Garrett	
FROM:	Office of Research Compliance Institutional Review Board	
SUBJECT:	Initial Approval	
Protocol Number:	#07-14	
Title:	The Effect of Coaching Sessions on Two Elementary Teachers as They Conduct Guided Reading in Two South Texas Schools	
Review Category:	Expedited	
Expiration Date:	February 20, 2015	

**Approval determination was based on the following Code of Federal Regulations:**

Eligible for Expedited Approval (45 CFR 46.110): Identification of the subjects or their responses (or the remaining procedures involving identification of subjects or their responses) will NOT reasonably place them at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the their financial standing, employability, insurability, reputation, or be stigmatizing, unless reasonable and appropriate protections will be implemented so that risks related to invasion of privacy and breach of confidentiality are no greater than minimal.

Criteria for Approval has been met (45 CFR 46.111) - The criteria for approval listed in 45 CFR 46.111 have been met (or if previously met, have not changed).

- (7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies. (NOTE: Some research in this category may be exempt from the HHS regulations for the protection of human subjects. 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) and (b)(3). This listing refers only to research that is not exempt.)

**Provisions:**

Comments: The TAMUCC Human Subjects Protections Program has implemented a post-approval monitoring program. All protocols are subject to selection for post-approval monitoring.

This research project has been approved. As principal investigator, you assume the following responsibilities:

1. Informed Consent: Information must be presented to enable persons to voluntarily decide whether or not to participate in the research project unless otherwise waived.
2. Amendments: Changes to the protocol must be requested by submitting an Amendment Application to the Research Compliance Office for review. The Amendment must be approved by the IRB before being implemented.

3. Continuing Review: The protocol must be renewed each year in order to continue with the research project. A Continuing Review Application, along with required documents must be submitted 45 days before the end of the approval period, to the Research Compliance Office. Failure to do so may result in processing delays and/or non-renewal.
4. Completion Report: Upon completion of the research project (including data analysis and final written papers), a Completion Report must be submitted to the Research Compliance Office.
5. Records Retention: Records must be retained for three years beyond the completion date of the study.
6. Adverse Events: Adverse events must be reported to the Research Compliance Office immediately.
7. Post-approval monitoring: Requested materials for post-approval monitoring must be provided by dates requested.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **CONSENT FORM**

#### **The Effect of Coaching Sessions on Two Elementary Teachers as They Conduct Guided Reading in a South Texas School**

##### **Introduction**

The purpose of this form is to provide you information that may affect your decision as to whether or not to participate in this research study. If you decide to participate in this study, this form will also be used to record your consent. You have been asked to participate in a research project studying the ways in which elementary teachers use guided reading to inform their instructional decisions after they have participated in training and coaching sessions in a South Texas district. You were selected to be a possible participant because you met the criteria: have between 1 to 5 years teaching experience; participant currently teaching struggling readers; have participated in training & coaching in guided reading sessions; and minimum age for participants is 18.

##### **What will I be asked to do?**

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete three interviews an hour long each. Be observed conducting guided reading lessons three times throughout the duration of the study and submit copies of the observed lessons. This study will last a total of 14 weeks. During week one, you will be interviewed for one hour. During week two or three, you will be observed for one hour conducting guided reading session. During week three you will also be given the transcription of the interview for a member check. During week 5, the second observation will take place followed by the second interview on week 5. On week 6 there will be a member check over the transcription of the interview. On week 8 the final observation will take place followed by the final interview on week 10. On week 14 there will be a final member check over the transcription of the interview. Final class visits will occur at this time.

Your participation will be audio / video recorded.

##### **What are the risks involved in this study?**

The risks associated in this study are minimal, and are not greater than risks ordinarily encountered in daily life.

##### **What are the possible benefits of this study?**

You will receive no direct benefit from participating in this study; however, the possible benefits to society from this research could consist of defining the type of professional development that is most effective in offering the support teachers need to better assist their struggling readers.

##### **Do I have to participate?**

No. Your participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time without your current or future relations with Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and Weslaco Independent School District being affected.

