The perception of teacher pathways on professional learning

by

Lori Mae Alexandra Marie Amaro

B.S., Fort Hays State University, 2011
M.S., Fort Hays State University, 2015

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Department of Curriculum and Instruction
College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

2021

Abstract

This paper explored the similarities and differences between teacher education pathways and perceptions that professional learning had on their teaching practices and teaching self-efficacy. Figuring out how to promote continual learning is critical no matter which pathway a teacher took to get their certification. Many barriers emerged when thinking about and discussing this topic, such as the experiences gained through teacher preparation programs; professional learning formats, content, and quality; district resource allowance; student learning needs; and application of professional learning. All of these elements can influence teachers' perceptions surrounding professional learning. As educators experience learning opportunities, successful implementation is necessary to see changes in instructional practices, student outcomes, and teacher beliefs and attitudes. The purpose of this study was to explore how elementary ELA teachers in a large Midwestern school district, coming from various pathways into education, perceived professional learning on their classroom practices and teaching self-efficacy. This case study took a qualitative approach by utilizing quantitative data to describe educators' perceptions. Throughout the study, methods including, surveys, philosophy statements, interviews, classroom observations, field notes, and participant journals, collected data, which assisted in understanding teacher perceptions. Coded and analyzed data formed categories that organized perceptions by professional learning perceptions on teaching practices, professional learning perceptions on teaching self-efficacy, and professional learning perceptions on teaching self-efficacy for those serving students of various populations. Sub-categories broke down the broad categories into definitions/understandings of professional learning and teaching self-efficacy, positive perceptions, and negative perceptions. Other data collected provided connections between perceptions and practices. Participants in this study came from pathways,

such as traditional, long-term substitute, accelerated, and other. The results showed that educators need continued support through specialized professional learning, as participants described gaps in their learning that need addressed. Limited professional learning with ReadyGen created a learning gap for teachers. All participants perceived a lack of preparation in working with students of various populations. The conclusion showed that participants, other than the accelerated pathway participant, did not contribute the influence of professional learning to their teaching practices. The conclusion of this study described the need for more specialized learning, especially as new teachers enter the profession, to ensure they are prepared to work in with the diverse students they encounter. In conclusion, recommendations included to continuation of professional learning in smaller settings and an examination of many professional learning aspects within the district.

Keywords: Professional development, professional learning, teacher pathways, alternative pathways, alternative certification, teaching self-efficacy

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Acknowledgements

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Dedication

This body of work is dedicated to the strongest person I know. He survived growing up in adversity and raising two daughters on his own. Despite life's challenges, his light continues to shine brightly by helping others in times of need. It was his unwavering love, grace, strength, and wisdom that I have endured through the past three years to reach this goal. He taught me to be kind and humble, to live with integrity and to always stand up for what I believe in. This is for you my dear Father, Patrick Amaro; I hope I have made you proud.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Professional learning is a component of education that continuously adjusts in order to meet the needs of both educators and students. Professional learning that educators experience are intended to help them become effective teachers that can impact student achievement and outcomes. First, an educator participates in pre-service training, either through a program available at the university level or an alternative pathway. Once some teachers have completed their pre-service training, they are off to experience life as a novice teacher. Other teachers, taking alternative pathways, sometimes begin their novice teacher experience as they are working through their pre-service pathway. After some years have passed and they have survived the leaky bucket phenomenon of teacher turnover, educators begin to experience teaching as a veteran instructor.

Teachers receive support to keep them up-to-date on the necessary topics and practices that will help them succeed when teaching diverse groups of students. Teachers experience opportunities that allow them to engage in and apply professional learning in the classroom. Many educators spend hours-upon-hours in professional learning settings annually, but who has taught them to engage in their own learning in order to transfer the newly taught topic or strategy into their classrooms?

Overview of the Issues in this Study

Professional Learning

Literature describing frameworks for professional learning provide key components that contribute to connecting motivation and the learning that teachers experience across their life

phases (Durksen, Klassen, & Daniels, 2017). Professional learning begins in teacher preparation programs or pathways. Several studies (Bain & Moje, 2012; Dennis, 2016; Guha, Hyler, & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Jacobs, 2013; Larson & Vontz, 2018; Shuls & Ritter, 2013; Sterling & Frazier 2011; Wilson, 2011) highlighted a range of teacher pathways into the classroom, which included: traditional, online-traditional, hybrid-traditional, transition into teaching, para pathways, accelerated pathways, and long-term substitute teaching. The literature considering the relationship between teaching pathways and professional learning is sparse.

However, Guskey originally created a framework years ago (1986) that illustrated how professional learning can guide classroom practices, regardless of their pathway, which in turn affects student outcomes, and changes teachers' beliefs and attitudes. Guskey's updated (2002) framework, seen in Figure 1.1, modeled the idea that professional learning could lead to change in teachers' classroom practices, which in turn, result in change in student learning outcomes. The culmination of the professional, changed classroom practices, and changed student outcomes can lead to sustainable change in teachers' beliefs and attitudes. While there has been much focus on professional development over the past 20 years, there is little consideration of the different pathways leading up to professional development.

Figure 1.1

Guskey's Model of Teacher Change
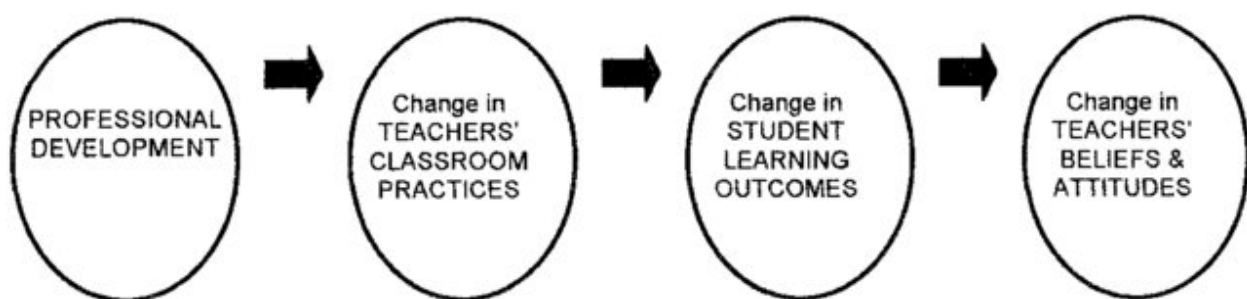
The term *professional development* has shifted to professional learning over the years as learner needs and types of learning situations have developed. Easton (2008) explained the importance of transitioning from the idea of professional development to professional learning. In this context, teachers saw themselves more as continuous learners. Comparably, the National Research Council (2010) addressed teacher preparation instruction and candidate experiences and concluded that an "improved understanding of the relationships between characteristics of teachers' preparation and students' learning and a comprehensive, coherent system for collecting data about teacher preparation" are critically needed (p. 178). Yet, some of the most valuable data on teachers comes from their classroom, after they have completed preparation, and when they are applying what they have learned (Guha, Hyler, & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

Pre-service Pathways into Teaching

Varieties of teacher pathways have emerged in response to teacher shortages across the country (Larson & Vontz, 2018). The need to merge research on teacher education pathways and how educators in each of these pathways perceive professional learning continues to exist as the teacher shortage crisis continues to grow (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). School districts persistently fill classrooms with underprepared personnel just to get by as "trends in teacher education indicate a teacher shortage for the foreseeable future" (Larson & Vontz, 2018, p. 5). The Office of Postsecondary Education (2016) described how traditional, face-to-face, pathways "will likely continue to decline, while alternative routes to teacher preparation will likely continue to increase" (as cited in Larson & Vontz, 2018, p.5).

Although traditional pathways are still the primary way in which teachers are trained, universities have begun to provide more convenient pre-service preparation pathways than in the

past. Even with the availability of more convenient formats of preparation, certain aspects of programs are key no matter which pathway a pre-service educator takes into the profession. Jacobs (2013, p.20) argued the importance of learning theories in professional learning experiences, such as Vygotsky's zones of proximal development and Piaget's genetic epistemology, to prepare future teachers, especially when teacher candidates get the opportunity to observe quality teaching. The most compelling literature regarding teacher preparation are the works of Dennis (2016) and Guha, Hyler, and Darling-Hammond (2017) that highlighted influential relationships established between school districts and local universities to select and adequately prepare teachers for diverse classroom settings and practices through clinical-type experiences.

Many studies presented claims around the various formats of professional learning and their effectiveness (e.g., Easton, 2008; Guskey & Yoon, 2009), while others have attempted to outline necessary components of efficient professional learning (Berry, Airhart, & Byrd, 2016; Foster, 2019; Kintz et al., 2015; Vermunt et al., 2019). Throughout some of these professional learning studies that focused on effective formats, it was noted that peer-based learning is a powerful and practical way to expand knowledge, build teaching self-efficacy, and put learning into use while conveniently remaining within one's own building (Foster, 2019). Even with the developments made in education from these studies, the lack of connection in the literature between teacher education pathways and professional learning engagement and application still exists.

Unlicensed Teachers

Attracting teachers to positions in Southwest Kansas continues to pose a challenge to the Ad Astra Public Schools, which is the context of this study. With limited shopping, eating, and entertainment choices, not only is the location seen as a negative attribute for those searching for employment in Ad Astra Public Schools, but the additional training one needs in order to succeed in the district can be overwhelming. With these issues, the district continues to assign unlicensed teachers to fill open positions, as they are limited in the new teachers they recruit to the area.

When school districts place unlicensed educators in classrooms, they take many risks, including the possibility of negative effects on student achievement. Each year, Ad Astra Public Schools fills nearly half of the open certified teaching positions with long-term substitutes. Although these substitutes hold a certificate in emergency substitute teaching, they lack the formal training of pre-service preparation. These long-term substitutes can easily move from position to position annually, while never completing a teaching degree. Others continue forward and become certified educators, either by obtaining their bachelor's degree in education or their master's degree, as they may already hold a bachelor's in a different area.

Without a doubt, the need for access to certified teachers continues to grow as more teachers move from the area into cities and towns that have more resources and provide more opportunities for their families. In addition, being a teacher in Kansas continues to pose increasing challenges as student needs continue to diversify. It is imperative that districts provide educators more specialized training that emphasizes student needs as a whole (ASCD, 2020).

Low-Performing Schools

As of the 2020-2021 academic year, the State of Kansas identified four elementary schools within Ad Astra Public Schools as being within the lowest performing 10 schools in the state. These schools did not participate in the type of process other schools did previously in regards to, identifying the root cause of why their schools are performed so low. The building leadership teams (BLTs) took lead during most of this process, beginning in the summer of 2020, while keeping the rest of the school informed. Administrators checked in with these schools monthly to monitor for the need of additional support, and if needed, they provided additional support to individual buildings.

During this process, it was critical that teachers thought deeply about aspects of their classroom that affected student achievement, such as classroom instruction. A unifying factor between these four buildings was the large number of economically disadvantaged students that performed below standard. This factor was easy for BLTs to use as an excuse, but they had to dig deeper to determine why these students were not responding to instruction. It was critical that BLTs recognized different needs for students, such as a greater amount of motivation and the use of different learning styles. Even though the state identified these particular buildings due to the scores of specific groups of students, it did not mean that instruction should only change for them; instead, this was an opportunity to make a change for the good of all students.

Unique Situation to the District

ELA Adoption

Ad Astra Public Schools underwent some unique situations that contributed to aspects of a shared phenomenon by English Language Arts (ELA) instructors. With a recent ELA

curriculum adoption, ELA teachers in the district began participating in stages of professional

learning to prepare them in using materials purchased from Savvas, formerly known as Pearson.

At the elementary level, teachers began using the program called ReadyGen while secondary

teachers began using the program called MyPerspectives from the same company. The process of

identifying, vetting, and selecting materials took place from January 2019 to January 2020.

Stakeholders from many different walks of education were actively present during the entire

process.

Following the purchase of the materials, teachers received phase one training via Zoom

on April 9, 2020, which focused on navigation of the program. Teachers independently

continued their training throughout the summer by watching self-guided tutorials provided by

Savvas and specific to their program. Along with self-guided professional learning, teachers

accessed their teaching manuals and all online materials over the summer months.

When teachers returned to classrooms in August 2020, they participate in the last phase

of training virtually by a Savvas representative during a full-day professional learning session,

specific to their grade levels. Teachers completed the training days before the start of school and

sent off to try out their new product with students. Instructional coaches, who received the same

training, supported ELA teachers at all levels to ensure teacher understanding and fidelity with

the program. Early on, teachers mentioned the desire to see lessons modeled at different grade

levels and the need for continual professional learning. The district did not provide any further

professional learning to teachers to help enhance their understanding of the programs.

Additional professional learning for the ELA materials was available to administrators

and instructional coaches following the start of the 2020-2021 school year. During one session, a

Savvas representative met with available administrators and instructional coaches to identify the five major components of a lesson that teachers should be providing to students during tier one instruction. These included: (a) foundational skills mini lesson, (b) building background knowledge, (c) close reading, (d) vocabulary/reading analysis, and (e) writing. Building-level administrators passed information down to their staff with the support and guidance of instructional coaches following this session. Teachers requested to see a lesson modeled with the incorporation of the five components early on and, as a result, a second learning session took place just a few weeks later. Many administrators along with most instructional coaches participated in a model lesson presented by two Savvas representatives. A SWIVL recorded the model lesson and administrators sent the video to teachers of all levels, to help them understand what a lesson should look like depending on the grade they teach. These two additional training sessions were the last that took place during the 2020-2021 school year. As questions arose, the Savvas contact point person for the district and the deputy superintendent of curriculum and instruction stayed in contact with representatives so they could communicate questions and resolutions to the necessary staff.

Prior to the ELA adoption, ELA materials at the elementary level for tier one instruction included Being a Writer, Making Meaning, Making Meaning Vocabulary, and Animated Alphabet for kindergarten through second grade. In addition, the district had not implemented a multi-tier system of supports (MTSS) framework until the 2019-2020 school year. Teachers provided tiered support during Guided Reading centers using any resources that they desired. Some buildings had years of experience with a school-wide intervention system, while others only started during the 2019-2020 school year. Teachers used their resources flexibly prior to the

establishment of the district tiered protocol and utilized the previous three-hour-ELA-block-schedule as a guide.

Teachers faced many challenges as they moved from multiple products with lots of flexibility to one product with an MTSS framework and tiered protocol in place that accounted for every minute in the day. Administrators decided that removing all previously used materials from all buildings through an ELA disposal would help teachers make the transition, but in reality, teachers kept and hid some of the products they enjoyed, especially knowing that the old products could make a comeback someday.

Overall, teachers struggled with the new product due to a lack of professional learning for their targeted needs. With the word "fidelity" being thrown around so often by administrators, teachers feared making any changes or adjustments to ReadyGen that would benefit their students while still following the program's components.

Better Readers Grant

Prior to the 2018-2019 school year, Ad Astra Public Schools learned of their status as a grantee for the Better Readers grant, which awarded the district three million dollars over a span of three years. What this meant for Ad Astra was more professional learning opportunities and a focus on family and community engagement. Each year, a new cohort of teachers started their journey in learning to serve students by bettering their understanding of cultural and language, reading, and writing.

Cohort one began their journey during the 2018-2019 school year and consisted of a few preschool teachers, all third-through-fifth-grade ELA teachers, all secondary ELA teachers,

along with special education teachers that served students in those particular grade levels. Cohort two began their journey during the 2019-2020 school year and consisted of six categories of educators: (a) the additional preschool teachers, (b) all kindergarten through second grade teachers, (c) teachers at the alternative elementary building, (d) secondary teachers who teach other content areas, (e) any new teachers that should have been in cohort one, and (f) special education teachers that serve students in those particular grade levels. Cohort three began their journey during the 2020-2021 school year and consisted of all specials teachers (i.e., P.E., music, counselors, librarians, and elective teachers), gifted teachers, and any special education teachers that were not in the other cohorts.

During year one for each cohort, teachers experienced learning opportunities on explicit vocabulary instruction and culturally relevant teaching. Year two focused on reading instruction and additional culturally relevant teaching experiences; while year three, targeted writing instruction and another round of culturally responsive teaching. The goal set forth by the district was that, with the completion of this grant, teachers would sustain their work for years to come.

Prior to the Better Readers grant, instructional coaching looked very different within the district, with little opportunity for coaching cycles. The district assigned instructional coaches to grade levels and most interaction took place at grade level meetings at the district office. These meetings took place a few times throughout the school year. Instructional coaches served assigned buildings and typically presented only for PLCs. At the start of the Better Readers grant, instructional coaches and their administrator established a clear job description that allowed instructional coaches to have a greater focus on their assigned building than before.

With the start of the grant, most professional learning was followed-up with a coaching cycle to ensure understanding of practice in order to transform the knowledge into action that would directly impact students. Teachers began participating in coaching cycles that focused on vocabulary and reading instruction. Video recording of teaching using a SWIVL was now the norm and allowed teachers to reflect on how students responded to instruction and gave teachers the opportunity to self-reflect. The accountability of a coaching cycle helped ensure that the professional learning continued to grow into classroom practice.

The opportunity and funding that came with the Better Readers grant allowed the district to hire outside consultants to come in and present on certain topics and to provide the professional learning development team with additional input. Consultants from Southwestern Plains Regional Service Center and Language and Literacy Consulting, Inc., provided most of the professional learning or plans that instructional coaches would follow to facilitate learning opportunities. Laurie Winter and Geri Lovelace of Language and Literacy Consulting, Inc. assisted Kelley Clark, Better Readers grant project manager/Ad Astra professional learning coordinator, in the creation of rubrics specific to topics presented through the grant, such as (a) culturally responsive teaching, (b) explicit vocabulary instruction, (c) phonemic awareness instruction, (d) phonics (word recognition) instruction, (e) fluency instruction, and (f) comprehension instruction. These rubrics served to guide instructional coaching cycles and assist in walkthrough observations conducted by the Better Readers grant project manager/district professional development coordinator, the district academic intervention coordinator, and the Better Readers grant instructional coach to gauge the use of practices introduced by the grant and the level of quality of the practices.

Another opportunity the grant presented was for educators at different levels to attend out-of-the-district conferences, even in other states. The Better Readers grant, in its final year, provided the opportunity for select educators within the district to train on the LETRS program by funding to train in-house personnel as facilitators, materials necessary for the training of facilitators and participants, and for substitute teachers that took positions while selected teachers attended in-district trainings.

Paraprofessionals also participated in paid professional learning during the summer of 2019 over topics, such as (a) cultural proficiency, (b) social emotional learning/self-efficacy, (c) supportive reading strategies, and (d) positive behavior management. If they participated in all sessions, they received a bonus, which encouraged a greater amount of participation than anticipated.

Further opportunities emerged for students and families in the community, including summer field trips, pop-up learning sessions, and book giveaways. Many of the family and community resources opened themselves to families with children ages birth-to-five-years-old. Also, with remote live learners (RLL) having limited access to books during the 2020-2021 school year, the Better Readers grant gifted all elementary RLL students with books of their choice when they attended the FastBridge winter screening window at the district office in December 2020.

As mentioned before, the grant allowed the district to purchase SWIVLs that instructional coaches used during coaching cycles and to record professional learning sessions. Each coach had two SWIVL set-ups with iPads to video planning sessions, model and observation lessons, and reflections. Instructional coaches also invited teachers to use SWIVLs, outside of coaching

cycles, for their own reflection purposes. With the purchase of Pro SWIVL accounts, teachers, instructional coaches, and administrators could view and share videos with ease.

The Better Readers grant was a three-year opportunity that the district experienced that allowed educators to expand their literacy knowledge. With the district's concern surrounding the sustainment of the grant work, the accountability that came along with sustaining practice was nonexistent until February 2021. Better Readers grant employees began walkthrough observations to gather data that would determine if educators made their learning part of their everyday.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore how elementary ELA teachers in a large Midwestern school district, coming from various pathways into education, engaged in professional learning, how they applied professional learning into their instructional practices, and how the professional learning experience contributed to their teaching self-efficacy.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study focused on how participants perceive professional learning on their teaching practices and teaching self-efficacy. Each research question was broken down as follows:

Research Question 1. How do elementary ELA teachers from different pathways to the profession perceive professional learning on their teaching practices?

Research Question 2. How do elementary ELA teachers from different pathways to the profession perceive professional learning on their teaching self-efficacy?

Research Question 2a. How do elementary ELA teachers from different pathways to the profession who serve students from various populations perceive professional learning on their teaching self-efficacy?

Overview of the Methods

The study was a single case study design with seven participants who experienced a range of pre-service preparation pathways, and teach in Ad Astra Public Schools with diverse student populations where the minority were the majority. This case study describes the perceptions of the seven educators as they participated in the Better Readers grant and the ELA adoption and usage of ReadyGen. Data collection took place three times throughout the first semester in the 2020-2021 school year using a variety of methods.

The methods used to collect data that assisted in answering the research questions in this study included: (a) surveys, (b) philosophy statements, (c) semi-structured interviews, (d) participant journals, (e) field notes, and (f) observations.

Participant selection took place through two different surveys: one survey to identify potential participants and their perceptions of professional learning and teaching self-efficacy and one survey to gauge the desire and availability of participants. Data collection through interviews, participant journals, field notes, and observations began in August 2020. All of the data collection involving the participants took place in the comfort of their own classrooms.

Each data collection period scheduled allowed participants to experience different aspects of the school year, such as administration of the universal screeners, parent-teacher conferences, usage of ReadyGen, and professional learning opportunities. The last data collection period took

place prior to the last day of the first semester. After the return of staff and students from winter break in January 2021, participants had the opportunity to sift through data in order to confirm, add, or clarify data specific to their experiences.

The analysis of data from this study followed each data collection session in order to guide the next set of interviews. Transcription and coding of interviews along with analysis of journal entries, field notes, and observations assisted in the identification of categories. Next, data and categories organized by the research questions became a narrative that described participant perceptions and experiences taking place during the first semester of the 2020-2021 school year.

Laying the Groundwork for this Study: A Previous Study

During the spring of 2020, I conducted research in the form of a duoethnography study for a qualitative research class. The instructor paired students and required the pairs to experience the steps of a duoethnography research study, which included interviewing, data collecting, data analyzing, and reporting the findings.

After an initial introduction meeting where partners shared about their subjectivities, two additional interviews took place using semi-structured interview questions. Interview questions for the session following the sharing of subjectivities included the following questions: (a) What does the term professional development mean to you?; (b) tell me about a time when you experienced a positive professional development session (meaning you enjoyed it and took something from it)?; (c) tell me about a time when you experienced a negative professional development session?; and (d) can you describe a typical day in your life as an instructional coach?. These questions focused on professional learning and current job duties.

The final interview session included questions regarding pre-service preparation and teaching-self efficacy. This interview session included the following semi-structured interview questions: (a) Describe your pre-service pathway that prepared you as a new teacher?; (b) can you describe the support you had as a new teacher?; (c) can you describe your pre-service training or learning experiences for content area pedagogy?; (d) tell me more about the first time you were approached about furthering your learning and education after becoming a teacher? (Followed up with: Was this ever an idea that was discussed during your pre-service training?); (e) can you give me an example of how your administrator positively or negatively contributes to your self-efficacy?; (f) can you describe the atmosphere and space that you believe teachers best learn in?; and (g) can you describe how you believe teachers learn best? Many questions included in this final interview stemmed from previous interview questions.

A majority of the semi-structured interview questions from this study served as survey questions for the case study. Prior to the creation of the survey for the case study, question review and adjustments took place in order to ensure the most accurate feedback and to move the questions into a Likert-scale format. Each interview in the duoethnographic study took place at a minimum of thirty minutes per person and video recorded for transcription purposes. Following each session, partners worked individually to watch videos and transcribe each session. Once all three interviews were completed, partners read transcriptions multiple times in order to code the data. Following the coding of the data, the identification of categories took place using the codes. Categories identified in the study included (a) privilege and opportunity differences, (b) paths to being effective educators, and (c) a love for professional learning and coaching: differing pathways to a shared passion in contrasting communities. Next, identified codes and categories

transformed into a visual concept map, presented in Figure 1.2, that assisted in a narrative

writing of the findings.

Figure 1.2

Previous Study Categories and Codes
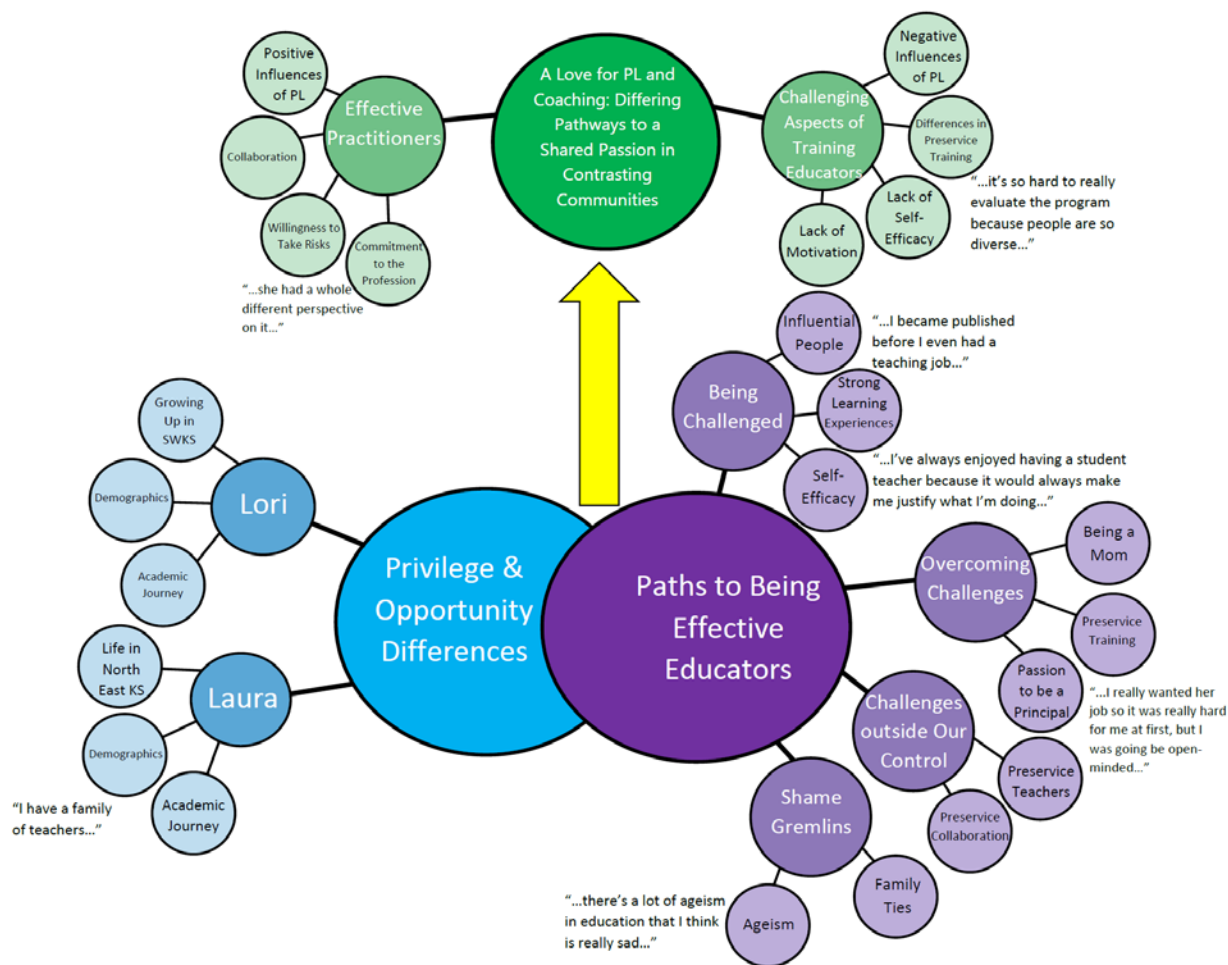
Throughout the writing process, the duoethnography project required the intertwining of

personal opinions and experiences into the data collected on the assigned partner. Coincidentally,

the partnering configuration within my project showed similarities in our pathways into

education and our experiences as educators. However, we had very different experiences

growing up. Captioned in the project were the differences in the experiences between my partner

and myself regarding privilege and opportunity.

Although, the methodology of the duoethnographic study differed from this case study, it served as a foundation for forming semi-structured interview questions, collecting interview data, analyzing qualitative data, and reporting on findings. A full understanding of this process assisted in each round of data collection in the case study. In addition, the duoethnographic study also provided different ideas in regards to displaying findings.

From the duoethnographic study, two significant findings emerged that guided ideas within this case study. First, from the duoethnography, it was apparent that teacher motivation and willingness to learn new ideas and topics drove continuous learning. Second, instructional coaching and the use of instructional coaches in schools provided critical in-house professional learning that motivated teachers and increased their comfortability to participate in professional learning.

The duoethnographic study served as a way to test out many different aspects of the methods that this case study utilized. The duoethnography allowed the making of adjustments prior to interviewing or collecting data on a larger number of participants. The duoethnographic study along with the guidance of Bhattacharya (2017) provided me with the necessary tools needed to conduct interviews with individual participants, analyze data from those interviews, report the categories and findings identified during coding, and make any suggestions necessary for future research.

Limitations

Like most qualitative studies, the results of this research provided rich, thick descriptions of individual perceptions that cannot be generalized to other contexts, which limits this study. With only one-to-three participants representing each pre-service education pathway, the

perceptions yielded from this study do not represent each pre-service education pathway as a whole. Another limitation with participants in this study was that they represented elementary ELA teachers only. The study took place as participants experienced the final year of the Better Readers grant and the first year of the ELA adoption and usage of ReadyGen. This also represents a unique situation that would be difficult to generalize results to other contexts.

Additional limitations within this study included unique community configurations and demographics. The community in which the study took place has the following characteristics: (a) the minority are the majority, (b) high numbers of residents living in poverty, (c) a minimum of twenty-two home languages causing many barriers, and (d) trauma that many students and families face. The combination of these demographics are found only in a few other areas of the state and region.

Significance of the Study

As the U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics (2019) reported, nearly five million students within the public education system are English Language Learners (ELLs). Therefore, there is a need for educators to recognize the difference in their students when compared to years past. In addition, the U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics (2019) recognized that 10 percent of students in Kansas were ELLs. With this amount of students learning English as their second language, teachers must prepare to teach and serve students differently than before.

When breaking down the numbers within the State of Kansas, some areas of the state, such as Western Kansas, have a larger number of ELL students when compared to other parts of the state, such as Central Kansas. Ad Astra Public Schools had 49.16% of their student

population listed as ELL students according to the district report card accessible through the Kansas State Department of Education. Other larger schools in Western Kansas, such as in Liberal and Garden City, can be closely compared in terms of the number of ELL students. Liberal had 51.51% of students listed as ELLs, while Garden City had 37.41% of students listed as ELLs. Heading east, Wichita Public Schools reported 19.55% of their students as ELLs, while Topeka reported 11.99% of their students as ELLs. As you reach Kansas City, Kansas, the number of ELLs increased, as the number reported for the school district was 36.55%.

With ELLs at ten percent across the state, schools serving large numbers of ELL students need to ensure that they employ educators that are well equipped and willing to continue to learn in order to address ever-changing student needs. Ad Astra Public Schools are not alone in this journey and other towns in the state are working to address similar concerns and issues within their districts.

Three cities in Western Kansas have common characteristics that are unique to the area. As they progress in serving their students from various populations, they could offer each other helpful advice and significant findings. First, all three communities have packing plants that employ large numbers of minorities, many of Hispanic descent. These packing plants support these communities and continue to bring more minorities to the area. Second, the three communities categorize as urban, when compared to other towns in the area. Many people move to the area to gain access to many goods and services that are not available in some of the smaller towns, which includes labor. Third, with these three cities reflecting urban characteristics, they have high numbers of residents living in poverty.

With 79.88% of students in Ad Astra Public Schools recognized as economically disadvantaged, when compared to the state number of 47.12%, teachers need to understand what experiences students have in terms of trauma and poverty. Knowing that students struggle to learn and engage in their schooling due to home issues means that teachers need to be trained in how to respond to these types of situations and continue to receive support in interacting with and teaching at-risk students.

As the field of education continues to adapt to serve students of various populations, including ELL students, inserting opportunities for pre-service educators to learn about serving these students is key. The pre-service pathways for teachers prepares them to work with at-risk students by providing learning opportunities based on pedagogy and "specialized knowledge" that "includes the teacher understanding the language experiences of the English Language Learner" (Wissink & Starks, 2019, p. 350). Yet, much learning takes place in the unique circumstance so their first classrooms.

Along with that statement, Wissink and Starks (2019) affirm what deJong et al. (2013) set forth by saying, "it cannot be assumed that the elementary-aged ELL student is fully proficient in their native language, as fluent oral communication in the native or first language (L1) does not ensure that the ELL student is proficient in reading and writing"(p. 350). Many students in the three mentioned communities speak a dialect from Guatemala, known as K'iche, which is only in the form of oral communication. Due to the lack of resources within the community for the dialect itself, many K'iche speakers become trilingual as they add English and Spanish to their forms of communication.

Wissink and Starks (2019) concluded their study with a list of recommendations suggested to teacher preparation programs that would benefit educators teaching ELLs if the programs have not yet made this transition. First, the need for "more specific coursework on how to teach ELLs" that should be the responsibility of "teacher education preparation programs in order to produce teachers who are better for the reality of teaching in today's classrooms" (Wissink & Starks, 2019, p. 356). Second, the need for a stronger focus on teaching emergent students, which would in turn "support their work with ELL students" (Wissink & Starks, 2019, p. 356). Third, placements for student teachers "should include more time teaching reading and working with ELL students in an inclusive classroom setting" (Wissink & Starks, 2019, p. 356). The fourth recommendation was for educators to learn another language in order to "support their teaching of ELL students" and to assist in their "understanding of the complexity of language learning" which can result in the "development of empathy for ELL students" (Wissink & Starks, 2019, p. 356). These recommendation all have significance for the realities of schooling in the Ad Astra Public Schools.

As universities continue to prepare educators to enter into a field that continues to change, school districts must take the responsibility of providing further knowledge and experiences that educators need to be successful in their districts and with the various populations of students that they encounter. Educators must also take responsibility to continue to expand their knowledge and learning experiences that will help them address many student needs. These needs are constantly changing and continue to pose new challenges that many educators lack training. These concerns support the need for understanding teachers' perceptions of professional learning as played out in instructional practices and within their teaching self-efficacy.

Researcher Positionality

A subjectivity statement provides transparency regarding the researcher's positionality (Bhattacharya, 2017; Peshkin, 1988). A positionality statement assures that the researcher presents information in a truthful and biased-free manner that supported the validity of the study and obliged the research to persist in epoché. As a researcher engaged in a case study involving educators, I have many lived experiences that have shaped my perceptions of professional learning, teacher education pathways into the profession, teaching practices, and teaching self-efficacy, which must be bracketed in order to understand the study from a fresh view. I am a Hispanic, middle-class female who has lived in the county, where data collected took place, for my entire life. Additionally, I hold employment by the school district as an instructional coach and a provider of professional learning at all levels along with supporting new teachers entering the district.

Definitions of Terms

Within my study, I must define important words throughout the study in order to help the reader gauge meanings accurately.

Apply: to put to use, specifically in one's own classroom practices.

Teaching Self-Efficacy: the level of confidence teachers have in the ability to guide students to success. Self-efficacy, defined by Bandura (1986), as "People's judgements of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances."

Engagement: a teacher's active participation in the learning opportunity at hand, whether it be during a district in-service, professional learning communities, instructional coaching, or mentoring.

Perception: the way that you notice or understand something using one of your senses.

Professional learning: formally referred to as professional development, opportunities that teachers can engage in to stimulate their thinking and enhance their professional knowledge to ensure that their practice is current (The General Teaching Council for Scotland, 2016).

Teacher Education Pathways: the route or path that a teacher has taken in order to receive their certifications to teach in a classroom, such as traditional pathway, hybrid pathway, or through gaining a substitute license for long-term uses.

Summary

This chapter introduced a brief explanation of the overview, statement of the problem, research purpose, research questions, an overview of the methods, limitations and possibilities, significance of the study, researcher positionality, and definitions of terms.

Chapter two will provide an overview of the research and literature connected to pre-service pathways, professional learning, and teaching self-efficacy. It will present literature that supports the argument that professional learning impacts teaching practice and teaching self-efficacy.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

"Every student learns when every educator engages in effective professional Learning" (Hirsh, 2010, p. 3). This statement, the Learning Forward Belief, can lead one down many paths of exploration that include perceptions of pre-service preparation, professional learning experiences, teaching self-efficacy, and the expectations and resources that educators use to guide their teachings. Literature within this chapter provided a better understanding of necessary components that have the potential for producing high-quality educators.

