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Implementing Teacher-Created Literacy Interventions in Pre-K Classrooms: Understanding Teacher Decision-Making

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**Implementing Teacher-Created Literacy Interventions in Pre-K Classrooms:
Understanding Teacher Decision-Making**

by

Jessica L. Richter

A Thesis

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Abstract

Achievement gaps in literacy start as early as pre-k. For this research study, an interview of 6 full-day pre-k teachers in a public school in Minnesota was conducted. One way to help close achievement gaps is for teachers to implement literacy interventions in the pre-k classroom. Instruction can have three different tiers. Tier 1 instruction is what a teacher teach to all students. Tier 2 instruction is when a teacher teaches a small group. Tier 3 instruction is when a teacher teaches with a pair of students or with individual students. The purpose of this research was to find out if teachers are familiar with published literacy interventions, and if teachers are comfortable using their own teacher-created literacy interventions to meet the immediate needs of pre-k students.

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My sincere thanks go out to my professor, Jane Minnema, who stayed dedicated to my success at St. Cloud State University. I am grateful for my boss and colleagues who continue to enhance my thinking and actions toward bettering the field of early childhood education.

I would also like to dedicate my work to my dad, Patrick Richter, who always wanted the next generation to be better than the last. He taught me how to question everything, how to be patient, and truly value young children.

Jessica Lynn Richter

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Overview

Teaching early literacy is a large part of early childhood education in the U.S. public school system. Early literacy is what children need to know about reading and writing before they actually learn how to read and write (Cedar Mill Community Library Association, 2016). Pre-kindergarten (pre-k) children learn literacy skills such as picture naming, letter identification, letter sound identification, rhyming, alliteration, and concepts about print such as how to start reading a book. Pre-k in public schools is one setting where children learn these skills.

The history of teaching in early childhood combined with child development research have shaped the way educators view teaching early literacy skills. As new information has emerged, early childhood educators have begun to shift their teaching methods. Many early literacy programs have resulted such as pre-k programs, Response to Intervention (RTI), Reading Recovery, and Minnesota Reading Corps. For children to be successful readers by third grade, these programs have aimed to intervene in early learning to support early literacy skill acquisition. In addition, implementing assessment tools such as Formative Assessment System for Teachers (FAST), Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDIs), and Strategic Teaching and Evaluation of Progress (STEP) incorporated into curriculum lets an early childhood teacher know exactly what skills a child needs to address on a day-to-day basis.

Published literacy interventions, such as those interventions identified above, are typically scripted for teachers to read aloud to the students and data are collected to monitor students' progress. As an example, in specifically considering RTI, interventions are classified into three tiers:

- Tier 1 – A phase of Response to Intervention and Multi-tiered system of supports.
“Whole class instruction, utilizing a high-quality general curriculum”
(Greenwood et al., 2015, p. 90).
- Tier 2 – A phase of Response to Intervention and Multi-tiered system of supports.
“Typically provides supplemental instruction often in small groups to help children with delays overcome specific learning gaps” (Greenwood et al., 2015, p. 90).
- Tier 3 – A phase of Response to Intervention and Multi-tiered system of supports. Tier 3 is a more intensive, often individualized intervention, for those with significant learning needs (Greenwood et al., 2015).

Early childhood educators implement Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions daily and published intervention programs can supplement the early childhood general curriculum (Goldstein et al., 2017). In considering Tier 3 interventions, teachers with strong backgrounds in early childhood development are equipped to develop and implement teacher-created literacy interventions.

Early childhood teachers have the opportunity to create literacy interventions for students in their classrooms to intervene and aid in student learning. A teacher-created intervention allows a teacher to work with the immediate needs of a student such as a tired, hungry, or otherwise “out of sorts” student. Four and 5-year-old children are affected when these basic needs are not met, which in turn can affect their learning (Maslow, 1999). In these cases, pre-k students could continue to have a difficult school day with little learning accomplished. A one-on-one intervention could solve both problems by turning a difficult school day into a successful school day because they received adult positive attention. Instead of little learning occurring, the

pre-k student can continue learning when a teacher-created intervention is crafted to meet the immediate student needs.

The need for maximizing learning opportunities in pre-k programming is verified by recent research findings. Biemiller and Slonim (2001) found that young children need to learn new words every day in order to gain enough new vocabulary to help students reach their literacy goals in later school years. Understanding how important it is for children to learn at least two new words a day to be on track academically, it could be concluded that missing even a day of learning supported with early literacy interventions could be detrimental to a pre-k student's future success in school.

Statement of the Problem

Students enter pre-k programs with varying levels of early literacy skills. In addition, there are many other factors that affect early literacy skill acquisition such as communication skills, parents' education level, family size and income levels, special education, and a student's birthdate or age (Crim et al., 2008). Some students are exposed to a wide range of vocabulary or have heard multiple languages spoken in their home. Other students may watch educational television or have books read to them every day. Exposure within a student's environment has an impact on what early literacy skills a student has acquired when their pre-k experiences begins. Thus "literacy development begins well before children enter school and can accelerate in an early childhood classroom setting" (Crim et al., 2008, p. 17).

Early childhood teachers implement various literacy interventions focused on different skills. For instance, focusing on phonological awareness has been proven to be an effective investment as stated in Crim et al. (2008), "Phonological awareness is a crucial stage in literacy

development. This early stage forms the foundation of learning, as the literacy skills developed in early childhood are strongly linked to a child's future reading success" (p. 18). An example of an intervention involving phonological awareness could be an intervention involving beginning sounds such as alliteration. The ability to hear letter sounds and distinguish the difference between sounds is phonological awareness.

As the pre-k program commences through the school year, literacy interventions can be administered to help low performing students. It is important for an early childhood teacher to know how to adequately intervene with literacy interventions when a student begins falling behind or is missing necessary literacy skills. Unfortunately, "Reports indicate that typical levels of instructional support provided by preschool teachers are low on average, intentional teaching of language and literacy occurs infrequently, and children's engagement in literacy behaviors is likewise limited" (Greenwood et al., 2015, p. 247). A beginning point in understanding this early childhood instructional issue is to better understand first, what is the knowledge base of early childhood teachers regarding literacy interventions and secondly, what barriers do early childhood teachers face when implementing literacy interventions in their pre-k programs?