##### **Who will know about my participation in this research study?**

This study is anonymous and all participants and locations where research will be conducted will receive pseudonym names. The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher, Mercedes Yanez will have access to the records.

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be audio / video recorded. Any audio / video recordings will be stored securely and only the researcher, Mercedes Yanez will have access to the recordings. Any recordings will be kept for the duration of the study and upon the completion of the study will be erased.

**Whom do I contact with questions about the research?**

If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact the researcher, Mercedes Yanez. My phone number is 956-463-0077 and my email is [meyanez@wisd.us](mailto:meyanez@wisd.us). You may also contact Dr. Sherrye Garrett, faculty advisor, at 361-825-3314 or email [sherrye.garrett@tamucc.edu](mailto:sherrye.garrett@tamucc.edu).

**Whom do I contact about my rights as a research participant?**

This research study has been reviewed by the Research Compliance Office and/or the Institutional Review Board at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. For research-related problems or questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you can contact Erin Sherman, Research Compliance Officer, at (361) 825-2497 or [erin.sherman@tamucc.edu](mailto:erin.sherman@tamucc.edu)

**Signature**

Please be sure you have read the above information, asked questions and received answers to your satisfaction. You will be given a copy of the consent form for your records. By signing this document, you consent to participate in this study. You also certify that you are 18 years of age or older by signing this form.

- ☐ Yes, you have my permission to video and/or audio record me.
- ☐ No, you do not have my permission to video and/or audio record me.

**Signature of Participant:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Printed Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Person Obtaining Consent:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Printed Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX C

### First Interview Questions

#### *Knowledge of teaching reading, being an effective teacher, & RTI*

1. What skills do you think a teacher needs to teach reading?
2. Describe to me how a teacher becomes an effective teacher.
3. How would you define guided reading?
4. How would you define response to intervention?

#### *Experiences on Training and Coaching Sessions*

5. Explain to me your experiences with guided reading before the training and coaching you received.
6. Explain to me your experiences with guided reading after the training and coaching you received.
7. Describe how the training and coaching you received helped you clarify any misconceptions or questions you had about guided reading?



## APPENDIX D

### Timeline of the Study

Time	Duration of Activity	Description of Activity	Participant's Role
Week of February 17, 2014	1 hour per participant	1 <sup>st</sup> Interview	Participate in a semi-structure interview
	One time at beginning of study	Complete Teacher's Sense of Efficacy Scale	Complete Scale
Weeks of February 24, 2014	Ongoing for the duration of the study	Transcribing Interview	None
	2 hours for each participant	Participant observation (sessions videotaped)	Agreed to being observed
Week of March 3, 2014	2 hours for each participant	Participant observation (sessions videotaped)	Agreed to being observed
Week of March 17, 2014	30 minutes for each participant	Member check with participant	Respond to transcriptions
Week of March 24, 2014	1 hour per participant	2 <sup>nd</sup> Interview	Participate in a semi-structure interview
Week of March 31, 2014	30 minutes for each participant	Member check with participant	Respond to Transcriptions
Week of April 7, 2014	2 hours for each participant	Participant observation (sessions videotaped)	Agree to being observed
Week of April 28, 2014	2 hours for each participant	Participant observation (sessions videotaped)	Agreed to being observed
Week of May 5, 2014	1 hour per participant	3 <sup>rd</sup> Interview	Participate in a semi-structure interview
Week of May 12, 2014	30 minutes for each participant	Member check with participant	Respond to transcriptions
Week of May 19, 2014	One time at beginning of study	Complete Teacher's Sense of Efficacy Scale	Complete scale
	Varied	Make final visits to classroom	Provide artifacts
Week of June 2, 2014 to Aug. 2014	Ongoing	Peer debriefing with committee chair, methodologist, and colleagues	None
Week of Sept. 7, 2014 to Nov. 2014	Ongoing	Data analysis and representation – Writing up of findings	None

## APPENDIX E

### Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale<sup>1</sup> (long form)