Pre-service preparation has added more pathways of preparing educators than just the traditional pathway along with solidifying which experiences are most beneficial in preparing pre-service educators. Many transformations in professional development have taken place over the years, including a change in the term from "development" to "learning" and formats that reflect in student achievement outcomes. Teaching self-efficacy, a topic that is not new to the field, surfaced as the field of education looks closely at how adults learn, tasks that impact their levels of efficacy in various experiences, and how the efficacy transfers to students. It is also necessary to look deeply at district expectations for educators, particularly in what teaching practices are required and the types of materials and resources used to guide curriculum.

Literature supporting this study included the topics of: (a) pre-service preparation and pathways, (b) professional learning experiences, (c) teaching practices, (d) teaching self-efficacy, and (e) adults as learners. Sections within this chapter further elaborate on the connection between literature and the case study.

Pre-service Preparation

Pre-service preparation is the first step in an educator's learning journey and has transformed over the years to deliver learning in a more convenient fashion with alternative pathways into the profession. Many teachers are experiencing the traditional and alternative pathways that ultimately get them to the same destination: a teaching position. The literature in this section explains the positive perceptions of various formats of pathways available along with how different pathways contributed to the teaching self-efficacy of those prepared in those pathways.

With Ad Astra Public Schools' need to retain teachers that effectively serve their diverse students' needs, especially in difficult-to-staff positions, it is imperative to examine the current pathways that teachers in the district take, in order to provide adequate support as they enter the district. Shuls and Ritter (2013) proposed, "Traditional and alternative routes to teaching are both good ideas—for certain subjects and grade levels" (p. 28). They also stressed that a single format would not meet the needs of all students, especially when thinking of K-12 learning needs. Ideal structures for elementary teachers included meaningful classroom experience with "multiple highly effective teachers in various grade levels" and instruction based on child development and pedagogy with clinical experiences tied to the instruction (Shuls & Ritter, 2013). In other words, traditional-type pathways work well for pre-service teachers aiming to work with primary students. As for secondary pre-service teachers, Shuls and Ritter (2013) recommended candidates needing to have strong content knowledge in the area they wish to teach as these teachers will "require much more specific content training" (p. 31). Knowledge in theories and experience in classroom observations are important, but for secondary teachers, they benefit

more from gaining a deeper understanding of the subject they are pursuing. Overall, Shuls and

Ritter (2013) advocated for recognizing the difference in primary and secondary pre-service

teacher needs when preparing them for their future positions.

With the variation in programs available, a key concept that pre-service teachers need to

experience as they exit their preparation programs is the feeling of being prepared. Darling-

Hammond, Chung, and Frelow (2002) conducted a study on that gauged educator perception on

how prepared they felt entering the profession. Their study analyzed the feeling of preparedness

teachers experienced, coming from traditional and alternatively pathways. Alternative

preparation in this study meant that teachers entered without experiencing formal training or

preparation, like those who received emergency credentials. In regards to curriculum, teaching

strategies, and meeting students' learning needs, Hammond et al. (2002) reported that graduates

of teacher education programs, or those coming from traditional pathways, rated their

preparedness significantly higher than those from alternative pathways did. Alternatively

prepared educators rated their preparedness with using "technology for communication with

others in the world" at a higher level than those traditionally prepared (Hammond et al., 2002, p.

290). The educators, who certified through emergency credentials, rated their readiness in

teaching "significantly lower than graduates of teacher education programs" (Hammond et al.,

2002, p. 290). Overall findings suggested differences in teacher education programs in terms of

the preparation they provided.

Even with access to alternative pathways, some pre-service educators continue to select

traditional pathways of preparation. Jacobs (2013) explained the importance of observations

prior to student teaching in order to gauge the reality of classroom instruction. This study

supported "healthy doses of theory plus clinical practice" in order to create a "solid foundation

for new teachers" (Jacobs, 2013, p.18). He further described how his own student teaching took him out of his comfort zone and credited the experience with his perceived preparation. In Jacobs (2013) concluding thoughts, he described the support provided to him from working "alongside some great teachers" through informal mentoring (p. 22). Since his colleagues were also traditionally prepared, he felt as if they all shared "a common vision and sense of responsibility for students" (Jacobs, 2013, p. 22).

Experiences that allow for practice in the field provide pre-service educators with a first-hand look at the profession they are entering. Jacobs (2013) described how pre-service teacher residencies stabilize the workforce as many experiences connect theory with clinical practice. Guha, Hyler, and Darling-Hammond (2017) described early research findings of "significant long-term benefits for districts, schools, and students when residencies are well-designed and well-implemented" (p. 32). Guha et al. (2017) described how clinicals were "inspired by the medical residency model, provide a pathway to certification grounded in deep clinical training tailored to the needs of participating school districts as residents work alongside expert teachers in high-needs classrooms for a full academic year" (p. 32). Even with the uniqueness of the residency program highlighted in the study, it shared numerous characteristics of the relationship between Ad Astra Public Schools and the area universities, including: (a) strong partnerships, (b) recruitment of high-ability candidates, (c) relevant coursework, and (d) financial support in exchange for committing to the district.

Dennis (2016) described a similarly structured residency program with "collaborative connections" between the residency program and local school districts serving at-risk students. The residency program she highlighted "merges coursework and clinical practice" while providing opportunities to not only residents, but also teacher mentors (Dennis, 2016, p. 15). The

opportunities included (a) integrated assignments, (b) co-teaching, (c) teaching rounds, (d) content-focused coaching, (e) quad-model clinical practice, (f) STEM PLCs, and (g) teacher leadership. This type of residency provided educators with a "better understanding of the needs of the community while being more empathetic to the needs of their students" (Dennis, 2016, p. 15).

Alternative preparation programs have become more readily available for those wishing to teach, who already hold a bachelor's degree in another profession. Larson and Vontz (2018) described an alternative pathway available, which results in a Masters in the Arts of Teaching (MAT), that emerged due to the "labor market's demand for additional elementary teachers" (p. 1). Larson and Vontz (2018) dialogued about the vision of the MAT program and its contribution to overcoming obstacles presented by traditional preparation. Characteristics used to describe this program include fast-paced, meaningful, and accessible. The program uses the supervision technology of a SWIVL to capture the "candidate's progress and performance in the classroom" along with feedback provided by university supervisors" (Larson & Vontz, 2018, p. 3). Overall, the study described how the program "forged new pathways to address a large nationwide problem" (Larson & Vontz, 2018, p. 5).

Research regarding pre-service preparation provided insight on the pathways, traditional and alternative, producing high-ability teachers prepared to meet the diverse needs of students. Levels of preparedness can vary by pathways and participant experience, but once educators enter their teaching positions, professional learning is available to continue the learning process.

Professional Learning Experiences

After educators complete their pre-service preparation, they move into teaching positions that began to expose them to continuous learning. Many initial learning experiences focus on supporting these novice educations to be successful within their districts through mentoring programs and new teacher trainings. Educators also begin experiencing professional learning alongside their veteran colleagues and continue this type of learning throughout their years in the profession.

Ultimately, school districts are responsible for ensuring that educators experience quality professional learning tailored to the needs of the students that they serve. Professional learning is available in many different formats and within Ad Astra Public Schools educators experience professional learning in the following formats: (a) mentoring (for first and second year teachers), (b) weekly PLCs, (c) instructional coaching, (d) monthly building-level PLCs, and (e) district-level trainings. Literature in this section describes positive experiences and perceptions regarding new teacher support, formats of professional learning, qualities of effective professional learning, and ways professional learning increased teaching self-efficacy.

Learning can look very different for educators depending on their years in-service and the students that they are serving. According to Maskit (2011), teachers experience "different stages in their professional development" and have various perceptions "toward pedagogical change" during these stages (p. 851). The stages she described are those within the "Teacher Career Cycle Model" presented by earlier research that included the following stages: (1) pre-service, (2) induction, (3) competency building, (4) enthusiasm and growth, (5) stability, (6) career frustration, (7) career wind-down, and (8) career exit. Maskit (2011) explained the trickiness

with the stages as "not all stages are necessarily related to the length of time in teacher, some teachers may not experience all stages in their career, and it was not certain that every teacher passes all the stages" (p. 852). Fessler & Christensen (1992) previously explained these ideas. It would benefit educational leaders to document where teachers are in order to note common attitudes at various stages of professional development.

New Teachers' Professional Learning and Support

New teacher support can vary from district to district, but Ad Astra Public Schools supports new teachers through professional learning sessions prior to the start of school, after school mini sessions, instructional coaching cycles, and an assigned mentor. Sterling and Frazier (2011) presented the importance of "administrators and senior teachers" in establishing "a collegial atmosphere in which all teachers support those new to the profession" (p. 44). Also, because mentors cannot always be available to observe new teachers' instruction to provide feedback, instructional coaches can fill in this void by gaining "direct knowledge of what was happening in the classroom and what the teacher needed to be effective" (Sterling & Frazier, 2011, p. 44). Sterling and Frazier (2011) described how, "Teachers' success can be increased by providing in-classroom support, supportive working conditions, and a supportive school culture" (p. 42).

Research Related to Guskey's *Model of Teacher Change*

Thomas Guskey's (1986, 2000, 2002) research on professional learning and teacher change guided others in the field as they looked at what works in professional learning and what quality professional learning looked like. Guskey (2002) provided an alternative model that challenged initial assumptions that "attitudes and beliefs come first" (p. 383). The "crucial point"

of Guskey's (2002) *Model of Teacher Change* "is not the professional development *per se*, but the experience of successful implementation that changes teachers' attitudes and beliefs" as they "have seen it work" (p. 383). Guskey (2002) suggested, "Significant change in teachers' attitudes and beliefs occur primarily after they gain evidence of improvements in student learning," whether it be by "a new instructional approach, the use of new materials or curricula, or simply a modification in teaching procedures or classroom format" (p. 383).

Guskey's (1986, 2002) model connected to Jerome Bruner's (1961) *Discovery Learning* as Bruner stated that "intellectual ability was developed in stages through step-by-step changes in how the mind is used. Bruner's (1961) learning ideas described how learners construct knowledge based on prior knowledge and when presented learning is in a spiral manner, continuous building on prior learning occurs. Guskey (1986, 2002) set the stage for other educational researchers that would move on to adjust his model for their own research purposes.

Desimore (2009) proposed a conceptual framework in her study similar to Guskey's *Model of Teacher Change*, but hers differs in the order of the topics and arrows lead both ways instead of just one direction. Hanover Research (2014) described the arrows in Guskey's (2002) model as a "positive self-perpetuating cycle" (p. 7). Whereas, the arrows within Desimore's (2009) model represented "interactive, non-recursive relationships between the critical features" (p. 184). Desimore's (2009) framework developed from Guskey's (1986, 2002) model and extended thinking on the critical features. The adjustments Desimore (2009) made to critical features included: (a) core features of professional development, (b) a shared box for "increased teacher knowledge and skills; change in attitudes and beliefs," (c) different ordering of "change in instruction" and "change in attitudes and beliefs," and (d) the result being "improved student learning" (p. 185). She concluded her study by discussing the use of knowledge of core features,

such as the ones she proposed in her framework, to establish a framework that can be used to evaluated professional learning.

de Groot-Reuvekamp, Ros, and Boxtel (2018) utilized Desimore's (2009) conceptual framework in their study as a way to analyze the professional development program referred to as *Timewise*. They further elaborated on the arrows in the framework as being "interactive, non-recursive relations between different components" (de Groot-Reuvekamp et al., 2018, p. 291). Their study also focused on the training teachers received on "educative curriculum materials" that were modeled for teacher use, background knowledge on the subject, and "materials to stimulate students' learning" (de Groot- Reuvekamp, Ros, & Boxtel, 2018, p. 299). De Groot-Reuvekamp, Ros, and Boxtel found in their study that the use of this particular teaching approach yielded "significant learning gains, changes in teachers' beliefs and attitudes," and a connection between instructional behavior and student learning gains.

Quality and Effective Professional Learning

Additional studies presented information regarding professional learning quality along with how it influenced teacher quality and morale. Gore et al. (2017) mentioned Guskey's work in the field as one of the few studies that showed "rigorous evidence of the impact and sustained effects of PD on teaching practice or student outcomes" (p. 99). The study conducted by Gore et al. (2017) focused on the "pedagogy-based approach" of teaching rounds and its impact on the quality of teaching (p. 99). Gore et al. (2017) described the "significant positive effects" that took place on teaching quality along with the positive impact "on teacher morale and sense of recognition" (p. 99).

Easton (2008) described the difference in the terms "professional development" and "professional learning" as educators shift from "growing, expanding, advancing, progressing, etc." to changing what they do often to "respond to the needs of the learners they serve" (p. 755). She also provided "qualities of powerful professional learning," which included: (a) it "arises from and returns benefits to the real world of teaching and learning;" (b) "requires the collection, analysis, and presentation of real data from student work and teacher practice;" (c) "begins with what really helps young people learn, engages those involved in helping them learn, and has an effect on classrooms where those students learn;" (d) "leads directly to application in the classroom;" (e) "may not formally end;" (f) "honors the professionalism, expertise, experiences, and skills of staff members;" (g) "content-rich;" (h) "collaborative;" (i) "establishes a culture of quality;" (j) "results in automatic buy-in;" (k) "slows the pace of schooling;" and (l) "provide activities that make PLCs more than just a structure" (Easton, 2008, p. 757).

Other studies described what the authors considered effective professional learning and what works for educators today. Guskey and Yoon (2009) discussed "what works in professional development" by reminding readers "workshops are not the poster child of ineffective practice that they are often made out to be," but that certain, focused workshops "showed a positive relationship between professional development and improvements in student learning" (p. 496). They also mentioned the following points: (a) outside expert professional development sessions can positively impact student learning, (b) time was a "crucial factor to success," (c) follow-up is "a vital importance," (d) various activities and practices must be carefully adapted, and (e) content must "enhance teachers' content knowledge and pedagogic content knowledge" (Guskey & Yoon, 2009, pp. 496-497).

Hirsh and Killion (2009) provided eight principles of professional learning that contributed to school improvement and sustainability and guide effective professional learning. The principles described throughout Hirsh and Killion's (2009) study included: (a) "principles shape our thoughts, words, and actions;" (b) "diversity strengthens an organization and improves its results;" (c) leaders are responsible for building the capacity in individuals, teams, and organizations to be leaders and learners;" (d) "ambitious goals lead to powerful actions and remarkable results;" (e) "maintaining the focus of professional learning on teaching and student learning produces academic success;" (f) "evaluation strengthens performance and results;" (g) "communities can solve their most complex problems by tapping internal expertise;" and (h) "collaboration among educators builds shared responsibility and improves student learning" (pp. 466-469). They also provided information regarding concrete change to the eight principles and how the changes became more "visible in practice," such as professional learning being more team-based or school-wide, the use of performance-based systems, and ways for teachers to become leaders in their schools (Hirsh & Killion, 2009, p. 468).

Kuijpers, Houtveen, and Wubbels (2010) examined a professional development model that aimed to improve student achievement and ended up incorporating six aspects from previous models while also adding three further aspects in order to ensure compliance. The aspects within the new model included "presentation of theory, demonstration of skills, practice in a secure environment, pre-conference, observation, and post-conference" (Kuijpers et al., 2010, p. 1688). The additional three aspects were "creation of appropriate conditions, evaluation and monitoring conference, and a focus on goals at school, teacher, and student levels" (Kuijpers, Houtveen, & Wubbels, 2010, p. 1688). The model developed in this study provided a pathway to effective professional learning that had an overall goal of improving student achievement.

Kintz et al. (2015) investigated "conditions associated with teachers' in-depth discussions," referred to as "teacher communities of inquiry (CI)" as part of a statewide professional development initiative (p. 121). This study "shed light on the factors associated with teacher learning and enactment of ambitious teaching practices" while "in turn improving instructional practices" (Kintz et al., 2015, pp. 132-133). Communities of inquiry can assist in understanding how teachers learn by analyzing their discussions that take place in this format as well.

The studies regarding effective and quality professional learning described models, specific principles, and other ideas that have transformed and emerged from earlier ideas as professional development moved into professional learning. Adjustments in this area will continue as learners' needs continue evolving and diversify.

Formats of Professional Learning

Professional learning comes in many different forms and for this study highlighting the importance of effective organizational teams and establishing norms, especially in the format of PLCs, helps to understand the format teachers experience most often. Ad Astra Public Schools relies on administrators to facilitate PLCs within their buildings as the most often used form of professional learning and provides leaders with topics to address.

von Frank (2013) explained how organizational team intelligence maximized learning by "creating groups with good communicators, enhance those skills, and make sure members have a variety of backgrounds" (p. 4). She also provided tools and suggestions to facilitating effective organizational teams, which included: (a) one person isn't doing all the talking, (b) create a safe environment where participants are comfortable admitting mistakes (c) avoid power and status,

and (d) teach members how to effectively communicate. von Frank (2013) provided directions, preparation information, and examples to reference when establishing group norms. Administrators and facilitators of PLCs can use these ideas to ensure success during group time.

With Ad Astra Public Schools' focus on serving ELL students, Molle's (2013) examination of facilitation practices in professional development for educators working with ELLs, provided insights on how to promote a learning environment, in various formats, for adults while avoiding negative discourse regarding students. Facilitators of professional development must be mindful when "fostering political awareness in participants" in learning formats and environments (Molle, 2013, p. 197). Tension that does arise in these environments must be handled appropriately to allow for a shift in perspectives that "aim to foster" a better understanding of the background of the tensions, as these situations are unavoidable and can be greatly used to increase participant understanding (Molle, 2013, p. 200).

With PLCs being frequently utilized format of professional learning at Ad Astra Public Schools, ensuring that administrators use the time to focus on learning is critical. Sompong, Erawan, and Dharm-tad-sa-na-non (2015) examined PLCs in primary schools that used a model that "consisted of four major factors," which included: (a) "preparation for learning organization," (b) "development of shared norms and values," (c) "learning from common work practice," and (d) "the expected outcome" (p. 2789). They described the use of action research in PLCs along with how the findings showed significant growth in "teachers' knowledge, comprehension, and competency" (Sompong et al., 2015, p. 2794).

Driving PLCs with student data is an imperative practice that can impact student learning as described by Lai and McNaughton's (2016) study. Teachers in Lai and McNaughton's (2016)

study participated in PLCs structured to provide them the following steps of addressing achievement problems: (a) collaborative data analysis, (b) identification and testing of causes, and (c) co-creating solutions. The process that teachers participated in during this time ultimately had an effect on interventions provided to students and allowed for teachers to "fine-tune instruction" (Lai & McNaughton, 2016, p. 434). Moulakdi and Bouchamma (2020) conducted a similar study in which elementary teachers used PLCs to "collectively engage in solving the learning-related difficulties" (p. 1). Student achievement significantly improved in this study, which added to the idea that PLCs are "considered to be an effective school improvement strategy centered on student achievement" (Moulakdi & Bouchamma, 2020, p. 1).

PLCs have shown to be a great source when digging into student data to improve achievement. As long as administrators use PLCs for learning and drive them with various forms of data, such as student achievement data, the problem solving that takes place can help improve instruction. Administrators facilitating PLCs must tend to the necessary components in order to ensure a learning environment that focuses on teachers and student needs.

Teaching Self-Efficacy

The father of self-efficacy, Albert Bandura, initially coined the term along and concept in 1977. He defined self-efficacy as a judgement one has of how well they can execute courses of action necessary to deal with prospective situations (Bandura, 1977). Although Bandura introduced the term self-efficacy, psychologists have studied the concept from several perspectives over the years (Lopez-Garrido, 2020).

Self-efficacy has incorporated into many different fields, including education, to heighten understanding of what people are feeling during different experiences. Self-efficacy in education can include: (a) students' self-efficacy, (b) teaching self-efficacy, and (c) collective self-efficacy.

Bandura (1977) noted that self-efficacy develops through mastery experiences (performance outcomes), vicarious experiences (social role models), social persuasions, and emotional and physiological states. Mastery experiences, as described by Banudra (1997), "are the most influential source of efficacy information because they provide the most authentic evidence of whether one can muster whatever it takes to succeed" (p. 80). James Maddux (1995) added to this concept by suggesting a fifth source of efficacy, referred to as imaginal experience.

Feelings of self-efficacy are tied to specific tasks, so it is imperative to use this thinking to promote student and educator success in both learning and teaching tasks throughout the day and ultimately over the school year. Hattie's (2017) study on areas that contribute to learning described the large impact that self-efficacy can have on student achievement. Along with that, collective teacher efficacy is the greatest (1.57) influence on student achievement from Hattie's list as compared to the normal effect size (.40) in one school year. The importance of recognizing and working to gain greater self-efficacy has greatly developed over the years and strategically inserted itself within education. To ensure that educators are providing impactful instruction to students, it is critical that the field of education continues emphasizing teaching self-efficacy so students can experience what it looks like in order to mirror the experiences within their own contexts.

As teaching self-efficacy has become more common in educational settings, literature has expanded on particular situations, from efficacy with certain student groups to building culture's impact on teaching self-efficacy. Protheroe (2008) described teaching self-efficacy and the importance of it in her work by stating, "Teachers' level of confidence about ability to promote learning can depend on past experiences or on the school culture" (p. 42). Protheroe (2008) described how Hoy (2000) built on Bandura's (1977) work by explaining how vicarious

experiences and social persuasions contribute to a teacher's sense of efficacy as they observe the practice of others and when receiving feedback. Protheroe (2008) also stated two critical ideas in regards to teaching self-efficacy. First, she stated, "A teacher may have faith generally in the ability of teachers to reach difficult children, while lacking confidence in his or her personal teaching ability" (Protheroe, 2008, p. 43). Second, Protheroe (2008) explained, "Teachers who believe they can teach all children in ways that enable them to meet these high standards are more likely to exhibit teaching behaviors that support this goal" (p. 45). As she concluded her study, she mentioned that "principals must intentionally help teachers develop a sense of efficacy" as "it is not enough to hire and retain the brightest teachers—they must also believe they can successfully meet the challenges of the task at hand" (Protheroe, 2008, p. 45).

Literature examining influences on teaching self-efficacy yielded results that help educational leaders improve in how they assist in building a sense of teaching self-efficacy for their teachers. Fives and Buehl (2010) examined teacher experiences and teaching levels to identify how these characteristics influence teaching self-efficacy. They found that pre-service teachers might have reported inflated levels of efficacy, which seemed to decrease as experience increased. This study reported mixed results from pre-service and practicing teachers. Also, Fives and Buehl (2010) reported "comparable findings across some published studies that suggest that pre-service and practicing elementary teachers have significantly higher efficacy beliefs than do those at the middle or secondary levels" while other studies reported no significant differences between teaching levels (p. 121).

Student characteristics can influence teacher self-efficacy, especially if they lack experiences with certain categories of students. Those entering Ad Astra Public Schools must be ready to take on the diverse population and may have to build some efficacy along the way.

"Teacher self-efficacy was higher when teaching high-achieving students and with smaller class sizes" (Malmberg et al., 2013, p. 432). This study also described work from Bandura (1997) by explaining that even though teachers are working in challenging situations, they should experience "a sense of mastery following success" as mastery experiences require some challenge (Malmberg et al., 2013, p. 433).

Previous student success plays a role in teaching self-efficacy as prior experiences come to mind when teachers experience similar situations. Johnstone (2004) examined the self-efficacy of teachers in inclusive classrooms with regular and special education students combined. She found that "all participants had positive attitudes towards inclusive classrooms, even though all stated they did not receive adequate special education or inclusion training" (Johnstone, 2004, p. 106). Although Johnstone (2004) reported that the participants lacked training, she explained, "It did not have a negative influence on their confidence or self-efficacy" (p. 106), which she mentioned differed from a previous study. Johnstone (2004) described that teachers in her study desired ongoing professional learning to help them grow in their inclusive practices.

Beauchamp et al. (2014) credited professional learning with influencing teaching self-efficacy when educational leaders ensure that important elements are in place. Beauchamp et al. (2014) explored the development of teaching self-efficacy through professional learning and found throughout a two-year study that the most valuable learning took place when educators collaborated with their colleagues (Beauchamp et al., 2014). Within year one, the strongest influence on teaching-self efficacy was professional learning initiated by teachers while collaboration was the strongest influence in year two (Beauchamp et al., 2014). Levels of efficacy reported by teachers in this study described "secondary teachers reporting higher self-efficacy than collective efficacy," whereas elementary teachers reported both "high self-efficacy

and high collective efficacy" (Beauchamp et al., 2014, p. 10). The professional learning by teacher preference focused more on teacher needs as opposed to student needs and focused on the following topics: (a) "share curriculum ideas and best practices," (b) "co-create and share learning and teaching resources," and (c) "learn new teaching strategies" (Beauchamp et al., 2014, p. 10).

With Ad Astra Public Schools' cohorts of professional learning, highlighting campus-wide professional learning on teaching self-efficacy can provide ideas to ensure sustainable practice. In Callens et al.'s (2019) study, teachers were eager to hear about sustainable work by building peer communities. This campus used faculty learning communities (FLCs) to "enhance teaching and learning" by "incorporating frequent activities to facilitate learning, development, and community building" (Callens et al., 2019, p. 72). With this structure of learning, teachers shared inquiry "that benefits individuals and groups, and both learning and nurturing a community are essential outcomes" (Callens et al., 2019, p. 72). Callens et al. (2019) credited FLCs with "improving teacher attributes, such as commitment to students and self-efficacy, while providing a sustainable environment for collaboration and sharing of professional norms and values" (p. 72).

Professional learning can occur informally as teachers work individually to better their knowledge in what they are teaching. Sharp et al. (2016) investigated the relationships between "teachers' self-efficacy of literacy instruction and their growing knowledge of literacy essentials" (p. 2432). Findings indicated, "Self-efficacy scores and knowledge scores significantly increased over time concurrently but without any predictive power of each other" (Sharp et al., 2016, p. 2432). This study supports the idea that teachers at Ad Astra Public

Schools will grow in their efficacy of time as they become more familiar and knowledgeable in using ReadyGen.

The different types of experiences, as first introduced by Bandura (1977) and then added on to over the years by other researchers, assist in building teaching self-efficacy for educators. Building culture can be one aspect of impact, which explains why it is imperative for administrators to cultivate a building of learning and collaboration. Experiences in teaching diverse students and the challenges they pose can also influence teaching self-efficacy as success accompanies tasks that are more challenging.

Adults as Learners

Adult learners quite often experience professional learning in formats that mirror what learning looks like for their students. Andragogy, as described in depth in chapter five of Merriam and Baumgartner (2020)'s book, provided critical guidance to give adult learners, or in this case, educators, learning experiences that satisfy their needs. Much like pedagogy, the child-focused teaching approach, andragogy, is the adult-focused teaching approach popularized by educator Malcolm Shepherd Knowles. He established five assumptions in regards to adult learners and four principles of andragogy.

The assumptions for adult learners included "self-concept, adult learner experience, readiness to learn, orientation to learning, and motivation to learn" (Knowles, 1980). These assumptions put an emphasis on the need for adult learners to be self-directed learners, to add to their bank of experience continuously, to be oriented in developing tasks in adjacent to their social roles, to moving towards immediate application of newly learned knowledge, and to become internally motivated to learn.

Principles that Knowles formed described the importance of adult involvement in the planning and evaluation of their own instruction, learning being connected with experiences, topics being relevant in order to impact jobs or personal lives, and "providing problem-centered learning rather than content-oriented" (Merriam & Baumgartner, 2020, pp. 118-119). Just as adults ensure students have great learning experiences, other adults who establish learning experiences for adults must also keep in mind these principles to ensure that their needs as learners are satisfied. Ad Astra Public Schools has shifted adult learning to follow more of a problem-centered approach with the adoption of the MTSS framework.

Differences in pedagogy and andragogy assist in the understanding of the type of learning adults need to experience, especially for educators seeking learning that builds onto previous knowledge. Makhlouf (2019) describes differences in adult-focused learning through the following points: (a) andragogy depends more on self-learning; (b) adults bring a foundation of background knowledge and diversity to their learning; (c) adults can learn from their instruction and peers; (d) the goal is to fill gaps in their understanding; (e) adults can organize their learning around self-identified gaps; and (f) intrinsic motivators, such as self-esteem, quality of life, recognition, and problem solving, can provide reasoning to continue learning. Merriam and Baumgartner (2020) mentioned, "Practitioners who work with adult learners continue to find Knowles' andragogy helpful when understanding adults as learners" (pp. 128-129).

Merriam and Baumgartner (2020) connected Knowles' andragogy ideas with Howard Y. McClusky's (1974) Theory of Margin throughout chapter five. In his theory, McClusky identified key factors around the load-power ratio that adults carry in their lives, which can change and adjust throughout adulthood (Merriam & Baumgartner, 2020). When adults have a greater margin created by an excess of power, they are able to handle the loads given to them. He

also established two different groups of loads: "normal life requirements and expectancies that people develop themselves" (Merriam & Baumgartner, 2020, p. 130).

With the information regarding adult learning presented by Merriam and Baumgartner (2020), it is critical that adults are involved in the creation of learning opportunities that they will use in order to bridge their own learning gaps. With adult-focused learning being so reliant on oneself, it seems that learning opportunities should be flexible and provide experiences, which adults can apply immediately.

Summary

It is necessary to reiterate important points from the literature the connected with this study. Literature connected to this study explored the following topics: (a) pre-service preparation and pathways (positive perceptions of formats supporting educator preparedness), (b) professional learning experiences (formats and impacts on ELA strategies, teaching practices, and teaching self-efficacy), (c) teaching self-efficacy (pertaining to experiences/tasks, various structures, types of students, and sources of teaching-self efficacy), and (d) adults as learners (andragogy). Each section described previous studies that supported how educators prepare to become in-service teachers and the pathways impacting learning and providing experiences to build teaching self-efficacy. They also examined professional learning experiences, influences of teaching self-efficacy, and information regarding adult learners. Studies referenced in this chapter supported ideas presented regarding the following points: (a) various pre-service pathways successfully prepare educators, (b) quality professional learning formats and practices make professional learning more successful, (c) teaching self-efficacy comes from various

sources and depend on individual educators' experiences, (d) and adult-learning contrasts in many ways with pedagogy.

Chapter three dives into methods of this study and methodology behind the study. Organization of the methods takes place in the sequence of: (a) the description the research design, (b) data collection and its sequence, and (c) analysis of the data utilized in this study. Chapter three also provides a description for the research setting, participants, and deeper information on the ELA program, ReadyGen, which participants experienced.

Chapter 3 - Methods

This chapter provides the blueprints for the methods applied in this study. This study utilized a case study approach to answer the research questions. With the focus of this study aimed at understanding personal experiences of the participants, as they come from differing teacher preparation pathways, and the ways in which they perceived professional learning experiences on their teaching practices, the perceptions served as the primary data collected, analyzed, and interpreted. This chapter describes the methods used to answer the research questions within this study. First, the sources of methodology that influenced the framework and selected data sources are described. Next, a section describing the ELA program, ReadyGen, used in the district further explains core components and research supporting the validity of the program. Following the section on ReadyGen is the description of the settings and participants. Then, provided is a data collection schedule, which guided events throughout the entire study. Following the data collection schedule is a breakdown of the sources of data in terms of the development, utilization, and analysis of the sources.

Methodology

With this study focusing on research questions regarding participant perceptions, the use of a qualitative research study deemed necessary. This type of study allowed for a deeper look into the views that participants had regarding their experiences with professional learning and how they perceived its effect on teaching practices and their teaching self-efficacy. Perceptions became codes, which evolved into categories to explain the perceptions. The use of a case study allowed for each participant to have their own perceptions that told their story, which contributed to the overall findings in this study.

This research utilized a framework reflecting the work and ideas of Thomas Guskey (1986, 2002), particularly his *Model of Teacher Change*. Guskey (1986, 2002) noted the importance of teachers experiencing quality professional learning, as it has the potential of changing teachers' classroom practices. The changes in classroom practice then lead to a change in student learning outcomes. Teachers begin to change their attitudes and beliefs, as the last step in Guskey's model, once they have experienced success in implementation. Clear evidence of improvements in student learning complete the model, which contributes to the desire for teachers to continue to work on new practices, using new materials, or trying new ideas or procedures.

The first component of the model occurred as Ad Astra Public Schools provided numerous professional learning experiences through the Better Readers grant that incorporated coaching cycles to assist teachers in making the changes in their classroom practices for successful implementation, which is the overall focus in Guskey's (2002) model. The next component of the model, changing student learning outcomes, relied on the collection of measurable data during the coaching cycle. The last component of Guskey's (2002) model, change in teachers' beliefs and attitudes, reflected in the refinement/exploration meeting that took place to determine if the practice needed further work to get the desired outcome or if students made progress to fulfill the goal of the coaching and teacher implementation succeeded.

The work of constructivist Jerome Bruner (1961) described the need to build knowledge based on previously learned topics in a spiraling manner to connect concepts to prior learning. The learning experiences, through the Better Readers grant, occurring before and during this study allowed teachers to build on previous knowledge to connect with their new learning.

This framework guided the study by exploring the attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of participants' as they began receiving professional learning prior to and during their use of ReadyGen, as they utilized ReadyGen in their classrooms, and as they participated in the Better Readers grant. This case study examined experiences that occurred throughout the first semester of the 2020-2021 school year for these educators, which assisted in the understanding of the ways in which they perceived professional learning on their practices and efficacy.

The use of a case study for this research allowed for collection and analysis of the perceptions, instructional practices, and experiences of seven different educators. The data merged into one case study to understand the overall perceptions of all teachers in the study. It also allows pre-service pathways to play a role in the organization of the data when necessary. Crowe et al. (2011) described how case studies helped researchers obtain "an in-depth appreciation of an issue, event or phenomenon of interest, in its natural real-life context" (p. 1), which is why the data collection took place in the classrooms of each participant. It was imperative to see teaching through in-person observations and allowing interviews to take place in the comfort of individual classrooms when searching for answers within the appropriate context. As described by Crowe et al. (2011), this case study "involved the collection of multiple sources of evidence, using a range of qualitative techniques," which allowed for the triangulation of data, which assisted in "increasing internal validity" of the study (p. 6).

This study utilized the data analysis process of forming patterns, which informed the identification of themes from participant interviews and participant journals. deMarris and Lapan's (2004) work guided multiple areas of interview design, including the development of interview questions, recording interviews for transcription, sharpening of questioning skills, and allocation of opportunities for participants to add personal opinions and thinking.

ReadyGen

The selection of the elementary ELA program, ReadyGen, took place during the ELA adoption during the 2019-2020 school year. The ELA work committee, comprised of many different stakeholders, vetted programs using rubrics and information presented through Edreports.org. After committee members presented their final consensus of the products, the deputy superintendent of curriculum and instruction took the consensus to the Ad Astra Board of Education to vote on a purchase of the materials. This process and selection ultimately impacted all K-12 students as the consensus included the purchase of secondary materials, MyPerspectives, from the same company, Savvas, for students at the secondary level.

Savvas Learning Company (2020) described ReadyGen as a "K-6 integrated literacy program that accelerates learning for all by presenting modeled reading experiences with authentic text" (p. 2). It also further stated, "Students engage in practice, build motivation, and improve their reading stamina" (Savvas Learning Company, 2020, p. 2). Three key features of the program emphasized in the brochure included: (a) "authentic text at the core of instruction (puts a library of 12 authentic trade books in the hands of every child)," (b) "built with results in mind (back-mapped for success to ensure all activities meet rigorous standards)," and (c) "broadens accessibility to complex texts and tasks (point-of-use scaffolds, strategic support, and individualized intervention accelerate learning for all)" (Savvas Learning Company, 2020, p. 2). ReadyGen's description on the Savvas website listed "10 Features That Improve ELA Instruction," which included (a) use of the Gradual Release Model, (b) focus on big ideas and deeper meaning, (c) teach with authentic texts, (d) connect reading and writing every day, (e) read closely and cite evidence in text, (f) generate vocabulary, (g) accelerate learning for all, (h)

intervene when students struggle, (i) use authentic, performance-based assessments, and (j)

engage students with technology (Savvas Learning Company, 2020).

In response to preparing students for college and career readiness, Savvas Learning

Company (2020) noted that ReadyGen "helps educators teach responsibly by empowering

teachers to grow their knowledge base by studying what learners do when they read and write"

(p. 8). In order to grow independent readers and writers, each ReadyGen lesson follows the

Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) Instructional Framework designed by Pearson and

Gallagher (1983). The instructional framework guides educators when providing appropriate

instruction to movie students towards independence. The organization and presentation of unit

themes "emphasize the common characteristics of a unifying concept that promote in-depth

understanding" (Savvas Learning Company, 2020, p. 9). In regards to the plan and pace of the

instruction, ReadyGen provided module overviews that "identify the instructional focus and what

learners are expected to know and do along with how the focuses align with goals for the

Performance-Based Assessments" (Savvas Learning Company, 2020, p. 10). Savvas Learning

Company (2020) provided "enduring understandings" and "essential questions" sections that

help teachers guide student thinking in order to "create a culture of inquiry around the text sets

and tasks" (p. 11). The text sets serve as models for the reading and writing practice that occurs

throughout instruction that ultimately assist students in their ability to master rigorous grade-

level standards. One piece of text is utilized over several days to allow students to "dive deeply

into the text and understand the author's purpose" (p. 9), which will help students when

responding to the Performance-Based Assessment.