Importance of the Study

Supporting young children's literacy skill provides the foundation for future academic success. On a macro-level of society:

Improving literacy in contemporary society has been amply demonstrated to improve life chances for individuals across diverse domains including health, mental health, housing, educational outcomes, employment opportunities, income levels, involvement with crime, and civic participation. Literacy remains an important component in the concept

of human capital, which is linked to both the social and the economic fate of individuals and nations. (Hopkins, Green, & Brookes, 2013, p. 24)

Literacy scores across the United States are falling behind the scores of students in other countries. This makes it difficult to be competitive in a global society and global work force. Students who are in fourth grade are no longer learning how to read but reading to learn, which is why they are an indicator of graduation rates and other statistics. In order for the United States to be a competitive forerunner of innovation and quality of life, we need to start preventing and solving problems facing in the education system.

Regarding a micro-level understanding of the importance of supporting young children's literacy development, pre-k literacy interventions can solve many school related issues. Intervening early in an at-risk student's academic career has shown to be proactive and cost-effective (Venn & Jahn, 2004).

From my pre-k experience at the local level of public schools in the state of Minnesota, Response to Intervention implementation has recently increased throughout the early childhood field. Literacy interventions are becoming more widely used in the public schools' pre-k programs. Minnesota Reading Corps has also increased in the number of participants throughout Minnesota pre-k programs. Taking these ideas, programs, and the shift toward data driven-based literacy instruction into account, pre-k teachers also have the opportunity to create literacy interventions for students in their own classes. A teacher-created intervention allows a teacher to work with the immediate needs of a particular student. Therefore, it is imperative that pre-k teachers understand literacy interventions and how to use progress monitoring data to make

necessary literacy intervention decisions. These data-based instructional decisions benefit students and teachers alike.

Also to the point, "...interventions that address the development of early literacy skills of young children with identified deficits are critical for promoting long-term literacy skills" (Kruse, Spencer, Olszewski, & Goldstein, 2015, p. 189). Given the importance of providing literacy instruction within preschool programs, this study focuses on factors that contribute to how pre-k teachers make decisions about implementing published and teacher-created literacy interventions in their classrooms.

Purpose and Research Questions

The primary purpose of this study was to identify factors that contributed to how pre-k teachers made decisions about implementing teacher-created literacy interventions in their classroom. Teachers are given some of their own discretion when it comes to making teaching decisions for the students in their class regardless of a set curriculum. Pre-k literacy interventions are one method a teacher can use to adapt a curriculum. This study was created to find out how familiar pre-k teachers are with literacy interventions and if pre-k teachers encounter barriers in using these interventions with their students. To address this study purpose, the research questions are:

- Q1) How familiar are pre-k teachers with published literacy interventions?
- Q1a) What barriers do pre-k teachers identify when implementing published literacy interventions?
- Q2) How do pre-k teachers develop literacy interventions to meet the needs of individual students?

Q2a) What barriers do pre-k teachers identify when implementing teacher-developed literacy interventions?

Literature Search

Peer reviewed journal articles were selected from the St. Cloud State University database. The most common databases that I used were ERIC, Psych INFO and Academic Search Premiere. The time frame for the literacy searches were from 2000 to the present, using key word, title, and author searches when needed. The search terms used was as follows: literacy interventions, pre-k literacy intervention, Tier 2 literacy intervention, Tier 3 literacy intervention, and tier 3 literacy intervention letter naming prekindergarten.

Definition of Terms

The following are terms central to this research study.

Early English Language Literacy: what children need to know about reading and writing before they actually learn how to read and write (Cedar Mill Community Library Association, 2016).

Phonological Awareness: “the ability to detect, manipulate, or analyze the auditory aspects of spoken language (including the ability to distinguish or segment words, syllables, or phonemes), independent of meaning” (Greenwood et al., 2015, p. 254).

Pre-k: a student in a school setting the year before kindergarten. Can be interchanged with: preschool, pre-k or prekindergarten.

Intervention: a specific type of supplemental instruction or activity that is used with students who are identified as at risk for developing reading problems (Horst, 2003).

Teacher-Created Literacy Intervention: a teacher creates or differentiates simple skill based games to help a student practice grade level requirements.

Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS): “multi-tier system of supports are differentiated levels of instructional support provided to students based on their demonstrated needs” (Gersten et al., 2009, p. 247).

Response to Intervention (RTI): this term is more widely used in the education system but can be interchanged with MTSS (Greenwood et al., 2015).

Tier 1: a phase of Response to Intervention and Multi-tiered system of supports. “Whole class instruction, utilizing a high-quality general curriculum” (Greenwood et al., 2015, p. 90).

Tier 2: a phase of Response to Intervention and Multi-tiered system of supports. “Typically provides supplemental instruction often in small groups to help children with delays overcome specific learning gaps” (Greenwood et al., 2015, p. 90).

Tier 3: a phase of Response to Intervention and Multi-tiered system of supports. Tier 3 is a more intensive, often individualized intervention, for those with significant learning needs (Greenwood et al., 2015).

Scaffolding: a variety of instructional techniques used to move students progressively toward stronger understanding and, ultimately, greater independence in the learning process (Abbott, 2014).

Formative Assessment System for Teachers (FAST): a comprehensive assessment system with both Curriculum-Based Measures and Computer-Adaptive Tests to screen, diagnose, monitor and inform instruction (Fastbridge, 2017).

Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDI's): a research-based early childhood assessment program (Early Learning Labs, 2017).

The Strategic Teaching and Evaluation of Progress (STEP): a diagnostic and monitoring tool for children's early literacy development (<https://uei.uchicago.edu/innovation>).

