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Qualitative Action Research Into the Planning Between the Classroom Teacher and Reading Interventionist

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QUALITATIVE ACTION RESEARCH INTO THE PLANNING BETWEEN THE
CLASSROOM TEACHER AND READING INTERVENTIONIST

by

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to Stacie Shaw Clark, my wife. Who has relentlessly encouraged every path I have wandered down, without complaint. You are the only reason this work is complete.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to my committee and your willingness to participate in my journey. I hope you find it interesting. I thank the teachers who gave their time and energy to make this study possible. Your openness and sincerity made it worth pursuing.

Dr. Suha Tamim, thank you, without your guidance and encouragement to believe in myself, I would still be working on chapter 1. You kept me focused and spent hours helping me work through all my ideas...words.

ABSTRACT

Students reading below grade level need intense intervention. Reading is an active development that requires close collaboration by all the teachers involved in supporting struggling students. Understanding the needs of students with reading deficiencies can present challenges for teachers that are unable to work collectively to support the students. Teachers and interventionists need time to reflect on their attitudes and perceptions of planning and collaborating if they are going to help students achieve reading goals. Through the intervention of this study, the development and implementation of collaborative planning, teachers will be better prepared to meet the needs of their students. This ethnographic study of collaborative planning explores how the current practice has impacted the reading intervention system. Findings suggest that social cognitive theory supports professional development in building self-efficacy, collective efficacy, and a self-motivating instructional practice that promotes a genuine sense of community and high expectations

Keywords: collaboration, reading intervention, Social cognitive theory

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SCASA.....South Carolina Association of School Administrators

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

As a Literacy Coach for an elementary school in a small rural district in the southeast United States, I ensure effective instruction in every part of our school's reading programs. It is my responsibility to help solve instructional problems in collaboration with the classroom teachers who experience these challenges. This responsibility includes working with teachers and other interventionists to provide instructional solutions for students who are not responding to current instructional practices that the classroom teacher provides.

Reading interventionists are imperative to a school. Many students promoted to the next grade level cannot read grade-level texts. Reading interventionists are highly trained in instructional strategies that help struggling readers overcome their deficits in reading skills. Classroom teachers identify students behind in their reading ability; then, these students take a summative test to help the teacher and interventionist pinpoint the exact areas of deficiency. Reading interventionists plan one instructional strategy that is determined by screening tools. Although the classroom teacher and interventionist initially meet to discuss which students require intervention, they do not have any other meetings or discussions about the students' progress.

The challenges to collaboration may cause a misalignment in the strategies being used. The interventionist's and teacher's choice of strategies may not be harmonious. During monthly meetings, the reading interventionist mentioned her students' difficulty

mastering the phonics progression of the reading intervention program she was using. The reading intervention program had a predefined order in which to introduce sounds. These sounds are presented and taught in isolation, in which the students simply learn the sound of specific phonemes. After meeting with the reading interventionist, I discussed this situation with the classroom teacher. I discovered that the classroom teacher was not using the same instructional model. The classroom teacher was using a different program; she was using a program that used a whole-language approach. Students learn skills and sounds through selected texts. This program does not teach phonics in isolation. Every skill or sound explained is found in a model text. The two resources have slight differences in the order sounds are introduced. After the discussion, we realized that teaching two different scopes and sequences of phonics instructions did not support the student. Research does not claim that one approach is definitively better than the other. However, many teachers disagree with these approaches. Where some teachers believe reading words in isolation is not actual reading, others think that using context to figure out words is not actual reading. Being taught simultaneously with both approaches can be puzzling to a student. One student stated that he was confused by learning different things in each classroom. After talking with another student, he informed me that he was learning the sounds that ch made in his reading intervention class and then taught to look for and find words that match the th digraph in a text. He complained that he never had the chance to practice what he was learning long enough to remember anything. The two very different sequences of phonics instruction bombarded the student. Yet another student was confused because she was learning skills in one class and then different strategies in another class. She did not get the chance to practice her new skillset. The

reading intervention program expected her to learn sounds and apply them to nonsense words. At the same time, the curriculum used in the regular education classroom had her using meaning and structure to read authentic texts. The phonics programs were not coordinated. Exposing the students to different sequences of letter sounds required a more extended amount of instructional time for mastery.

Therefore, the following problem of practice relates directly to the challenges faced by teachers and interventionists in planning reading interventions collaboratively. If both classroom teachers and reading interventionists worked together to complement their instructional practices, students' mastery of phonics skills would increase.

When student self-efficacy is diminished by a misalignment of instructional interventions, frustration and decreased engagement in classroom learning soon follow. In turn, these unintended student outcomes of well-intended educators lead to lower self-efficacy for teachers and those that support them, a dynamo of good intentions and bad results. For these reasons, this action research study focuses on the misalignment of intervention-based instruction among classroom teachers and the support specialists who work with their students.

Problem of Practice

Reading interventionists and classroom teachers are rarely given enough time to collaborate effectively regarding individual students' reading instruction. Failure to plan reading instruction that works together and aligns with the curriculum has adverse effects on student achievement. The basic assumptions, as Eun (2019) describes, "are fundamental underlying shared convictions that guide behavior and shape the way group members perceive, think, and feel" (p. 43). Classroom teachers see the need for

collaborative planning within the grade level as more important than planning with an interventionist. Planning with an interventionist is not a priority in light of other responsibilities. The underlying assumption with classroom teachers is that the interventionist is responsible for meeting the needs of the students they serve. For too long, the culture has been one of the notions that it is the interventionist's responsibility to help the student make gains in reading. Once the student leaves the regular classroom, the classroom teacher may feel their duty has ended. This fundamental assumption has been cultivated for years because collaboration between the classroom teacher and interventionist has not been observed as beneficial to any involved in the reading program.

Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds are increasingly identified as below grade level in reading and therefore need an individualized curriculum aligned to their specific needs. As Snow et al. (1998) state, "Children living in high-poverty areas tended to fall further behind, regardless of their initial reading skill level" (p. 18). Failing to plan adequate interventions increases the achievement gap for these students (Snow et al., 1998, p. 155).

First, teachers and interventionists do not have adequate time to effectively collaborate to formulate a proper plan to help students overcome deficiencies in reading (Davidson, 2017, p. 204). Recent legislation requires school personnel to support below grade level students with necessary intervention time (Read to Succeed, 2019). To do this effectively, collaboration among teachers is fundamental to the initiative's success. Teachers and interventionists are on schedules that leave little time for planned collaborations. The lack of collaboration leaves the teacher and interventionist with very

little insight into what the other is doing. In many pull-out intervention programs, the classroom teacher and interventionist seldom have time for weekly meetings. The increase in students receiving intervention creates the problem of teachers and interventionists failing to collaborate about student needs or progress. Kang (2015) documents that people typically cancel collaboration meetings without prior notice. A participant in the study agrees that, unfortunately, the cancelation of meetings shows the chaos of the ineffective system.

Teachers face barriers to collaboration from the system in different areas. One area of pressure is the weekly grade-level planning meetings to discuss instructional strategies for the content they teach the following week. Another area of pressure is found in attempting to solve problems with instruction noticed during the weekly observations carried out by the principal, assistant principal, and instructional coaches. The feedback from these weekly observations is intended to improve instructional practices within the classroom. As a result, instructional practices within the classroom are constantly evolving and improving based on student data, administration of formative assessments, and feedback from instructional observations. Feedback from observers affect the emotion of the school that can affect collaboration (Evans, 1996).

Challenges within a school system affect every part of the teachers' ability to collaborate. Problems with communication multiply the number of students in the intervention within the system. Students are given misaligned instruction and are unable to master strategies. Students that do not master reading strategies cannot make the growth needed to be taken out of the reading intervention.

Meanwhile, more students are identified as below reading level and in need of remediation by an interventionist. Therefore, more students are added to the reading interventionists class throughout the year. The number of students being served reduces classroom teachers' and interventionists' time to collaborate. Teachers are aware of the time needed for this collaboration. However, when looking at schedules, no common planning time between interventionists and teachers exists.

Secondly, when teachers and interventionists are unable to plan reading instruction collaboratively, it results in a lack of aligned curriculum and low student achievement. Teachers and interventionists can develop different instruction paths that fail to maximize student learning and achievement (Shelton, 2018). Lessons and interventions need to work together to support clear learning objectives when students do not meet their growth goals.

Student achievement is reflective of careful planning and communication of interventionists and classroom teachers. Communication challenges between the classroom teacher and reading interventionist have been observed and acknowledged by both. Reading achievement is the result of a systematic process of phonologic and phonemic awareness and phonics application as well as comprehension (Parrila et al., 2017). Failing to plan this process will slow the developing reader's progress to meet grade-level expectations. Problems occur when the teachers and interventionists are unable to plan reading strategies that support a common learning goal (Miller et al., 2010). Student performance shows the difficulty teachers and students face in the absence of collaboration.

Tucker (2015) agrees that as students enroll in pull-out programs, the teacher and the interventionist must use the same strategies if they want the students to be successful (p. 7). Collaboration has a direct impact on reading interventions. Miller et al. (2010) discover that many qualities related to student achievement appear in schools where teachers have the opportunity to collaborate in all demographics (p. 15). Students may receive instruction from the interventionist that conflicts with the instructional strategies of the classroom teacher. Shelton (2018) wonders what causes the collapse in communication between the classroom teacher and the speech pathologist. In his case study, he finds that "At least 57% of the school-based speech-language pathologists who participated in the survey responded that they are meeting face-to-face with classroom teachers" (p. 44). Teachers that are not given the opportunity to collaborate will miss opportunities for student achievement. Kang (2015) understands that collaboration utilizes each teacher's past experiences and expert knowledge. When teachers meet collaboratively to solve student problems, they often provide background experiences and specific skills to meet students' needs. During their discussion, disagreements may arise as to the best course of action for a student. This banter provides a scaffold for better instruction (p. 3). Regarding the available research, Tucker (2015) states that while plenty of research exists that highlights professional development and the need for collaborative teams, working together to produce curriculum and instructional strategies is not occurring regularly. However, very little research explicitly includes the needs of teachers and interventionists who work with struggling students when the student has more than one teacher, either in a pull-out or push-in instructional delivery model (p. 53).

Finally, Puma (1997) conducted a study that led to the conclusion, "Children in high poverty schools began school academically behind their peers in low poverty schools and were unable to close this gap in achievement as they progressed through school" (p. V). These findings were supported by the enactment of the Read to Succeed legislation. The legislation mandated that students who are below grade level in reading are to receive thirty minutes of reading interventions daily to help close these gaps.

The Read to Succeed Third Grade Retention Guidance Document (2019) states:

Any student enrolled in pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, first grade, second grade, or third grade who is substantially not demonstrating proficiency in reading, based upon formal diagnostic assessments or through teacher observations, must be provided intensive in-class and supplemental reading intervention immediately upon determination. (p. 8)

Gleason explains that students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are especially at-risk from starting school with a higher likelihood of developing reading deficiencies (Gleason, 2005, p. 315). Gleason (2005) states, "Such children may require intensive intervention and may continue to benefit from extra help in reading and accommodations for their disability throughout their lives" (p. 315). Hunt et al. (2002) agree that collaboration between teachers involves an abundance of time and monetary funds (p. 34). The lack of collaboration mostly goes unnoticed in the regular routines of the school day. Tucker (2015) states that during most investigations, principals felt as if teachers had adequate time to plan collaboratively. A lack of collaborative planning of reading intervention will have a higher impact on students of lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Gleason, 2005, p. 320-321).

As the need for reading interventions grow through mandated achievement goals, the effects of inadequate teacher and interventionist collaboration will continue to be a problem for students successfully reading grade-level texts. The failure to set aside time for planning and collaboration is directly related to students' inability to meet grade-level reading targets. Students already at risk due to a low socioeconomic status are disproportionately affected by the lack of collaboration between teachers and interventionists (Snow et al., 1998, p. 155).

The cognitive theories, such as social constructivism, that teachers utilize when educating students are the same theories that recognize the need for collaboration. Given the opportunity, teachers could apply educational practices to the planning and collaborating processes instead of only using them in their classrooms with their students. In the context of this study, teachers and reading interventionists focused on improving the communication and their perception of collaborative planning in meeting the needs of their students.

Theoretical Framework

Language acquisition is a complex process that requires teachers to seek expert advice and collaborate to meet the needs of students who struggle to meet grade-level expectations. Students who struggle to meet these grade-level expectations require intensive intervention by trained professionals that can meet the unique needs of those who struggle with developing effective decoding strategies (Dorn et al., 1998; Gleason, 2005; Savage & Cloutier, 2017).

Phonological Recoding

Teachers present material, view, and assess student mastery of the submitted content, then develop a new plan of instruction based on student mastery. Gleason (2005) states that when children come across an unfamiliar word, most teachers tell them to sound it out. "Children with strong decoding skills can employ phonological recoding, the process wherein letter strings are transformed into a pronunciation that is then recognized as a word" (Gleason, 2005, p. 419). The systematic modeling of phonological processes is where we find constructivist learning theory for language acquisition. An explicit, systematic approach to teaching language is needed for mastery. Gleason (2005) declares that "Children who had received explicit code instruction were later able to read more quickly and recognize more words than children who had experienced less explicit code instruction" (p. 420). When teachers fail to plan a cohesive curriculum that systematically presents explicit instruction, student achievement suffers.

Collaboration

The practice of collaboration and communication is the foundation on which educators build, refine, and support the instructional needs of their students. The theoretical framework for this qualitative action research consists of social cognitive theory and communities of practice as lenses to focus the collaborative and communication process that classroom teachers and reading interventions engage (Bandura, 2001; Charmaz, 2006; Dewey, 1938). This study used communities of practice to explore the collaborative nature of learning communities and how these collaborative communities demonstrate dynamic interactions within the reading intervention system. These dynamic interactions fostered the development of the collaborative process.

Collaboration is an intricate aspect of the social interactions within a school that support student learning. Failure to provide support in the collaborative community will be a detriment to the system (Dewey, 1938; Wenger et al., 2002).

Teachers who collaboratively plan reading interventions for their students are more equipped to meet the needs of the students they serve. This collaboration builds and reflects teachers' agency within the reading intervention process (Levine, 2010; Gourd, 2015). Children of low socioeconomic status were over-identified for the intervention programs and were the ones most likely to benefit from the reading intervention pull-out programs (Puma et al., 1997; Tucker, 2015). The over-identification of particular student populations supports the need for collaborative communication between the reading interventionist and classroom teacher. Collaborative communication will assist in quelling over-identification of specific student populations. Collaborative communication will also ensure that students get released from the reading intervention system when they meet their goals. Students who meet learning targets no longer require intervention (Puma, 1997). Intense reading intervention programs are intended to help struggling readers reach their reading goals. These programs include the latest best practices for teaching reading. Savage (2008) has established a modest basis that systematic phonics instruction improves reading. Classroom teachers and reading interventionists use learning theories every day in constructing instruction for their students. Language is a skill children acquire by interacting with others. For most children, adults facilitate language development. (Gleason, 2001). Teachers who work collaboratively with other teachers use the same learning theories to solve problems that hinder student growth.

Classroom teachers identify students who require additional support in reading development and refer students based on observations and skill development. Although classroom teachers meet with students in small groups based on need, these small groups are not always helpful for the struggling reader.

Research Questions

For this study, classroom teachers and reading specialists developed, implemented, analyzed, and modified well-aligned curriculum-based instructional strategies that fostered effective communication between teachers and specialists and led to higher reading outcomes for students. The purpose was to explore the perceptions of collaboration strategies for classroom teachers and the reading interventionists who provide support services for struggling readers.

Therefore, the research questions that guided this study was:

- 1) How do reading interventionists and classroom teachers describe their experience developing reading interventions in a collaborative and interactive process?
- 2) How do teachers perceive the strategies developed during the collaborative session for struggling readers as cohesive?
- 3) How can the development and use of a collaborative team impact teachers' and interventionists' assessment of the procedure for changes in reading interventions?

These research questions investigated the problem of practice by providing an overview of current practices and teacher perspectives of collaborative planning.

Researcher Positionality

Positionality relates to the researcher's place concerning the component's problem of practice. As Herr and Anderson (2015) state, "Who am I in relation to my participants and my study?" (p. 37). Reflecting on this question will guide you to either an insider or outsider point of view or "contain elements of both..." for the study (p. 37). The researcher may then develop the positionality further regarding relationships and knowledge of the action research. "Positionality represents a space in which objectivism and subjectivism meet" (Bourke, 2014, p. 3). This is my seventh year of teaching. All seven years have been at the research site. I have taught both third and fifth grades. "Positionality is thus determined by where one stands in relation to 'the other'" (Merriam et al., 2001, p. 411).

I consider myself, as Herr and Anderson (2015) state, "insider in collaboration with other insiders" (p. 45). The positional bias is reflected by, as Herr and Anderson (2015) state, "Power relations in a setting operate even when the insider thinks they're being collaborative" (p. 45). Based on my role as the literacy coach, I have one area of concern in this study. Certain aspects of Role Theory impact my positionality.

Peer Relationships

Cognitive coaching maintains that one's actions are motivated by thoughts, beliefs, and intellectual forces, not blatant behaviors, or actions. Costa and Garmston (2002) clarify different actions and strategies someone coaching teachers may take to foster positive outcomes toward instructional or professional goals. Coaches need to be able to assist people in taking steps to cultivate progress in planning, reflecting, and problem-solving. These are hidden skills that become the teacher's decisions and actions.

Coaches must develop these processes within peer relationships found in the school environments. The purpose is to have the teacher develop the process themselves, thereby building agency. The coach focuses on perceptions and the decision-making process that leads to self-directed learning. Constructivist coaches encourage metacognition. Cognitive coaches work within the teacher's educational ideology (Costa & Garmston, 2002; Senge, 2012). Positive peer relationships help promote the efficacy of the community.

My positionality in the context of this action research was the literacy coach of the research site for the past two years. My position was to help teachers and interventionists design instructional strategies to meet student needs. I am not an evaluator of instructional practices; however, I do provide feedback for instructional practices within the context of the classroom. Working with teachers in a collaborative sense helped develop a team approach to problem-solving in the classroom. Helping teachers to develop a sound instructional practice is the role of a literacy coach.

As a literacy coach, I provided instructional support to teachers with many years of experience. Although I have had less experience than some of the participants, my success during my three years in the classroom provided credibility to the suggestions and strategies I recommended. So, when I gave suggestions about better instructional practices, most teachers listened to me.

Research Design

This action research study focused on the problem of practice regarding reading interventionists and classroom teachers' perceptions of planning student reading interventions collaboratively.

Action research provides real answers to problems of practice that teachers face every day. Bonner (2012) credits action research as being a tool for educators to improve teaching and learning. Primarily, teachers use action research to enhance their practice (p. 3). Research, in any form, may be intimidating for most teachers. However, the need for answers has outweighed the apprehension of the idea of doing research (Herr & Anderson, 2015).

Using action research in a classroom environment can provide timely answers to challenging situations for practitioners. Herr and Anderson (2015) note that "Action research is inquiry that is done by or with insiders to an organization or community but never to or on them" (p. 3). Data collection in action research is a tool that is used by practitioners. Ross-Fisher (2008) says one can perform action research adequately through varied sources of data. Teachers can use anecdotal notes, student work, and a plethora of assessment tools (p. 163).

Regarding action research, the action needed for teaching and making changes would not be a part of the traditional approach to research. Therefore, I conducted this study through action research. The purpose of action research is two-fold. The first purpose is to reveal problems within a setting. The practitioner-researcher will investigate the reasons behind the problem to understand the situation better. The second purpose of action research is to view the issues from the perspectives of the participants (Mills, 2014).

This qualitative action research concentrated on the aspect of collaboration between interventionists and classroom teachers. Efron and Ravid (2013) describe why a case study is the best approach for this problem of practice; case study research focuses

on a specific unexplained phenomenon by examining an example of that event for the study (p. 41).