Major components in ReadyGen that Ad Astra elementary schools utilized included: (a)

foundational skills mini lesson, (b) build understanding, (c) close read, (d) reading analysis, and

(e) writing. Foundational skills mini lessons focus on grade-level phonemic awareness and phonics skills necessary to successful decode words when reading. Within the build understanding component of the lesson, students read a text closely and cite text evidence to show their understanding of key ideas and details, the craft and structure of the text, and knowledge and ideas within the text. This component follows a daily sequence of setting the purpose, engaging the students, reading the text, and checking for understanding through student discussions. Close read, which is the second time in the lesson that students hear parts of the text, provides time for students to engage in class discussions based on selected questions while utilizing text evidence to support their answers. Within the close read component is the benchmark vocabulary section that focuses on tier two vocabulary words pertinent to the text and lesson. The reading analysis component provides an opportunity for students to show their understanding of the text, typically through a graphic organizer, whether working independently or in small groups. The final component in this daily lesson plan is the writing instruction that provides teacher modeling, student guided practice to show understanding, and student independent writing practice focusing on writing skills pertinent to the grade level and module. A conventions mini lesson accompanies each writing lesson, which teaches needed conventions stated within the standards in a connected format although it is separate from the actual writing lesson. Ad Astra Public Schools opted out of utilizing the small group instruction component of the ReadyGen program as the ELA committee identified resources for tiered support with the establishment of the tiered protocol during the ELA adoption process.

Savvas conducted a one-year summative field test of its ReadyGen program in first and fourth grade classrooms during the 2015-2016 school year (Vilcheck, 2016). The purpose of the study was "to assess the effectiveness of ReadyGen in helping students attain critical reading

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skills and to document usage and implementation of the ReadyGen program" (Vilcheck, 2016, p. 1). The study took place at two public schools within suburban and rural areas in North Carolina and included 11 teachers and 291 students that varied in ethnicity and socioeconomic status.

This study measured student achievement data and implementation data to gauge an understanding of how the program impacted student achievement and how teachers implemented it. Researchers in this study measured student achievement using TerraNova3 assessments and focused the study on first and fourth grade teachers and students. Methods of data collection regarding program implementation and teacher perceptions included observations, surveys, and interviews with participants. An external independent evaluator analyzed student results from the TerraNova3 testing. Implementation data collected showed: (a) teachers implemented ReadyGen with moderate fidelity; (b) teachers presented an average of 3.09 lessons per week; (c) fourth grade students demonstrated an increase in their reading attitudes; (d) first grade students demonstrated a decrease in their reading attitudes; (e) 91% of teachers reported "their students had learned important ELA skills over the course of the study" (this was consistent with the student achievement results); (f) only half of teachers were satisfied with their student progress, even after feeling like "their students had been academically challenged by ReadyGen;" (g) greatest "impacts of ReadyGen were on student writing skills (73%) and vocabulary (55%);" and (h) "over half of teachers reported that ReadyGen provided good reading and writing activities, provided teachers with requisite knowledge to teach each lesson, positively impacted teacher knowledge of the CCSS for reading, and assisted students with limited reading abilities" (Savvas Learning Company, 2016, pp. 6-7).

Overall, the study concluded, "ReadyGen is effective at significantly increasing student reading achievement," including "learning gains across different types of students" (Vilcheck,

2016, p. 7). In addition, Vilcheck (2016) described, "scientific research indicates that the

ReadyGen program is an effective and useful program for both teachers and students" (p. 7).

Research Methods

This section describes the tools utilized in the data collection, analyzation, and

interpretation process of this study. Specific topics and method within this section include: (a)

data collection schedule; (b) participants; (c) settings; and (d) data collection, analysis, and

interpretation processes.

Data Collection Schedule

Data collection in this study took place from August 2020 to January 2021 presented in

Table 3.1. The data collection schedule guided the events and locations during the duration of the

study.

Table 3.1

Data Collection Schedule

Date	Location	Data Collection
M 8/27- W 9/2	Virtually	Participant Selection Survey
M 9/4- W 9/9	Virtually	Research Participation Survey
Th 9/17- F 9/30	Participant Classroom	- Prior to first interview: Philosophy Statement (emailed) - Interview 1 - Observation 1 - Field Notes - Participant Journal 1

M 10/19- F 10/30	Participant Classroom	• Interview 2 • Observation 2 • Field Notes • Participant Journal 2
M 11/30- Th 1/8	Participant Classroom	• Interview 3 • Observation 3 • Field Notes • Participant Journal 3
M 1/4- F 1/15	Participant Classroom	Final Data Meeting

The first milestone in the schedule began with participant selection, which took place in August 2020 using a survey that provided information regarding the participants' pre-service pathways, grade level(s) taught, and perceptions regarding professional learning and teaching self-efficacy. It surveyed the participants on their comfortability of sharing their perceptions and experiences. Respondents of the first survey received a second survey that gauged respondent desire and availability to participate. After the identification of the seven participants through the first two surveys and their confirmation of participation, the data collection process began. Prior to the first interviews, the participants provided their teaching philosophies. Data collection took place three times, during the 2020-2021 academic school year, through semi-structured interviews, participant journals, field notes, and observations.

Following the selection of participants and scheduling of initial interviews, the first round of interviews began on September 17, 2020 and concluded on September 30, 2020. The beginning minutes of the first interview introduced participants to the process by communicating the role of the participants and the researcher in this study as informed by Bhattacharya (2017). Participants learned of the study's purpose, process, and their position as co-researchers through member checks as they confirmed and clarified data. It was critical that participants felt

comfortable sharing their perceptions, experiences, and beliefs with another employee in the district without experiencing unwanted consequences. During this time, participants also learned of the confidentiality agreement with participating and the ways that data would be privately stored. Reciprocity for participating described to the participants was their input to better professional learning experiences for all teachers within the district.

Events planned throughout the school year influenced the data collection timing for each round. Timing for round one allowed for participants to start the school year and fell within an area of time that included the following events: (a) parent-teacher conferences, (b) fall testing window for FastBridge assessments, (c) initial teaching using ReadyGen, (d) beginning of the year professional learning experiences, and (e) changes that occurred due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Round two of data collection took place from October 19 to October 30, 2020, as participants experienced a time frame with a minimal amount of events. This allowed time for participants to decompress on certain ideas, such as professional learning experiences and usage of ReadyGen, while providing specific details in semi-structured interview questions.

Round three, the final round, of interviews took place between November 30, 2020 and January 8, 2021. During this period, participants were completed end of the semester tasks, such as FastBridge winter assessments, grading, and additional professional learning experiences. During this time, participants also had the experience of utilizing ReadyGen for half of the school year. This round allowed participants to reflect on the first half of the school year along with answering the final round of semi-structured questions.

Participants attended final meetings from January 4 to January 15, 2021, in order to run collected data by each participant for their final input and thoughts. This allowed for adequate representations of participants' perceptions, experiences, and opinions within the data and the overall findings. Just as it was in the rapport building during the first interview, participants received information to remind them about how the results from this study could improve district professional learning experiences.

Participants

With the numerous pathways available into the profession, it was important that participants selected came from a variety of pathways. Pathways on the initial survey included: (a) traditional (received schooling in-person from a university, along with student teaching experience); (b) online traditional (received schooling online from a university, along with student teaching experience); (c) hybrid traditional (received schooling in-person and online from one or more universities along with student teaching experience); (d) Transition into Teaching; (e) Para Pathway (through Fort Hays State University); (f) Accelerated Pathway (Newman University); (g) long-term substituting (full year, half year, and less than half year); and (h) other category for any special instances that do not fall within the previously listed pathways. From these various pathways, the seven participants selected represented traditional, long-term substitute, accelerated, and other pathways.

A survey was the first method of data collection that occurred, which served the purpose of identifying possible participants of different pathways along with collecting data regarding perceptions of professional learning and teacher efficacy. The survey was open for data collection from August 27, 2020 to September 2, 2020. The additional questions not only gave

insight into participant backgrounds, but it also served to provide information regarding

perceptions of professional learning and teaching self-efficacy. Using the additional questions

allowed for the adjustment of interview questions to produce the best feedback during semi-

structured interviews. The first survey yielded 33 responses and prior to the identification of

participants; those who responded to the first survey received a second survey to complete on

September 4, 2020, with it closing on September 9, 2020. The second survey assisted in

identifying participants' level of comfort with participating in the study and sharing their

perceptions, experiences, and opinions. The second survey yielded nine respondents; two of the

respondents expressed no desire or availability to participate, leaving the seven other respondents

as options for participants. Seven participants identified through the second survey received an

email to confirm agreement in participating in the study and communication began to schedule

the first round of data collection.

Participants selected for this study represented the following pathways: (a) three

participants from the traditional pathway, (b) two participants from the long-term substitute

pathway, (c) one participant from the accelerated pathway, and (d) one participant from the other

pathway. Participants' taught a range of grade-levels from first-grade to fourth-grade, with one

participant serving special education students in kindergarten-through-third-grade. Three

participants taught within one building, while the other four participants taught in four different

buildings within Ad Astra Public Schools. The participants' years in Ad Astra Public Schools

ranged from first year teacher to seven years of experience. Only one participant had teaching

experience outside of Ad Astra Public Schools, which gave her a total of fifteen years of

experience.

In order to uphold the agreement of confidentiality promised to participants in exchange for the sharing of their perceptions, experiences, and opinions, pseudonyms replaced participant names. Participants signed informed consent forms, seen in Appendix A, prior to their first interview and received a copy of the signed consent form prior to their first observation.

Settings

Data collection took place in the classrooms of the participants, as it was crucial to keep them in the area where they were most comfortable in and that was convenient for their schedule. Asking participants to travel a distance or to an unfamiliar location, could have caused hesitation or discomfort in participation and sharing of sensitive topics, perceptions, or experiences. Keeping participants in their own classrooms allowed for a higher level of confidentiality as the researcher visited the participants' locations.

With interviews taking place within participants' safe-zones, it increased their comfort and allowed them access to evidence that support their statements. For instance, participants had access to student data and artifacts that assisted in explaining perceptions and experiences. Along with access to student evidence, participants could incorporate any evidence connected directly to themselves, including resources they used to document professional learning. Artifacts allowed for further explanation of instruction, using ReadyGen resources, or student achievement data to answer specific questions regarding screening and progress monitoring.

Data Collection Methods

Data collected methods in this study included: (a) surveys for participant identification and desire to participate, (b) philosophy statements, (c) video-recorded interviews, (d)

observations, (e) field notes taken during observations, and (f) participant journals. After the collection of each method, data analysis and interpretation followed.

Surveys

The first survey in this study evolved five months prior to the start of the study as an assignment in a survey methods course in March 2020. The assignment required students to create a survey in Qualtrics that could benefit their future research study by utilizing a specific type of survey questions or a combination of questions. Collecting basic information on participants along with perceptions regarding professional learning and teaching self-efficacy drove the creation of the survey. Dillman, Smyth, and Christian's (2014) work informed the development of survey questions, particularly the formatting, to ensure questions did not contain jargon that created confusion. Assigned partners took each other's surveys and provided feedback.

Following adjustments from the feedback, instructional coaches at Ad Astra Public Schools helped pilot the survey by taking it and providing feedback in April 2020. After the addition of the final adjustments, the completed survey, presented in Appendix B, was ready for use. The first survey assisted in identification of possible participants along with perceptions of professional learning and teaching self-efficacy.

All elementary ELA teachers received the first survey in an email with an explanation of survey's purpose on August 27, 2020. Responses from the first survey provided a list of teachers who received an email with the next survey. Following the closing of the survey window, respondents to the first survey received a follow-up email on September 2, 2021 with an additional survey that assisted in gauging the respondents' desire to participant in the study.

Creation of the second survey in Google Forms, the research participation survey, presented in Appendix C, took place in early August 2020, as another form of communication with potential participants, due to the amount of respondents from the first survey. Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2014) also informed the development of the questions on this survey. It was critical for participants to have the opportunity to explain their response choice within the survey to determine how to overcome obstacles of participation.

Analysis of critical data from the first survey took place in the beginning of September 2020, in order to gauge an understanding of the perceptions participants possessed, prior to the first round of data collection. In the survey, teachers selected statements that best described their perceptions regarding teaching self-efficacy and professional learning from the following choices: strongly agree (1), somewhat agree (2), neither agree nor disagree (3), somewhat disagree (4), strongly disagree (5) or not applicable. The use of a Likert scale in regards to participation interest and availability helped in understanding more than just yes or no answers.

From the analysis, interpretation of data happened seamlessly as the program provided easy-to-read graphs and analysis of Likert scale items using minimum values, maximum values, means, standard deviation, variance, and percentages and count of participant responses. The report also provided various types of selection choices when scaling down from options other than all participants. Low means (1-2.49) generated from the data interpreted as agreement with the statement, whereas a high means (3.5-5) interpreted as disagreement with the statement. In addition, means falling in the range of 2.50 to 3.59 showed a neutral opinion of neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. Excluded from the analysis was the category of "not applicable," as it did not yield a numerical score.

Philosophy Statements

Philosophy statements collected in this study served to describe the expected cultures in participants' classrooms, as described by the work of Goodyear and Allchin (1998). Collecting and analyzing philosophy statements came as a suggestion from a professor aware of the purpose of this study. Understanding philosophy statements prior to visiting classrooms allowed for a better understanding of what each participant would focus on along with understanding expectations within their classrooms. Philosophy statements served as a form of analyzing instructional practices and observation data, when examining if the practices and data supported the statements formed by educators.

After the identification of participants for this study, they received an email to set their first semi-structured interview and a request for their teaching philosophy. After receiving the philosophy statements from all participants, analysis of the statements took place. Just as with interviews and participant journals, coding of philosophy statements occurred, which was a much shorter process than coding the other methods. The coding of philosophy statements could have been according to pre-service pathways, but it seemed more beneficial to look deeper at what the statements mentioned. Categories for the philosophy statements included: (a) whole child approach/student focused, (b) adult focused, and (c) environment focused. Philosophy statements focusing on the environment described necessary components, such as positive, safe, and stimulating.

Following the establishment of categories, some philosophy statements fell within multiple categories, showing the variety of needs necessary to create successful learning opportunities. Philosophy statements provide clear directions and expectations that can be

supplied to fellow educators, students, and administrators, to ensure all parties are aware of the

whys behind the following: (a) "teaching as a foundation and identity," (b) purpose for the

teaching position within a particular institute, and (c) to communicate the what and why of

teaching and learning expectations in a variety of modes (Goodyear & Allchin, 1998, p. 106).

Interviews

Interviews served as a critical method for collecting data regarding participant

perceptions of professional learning on their teaching practices and teaching self-efficacy.

Utilizing interviews as a data collection method and the formation of interview questions took

place during a previous study that assisted in piloting these ideas in March 2020. Informed by

Bhattacharya (2017), the development of interview questions occurred with a focus on

professional learning and teaching self-efficacy. Following the utilization of the questions during

the previous study, adjustments resulted in interview questions for this current study presented in

Table 3.2. Completing interviews within three rounds allowed participants to answer questions

specific to different periods throughout the semester and to avoid overwhelming participants by

the amount of questions.

Table 3.2

Interview Questions

Interview Questions	
Round 1	• What does the term "professional learning" mean to you?
	• Tell me about a time when you experienced a professional learning session that you enjoyed and were able to take something from it.
	• Tell me about a time when you experienced a professional learning session that you enjoyed and were able to take something from it.
	• What does the term "efficacy" mean to you?

Interview Questions	
	• Describe a time when you felt that your teaching efficacy was increasing. • What type of situations bring your teaching efficacy down? • What type of situations bring your teaching efficacy down?
Round 2	• From the survey, I recall that you took the preservice pathway of _____. Describe why you chose that pathway. • Do you feel like the pathway you selected prepared you for the position you first took? • What are some concepts you wish you would have been taught during your preservice training to better prepare you for your position? • Describe how your colleagues affect your teaching efficacy. • Describe how your administrator affects your teaching efficacy. • What type of environment do you best learn in? • Tell me more about when you were teaching ELA…(based on specific observation data)

Round 3	• Tell me about a professional learning experience that you were able to apply in your classroom.
	 • What influenced you to apply the learning?
	 • Describe your overall experience with professional development provided within the district.
	 • Have you experienced any professional learning opportunities outside of the district?
	     o If you did, how was your experience?
	 • Tell me about your teaching efficacy regarding teaching students of various backgrounds, such as ELL students.
	     o Did you receive any specific training to work with students of various backgrounds?
	        ▪ If so, describe what that entailed.
	 • Is there a topic or concept that you'd like to study more about?
	     o How would this help you as an educator?
	 • Tell me a little bit about how progress monitoring is going for you. In return, how are you predicting how they will do during this screening window?

Necessary follow-up questions for the current study developed in response to experiences

in the previous study by the researcher, noted in chapter one. deMarris and Lapan (2004)

influenced the development of numerous follow-up questions, which proceeded interview questions and led to further conversations when appropriate, such as "tell me more about what you said about _____". Not only did this allow for further details to surface, but it also served as a trust-building technique that allowed the participants to feel like their perceptions and experiences mattered. Responses from participant journals and observations helped in adding to the follow-up questions.

Think and response time allowed for greater descriptions of perceptions. The avoidance of nonrelative jargon occurred to ensure that there was no room for misunderstandings of questions or follow-up questions. Full attention given to participants allowed for a greater focus on participants as they responded and limited note taking ensured less of a distraction for participants. A SWIVL robot and application allowed for the video recording of each interview, which allowed for multiple views of videos during the transcription process. A private and secure SWIVL account housed videos in order to ensure participant confidentiality.

Individual interviews allowed participants to be more open with their responses than if others were present to influence their reactions. Interviews took place three times with two-to-three week time gaps in between each round to allow for transcription of interviews. Interview times ranged from seven to 20 minutes, depending on how much the participants elaborated in their responses. Interviews concluded with the scheduling of the following observation.

Transcription took place within Google Docs and transferred to the coding program NVivo. Following the transcriptions of the third interviews, structural coding took place, as informed by Saldaña (2021), around research questions. From the coding of research questions, subcoding, also described by Saldaña (2021), occurred to allow for a more extensive break down

of broader codes as shown in Table 3.3. The coding process, also influenced by Bhattacharya (2017), followed the guidelines listed: (a) read the data several times, (b) code into manageable units using various types of labels, (c) reflect on the process of chunking, (d) "cluster" analytical units into categories, (e) identify patterns "across and within categories, (f) discuss the findings with participants, and (g) make adjustments and return to any of the process guidelines as needed (pp. 150-151).

Table 3.3

Categories from Interviews

Categories from Codes	
Research Question Categories (Broader View)	Subcoding Categories (Extensive Breakdown)

Perceptions of Professional Learning on Teaching Practices	• Teaching Philosophies
	• Professional Learning Definitions/Understanding
	    o What Professional Looks Like (Positive Perceptions)
	    o Frustrations in Professional Learning (Negative Perceptions)
	    o Outside Professional Learning
	    o Pre-service Experiences
	• Teaching Practices

Perceptions of Professional Learning on Teaching Self-Efficacy	• Teaching Self-Efficacy Definitions/Understanding • Positive Perceptions • Negative Perceptions
Perceptions of Professional Learning on Teaching Self-Efficacy (Educators serving students of various populations)	• Positive Perceptions • Negative Perceptions

Participant Journals

Participant journals became a method for this study to understand participant perceptions regarding experiences utilizing ReadyGen. This method of data collection served to identify positive and negative perceptions that participants had following observations. Questions for participant journals developed in a way that would allow for positive and negative feedback to be acknowledge without the perceptions misdirecting interviews. Participants completed participant journals following each observation. In addition, it allowed participants to express their thoughts and feelings that may have refrained from expressing during interviews. Participant journals provided specific feedback on the participants' continuous experiences with ReadyGen. Participants completed journal entries over questions regarding challenges, successes and next steps in teaching ELA as shown Table 3.4

Table 3.4

Participant Journal Questions

Pariticipant Journal Questions
• What were some challenges you faced in teaching ELA today?
• How will you address those challenges? How will you know if you were successful?
• What do you think you were particulary successful at in teaching ELA today?
• Why do you think you were successful? Or how do you know you were successful?
• What are your next steps in teaching ELA? Why?

Participant journals took the form of a Google Form as an efficient way to collect feedback. After participants completed the journals, data was moved into moved into the NVivo program, where coding took place. Again, structural coding took place, as informed by Saldaña (2021), around research questions alongside interview data. From the coding of research questions, subcoding, informed by Saldaña (2021), allowed for a greater break down of broader

codes, which merged together with interview codes as shown in the interview section in Table 3.3.

Observations

Following each interview were classroom observations, which took place three times throughout the study by the researcher. Observations assisted in the formation of follow-up questions for interviews and allowed for direct experience in observing the participants' instructional practices they mentioned in their philosophy statements, interviews, and participant journals.

The current walkthrough observation tool utilized in the school district served as half of the tool for this method of data collection. The other half of the tool included rubrics established within the district for the Better Readers grant. The Qualtrics Survey Software combined the two tools, the walkthrough observation tool and Better Readers grant rubrics, into one tool to allow for storage, viewing, and analyzation of data. The observation tool, presented in Appendix D, used in this study had many instructional practices on it that have been research-based initiatives in the districts over the past nine years.

The walkthrough tool documented observation data regarding: (a) mastery objectives, (b) checks for understanding, (c) specific feedback, (d) positive and negative student/teacher interactions, (e) academic and language experiences, (f) the gradual release of responsibility, (g) district approved resources and pacing, (h) support staff, and (i) depth of knowledge. Most of these areas have been on the walkthrough document for years, with the exception of positive and negative interactions, which were a new addition to the tool this year as the district works more on building relationships, social emotional learning, and lowering the affective filter.

The development of the Ad Astra Public Schools' walkthrough tool, referred to as the eWalkThrough tool, occurred nearly a decade ago with the assistance of the Southwest Plains Regional Service Center (SWPRSC). Their company already developed an eWalkThrough tool, but as Ad Astra Public Schools made it part of the district, SWPRSC made adjustments to tool the district would use in order to match instructional practices critical to the district.

Following the personalization of the eWalkThrough tool for Ad Astra Public Schools, consultants from SWPRSC, particularly the CEO at that time, Dr. Kelly Gillespie, visited the district multiple times per year, providing professional learning to administrators and instructional coaches regarding the tool and facilitating calibration of the tool through district-wide walkthroughs. In the fall of 2018, Dr. Gillespie worked with instructional coaches to provide hyperlinks within the tool that provided deeper descriptions on the instructional practices listed on the tool, specifically examples and non-examples of some of the practices.

Following Dr. Gillespie's retirement in May 2019, Ad Astra Public Schools have independently adjusted the tool to match current instructional practices and expectations along with leading their own calibration cycles with only administrators. The calibration cycles serve as a way to ensure that all administrators are on the same page as they click on certain components on the eWalkThrough tool.

Within Ad Astra Public Schools, eWalkThroughs have become a monthly requirement for building administrations as they serve as a snapshot of what is seen in classrooms during the five-minute visit. After leaving a classroom, the building administrator sends a report from eWalkThroughs tool to the teacher in an automatic email. Ad Astra Public Schools encourages building administrators to add a probing questions for the teachers in the comment box.

Data collected from eWalkThroughs become discussion points during BLT meetings, PLCs, and even teacher evaluations. The reports can break down information specific to individual teachers, grade levels, buildings, or the entire district. The information gained from eWalkThroughs have guided district initiatives, professional learning, and goal setting within the district. Professional learning within the district provides opportunities for teachers to understand the instructional practices on the tools, which serve as critical components of learning throughout the day.

In this study, utilization of the eWalkThrough tool during observations served as a critical method for gathering instructional data as it is an area that teachers receive evaluations on and a tool that they are familiar with that provides feedback on the instructional practices within their classroom. The Better Readers grant rubrics began making their appearance in separate walkthroughs to collect data regarding practices learned through the grant, including phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and culturally responsive teaching.

The development of grant rubrics took place in the 2018-2019 academic school year by the grant coordinator for the district, Kelley Clark, and with the help from Language and Literacy Consulting, Inc. consultants Laurie Winter and Geri Lovelace. Prior to finalizing each rubric, the Better Readers grant coordinator would present the rubrics to instructional coaches for feedback, as the rubrics became part of the Ad Astra Public Schools' instructional playbook.

As these rubrics become a form of data collection in the district, it is important for teachers to experience walkthroughs using the rubrics. Observations utilizing the rubrics provided easy-to-read feedback, but since these types of walkthroughs only took into consideration five to 10 minutes of instruction, they lack the observation of multiple components

on the rubrics. Observations using the rubrics have only included the grant coordinator, the intervention coordinator for the district, and a consultant through the grant, making the data collected less important to teachers when compared to eWalkThrough data, as it is not an area of evaluation.

Each rubric also included a focus on core components of instruction in each area, with some focusing specifically on explicit instruction, application and specific populations. The grant coordinator created the rubrics to measure sustained practices that teachers learned through the grant. Each of the rubrics for the Better Readers grant evaluate the lessons observed using a scale with the following levels of instruction: 0-not evident, 1-emerging, 2-developing and 3-proficient. Specific to the culturally responsive teaching rubric are the following core components: (a) biography drive instruction, (b) lowering the affective filter: teacher-student rapport, (c) lowering the affective filter: routine/structure, (d) lowering the affective filter: engagement, (e) contextualizing instruction: prior knowledge, (f) contextualizing instruction: comprehensible input, (g) scaffolding language: teacher to student interactions, and (h) scaffolding language: student-to-student interactions.

Documentation of all observations in this study used the district's eWalkThrough observation tool, the culturally responsive teaching rubric, and rubrics specific to the instruction observed, such as phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, and comprehension instruction. Following the collection of round three observation data, analysis of data took place using the Qualtrics report feature. The program organized the observations utilizing bar graphs and numerical data that described the frequency of practices used throughout observations. When the collection of data from all three observations completed, a comparison took place to measure growth in usage of instructional practices that would confirm or deny whether philosophy

statements guided instruction or not. After the exportation of reports, data interpretation began, looking at individual, pathway, and whole group data using the reports feature in Qualtrics, looking for the frequency of practices. In addition, it was key to analyze the data to determine if teachers made growth in the instructional practices and quality of teaching they provided students during observations.

Observations within this study served as a critical method of data collection as it allowed for the viewing of practices that participants mentioned during semi-structured interviews. Observations also served as a way to gauge teacher use of strategies and instructional practices learned through the Better Readers grant.

Field Notes

Collection of field notes by the researcher occurred during observations using the comments section on the observation tool. This allowed for reflections "on subjectivities, emotions, hunches, questions that arise," observations made that did not fall under any other areas on the observation tool, and perceptions of instruction (Bhattacharya, 2017, p.150).

With field notes serving as a way to understand the observations from a different view, analysis of field notes remained separate from the analysis of observation data. With the observation tool only allowing for selection of instructional practices viewed, field notes served to explain the sequence and details surrounding the instructional practices. Analysis took place following the final round of observations by organizing notes by sequence and interpretation took form as a narrative.

Summary

The framework, methodology, and methods put in place guided the study and rendered data needed to understand perceptions and experiences of the educators coming from differing pathways into the profession. Data collected in the form of surveys, philosophy statements, semi-structured interviews, observations, field notes, and participant journals, meshed together in order to answer the research questions from multiple facets. These multiple methods of data collection provided perspective on multiple areas in the classroom using compatible data from teacher perceptions to classroom instruction. The data gathered served as an essential piece to gauge an understanding of instructional practices utilized in the participants' classrooms, their perceptions of professional learning and teaching self-efficacy, and philosophies of what classrooms should provide to the students within them.

Chapter four presents the analysis of data collected through a survey, philosophy statements, interviews, observations, field notes, and participant journals. Coding and categorization assisted in the analyzation of data from the teaching philosophies, interviews, and participant journals, which formed a descriptive narrative of the findings along with a concept map representing interview and participant journal data. Tables provide a clear understanding of observation data collected as well. An in depth examination of data alongside research questions assisted in identifying findings in this study.

Chapter 4 - Analysis of Data/Findings

This chapter explains the analysis of data and findings collected in this study to understand the participants' perceptions and experiences. Observations provided insight on the instructional practices utilized by participants. With this case study looking at the perceptions specific to each educator, this chapter provides a breakdown of data sources for each educator, along with data coming together by pre-service pathways with more than one participant. The data for all teachers came together to describe philosophy statements, interviews and participant journals, and observations. Data sources include teaching philosophies, survey data, interviews and participant journals, observations, and field notes.

Participant Information

Table 4.1

Participant Demographics

	Pre-service Pathway	# of years teaching	Grade level taught
Sadie	Traditional	7	Fourth
Dalila	Traditional	4	Third
Samantha	Other	6	First
Amy	Long-term substitute	0 (first year)	Second
Stella	Traditional	15	Kindergarten through Third Special Education
Lola	Long-term substitute	2	Third
Melanie	Accelerated Pathway-Newman	3	Fourth

Table 4.1 presents demographic information for the teachers in this study by providing the pre-service pathways, number of years teaching in total, and the grade level they taught

during the study. The information presented in the table helps deepen the understanding of each participants' data.

Findings

Data organized within this section includes teaching philosophy statements, survey data, interview and participant journal data, observation data, and field notes. Organization of data took place by participants in order to capture their individual experiences. Then, traditional pathway participants' and long-term substitute participants' data merged together, since the other two pathways, accelerated and other, only had one participant each in them. An overall merged view of philosophy statements, interviews and participant journals, and observation data for all participants proceeded the pathway data. Within interviews and participant journals, headings described categories, which formed from codes. Headings for each participant depended on whether or not they provided data categorized by the topics.

Sadie

Teaching Philosophy Statement

Table 4.2

Sadie's Teaching Philosophy

Sadie's Teaching Philosophy
I believe that all students have knowledge within them that is derived from the culture, language, and identity. It is my duty to become a harvester of this knowledge and to show my students and the community that the knowledge we all have inside of us is valuable and worthy.

Sadie's teaching philosophy, as presented in Table 4.2, represented a mix of expectations that focused on students and adults in the environment. Her philosophy illustrates she saw herself as the main person responsible for the learning environment to be successful.

Survey Data

Table 4.3

Survey Results for Sadie

		Response
Teaching Self-Efficacy		
1	I enjoy learning new techniques and strategies.	1-strongly agree
2	I believe in my own ability to guide my students to success.	1-strongly agree
3	I feel confident in my ability to apply professional learning strategies and techniques without instructional coaching.	1-strongly agree
4	My professional learning experiences have positively contributed to my self-efficacy.	2-somewhat agree
5	My administrator positively contributes to my self-efficacy.	2-somewhat agree
6	My building culture positively supports teacher self-efficacy.	2-somewhat agree
7	I see myself as a continuous learner	1-strongly agree
Professional Learning		
1	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of building PLCs* meet my needs as a continuous learner.	4-somewhat disagree
2	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of grade level PLCs* meet my needs as a continuous learner.	4-somewhat disagree
3	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of instructional coaching (this includes a range of experiences from seeking informal information or assistance from the instructional coach to going through a formal coaching cycle)* meet my needs as a continuous learner. (Mark "not applicable" if this doesn't apply to you)	1-strongly agree
4	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of mentoring (this includes both paid mentoring and non-paid buddy mentors that assist new teachers during their new teacher training year)* meet my needs as a continuous learner. (Mark "not applicable" if this doesn't apply to you)	2-somewhat agree
5	Professional learning opportunities provided *in a large group setting (at the district office)* meet my need as a continuous learner.	3-neither agree nor disagree
6	Professional learning opportunities provided by an out-of-the-district agency, at an outside location, but paid for my Ad Astra public schools meet my needs as a continuous learner. (Mark "not applicable" if you did not attend any "out-of-the-district" professional learning opportunities this year)	2-somewhat agree
7	Ad Astra public schools provides an adequate amount of professional learning opportunities that meet my needs as a continuous learner.	4-somewhat disagree
8	The professional learning opportunities I have experienced at Ad Astra public schools have improved my teaching quality.	2-somewhat agree
9	I am satisfied with the *amount* of professional learning opportunities available to me at Ad Astra public schools.	4-somewhat disagree

		Response
10	I am satisfied with the *quality* of professional learning opportunities available to me at Ad Astra public schools.	4-somewhat disagree

Sadie provided her perceptions regarding her teaching self-efficacy and professional learning as an initial data collection method. Table 4.3 shows Sadie's perceptions as she entered her eighth year in education. Sadie agreed, at various levels of agreement, with the statements pertaining to teaching self-efficacy. She disagreed more often with the statements regarding professional learning, particularly questions focusing on building level PLCs, grade level PLCs, and the amount and quality of professional learning provided in the district. Her survey data showed that she perceived satisfaction with her experiences working with her instructional coach.

Interviews & Participant Journals

Professional Learning Definitions/Understanding. In her first interview, Sadie defined professional learning as "seeking training to address a need not being met in the classroom to better serve students." She followed up her definition by describing the buy-in of the learning as greater when the importance of a topic is evident and when participants understand its depth.

What Professional Learning Looks Like (Positive Perceptions). In her second interview, Sadie said she viewed professional learning as continuous learning in a positive and collaborative environment as the format that works in the district along with "small chunks of learning with immediate application."

Frustrations in Professional Learning (Negative Perceptions). In her first interview, Sadie said she felt discouraged with professional learning not being applicable as a practice in her classroom. During the same interview, Sadie also said she felt frustrated over the limitations

the district put forth in terms of resources teachers can use to address tiered needs within the district's "tiered protocol." In the first interview, Sadie said she perceived that "higher up administrators assigned blanket expectations on what resources are allowed to meet each student's needs," when she experienced success using other resources.

Outside Professional Learning. In the third interview, Sadie said she perceived outside professional learning to be more appealing due to self-choice and determination to learn about a specific topic. During the same interview, she said she felt like she had "greater buy-in" when she sought learning experiences she believed would meet her needs as a continuous learner.

Pre-Service Experiences. In her second interview, Sadie said she felt fortunate for the field experiences in education she had during high school. In a follow-up statement, she said she felt "prepared enough to take on a teaching position," when she graduated high school. In her second interview, Sadie said she perceived gaps in specific subject areas, such as math, within her pre-service preparation field experiences. She continued the statement and said she felt her methods course for math and the field experience with it was "ineffective" due to teaching configurations at her assigned building. In her second interview, Sadie said she appreciated the similar understandings and like-mindedness that colleagues from the same university shared with her. In her third interview, Sadie disclosed the area she struggled with most as a student "became the most comfortable area to teach" because she reflected on what she needed to move her thinking forward in that area.

Teaching Practices. In her third interview, Sadie said outside professional learning has taught her to ask deeper level questions on the fly. She continued and explained that questions in the close read opened the door for more in-depth questions. In her third interview, Sadie stated

she used this practice to create questions within the close reading instruction as she felt that some of the provided ones did not take students to the appropriate level of thinking.

In her first participant journal, Sadie said she allowed her students to use tools, such as vocabulary cards, to be successful during academic discourse conversations. In her second participant journal, Sadie said she had high expectations for academic discourse and provided students with verbal sentence stems. In her third participant journal, Sadie said she used scaffolding to assist in the teaching of cause/effect relationships, especially for the nine newcomers in her class.

In her second and third participant journals, Sadie said she wanted to feel more prepared by reviewing lessons ahead of time to determine the best way of breaking the learning down with scaffolding strategies and vocabulary instruction, deciding whether the close reading questions lent themselves to the skill and task-at-hand, and identifying the purpose of the lesson. In her third interview and third participant journal, Sadie described pinpointing the learning skill by previewing the pages listed in the manual and perceived that ReadyGen recommended a significant amount of reading than necessary to teach the skill.

Teaching Self-Efficacy Definitions/Understanding. In her first interview, Sadie said she heard the term self-efficacy previously, but did not "genuinely know what the term means, but for me it's just like advocating for yourself." The researcher provided information for Sadie to understand teaching self-efficacy.

Teaching Self-Efficacy Positive Perceptions. In her third participant journal, Sadie said she observed her students justifying cause and effect relationships, which took place over

multiple lessons, and increased her teaching self-efficacy. In her first interview, Sadie said she

felt her teaching self-efficacy increasing as she recognized student growth of any kind.