Conclusion

The study of young children has started to evolve. Pre-k programs have received more attention and become more widely known as an investment for the future. Achievement gaps, new research, special education referrals, and data-driven teaching are prompting a need for teachers to be more diligent and explicit with pre-k instruction. Multi-tiered systems of supports (MTSS) in literacy interventions could help solve these problems. The next chapter presents a review of literature pertaining to pre-k literacy interventions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The content of the review of literature for this study includes current research on:

- 1) pre-k literacy development; 2) development of literacy interventions and the effects; and
- 3) Tier 3 literacy interventions for students in pre-k.

Early Literacy Development

Early literacy is phonemic awareness for students in pre-k. Phonemic awareness skills or phonological awareness means, “The ability to detect, manipulate, or analyze the auditory aspects of spoken language (including the ability to distinguish or segment words, syllables, or phonemes), independent of meaning” (Greenwood et al., 2015, p. 254). Phonemic awareness skills vary in pre-k but the typical skills that are assessed are name writing, picture naming, letter naming, letter sounds, rhyming, alliteration, and concepts about print. The way teachers help their students reach these goals are by scaffolding student learning. Students who are in pre-k need a solid phonemic awareness foundation. This can be achieved by repetitive teaching of specific skills with literacy interventions when needed.

Early Literacy Intervention

Literacy interventions can be a powerful tool used in a pre-k classroom. Some pre-k professionals hear intervention and assume special education programming. But in the more recent years, literacy intervention is gaining acceptance for being a tiered support system to help students. Pre-k students who could benefit from a literacy intervention may or may not be identified in special education. Literacy interventions can be used in many ways. For instance, from my experience as a pre-k teacher, these interventions may be used for a student who is very low in one area or even multiple areas of literacy development. Or, interventions may be used

for students who are very close to the target score in an area such as letter names. Students may also benefit from an intervention if they have reached the target score but still have some mastery learning to do (Greenwood et al., 2015).

Students enter pre-k programs with many different experiences and varying levels of exposure to literacy. Literacy experiences when children are toddlers and preschoolers will prepare them for learning in school (Allington & Walmsley, 1995). Children who do not get literacy experiences when they are toddlers and pre-k students, enter kindergarten behind their peers in literacy acquisition and oral language (Venn & Jahn, 2004).

Types of Literacy Interventions

Literacy interventions help a child learn phonemic awareness skills. Teachers' instruction scaffolds literacy skills by presenting step-by-step skills for pre-k students to practice, which are based on phonological awareness and how students process language. A student in pre-k works on: name writing, picture naming, letter naming or identification, letter sounds, rhyming, beginning sounds/alliteration, and concepts about print.

As with any other grade in school, pre-k has student goals. These goals equate to target scores derived from daily assessments to monitor students' learning progress. As children progress throughout the school year, children may drop below a target score. The child's score will determine if they need a literacy intervention (Goldstein et al., 2017). As an example from my pre-k teaching experience, a student knows zero letter names after the teacher assesses them in September. The teacher instructs a typical day working on behavior skills, classroom management skills, large group and small group instruction, and guiding active learning time. In the months of November through January, the student now knows six letter names. As another

scenario, three students came into school knowing eight letter names but in November through January, they now know 18 letter names. The first student is now behind several other students in the area of letter naming. The teacher has a sign that the first student may not be getting enough letter name exposure during typical instruction. It is also possible that the first student is not getting letter name help at home or there may be additional learning issues. In order to better explain this student's learning progress, the teacher may choose to start a letter name intervention with this child. If the next assessment window is sometime in March through May, it may be too late to see if that child has gained letter name knowledge after the interventions. Thus, the teacher may want to check their progress by collecting data on learning progress every two weeks during the interventions. From the progress monitoring, the teacher will be able to further assess what the student missed in their learning.

In this letter naming example, a student may have missed learning the uppercase and lowercase letters w and v. This assessment information can guide the teacher's instructional decision-making going forward. For instance, these letters may not be in this students' name as well as these letters do not commonly appear in print. This could tell the teacher that the student may not have seen this letter in print often, may not have written these two letters often, and may not have learned these letters at home. Additionally, the letters w and v are very similar between uppercase and lowercase. Learning these two letters would actually mean learning four letters since letter naming in assessments is a student knowing 26 uppercase letters and its 26 lowercase counterparts for a total of 54 points or letter names. Working on the w and v would then count as four data points instead of two according to this scoring method. The student in this scenario would be working towards knowing 12 letters as a target score according to the IGDI's

assessment (Hilbert & Eis, 2014). The set target letter scores could lead a teacher to provide literacy interventions to promote this student's letter naming acquisition.

Literacy interventions can be categorized into tiers (Greenwood et al., 2015). Tier 1 is full group instruction of a specific skill. Tier 2 is small group instruction of a specific skill. Tier 3 is individual or paired instruction of a specific skill. Tiered instruction is important for several reasons. It determines what type of student groupings a teacher organizes. It also helps teachers follow assessment data closely. Lastly, it determines the needs for interventions. Small groups are typically a part of a pre-k classroom on a daily basis. Some students who need Tier 3 literacy interventions learn best when placed with students who do not need Tier 2 or Tier 3 literacy interventions at all. Some students who do not need any literacy interventions, may not have mastered a skill enough to help other students who are in need of literacy interventions. Every year is different; every class is different; every student is different. The pre-k teacher has an important job to know when tiered instruction is needed: who it will benefit; which students will work well together; what type of intervention suits a student, and how to engage children in mastering a specific skill (Greenwood et al., 2015).

Literacy interventions are usually scaffolded for student learning (Greenwood et al., 2015). In a letter naming intervention example, a teacher would start with an unknown letter. Then, as an example, the teacher and student would sing a letter naming song together to remind the student of the letter name and to gain practice putting the letter name to the written letter. The teacher would then place flashcards of three known letters and the one unknown letter in a pile to practice with a child. Next, the teacher would lay them face up on a table and practice naming them together. The teacher and student would also name the letters together slowly, and

later, name the letters together at a faster pace. Lastly, the teacher would ask the child to name them slowly without the teacher's guidance. If the student is successful, the teacher will ask the student to name the letters at a faster pace by themselves. If the student is unsuccessful, the teacher may go back to one of the beginning skills to gain more practice and move back up through the process as the student needs. This is an example of scaffolding an intervention for a student with instructional adjustments as needed.