Qualitative research was chosen as a method to collect data from an "insider in collaboration with other insiders" approach (Herr & Anderson, 2015, p. 40). Herr and Anderson (2015) state that when insiders work together, they can create a collaborative community that works together to solve a common problem (p. 46). Lapadat et al. (2005) acknowledge that "Each of our individual voices is heard in this conversation" (p. 4). When the research practitioner collects data through qualitative research, then everyone's opinion is heard and valued. This valuing of everyone's opinion is why qualitative research will guide the findings for this study. The participants will have a chance to express their feelings through interviews and surveys. They will feel listened to and appreciated.

Data Collection

Tools chosen provided insight into the effectiveness of the collaborative process and the improvements in student instruction. Weekly collaborative planning to develop a community of practice took place. Data was collected weekly during the process of developing the intervention tool. Data collection took place after each collaborative planning session. Teachers answered open-ended questions dealing with aspects of the research questions. Teachers maintained reflective journals that recorded their thoughts and feelings about the effectiveness of the collaborative sessions and the strategies that they developed. The journals gave voice to the participants. Qualitative observations were conducted throughout the week to outline the effectiveness of the collaborative process.

Teacher Journals. The participants voiced their thoughts in a reflective journal after each collaborative session to develop an intervention tool. Efron and Ravid (2013) discuss the importance of drawing data from organized journal entries regarding research topics (p. 125). They say that teacher journals help build awareness of issues that can develop during sessions. This data provided the framework for future sessions and determined the effectiveness of the collaborative session in answering the research question.

Surveys. The surveys I administered to the participants were open-ended questionnaires. The pre-intervention survey administered established communication perceptions between the classroom teacher and reading interventionist. Post-intervention data was collected in the survey to measure the possible change of this perception. Surveys are the tools that "measure respondent's perceptions or attitudes" (Efron & Ravid, 2013, p. 109). The analysis of survey questions measured the perception of the effectiveness of the collaborative session and the development of the vision of the intervention tool. Survey data guided the measurement of teacher agency over the intervention. I asked several questions. Do administrators see the value of collaborative planning? What are follow-up systems in place to ensure collaboration is taking place? Do teachers see the overall need for working together to solve problems? What professional development is needed to help teachers be successful in collaborative efforts?

Qualitative Observation. As an insider, the research practitioner participated in the discussions and completed observational notes or anecdotal notes of the collaborative planning sessions that developed the intervention tool. This semi-structured observational

data provided an understanding of the collaborative environment and the dynamics of the group (Efron & Ravid, 2013, p. 86). I coded the data collected from notes and established themes to determine the community of practice environment and effectiveness in answer to the research questions.

Data Analysis

The analysis of data in qualitative case study research is cyclical in the process. Collected data was in response to surveys, teacher journals, and observational notes. Data collected was coded and sorted into themes. Themes developed from data deductively. Hatch (2002) says that most people make generalizations initially from analyzing data. Qualitative data will be analyzed using an inductive and comparative method that is developed from a constant comparative method (Merriam, 2002). The constant themes in the data allowed the research practitioner to determine the next steps in the process. The data also demonstrated how the amount of support of the collaborative process throughout the weekly sessions. The theoretical framework determined how data was collected. The inductive and comparative methods foundation grounded the data analysis. As Merriam and Tisdell (2017) state, "The overall process of data analysis begins by identifying segments in your data set that are responsive to your research questions" (p. 203). The questions the research practitioner answered were the basis for determining the themes for analysis and the coding system used in the process.

Quality Measures

Triangulation, research participant analysis, and data audit were the quality measures that were used during this action research. Qualitative measures were essential safeguards to ensure the validity of the research.

Triangulation. As Efron and Ravid (2013) state, triangulation uses more than one data point to obtain the results of a particular study; this could include using a variety of points of view (p. 70). A comparison of anecdotal notes during collaborative planning, teacher-generated reflections, and survey questions will validate data across multiple sources. Fusch et al. (2018) state, "external analysis methods concerning the same events and the validity of the process can be enhanced by triangulation" (p. 21). Triangulation of data within the qualitative results for this case study research was within the practice of methodological triangulation. Fusch et al. (2018) state, "triangulating the data from multiple data collection methods (interviews, focus groups, observations, etc.) in a qualitative case study or ethnography would be within-method triangulation. . ." (p. 22)

Research Participant Analysis. From the position of "insider in collaboration with other insiders" (Herr & Anderson, 2015, p. 45), I addressed any personal biases. To facilitate this quality measure, the research participants reviewed all collected vignettes and findings to affirm my view and conclusions. This review was to ensure the findings were consistent with the participants' understandings of the study. This peer review, as Efron and Ravid (2013) describe, "provides you with an additional set of eyes and helps you to determine the credibility of your interpretation and the accuracy of your findings" (p. 71).

Audit Trail. All recorded observational notes and collaborative coaching narratives will be assessable. This collection of records and artifacts offers an opportunity to reflect on the coherency and honesty of the study. (Efron & Ravid, 2013, p. 71).

Research Participants

This study included the reading interventionist that serves kindergarten through third grade in a rural pre-kindergarten through fifth-grade elementary school. The interventionist is a veteran teacher with 27 years of experience. She works with a total of sixteen teachers spanning all grade levels in the school. The interventionist and 4-third grade teachers participated in the research process. Three out of the 4-third grade teachers have over 20 years of experience. The fourth-third grade teacher has three years of experience. There was a total of six participants in this action research.

Research Context

The research intervention and reflections of the collaborative sessions are structured in cognitive coaching conversations to facilitate a collaborative reading intervention planning tool (Costa & Garmston, 2002). I facilitated the collaborative sessions using cognitive coaching questioning. The research participants completed reflective journal entries and surveys that provided answers to the research questions. I took the role of mediator. Costa and Garmston (2002) describe, "The mediator intervenes by helping to think through a strategic, deliberate approach" to a task (p. 57). Reflections engaged teachers across three areas. These reflection areas included the discussion of possible reading interventions, the cohesiveness of the reading interventions, and the effectiveness of collaborative reading interventions during instruction. I also took notes on the instructional strategies utilized by the teacher. The research participants met

weekly to discuss the collaborative tool and the cohesiveness of their instructional strategies. The community of practice provided a constructivist view of the problem of practice and developed teacher agency over the intervention.

Research Setting

The elementary school is part of a Rural School District. The predominantly rural school served 573 students in the 2018-2019 school year from grades Pre-Kindergarten to 5th grade. This small town in South Carolina houses 3,504 people. The school demographics consist of 266 females and 308 males. There were 42 K4 students, 89 kindergarten students, 95 first-grade students, 78 second-grade students, 95 third-grade students, 82 fourth-grade students, and 93 fifth-grade students. Of the 573 students enrolled in the 2018-2019 school year, there was 1 Asian student, 90 African American students, 2 Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander students, 474 Caucasian students, 0 Hispanic Students, and five students of two or more races.

The Elementary School offers academic courses in Math, Science, English Language Arts, and Social Studies for all students and special education populations. Special educators serve approximately twenty percent of the students at the elementary school. The school also has a gifted and talented program.

Glossary of Terms

Collaboration

Working together to solve mutual problems is discussed by Wagner (1998); Collaboration is to share an engagement with others and connect the "things we know" with those things "we don't know" to benefit the community of teachers (p. 76).

Teacher agency

Teacher agency is, as defined by Gourd (2015), the ability of educators to change and control the learning environment and directly impact their situations and understanding (p. 35).

Reading

Reading, as defined by Cooper and Kiger (2009) "... involves two basic processes decoding and comprehension" (p. 6). Decoding and comprehending include understanding how words sound and ascribing meaning to the sound of text (Cooper & Kiger, 2009). In principle, reading sounds simplistic; however, there are five necessary skills required for successful reading. These skills include, as Tompkins (2017) declares, "phonemic awareness and phonics; word identification; fluency; vocabulary and comprehension" (p. 39-40).

Community

Lave (1991) states that community, as defined in the context of this study, "revolves around a practice of uniquely defined social norms, practices, beliefs, and a degree of shared trust." This teacher community model is unique because it investigates how common properties influence the way teachers work with collaborators and students (Lave, 1991).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Failure to align instructional interventions has consequences that affect not only teacher efficacy but also student achievement (Tucker, 2015). This action research study focuses on the perception of collaboration between the classroom teacher and reading interventionist.

Effective collaborative planning is a challenge to facilitate between classroom teachers and reading interventionists (Kang, 2015). Developing an environment in which classroom teachers and reading interventionists feel the necessity to plan together is difficult. Collaborative planning is often seen as unattainable due to challenges within the system. Evans (2001) acknowledges that all convictions guide the behavior of a group that has shared beliefs about an issue. The shared issue is complicated. The classroom teacher has a conviction that it is the responsibility of the interventionist to teach the students how to read more efficiently. For many years the culture of the school has been that it is the interventionist's responsibility to help the student achieve grade-level reading expectations. This situation has developed due to the assumptions made by the classroom teacher and the lack of communication from the reading interventionist in regard to the strategies used within the intervention time (Kang, 2015).

This literature review will include the themes of fundamentals of language acquisition, discovery into the importance of the social cognitive theory to collaborative planning, and communities of practice. Themes also include perspectives of Communities

of Practice and the historical perspectives of collaborative reading intervention. This literature review also discusses the social-economic implications and impacts on struggling readers and the challenges teachers experience to collaboratively plan the reading interventions of students with low socioeconomic backgrounds. These themes influenced the theories, historical context, and trends within the field of education that relate to this study (Mertler, 2014).

Therefore, the research questions that will direct this study are:

- 1) How do reading interventionists and classroom teachers describe their experience developing reading interventions in a collaborative and interactive process?
- 2) How do teachers perceive the strategies developed during the collaborative session for struggling readers as cohesive?
- 3) How can the development and use of a collaborative planning tool influence teachers' perception of the process that develops reading interventions?

These research questions provide an overview of the current practice of collaboration between the reading interventionist and classroom teacher and also any challenges to collaborative planning. The interactive nature of the collaborative process will enable a group with a vast experience to create solutions to a problem that all share (Idol et al., 1987). Effective collaboration impacts learners and teachers. Improvements within an organization happen when colleagues work together to equip the institution for growth (Little, 1987).

Literature Review Methodology

This literature review used keywords to search databases of relevant literature. The search included the databases ERIC, Academic Search Complete, and Dissertations and Theses Global. The keywords included in the search for relevant literature were learning communities, Communities of Practice, communication, collaboration, and reading intervention. The type of resources used in this Literature Review included peer-reviewed Journal entries, textbooks, and dissertations as primary resources (Machi & McEvoy, 2016).

Theoretical Framework

To better understand the complexities of reading intervention and the need for a collaborative process to support struggling readers, a review of the literature and the fundamentals of language acquisition is necessary (Shaywitz, 2003). Firstly, language acquisition is a complex process that requires teachers to seek expert advice and collaborate to meet the needs of students who struggle to meet grade-level expectations. Students who struggle to meet these grade-level expectations require intensive intervention by trained professionals that can meet the unique needs of those who struggle with developing effective decoding strategies (Gleason, 2005; Dorn et al., 1998; Savage & Cloutier, 2017). Phonological recoding and the Alphabetic principle are two foundations found in every reading intervention program. (Savage & Cloutier, 2017).

Secondly, constructivism recognizes that knowledge is formed through collaboration (Powell & Kalina, 2009). The assertions of social cognitive theory maintain knowledge acquisition is developed from the observable community (Bandura, 2001). Teachers build a community of practice when they collaboratively create reading

interventions (Lave, 1991, p. 66). Teachers collaboratively designing the intervention tool also fosters and develops teacher agency to the process (Gourd, 2015, p. 35). Burbank and Kauchak (2003) agree that it is essential that teachers have a voice in the design of professional development activities (p. 501). The following language acquisition theories and social learning theories provide a framework for reading intervention and the collaborative process required for this study.

Phonological Recoding

Language acquisition is a complex process, and the steps in this process are multi-layered. Teachers use a variety of strategies to help students decode unfamiliar words. Most teachers use the approach called "sound it out" when decoding unfamiliar words (Savage & Cloutier, 2017). Students who have developed effective decoding skills are equipped to phonologically recode letters to blend them into a recognizable sound to produce a word (Gleason, 2005). In theory, this ability to follow logically recoded letters is a direct result of explicit recoding instruction. Students who are exposed to this direct recoding instruction can recognize words quicker than students who do not receive this explicit phonological recoding instruction (Parrila et al., 2017). The lack of a systematic curriculum for decoding affects children's ability to read. Having a cohesive and systematic approach to phonological recoding is a necessity to maintain students' ability to decode words properly (Gleason, 2005; Savage & Cloutier, 2017).

Alphabetic Principle Recoding

As children learn to read, a level of automaticity in the decoding process needs to take place. Developing a grasp of the alphabetic principle is essential for students to be successful in reading (Dorn et al., 1998). The alphabetic principle is the use of grapheme-

phoneme rules to recode letters to form words. Niedringhaus (2013) observes that it is essential for teachers to follow a systematic method in presenting reading instruction. This systematic method includes how to structure the student's exposure to grasp the complexity of the alphabetic principle. Teachers and students who follow a cohesive and systematic approach to reading interventions feel more successful in the outcomes of the interventions (Niedringhaus, 2013). It is imperative to realize that the goal of reading interventions and reading instruction is for students to achieve mastery in the fluency of reading. This mastery can only be achieved when students are aware of and can proficiently decode the anomalies in the grapheme-phoneme correspondence rules, which define the alphabetic principle (Gleason, 2005).

Social Cognitive Theory

Bandura's social cognitive theory relates to people and their environments and how the interactions between them affect and influence a person's development. Bandura (2001) states, "People are sentient, purposive beings. Faced with prescribed task demands, they act mindfully to make desired things happen rather than simply undergo happenings in which situational forces activate their subpersonal structures that generate solutions" (p. 5). A causality forms through the interactions of the environment and the people involved in the environment. This interaction maintains a reciprocal causation. Bandura (1997) asserts, "internal personal factors in the form of cognitive, affective, and biological events; behaviors; and environmental events all operate as interacting determinants that influence one another bidirectionally" (p. 6). Teachers involved in the reading intervention program have environmental influences that determine the course of action. This course of action, in turn, influences outcomes for students. The influence that

teachers have in the cognitive development of their students requires actions that, in turn, have consequences throughout the reading intervention system.

Within the framework of collaborative planning, the distinctions between how one thinks and how one ought to think will be more natural to delineate. Dewey continues this pattern of logic by the statement, "Men think in ways they should not when they follow methods of inquiry that experience of past inquiries shows are not competent to reach the intended end of the inquiries in question" (Dewey, 1938, p. 104). The use of constructed knowledge, even when in error, is always at work within a collaborative system.

Any factor that informs a decision with a required action has implications for the individual's development (Bandura 2001). With the introduction of data accumulated through instructional practice, teachers must use the environmental and cognitive information to change practices that facilitate student progress (Bandura,1997). Teachers, through collaborative interactions, may develop competencies to meet those demands and expectations. Bandura (2001) states, "[People] cultivate multiple competencies to meet the ever-changing occupational demands and roles" (p. 11).

Self-efficacy is foundational within the social cognitive theory. Self-efficacy is a belief in one's capability to perform within an environment. Perceptions of success in performance-based activities are influenced by factors that are related to previous performances. A construct is derived from past accomplishments, current expectations, and perceived skills needed to overcome a challenge (Eun 2019). Reflection and forethoughts are essential for progress in a problem-solving environment. (Bandura, 2001).

Teachers' perceptions of collaborative practices and their perspectives on performances will significantly affect their views of the programs used for reading intervention.

Teacher Learning Cohorts

Piaget's theory of cognitive development suggests that people do not immediately comprehend and apply new knowledge. They must construct knowledge (Piaget, 1953). Dewey (1938) states, "All inquiry proceeds within a cultural matrix which are ultimately determined by the nature of social relations. The subject matter of physical inquiry at any time falls within a larger social field" (p. 487). General education teachers are willing to change practices if allowed and have the opportunity to collaborate in learning communities and professional development (Brownell et al., 2006).

Teacher learning cohorts provide the framework for accountability that supports the teachers to change their instructional practice (Brownell et al., 2006). Teachers must collaboratively construct interventions to support student success. During cognitive constructivism, individuals develop concepts. However, social constructivism allows the process of collaboration to develop the concepts (Powell & Kalina, 2009). The idea is that the students interact with each other and the new material. This interaction brings clarity to the objective that independent work can sometimes obscure. Piaget's theory of cognitive development proposes that humans cannot obtain information that they immediately understand and use; instead, humans must construct their own knowledge (Piaget, 1953). Dewey (1938) states, "All inquiry proceeds within a cultural matrix which is ultimately determined by the nature of social relations. The subject matter of physical inquiry at any time falls within a larger social field" (p. 487). Teachers who

collaboratively work together to support students' learning are successful. Educators who collaboratively work to boost students' learning are proficient in meeting students' learning needs more so than those who do not collaborate. Vygotsky's investigations and hypotheses are supportively implicated in social constructivism. Within a learning cohort, teachers work together to solve problems of practice that would be more difficult to solve independently. During the collaborative sessions, Vygotsky's theories are at work. These theories include cognitive dialogue, social interaction, culture, and inner speech (Vygotsky, 1978).

Education is a dynamic field that is ever-changing in its approach to acquiring intended results. It seems that every few years, there is a new "best practice." If teachers are going to be useful in the classrooms, they must change with the times. Doing the same old lessons every year will not ensure successful students. Students who are not meeting grade-level reading targets need new specialized experiences. These students need interventions to close the gap with their peers.

Dorn et al. (1998) have suggested the need for an instructional model that provides a foundation for students to make individual progress at their rate. This instructional model comes from the idea that "it is critical to group and regroup [students] based on careful observation and assessment of how they are applying skills, knowledge, and strategies in their reading development" (Dorn et al., 1998). This grouping and regrouping of students are where the reading interventionist's skill becomes imperative. The interventionist can work with each student individually and focus specifically on the skills needed to help that student achieve.

General education teachers would change practices if allowed to collaborate in learning communities and participate in professional development (Tucker, 2015; Brownell et al., 2006; Nisser, 2017; Hopstetter, 2011; Shelton, 2018). Within collaborative cohorts, there are several characteristics of the teachers willing to implement strategies from the sessions. These characteristics include the teachers' willingness to try something new, willingness to adopt new ideas and strategies included an exemplary knowledge of curriculum, the ability to manage student behavior in the classroom, student-centered instructional strategies, and the skill of using reflective strategies for the success of the class (Brownell et al., 2006).

The notion is that teacher involvement in collaborative social interaction is a feasible method for constructing teacher self-efficacy and a theoretically useful means for professional development in the direction of the goal of improving teaching and student learning (Brownell et al., 2006; Dewey, 1938). The social interaction between the community of practice is an important aspect to consider when developing a plan to strengthen the collaborative community.

Communities of Practice

According to Wenger et al. (2002), a community is "a social structure that can assume responsibility for developing and sharing knowledge" (p. 29). Using a community of practice model is the epitome of a learning social structure. Knowledge is best acquired when people can work with a community of others who share the same purpose and passion. Teachers that work collaboratively to solve student reading deficiencies may plan interventions that are not aligned. Despite the developed collaborative communities,

the inability to produce a cohesive intervention plan reflects the collaborative community's substance and effectiveness (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Hansen, 1999).

Working in a community of practice enables teachers to expand to a collective mindset in problem-solving and promotes their ability to see multi-points of view (Lave, 1991). Developing a shared responsibility to help students overcome reading difficulties, teachers may problem solve and function as a cohesive unit. (Wenger et al., 2002).

Communities of practice and cultural processes of identity relate to each other. Lave created outlines of interdependencies that included activities, knowledge, and a world that reflected the participation of individuals in communities of practice (Lave, 1991). Lave states that learning is not a process of "socially shared cognition" (Lave, 1991, p. 55). Learning does not result from individual internalization. Learning is a shared experience found within a community. Learning requires that an individual become a member of a community of practice that gives shape to the knowledge of the collective. Being a member of the community motivates the learner to acquire knowledge from the collective. Another central idea is the view of "situated learning." Lave (1991) states, "This theoretical view emphasizes the relational interdependency of agent and world, activity, meaning, cognition, learning, and knowing" (p. 67). This view stresses the importance of the inferred meaning of the information by the group that has assembled to acquire knowledge from the activities. Therefore, knowledge is socially acquired and open-ended. Within the reading intervention system, the collaboration between the classroom teacher and the reading interventionist creates a community of practice that supports the learning of the community to implement better reading interventions for the students (Dewey, 1938; Wenger et al., 2002).