Teaching Self-Efficacy Negative Perceptions. In her first interview, Sadie said the

blanket statements about her student needs decreased her teaching self-efficacy. She described

feeling more aware of how to address student needs than those delegating the use of resources

and instructional practices. Sadie said building relationships with families continued posing a

challenge for her, as she perceived that her pre-service courses did not provide information on

that topic. In her second interview, Sadie said not being a learner for an extended period

negatively contributed to her teaching self-efficacy. In the same interview, Sadie said she did not

enjoy online and self-paced learning. She described the learning formats as negatively

contributing to her teaching self-efficacy.

Serving Students of Various Populations: Positive Perceptions in Teaching Self-

Efficacy. In her first interview, Sadie described her class as having nine newcomer students with

a majority of the rest of the students being ELLs. In her third interview, Sadie said she shifted

her focus over the years to serve her ELL students better. In that same interview, she said she

sought information that helped her instruct students with interrupted learning or traumatic

experiences. In her first participant journal and third interview, Sadie said she gained confidence

and increased her teaching self-efficacy by working with her instructional coach to modify

lessons to meet her students' needs. In her second interview, Sadie said she appreciated the

understanding of reality her administrator and instructional coach had with their first-hand

experiences of what the students are going through. She continued and described how the

principal and instructional coach are encouraging and provide help when needed. In her second

interview, Sadie said that her principal and instructional coach have a good understanding of reality and allowed Sadie to move at her own pace as a learner.

In her third interview, Sadie said she perceived her years of trial and error as a contribution to her teaching self-efficacy. In the same interview, Sadie said she tracked data to confirm student progress in ways not related to FastBridge. In her second participant journal, Sadie said her teaching self-efficacy increased as students, particularly her newcomers, participated in tier one discussions. In the same participant journal, Sadie said she established a routine for teaching her students ELA, which she perceived to flow better than when she followed the manual directly. In her second participant journal, Sadie said she found areas within ReadyGen to teach vocabulary instead of teaching it separately. In her third interview, Sadie said she needed to insert more visuals into the instruction to help explain comprehension topics to students. In her first participant journal, Sadie said she perceived students succeeded with speaking experiences, even without supports or strategies. In the same participant journal, Sadie said she focused on students' experiences with the gradual release of responsibility when reading and using text evidence.

Serving Students of Various Populations: Negative Perceptions in Teaching Self-Efficacy. In her first interview, Sadie said she perceived the district's professional learning regarding diverse learners as "basic, like explanations of the language development stages." In her third interview, Sadie described professional learning as "new and exciting" from the view of a new teacher, but with her focus now on ELL students, she felt like she "hit a learning wall." In her third interview, Sadie said she perceived the knowledge gained through her master's degree in ESOL curriculum and instruction, as unbeneficial when compared to her classroom experience.

In her second interview, Sadie said she felt like the grade-level phonics included in ReadyGen "did not work and are inappropriate for the newcomers" in her class, which fueled her decision early on to "ditch it." In the same interview, Sadie said she instructs her students through mini-lessons based on their phonics needs during tier two instruction. In her first interview, Sadie said she felt a significant decrease in her teaching self-efficacy when student testing data "did not accurately represent the students." In her second interview, Sadie said the newcomers in her classroom scored on different levels of being low and "many of them needed instruction in an area that was not typical for fourth graders, such as phonemic awareness and phonics." In her third interview, Sadie said she perceived FastBridge as not providing a detailed enough report to figure out where to start with them.

Observations

Table 4.4

Observation Results for Sadie

Teacher: Sadie Building: B Elementary Grade: Fourth	Round 1 Date: 9/22/20 Time In: 10:00am Time Out: 11:00am	Round 2 Date: 10/29/20 Time In: 10:15am Time Out: 11:00am	Round 3 Date: 12/16/20 Time In: 10:15am Time Out: 11:00am
Number of Students	19	21 (20 in person, 1 remote learner	19
Students Engaged In	• Comprehension	• Comprehension • Vocabulary	• Comprehension • Vocabulary
Period	• Beginning • Middle	• Beginning • Middle	• Beginning • Middle • End
The learning objective states what the students will learn and how the learning will be demonstrated.	Yes	Yes	Yes
The learning objective matches	Yes	Yes	Yes

Teacher: Sadie Building: B Elementary Grade: Fourth	Round 1 Date: 9/22/20 Time In: 10:00am Time Out: 11:00am	Round 2 Date: 10/29/20 Time In: 10:15am Time Out: 11:00am	Round 3 Date: 12/16/20 Time In: 10:15am Time Out: 11:00am
what students are learning.			
Students know and understand the mastery objective.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Checks for Understanding/ Formative Assessment	• Oral language • Questioning • Writing	• Oral language • Questioning	• Oral language • Questioning • Writing
Teacher provides specific feedback	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student/Teacher Interactions	• Positive-6 • Negative-0	• Positive-5 • Negative-6	• Positive-2 • Negative-4
Academic and Language Experiences	• Non-linguistic representations • Direct vocabulary instruction in use (teacher led) • Academic Discourse is evident • Specific classroom structures	• Non-linguistic representations • Direct vocabulary instruction in use (teacher led) • Academic Discourse is evident • Informal academic conversation	• Direct vocabulary instruction in use (teacher led) • Academic Discourse is evident • Informal academic conversation
Instruction	• Direct instruction • Modeling/Demonstration • Guided Practice • Teacher is following district approved/aligned (pacing guide)	• Direct instruction • Modeling/Demonstration • Monitored Independent Student Practice • Teacher is following district approved/aligned (pacing guide)	• Direct instruction • Modeling/Demonstration • Guided Practice • Monitored Independent Student Practice • Teacher is following district approved/aligned (pacing guide)

Teacher: Sadie Building: B Elementary Grade: Fourth	Round 1 Date: 9/22/20 Time In: 10:00am Time Out: 11:00am	Round 2 Date: 10/29/20 Time In: 10:15am Time Out: 11:00am	Round 3 Date: 12/16/20 Time In: 10:15am Time Out: 11:00am
	• Teacher is using district adopted resources	• Teacher is using district adopted resources	• Teacher is using district adopted resources
Support Staff effective support	• N/A	• N/A	• N/A
Bloom's/DOK	• Strategic Thinking • Comparing • Contrasting	• Skill//Concept • Explaining	• Strategic Thinking • Examining • Defending
Better Readers grant rubrics			
Culturally Responsive Teaching	3-Proficient	2-Developing	3-Proficient
Comprehension Instruction Reflection Rubric	3-Proficient	1-Emerging	2-Developing
Explicit Vocabulary Instruction Reflection Rubric	N/A	2-Developing	1-Emerging

Instruction observed in Sadie's classroom showed the use of a variety of instructional strategies, as shown in Table 4.4. During the observations, comprehension and vocabulary instruction took place. She guided her instruction each time with the use of her mastery objectives. Sadie checked for understanding using a variety of formats, such as oral language, questioning, and writing. Throughout her instruction, Sadie provided specific feedback to her students. During each observation, she followed district suggested pacing and used district adopted resources to guide her instruction. Within the lessons observed, she provided instruction that followed the gradual release of responsibility. Learning took place at a higher level of thinking typically, as she exposed students to strategic thinking through opportunities of

comparing, contrasting, examining, and defending. Sadie's instruction and classroom environment ranked as proficient using the culturally responsive teaching rubric.

Some areas observed that did not reflect Sadie's philosophy statement included: (a) positive and negative student/teacher interactions, (b) academic and language experiences, (c) comprehension instruction, and (d) explicit vocabulary instruction. Positive student/teacher interactions decreased while negative student/teacher interactions increased. The use of academic and language experiences decrease throughout the observations. Comprehension instruction, according to the Better Readers grant rubric, fluctuated from round one to round three. Sadie's explicit vocabulary instruction declined during observations, as reflected in the grant rubric.

Field Notes

During round one, Sadie set high expectations and used a high level of language when addressing the students, such as using the phrase "spur your memory." She did not instruct the students using the phonics mini-lesson. Sadie skipped over the lesson when she got to that segment in the ELA resource. The students used vocabulary notecards to assist in their academic discourse discussions. Sadie monitored students during academic discourse and joined in their conversations. When announcing the page number to students, Sadie provided the number in English and Spanish. She had students use their books many times to justify their answers to questions during academic discourse.

During round two observations, Sadie's class reviewed points-of-view as they thought in terms of, "Who is telling the story?" The class distinguished between first person and third person. Then, Sadie read the story aloud to the students utilizing the online read-aloud feature. She explained to the students that they would be reading chapters four through six today. She stopped the read-aloud after two pages and discussed the idea that the boy in the story had. The

students then engaged in informal academic discourse. One student conversed with a student on the computer that was learning remotely due to being in quarantine. The students began discussing the boy's idea using the sentence stem, "I think it's a good idea/not a good idea because…" Sadie provided the sentence stem to the students verbally and used the turn-to-a-partner strategy throughout the lesson.

While Sadie taught vocabulary words to the students, she had them repeat the word with her, provided a definition and cognate aloud to the students, and showed the students the words in the context of the book. She had the students use one word in the context of their own lives during a discussion. Sadie utilized a picture in the book to explain one of the vocabulary words (horizon). As the class arrived at chapter six in the online read-aloud, the book began having technical issues, so Sadie continued the read-aloud herself. The students engaged in another turn-to-partner discussion based on the point of view. A few groups shared out and three of the students who shared with the class justified their thinking using text evidence.

During round three, Sadie provided explicit vocabulary instruction for the word "potlatch." She explained the word as a giveaway of elaborate gifts to those who attend an important event or feast. The students worked through a cause-and-effect graphic organizer together with "what" and "why" prompts. Students discussed finding the effect after the teacher provided the cause during listening comprehension.

Dalila

Teaching Philosophy Statement

Table 4.5

Dalila's Teaching Philosophy

Dalila's Teaching Philosophy
My philosophy of education is that everyone deserves an education. That a good instruction changes with time and modification with student's needs. An educator is always researching and using research based resources to help students succeed. For students to learn they need to feel welcomed and in a safe environment. For students to learn, educators need to always have a clear focus and a pathway for all students' success. For all students success it is a work in progress between Administrators, teachers, students, and parents. Everyone in the team has one equal goal and that is for students to be successful.

Dalila's teaching philosophy, as presented in Table 4.5, provided a combination of expectations that focused on students, adults, and the environment. Her philosophy mentioned multiple stakeholders responsible for the success of students sharing one goal and the need of modifications to meet student needs, as success is "a work in progress."

Survey Data

Table 4.6

Survey Results for Dalila

		Response
Self-efficacy		
1	I enjoy learning new techniques and strategies.	1-strongly agree
2	I believe in my own ability to guide my students to success.	1-strongly agree
3	I feel confident in my ability to apply professional learning strategies and techniques without instructional coaching.	4-somewhat disagree
4	My professional learning experiences have positively contributed to my self-efficacy.	2-somewhat agree
5	My administrator positively contributes to my self-efficacy.	2-somewhat agree
6	My building culture positively supports teacher self-efficacy.	2-somewhat agree
7	I see myself as a continuous learner	1-strongly agree
Professional Learning		
1	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of building PLCs* meet my needs as a continuous learner.	2-somewhat agree
2	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of grade level PLCs* meet my needs as a continuous learner.	2-somewhat agree
3	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of instructional coaching (this includes a range of experiences*	1-strongly agree

		Response
	from seeking informal information or assistance from the instructional coach to going through a formal coaching cycle) meet my needs as a continuous learner. (Mark "not applicable" if this doesn't apply to you)	
4	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of mentoring (this includes both paid mentoring and non-paid buddy mentors that assist new teachers during their new teacher training year)* meet my needs as a continuous learner. (Mark "not applicable" if this doesn't apply to you)	1-strongly agree
5	Professional learning opportunities provided *in a large group setting (at the district office)* meet my need as a continuous learner.	3-neither agree nor disagree
6	Professional learning opportunities provided by an out-of-the-district agency, at an outside location, but paid for my Ad Astra public schools meet my needs as a continuous learner. (Mark "not applicable" if you did not attend any "out-of-the-district" professional learning opportunities this year)	2-somewhat agree
7	Ad Astra public schools provides an adequate amount of professional learning opportunities that meet my needs as a continuous learner.	1-strongly agree
8	The professional learning opportunities I have experienced at Ad Astra public schools have improved my teaching quality.	1-strongly agree
9	I am satisfied with the *amount* of professional learning opportunities available to me at Ad Astra public schools.	1-strongly agree
10	I am satisfied with the *quality* of professional learning opportunities available to me at Ad Astra public schools.	2-somewhat agree

Dalila provided her perceptions regarding her teaching self-efficacy and professional learning through a survey. Table 4.6 displays Dalila's perceptions as she entered her fifth year in education. Dalila agreed, at various levels of agreement, with all but one of the statements pertaining to teaching self-efficacy. She disagreed that she was confident to apply professional learning strategies without instructional coaching. Dalila also agreed with all but one of the statements regarding professional learning. She neither agreed nor disagreed that professional learning opportunities in a large group setting at the district office meet her needs as a continuous learner.

Interviews & Participant Journals

Professional Learning Definitions/Understanding. In her first interview, Dalila defined professional learning as "learning from a reliable source, like continuous learning."

What Professional Learning Looks Like (Positive Perceptions). In her third interview, Dalila said she enjoyed learning through instructional coaching cycles, particularly when her team focused on phonics and vocabulary instruction. In the same interview, Dalila said she perceived an improvement in the district-provided professional learning experiences over the years with a decline in large group settings and a push for more targeted learning. In her second interview, Dalila said that establishing a teaching focus is easiest when administrators provide and uphold clear building expectations.

Frustrations in Professional Learning (Negative Perceptions). In her third interview, Dalila said she virtually attended a three-day professional learning experience in during the summer, which advertised student collaboration and engagement skills. In the same interview, Dalila said her prior knowledge helped with this experience, but she felt disengaged by having someone talk at her, rather than allowing her to be an active learner.

Outside Professional Learning. In her third interview, Dalila said she perceived her outside professional learning experience as negative and it took away her excitement about learning with the lack of engagement. Following that statement, Dalila said she was excited to learn the topic, but the format of learning did not lend itself to the topic and experience.

Pre-Service Experiences. In her second interview, Dalila said she perceived a mismatch in the reading instruction she experienced at the university level that focused on teaching "Guided Reading" rather than the specific reading skills necessary to meet her students' needs.

Teaching Practices. In her third interview, Dalila said she found importance in her participation in a coaching cycle focused on phonics, since it was an identified area of weakness for her students based on FastBridge data. In the same interview, Dalila said she and her colleagues taught their students to break down works into smaller units to decode them better. In her third interview, Dalila also said she embedded supports in the forms of examples, images, expressions, and hand gestures into all areas of instruction.

Teaching Self-Efficacy Definitions/Understanding. In her first interview, Dalila defined teaching self-efficacy as "having a growth mindset of learning." In the same interview, Dalila said that having a smaller class size with few behavior issues contributed to a higher level of teaching self-efficacy than she had the previous year.

Teaching Self-Efficacy Positive Perceptions. In her third interview, Dalila said she perceived positive student growth in the form of data, as one way to increase her teaching efficacy. In the same interview, Dalila said she worked "behind the scenes" to differentiate and adjust instruction to would benefit student learning and achievement.

Teaching Self-Efficacy Negative Perceptions. In her third interview, Dalila recalled feeling underprepared in reading instruction when she first entered the field, which for some time negatively contributed to her teaching self-efficacy. In the same interview, Dalila said she set goals for all students using her FastBridge data in the prior year, but mostly monitored student progress this year on her own, as her focused shifted to push her lowest-achieving students to become readers.

Serving Students of Various Populations: Positive Perceptions in Teaching Self-Efficacy. In her third interview, Dalila said her classroom consisted of one newcomer student

and the majority of the rest of the students being ELLs. In the same interview, Dalila said her recent college courses connected with what she learned from the district regarding students of various populations.

In her third interview, Dalila said she set high expectations for her ELL students to ensure success, such as exposing all students to grade-level curricula like the phonics instruction within ReadyGen. In the same interview, Dalila said she felt like it provided a repetitive format and routine that allowed students to take in the instruction. In her third interview, Dalila said she translated less for some of her ELL students, like her newcomer, who relied heavily on everything in Spanish. In the same interview, Dalila said she found importance in relating students' backgrounds to the instruction, which she said was more natural for her as an ELL student herself. In her third interview, Dalila said she used her own experiences to provided necessary support within her instruction, such as hand gestures, pictures, and cognates.

Serving Students of Various Populations: Negative Perceptions in Teaching Self-Efficacy. In her first interview, Dalila said she was frustrated with the repetitiveness and lack of new knowledge perceived by the district provided culturally responsive teaching trainings. In the same interview, Dalila said she felt as if she struggled with finding the necessary interventions for a few students who were not ELLs but low learners. She followed that statement and said she perceived her newcomer making good progress, but now she felt the need problem solve the situation with the low learners, especially those who had been in the building since kindergarten and did not respond to intensive instruction she provided.

Observations

Table 4.7
Observation Results for Dalila

Teacher: Dalila Building: SS Elementary Grade: Third	Round 1 Date: 9/24/20 Time In: 12:00pm Time Out: 1:05pm	Round 2 Date: 10/21/20 Time In: 12:00pm Time Out: 12:45pm	Round 3 Date: 12/9/20 Time In: 12:00pm Time Out: 12:55pm
Number of Students	14	14	12
Students Engaged In	• Comprehension • Phonics	• Comprehension • Vocabulary • Phonics	• Comprehension • Vocabulary • Phonics
Period	• Beginning • Middle • End	• Beginning • Middle	• Beginning • Middle • End
The learning objective states what the students will learn and how the learning will be demonstrated.	Yes	Yes	Yes
The learning objective matches what students are learning.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Students know and understand the mastery objective.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Checks for Understanding/ Formative Assessment	• Oral language • Questioning	• Oral language • Writing	• Oral language
Teacher provides specific feedback	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student/Teacher Interactions	• Positive-2 • Negative-0	• Positive-1 • Negative-3	• Positive-2 • Negative-0
Academic and Language Experiences	• Non-linguistic representations	• Non-linguistic representations • Direct vocabulary instruction in use (teacher led) • Academic Discourse is evident	• Direct vocabulary instruction in use (teacher led) • Academic Discourse is evident

Teacher: Dalila Building: SS Elementary Grade: Third	Round 1 Date: 9/24/20 Time In: 12:00pm Time Out: 1:05pm	Round 2 Date: 10/21/20 Time In: 12:00pm Time Out: 12:45pm	Round 3 Date: 12/9/20 Time In: 12:00pm Time Out: 12:55pm
		• Informal academic conversation	• Informal academic conversation
Instruction	• Direct instruction • Modeling/Demonstration • Teacher is following district approved/aligned (pacing guide) • Teacher is using district adopted resources	• Direct instruction • Modeling/Demonstration • Monitored Independent Student Practice • Teacher is following district approved/aligned (pacing guide) • Teacher is using district adopted resources	• Direct instruction • Modeling/Demonstration • Guided Practice • Monitored Independent Student Practice • Teacher is following district approved/aligned (pacing guide) • Teacher is using district adopted resources
Support Staff effective support	• N/A	• N/A	• N/A
Bloom's/DOK	• Recall • Describing	• Skill//Concept • Explaining	• Skill/Concept • Explaining
Better Readers grant rubrics			
Culturally Responsive Teaching	2-Developing	1-Emerging	2-Developing
Comprehension Instruction Reflection Rubric	1-Emerging	1-Emerging	1-Emerging
Word Recognition Instruction Reflection Rubric	1-Emerging	1-Emerging	0-Not Evident
Explicit Vocabulary Instruction Reflection Rubric	N/A	2-Developing	1-Emerging

Dalila's instruction reflected a variety of instructional strategies throughout the observations, as presented in Table 4.7. Comprehension, vocabulary, and phonics instruction occurred during observations. She utilized mastery objectives each time and checked for understanding using oral language checks each time and questioning and writing once. Dalila provided specific feedback to her students during each observation. She followed district suggested pacing and used district adopted resources to guide her instruction each time. Dalila increased the use of academic and language experiences within her instruction. Her use of components in the gradual release of responsibility increased over time. Dalila increased the depth of knowledge in her instruction during observations as she moved students from the recall level to the skill/concept level. The amount of positive and negative student/teacher interactions fluctuated, but improved during the last observation.

Some areas observed that did not reflect Dalila's philosophy statement included: (a) culturally responsive teaching, (b) comprehension instruction, (c) word recognition instruction, and (d) explicit vocabulary instruction. Dalila's culturally responsive teaching practices fluctuated from developing to emerging, but then went back up to developing. Comprehension instruction, according to the Better Readers grant rubric, continued at the emerging level throughout all observations. Dalila's word recognition instruction and explicit vocabulary instruction declined during observations, as reflected in the grant rubrics.

Field Notes

During round one, limited field notes occurred during Dalila's observation. Field notes taken mentioned that she had separate mastery objectives that she communicated to the students during the phonics and comprehension portions of the lesson.

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Round two's observation in Dalila's class noted, that the mastery objective posted and communicated was for the phonics portion of the lesson. Students learned high-frequency words that Dalila wrote on the board. The students read the words together as Dalila provided feedback. She gave each student a sticky note with a word on it and students wrote a sentence using the word. Dalila walked around as the students began writing, reminding them of what makes a good sentence and provided specific feedback. Next, the class reviewed the vocabulary from the previous day by talking about each word, the definition, and its use in the context of the reading. Students engaged in academic discourse about the vocabulary words. The students modeled the expectations of academic discourse during a turn-to-a-partner discussion, but the conversations were very informal. No whole group talking accountability took place, such as a share-out. Then, the students worked on a vocabulary task in their reader's and writer's journal. Dalila began the computer read-aloud from the text collection about the Athabascans. The students discussed the old and new ways of doing various things mentioned in the text. Once the students finished listening to the reading, they began constructing the text's main idea on a graphic organizer.

For round three, Dalila started her instruction with a phonics practice routine, having students identify words with suffixes using a decodable reader. She then explicitly taught students three vocabulary words using the Frayer model in their vocabulary journal. The students listened to the new book as a read-aloud using the online book feature. During the read-aloud, Dalila stopped the reading to discuss the setting and the purpose of the song in the book, which allowed students to make inferences. Students then finished answering other comprehension questions independently in their reader's and writer's journal.

Samantha

Teaching Philosophy Statement

Table 4.8

Samantha's Teaching Philosophy

Samantha's Teaching Philosophy
Students learn best when they feel welcomed, comfortable, and safe.

Samantha's teaching philosophy, as presented in Table 4.8, emphasized the environment that supports student success. The environment must be one that makes students feel welcomed, comfortable, and safe.

Survey Data

Table 4.9

Survey Results for Samantha

		Response
Self-efficacy		
1	I enjoy learning new techniques and strategies.	2-somewhat agree
2	I believe in my own ability to guide my students to success.	4-somewhat disagree
3	I feel confident in my ability to apply professional learning strategies and techniques without instructional coaching.	4-somewhat disagree
4	My professional learning experiences have positively contributed to my self-efficacy.	2-somewhat agree
5	My administrator positively contributes to my self-efficacy.	4-somewhat disagree
6	My building culture positively supports teacher self-efficacy.	2-somewhat agree
7	I see myself as a continuous learner	1-strongly agree
Professional Learning		
1	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of building PLCs* meet my needs as a continuous learner.	2-somewhat agree
2	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of grade level PLCs* meet my needs as a continuous learner.	1-strongly agree
3	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of instructional coaching (this includes a range of experiences from seeking informal information or assistance from the instructional coach to going through a formal coaching cycle)* meet my needs as a continuous learner. (Mark "not applicable" if this doesn't apply to you)	2-somewhat agree
4	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of mentoring (this includes both paid mentoring and non-paid*	4-somewhat disagree

		Response
	buddy mentors that assist new teachers during their new teacher training year) meet my needs as a continuous learner. (Mark "not applicable" if this doesn't apply to you)	
5	Professional learning opportunities provided *in a large group setting (at the district office)* meet my need as a continuous learner.	0-not applicable
6	Professional learning opportunities provided by an out-of-the-district agency, at an outside location, but paid for my Ad Astra public schools meet my needs as a continuous learner. (Mark "not applicable" if you did not attend any "out-of-the-district" professional learning opportunities this year)	4-somewhat disagree
7	Ad Astra public schools provides an adequate amount of professional learning opportunities that meet my needs as a continuous learner.	1-strongly agree
8	The professional learning opportunities I have experienced at Ad Astra public schools have improved my teaching quality.	1-strongly agree
9	I am satisfied with the *amount* of professional learning opportunities available to me at Ad Astra public schools.	1-strongly agree
10	I am satisfied with the *quality* of professional learning opportunities available to me at Ad Astra public schools.	3-neither agree nor disagree

Samantha expressed her perceptions regarding her teaching self-efficacy and professional learning through a survey. Table 4.9 displays her perceptions as she entered her seventh year in the profession. Samantha agreed, at various levels of agreement, with four of the seven statements pertaining to her teaching self-efficacy. She disagreed with statements that included: (a) her ability to guide students to success, (b) her ability to apply professional learning strategies without instructional coaching, and (c) her administrator positively contributed to her teaching self-efficacy. Samantha agreed, at various levels of agreement, with six of the nine statements she answered regarding professional learning. She disagreed that mentoring provided by the district and outside-of-the-district professional learning opportunities meet her needs as a continuous learner. Samantha neither agreed nor disagreed that she was satisfied with the quality of professional learning opportunities available to her at Ad Astra public schools.

Interviews & Participant Journals

Professional Learning Definitions/Understanding. In her first interview, Samantha said professional learning was a way to improve practice, which can be different from day-to-day, necessary to meet the needs seen in the classroom.

What Professional Learning Looks Like (Positive Perceptions). In her first and third interviews, Samantha said she viewed professional learning as: (a) learning and having time to process it before applying it, (b) helpful when targeted, (c) provided at the building level, and (d) supported by data. In her third interview, Samantha said she recently experienced professional learning over writing mastery objectives and higher-level thinking skills. In the same interview, Samantha said she continued to learn about what would best help her students because knowing that the learned skills can result in student growth motivates her.

Frustrations in Professional Learning (Negative Perceptions). In her first interview, Samantha said she felt frustrated with her prior experience of outside professional learning and her recent experiences with online professional learning. In her third interview, Samantha said she enjoyed the knowledge she received from an outside experience, but was unable to apply the practices in her classroom. In her third interview, Samantha said she felt frustrated with online professional learning because it lacked the modeling with students.

Pre-Service Experiences. In her second interview, Samantha said her adult learning opportunities began as she earned a degree in liberal studies, due to her university not having an early childhood degree program. Following that statement, Samantha said she decided to take some time off with life and eventually returned to college, seeking endorsements in early childhood and reading. In her second interview, Samantha said the areas she received endorsements in ended up being most beneficial when setting foot in a classroom for the first

time. In the same interview, Samantha said she perceived the work necessary to receive her liberal arts degree did not adequately prepared her for the students she served, as she did not get to experience methods courses. In her second interview, Samantha said she perceived the lack of methods courses left her with a knowledge gap in using curriculum and resources along with a minimal understanding of pedagogy. In the same interview, Samantha said her confidence in teaching came from her early childhood experiences she gained when she ran a daycare in her home, although she felt like she had "no idea how to teach vocabulary and math."

Teaching Practices. In her second interview, Samantha said she felt inadequately prepared. She described teaching practices that she learned and applied while teaching for Ad Astra public schools that have helped address student needs while building her confidence. In her second interview, Samantha said she used her knowledge of early childhood concepts to fill in student gaps in concepts of print. She described how her students started the school year with little understanding of navigating a book, and with her focus on concepts of print, Samantha began seeing an improvement in this area. In the same interview, Samantha said she brought the students back to some familiarity and comfort with classroom routines, such as sitting on the carpet for a read-aloud. In her first participant journal, Samantha said she purposely embedded opportunities to talk about book features to increase student understanding of concepts of print.

In her second participant journal, Samantha said that ReadyGen required students to move straight into skills that she perceived as complex reading skills, such as understanding the central message, comparing/contrasting two texts, analyzing the text, and participating in discussions during close reading. She described providing more modeling opportunities and examples in her instruction to over the challenges students faced learning the skills. In her second interview, Samantha said she moved from using sticky notes in her manual to using

presentations on the SMART Board to pace lessons and provide more visuals and movement. In her first participant journal, Samantha said she worked on her partnering configurations and added brain breaks to keep the students' attention and up the lessons' engagement.

In her second interview, Samantha described utilizing graphic organizers during the reading analysis portion as a work in progress since the previous ELA program, Making Meaning, did not require students to participate in such complex learning assignments. In her first interview, Samantha said students entered her class with a lack of understanding in writing, which posed a challenge for her. She described working through this issue by keeping the gradual release of responsibility in mind. In addition, Samantha explained how she began asking students what to scribe in the graphic organizers and, over time, moved into student independence within this skill.

In her first participant journal, Samantha said she felt the need to fine-tune her academic discourse practices since ReadyGen incorporated them so often. She described pairing students up using a specific format to ensure they stayed on topic and engaged. In the same participant journal, Samantha said she continued working on this practice and began feeling successful as students correctly answered questions, especially in the context of real-life examples. In her second participant journal, Samantha said she made this practice routine in her classroom, as she began focusing on digging deeper into the text and forming higher-level thinking questions that required students to cite text evidence.

In her third interview, Samantha said she addressed student misunderstandings on the spot, starting with long vowel sounds/spelling patterns. She described phonics, as an area of practice that she learned through the Better Readers grant along with an instructional coaching

cycle. In her third interview, Samantha said she worked to provide necessary supports to help her students understand opinion writing by ensuring that students received adequate and quality writing instruction.

Teaching Self-Efficacy Definitions/Understanding. In her first interview, Samantha said teaching self-efficacy was "your view of yourself and effectiveness as a teacher."

Teaching Self-Efficacy Positive Perceptions. In her first interview, Samantha said her efficacy increased as her students recognized their ability to complete tasks or as they realized the progress they made. In the same interview, Samantha said she realized early on that her students entered her classroom with learning gaps and she decided to turn this experience into a positive note by saying that "the only way they can move is up." In her second interview, Samantha said she looked to her team for support through collaboration, reflection, encouragement, and confirmation that they experienced similar trends, which she said contributed positively to her teaching self-efficacy. In the same interview, Samantha said she perceived an increase in her teaching self-efficacy when she felt like her lessons flowed better and the class accomplished more as she changed up the format she used to present ELA instruction. In her second participant journal, Samantha said she perceived student participation in retelling, finishing sentences, and answering questions specific to the text as experiences that increased her teaching self-efficacy. In the same participant journal, Samantha said she continued to adjust her checks for understanding using questioning by adding a discussion about the story's central message.

Teaching Self-Efficacy Negative Perceptions. In her first and second interviews, Samantha said she perceived a decrease in her teaching self-efficacy in her experiences with

administrators. In her first interview, Samantha said the presence of an evaluator, made her feel

unsure about whether she had their approval or not and sometimes feeling like she "was not good

enough."

In her second interview, Samantha described a timeline of experiences with

administrators that she perceived as negative influences to her teaching self-efficacy. She

followed up and explained how she moved into an early childhood teaching position in another

state without genuinely understanding pedagogy. She described her principal as being present

but never providing any helpful or specific feedback. In her second interview, Samantha said she

felt like she knew what to do as she moved into the district and experienced her first

administrator at Ad Astra public schools. She described how the principal never provided her

with beneficial feedback and suddenly decided to "flip a switch" one day. She said he only

provided negative feedback from that point on. She continued by explaining how shortly after

this change, the principal raised his voice to her and threatened her job. In her second interview,

Samantha said the experience with this administrator contributed to her feelings of defeat and she

worried about the instability it could cause for her family. She described how this experience

brought her teaching self-efficacy down very low. In the same interview, Samantha said she

experienced another principal the next year and was unsure of the new expectations. She

descried the worry she experienced when thinking about whether her new principal would make

her feel like the previous principal did. In her second interview, Samantha said she perceived the

relationship starting out negatively, but she at least like she understood the principal's

expectations better and worked to leave a positive impression on the principal with her effort.

Samantha explained that until she experienced more approval from the principal, this issue

would continue to be a concern that negatively affects her teaching self-efficacy.

In her third interview and participant journal, Samantha said her confidence took another hit when she had to stay home for two months during the first semester due to Covid-19. She described how her absence meant, "students have not gotten instruction from me in a while," and acknowledged the negative impact on students because of this. In her third interview, Samantha said a substitute taught her students, while the instructional coach kept up with her assessments during her absence. She described the impact her absence had on the quality of instruction students received and mentioned, "There was no way to make up for the lost time." In her third interview, Samantha described the struggle she experienced after her return to get students where they needed to be with a lack of foundational skills, especially phonemic awareness and phonics. She described not having an accurate understanding of students' writing abilities, as she perceived most writing instruction and practice during her absence as "copying what the substitute wrote on the board." In her third participant journal, Samantha said her mission in ELA instruction changed to provide the scaffolding necessary for her students to gain pertinent knowledge in writing, reading analysis, and use of graphic organizers.

In her third interview, Samantha said she perceived many roadblocks holding her back from experiencing an increase in teaching self-efficacy, but as her students continued to show growth, her confidence increased. She described the importance of staying optimistic about filling student gaps along with increasing her own teaching self-efficacy along with way.

Serving Students of Various Populations: Positive Perceptions in Teaching Self-Efficacy. In her third interview, Samantha said she viewed herself as a "beginning learner in working with ELL students," but recognized progress made while teaching for Ad Astra public schools. She described the importance of increasing her knowledge by continuing her education in pursuit of a master's degree in English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). In the same

interview, Samantha said she perceived the need to apply ELL strategies she connected with in her graduate courses, which the district first introduced to her.

In her second interview, Samantha said she perceived the need for familiarity and routine in her classroom and decided to focus in this area as she observed students struggling. She added on by acknowledging the need to build student understanding in reading analysis and writing and started working on this goal by dictating student thoughts. In her first participant journal, Samantha said once her students showed an understanding of academic discourse procedures, they used learned words and topics in the context of real-world experiences. In her third interview, Samantha said she observed student success at this procedure, which helped increase her teaching self-efficacy. She described how students began practicing task at a higher level of learning. In the same interview, Samantha said continued the work she started to ensure success in student participation of academic conversations as a way to check their understanding.

Serving Students of Various Populations: Negative Perceptions in Teaching Self-Efficacy. In her second and third interviews, Samantha said she hesitated working with students of various populations because she perceived her lack of training as an inadequacy in her abilities and wished for more experience or training prior to teaching. She described feeling unconfident and "over her head," even as she learned strategies to best serve her students. In her third interview, Samantha said her experience with students of various populations helped her increase her teaching self-efficacy, especially as she continued seeking ways to fill in student gaps.

Observations

Table 4.10
Observation Results for Samantha

Teacher: Samantha Building: C Elementary Grade: First	Round 1 Date: 9/21/20 Time In: 11:00am Time Out: 11:40am	Round 2 Date: 10/27/20 Time In: 11:00am Time Out: 11:45am	Round 3 Date: 1/7/21 Time In: 10:45am Time Out: 11:40am
Number of Students	21	22	22
Students Engaged In	• Comprehension • Vocabulary	• Comprehension	• Comprehension • Vocabulary • Phonics
Period	• Beginning • Middle • End	• Beginning • Middle	• Beginning • Middle • End
The learning objective states what the students will learn and how the learning will be demonstrated.	Yes	Yes	Yes
The learning objective matches what students are learning.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Students know and understand the mastery objective.	No	No	Yes
Checks for Understanding/ Formative Assessment	• Oral language	• Oral language	• Oral language
Teacher provides specific feedback	Yes	No	Yes
Student/Teacher Interactions	• Positive-2 • Negative-7	• Positive-2 • Negative-8	• Positive-7 • Negative-4
Academic and Language Experiences	• Direct vocabulary instruction in use (teacher led)	• Non-linguistic representations • Academic Discourse is evident • Informal academic conversation	• Non-linguistic representations • Direct vocabulary instruction in use (teacher led)

Teacher: Samantha Building: C Elementary Grade: First	Round 1 Date: 9/21/20 Time In: 11:00am Time Out: 11:40am	Round 2 Date: 10/27/20 Time In: 11:00am Time Out: 11:45am	Round 3 Date: 1/7/21 Time In: 10:45am Time Out: 11:40am
			- Academic Discourse is evident - Informal academic conversation
Instruction	- Direct instruction - Modeling/Demonstration - Teacher is following district approved/aligned (pacing guide) - Teacher is using district adopted resources	- Direct instruction - Monitored Independent Student Practice - Teacher is following district approved/aligned (pacing guide) - Teacher is using district adopted resources	- Direct instruction - Modeling/Demonstration - Guided Practice - Teacher is following district approved/aligned (pacing guide) - Teacher is using district adopted resources
Support Staff effective support	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bloom's/DOK	- Recall - Recalling	- Skill//Concept - Explaining	- Skill/Concept - Summarizing - Demonstrating
Better Readers grant rubrics			
Culturally Responsive Teaching	1-Emerging	1-Emerging	2-Developing
Comprehension Instruction Reflection Rubric	1-Emerging	1-Emerging	0-Not Evident
Word Recognition Instruction Reflection Rubric	N/A	N/A	1-Emerging

Teacher: Samantha Building: C Elementary Grade: First	Round 1 Date: 9/21/20 Time In: 11:00am Time Out: 11:40am	Round 2 Date: 10/27/20 Time In: 11:00am Time Out: 11:45am	Round 3 Date: 1/7/21 Time In: 10:45am Time Out: 11:40am
Explicit Vocabulary Instruction Reflection Rubric	2-Developing	N/A	1-Emerging

Samantha's instruction demonstrated a variety of instructional strategies throughout the observations, as presented in Table 4.10. Comprehension, vocabulary, and phonics instruction occurred during observations. She used mastery objectives to guide her instruction each time and checked for understanding using oral language checks. Samantha provided specific feedback to her students a majority of the time during observations. She followed district suggested pacing and used district adopted resources. Samantha improved student/teacher interactions by decreasing negative interactions and increasing positive interactions. She increased academic and language experiences within her instruction and her use of components in the gradual release of responsibility. Samantha modeled effective use of support staff interacting with her class. The depth of knowledge in her instruction increased from recall to the skill/concept level. In addition, Samantha increased the quality of culturally responsive teaching that took place during observations.