Literacy Intervention Programs

The most well-known published literacy intervention programs are Reading Recovery, Response to Intervention, Early Reading first and Minnesota Reading Corps. Marie Clay developed Reading Recovery in 1976. Reading Recovery focuses on students who are in first grade and below their grade level in reading skills. As students reach grade level, they are moved out of the intervention and another student moves into the intervention. Response to Intervention started in late 1970s because a framework for literacy interventions was needed. In 2007, Gettinger and Stoiber used a Multi-tier System of Support (MTSS) in Early Reading first and volunteers and graduate students provided Tier 3 instruction to children with very weak language and literacy skills. Minnesota Reading Corps started literacy interventions in 2003. Its purpose is to train members with possibly little or no experience working with children. The goal of these programs is to provide specific and scripted literacy interventions to pre-k students who need help beyond the typical full group instruction.

Response to Intervention as a Technique to Increase Literacy Skills

Response to Intervention can be looked at from a Multi-tiered System of Support (Greenwood et al., 2015). RTI is a helpful technique for students when Tier 1 instruction is given and students are still struggling. There are some advantages to using RTI (Greenwood et al., 2015). For example, an entire school adopts this model with pre-trained individuals who provide interventions when needed. These interventions can continue for as long as a student needs. The disadvantage to standard RTI is that some students may not respond to the intervention and need a different approach.

Scheduling Literacy Interventions

Tier 1 full group literacy interventions typically occur several times throughout the school day while Tier 2 interventions typically occur every day during small group/readers workshop time with two to seven children. Finally, Tier 3 interventions typically occur with one or two students at a time who are working on one specific skill. Literacy interventions can also be embedded into a typical classroom routine when the learning environment allows for flexible scheduling. For instance, while morning breakfast and table work are being accomplished, the teacher may organize one to four students for a Tier 2 or Tier 3 intervention in a classroom location with the teacher facing the other students and the small group of students receiving an intervention seated with their backs to the rest of the class. Also, rest time is another opportunity for interventions. Leaving rest time interventions for the children who do not typically sleep or who may need extra interaction that day would benefit from literacy interventions during rest time.

Active learning time is 50 minutes for quality social interaction and early literacy skill development in a pre-k classroom (Umek & Peklaj, 2008). Active learning time allows time for Tier 2 or Tier 3 literacy interventions with students. Given 30 minutes of morning table work time, 20 minutes of rest time, and 50 minutes of active learning, it is conceivable to have a total of 100 minutes per day available for possible literacy interventions in a typical full day pre-k classroom with a licensed teacher and trained educational assistant.

Teachers' Prior Knowledge Necessary for Using Literacy Interventions

Teachers need to know several things to use literacy interventions effectively in their classroom (Kruse et al., 2015). Teachers need to know students' baseline data, how their students learn and what their learning style is, obstacles the children may be facing in order to learn at their optimal level, what motivates specific students, when specific students best attend, which student combinations work together best, and how long specific students' attention spans are. Tier 3 one-to-one teaching is sometimes needed in addition to Tier 1 full group teaching (Clay, 2005a). Tier 3 literacy interventions can use a student's strengths to help with areas in which they struggle. A student may have strength in jumping and weakness in letter identification. If a student can jump to a letter during an intervention and verbalize it while jumping, the student may make progress in letter identification (Clay, 2005b).

Designing and Creating Effective Intervention

Teacher-created literacy interventions that are used for Tier 3 interventions are created in many ways, yet do have some general themes in common. "There is little known about explicit, individually tailored interventions that may be needed for children requiring a higher tier of

instruction” (Noe, Spencer, Kruse, & Goldstein, 2014, p. 29). It is found that a Tier 3 intervention should be short in duration, scaffolded, teacher-led, explicit, have student engagement, provide wait time, include teacher prompts, opportunities for students to practice many times, and teacher offers immediate feedback (Noe et al., 2014). In general, Tier 3 literacy interventions should be anywhere from 6 to 13 weeks long and 3 to 5 days per week to master phonemic awareness skills. Using Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences, interventions need to have several different ways for a student to learn the same skill (Vialle, 1997). Gardner’s basic idea was that children can be intelligent and can learn in more than one mode. The eight basic modes are musical-rhythmic, visual-spatial, verbal-linguistic, logical-mathematical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic. Children learn in different ways and what works for one student may not work for the next student. One way to keep students engaged is by turning the intervention into a game. The teacher should show excitement while working with the student and introduce the intervention as a short game. The idea of a game has the potential to engage the learner and increase memorization of skills if the game is tailored to meet the learning needs of a student and used in small doses (Clay, 2005b).

Conclusion

Research about literacy development in pre-k students inform literacy interventions. The next chapter presents the method in which data were collected for this research project.

Chapter 3: Method

Overview

This was an interview study of six full-day pre-k teachers' views on literacy interventions. I conducted a group interview with the pre-k teachers to find factors that contributed to how they made decisions about implementing published and teacher-created literacy interventions in their classrooms.

The purpose of the group interview questions was to find out if teachers possessed the knowledge, skills, and training to create their own effective literacy interventions in their pre-k classroom. The intent was also to find out what barriers teachers faced in using literacy interventions.

Research Question

The research questions for my interview research project were:

- Q1) How familiar are pre-k teachers with published literacy interventions?
- Q1a) What barriers do pre-k teachers identify when implementing published literacy interventions?
- Q2) How do pre-k teachers develop literacy interventions to meet the needs of individual students?
- Q2a) What barriers do pre-k teachers identify when implementing teacher-developed literacy interventions?

Research Design

This mixed methods research design used a survey and interview research design to gather qualitative and quantitative data. This study had two components to its design. After

reviewing the published research on literacy interventions, I distributed a quantitative mini-paper and pencil survey of teacher's background qualifications and knowledge. Finally, I conducted qualitative approach to data collection to interview pre-k teachers who taught in a full day public school program. A face-to-face semi-structured group interview used a blend of prepared and iterative (emergent) questions to collect narrative data.