Specific environments are needed to support learning between colleagues. Levine (2010) suggests that activity theory complements the benefits of teachers working together. The activities of the community of teachers support the common goals of the community. Levine proposes that through the process of collaborative communication, colleagues improve their practice by blending different aspects of each other's perspectives in a method of inquiry that promotes learning (Levine, 2010). These activities work together to inform teachers about how they may better collaborate in learning communities. The results and findings suggest that communities can overlap as groups of teachers come together for collaborative activities. Each "community of practice [can demonstrate] how people learn from seeing, discussing, and engaging in shared practices" (Levine, 2010, p. 111). Levine also discusses that many strengths and weaknesses develop within a community. The finding suggests that the community of collaborative teachers uses different aspects of each person's strengths within a collaborative session. Limitations for communities of practice may be found in the constant struggle between competence and experience. The outsiders bring new methods of instruction to insiders; however, the insiders may not want to commit to new ideas fully. This lack of commitment to the collaborative learning environment could limit the success of the community (Levine, 2010; Snyder, 2002). Graven (2004) notes that the methods used to define those strengths included observations, discourse analysis, and interviews.

Limitations for Communities of Practice may be found in the constant struggle between competence and experience. The outsiders bring new practices to insiders; however, the insiders may not want to commit to new ideas fully. This lack of

commitment could limit the success of the community cohort (Little, 1987). If the research-practice cohort is to continue, researchers need accountability measures that teachers find helpful and not judgmental. Snow (2015) states, "Ensuring teachers can plan and work together improves their practice as well as their professional commitment and satisfaction" (p. 465). Professional development of specific issues within the classroom that have real application is more likely to be effective than random professional development. Highlighting teacher practice will mean developing a system for showing its importance (Snow, 2015). Snow explored the interconnection of research and practice by a method designated as practice-embedded educational research (Snow, 2015).

Snow (2015) discussed the advantages of introducing a problem of practice that is evaluated when compared to a traceable gap in the literature. Analysis of teachers' knowledge and instructional practices may benefit the evaluation of evidenced-based location-specific solutions.

Wegner (2009) suggests that learning takes place inside the community of collaborative practice. "It is a perspective that locates learning, not in the head or outside it, but in the relationship between the person and the world, which for human beings is a social person in a social world" (Wegner, 2009, p. 1). Teachers have viewed learning from the perspective of collaborative student grouping as a positive classroom technique for some time. However, system challenges often prevent them from using the same strategies in learning about their students (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Learning Communities

There is a distinct value of communities of practice to organizations. The worth of interaction between people encourages the growth of the individual and enhances the ability to learn. New ways to manage problems are developed when a community works together and shares information (Levine, 2010). Sharing ideas that involve a solution to a common issue enhances the ability to explore new concepts. Sharing ideas is essential to success. Communities of practice are all around (Lave, 1991; Levine, 2010; Wenger et al., 2002; Senge, 2012). Creating communities of practice in areas that are practical to manage knowledge can be beneficial to organizations. Moreover, learning communities help connect ideas from across different areas within an organization. The community can learn from members of the entire system. Learning communities can define a problem. Additionally, learning communities are not to condense knowledge but to be part of the organization's dynamics. Developing a community requires interaction and conversation. Learning communities lead to a continually changing environment that is in constant fluctuation (Senge, 2012).

Collaborating is often a complex process. Levine (2010) explores the environments needed to support learning between colleagues. Levine delves into four types of teacher communities and brings attention to the limitations of each. These four types of learning communities include inquiry community, teacher professional community, the community of learners, and community of practice. All these learning communities bring teachers together to find answers to questions, share beliefs, and share practices that promote student learning. The community of practice learning community supports teacher agency by providing an environment of collaboration that promotes

problem-solving and improves instructional practice. Levine suggests that activity theory complements the beliefs of teachers working together. "As my colleagues and I try to improve what we know and can do, we are combining insights regarding how inquiry communities and communities of practice promote learning..." (Levine, 2010, p. 110). These concepts work together to inform teachers about how they may better collaborate in learning communities. Graven (2004) suggests that teachers within a community of practice develop the supports and identities, or the agency, to implement change.

Dynamic Interactions

The dynamics of interactions consider the intricacies as well as offers recommendations for future study and strategies from a "dual system" to an actual blended system of collaboration between teachers who share students (Friend et al., 2010, p. 11). Teachers who provide instruction to the same students need a clearly defined set of expectations and other supports necessary for a real co-teaching environment. There is confusion between the two models of co-teaching and inclusion in the general education classroom. This confusion leaves teachers with the perception that they are working alone with special education students (Wenger et al., 2010; Friend et al., 2010; Shelton, 2018). In the area of roles, special education educators feel they take on the part of helper within the classroom due to the lack of collaboration. Positions of teachers and interventionists in the learning community determine the effectiveness of collaborative communication, and the level of interaction between this team affects the at-risk learner (Brownell et al., 2006). The literature review reflected that teachers and interventionists who participated in the study conducted by Tucker (2015) felt that collaboration was necessary for the success of the students. However, there was no time built into the schedule for

collaborative sessions. Teachers and interventionists could relate to the other issues and the challenge each faced in meeting the needs of the students. Each participant in the collaborative community understood the other's position and responsibility for student growth (Tucker, 2015). However, this study did have limitations. Tucker (2015) concluded that diversity in data collection among a variety of school districts would provide more diverse data. The researcher worked within the district. The participants felt they were not able to speak freely. Another limitation was that the researcher provided the depth of information from memory.

Lateral Communication

One must understand the communication that takes place within an organization. This communication covers vertical communication, peer types, and characteristics of peer groups. The study also addresses lateral communication within the system (Spillan et al., 2002). Working in a demanding environment affects relationships. Effective communication among members of a system is essential for the success of any organization. "An organization's structure, mechanistic, organic, or network, needs to be clearly defined for all employees at every hierarchical level" (Spillan et al., 2002, p. 102). Peer relationships impact work environments and promote changes within the system. Gender relationships impact roles within the organization. Relationships, along with the stresses of a work environment, have an impact on the ability of an organization to adapt or change (Senge, 2012).

Teacher Agency

Teachers use several theoretical practices to plan students' growth. Communities of practice develop to provide a continuation of the collaborative process. Teacher

agency impacts the collaborative community by guiding relations and fostering ownership in the collaborative sessions.

Teachers have a direct responsibility to impact student growth. Reviewing teacher agency, as it impacts the instructional decisions made that affect student achievement, is essential. Gourd (2015) states, "If agency is understood as 'the capacity to impact,' then it is important to understand what might contribute to an individual's capacity to impact as well as the significance of individual choices" (p. 70). Teachers can act individually or collaboratively in making decisions that affect students' learning. How teachers reach these decisions can either have a positive or negative impact on the students' interventions. Teacher agency can relate directly to this problem of practice. Gourd (2015) states that when undefined or unclear conversations occur, teachers create their understandings. "While a lack of common understanding for concepts such as "inclusion" and "student progress" can cause tensions, ambiguous concepts also provide opportunities for teachers to craft their own meaning for critical terms" (p. 27). Teachers need well-defined goals and teaching objectives to work together to help students meet learning goals.

Communities

The core purpose of recognizing commonalities is to define learning disciplines for changing the way people think within a shared system. These commonalities enhance the way team members think and work together to solve problems. This mental model provides leverage for those who want to encourage and build better learning communities (Hunt et al., 2002). These communities are shaped by the learning disciplines of system thinking, personal mastery, working with mental models, building shared vision, and

team learning (Senge, 2012). System thinking is the way people learn to understand the interconnectedness of change and the results of their actions within a group of connected community members (Senge, 2012). Team learning is the effort needed to achieve common goals. Team learning includes dialogue, skillful discussion, and collective thinking. Understanding the shared vision with a shared focus will also give teachers a common purpose (Senge, 2012).

Without a doubt orchestrating collaboration between classroom teachers and reading interventionists will require change. Evans' (2001) goal is to equip leaders with an understanding of what is necessary for change within an organization. Change requires leaders who can problem-solve and innovate within a system of educators from different philosophical backgrounds. Senge (2012) states, "Changing the way we think means continually shifting our point of orientation" (p. 26). Promoting a culture where different points of view are taking into consideration may help the transition and change within the reading intervention system. Facing a possible culture of resistance requires those involved in the process of enacting change to know "what we're trying to change" (Evans, 2001, p. 41). This knowledge revolves around three levels of culture: "artifacts and creations, values, and basic assumptions" (Evans, 2001, p. 42). The underlying assumptions, as Evans (2001) describes, "are fundamental underlying shared convictions that guide behavior and shape the way group members perceive, think, and feel" (p. 43). Evans' main ideas are the nature of change, educational innovation, conceptualizing change, culture institutions, response to reform, and the adjustments teachers must make to embrace changes within their systems.

Implementing change within the culture is almost impossible when teachers see the resources and demands out of balance. The performance and morale of those affected start to decline. A supportive culture is required if a change is going to occur (Senge, 2012). The conditions within the school need to be one that permits change to take place and allow the system to "tackle its problems" (Evans, 2001). Evans' objective is to make teams and leadership aware of the interconnectedness of different aspects of a community that enhance or detracts for the success of the community, reaching its full potential. The members of the learning community need to recognize the commonalities. When the common areas of a community are identified, goals may be set for collaboration and common practice. Until common goals and structures are put in place, teachers might find it challenging to support efficacy and agency within the collaborative groups (Loera et al., 2013).

Teachers work together to solve problems through a collaborative process by developing meaning through constructivists' methods and express agency over the process by developing and taking ownership of the collaborative planning tool. Each theory has a sustaining role and effect on the collaborative process. This research will investigate the teachers' perceptions of the collaborative system using a theoretical framework.

Inclusive School Community

In addition to Snow's discussion about collaboration, Nisser (2017) and Hopstetter (2011) also focused on collaborative consultation, evidence-based practice, and inclusive school culture. The purpose was to reveal the effectiveness of the collaborative consultation sessions. Nisser and Hopstetter state that teachers did not have time to meet

with consultants. Teachers were required to stand in for one another, and principals did not allow enough time for the teachers to attend scheduled meetings. Consultants were needed to maintain a teacher's engagement in the collaborative process. Without the consultants' prodding, nothing would have been accomplished during the sessions. Collaborative consultation may unite theory and practice. Teachers who engage in collaboration with the guidance of coaching found the process more rewarding. The complexity of interactions within the collaborative learning session was limited by the time teachers had for the sessions (Nisser, 2017).

Finally, a shared vision for collaboration is a must of those within the system. This shared vision brings with it the commitment for change and a shared future within the bounded system. Using skills to layout views and balance them with other views through inquiry and a thoughtful discussion is a powerful tool for change (Senge, 2012).

Historical Perspectives

A grasp of the historical perspective of reading intervention can be seen by exploring educational reform and the utilization of research in collaboration (Snow, 2015; Snow et al., 1998; Shaywitz, 2003).

Collaborative Reading Intervention

After many years of reading, many adults fail to remember precisely how they learned to read. The childhood experiences that interacted to produce proficient readers may be lost in the familiarity one has with the reading process (Shaywitz, 2003).

Collaborative reading interventions have a long history of success when used with struggling readers. The amount of planning and problem solving required to help students with decoding and comprehending can be frustrating (Sweeney, 2010). Teachers, along

with parents, may struggle with the daunting task of reading instruction. Reading instruction has long been a source of frustration through misalignment of curriculum and reading strategies (Snow et al., 1998).

Educational Reform

Many different organizations have a collective input on the educational system. Religious groups, civic action groups, right and left political organizations, and every form of minority groups have a vested interest in educational reform (Mathis, 1994). These groups often have conflicting interests. The results of so many interested organizations can be one of confusion and delayed response within the educational system. Reforms to the educational process have many layers in the perceptions of the quality of a school. The measurements required to define a quality school often change with the political seasons (Kang, 2015; Mathis, 1994; Snow et al., 1998). The development of different reading intervention programs has also been subjected to these seasonal changes. The reforms that have addressed the systematic phonics instruction versus whole language approach to reading instruction comes and goes as influences over the educational system change (Snow, 2015; Snow et al., 1998; Shaywitz, 2003). The historical changes and educational reform have led teachers to develop instructional strategies that supported one instructional model or the other. These historical changes to reading intervention led to conflicting and confusing instructional practices. A collaborative approach to developing reading instructional interventions is needed so that the outside influences of professional preference may be addressed (Snow et al., 1998).

Research Utilization

First and foremost, research-based reading instruction has been at the forefront of instructional practices. Teachers used researched-based methods for reading intervention by consistently referring back to literature for suggestive supports (Snow, 2015).

However, teacher preference and instructional tradition overshadow best practice reading instruction. Due to possible system-wide challenges, many teachers find it easier to continue old instructional practices instead of using research to further their students' success. From a historical perspective in reading instruction, teachers and reading interventionists need to develop collaborative skills to reach a broader range of struggling students (Friend et al., 2010). Teachers and reading interventionists may find it difficult to change and continue in current practice instead of developing a collaborative mindset to use research and instructional practices (Shelton, 2018).

Related Research

Something must change if all students are going to become successful readers. There is a wealth of studies on the effectiveness of teacher collaboration (Snow et al., 1998; Dorn et al., 1998). However, few studies focus on the development of tools to support collaboration.

Self-efficacy

Hopstetter describes the self-efficacy of speech-language therapists to collaborate with classroom teachers. Hopstetter also explores the development of self-efficacy beliefs among speech-language therapists. The self-efficacy of speech-language therapists increased among teams of teachers that regularly collaborated about student progress and strategies. All those interviewed discussed the main obstacle in collaborating and

developing self-efficacy was the lack of time. Most participants felt that they might benefit from additional professional development in teacher collaboration (Hopstetter, 2011).

Developing self-efficacy is vital. Bonner (2012) maintains teacher involvement in action research is a feasible method for constructing teacher self-efficacy and a theoretically useful means for professional development in the direction of the goal of improving teaching and student learning (Bonner, 2012). The purpose was to investigate the different views and the way those views change over time by the action research conductors.

The limitation revolved around the time frame in which the participants had to conduct the action research. The research was limited to eighteen weeks. Several themes developed from the reviewed research. One theme was that teachers who collaborate through social interaction can increase self-agency by gaining knowledge through peer relationships that affect many aspects of the classroom, including student engagement and efficient instructional strategies. These social interactions also produced confidence that supported higher classroom expectations. Social interactions also encouraged teachers to develop metacognition of their teaching and instructional strategies that are routinely used in the classroom (Bonner, 2012).

Social Interactions

In particular, social interactions between classroom teachers and reading interventionists are crucial. Tucker (2015) explored how the position of teachers and interventionists determines the effectiveness of collaborative communication. Tucker also discusses how the level of communication between the team affects the at-risk learner.

Tucker (2015) reflected that teachers and interventionists who participated in the study felt that collaboration was necessary for the success of the students. However, there was no time built into the schedule for collaborative sessions. Teachers and interventionists could relate to the other issues and the challenge each faced in meeting the needs of the students. Each participant understood the other's position and responsibility for student growth.

Unfortunately, Tucker (2015) employed generic qualitative action research to investigate the problem of practice. Diversity in data collection among a variety of school districts would provide more varied data. Tucker worked within the district; because of this, the participants felt they were not able to speak freely. Another limitation was that the depth of information Tucker provided the details from memory (Tucker, 2015).

Instructional Practices

Students' exposure to high-quality reading instruction in the early years has the most significant impact on student performance through 4th grade (Gleason, 2005; Torgesen, 2005). Collaborative practices in reading instruction helps to ensure that students are receiving the instruction they require to be successful readers (Snow et al., 1998; Dorn et al., 1998). The Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR) (2007) states that over the past thirty years, students' performance in reading has consistently stayed the same. In many assessments, student achievement has been below level. Within these assessments, students demonstrate a lack of the necessary skills to achieve level proficiency (Torgesen, 2005). The instructional practices used within the classroom and during the reading intervention are the single most contributor to this successful development of reading skills for the student. Many students do not receive a consistent

and prescriptive reading intervention (Friend et al., 2010; Snow, 2015). Students are required to receive high-quality instructional practice. The FCRR defines this high-quality instructional practice as explicit and differentiated reading instruction, opportunities for practice reading, and an organized and consistent classroom. The instructional practices a teacher uses to make a difference in student achievement. Collaborative efforts produce the most significant impact on instructional practices (Shaywitz, 2003).

Socio-Economic Effects

Not only should people consider the instructional practices used, but also the socioeconomic factors that contribute to students entering reading intervention programs. The state of South Carolina requires students to receive reading intervention as soon as deficiencies are noticed. The Read to Succeed Third Grade Retention Guidance Document (2019) states:

Any student enrolled in prekindergarten, kindergarten, first grade, second grade, or third grade who is substantially not demonstrating proficiency in reading, based upon formal diagnostic assessments or through teacher observations, must be provided intensive in-class and supplemental reading intervention immediately upon determination. (p. 8)

Lyon suggests that students who show difficulties in reading, when administered effective reading intervention, have an overall increase in their reading ability within the first three years of school (Lyon, 2000). Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to require some type of reading intervention during the first years of school (Lyon, 2000; Puma, 1997). Children raised in poverty-stricken environments by

parents with inadequate linguistic and reading skills have a disadvantage in becoming proficient readers (Lyon, 2000). This disadvantage is compounded by a system that may have embedded bias toward this population of students.

Furthermore, students of low socioeconomic backgrounds and the amount of overidentification of these students for the reading intervention system intensify the issue of poor reading (Gleason, 2005). Students pulled from the general education classroom, as Rae et al. (2002) suggest, are met with lower expectations in reading performance. This lower expectation includes an insipid curriculum and poor instructional strategies. The challenges to collaborative planning faced by the teachers create an absence of problem-solving required to meet the needs of these already at-risk groups of students (Shanahan, 2008).

Children who are at-risk due to the effects of socioeconomic issues must receive the support needed to help them achieve grade-level expectations in reading. If support is not received, the reading deficiencies may never be corrected (Wright, 2007). Teachers and reading interventionists must collaboratively plan and work with all stakeholders to ensure students' success as readers.

Impact of Inadequate Resources. The difficulty of learning to read must be explored along with consideration of collaboration. Snow et al. (1998) discusses the complex nature of reading and language acquisition for early learners. Many factors are involved in the students' successes or failures of learning to read (Legette, 2015). The impact of socioeconomic status and the use of nonstandard dialect of English at home are all factors that contribute to reading difficulties. These risk factors also include low expectations for the learner (Snow et al., 1998). Limited proficiency in spoken English at

home is another risk factor. Exploring the factors that lead to reading difficulties helps to frame the need for reading interventions within the school system. Snow (1998) states, "Reducing the number of children who enter school with inadequate literacy-related knowledge and skill is an important primary step toward preventing reading difficulties" (p. 5). The sooner reading problems are detected, the more preventative measures teachers can take to help prevent future reading problems. The need for proficient reading skills has increased as the demands of society and technology have pushed expectations for students higher. Effective prevention in the early years of language development is key to future success with students from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Snow et al., 1998). Moreover, Legette (2015) says that "the overrepresentation of Black youth in lower academic tracks and White youth in higher academic tracks may shape students' beliefs about their academic self-efficacy for themselves and different racial groups" (p. 2). Condrón (2009) states that "...schools with higher proportions of minority students in recent decades played a large role in the persistence of the black/white achievement gap ..." (p. 688). This achievement gap is evident in the reading intervention groups with a high ratio of minority students. (Legette, 2015).

Summary

With the achievement gap for students of low socioeconomic status continuing to increase, reading interventions will be a necessary tool to help close that gap. Many students will receive individual and small group reading interventions that will require a collaborative effort by all those responsible for meeting their instructional needs. Quick response in providing this intervention will help alleviate future problems in reading (Wright, 2007).