Some areas observed that did not reflect growth included: (a) a variety of checks for understanding, (b) lack of independent practice for students, (c) comprehension instruction, (d) word recognition instruction, and (e) explicit vocabulary instruction. Samantha's checks for understanding only took place in the form of oral language checks. Her use of monitored independent practice occurred during one observation. Samantha's comprehension, word

recognition, and explicit vocabulary instruction either decreased or remained at a low level of quality as described using the Better Readers grant rubric.

Field Notes

During round one, information regarding Samantha's support staff mentioned how one of the paras had excellent proximity and further explained information to students. The other paraprofessional in the room helped support students, but distracted the class for a moment. Samantha questioned the students about the title of the book. Students attempted to echo read along while Samantha read, which seemed to distract students. She asked the students to discuss different ways that animals sleep. Samantha did not provide a sentence stem for the discussion. When she asked groups to share out, students seemed unsure of the expectations and disengaged. Samantha moved on to another group without addressing the students being off task. Students participated in a check for understanding using a thumbs-up/down strategy, which had unclear directions. When Samantha asked the students questions, many discussed off-topic items or did not want to share. Students that Samantha chose to talk continued volunteering to share out while others had no accountability for their talk. For a majority of lesson, a student in the back row had his head down and never addressed by Samantha or the support staff.

During round two, Samantha read the mastery objective from her screen to the students, but the students did not seem to understand it. She did not teach the phonics instruction during the observation. Samantha had three paraprofessionals supporting her classroom when I first arrived. Two of the support staff left throughout the lesson, and only Samantha's classroom para professional stayed. As Samantha started the lesson, she conducted a picture walk of a section of two different texts. In one story, the students recalled the text's repetitiveness and chanted parts

as they came to it. Then, one student asked why the book mentioned a collar on the girl's shirt if she was not a dog. Samantha explained the difference between a shirt collar and a dog collar.

Samantha's students participated in an academic discourse conversation about how the characters in the book were helping others. Towards the end of the reading, she told the students to discuss how the teachers and students in the book felt when the principal mentioned, "Everyone was not learning." Samantha then said, "Turn to a partner and discuss how they are feeling." All at once, the students turned to their partners and said, "How are they feeling?" Samantha did not provide clear expectations for this task. Partner talk accountability and overall feedback from students showed a low understanding of what the principal's concern in the story. Samantha had the students get up from the rug to participate in a different academic discourse structure. Some students did not understand what was going on in the picture they discussed, which showed a picture of a girl jumping rope. After this section of the lesson, Samantha informed the students on their task to compare two stories. She told the students, "Comparing is when you describe how two or more things are different." In addition to this confusion, Samantha stopped the lesson suddenly and began practicing blending and segmenting nonsense words with the students.

During Samantha's third observation, the mastery objective stated the learning goal for the comprehension portion of the lesson. She showed students a supermarket picture to build background knowledge, and the class discussed parts of the image. Samantha moved into the foundational mini-lesson by posting a list of words for the class to read together that they previously learned—Samantha selected words for the students to use in a sentence. During one example, she showed the students how a student changed the word "come" to "coming" and explained –ing endings. The class worked through the word "be" in a similar format. Then, the

class worked on blending, segmenting, and decoding contractions. Samantha had the help of

three support staff in the room, two paraprofessionals, and one substitute that works within the

building. The paraprofessionals helped with classroom management and kept students on task.

Students listened to Samantha read the text aloud as the manual gave her the expectation

to read the whole book today. Before starting, Samantha asked students questions about the title,

author, and illustrator. Students discussed what they noticed and predicted what the story would

discuss as well. She taught the students the word supermarket as "a very big market." The class

talked about the supermarkets we have in town. Samantha used a PowerPoint presentation to

pace her lesson without having to refer to the manual. The students tried to get off task and

caused the lesson to take a little longer than needed. Toward the end of the lesson, the students

participated in an informal academic discourse activity and discussed what they could buy at a

supermarket. The lesson stopped after this point for recess and lunch and Samantha did not make

it through the whole lesson during the observation.

Amy

Teaching Philosophy Statement

Table 4.11

Amy's Teaching Philosophy

Amy's Teaching Philosophy
I believe that my job as a teacher is not just to teach the students what is on the curriculum. It expands beyond that. My goal is to teach my students how to succeed in life by helping them realize they are each their own individual, who are capable of anything they work hard for.

Amy's teaching philosophy, as presented in Table 4.11, focused on the adult's responsibilities to create successful learners. Her philosophy described not only the need to expose students to the curriculum, but what steps to take in order to be successful in life.

Survey Data

Table 4.12

Survey Results for Amy

		Response
Self-efficacy		
1	I enjoy learning new techniques and strategies.	2-somewhat agree
2	I believe in my own ability to guide my students to success.	2-somewhat agree
3	I feel confident in my ability to apply professional learning strategies and techniques without instructional coaching.	2-somewhat agree
4	My professional learning experiences have positively contributed to my self-efficacy.	1-strongly agree
5	My administrator positively contributes to my self-efficacy.	2-somewhat agree
6	My building culture positively supports teacher self-efficacy.	1-strongly agree
7	I see myself as a continuous learner	1-strongly agree
Professional Learning		
1	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of building PLCs* meet my needs as a continuous learner.	3-neither agree nor disagree
2	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of grade level PLCs* meet my needs as a continuous learner.	3-neither agree nor disagree
3	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of instructional coaching (this includes a range of experiences from seeking informal information or assistance from the instructional coach to going through a formal coaching cycle)* meet my needs as a continuous learner. (Mark "not applicable" if this doesn't apply to you)	1-strongly agree
4	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of mentoring (this includes both paid mentoring and non-paid buddy mentors that assist new teachers during their new teacher training year)* meet my needs as a continuous learner. (Mark "not applicable" if this doesn't apply to you)	2-somewhat agree
5	Professional learning opportunities provided *in a large group setting (at the district office)* meet my need as a continuous learner.	4-somewhat disagree
6	Professional learning opportunities provided by an out-of-the-district agency, at an outside location, but paid for my Ad Astra public schools meet my needs as a continuous learner. (Mark "not applicable" if you	2-somewhat agree

		Response
	did not attend any "out-of-the-district" professional learning opportunities this year)	
7	Ad Astra public schools provides an adequate amount of professional learning opportunities that meet my needs as a continuous learner.	1-strongly agree
8	The professional learning opportunities I have experienced at Ad Astra public schools have improved my teaching quality.	3-neither agree nor disagree
9	I am satisfied with the *amount* of professional learning opportunities available to me at Ad Astra public schools.	3-neither agree nor disagree
10	I am satisfied with the *quality* of professional learning opportunities available to me at Ad Astra public schools.	3-neither agree nor disagree

Amy indicated her perceptions regarding her teaching self-efficacy and professional learning through a survey. Table 4.12 displays her perceptions as she entered her first year in the profession. Amy agreed, at various levels of agreement, with all of the statements pertaining to her teaching self-efficacy. She agreed, at various levels of agreement, with four of the 10 statements regarding professional learning. She disagreed that large group professional learning opportunities at the district office meet her needs as a continuous learner. Amy neither agreed nor disagreed that professional learning in the form of building level and grade level PLCs meet her needs as a learner. She also neither agreed nor disagreed that she was satisfied with the amount and quality professional learning opportunities available to her in the district. Amy neither agreed nor disagreed that professional learning opportunities that she had experienced at Ad Astra public schools have improved her teaching quality.

Interviews & Participant Journals

Professional Learning Definitions/Understanding. In her first interview, Amy defined professional learning as "expanding your knowledge in something." She added that even after becoming a licensed teacher, it is important to continue learning.

What Professional Learning Looks Like (Positive Perceptions). In her first interview,

Amy said her preferred format of professional learning was when she had the opportunity to

work one-on-one with her instructional coach or in a small group of her colleagues. She

continued and said she appreciated watching the instructional coach model a lesson to put into

action within her classroom. In the same interview, Amy said the feedback from her observation

lessons was another favored element of instructional coaching. In her third interview, Amy said

she enjoyed learning experiences that ranged from working with her colleagues, instructional

coach, and administrator in PLCs to working one-on-one with her administrator during

evaluations. She described how during PLCs she received information to help her determine the

areas to focus on the most with her class as defined by her FastBridge data. In the same

interview, Amy said she appreciated the helpfulness of monthly new teacher meetings she

experienced in the first semester of the 2020-2021 school year.

Frustrations in Professional Learning (Negative Perceptions). In her first interview,

Amy said she experienced frustration over the assumption that she came in knowing certain

instructional practices and information regarding district acronyms, specifically professional

learning communities (PLCs), student intervention teams (SIT), building leadership team (BLT),

culturally responsive teaching (CRT), and explicit vocabulary instruction (EVI). In the same

interview, Amy said she perceived online professional learning opportunities as a format that did

not work. She continued and explained she did not learn well when the presenter lectured a lot,

nor did she like when the learning had too much crammed into it. In her third interview, Amy

said hearing the same topic and ideas many times frustrates her as well.

Pre-Service Experiences. In her second interview, Amy said it was "easier to

understand" the expectations for her since she subbed in the building where she took her

position. She continued by saying that subbing gave her more experience than her university courses. In the same interview, Amy said she had some regret in selecting her pathway because she wished for an authentic student-teaching experience with a cooperating teacher she could observe.

Teaching Practices. For reading instruction, Amy looked for ways to add more supports that strengthened areas where students seemed to have the most need or lacked background knowledge and experience. She described the need for her to reword questions in the reading instruction to assist in student understanding. She witnessed success using this strategy as she checked for student understanding.

In her first participant journal and second interview, Amy said she sought out ways to push her students further in this phonemic awareness and phonics as she recognized it as a vital piece of reading necessary to be successful. In her first interview, Amy said she perceived her students lacked foundational skills and worked to address their needs. She described multiple ways that she filled in student learning gaps, including: (a) reviewing a few sounds per day, (b) being more aware of articulation, (c) working more on letter/sound correspondence, (d) working with manipulatives, and (e) making adjustments as she sees fit to fill the gaps that students have when it comes to being automatic with decoding. In her first participant journal, Amy said she provided additional practice to boost engagement and build on learning by dedicating a few minutes per day for students to read word lists with a partner to build fluency in word reading and decoding.

In her third interview, Amy said she viewed planning as an important element of ensuring effective instruction and continued exploring ReadyGen to gain comfortability and confidence.

She explained that although she did not plan with her colleagues, she found it beneficial to collaborate over engagement strategies.

Teaching Self-Efficacy Definitions. In her first interview, Amy defined teaching self-efficacy as "believing in myself and what I can do."

Teaching Self-Efficacy Positive Perceptions. In her second interview, Amy said she perceived observations and experiences gained through subbing as a helpful element that contributed to her growth in confidence. She described, "Coming in knowing the building expectations and felt well-prepared." In the same interview, Amy said her teaching self-efficacy grew in behavior management as she moved from one classroom to another as a substitute. In her second interview, Amy described the relationship she made and feedback that she received from her administrator as beneficial. Amy described how she appreciated the positive and productive feedback her administrator provided during all observations and evaluations. She said the feedback "reassured her" that she did what was best for her students, which contributed to her teaching self-efficacy. In her first interview, Amy said she utilized calming strategies when she sensed struggle in the class or lesson she taught. She described the importance of taking a break, starting over, or trying a different strategy.

Teaching Self-Efficacy Negative Perceptions. In her first interview, Amy said she perceived that large group learning lowered her teaching self-efficacy. She described how the conversations in larger settings, seemed "over her head," primarily as someone referenced previously taught topics and acronyms. In her second interview, Amy said being right on pace, when her colleagues talked about how behind they were, made her question if she was teaching and pacing well enough. In her third interview, Amy said she felt unsure in her ability to instruct

students during tier two and tier three instruction, along with a lack of understanding of how to use student data.

Serving Students of Various Populations: Positive Perceptions in Teaching Self-Efficacy. In her third interview, Amy said she recalled a class that taught her to embrace culture instead of being blind to it. She described how she wanted increase her understanding of working with diverse learners and their families while becoming bilingual. In the same interview, Amy commented, "It was difficult to always rely on a translator as sometimes things do not get translated over as used in context." In her third interview, Amy said she wanted to understand how to meet her lowest learners' needs during intensive instruction. Amy said she recognized the need to understand the district's progress monitoring tree better, so she can build her confidence in addressing student needs.

Serving Students of Various Populations: Positive Perceptions in Teaching Self-Efficacy. In her first interview, Amy said she perceived her efficacy decreasing during times when she sensed a language barrier happening. In her second interview, Amy said she felt unprepared for the number of struggling students she would teach. She described scenarios presented to her during courses being unrealistic as they discussed one or two students struggling, "not half of the class."

Observations

Table 4.13
Observation Results for Amy

Teacher: Amy Building: C Elementary Grade: Second	Round 1 Date: 9/28/20 Time In: 8:20am Time Out: 9:10am	Round 2 Date: 10/26/20 Time In: 8:20am Time Out: 9:00am	Round 3 Date: 12/1/20 Time In: 9:00am Time Out: 10:00am
Number of Students	17	20	16
Students Engaged In	• Phonics	• Comprehension • Phonics	• Comprehension
Period	• Beginning • Middle	• Beginning • Middle	• Beginning • Middle
The learning objective states what the students will learn and how the learning will be demonstrated.	No	No	Yes
The learning objective matches what students are learning.	No	No	Yes
Students know and understand the mastery objective.	No	No	No
Checks for Understanding/ Formative Assessment	• Oral language • Questioning	• Oral language	• Oral language • Questioning
Teacher provides specific feedback	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student/Teacher Interactions	• Positive-0 • Negative-2	• Positive-0 • Negative-5	• Positive-1 • Negative-0
Academic and Language Experiences	• Non-linguistic representations	None	• Academic Discourse is evident • Informal academic conversation
Instruction	• Modeling/Dem onstration • Guided Practice • Monitored Independent	• Modeling/Dem onstration • Guided Practice • Monitored Independent Student Practice	• Direct instruction • Guided Practice • Teacher is following district

Teacher: Amy Building: C Elementary Grade: Second	Round 1 Date: 9/28/20 Time In: 8:20am Time Out: 9:10am	Round 2 Date: 10/26/20 Time In: 8:20am Time Out: 9:00am	Round 3 Date: 12/1/20 Time In: 9:00am Time Out: 10:00am
	Student Practice • Teacher is following district approved/aligned (pacing guide) • Teacher is using district adopted resources	• Teacher is following district approved/aligned (pacing guide) • Teacher is using district adopted resources	approved/aligned (pacing guide) • Teacher is using district adopted resources
Support Staff effective support	• Yes	• N/A	• Yes
Bloom's/DOK	• Skill/Concept • Demonstrating	• Skill//Concept • Demonstrating	• Recall • Recalling
Better Readers grant rubrics			
Culturally Responsive Teaching	1-Emerging	1-Emerging	1-Emerging
Comprehension Instruction Reflection Rubric	N/A	1-Emerging	1-Emerging
Word Recognition Instruction Reflection Rubric	2-Developing	0-Not Evident	N/A

Amy's instruction showed the use of a variety of instructional strategies throughout the observations, as presented in Table 4.13. Comprehension and phonics instruction occurred during the observations. She utilized oral language and questioning checks for understanding. Amy provided specific feedback to her students during each observation. She followed district suggested pacing and used district adopted resources. Amy improved student/teacher interactions

by decreasing negative interactions. She also increased academic and language experiences within her instruction. Amy effectively used support staff in her classroom.

Some areas observed that did not reflect Amy's philosophy statement included: (a) lack of guiding instruction with mastery objectives, (b) utilizing a variety of checks for understanding, (c) using all components in the gradual release of responsibility, (d) providing higher level thinking, (e) culturally responsive teaching, (f) comprehension instruction, and (g) word recognition instruction. Mastery objectives did not guide Amy's instruction until the last round of observations. Her checks for understanding only took place in the form of oral language and questioning checks. Amy did not consistently utilize the gradual release of responsibility in her instruction. She started out providing instruction at the skill/concept level, but by the third observation, students learned at the recall level. Amy's culturally responsive teaching and comprehension instruction remained at the emerging level, while word recognition instruction decreased from developing to not evident.

Field Notes

Round one field notes described the lack of mastery objectives utilized to guide instruction, possibly due to it being during tier two time. Amy utilized a lesson from the tiered protocol and did not teach the lesson with the fidelity necessary. Amy repeated many times, "You guys forgot!" as students struggled with a concept. Instead of providing specific when students were incorrect, she said, "Uh, no!" Amy asked the students to change the beginning sounds of given words, but she said the letter name instead of the letter sound. Amy gave the students five words to practice short a and short e vowel patterns. The students used their whiteboards to sort given words, and as they finished, the students patiently sat and waited. Amy could have used more checks for understanding throughout the lesson. She could have possibly

incorporated sign language into the check for understanding that she did instead of utilizing the thumbs up/down check. Students in one group made words incorrectly, but Amy did not notice the error, even when they shared it aloud.

During the second round of observations, Amy reviewed L-blends (pl, sl, gl, cl, bl, and fl) on the board along with the sounds they made. Amy's students word chained on their whiteboards along with counting syllables. The class switched over to task of listening to the story aloud from the book online. Amy reviewed the author and illustrator with the students and as the book progressed, Amy asked students to take note of the details along with asking them comprehension questions. She pulled sticks to call upon students, but only picked certain students to share.

The students discussed the character spending money and referred to it as "wasting money." Amy asked the students to join in reading when it came to the repetitive part. The students sensed the fact that the character in the book was greedy. Amy incorporated the Zones of Regulation by asking students what zone they would be in if someone called them a name as the character's brother did. Amy provided multiple opportunities for students to answer questions in her lesson along with some sarcasm that the students comprehended. Amy could have incorporated math into the lesson by asking students to add the amounts of money that the character spent. A structured academic discourse discussion, such as using A/B partners, with language support could have assisted in taking student understanding to a deeper level.

During the final observation, Amy's class reviewed text features and captions to begin the lesson. She read the text aloud and asked questions to review and clarify information from the story. Amy continuously called on the same four students that had their hands raised to share

their ideas. Amy could have utilized her student sticks to ensure the participation of all students. Amy may have benefitted from displaying the text on the SMART Board for students to view when navigating their own books. Two students laid their heads down during the reading and did participate. Amy started to call on more students to answer questions as the lesson progressed. Amy did not provide clear academic discourse expectations prior to discussions, which made it seem unplanned. She reminded students to use complete sentences during discussions and provided sentence stems verbally. A special education para professional helped monitor one student in the back row who needed support. The para professional greatly helped keep him on task with quiet corrections to his negative behaviors.

At this point in the lesson, Amy brought up the word unusual and provided meanings from examples in the book. She discussed the word "wealthy" with the students in the middle of her teaching. Only one student answered her question about the caption on the page, and the other students seemed disengaged. Amy had the class participate in an academic discourse discussion about Teddy Roosevelt heading west. Students shared out by stating that Teddy went west to get fresh air and to forget about his family dying. Amy suddenly stopped the lesson to give the students a restroom break. When they returned, Amy continued reading aloud to the student and asking them questions. Amy read four chapters to the students as guided by the ReadyGen manual. The word "bully" came up as a word that Teddy Roosevelt used, which Amy described as meaning "excellent."

Amy's lesson may have gone smoother if she placed sticky notes in the book she is reading, so she would not have to carry both the manual and the text around. She asked the students to provide words that best described Teddy's personality. The class moved into a discussion about text features and could have benefitted by using an anchor chart to keep track of

the text features they learned. At the end of the lesson, Amy reviewed text features from the chapters read and pulled sticks to ask questions. The students individually answered questions about pictures and captions as Amy called upon them. Amy defined captions by saying, "They summarize vital points or add information."

Stella

Teaching Philosophy Statement

Table 4.14

Sadie's Teaching Philosophy

Stella's Teaching Philosophy
I envision my classroom to be a safe and positive environment where students can be themselves and free to express their views. Getting to know my students inside and outside the school to make sure they know they are cared for and about. The classroom will be a structured environment with expectations that all can achieve. Finding ways to help students achieve that fits their unique learning style and suits them best will be a primary goal.

Stella's teaching philosophy, as presented in Table 4.14, provided a mix of expectations that focused on students, adults, and the environment. Her philosophy mentioned the adult's responsibility of learning about the students to provide unique learning experiences that support student success. Stella's philosophy describes many impact aspects required to work with students who strive from learning in a different setting than their peers.

Survey Data

Table 4.15

Survey Results for Stella

		Response
Self-efficacy		
1	I enjoy learning new techniques and strategies.	2-somewhat agree

		Response
2	I believe in my own ability to guide my students to success.	2-somewhat agree
3	I feel confident in my ability to apply professional learning strategies and techniques without instructional coaching.	2-somewhat agree
4	My professional learning experiences have positively contributed to my self-efficacy.	4-somewhat disagree
5	My administrator positively contributes to my self-efficacy.	1-strongly agree
6	My building culture positively supports teacher self-efficacy.	1-strongly agree
7	I see myself as a continuous learner	2-somewhat agree
Professional Learning		
1	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of building PLCs* meet my needs as a continuous learner.	4-somewhat disagree
2	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of grade level PLCs* meet my needs as a continuous learner.	2-somewhat agree
3	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of instructional coaching (this includes a range of experiences from seeking informal information or assistance from the instructional coach to going through a formal coaching cycle)* meet my needs as a continuous learner. (Mark "not applicable" if this doesn't apply to you)	2-somewhat agree
4	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of mentoring (this includes both paid mentoring and non-paid buddy mentors that assist new teachers during their new teacher training year)* meet my needs as a continuous learner. (Mark "not applicable" if this doesn't apply to you)	0-not applicable
5	Professional learning opportunities provided *in a large group setting (at the district office)* meet my need as a continuous learner.	4-somewhat disagree
6	Professional learning opportunities provided by an out-of-the-district agency, at an outside location, but paid for my Ad Astra public schools meet my needs as a continuous learner. (Mark "not applicable" if you did not attend any "out-of-the-district" professional learning opportunities this year)	0-not applicable
7	Ad Astra public schools provides an adequate amount of professional learning opportunities that meet my needs as a continuous learner.	2-somewhat agree
8	The professional learning opportunities I have experienced at Ad Astra public schools have improved my teaching quality.	2-somewhat agree
9	I am satisfied with the *amount* of professional learning opportunities available to me at Ad Astra public schools.	1-strongly agree
10	I am satisfied with the *quality* of professional learning opportunities available to me at Ad Astra public schools.	2-somewhat agree

Stella indicated her perceptions regarding her teaching self-efficacy and professional learning through a survey. Table 4.15 displays her perceptions as she entered her sixteenth year

in the profession. Stella agreed, at various levels of agreement, with all but one of the statements pertaining to her teaching self-efficacy. She disagreed with the statement mentioning professional learning experiences positively contributing to her teaching self-efficacy. Stella agreed, at various levels of agreement, with seven of the nine statements she responded to regarding professional learning. She disagreed that building level PLCs and large group professional learning opportunities at the district office meet her needs as a continuous learner.

Interviews & Participant Journals

Professional Learning Definitions/Understanding. In her first interview, Stella defined professional learning as "things that will help me do better in the classroom and grow as a teacher." She followed by saying she preferred hands-on, active participation in order to apply the strategies in her classroom.

What Professional Learning Looks Like (Positive Perceptions). Stella recalled embedding vocabulary and phonics strategies that she learned and experienced coaching cycles with through the Better Readers grant. She enjoyed not only seeing the instructional coach model the strategy, but seeing her colleagues model too.

Frustrations in Professional Learning (Negative Perceptions). In her third interview, Stella said she felt a pull on her as a new teacher in the district because of her special education teacher position. She described the overwhelmed feeling she experienced by the amount of information that both the school district and special education cooperative provided. In the same interview, Stella said it was a challenge to choose between one training and another. She said she felt like she missed meaningful learning, and perceived the creation of a gap in her knowledge that no one ever reached out to fill.

Teaching Practices. In her second interview, Stella described the process she worked

through with students to help them visualize words and manipulative phonemes in their minds.

In her third interview, Stella said she used Elkonin boxes to provide sensory opportunities to her

students as they blended and segmented real and nonsense words. In all of her participant

journals, Stella described her continuous work using phonics lessons offered through the tiered

protocol to build student understanding and confidence in working with spelling patterns. In her

third interview, Stella said she decided to dive into the foundational skills taught within

ReadyGen by using lessons a grade level below for her students that struggle with concepts

within their own grade level. In the same interview, Stella said she looked for way to break skills

into smaller learning sessions as she only works with her students for a set amount of time each

day. In her third interview, Stella described embedding vocabulary into her reading instruction

using the Picture Word Inductive Model (PWIM), which she learned in an instructional coaching

cycle. She described how PWIM helped her students build background knowledge on topics she

taught while adding new information throughout the lessons.

In her first and second participant journals, Stella said she needed to have better time

management within her lessons, which she said would help with student engagement. In her first

participant journal, she said she wanted to focus on utilizing her classroom behavior system to

redirect off-task students, providing plenty of opportunities for students to learn on various

platforms, and setting a timer to pace lesson components. In her second participant journal, Stella

said she planned to dedicate a short amount of time at the end of each session to share off-topic

information to decrease the number of interruptions during her instruction. In her first participant

journal, Stella described incorporating attention-getters in her lessons and allowing more group

discussions to check for understanding. In the same interview, Stella described the importance of

communicating mastery objectives to students and reiterating them at the end of the lesson to check for overall success.

Teaching Self-Efficacy Definitions/Understanding. In her first interview, Stella defined teaching self-efficacy as "students coming in and feeling safe, comfortable, and not lost with the information."

Teaching Self-Efficacy Positive Perceptions. In her third interview, Stella said she perceived her teaching self-efficacy increasing when student progress and data reflect growth. She continued by describing how critical it is to celebrate growth of all sizes in a classroom that serves special education students with varying needs and goals. In her first interview, Stella said she used FastBridge screeners and progress monitoring to set student IEP goals and perceived her teaching self-efficacy increasing when she observed students working hard to meet the goals with her motivation.

Teaching Self-Efficacy Negative Perceptions. In her third interview, Stella said she disliked online learning and felt lost when experiencing a technology barrier. In the same interview, Stella described her teaching self-efficacy decreasing when she was a new teacher in the district and felt overwhelmed with all of the latest information and responsibilities from two different districts.

Serving Students of Various Populations: Positive Perceptions in Teaching Self-Efficacy. In her third interview, Stella described having one newcomer student with a majority of her other students being ELL students, along with all students having special education needs. In the same interview, Stella connected prior knowledge to college courses that helped her serve the students better. She described experiencing diversity of many kinds along with various

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learning needs. Following that, Stella mentioned the need to learn more about teaching English to a second language learner to approach special education instruction adequately. In her first interview, Stella said she felt like her comfortability level with the materials she taught with as a positive contribution to her teaching self-efficacy. In the same interview, Stella said she felt more confident in teaching when she knew where the lesson was going and how it related to the text. In her third participant journal, Stella said she perceived her teaching self-efficacy increasing as her students enjoyed practicing skills she taught them in decoding automaticity.

Serving Students of Various Populations: Negative Perceptions in Teaching Self-Efficacy. In her first interview, Stella described the challenge of addressing students' social-emotional needs during instructional time. In her third interview, Stella said she provided the students with the purpose behind the testing that she does with them to encourage motivation when she is assessing students. In her second interview, Stella said she perceived that her college courses underprepared her with realistic scenarios or the multiple behaviors affecting her classroom, such as defiant behavior.

Observations

Table 4.16

Observation Results for Stella

Teacher: Stella Building: C Elementary Grade: K-3 SpEd	Round 1 Date: 9/21/20 Time In: 10:15am Time Out: 10:45am	Round 2 Date: 10/19/20 Time In: 11:45am Time Out: 12:12pm	Round 3 Date: 12/8/20 Time In: 10:15am Time Out: 10:45am
Number of Students	2	2	3
Students Engaged In	• Phonics	• Phonics	• Phonics
Period	• Beginning • Middle	• Beginning • Middle	• Beginning • Middle

Teacher: Stella Building: C Elementary Grade: K-3 SpEd	Round 1 Date: 9/21/20 Time In: 10:15am Time Out: 10:45am	Round 2 Date: 10/19/20 Time In: 11:45am Time Out: 12:12pm	Round 3 Date: 12/8/20 Time In: 10:15am Time Out: 10:45am
	• End	• End	• End
The learning objective states what the students will learn and how the learning will be demonstrated.	No	Yes	No
The learning objective matches what students are learning.	No	No	No
Students know and understand the mastery objective.	No	No	No
Checks for Understanding/ Formative Assessment	• Oral language	• Oral language	• Writing
Teacher provides specific feedback	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student/Teacher Interactions	• Positive-2 • Negative-0	• Positive-4 • Negative-0	• Positive-3 • Negative-0
Academic and Language Experiences	• Non-linguistic representations	• Non-linguistic representations	None
Instruction	• Direct Instruction • Modeling/Dem onstration • Guided Practice • Monitored Independent Student Practice • Teacher is following district	• Direct Instruction • Modeling/Dem onstration • Guided Practice • Monitored Independent Student Practice • Teacher is following district approved/aligne d (pacing guide)	• Direct instruction • Guided Practice • Monitored Independent Practice • Teacher is following district approved/ aligned (pacing guide)

Teacher: Stella Building: C Elementary Grade: K-3 SpEd	Round 1 Date: 9/21/20 Time In: 10:15am Time Out: 10:45am	Round 2 Date: 10/19/20 Time In: 11:45am Time Out: 12:12pm	Round 3 Date: 12/8/20 Time In: 10:15am Time Out: 10:45am
	approved/aligned (pacing guide) • Teacher is using district adopted resources	• Teacher is using district adopted resources	• Teacher is using district adopted resources
Support Staff effective support	• Yes	• N/A	• Yes
Bloom's/DOK	• Skill/Concept • Demonstrating	• Skill//Concept • Demonstrating	• Skill/Concept • Demonstrating
Better Readers grant rubrics			
Culturally Responsive Teaching	2-Developing	2-Developing	2-Developing
Word Recognition Instruction Reflection Rubric	1-Emerging	1-Emerging	1-Emerging

Stella's instruction modeled a variety of instructional strategies throughout the observations, as presented in Table 4.16. Stella provided phonics instruction to students in her special education classroom during the observations. She utilized oral language and writing checks for understanding. Stella provided specific feedback to her students during each observation. She followed district suggested pacing and used district adopted resources. Stella maintained positive student/teacher interactions during all observations. She used the gradual release of responsibility in her instruction during each observation. Stella effectively utilized the support staff in her classroom.

Some areas observed that did not reflect Stella's philosophy statement included: (a) lack of guiding instruction with mastery objectives, (b) decrease in academic and language experiences, (c) providing higher-level thinking, (d) culturally responsive teaching, and (e) word recognition instruction. Stella did not use mastery objectives to guide her instruction. She provided instruction at the skill/concept level during all observations. Stella's culturally responsive teaching and word recognition instruction remained the same throughout the observations.

Field Notes

During round one, Stella's students used hand gestures to segment words. The two boys participating in the lesson seemed to be on different levels of understanding in phonics. The gap between the boys started to close once the lesson progressed. Stella had students participate in a thumbs up/thumbs down check for understanding to show if they heard bl- blends in words or not. Stella asked her students, "Where does your tongue go for bl?" She explained, "Your tongue is behind your teeth." The sequence of the lesson noted the following steps: (a) students used vowel cards to complete the CVC word/picture provided, (b) students practiced distinguishing words orally with thumbs-up/down, (c) students highlighted words as Stella said the words aloud as they looked for bl- blends, and (d) Stella and the students blended words orally. She provided specific feedback as the students progressed through the lesson and provided clarification for mistakes. During a segment of the lesson, one boy left to wash his hands, so he did not experience one of the activities.

During the second observation, Stella orally word chained with her students using s-blends. Students read words fluently from their cards. As they read the words, Stella provided

feedback, especially when students struggled to decode the correct vowel sounds in words. As students finished reading their word lists, Stella gave them a new word list and helped students correct mistakes as they were decoding aloud. She asked one student to decode in his mind to be more automatic, which he did successfully. After this activity, Stella discussed the meaning of words that students did not know and nonsense words. She asked the students to name words they did not know to clear up any confusion and talk about how it connected to them. Students got out their whiteboards and began segmenting s-blend words by word chaining. The routine established for this activity was as follows: (a) say the word, (b) say the sounds as you count them on your fingers, and (c) write down the letters that match those sounds. While chaining on a word, Stella explicitly taught the students how to distinguish between using a letter k and a letter c in the word skid, based on the spelling rule.

During round three, Stella utilized a phonics lesson from the tiered protocol to review long vowel (CVCe) sounds. The students practiced changing CVC words to CVCe words and discussed if words categorized as real or nonsense. Stella said a word while students quickly swatted the word. Students took turns participating while focusing on building automaticity in decoding. She then had the students sort ph- and wh-words by reading and sorting given words. In the last few minutes, two of the three students left to go back to their classrooms for recess and lunch while one student stayed and continued practicing by writing words on a whiteboard.

Lola

Teaching Philosophy Statement

Table 4.17

Lola's Teaching Philosophy

Lola's Teaching Philosophy

> **I believe a classroom should be a place that surrounds students with love, learning, energy, and growth. It will be a place where they are free and safe to be whoever they want to be.**

Lola's teaching philosophy, as presented in Table 4.17, focused on the environment needed for students to grow. Her philosophy described multiple facets necessary to encourage student success.

Survey Data

Table 4.18

Survey Data for Lola

		Response
Self-efficacy		
1	I enjoy learning new techniques and strategies.	1-strongly agree
2	I believe in my own ability to guide my students to success.	1-strongly agree
3	I feel confident in my ability to apply professional learning strategies and techniques without instructional coaching.	3-neither agree nor disagree
4	My professional learning experiences have positively contributed to my self-efficacy.	2-somewhat agree
5	My administrator positively contributes to my self-efficacy.	1-strongly agree
6	My building culture positively supports teacher self-efficacy.	1-strongly agree
7	I see myself as a continuous learner	1-strongly agree
Professional Learning		
1	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of building PLCs* meet my needs as a continuous learner.	1-strongly agree
2	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of grade level PLCs* meet my needs as a continuous learner.	1-strongly agree
3	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of instructional coaching (this includes a range of experiences from seeking informal information or assistance from the instructional coach to going through a formal coaching cycle)* meet my needs as a continuous learner. (Mark "not applicable" if this doesn't apply to you)	2-somewhat agree
4	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of mentoring (this includes both paid mentoring and non-paid buddy mentors that assist new teachers during their new teacher training year)* meet my needs as a continuous learner. (Mark "not applicable" if this doesn't apply to you)	3-neither agree nor disagree
5	Professional learning opportunities provided *in a large group setting (at the district office)* meet my need as a continuous learner.	3-neither agree nor disagree

		Response
6	Professional learning opportunities provided by an out-of-the-district agency, at an outside location, but paid for my Ad Astra public schools meet my needs as a continuous learner. (Mark "not applicable" if you did not attend any "out-of-the-district" professional learning opportunities this year)	0-not applicable
7	Ad Astra public schools provides an adequate amount of professional learning opportunities that meet my needs as a continuous learner.	1-strongly agree
8	The professional learning opportunities I have experienced at Ad Astra public schools have improved my teaching quality.	1-strongly agree
9	I am satisfied with the *amount* of professional learning opportunities available to me at Ad Astra public schools.	1-strongly agree
10	I am satisfied with the *quality* of professional learning opportunities available to me at Ad Astra public schools.	1-strongly agree

Lola indicated her perceptions regarding her teaching self-efficacy and professional learning through a survey. Table 4.18 displays her perceptions as she entered her third year in the profession. Lola agreed, at various levels of agreement, with all but one of the statements pertaining to her teaching self-efficacy. She neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement regarding her ability to apply professional learning without her instructional coach. Lola agreed, at various levels of agreement, with seven of the nine statements she responded to regarding professional learning. She neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements regarding mentoring experiences and large group professional learning opportunities at the district office meeting her needs as a continuous learner.