Participants

I created a convenience sample of participants for my research study. Six teachers were chosen for the group interviews. The participants in this research project were pre-k teachers who teach preschool classes for students who attended preschool for 5 days per week for 6 hours per school day. The full-day pre-k program was located in a pre-k through Grade 5 public school building. The pre-k programs followed a standard school district schedule with school being in session approximately 170 days per year. The full day pre-k teachers typically had Birth to Third Grade teaching licenses. Most students in the full day program lived within the school district boundaries as set forth by a grant initiative.

Setting

The participants taught in a school district where over 70% of families qualify for free and reduced lunches. The school district used a balanced literacy approach with pre-k teachers adjusting curriculum accordingly to meet the needs of pre-k students. Pre-k programs used Houghton Mifflin themed books for 5-day "read alouds" combined with Benchmark, Newmark and National Geographic guided reading and comprehension books. Shared reading had been chosen from specific nursery rhymes. The pre-k program in this district used specifically

selected curriculum to target literacy skills so as to have a balanced literacy curriculum for pre-k programming that matched the rigor of the pre-k program offered in this district.

All students received Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions throughout the school day. The schedule for all full day pre-k classrooms were similar. Each classroom was required to have Tier 1 interventions in the morning and afternoon with some form of Tier 2 interventions in the morning. These Tier 2 interventions could be small group work, guided reading, literacy work stations or 1-hour reader workshops where teachers and educational assistants lead one or two small groups of students along with student stations where students rotated through the stations independently.

Data Collection Strategies, Procedures, and Instrument

The mini-paper and pencil survey had six closed ended questions. This instrument was to yield teacher demographics that included: years of experience, what teaching license they held, exposure to Minnesota Reading Corps, and familiarity of the assessment programs Response to Intervention and Reading Recovery.

The instrument used was a semi-structured set of interview questions that could be adapted to a specific conversation that ensued during the group interview. There were eight predetermined, open-ended questions included in the group interview protocol. The interview questions were based on the literature reviewed for this research project as well as from 12 years of teaching and professional experience from literacy intervention training. For the purposes of this research study, this semi-structured group interview protocol was pilot tested prior to conducting the group interview.

The procedure for meeting with participants in a group interview was in a location that is comfortable for the participants. The length of interviewing was less than 1 hour. The group interview was held on a previously agreed upon date, time, and location. The group interview was recorded with the audio tapes secured in a locked cabinet for safety and then later transcribed for analysis. When the study was completed, a copy of the final results was sent to the participants as a thank you for participating.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data from the mini-paper and pencil survey were analyzed with descriptive data analyses. Qualitative data analysis involved the identification, examination, and interpretation for patterns and themes in textual data that determined how these patterns and themes helped answer the research questions for this study (The Pell Institute, 2017).

Conclusion

Published literacy interventions, a mini-paper and pencil survey and a face-to-face group interview lead to results in learning more about how pre-k teachers used literacy interventions in their early childhood programs along with the barriers they faced when implementing literacy interventions. The next chapter presents the findings from conducting this research project.

Chapter 4: Results

Overview

This was a research project was an interview study of six full-day pre-k teachers' views on literacy interventions. These pre-k teachers participated in a group interview to identify how pre-k teachers made decisions about implementing teacher-created literacy interventions in their classroom.

The overarching purpose of the group interview questions was to learn if these teachers possessed the knowledge, skills, and training to create their own effective literacy interventions in their pre-k classroom. An additional intent was to find out what barriers teachers faced in using interventions.

The two data collection instruments were a demographic written survey and a group face-to-face interview. The demographic interview was a mini-paper and pencil survey of teachers' backgrounds, qualifications and knowledge. The face-to-face semi-structured group interview protocol contained a blend of prepared and iterative questions that emerged within the group interview process.

Demographic Findings

The six-question mini-paper and pencil survey revealed that teachers had taught in the field from 2-20 years with either early childhood birth through third grade or kindergarten through sixth grade teaching licenses. Two of the six teachers have previously been members of the Minnesota Reading Corps themselves and three of the six teachers have worked directly with a member of Minnesota Reading Corps. Four of the six teachers have used Response to Intervention. One of the remaining two teachers used RTI during their student teaching but not

since they have had their own classroom of students. None of the six teachers have worked in Reading Recovery. Please refer to Table 1 for a display of these results.

Table 1

Pre-k Teacher Background

| TEACHER | YEARS | LICENSE | MRC* | MRC** | RTI | RR |
|---------|-------|-----------------------|------|-------|-----|----|
| A | 20 | Pre-k, K-6 | Yes | Yes | Yes | No |
| B | 6 | Pre-k, K-6 | No | Yes | Yes | No |
| C | 6 | Birth-3 rd | No | Yes | Yes | No |
| D | 3 | Birth-3 rd | No | No | Yes | No |
| E | 2 | Birth-3 rd | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| F | 2 | Birth-3 rd | No | No | No | No |

*Has been a member of Minnesota Reading Corps

**Has had a member of Minnesota Reading Corps in their classroom

Group Interview Findings

The overarching themes that came from the group interview pertained to Time, Data, Learning, Barriers, Communication, and Supports for Literacy Interventions. The interview findings will be quoted as six interviewees and labeled: Interviewee A, Interviewee B, Interviewee C, Interviewee D, Interviewee E, and Interviewee F.