As students are identified for reading intervention, the collaborative strategies used by teachers to build effective intervention programs will be a vital factor in the success of student achievement. The cooperation between these teams to collaboratively plan practical approaches to meet students' needs will be reflective of the interactions among these professionals (Lave, 1991; Evans, 2001). Students who are served in different environments - that include classroom settings and pull-out reading intervention programs—may be introduced to different reading instructional strategies and different curriculums that create confusion and hinder the overall performance and growth of the student (Rea et al., 2002). Developing an effective collaborative process within the reading intervention system may help alleviate some of the stumbling blocks (Loera et al., 2013).

The effects of high-stakes testing cannot be overlooked within the reading education system. Spillan et al. (2002) maintain the relationships and structures within schools are affected by this high-pressure environment. Giving teachers the tools to collaboratively plan and support struggling readers may develop lasting teacher agency over the system and produce positive effects in student achievement. Developing an environment conducive to collaboration, supporting teacher involvement, and supporting student reading achievement is important (Spillan et al., 2002). Student reading achievement may be realized when an actual communitive collaborative environment that fosters growth is developed.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of collaboration strategies for classroom teachers and the reading interventionists who provided support services for struggling readers. Collaboration strategies were needed to focus on effective alignment of the classroom and intervention curricula and be implementable with limited time for collaboration. Classroom teachers and reading specialists improved, implemented, analyzed, and modified curriculum-based instructional strategies that were well-aligned, fostered effective communication between teachers and specialists, and led to higher reading outcomes for students. Brownell et al. (2006) state that teachers who had adequate time to discuss student progress concurrently were significant in implementing innovative interventions (p. 183).

Collaboration in schools can be challenging to achieve. Working together to improve teaching requires a teachable attitude and a desire to reach students. Senge (2012) quotes an educator who works with university teachers when he states, "One of the hardest parts of my job is to get teachers to understand there is someone else in the classroom with them" (p. 26). When planning interventions, teachers must have a shared vision of the process needed to help students. Senge (2012) states, "Learning is driven by vision" (p. 27). Reading interventionists and classroom teachers are rarely given enough time to effectively collaborate on individual students' reading instruction. The challenges teachers face to plan reading instruction that works together and aligns with the

curriculum may negatively affect student achievement. I used a qualitative action research design to answer the following research questions:

- 1) How do reading interventionists and classroom teachers describe their experience in engaging in developing reading interventions in a collaborative and interactive process?
- 2) How do teachers perceive the strategies developed during the collaborative session for struggling readers as cohesive?
- 3) How can the development and use of a collaborative team impact teachers' and interventionists' assessment of the procedure for changes in reading interventions?

Action Research

Delkeskamp (2012) states that teachers have become increasingly intrigued by the ability of action research to improve instructional practices and the school at large. Similarly, Bonner (2012) confirms, "Some researchers have indicated that action research can be an approach that has the potential to affect teachers' sense of instructional competence and perceived teacher self-efficacy in a positive way" (p. 2). Many teachers are not aware of the practical approach that action research can provide. Ross-Fisher (2008) states, "Action research, on the other hand, presents a more user-friendly, practical approach to conducting research" (p. 106). The misconceptions of action research can also involve the time frame needed for the research project. Ross-Fisher (2008) contends that action research can be conducted within the time frame of a "few weeks or an entire school year" (p. 161). Therefore, using action research in a classroom environment can provide timely answers to challenging situations for practitioners. Herr and Anderson (2015) note that "Action research is inquiry that is done by or with insiders to an

organization or community but never to or on them" (p. 3). Thus, data collection in action research is a tool that practitioners use. Ross-Fisher (2008) says one can perform action research adequately through varied sources of data. For example, teachers can use anecdotal notes, student work, and a plethora of assessment tools (p. 163).

However, the traditional research approach would be an issue for most classroom teachers. The purpose of research for the teacher would be to solve problems in their respective classroom environments. Herr and Anderson (2015) discuss the fact that "Traditional research, which tends to take a more distance approach to research settings...would raise issue of reactivity" (p. 3). A qualitative action research approach was appropriate for this study as the goal of action research is to understand the collaborative process in the reading intervention program.

Qualitative Research Design

I conducted this study using a qualitative research design. Merriam and Tisdell (2017) state that the focus of qualitative research "is on the process, understanding, and meaning; the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis; the process is inductive, and the product is richly descriptive" (p. 15).

This qualitative action research utilized an ethnographic action research method. The study focused on various facets of collaboration between interventionists and classroom teachers. Ethnographic studies should be used when the problem is unclear and embedded across a system (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). Using an ethnographic approach revealed issues within the reading intervention system and how those issues affected collaboration perceptions. Levine (2010) states, "Ethnographic methods of observation, including participant observation, can create richer, nuanced portraits of the

norms, routines, beliefs, and trust fostered in specific professional communities. Such methods can also be used to explore the impact of interventions on teachers' professional contexts" (p. 9).

Merriam and Tisdell (2017) described the purpose of an ethnographic study as follows:

The factor that unites all forms of ethnography is its focus on human society and culture. Although culture has been variously defined, it essentially refers to the beliefs, values, and attitudes that structure the behavior patterns of a specific group of people. (p. 20)

Understanding the culture developed by the study participants helped build collaboration tools that directly affected the research questions. Shulman (2002) delineates the ability to separate pedagogical knowledge into a perspective of the skills we teach from how we teach them into separate processes. Developing this ethnographic action research into twenty-seven sessions conducted in six months was supported by dividing reflections into the content taught and collaborative instructional strategy, thereby compounding the effects of values, beliefs, and perceptions that construct the participants' behavior patterns.

Building a "we are in this together" attitude can be difficult at times, especially when finding time to collaborate seems impossible. Time is a precious commodity for teachers. Teachers do not have time to find the resources they need. Having resources available that will meet teachers' and students' needs is imperative during the day-to-day bustle of an elementary school. Senge (2012) states, "At its core, team learning is a discipline of practices designed, over time, to get the people on a team thinking and acting together" (p. 115).

Classroom teachers and reading interventionists worked together to develop a tool to help with communication and collaboration. The ability to strategically plan instructional strategies may impact student achievement and possibly facilitate more collaboration. Teachers who communicate to inform each other of a student's progress develop into a strong team that can overcome challenges within the reading intervention system. Improving communications will lead to a more efficient transfer of strategies between the intervention and in the classroom.

Research Site

The elementary school is part of a rural school district. The predominantly rural school served 573 students enrolled in the 2018-2019 school year from grades Pre-Kindergarten to 5th grade. The site is located in a community in South Carolina that houses 3,504 people. The school demographics consist of 266 females and 308 males. Eight percent were K4 students, 15% kindergarten students, 18% first-grade students, 16% second-grade students, 14% third-grade students, 15% fourth-grade students, and 14% fifth-grade students. Of the 580 students enrolled in the 2020-2021 school year, 1% are Asian students, 14% African American students, 1% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander student, 80% Caucasian students, 0% Hispanic Students, and 4% Two or more race students.

The elementary school offers academic courses in Math, Science, English Language Arts, and Social Studies for all students and special education populations. Special educators serve approximately twenty percent of the students at the elementary school. The elementary also has a gifted and talented program and teacher.

Participants

The participants are a part of the reading intervention system. First, teachers identify students that require reading intervention. Next, the teachers refer the students to the reading interventionist, who then pulls the students for more intense instruction. The problem occurs when the reading interventionist and the classroom teachers are unable to communicate how they teach the students. The student becomes confused and is unable to become proficient at either strategy.

The reading interventionists are highly trained in instructional strategies that help struggling readers overcome their reading skills deficits. Reading interventionists plan one instructional approach that is determined by screening tools. These tools reveal reading deficiencies in the students that the classroom teacher identified. The reading interventionist and classroom teacher do not meet to discuss student progress. Jane, the reading interventionist in this study has taught for 25 years. She has served as a reading interventionist for the past six years. She is trained in several research-based and evidence-based reading programs.

The classroom teacher is responsible for teaching grade-level reading skills and strategies for the entire class. The teacher also meets with small groups of students to work individually on skills needed for that group to succeed. Classroom teachers work with and develop instructional strategies for students in a small group setting. This setting includes guided reading and reading workshops. The classroom teacher identifies students that require reading intervention above and beyond what she is expected to do. The teacher identifies these students based on classroom assessments. The classroom teacher is the one responsible for the overall progress of students in meeting reading

targets. This responsibility is overseen by building administrators using the Student Learning Objectives or SLO process for teacher accountability. There were four third-grade classroom teachers in this study.

Gayl is a white female. She has a bachelor's degree in elementary education. She has 12 years of classroom experience. She has taught for four years in third grade. Gayl currently has 27 students in her class. She is interested in reading intervention and improving her practice. She is open to trying new strategies to help students' achievement.

Stacie is also a white female. Similarly, she has a bachelor's degree in elementary education. She has 15 years of classroom experience and has taught for ten years in third grade. Stacie currently has 22 students in her class. She has small children and is limited in time to plan. She is currently serving on many committees and is the teacher of the year for the school.

Shelly is a white female. She has a bachelor's degree in elementary education. Shelly has eight years of classroom experience, three of which have been in 3rd grade. Shelly has 21 students in her class. She currently has one of the highest growth scores in reading for the district. Shelly has a passion for her students, which is evident in her tenacity for growth.

Sydney is a white female. She has 28 years of classroom experience, fifteen of which has been in the third grade. Sydney currently has 24 students in her class. She is retired and only serving as a third-grade teacher this year. She has been a reading coach and holds a Doctorate in Education.

The Literacy Coach is responsible for assisting teachers and interventionists in planning instruction for best practices in reading. The Literacy Coach facilitates data meetings and works with teachers and interventionists to develop an intervention plan for students who show reading deficiencies. Literacy Coaches work with classroom teachers to develop instructional strategies that promote student growth and enact best practices. Literacy Coaches have no administrative authority but work with teachers to model best practices. The Literacy Coach has taught for seven years and served as a Literacy Coach for four years. His classroom experience has been in the third grade and fifth grades.

As the researcher, I took the role of facilitator. Costa and Garmston (2002) describe, "The mediator intervenes by helping to think through a strategic, deliberate approach [to a task]" (p. 57). I facilitated the collaborative sessions using cognitive coaching questioning. My role was to provide teachers with feedback about the cohesiveness of the collaboratively designed reading strategies. As a participant-as-observer, I was engaged as a full member of the team. I facilitated the sessions and guided the participants through the research process (Merriam & Tisdall, 2017). The depth of my engagement was determined by the reactions and discussions of the participants. The effect was that as the session became more productive and collaborative, my involvement was not required. My role evolved into an observer as a participant. The session participants facilitated the problem solving for the system issues (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999).

The Implementation of Collaborative Planning

The collaborative planning sessions were the intervention for this study. Geertz (1973) states, "Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of

significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, ...in search of meaning" (p. 5). Researching the culture of collaborative planning helped discover processes and influences on the system's effectiveness.

The Intervention

The classroom teachers and interventionist used a collaborative team approach to carry out team learning within the system of collaboration.

First, I administered and coded the data collected from the open-ended survey questions to qualitatively measure perceptions about the process used to develop the reading interventions. Throughout this study, weekly collaborative planning sessions occurred. The sessions were thirty minutes long. They occurred three times a week for nine weeks. The sessions were located at the research site in an elementary classroom. I sent invitations and email reminders to each participant. Participants were given an agenda, so they knew the organization of each session. The first session's goal was to gather a consensus of the problems in the collaborative planning of reading intervention. Based on that discussion, future goals organically developed. Future agendas were created based on goals established from the first meeting. During these sessions, I used cognitive coaching strategies to explore opportunities to develop a collaborative planning tool. The teachers, the reading interventionist, and I had open-ended discussions on what resources and instructional strategies were being used in the classroom. As a clear picture developed from the discussions, I noted the participants' statements and actions. I also made an audio recording of each session. The notes and audio transcription, along with information gathered from teacher journals and classroom observations guided the following week's discussion. The participants constructed the collaboration tool as

themes developed from the discussions. I coded the data collected from the teacher journals to establish themes that revealed how effective the reading interventionist and classroom teachers believe they had been. The journals also showed the teachers' and interventionist's beliefs about how engaged they were in the collaborative and interactive process. Qualitative observations were used to measure the observable effectiveness of collaborative sessions in supportive cohesive instructional practices. I coded the data collected from the observation to establish themes that revealed how effective the reading interventionist and classroom teachers communicated.

The participants of the study collaborated to develop a tool to facilitate communication of reading strategies. The researcher used the data collection tools, perceptions, and efficacy of the collaborative process to answer the research questions. The ability to strategically plan instructional strategies increased student progress and facilitated more collaboration. Improving communications may lead to an efficient transfer of strategies between the intervention and in the classroom. Developing this dialogue is the first step in developing a dedicated team mindset where one does not already exist.

The work was a qualitative study that reflected the development of a communication tool that supported collaboration. The context was a study of the collaborative sessions that developed the tool. The study used reflective teacher journals and meeting minutes, as well as surveys, to collect data to answer the research questions. Data analysis began with the deductive development of themes from the data sources. Each session lasted approximately 30 minutes.

Weekly after-school sessions developed communication opportunities, so each understood "one another more completely" (Senge, 2012, p. 116). Each participant must feel involved in the process of developing the collaboration tool. Each teacher will need to have input and feel as if he has been heard within the process to build agency. Communication will be the foundation for the learning team. Senge (2012) states, "In the practice of dialogue, we pay attention not only to the words but to the spaces between the words; not only to the results of an action but to its timing..." (p. 116). Within this process, the teachers will develop a deeper understanding of each other's position. Communication between the classroom teacher and interventionist was necessary to implement the plan.

Data Collection Instruments

The data collection tools selected to answer the research questions (Efron & Ravid, 2003, p. 85) provided insight into the effectiveness of the collaborative process and the improvements in the instruction that students receive. The data collection tools are listed below.

Teacher Journals

After each collaborative session, the participants voiced their feelings and ideas in a reflective journal to develop an intervention tool. Efron and Ravid (2013) discuss the importance of organized journal entries and the data that can be drawn regarding research topics (p. 125). They say that teacher journals help build awareness of issues that can develop during sessions. This data provided the framework for future sessions and determined the collaborative session's effectiveness in answering the research question: How do reading interventionists and classroom teachers describe their experience in

developing reading interventions in a collaborative and interactive process? Providing an opportunity to journal thoughts and feeling throughout the research gave the researcher insight into the collaborative process. This insight provided an occasion to make changes to the collaborative intervention tool. Teachers' reflective journals allowed teachers to become more aware of the process. These journals were provided to teachers as a Google document in a labeled Google Drive that they had access to after each session. This google document was an open-ended free write to document the participants' thoughts and feelings of the collaborative process.

Surveys

The survey was administered to establish communication perceptions between the classroom teacher and the reading interventionist. Before and after the collaborative sessions, data was collected in the survey to develop the current perception. Surveys are the tools that "measure respondent's perceptions or attitudes" (Efron & Ravid, 2013, p. 109). Survey questions were divided to measure the perception of the effectiveness of the collaborative session and the development of the vision of the intervention tool. Survey data guided the measurement of teacher perceptions over the intervention. The reflection areas included the discussion of possible reading interventions, the cohesiveness of the reading interventions, and the effectiveness of collaborative reading interventions during instruction. Data collected from the surveys helped answer the research question: How do teachers perceive the strategies developed during the collaborative session struggling readers as cohesive? The survey questions included:

- 1) How effective do you perceive the collaboration between you (the classroom teacher) and the reading interventionist?

- 2) How often do you know what your student is learning during the pull-out reading intervention time?
- 3) Do you see your students using skills learned during reading intervention?
- 4) Do you feel you should know more about what your students do during the reading intervention?

See Appendix B

Qualitative Observation

I completed observational notes or anecdotal notes of the collaborative planning sessions that developed the intervention tool. Full transcripts of the sessions were recorded. Observational data provided an understanding of the collaborative environment and the dynamics of the group (Efron & Ravid, 2013, p. 86). I coded the data collected from notes and transcripts to determine themes. The data answered the following research question: How can the development and use of a collaborative planning tool influence teachers' perception of the process that develops reading interventions? The participants used the qualitative observations to develop the collaborative intervention tool further. In describing the relationship between the observer and the observed, as Merriam and Tisdell (2017) state, I took the role of "Participant as an observer: the researcher's observer activities, which are known to the group, are subordinate to the researcher's role as a participant" (p. 144). The observation using anecdotal notes was scribed using Google docs and a Google Drive folder. Observations were dated and time-stamped using Google Drive. Figure 1.1 below contains the research questions and corresponding data collection tool.

Table 1.1 *Research Question*

Research Question	Data Collection Tool
How do reading interventionists and classroom teachers describe their experience developing reading interventions in a collaborative and interactive process?	Teacher Journals
How do teachers perceive the strategies developed during the collaborative session for struggling readers as cohesive?	Surveys Teacher Journals
How can the development and use of a collaborative planning tool influence teachers' perception of the process that develops reading interventions?	Qualitative Observation Teacher Journals

Note: Research questions and the data collection tool used to answer the questions

Data Collection Methods

Data collection tools are important and give an overall picture of the participants' perceptions of the collaborative process. The data collected included

Teacher Journals

Teachers wrote in a reflective journal after each collaborative session. The journal entries consisted of reflections and feelings during the session. I coded the data collected from the teacher journals to establish themes that revealed the sessions' effectiveness. The journals also showed the teachers' and interventionist's beliefs about how engaged they are in the collaborative and interactive process.

Surveys

I administered survey questions to each participant at the beginning of the action research. I coded the data collected from the open-ended survey questions to qualitatively measure teachers' perceptions about the process used to develop the reading

interventions. I also administered the same survey questions at the end of the sessions to determine how perceptions of collaborative planning changed.

Qualitative Observation

I observed the participants during the weekly collaborative sessions. I collected anecdotal notes on the interactions between the teachers and the reading interventionist to document perceptions and beliefs about collaborative planning. Also, I had open-ended discussions on what resources and instructional strategies were being used in the classroom. As a clear picture developed from the discussions, I noted the participants' statements and actions. I also made an audio recording of each session. The notes and audio transcription from the sessions along with information gathered from classroom observations guided the following week's discussion.

Observations were used to measure the observable effectiveness of collaborative sessions in supportive cohesive instructional practices for struggling readers. I coded the data collected from the observation to establish themes that revealed how effective the reading interventionist and classroom teachers communicated. The participants constructed the collaboration tool as themes developed from the discussions.

Research Procedure Summary

The work was a qualitative study that reflected the development of a communication tool that supported collaboration. The context was a study of the collaborative sessions that developed the tool. The study used reflective teacher journals and meeting minutes, as well as surveys, to collect data to answer the research questions. Data analysis began with the deductive development of themes from the data sources. Hatch (2002) states that one introduces generalizations from analyzing data.

Data Analysis

Throughout the data analysis, I endeavored to derive meaning from the research participants' perspectives by searching for themes related to the research questions. I made assertions that aligned with the theoretical framework of the study. I found these claims using evidence from the data collection methods. I referenced each assertion back to a related research question making meaning as each opportunity was revealed. I communicated this evidence to the research participants to provide an equal opportunity for interpretation (Cooper-Twamley, 2009). Additionally, Bogdan and Biklen (2003) assert, "Interpretation is not an autonomous act . . . Individuals interpret with the help of others. . . Through interaction, the individual constructs meaning" (p. 27).

I conducted data analysis using an inductive and comparative approach that drew on the constant comparative method (Merriam, 2002). The data analysis had multiple loops where the feedback data sources highlighted how the participants perceived the collaborative planning sessions and the reading strategies' cohesiveness.

According to Gay et al. (2006), "Data analysis in qualitative research is not left until all data are collected, the qualitative researcher begins data analysis from the initial interaction with participants and continues the interaction and analysis throughout the entire study" (p. 468). Qualitative data was analyzed using an inductive and comparative method that was developed from a constant comparative method (Merriam, 2002). The data's consistent themes allowed me to determine the next steps in the process. The data also demonstrated the amount of support of the collaborative process throughout the weekly sessions. The inductive and comparative deductive methods were the basis of the data analysis. As Merriam and Tisdell (2016) state, "The overall process of data analysis

begins by identifying segments in your data set that are responsive to your research questions" (p. 203). The questions I answered were the basis for determining the themes for analysis and the coding system used in the process. Collected data was in response to surveys, teacher journals, and observational notes.