Teacher Beliefs	How much can you do?								
<p style="font-size: small; margin: 0;">Directions: This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create difficulties for teachers in their school activities. Please indicate your opinion about each of the statements below. Your answers are confidential.</p>	Nothing	Very Little	Some Influence	Quite A Bit	A Great Deal				
1. How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
2. How much can you do to help your students think critically?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
3. How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
4. How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
5. To what extent can you make your expectations clear about student behavior?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
6. How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
7. How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students ?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
8. How well can you establish routines to keep activities running smoothly?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
9. How much can you do to help your students value learning?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
10. How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
11. To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
12. How much can you do to foster student creativity?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
13. How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
14. How much can you do to improve the understanding of a student who is failing?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
15. How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
16. How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
17. How much can you do to adjust your lessons to the proper level for individual students?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
18. How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
19. How well can you keep a few problem students from ruining an entire lesson?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
20. To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
21. How well can you respond to defiant students?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
22. How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
23. How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
24. How well can you provide appropriate challenges for very capable students?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)

## Directions for Scoring the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale<sup>1</sup>

**Developers:** Megan Tschannen-Moran, College of William and Mary  
Anita Woolfolk Hoy, the Ohio State University.

### Construct Validity

For information the construct validity of the Teachers' Sense of Teacher efficacy Scale, see:

Tschannen-Moran, M., & Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2001). Teacher efficacy: Capturing and elusive construct. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 17, 783-805.

### Factor Analysis

It is important to conduct a factor analysis to determine how your participants respond to the questions. We have consistently found three moderately correlated factors: *Efficacy in Student Engagement*, *Efficacy in Instructional Practices*, and *Efficacy in Classroom Management*, but at times the make up of the scales varies slightly. With preservice teachers we recommend that the full 24-item scale (or 12-item short form) be used, because the factor structure often is less distinct for these respondents.

### Subscale Scores

To determine the *Efficacy in Student Engagement*, *Efficacy in Instructional Practices*, and *Efficacy in Classroom Management* subscale scores, we compute unweighted means of the items that load on each factor. Generally these groupings are:

#### Long Form

<i>Efficacy in Student Engagement:</i>	Items 1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 14, 22
<i>Efficacy in Instructional Strategies:</i>	Items 7, 10, 11, 17, 18, 20, 23, 24
<i>Efficacy in Classroom Management:</i>	Items 3, 5, 8, 13, 15, 16, 19, 21

## Reliabilities

In Tschannen-Moran, M., & Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2001). Teacher efficacy: Capturing and elusive construct. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 17, 783-805, the following were found:

	Long Form			Short Form		
	Mean	SD	alpha	Mean	SD	alpha
<b>OSTES</b>	7.1	.94	.94	7.1	.98	.90
<b>Engagement</b>	7.3	1.1	.87	7.2	1.2	.81
<b>Instruction</b>	7.3	1.1	.91	7.3	1.2	.86
<b>Management</b>	6.7	1.1	.90	6.7	1.2	.86

<sup>1</sup> Because this instrument was developed at the Ohio State University, it is sometimes referred to as the *Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale*. We prefer the name, *Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale*.

## APPENDIX F



The College Of  
**WILLIAM & MARY**

School of Education  
P.O. Box 8795  
Williamsburg, Virginia 23187-8795  
Fax: (757) 221-2988

Megan Tschannen-Moran, Ph.D.  
Professor of Educational Policy, Planning, and Leadership  
[mxtsch@wm.edu](mailto:mxtsch@wm.edu)  
(757) 221-2187

March 17, 2014

Mercedes,

You have my permission to use the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (formerly called the Ohio State Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale), which I developed with Anita Woolfolk Hoy, in your research. You can find a copy of the measure and scoring directions on my web site at <http://wmpeople.wm.edu/site/page/mxtsch> . Please use the following as the proper citation:

Tschannen-Moran, M & Hoy, A. W. (2001). Teacher efficacy: Capturing an elusive construct. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 17, 783-805.

I will also attach directions you can follow to access my password protected web site, where you can find the supporting references for this measure as well as other articles I have written on this and related topics.

I would love to receive a brief summary of your results.