Theme #1: Use of Teaching Time

The participants' comments about teaching time focused on observing students every day. Teachers wanted to make the best use of their time when they have their students at school. Transition times were an opportunity to use a literacy intervention. For instance, Interviewee A stated that, "It's embedded." This full-day pre-k teacher used time while the children were in line at the bathroom or lunch as a time to embed literacy interventions into the daily routine through song and movement. Interviewee B said, "It's throughout the day, no matter what subject it is or what part of the day. We're always working with the students on skills." Student observations were also done frequently and informally since pre-k students are not able to create

tangible work projects as teachers do in older grades that can be assessed later. Pre-k teachers were assessing in the moment as they go throughout the day to check on progress by keeping small artifacts or jotting notes to review later. Interviewee C stated, “We just use the transition time to do large group interventions because you’re doing literacy activities as a large group so it’s needed to reinforce whatever we’re teaching or working on through songs or writing or some other kind of activity.” An example a teacher gave is to use small dry erase boards and write a letter while describing how to form the letter and sing a letter song to go with the activity. This structured activity reinforced letter writing and letter identification or sounds, but was implemented in an unstructured learning setting. The teacher found a productive teachable moment where the students would have been standing in a line with little interaction if it were not for the teacher using the down time constructively.

Theme #2: Pre-k Teachers Use Data

Pre-k teachers’ data collection was described in terms of baseline data, progress monitoring and tracking one student’s data. One teacher explained tracking data like this, “Just a baseline of what they already know and progress monitor to see where they’re at and go forward.” Progress monitoring is discussed often in these teachers’ Professional Learning Community (PLC) that met once per week. These PLC discussions kept teachers’ data collection up to date. Interviewee D said, “I usually keep one thing I worked on during the week and I’ll keep those and look at as the weeks go by and see if they’re improving and then I send it [progress results] home.” Interviewee B tracked data in a different way. She stated, “A lot of times I don’t necessarily write it down, I just go by what we did in a small group and see how well they did and my EA [Educational Assistant], she’ll do the same thing and we’ll just discuss

if the student has the skill down now. I just don't always write it down but in that sense I am progress monitoring almost daily." Teachers noticed that even though they track data differently, sometimes they acknowledged that they believe it is important to know how the students in their classes are doing week by week.

Theme #3: Student Learning Factors

The pre-k teachers who participated in this study believed every student is always learning something. These teachers used the assessments and progress monitoring to drive their interventions. It was stated that students can change skill levels within 1 week so that teachers need to monitor student progress carefully. One teacher also stated that they could be working on spelling with a group of students and another student may still need letter recognition. In this case, the teacher would still provide an intervention to each student or group of students that supports their individual needs. Learning is interdisciplinary for these full day pre-k teachers. By this I mean, pre-k teachers consistently teach in more than one subject area at a time.

Social and emotional readiness is a key factor for student learning. Interviewee D talked about student motivation when he said, "One of my kids just doesn't care to learn and they don't care about their letters. I can tell them how important it is and they can write their names but [this student] don't know the letters in their names. Since they don't care, it's my job to find out what is actually going to make them want to learn it."

Finally, Interviewee A, stated, "I think another struggle is several children are coming in with mental health issues." Mental health is a factor to student's learning in a pre-k classroom.

Theme #4: Internal School Barriers

In addition to outside school pressures, teachers face many other barriers within the school itself that are specific to administering literacy interventions and creating their own literacy interventions. During the face-to-face group interview, pre-k teachers discussed seven barriers. First, that there was never enough time in any given school day to give as many literacy interventions as they would like to provide or that children actually needed. “Because we have so many other things that we need to do on top of that and all the requirements we’re supposed to do as teachers while also dealing with behavior and everything so it shows up during the day and sometimes you can’t get it done during the day. Sometimes I don’t even get to small groups because a certain child has to take all my focus away from the rest of them.” Secondly, a student’s lack of motivation is a barrier. Several students in each class do not have any interest in learning. Teachers try to make learning fun and engaging but some students just have little motivation to learn. A third barrier was a teacher’s connection to a student’s home. Many times, teachers do not have working telephone numbers or emails for a student’s family. When things are sent home, sometimes the same paper may remain in the child’s unchecked backpack or may not be returned to school if removed from the backpack at home. Teachers also felt disconnected from families where students received school transportation. If a family member dropped off or picked up the student at school, it is more common for teachers to have more face-to-face interactions. Student behaviors is the fourth barrier that teachers face. All six teachers expressed concern that student behaviors negatively affected student learning and the learning of the other students in the classroom. Mental health issues were a fifth barrier to implementing literacy interventions in their pre-k programs. Many mental health related issues tended to be hereditary

and therefore made it difficult for the teacher to interact with the parent and their children effectively. As a sixth barrier to implementing literacy interventions, some families had too many other commitments to make school a priority. If a parent worked late, it may be difficult to get to bed at a reasonable hour that then impacted parent involvement in their child's school. Lastly, teachers received different educational training because institutions have different teaching requirements. Every teacher had a different experience or set of classes that they took to prepare them to become a teacher.

One comment by interviewee D addressed four of these barriers, "You can definitely tell who's been working on it at home versus who doesn't work on it at home because you [as a teacher] only have so much time during the day and you can only do so much and they go home and [students] just watch TV like I've come to realize a lot of my students do. It really does show because the next day I can see two of my kids that go home and work on their names and they're 100 times better than the ones that I send home and they didn't practice and they're not progressing as much as my other ones. And kids these days will tell you and talk about it. They said, 'No, I didn't work on it.' or 'I worked on this with my mom.'" A good example of a connection to home would be teachers who reported, "At our conferences, we teach the parents how to teach the kids." In other words, the pre-k teachers used conferences as a learning opportunity to help the parents.

Theme #5: Teacher Barrier Solutions

The pre-k teachers who participated in this group interview identified three solutions to the barriers that they encountered in providing literacy interventions. First, because of these barriers, pre-k teachers are finding creative ways to teach their students necessary skills. One

example Interviewee D described was, “I have magnetic letters to put into different places. I’m trying a new literacy intervention with one of my friends because so far just having her copy a name instead of doing it just isn’t working. So I’m trying different strategies with her to know what way she learns best. Is it kinesthetic, visual, or audio? What is it that makes them learn best to be able to know that and then try and get her up to speed and whether they work better in a group or alone.” The teachers agreed that pre-k students learn in many different ways.