Interviews & Participant Journals

Professional Learning Definitions/Understanding. In her first interview, Lola defined professional learning as "collaboration and hearing the ideas of others to build on what we already know in order to get better at teaching."

What Professional Learning Looks Like (Positive Perceptions). In her second interview, Lola said her preferred format of professional learning as quiet and self-paced. In her third interview, Lola said she sought to learn more about what her students needed, primarily when challenging her high-achieving students. In her first interview, Lola said she valued opportunities to self-reflect as she moved from lesson-to-lesson while making necessary adjustments to her teachings.

Frustrations in Professional Learning (Negative Perceptions). In her second interview, Lola described her perception of the lack of regular teacher training that long-term substitutes experience. She continued with, "Administrators sometimes assume that all educators enter the profession already understanding specific ideas and acronyms, which causes confusion and frustration." In the same interview, Lola said she was unaware of how to ensure she exposed students to academic discourse, self-efficacy, and a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS).

Pre-Service Experiences. In her second interview, Lola said she appreciated having a long-term position to gain experience. She described the random subbing position she previously experienced only slightly contributing to her confidence. In the same interview, Lola said she enjoyed being in one building and working with educators that she perceived to be in it for the same reason she was and viewed them as "a great resource to have near" her. In her third interview, Lola said she learned to differentiate during lesson planning and made connections between district-learned topics and information in her courses. She described one connection she made in a course that focused on MTSS and how the connection assisted in building understanding in an "unknown subject" when first introduced to her in the district. She continued by saying that her course further explained the necessity of MTSS in Kansas' schools. In her

third interview, Lola said her instructor for her science methods course sparked her "undeveloped love for teaching science" that she recently embedded in her classroom instruction.

Teaching Practices. In her first interview, Lola said she searched for ideas to add more supports to strengthened student needs in areas where they lacked background knowledge and experience. In her third interview, Lola described incorporating ways for students to understand characters they read about by asking students to relate to characters' feelings. In her third participant journal, Lola said she observed students enjoying stories more, especially as she added a positive outlook on using the resources. Lola described adding opportunities to instruct and utilize tone and expression in read-alouds. In her third participant journal, Stella said, "Students seemed to be more engaged in the text and eager to predict what would happen next." Lola described that she believed her presentation of the resources positively and in an upbeat manner helped the students buy into their learning.

In her first participant journal, Lola said she embedded review time into reading instruction in order to build on ideas and understanding. Lola described how this strategy assisted students in keeping their understanding over a topic for a more significant amount of time as it moved into their long-term memory. In her second participant journal, Lola said she recognized student gaps in writing and worked with her instructional coach, who modeled a lesson in her class. In her first participant journal, Lola described additional support she provided to fill gaps in foundational writing skills, such as conventions lessons. In her third interview, Lola said she continued seeking ways to push her students further in this phonemic awareness and phonics, so they acquire the skills necessary to be successful readers.

In her third participant journal, Lola said she implemented a Friday extension activity based on the text each week, which allowed students to express their opinions, describe their reasoning, and cite evidence in a writing piece. In her first participant journal, Lola said she changed the time she taught ELA to increase engagement, with the morning being the most focused time of the day for her class.

In her second interview, Lola said she kept in mind the importance of being culturally responsive while planning writing activities. She described her students, as "coming in with a lack of background and prior knowledge in writing." In the same interview, Lola said she perceived this to be a critical issue that she needed to address and began by allowing students to write about topics they could relate to before asking them to work on a focused writing piece. She continued by describing how this instructional practice built up student understanding and confidence in the writing process, particularly in brainstorming ideas. In her third interview, Lola said she sought ways to challenge her tier one students throughout the day.

Teaching Self-Efficacy Definitions. In her first interview, Lola defined teaching self-efficacy as "Confidence, self-reflection, growth," and knowing that she can get the results she wants if she works hard at it.

Teaching Self-Efficacy Positive Perceptions. In her second interview, Lola said she experienced a previous career that made her feel like she was not herself anymore while dealing with some grief in her life. She described how stumbled upon her true calling of teaching as she began occasionally subbing as a way to get out of the house while being a stay-at-home mom. In the same interview, Lola said she gained confidence as she moved into more long-term positions, typically during maternity leave absences. In her section interview, Lola described how after

years of this long-term of subbing, she accepted a yearlong subbing position with the expectation that she would complete the schooling required to get her teaching license. She described teaching as a career where she "can have fun," "it does not feel like work," and one she "looks forward to going in every single day." In the same interview, she said her life experiences and former career made her forget who she was and what was important in life. She described feeling like herself again because "the students have opened a purpose for her." In her second interview, Lola said she got joy in working with people who are "in it for the same reason."

In her second interview, Lola said she had incredibly supportive administrators who provided knowledge and experiences that she lacked while knowing that they have her back. In the same interview, Lola said she has figured out who to ask for help and now supports new teachers, which increased her teaching self-efficacy. In her second interview, Lola described one of her grade-level colleagues as "uplifting" and helping her build her confidence when she steps in as her support system, which she credited as a vital piece of her success. In her third interview, Lola said the courses she took provided connections to topics she has learned over the years.

In her third interview, Lola said she put her student data to use by setting individual goals with the students, especially those on SIT that she monitored closely to decide what steps to take next. She described enjoyment in digging into data to identify student growth, not just from one tier to the next, but within their raw score. She continued and said she looked further at students who did not improve to investigate what held them back. In the same interview, Lola said she perceived her teaching self-efficacy increasing as she witnessed student movement from foundational skills to skills that are more difficult.

Teaching Self-Efficacy Negative Perceptions. In her first and second interviews, Lola said she did not prefer large group learning settings and lacked comfortability in speaking up and sharing ideas and did not like being vulnerable. Lola described how the "newness" of ReadyGen created unsureness for her that decreased her teaching self-efficacy. In her second interview, Lola said she perceived the flow of the writing instruction to be "off" and the strategies mentioned in ReadyGen as "too complicated for students to use." Lola described how some instruction within ReadyGen called for the use of previous-grade level skills, which caused frustration for her when she had to relate those skills to her teaching. In her third participant journal, Lola said she struggled with lessons in ReadyGen that recommended displaying and communicating the reading's central message because she did not understand how it connected to the text.

In her first interview, Lola said Covid-19 decreased her teaching self-efficacy because of the amount of time students remained in quarantine. Lola described having to re-teach routines and procedures students typically come in knowing. In her third interview, Lola said she perceived student data sometimes as skewed by the environment when students do not have a good enough grasp of the expectations. In her second interview, Lola eagerly said, "I teach kids to read." Lola described the gratification in "seeing students getting the topics that you are teaching them."

Serving Students of Various Populations: Positive Perceptions in Teaching Self-Efficacy. In her second interview, Lola said she previously worked with children that needed additional mental health support. She described using this background knowledge to her advantage, and with the addition of culturally responsive teaching, she perceived herself as "fully equipped for the challenge." In the same interview, Lola said her background in mental health

assisted in the creation of adaptions in the classroom to meet multiple students' needs, particularly when approaching and handling their needs. In her third interview, Lola said she perceived her university course experiences as minimal, with readings, lectures, and rubrics that taught her to embed culture in writing instruction. In the same interview, Lola said she made connections between her courses and learning in the district regarding strategies to use with students of various populations.

In her third interview, Lola said the greatest effect on her teaching self-efficacy was learning about the importance of establishing a culturally responsive classroom. Lola described how she learned to relate student backgrounds within her teaching and embed culture throughout the day. In her second participant journal, Lola said she provided explicit vocabulary instruction and felt confident teaching students to be more aware and appreciative of other cultures and learning styles. In her third interview, Lola said she increased engagement in writing and supported struggling students by incorporating writing activities that allowed them to choose topics and write from their hearts. In the same interview, Lola described the following items as supports she embedded for student success: (a) resources within ReadyGen, such as by-the-way words, scaffolding supports, vocabulary instruction, and whole group teaching; (b) her building interventionist para; (c) opportunities to review concepts; (d) partnering configurations; (e) the ELL portion of Raz-Kids; and (f) positive presentation of instruction and the ability to add in her creativity.

Observations

Table 4.19
Observation Results for Lola

Teacher: Lola Building: R Elementary Grade: Third	Round 1 Date: 9/30/20 Time In: 1:15pm Time Out: 2:15pm	Round 2 Date: 10/28/20 Time In: 1:10pm Time Out: 2:10pm	Round 3 Date: 12/11/20 Time In: 8:20am Time Out: 9:20am
Number of Students	19	20	19
Students Engaged In	• Comprehension • Vocabulary	• Comprehension	• Comprehension • Vocabulary
Period	• Beginning • Middle	• Beginning • Middle	• Beginning • Middle
The learning objective states what the students will learn and how the learning will be demonstrated.	Yes	Yes	Yes
The learning objective matches what students are learning.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Students know and understand the mastery objective.	Yes	No	Yes
Checks for Understanding/ Formative Assessment	• Oral language • Writing	• Oral language • Questioning	• Oral language • Questioning
Teacher provides specific feedback	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student/Teacher Interactions	• Positive-2 • Negative-0	• Positive-2 • Negative-4	• Positive-1 • Negative-0
Academic and Language Experiences	• Non-linguistic representations • Direct vocabulary instruction in use (teacher led)	• Academic Discourse • Informal academic conversation	• Non-linguistic representations • Direct vocabulary instruction in use (teacher led) • Academic discourse is evident

Teacher: Lola Building: R Elementary Grade: Third	Round 1 Date: 9/30/20 Time In: 1:15pm Time Out: 2:15pm	Round 2 Date: 10/28/20 Time In: 1:10pm Time Out: 2:10pm	Round 3 Date: 12/11/20 Time In: 8:20am Time Out: 9:20am
			• Informal academic conversation
Instruction	• Direct Instruction • Modeling/Demonstration • Guided Practice • Monitored Independent Student Practice • Teacher is following district approved/ aligned (pacing guide) • Teacher is using district adopted resources	• Direct Instruction • Modeling/Demonstration • Guided Practice • Monitored Independent Student Practice • Teacher is following district approved/ aligned (pacing guide) • Teacher is using district adopted resources	• Direct instruction • Modeling/Demonstration • Guided Practice • Monitored Independent Practice • Teacher is following district approved/ aligned (pacing guide) • Teacher is using district adopted resources
Support Staff effective support	• N/A	• Yes	• Yes
Bloom's/DOK	• Skill/Concept • Explaining	• Strategic Thinking • Contrasting	• Strategic Thinking • Questioning • Defending
Better Readers grant rubrics			
Culturally Responsive Teaching	1-Emerging	1-Emerging	2-Developing
Explicit Vocabulary Instruction Reflection Rubric	2-Developing	N/A	2-Developing

Teacher: Lola Building: R Elementary Grade: Third	Round 1 Date: 9/30/20 Time In: 1:15pm Time Out: 2:15pm	Round 2 Date: 10/28/20 Time In: 1:10pm Time Out: 2:10pm	Round 3 Date: 12/11/20 Time In: 8:20am Time Out: 9:20am
Comprehension Instruction Reflection Rubric	1-Emerging	1-Emerging	2-Developing

Lola's instruction reflected the use of a variety of instructional strategies throughout the observations, as presented in Table 4.19. She provided comprehension and vocabulary instruction to students during the observations. Lola used mastery objectives to guide her instruction, a variety of checks for understanding, and provided specific feedback to her students during each observation. She followed district suggested pacing and used district adopted resources. Lola increased the academic and language experiences in her instruction. She utilized each component of the gradual release of responsibility within her lessons. Lola increased the depth of knowledge in her instruction from skill/concept to strategic thinking. Her culturally responsive teaching strategies and comprehension instruction increased from emerging to developing.

Lola had two areas that did not reflect growth necessary for student success: student/teacher interactions and explicit vocabulary instruction. Lola decreased her positive student/teacher interactions and her negatives student/teacher interactions fluctuated. Her explicit vocabulary instruction remained at developing throughout the observations.

Field Notes

During the first observation, Lola presented students with a new story from the new unit on page 40 of the text collection. The text was about phases of the moon, and the Lola read the text aloud. After the reading, students worked in their reader's and writer's journals on page 53

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and completed a graphic organizer. The students struggled to make connections with the moon topic. Lola also struggled to clarify the topic for the students and the prior knowledge appeared to be low.

During round two, Lola reviewed vocabulary words (migrate, scarce, and pioneers) with the students and mentioned that she would not explicitly teach mileage today. She explained the meaning of mileage to students, but said she felt they already had a good understanding of the word and it did not need the attention like a tier two word. Lola asked the students to make predictions about the story and characters based on the cover. She decided to use a read-aloud from YouTube instead of the read-aloud provided within ReadyGen. After making it successfully through the first chapter, the second chapter had a crying baby in the background of the recording along with the reader leaving words out. Lola prompted students to move into academic discourse discussions over the close-read questions. Although she started the first question with a structured expectation, she did not follow through when the students answered in incomplete sentences. One question asked students to contrast past teachers with current teachers. As a whole group, Lola began scribing student ideas onto the graphic organizer as the students copied down the writing. The graphic organizer projected on the whiteboard was difficult to see.

During the last observation, Lola started the lesson with a review of the book by discussing text features and why the book was a fictional story. The class discussed the meaning of "having a spring in your step" and decided it meant "excited." The same two students raised their hands to answer all of the questions, which could have provided an opportunity for academic discourse. Lola asked the students about "heroes" that are not superheroes. The class talked about needs, which was something they learned in their last science unit. Lola required the

students to utilize text evidence to justify their answers. She referred back to the mastery objective to provide expectations. The class described the character's determination and had no doubt that she would find water. During explicit vocabulary instruction, Lola used a dictionary to determine synonyms for given words. Students used navigate in a complete sentence in their reader's and writer's journal to show their understanding. Lola provided students with the Spanish cognates of the vocabulary words and began reading the text aloud. Even though it was informal, the class participated in rich academic discourse and showed that they did not need as much formal support. During academic discourse and share-outs, students reasoned quite a bit.

Melanie

Teaching Philosophy Statement

Table 4.20

Melanie's Teaching Philosophy

Melanie's Teaching Philosophy
My philosophy of education is that all children are unique and require an encouraging, stimulating educational environment where they can grow physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially. My goal is to create a safe environment where students feel comfortable to share their ideas and take risks. By creating this type of atmosphere, students will be encouraged to meet their full potential.

Melanie's teaching philosophy, as presented in Table 4.20, described a mix of expectations that focused on students, adults, and the environment. Her philosophy mentioned the uniqueness that students bring into the environment and focused on whole-child needs in an atmosphere that encourages students working to their full potential.

Survey Data

Table 4.21

Survey Results for Melanie

		Response
Self-efficacy		
1	I enjoy learning new techniques and strategies.	1-strongly agree
2	I believe in my own ability to guide my students to success.	1-strongly agree
3	I feel confident in my ability to apply professional learning strategies and techniques without instructional coaching.	2-somewhat agree
4	My professional learning experiences have positively contributed to my self-efficacy.	2-somewhat agree
5	My administrator positively contributes to my self-efficacy.	2-somewhat agree
6	My building culture positively supports teacher self-efficacy.	4-somewhat disagree
7	I see myself as a continuous learner	1-strongly agree
Professional Learning		
1	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of building PLCs* meet my needs as a continuous learner.	4-somewhat disagree
2	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of grade level PLCs* meet my needs as a continuous learner.	4-somewhat disagree
3	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of instructional coaching (this includes a range of experiences from seeking informal information or assistance from the instructional coach to going through a formal coaching cycle)* meet my needs as a continuous learner. (Mark "not applicable" if this doesn't apply to you)	1-strongly agree
4	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of mentoring (this includes both paid mentoring and non-paid buddy mentors that assist new teachers during their new teacher training year)* meet my needs as a continuous learner. (Mark "not applicable" if this doesn't apply to you)	5-strongly disagree
5	Professional learning opportunities provided *in a large group setting (at the district office)* meet my need as a continuous learner.	5-strongly disagree
6	Professional learning opportunities provided by an out-of-the-district agency, at an outside location, but paid for my Ad Astra public schools meet my needs as a continuous learner. (Mark "not applicable" if you did not attend any "out-of-the-district" professional learning opportunities this year)	2-somewhat agree
7	Ad Astra public schools provides an adequate amount of professional learning opportunities that meet my needs as a continuous learner.	3-neither agree nor disagree
8	The professional learning opportunities I have experienced at Ad Astra public schools have improved my teaching quality.	4-somewhat disagree
9	I am satisfied with the *amount* of professional learning opportunities available to me at Ad Astra public schools.	4-somewhat disagree
10	I am satisfied with the *quality* of professional learning opportunities available to me at Ad Astra public schools.	4-somewhat disagree

   Melanie indicated her perceptions regarding her teaching self-efficacy and professional

learning through a survey. Table 4.21 displays her perceptions as she entered her fourth year in

education. Melanie agreed, at various levels of agreement, with all but one of the statements regarding her teaching self-efficacy. She disagreed with the statement that mentioned her building culture positively supporting her teaching self-efficacy. Melanie disagreed, at various levels of disagreement, with seven of the statements pertaining to professional learning. She neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that mentioned Ad Astra public schools providing an adequate amount of professional learning opportunities. She agreed that professional learning through instructional coaching and outside-of-the-district professional learning met her needs as a continuous learner.

Interviews & Participant Journals

Professional Learning Definitions/Understanding. In her first interview, Melanie said she saw professional learning as a form of learning that teaches a person to be a better teacher by gaining more tools and skills than they had before. She described professional learning as "building on foundational teaching skills with more specific skills."

What Professional Looks Like (Positive Perceptions). In her second interview, Melanie said her preferred professional learning format was "being an active participant in an engaging setting where the presenters are passionate about what they are presenting." Melanie described the importance of seeing excitement and the investment presenters radiate as they discussed a topic. In her first interview, Melanie said she enjoyed professional learning experiences most when she received a skill that she could easily apply in her classroom.

Frustrations in Professional Learning (Negative Perceptions). In her third interview, Melanie said she was frustrated with the quality of the professional learning that she experienced within the district in the past two years. She described that adult learners have different learning

needs, just as with children, and stated that those providing professional learning should differentiate the learning. In the same interview, Melanie said when the district asked for her opinion on professional learning, nothing seemed to change, which was one reason she felt frustrated. In her first interview, Melanie said that large group settings seemed to make productivity decrease. Melanie described how most of the large group learning opportunities she has attended required participants to "sit down, take notes, and listen to a lecture." In her third interview, Melanie said the professional learning over reading skills, which included instructional coaching, was too "skill-focused, harder to apply to science and social studies, and did not feel cohesive."

Outside Professional Learning. In her first and third interviews, Melanie described her experience with outside professional learning, which occurred once, as a positive learning experience. Melanie continued by saying the learning session appeared to be a well thought out process, focused on the needs of ELL students, and presented information she was able to apply the next day.

Pre-Service Experiences. In her second interview, Melanie said she earned a degree in biology and was on her way into medical school when she changed majors. She continued and said that since she already invested her time into a bachelor's degree, she did not want to go through the process of starting over completely. Melanie described finding a program with an accelerated pathway that would allow her to complete student teaching within twelve months and ultimately finish the program within eighteen months. In the same interview, Melanie said she felt fully prepared with "a sound background" in the areas of classroom management, lesson planning, objective writing, and viewing and applying curriculum.

Teaching Practices. In her third interview, Melanie described teaching practices that she learned and applied during her time in the district. Melanie said she received training for Google Classroom, which was vital for her remote live learning (RLL) classroom. She continued by saying that no one had to push her to buy into Google Classroom since the district designated it as the platform for online learning. In the same interview, Melanie said it was important to build relationships with students in order to improve their motivation and drive to work in a virtual classroom. Melanie described the process she established to motivate students with goal setting. She continued by explaining how she had her students base their goals off their FastBridge screening and progress monitoring data. Melanie described how students created long and short-term goals, with some students even needing step-by-step goals. In her third interview, Melanie said not only did she provide incentives for those making progress, but also she was transparent with the students on how their goals affected others as she upheld high expectations in their progress.

In her second participant journal, Melanie said she held her students accountable for their learning by using academic discourse to check for understanding. In her third interview, Melanie said she worked through progressive scaffolding using sentence stems with the academic conversations and made the time limit adjustments when students seemed to get off-topic. In the same interview, she described how this type of practice created excitement for the students and invited them to participate in class discussions more often. In her first participant journal, Melanie said she built on students' previous knowledge and learning before moving into the next topic.

In her third interview, Melanie described the explicit vocabulary instruction she gained through the Better Readers grant along with the experience of an instructional coaching cycle.

Following that, Melanie said she felt vocabulary was an area easy to apply and utilize across many subjects. In the same interview, Melanie described a particular strategy, Linking Language, to check for prior knowledge and check for understanding. She said her students learned tier two vocabulary words that go along with their text in ReadyGen using explicit vocabulary instruction.

In her third interview, Melanie said she strived to improve in her writing instruction to create successful writers. She described using scaffolding strategies when teaching writing and adjusting her time to allow for more modeling and brainstorming and less time independently writing. Melanie continued by saying she believed that the more modeling she provided, the more skills she equipped the students to use. In the same interview, Melanie said she saw an increase in enjoyment in opinion writing from her students. She continued by describing that her goal in writing instruction was to move students from citing text evidence directly to supporting their opinion using text evidence without page numbers.

In her second interview, Melanie said that although her classroom did not look the same as her two grade-level colleagues in many aspects, she recognized the need to plan with them. Melanie described how they collaborated over ideas that supported student learning, such as writing instruction and worked together to create an anchor chart to organize narrative writing ideas as they brainstormed them. In the same interview, Melanie said it was important to improve her own understanding of narrative writing to help her students succeed in this area.

Teaching Self-Efficacy Definitions/Understanding. In her first interview, Melanie defined efficacy as "the ability to do hard things." She described her efficacy building as she felt "successful with something and felt more comfortable to try another thing." In the same

interview, Melanie described how things could be "new to us, but are not necessarily hard." In her second interview, Melanie said she continually reminded herself that she has to do what is best for kids, and the progress she saw in student data confirmed that the students performed well. Melanie described relying heavily on student data to set goals, how goal setting built up student self-efficacy, and excitement students have to further their learning. Seeing progress encouraged student excitement for reading, especially as they made growth and she adjusted their instruction.

Teaching Self-Efficacy Positive Perceptions. In her second interview, Melanie perceived her pre-service preparation with her confidence in classroom management, lesson planning, objective writing, and utilizing curriculum. In the same interview, Melanie said her administrator positively contributed to her teaching self-efficacy with her positive encouragement and constant reminder to give grace, as not everyone knows everything. Melanie described her experience using ReadyGen and said it increased her teaching self-efficacy as she witnessed students eager to participate in discussions to answer questions. Melanie continued by saying that she worked to increase student excitement to learn by building on their prior knowledge and learning. In her second participant journal, Melanie said she celebrated when academic conversations thrived and students supported their answers with text evidence. Students showed excitement for writing instruction, which Melanie perceived as a contribution to her teaching self-efficacy.

Teaching Self-Efficacy Negative Perceptions. In her second and third interviews, Melanie said her teaching self-efficacy declined during most professional learning experiences. She described holding high expectations for learning, especially coming from an accelerated form of pre-service learning. In her first and second interviews, Melanie said her building culture

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negatively influenced her teaching self-efficacy. She described how other teachers discouraged her from trying new things, set low expectations for their classrooms, and bragged about what they are not doing that they should have been. Melanie said she worried that if teachers did not do what is expected then her encounter with those same students would require twice the work to fill their learning gaps. In her first interview, Melanie described professional learning within her building as: (a) unproductive, (b) unbeneficial to her knowledge, (c) not differentiated to meet her needs, and (d) not driven by teacher opinion and need. Melanie continued by saying, "Some professional learning sessions felt like they should have been an email instead of spending a good chunk of time on it."

Serving Students of Various Populations: Positive Perceptions in Teaching Self-Efficacy. In her second interview, Melanie said she grew her teaching self-efficacy over her few years of teaching. In the same interview, Melanie described her administrator's view of the big picture as a helpful technique. In her third interview, Melanie said her university courses she took for her master's in ESOL allowed her to connect with many topics presented through the district, through the Better Readers grant. She described that she felt like the courses she took while working towards her teaching degree did not adequately prepare her to serve students of various populations as it only focused on differentiating for ELLs during lesson planning. In the same interview, Melanie said she used scaffolding in her teachings to provide support during academic discourse and related many teachings to student backgrounds and culture. Melanie said she felt like ReadyGen related to culture through many texts within her grade level.

In her second and third interviews, Melanie said she perceived her teaching self-efficacy increasing most when she witnessed student success, particularly as her students moved through progressive scaffolding, participated in academic discourse, and progressed in their goals set

with FastBridge data. In her third interviews, Melanie described one of her greatest moments of

increase in her teaching self-efficacy took place as all, but one student moved out of the

decoding group (lowest of the four) after the winter screener. In the same interview, Melanie

described how she continued working on her confidence in pushing high-performing students to

their full potential. Melanie said she strived to continue growing her knowledge in serving ELL

students as she felt out of practice without having any ELL students this year.

Observations

Table 4.22

Observation Results for Melanie

Teacher: Melanie Building: L Elementary (RLL) Grade: Fourth	Round 1 Date: 9/28/20 Time In: 10:15am Time Out: 11:00am	Round 2 Date: 10/26/20 Time In: 10:18am Time Out: 11:00am	Round 3 Date: 12/3/20 Time In: 11:35am Time Out: 12:30pm
Number of Students	12	14	15
Students Engaged In	• Comprehension	• Comprehension	• Writing
Period	• Beginning • Middle • End	• Beginning • Middle	• Beginning • Middle
The learning objective states what the students will learn and how the learning will be demonstrated.	No	No	No
The learning objective matches what students are learning.	No	No	No
Students know and understand the mastery objective.	No	No	No

Teacher: Melanie Building: L Elementary (RLL) Grade: Fourth	Round 1 Date: 9/28/20 Time In: 10:15am Time Out: 11:00am	Round 2 Date: 10/26/20 Time In: 10:18am Time Out: 11:00am	Round 3 Date: 12/3/20 Time In: 11:35am Time Out: 12:30pm
Checks for Understanding/ Formative Assessment	• Oral language • Questioning	• Oral language • Questioning	• Questioning • Writing
Teacher provides specific feedback	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student/Teacher Interactions	• Positive-3 • Negative-0	• Positive-3 • Negative-1	• Positive-5 • Negative-0
Academic and Language Experiences	• Non-linguistic representations • Academic discourse is evident • Specific classroom structures to facilitate academic conversations	• Direct vocabulary instruction in use (teacher led) • Academic Discourse • Specific classroom structures to facilitate academic conversations	• Academic discourse is evident • Specific classroom structures to facilitate academic conversations
Instruction	• Direct Instruction • Modeling/Demonstration • Guided Practice • Monitored Independent Student Practice • Teacher is following district approved/ aligned (pacing guide)	• Modeling/Demonstration • Guided Practice • Monitored Independent Student Practice • Teacher is following district approved/ aligned (pacing guide) • Teacher is using district adopted resources	• Direct instruction • Modeling/Demonstration • Monitored Independent Practice • Teacher is following district approved/ aligned (pacing guide) • Teacher is using district adopted resources

Teacher: Melanie Building: L Elementary (RLL) Grade: Fourth	Round 1 Date: 9/28/20 Time In: 10:15am Time Out: 11:00am	Round 2 Date: 10/26/20 Time In: 10:18am Time Out: 11:00am	Round 3 Date: 12/3/20 Time In: 11:35am Time Out: 12:30pm
	• Teacher is using district adopted resources		
Support Staff effective support	• N/A	• N/A	• N/A
Bloom's/DOK	• Strategic Thinking • Comparing • Contrasting • Defending	• Strategic Thinking • Comparing	• Strategic Thinking • Defending
Better Readers grant rubrics			
Culturally Responsive Teaching	2-Developing	3-Proficient	3-Proficient
Comprehension Instruction Reflection Rubric	2-Developing	1-Emerging	N/A

Melanie's instruction modeled a variety of instructional strategies throughout observations, as presented in Table 4.22. She provided comprehension and writing instruction to students during the observations. Melanie used a variety of checks for understanding and provided specific feedback to her students. She followed district suggested pacing and used district adopted resources. Melanie increased the positive student/teacher interactions and decreased the negative student/teacher interactions. Melanie used structured academic discourse during all observations. She instructed at the strategic thinking depth of knowledge. Her culturally responsive teaching strategies increased from developing to proficient.

Some areas observed that did not reflect Melanie's philosophy statement included: (a) no use of mastery objectives, (b) fluctuation of academic and language experiences, (c) not using all components in the gradual release of responsibility, and (d) decrease in comprehension instruction. Melanie did not utilize mastery objectives to guide the instruction in her remote-live-learning classroom. She fluctuated in the use of language and academic experiences within her instruction. Melanie did not include all components of the gradual release of responsibility in her instruction. Her comprehension instruction decreased from developing to emerging.

Field Notes

During round one in the RLL classroom of Melanie, she stated the purpose to the students, but it was not necessarily a mastery objective. The students used "I'm Ready" cards and academic discourse cards to guide them during this new experience. Melanie used repetition and provided clarification when needed. She set high classroom expectations and kept the language she used at a high level as well.

The second observation started with Melanie asking the students to discuss the story's setting. Students responded to the discussion in the chat box, so Melanie could check for understanding. She had students independently read pages three through 13 and checked on their progress, using the fist-of-five for the time they still needed after the timer went off. Melanie gave students two additional minutes from that check and then moved into a brain break. Students broke into groups to discuss the reading using teacher-provided questions. Students returned in their whole group setting to share out. Melanie reminded students to use text evidence to support their answers. The students discussed one question: "Why was it difficult for the villagers to get salt?"

During the final observation, Melanie's instruction focused on opinion writing using the OREO strategy. She reviewed the strategy with the students and the students show their understanding in the chat box. One student in a breakout room worked on a math test he missed when he was absent. His expectation while working on this task required him to share his screen the entire time with Melanie. The students showed confusion over the word "related" and Melanie taught the students to use it with the meaning of "similar" or "alike." The class participated in a warmup OREO writing prompt about cats versus dogs. Melanie used the chat box for students to have accountable talk and to check for understanding.

Melanie disciplined a student for not following chat box expectations and the discipline happened in a positive way. Melanie sent the student to a breakout room to think about her actions, and once Melanie joined her in the room, while the others wrote, she gave the student a task to complete that explained how she broke the expectations. Melanie shared the documentation with the student's parents. She provided expectations for the independent OREO writing using the text and providing text evidence. The class shared their independent writing with each other while Melanie checked up on the other two students. Students participated in formal academic discourse, even though they seemed to be natural with the expectations now.

Traditional Pathway

Data collected for traditional pathway participants included teaching philosophy statements, survey data, interview and participant journal data, and observation data. Individual data merged to form an understanding for participants within this pathway.

Teaching Philosophy Statements

Sadie, Dalila, and Stella provided teaching philosophies that mention multiple
stakeholders, such as educators, the community, administrators, families, and the students. In
other words, these educators believed that it takes a village to create successful students. They
also mentioned in their philosophy statements various facets essential to educating students,
including culture, language, identity, instructional modifications to meet individual needs, and an
environment where students can express their personal views and unique learning styles. Sadie,
Dalila, and Stella had philosophies that recognized students needing multiple characteristics and
support to be successful.

Survey Data

Table 4.23

Survey Results for Traditional Pathway Participants

		Mean Response
Self-efficacy		
1	I enjoy learning new techniques and strategies.	1.33-agree
2	I believe in my own ability to guide my students to success.	2.33-agree
3	I feel confident in my ability to apply professional learning strategies and techniques without instructional coaching.	1.5-agree
4	My professional learning experiences have positively contributed to my self-efficacy.	2.67-neutral
5	My administrator positively contributes to my self-efficacy.	1.67-agree
6	My building culture positively supports teacher self-efficacy.	1.67-agree
7	I see myself as a continuous learner	1.33-agree
Professional Learning		
1	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of building PLCs* meet my needs as a continuous learner.	3.33-neutral
2	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of grade level PLCs* meet my needs as a continuous learner.	2.67-neutral
3	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of instructional coaching (this includes a range of experiences from seeking informal information or assistance from the instructional coach to going through a formal coaching cycle)* meet my needs as a continuous learner. (Mark "not applicable" if this doesn't apply to you)	1.3-agree
4	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of mentoring (this includes both paid mentoring and non-paid buddy mentors that assist new teachers during their new teacher*	1.5-agree

		Mean Response
	training year) meet my needs as a continuous learner. (Mark "not applicable" if this doesn't apply to you)	
5	Professional learning opportunities provided *in a large group setting (at the district office)* meet my need as a continuous learner.	3.33-neutral
6	Professional learning opportunities provided by an out-of-the-district agency, at an outside location, but paid for my Ad Astra public schools meet my needs as a continuous learner. (Mark "not applicable" if you did not attend any "out-of-the-district" professional learning opportunities this year)	2-agree
7	Ad Astra public schools provides an adequate amount of professional learning opportunities that meet my needs as a continuous learner.	2.33-agree
8	The professional learning opportunities I have experienced at Ad Astra public schools have improved my teaching quality.	1.67-agree
9	I am satisfied with the *amount* of professional learning opportunities available to me at Ad Astra public schools.	2-agree
10	I am satisfied with the *quality* of professional learning opportunities available to me at Ad Astra public schools.	2.67-neutral

Sadie, Dalila, and Stella indicated their perceptions regarding teaching self-efficacy and professional learning through a survey. Table 4.23 displays a combined analysis of their perceptions. Sadie, Dalila, and Stella agreed, at various levels of agreement, with all but one of the statements regarding their teaching self-efficacy. They neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that mentioned that professional learning experiences have positively contributed to their teaching self-efficacy. Sadie, Dalila, and Stella agreed, at various levels of agreement, with six of the statements pertaining to professional learning. They neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements regarding professional learning, which included: (a) building level PLCS, (b) grade level PLCs, c) large group settings, and d) the quality of professional learning opportunities.

Interviews & Participant Journals

Figure 4.1

Traditional Pathway Concept Map

Traditional Pathway

Perceptions of Professional Learning on Teaching Practices

- Professional Learning Definitions/Understanding: "Gaining information and experiences from a reliable source to grow as an educator and better serve students"
  - What Professional Learning Looks Like (Positive Perceptions)
    - Instructional Coaching, Smaller Group Settings, Collaborative Environment, Greater Buy-in When Topic is Evident, Hands-on, Actively Engaged, Gradual Release of Responsibility
  - Frustrations in Professional Learning (Negative Perceptions)
    - Limitations on Resources, Overwhelming New Teacher Experiences, Online Learning, Self-paced
  - Outside Professional Learning
    - Appealing and Greater Buy-in Due to Self-Choice, Presenter Disengagement
  - Pre-Service Experiences
    - Experiences Prior to Pre-Service Helped, Colleagues with Similar Understandings, Field Experiences
    - Mismatch Between University Instruction and District Curriculum, Perception of Methods Courses Not Beneficial Due to Configuration of Field Experience
- Teaching Practices
  - Confidence in Asking Questions on the Fly to Prepare for More In-Depth Questions, Selecting Areas to Focus Using Data, Explicit Decoding Instruction, Vocabulary Instruction utilizing Picture Word Inductive Model (PWIM), Supports during Academic Discourse, Gradual Release of Responsibility, Supporting Thinking with Text Evidence, Intentful Planning, Time Management & Pacing, Checks for Understanding

Perceptions of Professional Learning on Teaching Self-Efficacy

- Teaching Self-Efficacy Definitions/Understanding: Initially the teachers did not know the meaning of self-efficacy
- Positive Perceptions
  - Professional Learning Assists in the Improvement of Practices, Small Class Size with Less Behavior Issues, Focusing on Instruction, Students Verbalizing Their Thinking, Supporting Ideas with Text Evidence, Students Understanding Complex Ideas, Colleagues that Share Similar Experiences or Provide Support, Data that Supports Growth
- Negative Perceptions
  - Blanket Assumptions about Adult Learning Needs, Areas Perceived as Not Mentioned During Pre-Service Learning, Not Learning for an Extended Amount of Time, Self-Paced Learning, Data Not Being Specific Enough

Perceptions of Professional Learning on Teaching Self-Efficacy (Educators Serving Students of Various Populations

- Positive Perceptions
  - Connections Between Experiences and College Courses, Modifying Lessons to Meet Student Needs, Administrators Understanding the Current Reality, High Expectations, Building Student Confidence, All Students Benefit from Focused Instruction, Tracking Data that Shows Student Progress at All Levels, Relating to Students Personally
- Negative Perceptions
  - Large Amounts of Diversity in One Room, Very Low Learners, Data Not Describing Student Needs Thoroughly Enough, Perception on Culturally Responsive Teaching Professional Learning as Repetitive and Not Helpful, Classroom Experience Perceived as More Beneficial Than College Courses, Locating Resources for Low (but not ELL) Students, Having to Focus on Social-Emotional Needs More Than Instructional Needs

Interview and participant journal data were coded and categorized for traditional pathway participants, Sadie, Dalila, and Stella, and described a variety of perceptions, as shown in Figure 4.1. The data collected from the mentioned methods provided perceptions of the three teachers in regards to professional learning on teaching practices, professional learning on teaching self-efficacy, professional learning on teaching self-efficacy (for educators serving various populations. A breakdown of each of the broad categories deemed necessary and included the topics of definitions/understandings, positive and negative perceptions, teaching practices, pre-service experiences, and outside professional learning. Figure 4.1 lists specific information mentioned within each category.