All the best,

Megan Tschannen-Moran  
The College of William and Mary  
School of Education

# APPENDIX G

## Reading Behaviors to Notice and Support

### READING BEHAVIORS TO NOTICE AND SUPPORT

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Levels A - B
Introduce word-by-word matching
Locating known words
Book handling skills
Controlling left to right direction and return sweep
Noticing/interpreting detail in pictures
Using oral language in relation to text
Paying close attention to print – noticing feature of letters and words
Remembering and using language patterns
Using knowledge of language syntax as a source of information
Using oral language in combo with pointing – matching voice with words on page
Predicting what makes sense
Self-monitoring – checking one's reading by using word-by-word matching, noticing known words in text, or noticing mismatches in meaning or language

Level C
Using visual information to predict, check, confirm
Word-by-word matching of voice with print
Using pictures to predict meaning and words
Predicting from events what comes next
Checking illustrations with print
Using known words as anchors
Moving fluently through the text while reading for meaning
Solving some unfamiliar words independently
Accumulating a reading vocabulary – a group of known words frequently encountered that are recognized from book to book.

Level D
Controlling early stages (word-by-word matching, directional movement) in longer text
Moving away from finger pointing as eyes take over the process
Using pattern and language syntax to read with phrasing using knowledge of letter-sound relationships, words, and parts of words to check on one's reading
Rereading to confirm reading or problem solving
Attempting to self-correct
Moving more fluently through the text
Actively reading for meaning

Level E
Tracking print with eyes except at points of difficulty or on novel text
Using knowledge of language syntax and meaning to read with phrasing
Reading fluently
Solving new words while maintaining a focus on meaning
Rereading to check, confirm, and search
Cross-checking one cue with another
Self-correcting using multiple cues
Predicting what will happen next and reading to confirm
Using known words to get to words not yet known
Relating one text to another
Using more information from print to construct the meaning of the story

Levels F
Being aware of punctuation/using it for phrasing and meaning
Searching visual information to figure out new words while reading
Using the syntax to predict, then checking accuracy of the prediction
Analyzing new words, checking them against what makes sense or sounds right
Controlling early strategies even on novel texts
Reading with fluent phrasing and attention to meaning
Moving quickly through the text
Using known words and parts of words as well as letter-sound relationships to get to new words, and checking against other information such as meaning
Using multiple sources of information to self-correct

Levels G-H
Moving through text using pictures and print in an integrated way to make meaning
Solving new words by using word analysis, then checking the words against meaning
Monitoring one's reading (accurately reading long stretches of text with intermittent hesitations and repeats)
Self-correcting close to the point of error
Rereading to check and search
Discussing ideas from the story in a way that indicates understanding
Discussing characters in a way that indicates understanding and interpretation
Effectively managing a variety of texts, including fiction and informational texts
Activating background knowledge
Making predictions

Levels I
Fluent and phrased reading and rereading
Competent problem solving of new words on initial reading
Flexible checking one's reading against meaning
Using integrated sources to cross-check
Making connections between texts through discussion, art, or writing
Demonstrating and understanding of and empathy with characters in discussion, art, and writing
Moving toward easy, fluent reading even of unfamiliar and difficult texts, demonstrating less overt problem solving
Self-correcting at the point of error with fewer returns to the beginning of sentences or phrases
Coping with unfamiliar concepts
Gaining momentum while moving through text because knowledge is being constructed about how this text works and what it is likely to say

Levels J
Using skills and strategies effectively in a variety of texts
Sustaining interest and fluency in longer texts
Easily comes back to text of more than one sitting
Solving unfamiliar words/concepts "on the run" without detracting from meaning
Self-correcting when necessary to support meaning but more internal now
Reading silently much of the time with no vocalizing needed
Moving from nonfiction to fiction flexibly and vice-versa
Using ideas from one's reading in one's writing
Summarizing or extending a given text

Levels K
Using multiple sources of information in an integrated way
Reading silently much of the time
Efficiently analyzing longer words
Using a variety of word analysis strategies without losing meaning/fluency
Reading in a phrased, fluent way over longer stretches of text
Demonstrating understanding of different perspectives and characters
Using text structure to predict likely sequence of events or to analyze and critique the text
Sustaining characters and plot over days