Another example of this was when Interviewee C referred to interventions that they have used such as “large motor ones like bounce a ball on a letter, or jump to a letter, trace it with chalk and then walk it. I’ve found sometimes large motor would help like writing with paper on the walls, on the floors, on the tables, on the easel or just everywhere.”

Secondly, additional staff who provided literacy interventions such as Minnesota Reading Corps (MRC) members are a helpful solution to the barriers to implementing or creating literacy interventions within their classrooms. Some of their success may be attributed to being able to focus on small groups of students. Interviewee E shared, “I think that’s why MRC is good having that in your room because that’s all they do is focus on the smaller groups and the kids that need it.”

Finally, pre-k teachers were creative “in the teaching moment” to create appropriate self-developed literacy interventions for specific children. Interviewee B stated, “I think we’re always being creative.” Interviewee C said, “[We just] do our own.”

Theme #6: Parent-Teacher Communication

Lastly, communication-related interview comments emphasized the communication between the parent and teacher. All pre-k teachers were in constant communication with the

families of the children in their classroom by email, face-to-face conversations, and regularly scheduled conferences. Referring to communication with families, Interviewee C said, “And also having that connection with home. Having students working, not only with us, but so their families know too so we have that follow through if a family is even working with them at all.” To repeat one interview response that fits into two different themes of findings, Interviewee A explained a time to talk with parents as, “At our conferences we teach the parents how to teach the kids.” This teacher used conferences to reinforce skills taught in class and to help parents know what to teach their child. The teacher explained this thought process to help parents by taking the parent’s perspective. How can a parent teach a child necessary skills if they do not know what is being worked on or how the teacher is teaching the skill? The teacher wanted the parents to feel comfortable asking questions to allow for open communication about what the child is learning and how they are progressing.

Additional Non-Thematic Findings

The previous results specifically addressed each of the research question posed for this research project. In addition, tangential topics also emerged from my data analysis that are important for pre-k teachers’ literacy interventions usage. These additional findings are presented in this section of my results chapter.

- When asked what the term ‘literacy’ meant to them, pre-k teachers expressed the term literacy to mean reading, writing, speaking, language and communication. The teachers mentioned that many people, which included parents and teachers prior to learning in college and school careers, think that literacy only refers to reading. The interpretation of reading can mean something different to different people. These

- participants thought that it was important to acknowledge that literacy takes different forms for young children, but technically, literacy actually includes writing, speaking, language and communication too.
- Pre-k teachers' knowledge about literacy interventions was also interesting. Three of the six teachers interviewed have worked with a member of Minnesota Reading Corps where their literacy interventions training was processed through SEEDS quality interactions. These quality interactions are based on the idea of sensitivity, encouragement, education, development of skills through doing and self-image support. Minnesota Reading Corps and these teachers' direct supervisor required SEEDS training for all Community Education Staff. It can be assumed that this group of pre-k teachers would probably not know as much about literacy interventions if SEEDS training had not been a required.
 - Another tangential finding pertained to teacher familiarity with published literacy interventions and barriers they faced. It can be concluded that five out of the six teachers have used response to intervention. No teachers have used reading recovery, but that may be enough experience for teachers to be aware of literacy interventions.
 - During the group interview, it was brought up that different college institutions required had different expectations, so it made it difficult to know the amount of time that they had worked with students during pre-service training. I would assume that because none of the pre-k teachers interviewed had direct college instruction about literacy interventions, full-day pre-k teachers used knowledge gained in their work places for specific literacy skill interventions.

- Several teachers believed student learning was a factor for literacy interventions. Teachers agreed that literacy interventions are the most beneficial to the student when teachers know how a student learns best and then, reinforces a student's strength throughout the school day. These teachers thought that literacy and other academic interventions can be interchanged as long as a teacher understood how a student best learns and the specific skill in need of intervention. Some strategies that could be used would include movement, kinesthetic, visual and auditory activities.
- These teachers used the assessments and progress monitoring to drive their interventions. It was stated that students can change skill levels within 1 week so that teachers need to monitor student progress carefully. One teacher also stated that they could be working on spelling with a group of students and another student may still need letter recognition. In this case, the teacher would still provide an intervention to each student or group of students that supports their individual needs.
- All the teachers said they did create their own literacy interventions versus an intervention that is from a script such as Minnesota Reading Corps. Some teachers find specific published interventions to adapt as needed. Other teachers said they preferred to borrow an intervention from a colleague and then modifying it to fit what was needed in their classroom. They used examples like name songs for children to learn the letters in their names, computer ideas and games and visuals that they found useful to help children with specific skills. They also gave other examples for interventions that involved large motor activities such as bouncing a ball on a letter or jumping to a letter. The teachers expressed using tactile letters made of sandpaper or

shaving cream on a hard surface to write letters. Several teachers mentioned using different activities to address the same skill to ensure that the student has acquired this skill across varying contexts. Since knowing a skill temporarily and mastering a skill are two different levels of learning, these pre-k teachers thought it was important to find many different ways to teach the same skills.

- The final finding from my study was that pre-k teachers understood how 4- and 5-year-old children learn. The teachers understood how pre-k students think, what type of time is appropriate for them to sit, how the room needs to be organized, what types of materials and centers need to be in the classroom, and how to structure the school day for a student's optimal learning. It was also apparent that the pre-k teachers knew a lot about their students and their families, which means they have communicated with the families quite often.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the results of the study. The next chapter discusses these findings.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Overview

Early literacy is an important skill for pre-k students. In school, they learn literacy skills such as picture naming, letter identification, letter sound identification, rhyming, alliteration, and concepts about print. This study focused on literacy interventions for pre-k students and the barriers teachers face.

Child development studies and the history of early childhood education continues to change the way teachers teach. Many programs have resulted from this information such as Pre-k programs, Response to Intervention, Reading Recovery, Minnesota Reading Corps—to name a few that are commonly used in Minnesota where I teach early childhood education. These programs have aimed to intervene in early learning and attempted to close achievement gaps. Assessment tools and data-driven teaching allows a teacher to know exactly what skills a child needs to acquire.