Observations

Table 4.24

Observation Results for Traditional Pathway Participants

Traditional Pathway	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3
Number of Students	19, 14, 2	21 (20 in person, 1 remote learner, 14, 2	19, 12, 3
Students Engaged In	• Comprehension • Phonics	• Comprehension • Vocabulary • Phonics	• Comprehension • Vocabulary • Phonics
Period	• Beginning • Middle • End	• Beginning • Middle • End	• Beginning • Middle • End
The learning objective states what the students will learn and how the learning will be demonstrated.	2-Yes, 1-No	Yes	2-Yes, 1-No
The learning objective matches what students are learning.	2-Yes, 1-No	2-Yes, 1-No	2-Yes, 1-No
Students know and understand	2-Yes, 1-No	2-Yes, 1-No	2-Yes, 1-No

Traditional Pathway	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3
the mastery objective.			
Checks for Understanding/ Formative Assessment	• Oral language • Questioning • Writing	• Oral language • Questioning • Writing	• Oral language • Questioning • Writing
Teacher provides specific feedback	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student/Teacher Interactions	• Positive-10 • Negative-0	• Positive-10 • Negative-9	• Positive-7 • Negative-4
Academic and Language Experiences	• Non-linguistic representations • Direct vocabulary instruction in use (teacher led) • Academic Discourse is evident • Specific classroom structures	• Non-linguistic representations • Direct vocabulary instruction in use (teacher led) • Academic Discourse is evident • Informal academic conversation	• Direct vocabulary instruction in use (teacher led) • Academic Discourse is evident • Informal academic conversation
Instruction	• Direct instruction • Modeling/Demonstration • Guided Practice • Monitored Independent Student Practice • Teacher is following district approved/aligned (pacing guide) • Teacher is using district	• Direct instruction • Modeling/Demonstration • Guided Practice • Monitored Independent Student Practice • Teacher is following district approved/aligned (pacing guide) • Teacher is using district adopted resources	• Direct instruction • Modeling/Demonstration • Guided Practice • Monitored Independent Student Practice • Teacher is following district approved/aligned (pacing guide) • Teacher is using district adopted resources

Traditional Pathway	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3
	adopted resources		
Support Staff effective support	• Yes	• N/A	• Yes
Bloom's/DOK	• Recall • Describing • Skill/Concept • Demonstrating • Strategic Thinking • Comparing • Contrasting	• Skill//Concept • Explaining • Demonstrating	• Skill/Concept • Demonstrating • Strategic Thinking • Examining • Defending • Explaining
Better Readers grant rubrics			
Culturally Responsive Teaching	2-Developing	2-Developing	2-Developing
Comprehension Instruction Reflection Rubric	2-Developing	1-Emerging	2-Developing
Explicit Vocabulary Instruction Reflection Rubric	N/A	2-Developing	1-Emerging
Word Recognition Instruction Reflection Rubric	1-Emerging	1-Emerging	1-Emerging

Sadie, Dalila, and Stella's instruction displayed a variety of instructional strategies throughout observations, as shown in Table 4.24. They provided comprehension, vocabulary, and phonics instruction to students during the observations. The three teachers used a variety of checks for understanding and provided specific feedback to their students. They all followed district suggested pacing and used district-adopted resources. Sadie, Dalila, and Stella

incorporated all components of the gradual release of responsibility in their instruction. They effectively utilized support staff in their classrooms and instructed at the strategic thinking depth of knowledge sometimes.

Some areas observed that did not reflect their philosophy statements included: (a) use of mastery objectives to guide instruction, (b) decline in use of non-linguistic representations, (c) negative student/teacher interactions, (d) use of structured academic discourse, (e) no growth in culturally responsive teaching, (f) decline in comprehension instruction, (g) decline in explicit vocabulary instruction, and (h) no growth in word recognition instruction. The teachers did not use mastery objectives to guide their instruction during all observations. Sadie, Dalila, and Stella started out using non-linguistic representations, but then moved away from using them during observations. Negative student/teacher interactions increased during observations in their classrooms. The traditionally prepared teachers moved away from using structured academic discourse over time. Culturally responsive teaching remained at developing as word recognition instruction remained at emerging. Comprehension instruction fluctuated from developing to emerging and back up to developing while explicit vocabulary instruction declined from developing to emerging.

Long-Term Substitute Pathway

Teaching Philosophy Statements

Amy and Lola provided teaching philosophies that recognized their position in education being one that is more than just providing curriculum to students. They also highlighted the importance of students showing individuality while feeling safe to be whom they want to in the environment provided. The classroom environment must be one where students feel loved to accomplish learning and growth with the appropriate energy that goes along with these concepts.

Survey Data

Table 4.25

Survey Results for Long-Term Substitute Pathway Participants

		Mean Response
Self-efficacy		
1	I enjoy learning new techniques and strategies.	1.5- agree
2	I believe in my own ability to guide my students to success.	2.5-neutral
3	I feel confident in my ability to apply professional learning strategies and techniques without instructional coaching.	1.5-agree
4	My professional learning experiences have positively contributed to my self-efficacy.	1.5-agree
5	My administrator positively contributes to my self-efficacy.	1-agree
6	My building culture positively supports teacher self-efficacy.	1-agree
7	I see myself as a continuous learner	1-agree
Professional Learning		
1	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of building PLCs* meet my needs as a continuous learner.	2-agree
2	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of grade level PLCs* meet my needs as a continuous learner.	2-agree
3	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of instructional coaching (this includes a range of experiences from seeking informal information or assistance from the instructional coach to going through a formal coaching cycle)* meet my needs as a continuous learner. (Mark "not applicable" if this doesn't apply to you)	1.5-agree
4	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of mentoring (this includes both paid mentoring and non-paid buddy mentors that assist new teachers during their new teacher training year)* meet my needs as a continuous learner. (Mark "not applicable" if this doesn't apply to you)	2.5-neutral
5	Professional learning opportunities provided *in a large group setting (at the district office)* meet my need as a continuous learner.	3.5-disagree
6	Professional learning opportunities provided by an out-of-the-district agency, at an outside location, but paid for my Ad Astra public schools meet my needs as a continuous learner. (Mark "not applicable" if you did not attend any "out-of-the-district" professional learning opportunities this year)	2-agree
7	Ad Astra public schools provides an adequate amount of professional learning opportunities that meet my needs as a continuous learner.	1-agree
8	The professional learning opportunities I have experienced at Ad Astra public schools have improved my teaching quality.	2-agree
9	I am satisfied with the *amount* of professional learning opportunities available to me at Ad Astra public schools.	2-agree

		Mean Response
10	I am satisfied with the *quality* of professional learning opportunities available to me at Ad Astra public schools.	2-agree

Amy and Lola indicated their perceptions regarding teaching self-efficacy and professional learning through a survey. Table 4.25 displays a combined analysis of their perceptions. Amy and Lola agreed, at various levels of agreement, with all but one of the statements regarding their teaching self-efficacy. They neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that mentioned belief in their own abilities to guide students to success. Lola and Amy agreed, at various levels of agreement, with eight of the statements pertaining to professional learning. They disagreed with the statement mentioning professional learning in large group settings at the district office. They neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements regarding mentoring.

Interviews & Participant Journals

Figure 4.2
Long-Term Substitute Pathway Concept Map

Long-Term Substitute Pathway

Perceptions of Professional Learning on Teaching Practices
- Professional Learning Definitions/Understanding: "Opportunities to expand on and build your knowledge"
- What Professional Learning Looks Like (Positive Perceptions)
  - Instructional Coaching,Collaborating with Colleagues, PLCs, Administrator Feedback
  - Quiet, Self-Pace, Self-Reflection, Hands-on Learning
- Frustrations in Professional Learning (Negative Perceptions)
  - Lack of Training, Assumptions on Prior Knowledge
- Pre-Service Experiences
  - Familiar with Expectations, Long-Term Positions Beneficial, Connections with College Courses
- Teaching Practices
  - Adding Necessary Supports, Excitement in the Instruction, Filling in Gaps, Focusing on Phonemic Awareness and Phonics, Culturally Responsive Teaching

Perceptions of Professional Learning on Teaching Self-Efficacy
- Teaching Self-Efficacy Definitions/Understanding: Confidence and "knowing that I am capable of producing results desired if I work hard"
- Positive Perceptions
  - First-hand Experience as a Sub, Positive and Productive Feedback and Support from Administrators, Calming Strategies, Being in a Rewarding Career, Gaining Familiarity with ReadyGen, Student Success with Skills Taught, Student Excitement to Learn, Increased Engagemnet
- Negative Perceptions
  - Large Group Learning, Being Vulernable or Sharing Ideas Aloud, Being Unsure about Previously Taught Topics and Acronyms, Understanding the Flow of ReadyGen

Perceptions of Professional Learning on Teaching Self-Efficacy (Educators Serving Students of Various Populations
- Positive Perceptions
  - Previous Background in Mental Health; Understanding the Importance of a Culturally Responsive Classroom; Making Learning Relatable; ReadyGen's embedding of Scaffolding Supports, Vocabulary Words, and Whole Group Instruction; ELL Supports in Raz-Kids; Importance of Becoming Bilingual; Recognizing Culture
- Negative Perceptions
  - Language Barriers, Realistic Scenarios in Learning

Interview and participant journal data coded and categorized for long-term substitute pathway participants, Amy and Lola, described a variety of perceptions, as presented in Figure 4.2. The data rendered from the mentioned methods provided perceptions of the two teachers in regards to professional learning on teaching practices, professional learning on teaching self-

efficacy, professional learning on teaching self-efficacy (for educators serving various populations. A breakdown of each of the broad categories deemed necessary and included the topics of definitions/understandings, positive and negative perceptions, teaching practices, pre-service experiences, and outside professional learning. Figure 4.2 provides specific information mentioned within each category.

Observations

Table 4.26

Observation Results for Long-Term Substitute Pathway Participants

Long-Term Substitute Pathway	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3
Number of Students	17, 19	20	16, 19
Students Engaged In	- Phonics - Comprehension - Vocabulary	- Comprehension - Phonics	- Comprehension - Vocabulary
Period	- Beginning - Middle	- Beginning - Middle	- Beginning - Middle
The learning objective states what the students will learn and how the learning will be demonstrated.	No, Yes	No, Yes	Yes
The learning objective matches what students are learning.	No, Yes	No, Yes	Yes
Students know and understand the mastery objective.	No, Yes	No	No, Yes
Checks for Understanding/ Formative Assessment	- Oral language - Questioning	- Oral language - Questioning	- Oral language - Questioning
Teacher provides	Yes	Yes	Yes

Long-Term Substitute Pathway	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3
specific feedback			
Student/Teacher Interactions	• Positive-2 • Negative-2	• Positive-2 • Negative-9	• Positive-2 • Negative-0
Academic and Language Experiences	• Non-linguistic representations • Direct vocabulary instruction in use (teacher led)	• Academic Discourse • Informal academic conversation	• Non-linguistic representations • Direct vocabulary instruction in use (teacher led) • Academic Discourse is evident • Informal academic conversation
Instruction	• Direct Instruction • Modeling/Demonstration • Guided Practice • Monitored Independent Student Practice • Teacher is following district approved/aligned (pacing guide) • Teacher is using district adopted resources	• Direct Instruction • Modeling/Demonstration • Guided Practice • Monitored Independent Student Practice • Teacher is following district approved/aligned (pacing guide) • Teacher is using district adopted resources	• Direct instruction • Modeling/Demonstration • Guided Practice • Monitored Independent Practice • Teacher is following district approved/aligned (pacing guide) • Teacher is using district adopted resources
Support Staff effective support	• Yes	• Yes	• Yes
Bloom's/DOK	• Skill/Concept • Demonstrating	• Skill//Concept • Demonstrating	• Recall • Recalling

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Long-Term Substitute Pathway	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3
	• Explaining	• Strategic Thinking • Contrasting	• Strategic Thinking • Questioning • Defending
Better Readers grant rubrics			
Culturally Responsive Teaching	1-Emerging	1-Emerging	2-Developing
Comprehension Instruction Reflection Rubric	1-Emerging	1-Emerging	2-Developing
Word Recognition Instruction Reflection Rubric	2-Developing	0-Not Evident	N/A
Explicit Vocabulary Instruction Reflection Rubric	2-Developing	N/A	2-Developing

Amy and Lola's instruction displayed multiple instructional strategies seen throughout observations, as shown in Table 4.26. They provided comprehension, vocabulary, and phonics instruction to students during observations. The two teachers used oral language and questioning checks for understanding and provided specific feedback to their students. They followed district suggested pacing and used district adopted resources. Amy and Lola increased academic and language experiences in their instruction and incorporated all components of the gradual release of responsibility. They effectively utilized support staff in their classrooms and instructed at the strategic thinking depth of knowledge sometimes. Amy and Lola improved in culturally

responsive teaching and comprehension instruction. They increased their culturally responsive teaching and comprehension instruction from emerging to developing.

Some areas observed that did not reflect their philosophy statements included: (a) use of mastery objectives to guide instruction, (b) fluctuation in student/teacher interactions, (c) instruction at low levels of depth of knowledge, (d) decline in word recognition instruction, and (e) no growth in explicit vocabulary instruction. The teachers did not use mastery objectives to guide their instruction during all observations. Amy and Lola fluctuated in their amounts of student/teacher interactions. They sometimes instructed at lower levels of thinking. Word recognition instruction declined from developing to not evident while explicit vocabulary instruction remained at developing.

Summary of Data from All Pathways

Teaching Philosophy Statements

All teachers in this study provided philosophy statements that provide insight on their classroom expectations that cultivated successful students. Codes and categories linked to philosophy statements showed a mix of student-focused, adult-focused, and environment-focused statements. Establishing teaching philosophies was a task that some of the teachers not worked through for some time while others recently created philosophy statements to satisfy an assignment in their college courses. The concepts summarized from the teaching philosophies reminded teachers of the district core beliefs embedded in the KESA plan.

Survey

Table 4.27

Survey Results for All Participants

		Mean Response
Self-efficacy		
1	I enjoy learning new techniques and strategies.	1.43-agree
2	I believe in my own ability to guide my students to success.	1.71-agree
3	I feel confident in my ability to apply professional learning strategies and techniques without instructional coaching.	2.57-neutral
4	My professional learning experiences have positively contributed to my self-efficacy.	2.14-agree
5	My administrator positively contributes to my self-efficacy.	2.00-agree
6	My building culture positively supports teacher self-efficacy.	1.86-agree
7	I see myself as a continuous learner	1.14-agree
Professional Learning		
1	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of building PLCs* meet my needs as a continuous learner.	2.86-neutral
2	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of grade level PLCs* meet my needs as a continuous learner.	2.43-agree
3	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of instructional coaching (this includes a range of experiences from seeking informal information or assistance from the instructional coach to going through a formal coaching cycle)* meet my needs as a continuous learner. (Mark "not applicable" if this doesn't apply to you)	1.43-agree
4	Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of mentoring (this includes both paid mentoring and non-paid buddy mentors that assist new teachers during their new teacher training year)* meet my needs as a continuous learner. (Mark "not applicable" if this doesn't apply to you)	2.83-neutral
5	Professional learning opportunities provided *in a large group setting (at the district office)* meet my need as a continuous learner.	3.67-disagree
6	Professional learning opportunities provided by an out-of-the-district agency, at an outside location, but paid for my Ad Astra public schools meet my needs as a continuous learner. (Mark "not applicable" if you did not attend any "out-of-the-district" professional learning opportunities this year)	2.40-agree
7	Ad Astra public schools provides an adequate amount of professional learning opportunities that meet my needs as a continuous learner.	1.86-agree
8	The professional learning opportunities I have experienced at Ad Astra public schools have improved my teaching quality.	2.00-agree
9	I am satisfied with the *amount* of professional learning opportunities available to me at Ad Astra public schools.	2.14-agree
10	I am satisfied with the *quality* of professional learning opportunities available to me at Ad Astra public schools.	2.71-neutral

All teachers in this study indicated their perceptions regarding teaching self-efficacy and professional learning through a survey. Table 4.27 displays a combined analysis of their perceptions. All teachers agreed, at various levels of agreement, with all but one of the statements regarding their teaching self-efficacy. They neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that mentioned their ability to apply professional learning without instructional coaching. All teachers agreed, at various levels of agreement, with six of the statements pertaining to professional learning. They disagreed with the statement mentioning professional learning in large group settings at the district office. They neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements regarding building level PLCs, mentoring, and the quality of professional development available to them at Ad Astra public schools.

The statements that teachers showed a neutral opinion or disagreed with provided some insight on which types of professional learning experiences to look closer at in the future. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, meetings that occurred in a large group setting at the district office halted during this school year, which reassured teachers who perceived this setting ineffective. Teachers who took the survey also expressed the importance of instructional coaching when applying professional learning to build the confidence necessary to embed the practice independently.

Interviews & Participant Journals

Figure 4.3
Concept Map for All Participants

All Teachers

Perceptions of Professional Learning on Teaching Practices

- Professional Learning Definitions/Understanding: "Opportunities to build on knowledge or gain new information and experiences to grow as an educator and better serve students"
  - What Professional Learning Looks Like (Positive Perceptions)
    - PLCs, Administrator Feedback, Instructional Coaching, Smaller Group Settings
    - Collaborative Environment, Greater Buy-in When Topic is Evident, Hands-on, Actively Engaged, Gradual Release of Responsibility,
  - Frustrations in Professional Learning (Negative Perceptions)
    - Limitations on Resources, Overwhelming New Teacher Experiences, Online Learning, Self-paced, Assumptions of Prior Knowledge
  - Outside Professional Learning
    - Appealing and Greater Buy-in Due to Self-Choice, Enjoyable when Presenter is Passionate and Purposeful, Presenter Disengagement
  - Pre-Service Experiences
    - Experiences Prior to Pre-Service Helped, Colleagues with Similar Understandings, Field Experiences, Provided Sound Background
    - Mismatch Between University Instruction and District Curriculum, Perception of Methods Courses Not Beneficial Due to Configuration of Field Experience, Program Wasn't Established Yet
- Teaching Practices
  - Confidence in Asking Questions on the Fly to Prepare for More In-Depth Questions, Selecting Areas to Focus Using Data, Explicit Decoding Instruction, Vocabulary Instruction utilizing Picture Word Inductive Model (PWIM), Supports during Academic Discourse, Gradual Release of Responsibility, Supporting Thinking with Text Evidence, Intentful Planning, Time Management & Pacing, Checks for Understanding, Embedding Supports, Culturally Responsive Teaching, High Expectations for All

Perceptions of Professional Learning on Teaching Self-Efficacy

- Teaching Self-Efficacy Definitions/Understanding: "Ability to guide students to success"
- Positive Perceptions
  - Professional Learning Assists in the Improvement of Practices, Small Class Size with Less Behavior Issues, Focusing on Instruction, Students Verbalizing Their Thinking, Supporting Ideas with Text Evidence, Students Understanding Complex Ideas, Colleagues that Share Similar Experiences or Provide Support, Data that Supports Growth, Classroom Experience, Positive Feedback from Administrator, Rewarding Career, Familiarity with ReadyGen, Increased Engagement, Student Excitement to Learn
- Negative Perceptions
  - Blanket Assumptions about Adult Learning Needs, Areas Perceived as Not Mentioned During Pre-Service Learning, Not Learning for an Extended Amount of Time, Self-Paced Learning, Data Not Being Specific Enough, Large Group Learning Settings, Being Vulnerable, Unknown Learning Practices and Acryonyms, Understanding the Flow of ReadyGen

Perceptions of Professional Learning on Teaching Self-Efficacy (Educators Serving Students of Various Populations

- Positive Perceptions
  - Connections Between Experiences and College Courses, Modifying Lessons to Meet Student Needs, Administrators Understanding the Current Reality, High Expectations, Building Student Confidence, All Students Benefit from Focused Instruction, Tracking Data that Shows Student Progress at All Levels, Relating to Students Personally, Background in Mental Health, Culturally Responsive Teaching and Reasoning Behind It, ReadyGen Supports, Raz-Kids Supports, Being Bilingual
- Negative Perceptions
  - Large Amounts of Diversity in One Room, Very Low Learners, Data Not Describing Student Needs Thoroughly Enough, Perception on Culturally Responsive Teaching Professional Learning as Repetitive and Not Helpful, Classroom Experience Perceived as More Beneficial Than College Courses, Locating Resources for Low (but not ELL) Students, Having to Focus on Social-Emotional Needs More Than Instructional Needs, Language Barriers, Unrealistic Scenarious in Learning

Interview and participant journal data coded and categorized for all teachers in this study, described a variety of perceptions, as shown in Figure 4.3. The data rendered from the mentioned methods provided perceptions of the seven teachers from various backgrounds in regards to professional learning on teaching practices, professional learning on teaching self-efficacy, professional learning on teaching self-efficacy (for educators serving various populations. A breakdown of each of the broad categories deemed necessary and included the topics of definitions/understandings, positive and negative perceptions, teaching practices, pre-service experiences, and outside professional learning. Figure 4.3 provides specific information mentioned within each category.

Observations

Table 4.28

Observation Results for All Participants

All Participants (7)	Round 1 9/21/20-9/30/20	Round 2 10/19/20-10/29/20	Round 3 12/1/20-1/7/21	Total 9/21/20-1/7/21 (21 observations)
Students Engaged In	Phonics Comprehension Vocabulary	Phonics Comprehension Vocabulary	Phonics Comprehension Vocabulary Writing	Phonics-76% Comprehension-38% Vocabulary-43% Writing-5%
The learning objective states what the students will learn and how the learning will be demonstrated.	57%	71%	71%	67%
The learning objective matches what students are learning.	57%	57%	71%	62%
Students know and understand	43%	29%	57%	43%

All Participants (7)	Round 1 9/21/20- 9/30/20	Round 2 10/19/20- 10/29/20	Round 3 12/1/20- 1/7/21	Total 9/21/20- 1/7/21 (21 observations)
the mastery objective.				
Checks for Understanding/Formative Assessment	Oral language-100% Questioning-57% Writing-29% Projects & Performances-0%	Oral language-100% Questioning-43% Writing-14% Projects & Performances-0%	Oral language-71% Questioning-57% Writing-43% Projects & Performances-0%	Oral language-90% Questioning-52% Writing-29% Projects & Performances-0%
Teacher provides specific feedback	100%	86%	100%	95%
Student/Teacher Interactions	Positive-6 Negative-2	Positive-6 Negative-6	Positive-7 Negative-2	Positive-19 Negative-10
Academic and Language Experiences	Non-linguistic representations-86%

Direct vocabulary instruction in use (teacher led)-43%

Academic Discourse is evident-29%

Specific classroom structures to facilitate academic conversations-29%

Informal academic conversation-0% | Non-linguistic representations-57%

Direct vocabulary instruction in use (teacher led)-43%

Academic Discourse is evident-71%

Specific classroom structures to facilitate academic conversations-14%

Informal academic conversation-57% | Non-linguistic representations-29%

Direct vocabulary instruction in use (teacher led)-57%

Academic Discourse is evident-86%

Specific classroom structures to facilitate academic conversations-14%

Informal academic conversation-71% | Non-linguistic representations-57%

Direct vocabulary instruction in use (teacher led)-48%

Academic Discourse is evident-62%

Specific classroom structures to facilitate academic conversations-19%

Informal academic conversation-43% |

All Participants (7)	Round 1 9/21/20-9/30/20	Round 2 10/19/20-10/29/20	Round 3 12/1/20-1/7/21	Total 9/21/20-1/7/21 (21 observations)
Instruction	Direct Instruction-86% Modeling/Demonstration-100% Guided Practice-71% Monitored Independent Student Practice-57% Teacher is following district approved/aligned (pacing guide)-100% Teacher is using district adopted resources-100%	Direct Instruction-71% Modeling/Demonstration-86% Guided Practice-57% Monitored Independent Student Practice-100% Teacher is following district approved/aligned (pacing guide)-100% Teacher is using district adopted resources-100%	Direct Instruction-100% Modeling/Demonstration-71% Guided Practice-86% Monitored Independent Student Practice-71% Teacher is following district approved/aligned (pacing guide)-100% Teacher is using district adopted resources-100%	Direct Instruction-86% Modeling/Demonstration-86% Guided Practice-71% Monitored Independent Student Practice-76% Teacher is following district approved/aligned (pacing guide)-100% Teacher is using district adopted resources-100%
Support Staff effective support	100%	100%	100%	100%
Bloom's/DOK	Recall-29% Skill/Concept-43% Strategic Thinking-29% Extended Thinking-0%	Recall-0% Skill/Concept-71% Strategic Thinking-29% Extended Thinking-0%	Recall-14% Skill/Concept-43% Strategic Thinking-43% Extended Thinking-0%	Recall-14% Skill/Concept-52% Strategic Thinking-33% Extended Thinking-0%
Better Readers grant rubrics				
Culturally Responsive Teaching	2-Developing	2-Developing	2-Developing	2-Developing
Comprehension Instruction	1-Emerging	1-Emerging	1-Emerging	1-Emerging

All Participants (7)	Round 1 9/21/20-9/30/20	Round 2 10/19/20-10/29/20	Round 3 12/1/20-1/7/21	Total 9/21/20-1/7/21 (21 observations)
Reflection Rubric				
Word Recognition Instruction Reflection Rubric	1-Emerging	1-Emerging	1-Emerging	1-Emerging
Explicit Vocabulary Instruction Reflection Rubric	2-Developing	2-Developing	2-Developing	2-Developing

Instruction displayed by these teachers through observations showed a variety of instructional strategies, as shown in Table 4.28. The teachers provided phonics, comprehension, vocabulary, and writing instruction to students throughout 21 observations. Utilizing mastery objectives to guide instruction showed an increase in all areas, although it did not occur during all observations. Teachers used a variety of checks for understanding during their lessons, with oral language checks being the most frequently used check at 90%. The use of oral language checks decreased over the observations. Questioning and writing checks for understanding increased and overall questioning took place during 52% of the observations while writing took place during 29% of the observations. Teachers provided specific feedback to the students during 95% of observations.

Student/teacher interactions improved as positive interactions increased and negative interactions decreased. The use of academic and language experience produced a mix of results as the use of non-linguistic representations decrease, direct vocabulary instruction increased, academic discourse increased, structured academic discourse decreased, and informal academic

discourse increased. Teachers effectively utilized support staff during all observations. The use of the gradual release of responsibility also produced a combination of results as direct instruction increased, modeling/demonstrate decreased, guided practice increased, and monitored independent practice decreased. The teachers in this study followed district pacing guides and used district approved resources during all observations.

The depth of knowledge observed in lessons showed a decrease in teaching at the recall level, which means lower level thinking, became higher-level thinking. Instruction at the skill/concept level decreased as strategic thinking increased. Teachers did not provide instruction at the extended thinking level. Culturally responsive teaching along with word recognition, comprehension, and vocabulary instruction, observed showed that all areas remained the same throughout the observations. Culturally responsive teaching and explicit vocabulary instruction remained at the developing level while word recognition and comprehension instruction remained at the emerging level.

Summary of Data and Overall Findings

This chapter charted qualitative data representing elementary ELA teachers from different pathways perception of profession learning on teaching practices and teaching self-efficacy. Referring back to Guskey's (2002) *Model of Teacher Change*, these findings reinforced the idea that teacher change requires experience of quality professional learning, influences changes in classroom practices that impact student achievement. The data displayed in this chapter explained perceptions of necessary instruction and supports imperative to student success while it provided data describing a need for strategic professional learning that is specific to the needs of the adult learners and their students.

In this chapter, findings showed the need for specialized learning for educators along with additional professional learning and continued support in using ReadyGen. Teachers in this study expressed knowledge of numerous instructional practices, but observations showed utilization of practices at various levels. Support in embedding practices into the new ELA program with confidence is a critical next step for educators.

Chapter five provides a summary, discussion and implications, recommendations for district leaders and future research, and a conclusion of the study. It serves to summarize the information gathered from this study to answer research questions along with providing directions on next steps for Ad Astra public schools and for those interested in future research similar to this study.

Chapter 5 - Summary, Discussion and Implications, Recommendations, and Conclusions

Chapter five begins with a summary of the study and descriptions of how findings answered the research questions. The discussion and implications section provides connections between findings and relevant literature. Recommendations presented provide ideas for teachers, school districts, and future researchers. The final section of this chapter provides conclusions of the study.

Summary of the Study

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore how elementary ELA teachers in a large Midwestern school district, coming from various pathways into education, engaged in professional learning, how they applied professional learning into their instructional practices, and how the professional learning experience contributed to their teaching self-efficacy. Teachers in this study experienced using a new ELA program, ReadyGen, while receiving professional learning for the program. They described perceptions regarding the professional learning they received for ReadyGen implementation and various reading subjects presented through the Better Readers grant.

Research Questions

The research questions in this study focused on how participants perceive professional learning on their teaching practices and teaching self-efficacy. Descriptive answers for each research question follows the presentation of questions within this section.

Research Question 1. How do elementary ELA teachers from different pathways to the profession perceive professional learning on their teaching practices? Teachers in this study expressed a greater amount of application of professional learning through teaching practices with the support of instructional coaching. Prior to the Better Readers grant, teachers took on the responsibility of initiating application of learned practices with minimal support. Traditional pathway teachers described learning through classroom experiences and trial and error previously. With the support, they began receiving during the Better Readers grant, teachers applied most professional learning into practice with instructional coaching cycles as part of the process. Teachers felt more confident as they had mastery experiences associated with their learning (Bandura, 1977). They also continued utilizing practices learned through the process with the experience of successful implementation (Guskey, 2002).

Research Question 2. How do elementary ELA teachers from different pathways to the profession perceive professional learning on their teaching self-efficacy? Teachers in this study described participating in instructional coaching cycles with their peers, which provided them with mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, and social persuasion (Bandura, 1977). The teachers experienced growth in professional learning through this format, but simultaneously had other factors negatively influencing their teaching self-efficacy, not related to professional learning. Teachers worked to continuously balance positive and negative perceptions. Two factors identified that could lead to positive perceptions and greater teaching-self efficacy were specialized professional learning and additional training in implementing ReadyGen.

Research Question 2a. How do elementary ELA teachers from different pathways to the profession who serve students from various populations perceive professional learning on their teaching self-efficacy? Teachers in this study described experiences of working with students of

various populations and their perceived lack of training, which contributed to mixed influences on their teaching self-efficacy. Teachers recounted self-guided learning, which was a challenging way to determine success without having parameters that were comparable with colleagues. On the other hand, they contributed support from their administrators and instructional coaches as positive influences to their teaching self-efficacy through social persuasions attained because of positive verbal feedback (Bandura, 1977).

Discussion and Implications

This section provides a discussion of the findings and implications connected to literature. All data collected assisted in describing how ELA elementary teachers from different pathways to the profession perceive professional learning on their teaching practices and teaching self- efficacy and how literature explains the perceptions.

Teaching Philosophy Statements

Teaching philosophy statements described expectations for students, adults, and the educational environments they collaborate in that they deemed necessary for student success. In some instances, teaching philosophy statements and observed classroom expectations did not align. Misalignment of teaching philosophy statements could be the result of a lack of mastery experiences in content knowledge or philosophical understanding of education (Bandura, 1977). Teaching philosophy statements reflecting instructional practices and the context of the building or district they serve (Goodyear & Allchin, 1998). Utilizing an institution's mission when preparing a teaching philosophy ensures clear alignment with the context (Goodyear & Allchin, 1998).

One area that did not reflect expectations set forth by teachers was the described differentiation or adjustments needed to meet the "whole-child" needs of individual students. Observed student/teacher interactions improved throughout the study, but the number of negative student/teacher interactions continued to reflect practices that do not assist in lowering the affective filter. With the lowering of the affective filter, students will feel more welcome and safe to grow in their learning environment.

Within some teaching philosophy statements, teachers described providing research-based practices that promoted student success. Instructional practices observed within classrooms did not always reflect the quality or frequent use necessary for student success. The observation of the following instructional practices did not align with expectations spelled out in teaching philosophy statements:

- utilization of mastery objectives to guide instruction;

- academic and language experiences;

- structured discourse;

- consistent use of all components of the Gradual Release of Responsibility;

- a better understanding of levels of quality teaching based on the Better Readers grant rubrics.

The practice of establishing and upholding a teaching philosophy statement to set expectations for learners and teachers was not a common practice with the teachers in this study. Some created philosophy statements for the purpose of this study while others utilized statements created in college courses. Bandura (1977) described having a set of beliefs when executing a plan of action, which could potentially connect with teaching philosophies to ensure success for

students within their classrooms. Without a clear philosophy statement in each classroom, students and their teachers will lack an understanding about motivators, outcomes, values, and relationships (Goodyear & Allchin, 1998). Having clear expectations can guide all involved in education settings, similarly to the use of mastery objectives guiding instruction. Utilizing teaching philosophy statements allows educators to reflect on their practices and if they are delivering the instruction that is appropriate for success (Goodyear & Allchin, 1998). Reflecting on practices to check for successes allows teaching philosophies to serve a tool for analyzing the attainment of mastery experiences and goals that influence decisions in proceeding steps (Bandura, 1977).

Survey

The survey in the study provided perceptions from educators regarding professional learning and teaching self-efficacy. The first component of Guskey's (2002) *Model of Teacher Change*, professional learning, relates to information collected through the survey. Guskey (2002) explained that the focus of his model is not necessarily on the professional learning, but more about the success with implementation that transforms teacher attitudes and beliefs. Participants expressed their need of instructional coaching when applying new strategies in the survey. When considering successful implementation, the need for instructional coaching is imperative to ensure that necessary changes in teachers' beliefs and practices, which impact student learning outcomes in the experience. Successful implementation of learning provides teachers with four types of experiences described by Bandura (1977). As teachers move forward from a successful accomplishment, they have a mastery experience to move forward with that will help shape some of their future experiences. With instructional coaching providing work with peers, teachers gain vicarious experiences as they observe their peers in effective

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instruction. Another way teachers have vicarious experiences involved in instructional coaching occurs as they critique their own teaching, especially when considering moves for future instruction. Receiving feedback from colleagues, through instructional coaching reflections, allows for teachers to experiences social persuasions that influence their teaching self-efficacy. With the delivery of a successful lesson, teachers experience feelings of satisfaction and pleasure within physiological and emotional states. Each of these experiences provide teachers with opportunities that boost their teaching self-efficacy.

Another component in Guskey's (2002) model connected with survey data is professional learning. Teachers felt like the quality of professional learning provided by the district did not meet their needs as continuous learners. They also felt that professional learning in the forms of building PLCs, mentoring, and large group settings did not meet their needs as continuous learners. With concerns in these areas, it is imperative to examine the causes so all educators see the importance in the professional learning experiences they receive in order to transferred them into successfully implemented practices. It is equally important to note the forms of professional learning that teachers indicated in meeting their needs, to ensure the continuation of these experiences. Forms of professional learning that teachers preferred included grade level PLCs, instructional coaching, and outside-of-district. Teachers expressed through the survey that they felt like the amount of professional learning opportunities provided by the district met their needs as continuous learners. They also felt like their professional learning experiences improved their teaching quality. This information describes the appreciation and willingness that the teachers have for continuous learning. Without experiencing successful implementation of skills learned through professional learning, as described by Guskey (2002), teachers will not experience the other changes that occur throughout the *Model of Teacher Change*, such as change in

instructional practices, student outcomes, and attitudes and beliefs. In addition, if the professional learning experiences do not provide a new skill or ways to improve performance, teachers do not gain mastery experiences that lead them into taking on new challenges.