Data collected was coded and sorted into themes. To accomplish this, I began by analyzing the pre-survey data from each teacher. I coded each survey, placing the codes into categories. After each individual survey was coded, I collected the categories and placed them into one collection of categories. Each code was labeled by an individual color-coded to identify which participant was the source. I continued the process with teacher journals and observational notes. I individually connected the codes into categories from each data source. This process I followed included separating data sources by the teacher and then by category. The categories were developed into themes (Thomas, 2006). By collecting each data source and coding it into categories, I created one collective of categories to source and formed a collective set of themes derived from each data source (Gay et al., 2006).

The raw data was analyzed and coded, examining similar responses. Merriam and Tisdall state, "As you get toward the end of your study, you are very much operating from a deductive stance and that you are looking for more evidence in support of your findings set of categories" (p. 210). This inductive data analysis approach included steps that coded data to look for themes and categories (Thomas, 2006). Themes were developed from data deductively.

I used the analysis process method to code and analyze the data throughout the qualitative action research.

The analysis process focused on (1) becoming familiar with the data and identifying potential themes in it (reading/memoing); (2) examining the data in depth to provide detailed descriptions of the setting, participants, and activity (describing); and (3) categorizing and coding pieces of data and grouping them into themes (classifying) (Gay et al., 2006, p. 469).

I used the above analysis strategy to code and analyze the qualitative data. The themes developed related to the research questions. According to Gay et al. (2006), "One of the most frequent data analysis activities undertaken by qualitative researchers is coding, the process of categorically marking or referencing units of data with codes and labels as a way to indicate patterns and meanings" (p. 471). During the initial data review, the inductive process helped develop the themes in participants' responses. The codes used were based on the actual data found within the responses. The categories developed from transcribed recorded participant conversations during the weekly meetings (Merriam & Tisdall, 2017). Coding these responses based on recurring themes gradually became more deductive as the process continued.

Rigor and Trustworthiness

Triangulation, research participant analysis, and data audit were the rigor and trustworthiness measures used during this action research. These measures were essential safeguards to support the validity of the study.

Triangulation

As Efron and Ravid (2013) state, triangulation uses more than one data point to obtain results of a study; this could include using various points of view (p. 70). A comparison of notes during collaborative planning, teacher-generated reflections, and

survey questions validated data across multiple sources. Fusch et al. (2018) state, "external analysis methods concerning the same events and the validity of the process can be enhanced by triangulation" (p. 21). Triangulation of the data occurred weekly throughout this timeframe of this study.

Member Checking

From the position of "insider in collaboration with other insiders" (Herr & Anderson, 2015, p. 45), I intended to address biases. To facilitate this quality measure, the participants reviewed all collected observational notes and journals to affirm themes and conclusions. This review ensured the results were consistent with the participants' understandings of the study. This peer review, as Efron and Ravid (2013) describe, "provides you with an additional set of eyes and helps you to determine the credibility of your interpretation and the accuracy of your findings" (p. 71). This "respondent validation" (Merriam & Tisdall, 2017, p. 246) was vital to ensure that the view of the data collected was not misconstrued. Respondent validation also ruled out any misunderstandings or biases. Carspecken (2013) states, "If power relations are not equal between the observer and the communities of peoples affected by truth claims, then these claims cannot be validated" (p. 90). Allowing all members of this study to review the collected notes and themes collected from the data provided an equal opportunity to exercise power over this study. This research participant analysis was conducted and documented throughout the research process to ensure the experiences were based on reality.

Audit Trail

All recorded observational notes and collaborative coaching narratives will be assessable to the participants in the study. This collection of records and artifacts offers an opportunity to reflect on the study's coherency and honesty (Efron & Ravid, 2013, p. 71).

A detailed account of the process will help determine reliability. Merriam and Tisdell (2017) state, "Rather than demanding the outsiders get the same results, a researcher wishes outsiders to concur that, given the data collected, the results make sense ..." (p. 251). In this qualitative research, these considerations to enhance validity and reliability can be found in the trustworthiness of the researcher. By keeping detailed accounts of memos, notes, and observations to log the events as you see them supports the finding within the research. Data audits will help maintain clarity throughout the research process. Therefore, weekly reviews will be documented and conducted by the participants.

Ethical Considerations

One responsibility of the research practitioner is to minimize the impact of bias in the inquiry process. An essential aspect to this responsibility is the participants' consent and confidentiality within the context of the study. Those who participate in a study must give consent before data is collected (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The participants' identity in this study was kept confidential and the data coded in a way that kept the identities anonymous.

As a reading coach, the participants were accustomed to my classroom presence in grade-level planning meetings. The relationships I built established trust between

myself as a researcher and those who participated in this study. The participants volunteered their time and energy toward the completion of this study.

To protect all participants involved in this action research, I thought about several ethical considerations. I provided each participant with a consent form. I also made them aware of how much time would be involved in this research. The trustworthiness and validity of this research were centered on the accuracy of the data collected. The qualitative results for this research were within the practice of methodological triangulation. Fusch et al. (2018) state, "Triangulating the data from multiple data collection methods (interviews, focus groups, observations, etc.) in a qualitative case study or ethnography would be within-method triangulation. . ." (p. 22). The participants in this study participated in an audit of data to support the acquisition of data as trustworthy and valid.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I considered the conceptual framework for this study. This framework includes a constructivist stance based on ethnographic action research. I provided the research design that selected the participants with a collaborative approach to intervention methodology. I discussed the data collection procedures using reflective teacher journals, open-ended surveys, and qualitative observations. The data analysis procedures included inductive to deductive theme development that was outlined by using an analysis method coding system. I discussed the measures needed to ensure validity, reliability, and transferability using triangulation audit trails and research participant analysis.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Large sums of money are spent annually on intervention initiatives that do not meet expectations. Attention is given to intervention platforms with very little input by those expected to use and facilitate the adoption of those interventions (Lorsbach, 2008; Sloan, 2009). Intervention initiatives are in every aspect of education. Reading interventionists and classroom teachers are encouraged to use best practices with current research to support learning deficiencies in the students they serve. However, reading interventionists and classroom teachers rarely have sufficient time to implement new interventions for at-risk students (Davidson, 2017). The lack of collaborative planning compounds the overall ineffectiveness of the reading intervention system (Kang, 2015). As a result, teacher self-efficacy is impacted by ineffective practices and intervention implementation.

The purpose of this ethnographic study is to qualitatively investigate the experiences of collaborative interactions between classroom teachers and reading interventionists who implement interventions to support struggling readers. A productive collaborative environment can often be a challenging experience for teachers. Often the need for collaborative sessions can be contested (Kang, 2015). Levine (2010) states:

Ethnographic methods of observation, including participant observation, can create richer, nuanced portraits of the norms, routines, beliefs, and trust fostered

in specific professional communities. Such methods can also be used to explore the impact of interventions on teachers' professional contexts. (p. 9)

Providing teachers insight into their impressions of this collaborative intervention implementation process could develop an agency over the system that positively affects overall perceived efficacies.

Research Design

This qualitative research employed an ethnographic research method. The study concentrated on a variety of aspects of collaboration among interventionists and classroom teachers. Ethnographic studies should be used when the dilemma is unclear and embedded across a system (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Using an ethnographic approach divulged problems within the reading intervention system and how those issues affected the collaboration of the community of teachers. Awareness of the culture created by the study members helped build collaboration strategies that could influence the research questions. I used a qualitative action research design to answer the following research questions:

- 1) How do reading interventionists and classroom teachers describe their experience developing reading interventions in a collaborative and interactive process?
- 2) How do teachers perceive the strategies developed during the collaborative session for struggling readers as cohesive?
- 3) How can the development and use of a collaborative planning tool influence teachers' perception of the process that develops reading interventions?

Data Collection

The qualitative data sources provided awareness of the effectiveness of the collaborative process and the perceived effectiveness of the sessions. Data collection took place after each of our sessions. Teachers kept reflective journals that recorded their opinions and sentiments about the usefulness of the collaborative sessions to support intervention changes.

Participants

Gayl, a teacher, has a bachelor's degree in elementary education. She has 12 years of classroom experience and has taught for four years in third grade.

Stacie, a teacher, has a bachelor's degree in elementary education and has 15 years of classroom experience. She has taught for ten years in third grade.

Shelly, a teacher, has a bachelor's degree in elementary education and has eight years of classroom experience. Three of which have been in 3rd grade.

Sydney, a teacher, has 28 years of classroom experience. She has been a reading coach and holds a Doctorate in Education.

Jane, the reading interventionist, has taught for 25 years. She has served as a reading interventionist for the past six years.

The literacy coach, which is the researcher's position, is responsible for assisting teachers and reading interventionists in planning instruction for best practices in reading. The literacy coach facilitates data meetings and works with teachers and interventionists to develop an intervention plan for students with reading deficiencies.

Table 2.1 *Participants*

Team Members	Role	Descriptors
The Reading Interventionist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned and implemented specific instructional strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly trained in instructional strategies that help struggling readers overcome their deficits in reading skills
Classroom Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified students who required reading intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for teaching grade-level reading skills and strategies for the entire class
Literacy Coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitated data meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed an intervention plan for students who showed reading deficiencies

The participants in this study were selected based on the need for an effective reading intervention system for third-grade. The teachers and interventionists maintained a perceivable friendship during and beyond the school day. The friendship between the members provided an opportunity to investigate the participants' culture through the lens of collaborative practices that were not affected by other challenges beyond the topic. It was clear before the study that the team enjoyed working with each other.

Qualitative Findings

This section will discuss the findings of the research. The narrative will establish a manifestation of the change over time the research participants experienced. A culture existed within the participants' work environment that shaped the perceptions explored across the research questions. After each collaborative planning session, teachers recorded thoughts in a reflective journal, culminating in a post-session survey. The themes of evolving communication dynamics and evolving collaborative dynamics are coded through the participants' experiences as recorded in a pre-and post-survey, the

meeting transcripts, and the reflective teacher journal. These qualitative data collection tools recorded perceptions that each teacher held individually and coincided with a perceivable ethos. The participants themselves worked well together and were actively engaged. The findings show that the evolving dynamics related to attitudes and perceptions of communication and collaboration. As the sessions progressed, this perceived relationship defined the tone of the sessions. The participants throughout the session regarded the system (schedules, class sizes, and past experiences) as the problem.

Themes

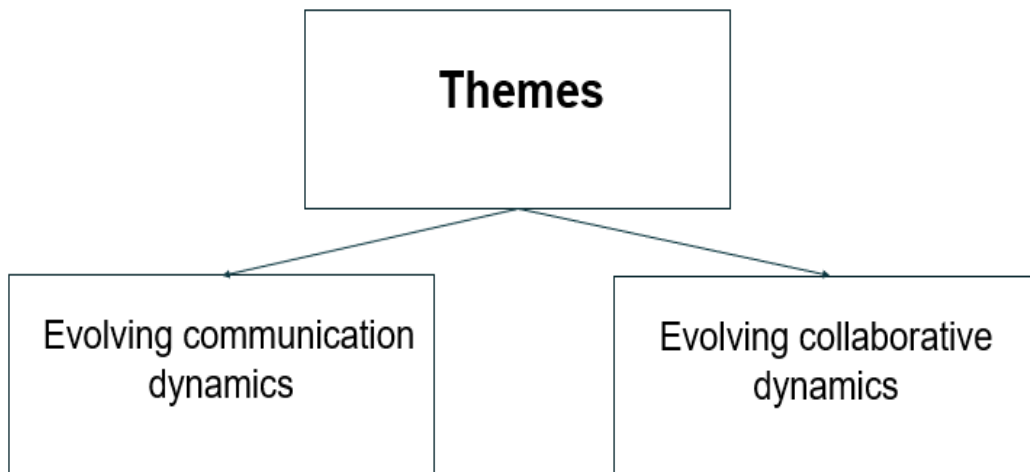


Figure 1.1 Visually displays the themes derived from the data.

Evolving Communication Dynamics

Within this section, I examined the perceptions and attitudes about communication between the participants. The teachers had ideas and feelings about the team's communication, which revealed a dynamic that contradicted the observable team actions. The theme was divided into subthemes that became apparent throughout the surveys, meeting transcripts, teacher journals, and my meeting notes and journal. The participants shared different feelings about the nature of the team's communication skills based on the anonymity of the data sources. If the teacher felt she was privately speaking

to me through a journal entry, her response reflected concerns for the group. This concern may not have been as apparent during the team discussions. There were four subthemes derived from teacher responses: Attitudes about team communication, perceptions about team communication, the need for communication support, the need for cohesive intervention, and communication.

Evolving Communication Dynamics

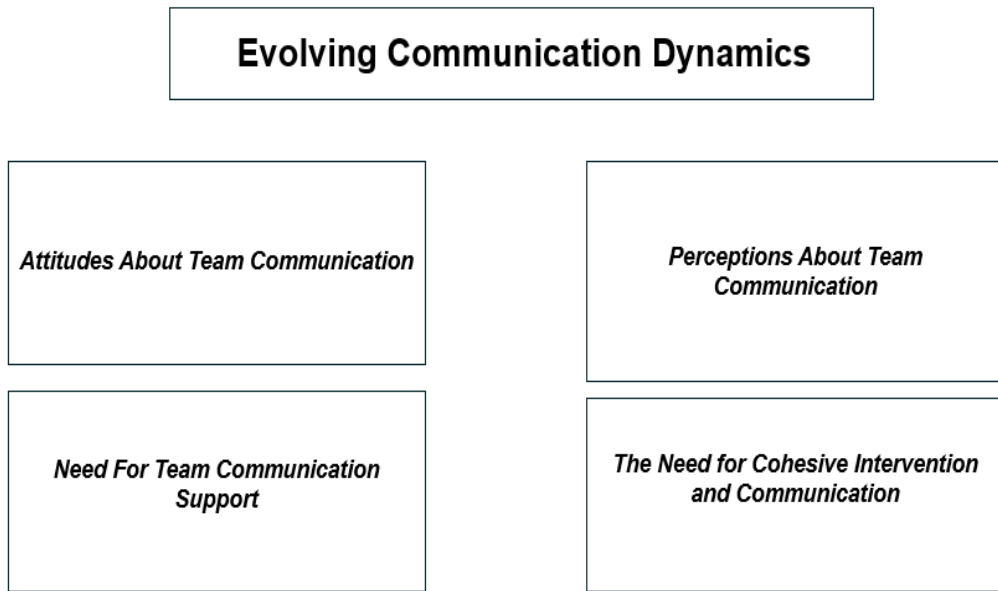


Figure 1.2 *Evolving Communication Dynamics* visual displays the theme and subthemes derived from the data

Attitudes About Team Communication

Openness to change can be measured by the attitudes of those needing to change. Attitudes are feelings constructed through reality. Attitudes to innovation may be developed through "personality, life experience, and career experience" (Evans 1996). It became apparent through the responses that certain attitudes about open communication impacted the group. These attitudes affected the overall efficacy of the team's interaction, and individual teacher views directly impacted the collective opinion. The team's attitudes were not reflective of how they felt about each other but rather a view of the

past activities. The team has worked together for over three years and is routinely seen together before and after school. A perceivable active relationship between the participants was noted in observations.

A negative attitude towards communication developed from the pre-survey and discussion journals responses. This negativity regarding communication revolved around the view that it is extra work on the teachers. The extra time required to meet and the possible extra paperwork were areas of concern. The documentation aspect of communication is the way administrators can prove that discussions are happening regularly. The extra work needed to document the team's communications regarding student achievement was a problem for the team's progress in changing the way they supported each other in meeting student needs.

From my journal notes, the documentation was not seen as helpful and did not support the teams' efforts to share student information to support student learning. For the teachers, it was useless extra work.

When I asked why they felt that way regarding teacher communication, Stacie, a teacher, stated during a group discussion, "Cause you don't wanna put more work on teachers, I think that's gonna get to be a lot of paperwork, and no one wants to read all that." Stacie's response illustrated the feeling that increased communication among teachers would produce an additional workload for teachers already struggling to keep up with their students. This idea of communication being extra work was connected to Stacie's view of the team's ability to discuss student needs. "I think to communicate every day, especially if they're having a day when our students are doing their best or days

when they're just straight-up struggling. I know communication is important but who has the time?" When I asked if others felt this way, Shelly, a teacher, said:

Do they not believe that we are already doing everything we possibly can to help these students? Why do I have to document every single thing I do to try to help my students succeed? Do they really think I have time to document all of that?

Why can't they just leave us alone and trust us to do what is best for our students?

From my journal entry after the session, I surmised that the team's overall attitude was that refining communication practices would be extra work for teachers. I wrote in one journal entry:

During the discussion, the teachers were opposed to the idea of additional meetings to discuss reading instruction. They had the impression that meeting more to just talk was useless and unhelpful for students. The time in a meeting could be used for more important work like grading papers. These teachers saw no need for more communication.

Another negative attitude toward communication was revealed by the vulnerability of teachers having conversations between peers in a professional environment. Stacie, a teacher, shared in her journal, "If someone's idea is shot down, it shouldn't be taken in a negative way." Past experiences with sharing ideas within a team have left her feeling that her thoughts were not worthy of consideration.

In one of our sessions, I asked, "What impacts your ability to share with other teachers?" It became evident throughout the responses that, to the participants, how each team member perceives the tone of communication impacts the effectiveness of the planning session. In one of our sessions, Sydney, a teacher, stated in her journal, "If you

approach the conversation in a respectful way, one that it is used to encourage a teacher is best." The attitude of the team is related to the usefulness of the conversations. If the members of the group felt alienated or attacked, the discussion was perceived as futile. However, I reflected in my journal that if the team member was encouraged and felt heard, the communication was thought to be beneficial. This perception is in the reflection of Stacie, having ideas "shot down" or Sydney's, thoughts of "encourage a teacher [through the communication of ideas]."

However, the members assumed that their communication was happening on a routine basis. The different team members constructed distinct perceptions about their level of communication established by the team's point of view (Costa, 2002). Based on what I wrote in my journal, the team did not recognize the characteristics of effective communication in terms of collaboration.

Perceptions About Team Communication

Perceptions are the teachers' understandings of reality. Perceptions develop differently between people who experience the same event. Perceptions are developed through our senses and can become distorted by a dominant representational system (Costa & Garmston, 2002). The first thing I needed to do was understand the team's collaborative dynamic. The teachers' discussion about current communication practices crafted a view of the reality of the team's dynamics. From this point forward, the study participants will be referred to as the "team" unless otherwise stated.

At the beginning of the study, I asked, "How often do you communicate about students?" The team perceived communication as a predictable "part of the day." The team's experience was that communication was routine, although the frequency of the

meetings depended on whom was asked. During our discussion, Gayl, a teacher, stated, "We may discuss [students] sooner [than once a month] depending on the issues/things observed." Gayl's perception of the frequency of the team's communication occurs as the need arises. However, Stacie, a teacher, stated in her journal, "Our collaboration occurs weekly," while Jane, the interventionist, reflected, "[We are in] constant communication of what I see in the classroom with the intervention."

However, Jane created confusion during the discussion when she responded, "We [the team] do have data team meetings once to twice a month." The team was under the impression that they met more than just once or twice a month due to the many times they spoke to each other during a typical day.

I noted in my journal, the team held monthly data team meetings to discuss student progress. Nevertheless, Gayl, a teacher, stated during our discussion, "We may discuss [student progress] during our PLC [data team] time if we get to it." The teachers might have been required to meet, but it seemed that the discussion of student data was not always a top priority. Gayl's response, "if we get to it," did not reflect confidence in the team's fidelity for communication that supported students. Gayl's statement showed that although they might have meetings, the discussion topics were not always about students and students' performance.