Interviews and Participant Journals

Interviews and participant journals provided a considerable amount of information regarding teachers' perceptions of professional learning on their practices and teaching self-efficacy. The collection of interviews and participant journals produced the following categories formed by codes. Codes supporting the categories described the following understandings and perceptions:

- overall solid understanding of professional learning and its purpose;
- teacher satisfaction with instructional coaching support, small group settings, such as PLCs, and supportive administrators (with the exception of one participant) as it provided time for collaboration with colleagues, hands-on learning, and topics applicable to the current reality;
- teacher frustration with the perceived lack of quality, differentiation, large settings, perceived limitation on resources in tiered protocol, difficulties in utilizing data to identify student needs, lack of support for long-term substitutes to fill in learning gaps (assumptions of prior knowledge), new teacher support, and online learning;
- outside professional learning with passionate, engaging presenters with applicable information;
- positive perceptions of pre-service experiences, such as field experiences, the sound-background provided, seen as helpful ;

- negative perceptions of pre-service experiences, such as mismatches between university instruction and district curriculum, field experiences with improper configurations, and underdeveloped program options;

- large variety of teaching practices described;

- gaps in teachers' initial understanding of teaching self-efficacy;

- positive perceptions of teaching self-efficacy, such as small class sizes, minimal behavior issues, students' ability to show understanding in various forms, colleague and administrator support, data showing growth, classroom experiences/trial and error, student engagement and excitement, and familiarity with teaching materials;

- negative perceptions in teaching self-efficacy, such as blanket assumptions of adult and student learning need, areas perceived as lacking in pre-service preparation, not learning for an extended time, self-paced, data not representing student abilities, large group learning, being vulnerable, unknown topics, unknown practices, unknown acronyms, and unsureness with new curriculum;

- positive perceptions in teaching self-efficacy for those serving students of various populations, such as connections between experiences and college courses, knowledge to modify lessons with supports, supportive administrators and instructional coaches, administrators and instructional coaches' understanding of current reality, high expectations, building student confidence, the benefit for all students, tracking data representative of students, relating to students/culturally responsive teaching, and ReadyGen supports;

- negative perceptions in teaching self-efficacy for those serving students of various populations, such perceived lack of preparedness to serve students, large amounts of

diversity in one room, very low learners, data not descriptive of student needs,

perceived lack in culturally responsive teaching trainings, perceived lack in formal

courses and training in comparison to classroom experience, resources for low

students (not ELLs), social-emotional needs of students, and language barriers.

The work of Guskey (1986, 2002), Bruner (1961), and Bandura (1977) connect with

many implications in this study. Guskey's (1986, 2002) *Model of Teacher Change* supports the

need for professional learning that can be turned into implemented practices, which provide

"mastery" experiences that Bandura's (1977) described in his work regarding teaching self-

efficacy. In addition, Bruner's (1961) *Discovery Learning* described the spiraling manner of

learning necessary for learners to build on prior learning, as it applies to adult learning.

The preference of small group learning grew over the past few years as a few district

configurations changed. First, COVID-19 restrictions within the district have halted large group

learning during the 2020-2021 school year, so teachers have been able to receive learning within

their designated buildings. In addition, with the adoption of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports

(MTSS), Ad Astra's District Leadership Team (DLT) has delegated professional learning topics

for the past two years. Professional learning takes place in more of a systemic approach and at

the building level more often than in the past. Six out of seven of the teachers in the study

experienced the previous format of learning that took place more often at the district office in

large groups. Teachers who participated the previous formats of learning prior to the adoption of

MTSS, did not have opportunities with the learning that allowed them to interpret the

information from Bandura's (1977) four sources of influence along with the additional source

suggested by Maddux (2013). The new format of learning within buildings allows for a greater

amount of building collaboration, thinking about students that many teachers will get to

experience working with as they move from one grade level to another. The previous format

frustrated some teachers due to a lack of focus on their student needs and typically seemed like a

waste of time, as teachers would share what district-delegated instructional practices they

implemented or did not implement. With the positive adjustments made in professional learning

formats, due to the adoption of MTSS, teachers in this study seem to enjoy engaging in learning

more than they did in the past. Professional learning since the adoption of MTSS has provided

targeted learning accompanied by follow-up support through instructional coaching to allow

teachers mastery, vicarious, social persuasion, and emotional and physiological experiences that

contribute to their teaching self-efficacy in a positive manner.

One concern with professional learning involves quality, as teachers have not

experienced a spiral in learning, as explained by Bruner (1961), to build on to their previous

knowledge with the exception of culturally responsive teaching (CRT). The introduction of

topics provides surface-level learning that needs built on to by revisiting topics to solidify

teacher understanding and promote successful implementation. Continuously receiving learning

on new topics will not build a solid foundation in topics that are critical in the district. Although

the district presented on CRT multiple times for teachers to gain a deeper understanding of it,

they lacked awareness in the purpose of the spiraling and viewed the learning as repetitive.

A few explanations describe teacher perception on the limited resources available in the

district due to the tiered protocol. Prior to the adoption of MTSS, teachers had flexibility in the

resources they utilized for instruction and assessments. Although the district provided

curriculum, the use of the curriculum varied from classroom to classroom. This caused great

difficulty when schools received new students and teachers tried to gauge what topics the student

previously learned. During this time, the utilization of mastery objectives was not consistent

throughout the district either. A shock made its way through the district with the establishment of a tiered protocol that delegated resources allowed during different tiers of instruction. Some teachers saw the tiered protocol as a helpful guide while others viewed it as a restriction put on them. With the newness that the tiered protocol still had associated with it, some teachers had not yet felt success nor sensed mastery experiences in utilizing components of the protocol. In return, new skills and improvements in teachers' performances will not result in successful implementation without the sense of mastery. With continued experiences of failure, when utilizing the tiered protocol, it will take teachers believing in themselves and their capability of carrying out these tasks (Bandura, 1977).

With experience using ReadyGen and other resources on the tiered protocol, the DLT adjusted the tiered protocol to provide specific resources to use to instruct different skills within tiers and added resources for enrichment and comprehension instruction. Another addition to the tiered protocol, under tier one instruction, noted the non-negotiables or the five components required to teach in ReadyGen.

Although teachers expressed their enjoyment of outside professional learning, COVID-19 limited the opportunity, especially for out-of-the-state learning funded by the Better Readers grant. In response, Ad Astra Public Schools began working on creating their own experts in the district, which limited the need for outside professional learning. Due to COVID-19, most outside learning opportunities became available online, which cut out the need to travel. As teachers view their peers as experts in the field, they have opportunity to grow in their teaching self-efficacy through vicarious experiences, which allow them to take in positive beliefs about themselves (Bandura, 1977).

An area that seemed to be out of the district's control was pre-service learning. Other than communicating needs and ideas to area universities, Ad Astra Public Schools have options for preparing their newly hired teachers to work with the diverse students served in the district. Even with a variation in experiences, the district could take advantage of the situation by creating a system to gauge an understanding of what teachers come in knowing in order to provide professional learning specific to their needs. Even when perceptions of mismatches in curriculum taught at the university and curriculum used within the district occur, specialized learning can fill in gaps before they begin. Most teachers in the study perceived a lack of preparation when working with students of various populations. The district holds a responsibility to prepare teachers for the diversity they will experience and need to make it part of the specialized learning process identified when they enter the district. Through specialized professional learning, teachers have the potential to participate in opportunities that would provide multiple teaching self-efficacy experiences. Without specialized learning, teachers continue to lack in mastery experiences that build robust beliefs and unknowingly teach them that they are capable of obtaining new sills (Bandura, 1977).

New teachers are not the only educators that have the requirement to learn, but Ad Astra Public Schools maintain the obligation to promote continuous learning to all teachers in the district. The view of continuous learning requires a shift from stigmatized and only necessary for struggling educators to beneficial, purposeful, and appealing. A shift in thinking and understanding professional learning is necessary to allow educators to see the importance of changing instructional practices, like in Guskey's (2002) model.

With professional learning topics presented once, teachers do not get the opportunity to build up their knowledge and skills that result in mastery learning, just as students require, as

described by Bruner (1961). Necessary tracking of district initiatives by Ad Astra Public Schools is imperative to ensure the continuation of building on of learning and practices, especially those outlined in the eWalkThrough document and Better Readers grant rubrics. Student data tracking is critical in this process as it drives the selection and adjustments of topics of learning. Data should not be limited to information regarding the universal screening, but take into account data gathered for ELLs, such as IDEA Oral Language Proficiency Test (IPT) information. Linking data to professional learning implementation provides teachers with a way to check for changes in student outcomes, one component in Guskey's (2002) model. Changes in student outcomes provide opportunities for teachers to obtain mastery experiences as they recognize carrying out tasks successfully (Bandura, 1977).

Although teachers gained teaching self-efficacy as they became more comfortable in using ReadyGen, additional professional learning specific to the program would benefit teachers, as the initial professional learning was limited. Teachers, again, need to build on their understanding and knowledge of the program while learning deeper about supports critical to student learning (Bruner, 1961). A systemic list of supports, especially when making adjustments for ELLs, within ReadyGen would benefit teachers working with students who are learning at various levels. Collaborating with peers who achieved success in embedding supports allows for teachers to sense vicarious experiences that contribute to their understanding and beliefs that they are capable of adequately implementing supports for their students (Bandura, 1977). The list of supports would be part of new teacher specialized learning along with ensuring veteran teachers have a solid understanding of where and how to embed supports in a scripted resource.

In the past, Ad Astra Public Schools taught teachers the importance of teaching students self-efficacy. The district never introduced the topic in a way that required adults to think in

terms of their own self-efficacy or related it to their teaching self-efficacy, which means they did not get the opportunity to gain any of Bandura's (1977) described experiences that could have influenced their personal beliefs in themselves. Just as the district required teachers to learn about their own culture when learning about culturally responsive teaching, it would benefit educators to learn about their teaching self-efficacy along with focusing on the importance of teaching it to students. After focusing on self-efficacy as part of the district's KESA plan, Ad Astra Public Schools pushed the topic to the side for the past two years. Bringing the topic back up would allow for a greater understanding of efficacy and a focus on teacher and student social-emotional needs.

When working with students of various populations, teachers do not usually get much of a say in regards to the amount of diverse learners in their classrooms. In order to ensure teachers are not being set up for tough experiences in their classrooms, the number of diverse learners, especially those receiving special education services and newcomer students, needs to be monitored. School districts and administrators should not force teachers into overly challenging situations, just as students should not experience those types of situations to ensure an opportunity for growth in their efficacy. Another area of implication from this study is the need for culturally responsive resources in an easy-to-understand format, such as a resource list, and further training that builds on previously learning. With the amount of diversity staying constantly high in Ad Astra Public Schools, it is necessary to continue learning ways to approach instruction that will benefit diverse learners and create mastery experiences for educators. Teachers experienced difficult teaching periods by having a large number of diversity in their classrooms and had not quite had the successes to feel triumph that would provide mastery experiences (Bandura, 1977). As they continue to gain more opportunities of success, teachers

will learn how to be resilient in their challenging tasks through the teaching self-efficacy they gained.

Observations

Classroom observations provided a deeper understanding of the practices utilized by the teachers in the study, which connected to Guskey's (2002) model, particularly the component of change in classroom practices. Just as with the students, teachers spent a significant amount of time out of their classrooms due to the COVID-19 pandemic. On top of returning to the routine of school, teachers began utilizing a new resource for teaching tier one ELA instruction, ReadyGen. With the unfamiliarity of the program and the required fidelity, teachers showed caution when embedding certain practices and supports into their instruction.

The observation data supports the idea of change in instructional practices as growth in seen in multiple areas, including the following:

- utilization of mastery objectives to guide instruction;

- implementation of a variety of checks for understanding;

- academic and language experiences;

- academic discourse, specifically informal conversations.

Although the teachers in this study described a large variety of instructional practices in interviews and participant journals, their use and quality of the practices did not reflect what teachers described. This could be due to unfamiliarity of the program that teachers still faced or their concern with deviating away from what the resources delegate to ensure fidelity. Teachers did not experience learning that showed them how to shift from the old programs to ReadyGen,

especially with the many differences between the programs. With the disposal of all previously utilized ELA products, teachers had to start over new while thinking that everything they did before was wrong. They also had to start over with their mastery experiences linked to their curriculum, as they began using ReadyGen. They may have experienced some failures that set back their teaching self-efficacy in the beginning, but began seeing their new practices become mastery as they improved (Bandura, 1977). Nearly all teachers in this study expressed concern in having enough time to fit all five components into the allotted 105 minutes mandated by the district and upheld by their building administrators. When teachers overcome their concerns and have more familiarity with ReadyGen, teacher change in instructional practices may be clearer.

Field Notes

Field notes taken during observations provided detailed notes on practices and routines taking place in classrooms. Field notes specified what the teachers did that they had the knowledge to do differently or lacked the experience of what to do. Embedding of previously learned instructional practices into ReadyGen was not common. Field notes early on described teacher usage of their manuals verbatim, whereas field notes taken further in the study explained practices teachers implemented to make the learning more natural, such as PowerPoint presentations for pacing. In the beginning, teachers utilized scripted instruction to ensure they exposed students to the curriculum adequately, but through success in student understanding and practice of using the program, teachers gained mastery experiences that allowed them to feel confident in implementing ReadyGen (Bandura, 1977). Change in instructional practices seen in field notes occurred mostly in the implementation of ReadyGen with some viewed changes in instruction, as reflected in observation data.

Relevant Literature

This section serves to provide relative literature connected to the findings of this study. Connections made assisted in solidifying recommendations presented from this study.

Callens et al.'s (2019) study related to findings in the research as it described success in a campus-wide professional learning program. With nearly all Ad Astra teachers participating in cohorts of learning, as teachers did in Callens et al.'s (2019) study, similar practices, such as planning for sustainment, utilizing research-based practices, and working toward institutional change to move away from large learning settings.

Foster's (2019) study related to findings as it confirmed that teachers value professional learning led by their colleagues. Participants in the study and in Foster's (2019) study mentioned their appreciation for the accessibility of their peers and familiarities that provide comfort in the learning. Findings in both studies described the importance of addressing learning needs of both students and teachers.

Lai and McNaughton's (2016) research relates to findings within this study as student data served as evidence for fine-tuning instruction. Teachers in both studies experienced data-driven professional learning along with checking the success of their instruction using various forms of data. Classroom practices in both studies adjusted to meet the needs of students and showed a focus on explicit instruction as teachers worked towards improving student scores on achievement assessments.

Recommendations

For Teachers

This study collected data from teachers regarding their perceptions of professional learning on their teaching practices and teaching self-efficacy. Listed below are a handful of recommendations for teachers to consider that developed from this study:

- when you need help in a particular area, seek the expertise around you, including administrators, instructional coaches, and colleges, as they can provide formal and informal professional learning that aligns with building expectations;

- when learning a new curriculum, set time aside to get to know the program, to find out the scope and sequence and important components

- plan for embedding of supports, if they are not already provided

- journal thoughts, concerns, and successes throughout the utilization of a new program so you are better prepared the next year;

- seek information regarding instructional practices within the building or district to ensure adequate use of the practices.

For District Leaders

This study helped gauge a greater understanding of the perceptions of professional learning on teaching practices and teaching self-efficacy. Listed below are several practical recommendations for district leaders to address that stemmed from this research:

- provide specialized professional learning, taken from semi-structured interviews;

- provide adequate professional learning to support teachers using new curriculum, taken from semi-structured interviews, observations, field notes, and participant journals;

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- provide professional learning in implementing teaching practices and strategies in the curriculum, taken from semi-structured interviews, observations, field notes, and participant journals;

- provide professional learning in smaller setting (building level at the largest) for educators to feel successful in their learning, taken from the initial survey;

- continuously examine the quality of professional learning to ensure the needs of all adult learners are being met, such as differentiating professional learning to meet the various levels of learning, taken from the initial survey and semi-structured interviews;

- provide professional learning that targets specific skills and learning, taken from semi-structured interviews;

- continuously examine the culture of buildings, relationships between administrators and their staff, and other areas that may be cause a decreasing in teacher self-efficacy, taken from the initial survey and semi-structured interviews;

- continuously examine mentoring programs, taken from the initial survey;

- provide adequate professional learning to long-term substitutes that may not be formally trained in all district topics, taken from semi-structured interviews;

- encourage and support educators working on additional endorsements, such as when those working with various populations work on their ESOL endorsement, taken from semi-structured interviews;

- provide professional learning to all staff regarding how to address the needs of learners from various populations, taken from semi-structured interviews;

- continuously provide professional learning on district initiatives and instructional practices, especially those evaluated on, taken from observations and field notes;

- provide professional learning on explicit instruction, particularly in the areas of vocabulary, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension, and culturally responsive teaching, taken from observations and field notes;

- continuously examine the need for outside-of-the-district professional learning opportunities and consider establishing a system for educator requests it, taken from the initial survey.

The benefit of further examining the recommendations listed above would be to ensure that teachers understand practices and strategies in order to provide quality teaching that they are confident in and have the flexibility to embed supports instead of following the ReadyGen verbatim. Teachers need to be confidently equipped with a variety of learning tools so they are prepared to teach effectively no matter what resources use. They also need to understand where to apply their learned strategies and supports to meet their students' needs from various populations as schools continue to grow in diversity.

For Future Research

This study yielded data that provided a better understanding of what elementary ELA teachers experienced and perceived as they implemented ReadyGen into their classrooms of diverse students. The teachers treaded lightly as the district mandated fidelity to the program and specific time allowances. Potential areas for future research surfaced during this study, including the following ideas:

- conduct a study with elementary ELA or math teachers from different pathways to the profession to explore perceptions of preparedness and support in utilizing a new program;

- conduct a study with teachers from different pathways to the profession to explore perceptions of preparedness as they enter their first teaching position;

- conduct a study with secondary ELA teachers from different pathways to the profession to explore how they describe the influence of professional learning on their teaching practices and efficacy;

- conduct a study with a larger sample size, particularly with more teachers representing each pathway;

- conduct a study to compare/contrast teachers in different Better Readers grant cohorts;

- conduct a study in similar and different community configurations to compare/contrast results.

Conclusions

Successful implementation of new strategies and learning are key when working through teacher change. Guskey (2002) described the importance of this model to ensure that change is sustainable. The teachers in this study continued to move forward with their learning and implementation of ReadyGen as they work to sustain their learning. The teachers in elementary ELA classrooms need continued support from Ad Astra Public Schools in the forms of specialized professional learning and continued support for the usage of ReadyGen to reach success in embedding the many instructional practices they learned in the past into their current curriculum. As described by Bruner (1961), teachers need continued learning on topics they received introduction level professional learning on in order to spiral and build onto their knowledge. With the building of knowledge, teachers have the opportunity to experience mastery learning on instructional practices that build their teaching self-efficacy, as described by Bandura

(1977). The building of teaching self-efficacy for teachers at Ad Astra Public Schools is essential to student learning and overall experiences of collective teacher efficacy, the highest effect size in Hattie's (2012) study of factors related to student achievement.

Experiencing a new ELA program with very specific protocols and limited professional learning posed a challenge for elementary teachers at Ad Astra Public schools. Continued improvements in professional learning and support, especially during the use of a new program is key to ensure success. The teachers hold the knowledge of many instructional practices, but need assistance in forging forth to determine the best place to embed the practices. With the building level support teachers receive from their principals and instructional coaches, success is possible. The support of all teachers in specialized learning must become a systemic practice across the district, so all students at Ad Astra Public Schools experience learning that takes them to their full potential no matter the challenges associated.

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Appendix A - Informed Consent Form

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U N I V E R S I T Y

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Compliance Office

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Teacher Pathways Impact on Professional Learning Study
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If you are performing research involving human subjects, it is your responsibility to address the issue of informed consent. This template is intended to provide guidance for crafting an informed consent document. The Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects (IRB) *strongly* recommends that you model your consent form on this template. However, if you choose a different approach, it must contain at a minimum the same elements as this standard version. Language and terminology used in the consent form must be written at no more than the 8th grade level, so that the potential participant can clearly understand the project, how it is going to be conducted, and all issues that may affect his or her participation. In addition, please write the consent form in a manner that addresses your subjects directly instead of writing it in a manner that addresses the University Research Compliance Office directly. *Information on the important issue of informed consent can be found in 45 CRF 46 at* http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.html#46.116. **Federal law mandates that all signed and dated informed consent forms be retained by the P.I. for at least three years following completion of the study.**

WAIVER OF INFORMED CONSENT: *There are limited instances where the requirement for a formal informed consent document may be waived or altered by the IRB.*
45 CFR 46 states that "An IRB may waive the requirement for the investigator to obtain a signed consent form for some or all subjects if it
finds either: 1) *That the only record linking the subject and the research would be the consent document and would be potential harm resulting from a breach of confidentiality. Each subject will be asked wants documentation linking the subject with the research, and the subject's wishes will govern;*
2) *That the research presents no more than minimal risk of harm to subjects and involves no written consent is normally required outside of the research context."*

If a study employs only questionnaires and surveys as the source of their data, it may generally be assumed that to answer and return the questionnaire is an appropriate and sufficient expression of free consent. However, there are circumstances that might call this assumption into question - e.g., teacher-student relationship between the investigator and the subject, etc. However, a statement should be included on the questionnaire or survey form indicating that participation of the subject is strictly voluntary, the length of time reasonably expected to complete the questionnaire or survey form, and that questions that make the participant uncomfortable may be skipped.

Form Content
PROJECT TITLE: Full title of project. If possible, the title should be identical to that used in any funding/contract proposal.
PROJECT APPROVAL DATE/ EXPIRATION DATE: provided in the approval letter, must be in place before distributing to subjects.
LENGTH OF STUDY: Estimate the length of time the subject will be expected to participate.
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR/CO-INVESTIGATOR(S): Must be a regular member of the faculty.
CONTACT DETAILS FOR PROBLEMS/QUESTIONS: Name, phone number and/or email address of the P.I.
IRB CHAIR CONTACT INFORMATION*: For the subject should he/she have questions or wish to discuss on any aspect of the research with an official of the university or the IRB. These are:* Rick Scheidt, Chair, Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224; Cheryl Doerr, Associate Vice President for Research Compliance, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224.
PROJECT SPONSOR: Funding/contract entity.
PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH: Explain in lay terms that this is a research project, and why the research is being done.
PROCEDURES OR METHODS TO BE USED: Explain in lay terms and in language understandable at the 8th grade level how the study is going to be conducted and what will be expected of participants. Tell participants if they will be audio or videotaped, if they will be paid, etc.

ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES OR TREATMENTS, IF ANY, THAT MIGHT BE ADVANTAGEOUS TO SUBJECT: Explain any alternative procedures or treatments if applicable.

RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS ANTICIPATED: Describe any foreseeable risks or discomforts from the study. If there are no known risks, make a statement to that effect.

BENEFITS ANTICIPATED: Describe any *reasonably expected* benefits from the research to the participant or others from the research.

EXTENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY: Explain how you plan to protect confidentiality.

IS COMPENSATION OR MEDICAL TREATMENT AVAILABLE IF INJURY OCCURS: *In cases where more than minimal risk is involved.*

PARENTAL APPROVAL FOR MINORS: If minors or those who require the approval of a parent or guardian are participants, you should include a space for their consenting signature.

PARTICIPANT NAME/SIGNAUTRE: Name of research participant and signature.

WITNESS TO SIGNATURE (PROJECT STAFF): Staff signature.

If any of the following content sections do not apply to your research, feel free to delete from the consent form.

PROJECT TITLE:

Teacher Pathways Impact on Professional Learning Study

PROJECT APPROVAL DATE:	8/3/2020	**PROJECT EXPIRATION DATE:**	5/3/2021	**LENGTH OF STUDY:**	9 months

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:	J. Spencer Clark

CO-INVESTIGATOR(S):	Lori Amaro

CONTACT DETAILS FOR PROBLEMS/QUESTIONS:	J.Spencer Clark, Email: jspencerclark@ksu.edu, Phone: 785-532-5904

IRB CHAIR CONTACT INFORMATION:	Rick Scheidt, Chair, Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224

PROJECT SPONSOR:	N/A

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH:

The purpose of this study is to identify ways that you, teachers from various preservice backgrounds, engage in and apply professional learning in order to make suggestions to the deputy superintendent of curriculum and instructional. The suggestions will be deemed considerations as possible modifications to the format of professional learning at USD 443.

This study will also bring light to teacher efficacy in your teaching and learning abilities, especially working with students of various populations.

PROCEDURES OR METHODS TO BE USED:

You will be identified through a survey and then given an additional survey to establish your willingness to participate. Prior to the first round of data gathering within interviews, you will be asked to for a philosophy statement. Then you will undergo interviews with the researcher, Lori Amaro, in order to determine further perceptions of professional learning, teacher efficacy, and to discuss current student achievement data. Observation checklists will be used to gauge your teaching practices and efficacy. Field notes and participant journals will also be collected in order to form interview questions along assisting in a deeper understanding of the participants and the researcher. You will undergo a final interview to determine if your opinions have changed throughout the process and so that findings are communicated and confirmed with you.

BIOLOGICAL SAMPLES COLLECTED (Describe procedure, storage, etc.):

[Select a statement from the drop down menu]

Not Applicable.

ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES OR TREATMENTS, IF ANY, THAT MIGHT BE ADVANTAGEOUS TO SUBJECT:

None.

RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS ANTICIPATED:

None.

BENEFITS ANTICPATED:

Input into possible format adjustments made regarding district professional learning.

EXTENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY:

Your name, building, and teaching assignment will not be disclosed or attached to data presented to anyone other than the researcher. The researcher will organize data by using a number to represent each participant in order to ensure a protections protocol that assures confidentiality. Access to data will be limited to the researcher only. Once data collection is complete, it will be confidentially summarized and interpreted within the researcher's dissertation. A list of recommendations, that will not include any participant identifiers, will be shared with the Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction for USD 443, Dr. Scott Springston.

The information or biospecimens that will be collected as part of this research could be used for future research studies or distributed to other investigators for future research studies without additional informed consent.

IS COMPENSATION OR MEDICAL TREATMENT AVAILABLE IF INJURY OCCURS? ☐ Yes ☒ No

PARENTAL APPROVAL FOR MINORS:

PARENT/GUARDIAN APPROVAL SIGNATURE:		**DATE:**

Terms of participation: I understand this project is research, and that my participation is voluntary. I also understand that if I decide to participate in this study, I may withdraw my consent at any time, and stop participating at any time without explanation, penalty, or loss of benefits, or academic standing to which I may otherwise be entitled.

I verify that my signature below indicates that I have read and understand this consent form, and willingly agree to participate in this study under the terms described, and that my signature acknowledges that I have received a signed and dated copy of this consent form.

(Remember that it is a requirement for the P.I. to maintain a signed and dated copy of the same consent form signed and kept by the participant).

PARTICIPANT NAME:		
PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE:		**DATE:**
WITNESS TO SIGNATURE: (PROJECT STAFF)		**DATE:**

Appendix B - Participant Selection Survey

Participant Selection Survey Please respond to the following questions as they apply to the 2020-2021 academic year	
Question 1	First Name
Question 2	Last Name
Question 3	Teaching Location-Please select the location of your teaching position (dropdown list) • B Elementary • C Elementary • L Elementary • M Elementary • N Elementary • R Elementary • S Elementary • SS Elementary • W Elementary
Question 4	Select all of the grade levels you currently teach (selection boxes) • Kindergarten • First Grade • Second Grade • Third Grade • Fourth Grade • Fifth Grade
Question 5	If teaching in a specific content area, then provide those details as well (ex. 5th grade math)
Question 6	How many years have you taught in total? (Full time, in a PreK-5 setting) If this is your first year, enter 0 or state "first year"
Question 7	How many years have you taught for Ad Astra Public Schools? (Full time, in a PreK-5 setting) If this is your first year, enter 0 or state "first year"
Question 8	Pre-service Pathway: Select the "Pathway into Education" that best describes your experience (dropdown list) • "Traditional" (Received schooling in-person from a university, along with student teaching experience) • "Online Traditional" (Received schooling online from a university, along with student teaching experience) • "Hybrid Traditional" (Received schooling in-person & online from one or more universities along with student teaching experience) • Transition into Teaching • Para Pathway-FHSU • Accelerated Pathway-Newman • Long Term Substitute (Full Year) • Long Term Substitute (Half Year) • Long Term Substitute (Less than Half Year)

	• Other o Display Logic: If Pre-Service Pathway-Other is Selected-You selected "other" as your pre-service pathway in the previous questions, please explain further.
Question 9	Feelings Pertaining to Self-Capabilities & Efficacy: Please select the statement that best describes your opinion (Likert scale options-not applicable, strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree) • I enjoy learning new teaching techniques and strategies. • I believe in my own ability to guide my students to success. • I feel confident in my ability to apply professional learning strategies and techniques without instructional coaching. • My professional learning experiences have positively contributed to my self-efficacy. • My administrator positively contributes to my self-efficacy. • My building culture positively supports teacher self-efficacy. • I see myself as a continuous learner.
Question 10	Perception of Professional Learning: Please select the statement that best describes your opinion (Likert scale options-not applicable, strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree) • Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of building PLCs* meet my needs as a continuous learner. • Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of grade level PLCs* meet my needs as a continuous learner. • Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of instructional coaching (this includes a range of experiences from seeking informal information or assistance from the instructional coach to going through a formal coaching cycle)* meet my needs as a continuous learner. (Mark "not applicable" if this doesn't apply to you) • Professional learning opportunities provided *within my building in the form of mentoring (this includes both paid mentoring and non-paid buddy mentors that assist new teachers during their new teacher training year)* meet my needs as a continuous learner. (Mark "not applicable" if this doesn't apply to you) • Professional learning opportunities provided *in a large group setting (at the district office)* meet my need as a continuous learner. • Professional learning opportunities provided by an out-of-the-district agency, at an outside location, but paid for my Ad Astra Public Schools meet my needs as a continuous learner. (Mark "not applicable" if you did not attend any "out-of-the-district" professional learning opportunities this year) • Ad Astra Public Schools provides an adequate amount of professional learning opportunities that meet my needs as a continuous learner.

	- The professional learning opportunities I have experienced at Ad Astra Public Schools have improved my teaching quality. - I am satisfied with the *amount* of professional learning opportunities available to me at Ad Astra Public Schools. - I am satisfied with the *quality* of professional learning opportunities available to me at Ad Astra Public Schools.

Appendix C - Research Participation Survey

	Research Participation Survey
Please complete the following questions with your upmost honesty. Rate your interest and availability in being a participant for a research study that will take place from August 2020 to January 2021. The study will include three interviews followed up by three participant journal entries. The researcher will come to you for interviews along with three classroom observations.
Question 1	Rate your interest or disinterest in participating in a research study focused on the preservice pathway you took into education and professional learning experiences. (Likert scale: 1-not interested at all to 5-very interested)
Question 2	Please share some reasoning behind your selection in interest.
Question 3	Rate your availability or unavailability from August 2020-January 2021. (Likert scale: 1-not available at all to 5-very available)
Question 4	Please share some reasoning behind your selection in availability. (ex. coaching, children at home, etc.)
Question 5	Please share any other questions, concerns, or comments regarding the possible participation of this research study.

Appendix D - Observation Tool

Observation Tool	
Building	Dropdown list of elementary schools • B Elementary • C Elementary • L Elementary • M Elementary • N Elementary • R Elementary • S Elementary • SS Elementary • W Elementary
Class	Dropdown list of Grades • Kindergarten • First • Second • Third • Fourth • Fifth
Teacher	Dropdown list of Participant Numbers
# of students	Line to type amount
Date	Line to type date
Time In	Line to type time
Time Out	Line to type time
Students engaged in	Multi-selection boxes with: • Phonological Awareness • Phonics • Fluency • Vocabulary • Comprehension
Period	Multi-selection boxes with: • Beginning • Middle • End
Setting Objectives and Providing Feedback	Mastery (content) Objective answers the questions "What will students learn in this class?" and "How will I know they learned it?" Language (by what means) Objective answers the question, "What language does the student need to understand and produce to fully participate?" Multi-selection boxes with: • The learning objective states what the students will learn and how the learning will be demonstrated.

	• The learning objective matches what students are learning. • Students know and understand the mastery objective.
Checks for Understanding/ Formative Assessment	The process of monitoring learning to ensure student possess the skill or information taught. Multi-selection boxes with: • Oral language • Questioning • Writing • Projects and Performances • Teacher provides specific feedback about student's accuracy and/or effort
Student/ Teacher Interactions	Tally for Total (slider scale with numbers 0 to 20) • Positive Student/Teacher Interactions • Negative Student/Teacher Interactions

Academic and Language Experiences	Multi-selection boxes with:
	• Non-linguistic representations
	• Direct vocabulary instruction in use (teacher led)
	• Academic discourse is evident
	     o Display Logic: If academic and language experiences-academic discourse is evident is selected:
	        ▪ Specific classroom structures to facilitate academic conversations
	        ▪ Informal academic conversation

Instruction	Select all that apply. Multi-selection boxes with: • Direct instruction • Modeling/Demonstration • Guided Practice • Monitored independent student practice • The teacher is following district approved/aligned curriculum (pacing guides). • The teacher is using district-adopted resources.
Support Staff	Support staff is effectively supporting the classroom. Single-selection bubbles of: • Yes • No • N/A (support staff not present)

Bloom's/DOK	Multi-selection boxes with:
	• Not observed
	• Recall
	     o Display Logic: If Bloom's/DOK Recall is selected:
	        ▪ Recalling
	        ▪ Listing
	        ▪ Memorizing

	■ Describing
	     ■ Defining
	   • Skill/Concept
	    ○ Display Logic: If Bloom's/DOK Skill/Concept is selected:
	     ■ Explaining
	     ■ Summarizing
	     ■ Classifying
	     ■ Interpreting
	     ■ Paraphrasing
	     ■ Implementing
	     ■ Illustrating
	     ■ Experimenting
	     ■ Demonstrating
	     ■ Solving
	   • Strategic Thinking
	    ○ Display Logic: If Bloom's/DOK Strategic Thinking is selected:
	     ■ Appraising
	     ■ Comparing
	     ■ Contrasting
	     ■ Examining
	     ■ Questioning
	     ■ Hypothesizing
	     ■ Critiquing
	     ■ Judging
	     ■ Ranking
	     ■ Defending
	   • Extended Thinking
	    ○ Display Logic: If Bloom's/DOK Extended Thinking is selected:
	     ■ Designing
	     ■ Constructing
	     ■ Producing
	     ■ Planning
	     ■ Improvising

Comments	Box for Field Notes

Better Readers grant rubrics	Which rubric did you use in addition to the walkthrough document?
	Multi-selection boxes with: (display logic-detail rubrics displayed after selection here)
	  • Explicit Vocabulary Instruction Reflection Rubric
	  • Culturally Responsive Teaching Observation Rubric
	  • Phonological Awareness Instruction Reflection Rubric
	  • Word Recognition Instruction Reflection Rubric
	  • Fluency Instruction Reflection Rubric
	  • Comprehension Instruction Reflection Rubric

Explicit Vocabulary Instruction Reflection Rubric	(Single selection boxes for each bulleted item to rank instruction using the scale of: 0-not evident, 1-emerging, 2-developing, 3-proficient) • Appropriate selection of tier 2 words • Includes all elements of practice • Includes academic language supports • Promotes transfer
Culturally Responsive Teaching Observation Rubric	(Single selection boxes for each bulleted item to rank instruction using the scale of: 0-not evident, 1-emerging, 2-developing, 3-proficient) • Biography Driven Instruction • Lowering the Affective Filter: Teacher-Student Rapport • Lowering the Affective Filter: Routine/Structure • Lowering the Affective Filter: Engagement • Contextualizing Instruction: Prior Knowledge • Contextualizing Instruction: Comprehensible Input • Scaffolding Language: Teacher to Student Interactions • Scaffolding Language: Student to Student Interactions
Phonological Awareness Instruction Reflection Rubric	(Single selection boxes for each bulleted item to rank instruction using the scale of: 0-not evident, 1-emerging, 2-developing, 3-proficient) • Explicit Instruction • Specific Populations (ELL, SpEd, etc.)
Word Recognition Instruction Reflection Rubric	(Single selection boxes for each bulleted item to rank instruction using the scale of: 0-not evident, 1-emerging, 2-developing, 3-proficient) • Explicit Instruction • Application • Specific Populations (ELL, SpEd, etc.)
Fluency Instruction Reflection Rubric	(Single selection boxes for each bulleted item to rank instruction using the scale of: 0-not evident, 1-emerging, 2-developing, 3-proficient) • Explicit Instruction • Application • Specific Populations (ELL, SpEd, etc.)
Comprehension Instruction Reflection Rubric	(Single selection boxes for each bulleted item to rank instruction using the scale of: 0-not evident, 1-emerging, 2-developing, 3-proficient) • Explicit Instruction • Application • Specific Populations (ELL, SpEd, etc.)