From the beginning of this study, the participants agreed that they were engaging in routine communication. However, perceptions within the team, communication appeared as an inconsequential occurrence. Stacie, a teacher, reflected that the team norm is "having simple conversations in passing." In the journal, Shelly, a teacher, also reflected this idea; she stated, "Conversations in passing are informative about what

students were doing in reading." The concept that communication was constant and intentional did not develop within the initial responses. Jane, the Interventionist, stated during our discussion, "We haven't had time to sit down and look at the students' data together." While Sydney's journal reflection stated, "[it is] hard to keep in constant communication with the teacher who is completing the intervention." Gayl best summarized the reality of the team's communication habits when she stated during our discussion that "[We] may see each other in the hallway/classroom and discuss it [intervention] then."

The teachers' discussions about communication lead naturally to the negativity and potential pitfalls of effective communication. The team's conversation directed us to the concept of using communication support tools. Exploring the development of this concept helped give insight into the team's progress throughout this study.

Need For Team Communication Support

Digging into the team's conversation revealed a lack of support for effective communication. During our conference, Gayl, a teacher, stated, "So you're starting over [with no communication]." The team's meetings had no uniform method for conversation. The team did not have a specific list of items they had to bring to the meetings to discuss. I wrote in my journal, "They seemingly just "winged" the meetings." Stacie, a teacher, stated, "We just have our notes that we talk about 'cause most of the time one teacher will spend the entire meeting talking about what she is doing in her classroom and not leave any time for the rest of us to share." And regarding instructional strategies, Shelly, a teacher, stated that teachers mainly contribute, "this is what I'm doing, but she does not tell how she is teaching that. And that's as far as the conversation

goes." The team concluded that a standard communication tool was needed for the meetings so that their time was not wasted.

After realizing that a communication tool was necessary, I asked the team to complete a communication support needs assessment. The needs assessment was a brainstorming activity where we listed ideas and data points the team could collect about student behaviors. I asked during the meeting:

Quietly go over in your mind what information would be helpful to you. What information would you want to know before working with a student who has just been working with another teacher on reading skills? Then share that with the group. Categorize and combine similar bits of information.

After going through the process, the team believed that these ideas and data points would be helpful to share. The information they deemed helpful is discussed in the following subtheme. The data from the activity reflected what the team thought would be helpful during their collaborative planning meetings. Gayl stated in her journal, "Sharing each other's students' data makes us all accountable for each other." Jane, the interventionist, also concluded that "having a common language across the board is also beneficial." Sydney noted that it would be "convenient to have some sort of checklist" during the discussion. This need for a checklist was also supported by Stacie, who stated, "a checklist that could be shared between teacher and interventionist to help be better monitors of each student's progress." The conversation quickly turned into what type of information would be included on this checklist, and a determined atmosphere among the team to not make it extra work became apparent.

The team also discussed the type of data they needed to have that would support effective communication. What did this data have to include? Gayl stated that the "types of resources that can be used during intervention" were essential to include on the tool, and Sydney, had a "common checklist of skills and strategies being used by each teacher." The team's consensus was summed up by Stacie's journal entry, stating that the tool needed to provide a framework for "targeting specific needs and using the instructional time more wisely." The tool would ensure that the communication between the teachers was most effective, and that student progress would be supported. The team began to support the communication tool by proposing ideas and taking ownership of the process. Shelly suggested ways in her journal to refine the communication tool:

It could be adaptive if you find something else that you want, and that's the good thing about it being on paper and passed around, that you can make notes on a sticky note and say, I really need this information this week on this kid.

The team wanted the tool to be adaptive to the needs of the teacher, the team, and the student.

After the session, I reflected in my journal that the collaborative team atmosphere became more positive as the discussion about adequate communication support developed. The team's perception of the benefits of communication became solidified. Terms such as "like" and "beneficial" became more frequent during the discussions.

As the discussions became more relevant to the actual needs of teachers and their students, the tool became a centerpiece for planning intervention communication. During the team discussion, a communication tool was developed. The tool was a spreadsheet containing the student's name, the dates of the week that the student was served, a brief

description of the skills the interventionist was focused on teaching the student, and the instructional strategies used to teach the skill. The tool also contained a column to add anecdotal notes from the classroom teacher about any reading behaviors they see the student use. I reflected in my journal how the team decided to keep the document concise. It was needed to provide an overview for the classroom teacher of what the interventionist was doing during their time with the student. The tool provided two-way communication with data that both the interventionist and classroom teacher could support the student. The conversations moved from the usefulness of communication and the roadblocks of effective communication to a more problem-solving mindset for instructional planning.

The Need for Cohesive Intervention and Communication

For communication to be effective, the team concluded that a cohesive communication plan needed to be developed. Without a plan, the team decided that meetings would continue to be unsuccessful. While creating a plan, a sense of community developed. During a discussion, Gayl, a teacher, stated, "[we need to] ensure that the teacher had data to discuss during meetings and help hold them [teachers] accountable. We also need to make sure that everyone is heard and feels validated." A consensus of "communication should be consistent and time optimized" also became apparent. Shelly, a teacher, stated during the session:

We have a lot of behavioral issues that students may or may not go to group depending on behaviors, which then goes back to you don't have enough data to kind of drive you forward with what type of instruction 'cause it's not consistent.

They may come to the group, but then they may not actually do what you have asked them to do.

The team agreed that communication would help overcome many of the barriers seen in the reading intervention system. Behavior issues, teacher accountability, and sharing instructional practice could all be overcome through effective communication between interventionists in the classroom.

In my journal, I noted that the team decided that making sure the intervention strategies were consistent should be a priority in planning. The team agreed that there should be an interconnectedness to what the interventionist was doing during student reading intervention time and what the classroom teacher expected during normal class time. The question was how to communicate this between the members of the team. In her journal, Jane, the Interventionist, stated, "Some type of documentation [was needed] so both teacher and interventionist know what is happening during small group and class time." The discussion led to a list of needed data points for the communication tool to ensure the interconnectedness and consistency of reading intervention strategies. This list included

1. "strategies being used with the student (working and not working)."
2. "dates of meeting with the student."
3. "notes on the progress of the student."
4. "skill being focused on."
5. "present or absent [student]."
6. "suggestions of next steps [reading strategies]."

This informative list would provide consistent communication and help guide the teachers in effective planning. Jane, the Interventionist, stated to the team:

Just also seeing if there's a pattern too [student reading patterns] if they're constantly... I don't know, like even fluency when they're reading. If they're constantly missing something or they are struggling with something, I think that I would definitely like to know that- I see it, I'd like to see if somebody else is seeing it or if I'm just making it up on my own.

The information communicated between the teacher and interventionist would lead to a more successful practice.

Although the team agreed that communicating student reading behaviors was necessary, they also acknowledged that it was time-consuming. As Sydney, a teacher stated to the team:

Because it allowed us to get to more kids, and then it allowed another set of eyes to see needs and stuff of our kids we knew it was something we needed to do – but when did we have time?

After the session, I reflected in my journal that "The team needed to come up with a way to remedy this problem of time."

In the pre-survey responses, it was a consensus among the group that communication was a required and essential part of being effective. The pre-survey results indicated that the team's communication was needed to fulfill the monthly data team obligations. However, the team has realized that our communication practices are not at the level of a truly collaborative team. The team had allowed perceptions of the frequency and attitudes regarding communication to hinder the collaborative process.

With this now realized, the team was taking action to remove barriers to the quality of their communication so a genuinely collaborative environment could be developed. They understood that their level of communication could not support collaborative practice and improve the quality of the reading intervention. The figure below represents the interconnectedness of the team's improved perceptions and attitudes to support a collaborative team. Without the changes to the team's communication, true collaboration would not be supported. See Figure 1 below.

Path to Collaboration

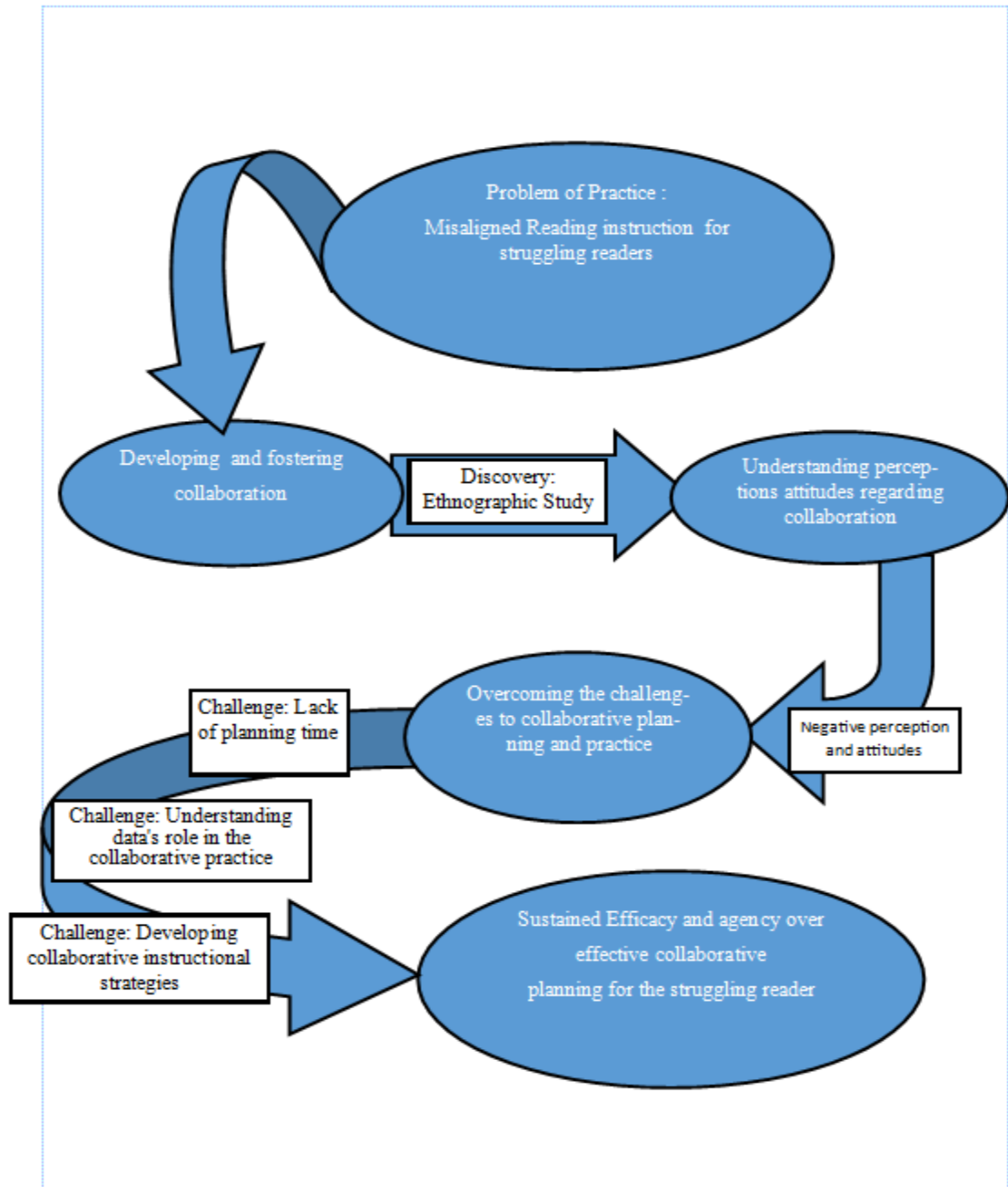


Figure 1.3 *Path to Collaboration* visual represents the path of the team to effective collaborative planning.

Throughout the sessions in which we discussed team communication, the participants' interactions became more fluid. In my experience with the team, I noticed that they spent many hours after school interacting in a jovial, friendly manner. However, in the research setting, I perceived the team members' hesitation to share as an obstacle. As recorded in my observation journal during the first two sessions, the teachers' mannerisms and focus on distractions such as phones or emails left an impression that they were uncomfortable discussing past experiences about collaboration.

As the sessions continued, this hesitation became less evident. The team relaxed during the discussion of communication strengths and weaknesses based on personal experiences. In my observation journal, I stated that teachers allowed fewer interruptions during our session and were actively engaged in making eye contact and expressing agreement with affirming mannerisms such as smiling at the one speaking and nodding their head in agreement. Engaging phrases such as "I agree" and "That's right" expressed the relaxing atmosphere during the sessions. This dynamic in interactions became the norm for the participants (Wenger et al., 2010).

Evolving Collaborative Dynamics

As the team came to a consensus, a plan to support more effective communication was developed. A natural focus on collaboration developed during the sessions. In her journal, Gayl, a teacher, stated, "The more communication there is, the more successful I feel in collaborative planning." This section will explore the teachers' thoughts of the collaborative planning time regarding negative and positive attitudes towards collaboration, challenges of collaborative practice, collaborative instructional strategies, and data's role in the collaborative practice. The question asked at the beginning of the

team meetings was, “Are we talking?” However, as reflected in my journal, the question asked now had become, “What are we talking about?”

Evolving Collaborative Dynamics

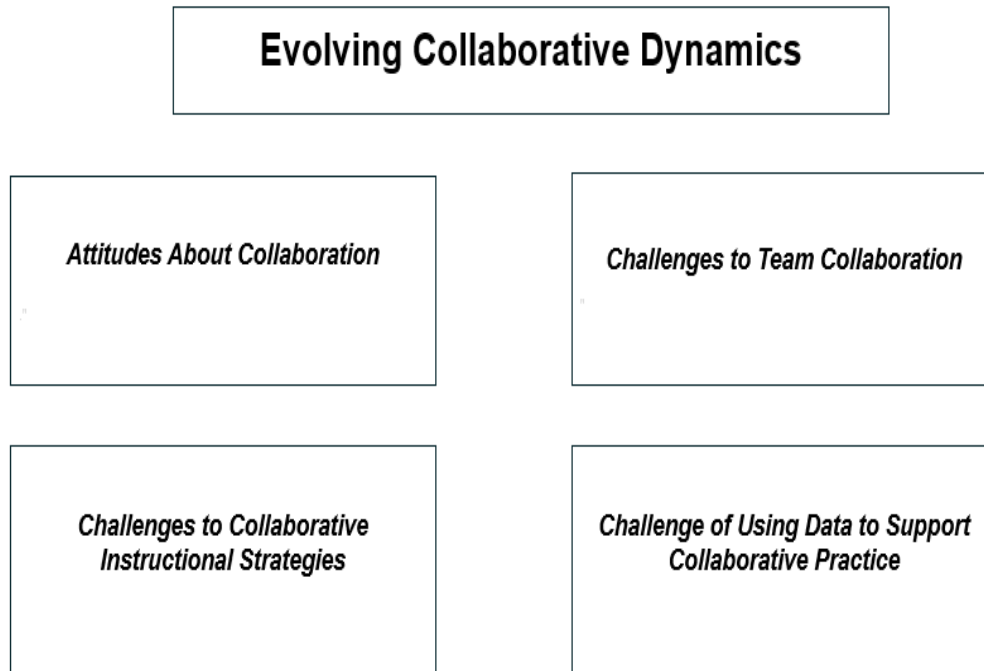


Figure 1.4 Evolving Collaborative Dynamics visual displays the theme and subthemes derived from the data.

Attitudes About Collaboration

The team’s observation of collaboration echoed similarities to that of communication. A consensus on the importance of teamwork was evident. That importance will be explored later in this section. However, a discernible negative or positive attitude toward collaboration was revealed in the data collected.

A negative attitude toward collaboration and the competitiveness of test scores was displayed. During a discussion, Jane, the Interventionist, stated, “I’ve been in... within a team that it was every man for himself, and so in that situation, you just... you are a lost puppy.” Gayl, a teacher, stated, “You don’t wanna be the low person getting the

lowest...[scores].” Teachers shared generalized experiences of teams that were not as forthcoming with strategies that worked in their classroom because of this competitive spirit between team teachers. I asked the team about past negative experiences with collaboration that resulted in bad attitudes.

Jane stated:

Other teams were not willing to share ideas. Like, you may share... You may have somebody that’s like, Okay, I’m gonna do... the reading lesson plans. But the plans are very vague, they’re very generic, like, okay, do this page. And it’s like, okay, well, I mean, now I have to take this and run with it, and kind of figure it out for myself.

Shelly, a teacher, stated as the conversation drifted into silence, “Yes. Very, very, very, competitive, and I don’t wanna say it makes it hostile, but...” I reflected that Shelly implied high-stakes testing hinders a truly collaborative process. Teachers are reluctant to share effective strategies and ideas due to being out-performed on state tests at the end of the year. Shelly stated in her journal, “Those types of people kinda just want all of that glory and those high scores for themselves rather than...[sharing].” I wrote:

The negative attitude for collaboration seemed to resonate in previous experience; this team of teachers does not accuse each other of creating their negativity about collaborative practice but did influence their reluctance to engage in open, collaborative communication before the sense of community developed.

After the discussion turned from the opposing points of view, a more open positive attitude grew.

Ultimately a positive attitude toward collaboration developed as a byproduct of creating a true team mentality. The team was working together to solve a common problem. In our discussion, as Stacie stated, “It just goes back to making everyone feel that they’re part of the team, because if you’re all working together and looking at each other for resources and ideas, then you are gonna be a true team.” The team developed self-efficacy for collaboration. In her journal, Stacie noted, “I think it’s kind of a self-fulfilling prophecy. The more results you see positively, the more likely you are to do that, and you’ll feel good about the collaborative sessions you’re having.” The positive work of the collaborative practice was expressed in this development of a team mentality. Shelly declared during the session:

If you developed a team mentality that the expectation is if you’re doing really well in one area, so you got the interventionist doing well with this particular reading skill or this particular reading strategy, the expectation is now that person is expected to share and mentor the other teachers in that strategy to make practice better for everyone.

Developing a shared expectation for the collaborative practice of the team seems to set a more positive attitude during the meetings. This team mentality and team expectation was used to overshadow the negativity of every man for himself. In one journal entry, Gayl said, “It’s not something that you can [do] be a lone wolf and then get these great scores and not share with your team and then call it a collaborative [team].”

I noted the attitude that prevailed during the collaborative sessions grew and expanded to many different areas. As the sessions grew in the transparency of instructional strategy and strengths and insecurities of practice, a mindset of “yeah, you

don't withhold anything" triumphed. Developing a rigorous drive to share information was key to overcoming the past negative situations the team had experienced. The overcoming of the negative experiences led to a consensus of collaborative expectations. This consensus contributed to the overall success (meaning teacher participation) of the collaborative sessions.

As the collaborative sessions continued to dive deeper into the collaborative process, Gayl shared in her journal, "The more communication there is, the more successful I feel in collaborative planning." The team members began to collaborate in terms of the strengths and weaknesses of each other's instructional strategies and pedagogy. An openness to share continued to strengthen the need for collaboration. In her journal, Sydney stated, "As an educator, I know my strengths and my weaknesses and in the areas that I am weakest, is a great learning experience from another educator who may be stronger in that area."

As the process continued, the natural development of collaboration coincided with a constructed perception that "documentation of communication is key." In my reflection after the session, I stated, "The shared view was that documentation of collaborative communication is instrumental to the overall success. The need to keep everyone on the same page about what intervention needed to look like for a particular student was discussed among the team members." Sharing observed data about a student was determined necessary to the team. Sydney stated during the discussion:

But I was glad when my little ones went to somebody besides me because I felt like that was a [benefit to the student] ... I was glad like when mine went to [the

interventionist], or because I felt like they could hear [the instructional strategies] somewhere else....

In one session, admitting the need for instructional support strategies by someone more experienced or more knowledgeable than you to support your students was a topic for discussion. This need to collaborate on complicated situations was a growth mindset from previous meetings, as mentioned above. Gayl stated during the session:

Well, and I do feel like an interventionist has maybe a little bit more, is more knowledgeable about basic phonics things that us as upper level may not have as much experience or knowledge with, so it's helpful to have somebody to kind of say, "Hey, can you show me how to do this? Or can you explain this a little bit more?" Just because it's upper level, by the time they get to us, we're expecting them to know how to read, we're starting to work on more comprehension skills, but we are getting a lot of kids that still don't have those. Basic phonics and... So, it's helpful to have somebody who has had experience. So, you can kind of help build your own experience on that.

Opening up the discussion to improve your own practice or instructional skills to meet the needs of your students had become the heart of the collaborative sessions. Improving the instructional method of the teachers who participated was a topic I revisited. I asked the team at the beginning of the session, "How well do you, as classroom teachers, know what skills and strategies the interventionist is using while working with your students?"

Shelly stated during one session:

But there might be an area that we can work on to know exactly what the intervention

strategies we're using when we pull each other's kids, or what strategies the interventionist is using when they pull kids so that we can better support that when the student comes back to us.

The student experiencing consistent and aligned instructional experiences through improved teacher instructional practice became essential to all the participants.

Developing a shared process for communicating student progress was beneficial to the group. Jane stated in one journal entry, "Discussing the student's progress with the reading interventionist allows us to streamline what we are doing in the classroom to help the student be successful." The collaborative communication allowed teachers to develop a deeper understanding of how their instructional practices affected student achievement. Gayl stated, "Collaborative planning was successful because we were able to discuss what worked or what didn't work." When discussing past experiences during our session, Stacie stated, "[I] don't think it affects the feelings toward collaboration because it is our job to do what is best for our students." A true team mentality developed through the lens of collaboration. Gayl summarized, "[I] believe that a strong team will produce the best results because their main goal is making sure students are mastering content skills."

With a renewed focus on enriching the collaborative planning between the team members, a deep understanding of what it takes for a team to become collaborative was realized. A consensus was developed that reflected the importance and need for collaboration between the team members. In the post-survey, Stacie, a teacher, stated, "Collaboration is needed," and Shelly, a teacher, expressed that "collaboration is super important," and in a more refined proclamation, Jane, the Interventionist, stated, "Communication between interventionist and teacher is exceptionally important." Our

discussion of collaboration evolved into, as Shelly, a teacher, stated in her post-survey, “that’s just a part of being supportive of each other.” Once the shared vision for the collaborative time became solidified, past feelings and perceptions for collaborative practices morphed into a more productive way of thinking.

However, within this renewed vigor for collaborative planning, challenges to the practical application of collaboration were still evident.

Challenges to Team Collaboration

Similar to the challenges of effective communication, the challenges for collaborative planning revolved around the amount of time required. Without the time to collaborate, different feelings were expressed about their planning time’s overall effectiveness and usefulness. The team was frustrated by the shallowness of the discussions.

“[Time] challenges can make it feel pointless to meet,” Stacie, a teacher, expressed in her journal. Without adequate time to discuss instructional strategies, student progress anecdotal observations, or sharing relevant data points, teachers see even the time they have together as pointless and useless to the success of their students. Time constraints placed on teams seemed to make collaboration impossible. Stacie stated during our discussion, “[Collaboration can] sometimes be hard between the classroom teacher and interventionist due to time constraints.”

I wrote in one journal entry, “time to meet appeared to be the biggest hurdle in authentic, collaborative communication.” Shelly, a teacher, stated in her journal, “When we are limited on time, we hit the surface of what we are doing. Our conversations are just the highlights of what’s going on with no real depth.” This frustration was echoed

during many of our collaborative planning sessions. Unfortunately, no real solution was found. Gayl, a teacher, wrote, “Time doesn’t allow for deep intentional conversations about student progress.” During one collaborative planning session, I noted that the conversation stalled and hindered the development of an effective collaborative community. The lack of time was a solid contributor to the inadequate development of these conversations. Stacie, a teacher, stated in the pre-survey, “limits [to] the types of conversations we have are due to time.” I reflected to the team that the palpable feeling of frustration and hopelessness to the time constraint construct seemed impossible to overcome. I told them that there had to be a way to make more efficient use of our time.

In my journal, I stated after one session, “as the team members discussed the issue of time and its effect on collaborative planning, it seemed awareness of time was affected by the subtle nuances of specific experiences and the importance of our experiences within a given time frame. I reflected, could the gravity and importance of the topic being discussed influence their perceptions of the amount of time they had to discuss issues that were very important to them (the success of their students)?

As the collaborative sessions developed, the obstacles for effective communication between the team members became more vivid. Time restraints and current conditions became hurdles to overcome. Due to the unique nature of the school year because of the impact of COVID-19, Stacie stated during a discussion that we have a “shortened school day this year.” Shelly echoed, “[We have to be] very intentional with the time that we do have to meet because it is so short.” This short school day made the team concise with what data was shared and amplified the importance of a collaborative

planning tool to share instructional strategies quickly, efficiently, and without wasting time on a frivolous conversation. Shelly stated during our discussion:

I felt like sometimes I just had to quickly spell out some things about what my kids were doing, what I was doing with them, what I saw, versus somebody who went first during the meeting and had a little bit longer time. They would maybe be able to talk a little bit more in-depth about it, versus like towards the end of mine, it was kind of like, 'Okay, here's this, this and this. And then that's all I got to say. I didn't even have enough time to get feedback about the problems I was seeing with my students.

This reflectiveness between the team members about the quality of what was shared supported and streamlined the collaborative process. The participants reflected on what each member contributed to the discussions. They agreed that each teacher needed only to discuss what was outlined on the communication tool. That way, no one took up all of the time, and every teacher felt like her voice was heard and her problems were shared.

Their revelations from journals and discussion transcripts about the inconsistency were used to guide them into the reality of their effectiveness. Once the effectiveness of their collaboration was evident, an agency developed that established efficacy over the team's process to create a more effective communication protocol. Listening to each other's attitudes about issues related to collaboration reinforced a mindset of what a communication tool could do to overcome obstacles. Sharing each other's past experiences became the catalyst for improved future experiences (Bandura, 2001).

Exploring and creating an ideal of what collaboration in intervention planning should be

and identifying the need for effective use of time naturally leads to a richer understanding of collaborative planning (Dufour, 2009; Senge, 2012).

The following section will explore the evolution of this team's ideas of the collaborative process and ways they overcame the challenges of time and competitiveness to become a truly collaborative team. During one discussion, Sydney stated, "Teamwork is built on everyone doing their part." This team of teachers began to work cohesively to share the stress of supporting students.

Challenges to Collaborative Instructional Strategies

Instructional strategies to support student learning were discussed in depth during our collaborative sessions and in the teacher journals. Gayl wrote in her journal, "Students should also be practicing the same strategies and not constantly learning new ones." The team agreed that students should see consistent strategies throughout the instructional day. This consistent view of the continuity of instructional practice provided the foundation for a specific collaborative approach. Shelly, during the discussion, stated, "I could make sure that the skills and strategies the student is learning during the intervention can be continued within the classroom." The team settled on the idea that student learning would best be supported through consistent strategies. Stacie continued, "Even when not sharing kids, it is helpful to share ideas and suggestions of ways to help our students who are struggling...." The need for a common language and common practice was shared by the participants. The team thought that sharing ideas and strategies could help support their classroom instruction. As Gayl stated to the team:

Sometimes it may not even be your ideas; it could just be that it just doesn't work for that student. You have to meet the kid where they're at. And sometimes they

learn differently, and every kid is different, so you just have to meet them where they're at. And just because this strategy doesn't work for this kid doesn't mean that next year that you don't try again and try it with a different group of students. The team supported the idea that having consistency regarding instructional practices was a necessary part of moving forward to support student learning. Sharing ideas, successes, and failures would support every learner. During one session, Jane said it was "helpful for everyone to be on the same page about what intervention needs to look like." Now the question turned to how to put everyone on the same page. I reflected during the session, "what would be the catalyst to bring about alignment in instructional practice? Data became the centerpiece of conversation in our collaborative sessions and its role in alignment.

Challenge of Using Data to Support Collaborative Practice

The role of student data in collaborative practice became apparent throughout our discussions. The team members understood that using data to support instruction and instructional changes was key to student success. Shelly, a teacher, discussed data's role in supporting instructional practice. She stated to the team:

One of the biggest areas to really dig down deep into what the kids are... their data. And not just looking at it and say okay, I just need to do this. But really going in and saying, okay, what part of that did they not understand?

I noted, the discussions about student achievement were often just a mere presentation of data more than a problem-solving event." Using data to facilitate change in instructional practices became important. As Jane, the interventionist, wrote in her journal, "Data needs to be specific so that time is not wasted and the team can determine a plan of action

to move the student forward.” Teachers wanted to be able to develop a plan of action to move students closer to reaching their goals. Jane stated to the team, “If no one is documenting what they saw or didn’t see, it won’t allow the next person to pick up and start teaching the student the next strategy.” After this session, I stated in my journal, “the teachers were concerned that without documentation of student progress, teachers would be continually riding an instructional merry-go-round.” Teachers would keep on using the same failing strategy for the students. Student progress would not happen simply because the same inadequate approach would just be repeated. In order to stop this cycle, the team decided that student data would need to be discussed routinely. When the team continued to discuss the use of data to support student learning, Gayl, a teacher, shared at one session:

When you’re progress monitoring, and you’ve got your kids here, and they say they’ve mastered this skill or this whatever, this vocabulary, but until you see it [the student used the vocabulary word] in the classroom independently, you can’t really say they’ve mastered it.

I reflected on that statement in the following journal entry, “The view of students’ success progressively changed into what the students could do independently outside of the intervention setting.” Classroom teachers wanted to see the students use what they have learned during the intervention in their classrooms. Sydney acknowledged:

And it’s hard to get them to use any type of strategy on their own. I think sometimes it’s not because they don’t know how to do it because they don’t choose to take the time to do it and so that’s a big problem too.

As I noted in my journal, teachers and the interventionist wanted to see students using reading strategies taught in the classroom and during the reading intervention. True collaboration would support everyone being on the same page with expectations for students. Each part of the reading intervention system could support the other.

The teams' interactions throughout the sessions maintain a collaborative culture supporting each team member. Previous experiences shared during discussions guided the current exchanges. The team was focused on changing the system to develop positive collective experiences. The debate on what was needed to have collaborative reading interventions was constructed in a supportive atmosphere reflective of the relationship viewed from the outside perspective of the team's interpersonal connection. Members of the team were cordial and considerate of each other's suggestions and comments. During the session, I described in my journal that the teachers pulled in close while listening to each other's ideas and fully participated in discussions. I noted that suggestions and the team's discussion were guided in terms of "have you thought about this... or ever looked at this type of data point for planning?" in a supportive tone.

Triangulation

The team's consensus became apparent after an analysis of the discussions, post-survey results, and journal reflections. By taking the time to understand what students could or could not do during the reading intervention, classroom teachers were able to hold students accountable for their learning during the reading intervention time.

Triangulating the data played an instrumental role in discovering the broad picture and the best approach to aligned, collaborative-based instruction.

Reflecting on data collected from the study, the researcher, teachers, and the reading interventionist made it possible to discuss ways to overcome challenges to their collaborative practice. Overcoming negative attitudes for sharing ideas in a competitive environment and improving the use of student data to inform instruction promoted team members' learning atmosphere and supported student success. This reflective process encouraged the development of an effective collaborative team.

Research Questions

Reflecting on the research questions places a frame around the conclusions for this study. Gleaning insight from the shared experiences to understand their perception of the process promotes learning in the social environment. The willingness in which this team shared their time revealed the team's dedication to improving themselves to help their students.

RQ1: How do reading interventionists and classroom teachers describe their experience developing reading interventions in a collaborative and interactive process?

The first research question dealt with how reading interventionists and classroom teachers describe their experiences developing reading interventions in a collaborative and interactive process. The qualitative data revealed a rich description of the participants' experience working collaboratively in an interactive approach to developing reading interventions.

The team's experiences working together throughout this research process reflected a wide range of perceptions and attitudes. At the beginning of the study, the reading interventionist and classroom teachers considered the experience "extra work" in developing reading interventions collaboratively. In the beginning, the team's

collaborative process was described as if working together did not support students. This belief was evident when the reading interventionist did not know the classroom teacher's reading strategies during regular instruction. As the study progressed, the description of the experience in developing collaborative and interactive reading interventions became viewed as being aligned and supportive of student progress.

The teachers began to experience a productive collaborative, interactive team in developing reading interventions and described the process as beneficial to the overall reading intervention system. The classroom teachers' and reading interventionists' practices within collaboration and communication may determine the team's overall experience.

RQ2: How do teachers perceive the strategies developed during the collaborative session for struggling readers as cohesive?

The second research question involved discovering how teachers perceive the strategies developed for struggling readers as cohesive during the collaborative session. The narrative of perceptions described through the qualitative data supports the following conclusions.

Facilitating a collaborative practice supported the successful implementation of the curriculum change and improved student outcomes to reach goals for reading intervention. The team's perception improved as the collaborative practice developed between classroom teachers and interventionists and, therefore, their perception of the strategies' cohesiveness. This improvement enhanced the team's perceived efficacy and agency in and over the strategies development. Their perceptions and attitudes of

collaboration and communication developed into positive and reflective support for students.

Providing teachers insight into their feelings of the collaborative process in reading intervention developed an agency over the system that affected overall perceptions of efficacy in supporting students.

RQ3: How can the development and use of a collaborative planning tool influence teachers' perception of the process that develops reading interventions?

The third research question concerned the development and use of a collaborative planning tool and how it influences teachers' perception of the process that develops reading interventions. The qualitative data for this question described the team's influence working together to create a tool to support perceptions of the collaborative process within the team.

Classroom teachers and the reading interventionist concluded that they needed to develop a tool to help with communication and collaboration. The tool developed increased the team's overall attitude of the effectiveness of collaboration and the importance of communication. This chart supported a collaborative process to receive the same instructional practices in the classroom and reading intervention. The ability to strategically plan instructional strategies and reflect on students facilitated the perception of accountability and provided a means to measure progress. Teachers that communicated were better informed of each student and developed into a strong team that overcame challenges within the system. The team suggested that improving communication leads to a more efficient transfer of strategies between the intervention and the classroom.

Summary

During this six-month study into the collaboration of classroom teachers and reading interventionists, many rich conversations gave insight into the dynamics of the team's culture. The team recognized the limited communication between its team members with careful reflection. This revelation leads to them taking steps to improve the communication between its members. The team then transitioned to the obstacles in developing a collaborative practice.

Their perceptions of collaborative planning included problems with time, competitiveness, and developing an understanding of the value of in-depth data discussions. As an insider, I played a minimal role in the evolving dynamics toward a truly collaborative team. As the literacy coach, simply planning the meetings and placing the team together was the catalyst the team needed to openly reveal issues they became more aware of during the months together. The process facilitated the discussion in a safe environment to plan and make meaningful changes. Giving the team time to make decisions through collaborative discussion organically led to problem-solving once the problem became apparent.

The findings reflected the thoughts of a team involving a reading interventionist, classroom teachers, and a literacy coach that displayed perception and attitudes to communication and collaboration. These impressions, when discussed, were the driving force for a change in practice. This ethnographic study investigated the impact of giving teachers time to communicate and eventually led to meaningful team collaboration.

CHAPTER 5

IMPLICATION FOR FUTURE PRACTICE

This chapter will discuss the implications of the findings of this study as related to the literature review and outline recommendations for future practice. I will discuss a plan of action to implement the results and reflect on action research and the ethnographic methodology followed by the study's limitations and future research recommendations.

Study Overview

Teachers and interventionists who want to support struggling readers are faced with a recurring cycle that sustains the influx of struggling readers and hinders the teacher's ability to impact student learning. This cycle involves the lack of targeted intervention, collaborative planning, and miss-aligned instructional practices (Shelton, 2018). Limiting the confusion of instructional practice and curricular resources helps to alleviate some tension within this high-pressured environment (Spillan et al., 2002). The intervention of this study used a collaborative team approach to facilitate a community of learning within the reading intervention system. This ethnographic action research explored the perceptions and attitudes of the collaborative practice between teachers who served the same students for reading intervention.

Research Questions

A qualitative action research design was used to answer the following research questions:

- 1) How do reading interventionists and classroom teachers describe their experience developing reading interventions in a collaborative and interactive process?
- 2) How do teachers perceive the strategies developed during the collaborative session for struggling readers as cohesive?
- 3) How can the development and use of a collaborative planning tool influence teachers' perception of the process that develops reading interventions?

Summary of the Findings

The findings in this study reflected the evolving perceptions and attitudes of the team's communication and collaboration practices. Through open communication, the team's perception of their communication practices revealed that the team did not collaborate. After this revelation, the team improved their communication to support collaborative practice. Developing the collaborative process anticipated support for teachers and the students they serve. Teacher agency over the collaborative planning grew as their perceived efficacy during the sessions improved. Revealing and working through the teams' negative feelings provided a foundation for a more positive perception of communication to support collaboration. The development of a communication tool to support collaboration between the team members improved the teams' perceptions and attitudes about collaborative practice.

Therefore, providing teachers a space to reflect on current collaborative practices developed a starting point for supporting an improved collaborative approach. Providing teachers assistance that helped guide discussions and supported reflective thinking may change attitudes and perceptions about collaborative teams.

Results in View of Literature

A filter from literature must be applied to draw conclusions and understand the findings. In order to reach conclusions, a review of the results will be addressed through social cognitive theory, communities of practice, and dynamic interactions.

Social Cognitive Theory

Bandura's social cognitive theory connects communities of people and their environments and how their interactions influence their dynamics. Bandura supports a bi-directionally between the interactions of people within a system (Bandura, 1997). The team in this study influenced and outlined the course of action the team undertook. This relationship between the team members directly impacted the study and the findings. As team members described their experiences, the reality of that experience solidified into a perception about the event (Brownell et al., 2006). As each course of action was determined, the events of that action influenced the next event.

As the teachers described and discussed the actions during the collaborative session, they developed a team mentality that contributed to the positive attitudes from the collaborative sessions. This development of the individual is supported by the social cognitive theory assertion that people grow to meet changing demands and roles (Bandura, 2001; Eun 2019). As the team grew to meet the challenges of collaborative

practice, the discussions led to further growth. The cycle of inquiries leads to a collaborative system (Dewey, 1938; Wenger et al., 2002).

The interconnectedness of the team's experience improved the collaborative dynamic. The social cognitive theory supports this conclusion. People grow from the interactions found within their environment and other team members. Bandura describes reciprocal determinism as they enter play between individuals and the environment. This environment includes individuals within the team of interaction (Bandura 1978). People are contributors to their learning and make choices based on the situation and structure of the common shared event.

Self-Efficacy. Within the tenants of social cognitive theory, the development of self-efficacy or confidence in your abilities should be studied along with the organization's trustworthiness or certainty in which the participant is performing the required task. Within this study, the reflections on the individual team members' self-confidence were discussed. As the team progressed, so did the self-efficacy of its members. The teachers and interventionists developed strong efficacy as each challenge was overcome. Faith in the process develops a positive attitude and incorporates a higher performance in impacting behavior. These behaviors facilitate the performance or outcomes of the participant (Ozyilmaz et al., 2018; Bandura, 1987). Providing support for participants through the lens of efficacy supports learners and their results (Newton, 2011; Cronje, 2020).

Collective Efficacy. The social-cognitive framework is a model for professional development that includes collective efficacy. Collective efficacy is a shared belief in the groups' capabilities to perform a task with particular objectives to measure success

(Bandura, 1997; Donato, 1994). The collective efficacy determines the performance level by establishing how well the group works together to face particular challenges (O'Donohue & Kitchener, 1999; Ozyilmaz et al., 2018). This collective scaffold approach to learning produces members who can use the groups' strategies in other individual situations (Eun, 2019; Donato, 1994).

The collective efficacy of the team developed from within the discussion of the group. As each session problem-solved an issue, the team became more efficient and determined to solve the next problem. The overall collective efficacy drove the performance of the team to outstanding achievements. The team began to rely on each other and the skills of each member.

Providing a rich collaborative environment for all its members contributes to participation and the efficacy of each participant. Supplying a social climate with extrinsic rewards followed by direct relevance to the participant's professional situations can build interdependence between its members. Developing strong connections between the participants creates an environmental condition for growth (Naranjo, 2012; Newton, 2011).

Communities of Practice

Developing a collaborative team was influenced by first supporting the team in a true community of practice. Developing a sense of community was responsible for creating and sharing knowledge between the team members (Wenger et al., 2002). As the team grew as a community, their communication developed into a positive and reflective system. The team overcame previous competitiveness to produce a community of professionals who cohesively implemented reading intervention. The community of

practice development enhanced collaboration and the team's perception of efficacy and agency. Overcoming adversities and multiple points of view enabled teachers to improve their instructional strategies and form a truly integrated reading intervention system for their students. This shared responsibility resolved issues of trust and accountability for the team (Lave, 1991).

Learning and growing from one another by becoming a member of a community added to the collective efficacy of the team (Bandura 1978). The interdependency that developed between the members in this study contributed to the overall perceived success of the team's collaborative sessions (Lave, 1991). Each member supported one another in their strengths and weaknesses to develop a deep collaborative mindset.

Establishing a community of practice supported the teachers' development throughout the collaborative process. The learning and growing from one another supported the common goals and helped each team member overcome previous collaboration experiences. The findings suggested that without developing a community of practice, the importance of interactions between its members would not have been realized.

Dynamic Interactions

The team's work in improving the quality of the interactions between the team members supported the growth of the attitudes and perceptions of collaboration. Having unclear roles and how those roles affect students can be one obstacle to overcome in developing a collaborative team (Friend et al., 2010). The teachers in this study reflected that a lack of time for collaborative planning and cohesive instructional practices

hindered student achievement. This lack of student growth contributed to the negative perception and the perceived need for more effective communication.

As the perceptions of the quality of the team's interactions improved, the openness in which they shared data and communicated student progress and reflected on instructional practices became more fluid and open. The team's honest communication determined the overall effectiveness of the learning community to help at-risk learners (Brownell et al., 2006). The interactions between the team members became more dynamic and supportive to each of its members, and the improved quality of the teams' interactions led to developing the collaborative tool that supported the team's instructional practices.

Having dynamic interactions between the team members improved the team's overall effectiveness. The quality of those interactions defined many of the teachers' attitudes and perceptions regarding collaborative practice (Friend et al., 2010). This conclusion is supported by developing the teachers' collaborative tool to support the communication between its members. Solving the communication problems within the team dynamic placed the teachers on the path to improve their collaborative practices (Skinner, 1974).

Professional development in terms of adult learning presents a unique challenge. Adults may be withdrawn and reluctant to engage in meaningful discussions. The question of "how do you build a sense of community?" may be asked. The social cognitive theory states that a person's actions are somewhat formed and controlled by dynamics within a social construct (Dholakia et al., 2004). A person's cognitive development and beliefs are significantly impacted by expectations and information

constructed in a team-based learning environment (Skinner, 1968). Self-efficacy and collective efficacy are added to the relevant literature for this study to understand how the development of a community is facilitated.

Implications for Practice

Within this section, I explore the implication of this study for the development of collaborative teams in reading interventions. Bringing together the teachers and interventionists to solve issues within the intervention system built a team mentality that supported the development of positive attitudes and perceptions about communication to support collaboration. The first implication for practice is that teachers must be given an environment to be open and honest about the quality of communication between the team and how their attitudes and perceptions affect this quality. The second implication is to support teachers in developing an understanding of the need for communication support. The third implication for practice is to support teachers in the evolution of just communicating student data to forming an effective collaborative team to solve students' needs. The fourth and final implication is providing teachers the opportunity to solve the challenges to develop collaborative practices.

Teachers need open and honest communication

During this study, the team reflected on open communication and the attitudes produced through previous negative experiences. The teachers believed that "more" communication would be extra work on the team. The team's attitude affected the overall efficacy of the interactions. Social cognitive theory suggests that the team's current interactions were affected by proceeding events (Bandura, 1997).

Teachers' attitudes regarding communicating with one another must be addressed to facilitate a collaborative community that is perceived as effective. Providing an environment that gives teachers a chance to reflect on their experiences and the potential negativity that those experiences bring to the new environment is essential for the overall success of the collaborative team. Enabling teachers to share and communicate openly and honestly about negative attitudes provides validation and a platform to advocate for those feelings. Without overcoming and growing, teachers who try to form a collaborative environment may not genuinely engage in the work without dealing with those previous experiences. Implications for future practice require facilitators to encourage teachers to share experiences so they are not repeated.

Teachers need to realize the need for communication support

Teachers' perceptions of their current communication practice can be an obstacle for teams trying to develop collaborative practices. Facilitators building a collaborative community need to understand teachers' perceptions about how they communicate. In this study, the team's perception of their communication practices did not accurately represent what was taking place (What we think we do is not actually what we do). In this process of developing a collaborative team, teachers needed to reflect on their current perception of communication. Even though a team may meet on a routine basis and have monthly meetings, the actual content of those meetings may not be reflective of true collaborative practice. Teachers need to reflect and realize this disconnection to provide the best support to their students.

Communication may need support tools to guide their discussions. Application for future practice requires facilitators to study the current environment where teachers

communicate support for students within a reading intervention system. As this team began to understand their level of communication fully, the need for a communication support tool became evident to the participants. This tool helped guide the teacher's conversation in providing relevant data that supports the learning for their students. Having the teachers develop this tool produced an agency over the reading intervention system (Hunt et al., 2002). This agency would have been more challenging to grow if the teachers were handed the tool to use. Allowing teachers first to realize their current level of communication, see the need for a communication support tool, and then develop that tool as a team helped to provide the foundation for these teachers to take ownership of their practice.

Moving past communication to collaboration

As the teachers participated in the session, it became evident that the team's previous communication had not been effective. This progress towards authentic, collaborative practice helped teachers realize that collaboration is more than communication. Talking about an issue is not solving the problem and working together. Collaboration requires a rich depth of exploration into the causality of a given situation (Levine, 2010). Helping the team realize that collaboration required authentic communication was the first step in building this collaborative team. In-depth discussions were required to ensure that students were experiencing aligned instructional practices from all the team members serving them. Collaborative planning can be a challenge for some teams to achieve. Being supportive, excited, and vibrant during the process can be essential to overcoming negative attitudes and false perceptions of current practices. Developing relationships in the work environment promotes change (Senge, 2012). As

the teachers began to communicate, an authentic, collaborative approach began to shape. Teachers' problem-solved based on student needs using the tools that they developed.

As team members moved past surface-level communication to a rich collaborative environment, the excitement for that collaborative team became self-sustaining (Levine, 2010). Facilitators in future practice need to help and guide teachers in developing this rich environment and passion for collaborative practices. Teachers need ownership of the process if they are going to sustain the momentum necessary to perpetuate this type of environment. Facilitators who help guide teachers into this agency over collaborative practice will help maintain the required system for student growth.

Defeating challenges to collaboration

Throughout this study, the team shared that time was one of the biggest challenges to collaborative practices. The team expressed the frustration that resulted from a lack of time to produce conversations of real depth. This lack of depth due to time constraints produced a lack of proper solutions for students who had reading difficulties. For them, it felt as if the meetings were too short to be effective for problem-solving. Frustration and a sense of hopelessness can be overwhelming challenges to collaborative practice (Gourd, 2015).

Rushing through the process of discussing student needs only perpetuates the barriers to helping students who are at risk for reading difficulty. Without proper time to meet the challenges, it may seem pointless for teachers to come together and try to help students meet learning targets. Discussing instructional strategies, student progress, and the data needed to help guide instructional practice requires teachers to be given the time to make sense of all these crucial components. To align the curriculum and the continuity

of instructional practices that students are exposed to, teachers require planning, and facilitators need to give authentic consideration to the time constraints placed on teachers who serve at-risk readers.

There are several implications for future practice from this study. Administrators must allow extra time for teachers who serve students with severe reading difficulties to discuss instructional strategies and curriculum alignment in order to facilitate an efficacy in the collaborative practice. Teachers need to feel effective in collaborative planning (Skinner, 1974). The perceptions of time given to this vital task can make a difference and meet students' needs. Teacher efficacy, the feeling of adequacy, and meeting challenges may enable the growth needed to meet the needs of students (Loera et al., 2013).

Plan of Action

Action research provides the practitioner with a real-world application to improve learning and instruction (Bonner, 2012). An inquiry into current procedures and the reading intervention system provided answers and insight for the team who participated in this study. The data collected helped give vital information to the participants to strengthen their collaborative practices. Data is the instrument to support the collaborative community in action research (Herr & Anderson, 2015).

The foundation of social cognitive theory is the intersection between participants and their environment (Bandura, 1997; Reed, 2012). Developing a professional environment that promotes the impact of social interaction and the content material can be a challenge (Euerby & Burns, 2012; Eun, 2019). Considering situational factors, participants' perceptions and attitudes toward learning can be a game-changer. Providing

a support system for teachers with rich social interactions that develop cognitive functioning and produce a bidirectional exchange can support a thriving learning environment (Eun, 2019; Hars & Ou, 2002). The collaboration tool below supported the team's flow of information.

Collaboration Form

Collaboration Form

Student _____ Grade _____ Dates Served _____

Skill Deficit Area _____ Program/Strategy _____

Interventionist _____ Intervention Time _____

		M	T	W	T	F	# intervention days / # school days	Intervention/Anodal Notes from time with student	
Week	Attendance								
	Classroom Instructional focus								
Week	Attendance							:	
	Classroom Instructional focus								
Week	Attendance							:	
	Classroom Instructional focus								
Week	Attendance								
	Classroom Instructional focus								
Attendance Coding P - Student Present A - Student Absent TA - Teacher Absent S - School Event N - No School		Attendance Total: <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>		Lesson Focus PA: Phonemic Awareness P: Phonics C: Comprehension F: Fluency W: Written Expression					
Progress Monitoring Data 									

Figure 2.1 *Collaboration Form* was created by the teacher in this study during the collaborative sessions.

Teachers and interventionists use the form to share information regarding the student they serve. Allowing for an environment rich with social networking and support that offer participants the perception of a community can provide the necessary self-efficacy components to complete a program. With this foundation, the following action plan was developed.

Table 3.1 *Action Plan*

Date	Activities	Rationale
July 2021	Share research findings at the South Carolina Association of School Administrators.	Schools across the state may benefit from this study's finding to support students with learning loss from the ongoing pandemic.
August 2021	The team will share the experience of this study with other grade-ban teams within the research site.	Develop a schoolwide vision for improving collaboration within the reading intervention system.
September 2021	Meet with individual team grade levels to discuss current practices.	Address specific team needs in improving collaboration.
October 2021	The research site developed a schoolwide team meeting schedule to support collaboration.	Based on the findings of this study, teams need time to build effective collaborative practices.
November-December 2021	Schoolwide teams will develop communications tools.	Based on the findings of this study, individual grade-level teams will have similar but unique needs in terms of data and skills that need to be communicated.
January 2022-May 2022	Allow teams from the research site to share experiences with collaborative teams with schools across the district.	Based on the finding of this study, implement a district initiative to support student learning through improved collaborative practice based on social cognitive theory.
July 2022	Lead a professional development session with the South Carolina Association of School Administrators.	Share an update with state administrators of the progress of the research site teams and the district initiatives to improve practices through collaboration.

In July of 2021, I presented the findings of this study in a professional development session at the statewide South Carolina Association of School Administrators. I shared the information with a group of school administrators to support teacher efficacy and agency over the collaborative team-building process. Several points were covered in the session:

- Reading intervention is a complex process that requires a team of effective educators to work collaboratively to meet the diverse needs of students.
- Giving teachers time to articulate and seek alignment of their expectations for the reading intervention communication will genuinely make it a team effort and a shared vision for the system change. Senge states, "Give people time to think about the vision they would truly want to create for themselves and for the district" (p. 95).
- Taking a step back from the situation allowed for analysis and interpretation of the situation within our schools' system (Senge, 2012, p. 98).
- In order to understand the nature of the collaborative framework in our school, a constant step back is needed to ensure that my interpretation of the actions of those within the system is accurate.
- The need for collaboration is a value that is intrinsic within our school culture. Unfortunately, when it comes to the classroom teacher and interventionist, the value of collaboration takes a lower priority. Finding

time to serve the students overshadows the need to find time for collaboration.

- Overcoming the negative attitudes that exist about collaborative partnerships to change ineffective instructional strategies will be a challenge.
- No students should be hindered from reaching their full potential due to the failure of the educational system.

The feedback received from the leaders at SCASA provided insight into teachers' unique needs to develop truly collaborative partnerships. The negative attitudes and perceptions revolve around communication and collaboration system-wide.

Administrators see glimpses of their teacher teams in the context of the findings of this study. A transferability to any given team was evident in the responses. This study was conducted with a group of teachers focused on reading intervention. However, the conclusions strengthen any team that may need support in the collaborative team-building process.

During the study, self-perpetuating tenacity developed that produced high levels of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). By following the steps above this tenacity may expand throughout the district. Social cognitive theory perpetuates the principle that even if people can complete a task, they must believe they have the skills to complete the job. The social learning environment can promote a teacher's can-do attitude within a professional development program. The support of peers in engaging in social networking systems will encourage the effective exchange of ideas and provide the

mechanism that develops the participants' attitudes and learning (Donato, 1994; Elander, 2012).

Reflection

Conquering the difficulties for successful collaborative practices is vital for continuous dynamic change (Goddard et al., 2007). Fostering an environment that supports collaborative practice helps teachers and students alike as intervention develops. This qualitative action research employed an ethnographic research method. The study collected information on various aspects of collaboration among interventionists and classroom teachers. Ethnographic studies are used when a problem is unclear and entrenched across a system (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Alignment between the research purpose, research design, the research questions, data sources, and participants demonstrates planning and a deep understanding of the interconnected nature of the research framework. One aspect of qualitative data that requires proper alignment between the overall framework is how messy the data analysis can become. Glaser (1999) suggests that the method continually evolves and must remain flexible to accommodate more current research interests. Quantitative data is usually collected, and then a theme or analysis is brought out of the data.

As expected, the teachers in this study were open and honest about the current practices within their team. The team worked willingly and was highly engaged throughout the process. Action research met the needs of this study by having actionable steps to further the development of the team of teachers. Ethnographic methods help identify the problems within the community of teachers as the team shared in their journals and the meeting dialogues.

Unexpectedly, teachers' attitudes and perceptions became the evident commonality in this study. The ethnographic method was instrumental in bringing the attitudes to the front of our discussions. The qualitative data collection proved effective for perpetuating the discussions and was unexpectedly easy to collect from the participants. The team wanted to have a voice heard in this study. The study would have been more effective if the time constraints due to Covid were not in place. Social distances limited the team meeting, affecting the proximity needed to share openly in a group.

Limitations of the Study

The strength of this study was the qualitative data collected to study the community of teachers. However, the collected qualitative data did not measure the impact of the study and the changes to collaborative practices on actual student achievement. Social environments need to develop rich learning conditions that can support learning. This study was limited in interacting with conditions to support complex social interactive environments (Euerby & Burns, 2012). The study was limited by a lack of tools supporting active engagement and the time required to build connections between participants to communicate the causes for failures within the community.

Future Research

In this current social distancing environment and the ongoing need for quality professional development, self-paced modules have become popular in many school districts and other professional settings (Eun, 2019; Azeem & Khalid, 2012). This new trend of supporting professionals in a sometimes-isolated venue may feed a lack of

community and collaboration (Meadows, 2016; Watkins, 1997). Developing a sense of cooperation and community in a virtual environment poses problems. Considering this study, future research is needed to discover how developing social relationships within the framework of self-paced learning can be supported. Forming friendships and a sense of belonging in this new virtual environment is a challenge (Azeem & Khalid, 2012; Eun, 2019).

Given our understanding of learning theories and their impact on achievement and success, it has become essential to design and implement instructional methods that support all modalities and backgrounds regardless of the instructional environment. We often overlook the continuity of our professional development programs (Newton, 2011). Further study in professional development and the impacts of self-efficacy of those involved in the programs is needed. It impacts their achievement due to the lack of support in a self-paced environment within the social cognitive theory. Embedding a support system in the context of a structural module that encourages social interaction may determine success (Azeem & Khalid, 2012; Eun, 2019). Future research must incorporate the virtual component in supporting teachers in collaborative practices.

To facilitate this research, we must look into how a support system for social interaction can be developed using communication tools. Providing adequate time for teachers to use those tools in a way that provides support and understanding will be necessary. Future research will focus on investigating professional development in terms of shortened online experiences for participants. Sessions that require only fifteen minutes of active attention may produce better results than a thirty-minute session of active engagement. The research may reveal how providing adequate refocusing time

during collaborative sessions impacts the collaborative process.

Summary

Throughout this study, teachers embarked in pursuit of collective efficacy and community building. Using discussion that supported social interaction and the transference of ideas and strategies helped promote learning and self-efficacy with collaborative practices (Azeem & Khalid, 2012; Bandura, 2001)—allowing teachers to engage in dialogue that supported each other and individual goals.

To implement the findings of this study includes the continued support of teacher teams for collaborative practice. Schools must foster a school-wide support system for teachers to develop solid collaborative teams through an awareness of attitudes and perceptions regarding communication and collaboration and refine support tools through a team effort promoting efficacy and agency over the system.

The research site has incorporated the findings and conclusions of this study, allowing teachers to collaboratively construct collaboration tools to align instructional practices. Teams meet weekly to discuss student data collected on these communication tools and plan instructional methods aligned to support student learning. Teachers work together to problem-solve for students with reading difficulties.

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APPENDIX A
LETTER OF INVITATION

Dear _____,

My name is Russell Clark. I am a doctoral candidate in the Education Department at the University of South Carolina. I am conducting a research study as part of the requirements of my degree in Curriculum and Instruction, and I would like to invite you to participate.

I am studying collaboration in reading intervention. If you decide to participate, you will complete an open-ended survey regarding your perceptions about the process used to develop the reading interventions. The study will consist of three thirty-minute meetings per week for nine weeks for a total of twenty-seven collaborative planning sessions. I will make an audio recording of each session. You will keep a teacher journal to be completed at the end of each session. Classroom observations will be conducted weekly and used to measure the observable effectiveness of collaborative sessions in supportive cohesive instructional practices for struggling readers. The participants of the study will collaborate to develop a tool to facilitate communication of reading strategies.

Participation is confidential. Information obtained about you during this research study will remain confidential and released only with your written permission. Data collected will be stored securely, and identifiable information will be removed from

documentation before publication. Results of this research study may be published; however, it will not include your name or other identifying information about you.

Others in the group will hear what you say, and it is possible that they could tell someone else. Because we will be talking in a group, we cannot promise that what you say will remain completely private, but we will ask that you and all other group members respect the privacy of everyone in the group.

We will be happy to answer any questions you have about the study. You may contact me at rclark@asd2.org 864- 617-2261 or my faculty advisor, Suha Tamin, TAMIMS@mailbox.sc.edu.

Thank you for your consideration.

If you agree to participate, please send a response to rclark@asd2.org.

With kind regards,

Russell Clark

rclark@asd2.org

864-617-2261

APPENDIX B

PRE-SURVEY QUESTIONS.

Date of Survey:

Time started:

Time completed:

Location:

1. How effective do you perceive the collaboration between you (the classroom teacher) and the reading interventionist?

2. How often do you know what your student is learning during the pull-out reading intervention time?

3. Do you see your students using skills learned during reading intervention?

4. Do you feel you should know more about what your students do during the reading intervention?

APPENDIX C

Collaboration Form

Student _____ Grade _____ Dates Served _____

Skill Deficit Area _____ Program/Strategy _____

Interventionist _____ Intervention Time _____

		M	T	W	T	F	# intervention days / # school days		Intervention/Anodal Notes from time with student
Week	Attendance								
	Classroom Instructional focus								
Week	Attendance								:
	Classroom Instructional focus								
Week	Attendance								:
	Classroom Instructional focus								
Week	Attendance								
	Classroom Instructional focus								
<u>Attendance Coding</u> P- Student Present A - Student Absent TA - Teacher Absent S - School Event N- No School		Attendance Total: <input style="width: 40px; height: 20px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>						<u>Lesson Focus</u> PA: Phonemic Awareness P: Phonics C: Comprehension F: Fluency W: Written Expression	

Progress Monitoring Data