Summary of Findings for Each Research Question

These following summary comments address the specific overarching research questions for this research project:

Research Question 1: How familiar are pre-k teachers with published literacy interventions? Teachers were familiar with literacy interventions. They knew about some specific types of published programs and understood the procedures of these literacy interventions, the purposes, and various ways to adapt the literacy interventions to use in their teaching. Thus, I conclude that these teachers have a good grasp on the way pre-k students learn generally, the use of progress monitoring data, and scripted or teacher-created literacy

interventions. The teachers seem to know about Minnesota Reading Corps and Response to Intervention due to their experiences on the job and what they learn from their teaching team. The teachers interviewed have high expectations for the students in their classes. Their direct supervisor holds literacy interventions in high regard and worthy of teachers' time by allowing PLC discussion time and supporting SEEDS training for all pre-k employees.

Research Question 1a: What barriers do pre-k teachers identify when implementing published literacy interventions? Teachers do think time is a large barrier to implementing published literacy interventions. It takes time to get specific materials out and to follow a script. Pre-k students learn in ways other than sitting at a desk. Rather, they prefer to use their whole bodies to move while learning. Since pre-k learners learn best when there is an action that goes with a skill, pre-k teachers adapt to this learning preference by using literacy interventions that are teacher-created. A teacher-created intervention allows the teacher to match the specific skill with specific actions. An example would be a student jumping on a printed letter sign on the floor while saying the letter name. Traditional scripted interventions do not use gross motor skills in this way. These pre-k teachers believe it saves learning time to be able to develop their own literacy interventions.

Research Question 2: How do pre-k teachers develop literacy interventions to meet the needs of individual students? Teachers are able to create their own literacy interventions based on the needs of their students. They use data and progress monitoring to create literacy interventions while meeting the students' immediate social and emotional needs of the day. Teachers felt more comfortable creating their own literacy intervention than using a pre-made scripted intervention.

Research Question 2a: What barriers do pre-k teachers identify when implementing teacher-developed literacy interventions? The participants in this research study said time was a barrier, so that it was easier for them to create their own literacy interventions spontaneously that specifically focused on the immediate needs of a student. Scripted interventions required them to pull out a published manual and have specific materials such as letter cards or easels already set up. The ease of teacher created literacy interventions mitigated the time barrier.

When pre-k teachers developed their own literacy interventions, it was difficult to find the time to implement these fun and engaging activities when the teachers had other classroom responsibilities. Some of these responsibilities included other literacy assessments, behavior assessments, daily work and behavior management. This latter responsibility, behavior management, was emphasized as a substantial issue since students with behavior management needs in pre-k required much of a teacher's attention.

Implications for Practice

Pre-k programming as a student's first formal grade of school can impact a student's learning in the early childhood years as well as into future school years. Research has shown that literacy interventions can effectively support pre-k student learning. It has also been demonstrated that early childhood is an indicator of reading success in later school years. Because of these findings, it is especially important that pre-k teachers need to know how to teach and track literacy skills. My research study demonstrated that pre-k teachers are creative in creating engaging interventions for pre-k students to learn, which can be thought to jumpstart a student's love of learning. Also, my study demonstrated that pre-k teachers have the flexibility and knowledge to create their own literacy interventions that are specifically designed and

monitored for each student's current skill level. In this way, teaching can be scaffolded to better meet early literacy learning needs.

Higher education that have teacher preparation programs could benefit from better congruency in class offerings. According to the participants in this study, early childhood education coursework is lacking in emphasizing the importance of literacy interventions as well as the necessary skills to be able to create their own literacy interventions that meet the unique learning needs of their future pre-k students. It is possible that pre-service training course content has been updated.

Education as a field can benefit as pre-k teachers better understand the importance of literacy interventions, which would include how to develop teacher-created interventions. Programs such as reading recovery, Response to Intervention and Minnesota Reading Corps do expose teachers to various programs of literacy interventions along with the necessary knowledge base, data collection strategies, and instructional scripts that have been shown to be effective. If all school leaders could emphasize the value and importance of these literacy intervention programs, I believe most pre-k teachers would make time for literacy interventions in their day to day teaching in their early childhood classes.

Study Limitations

This research study had various identifiable limitations. My study had a limited number of participants. Only six full-day pre-k teachers were interviewed. This was a sufficient number to make some conclusions but a small sample size on which to base compelling conclusions. Also, all the participants were from one teaching staff so that these six teachers were limited to the same trainings, curriculum, staff, student demographics, and published intervention

programs. This may have impacted their answers to the group interview questions. Individual interviews could have yielded more results. Finally, there was a limited amount of time to collect the data for this study. Extended time to interview this group of pre-k teachers as well as interviewing additional groups of teachers from other districts would have provided a more representative set of findings.

Future Research Recommendations

I would recommend that more research be conducted on literacy interventions, specifically in early childhood through third grade. In addition, I would recommend more research focused on programs that use an RTI intervention model such as Reading Recovery. There seems to be an abundance of research study of published programs such as Response to Intervention but little evidence-based work addressing the value of pre-k literacy interventions or teacher-created literacy interventions.

Pre-k teacher preparation programs would be another area to look into further. It is clear from this interview that there was a lack college coursework preparing a teacher for the rigors of organizing literacy interventions to help close the achievement gap. Some programs or individual professors taught about ways to adapt teaching but nothing was specifically mentioned about literacy interventions. The teachers interviewed only had knowledge of the term 'literacy intervention' due to the presence of the Minnesota Reading Corps in the schools where they are currently teaching. Additional research is needed to confirm this study's finding.

Teachers in my research study felt confined to a rigid teaching schedule and therefore are not left with the time necessary to make personal data-based teaching decisions about their students' literacy learning needs. Future research could further expand to understand

administrators' perspectives on pre-k literacy intervention programs. I would wonder to what extent they value literacy interventions and if they would allow teachers adequate time in their teaching schedules to effectively develop and implement these pre-k interventions. Possibly administrators could shed light on why evidence-based results have demonstrated the effectiveness for Response to Intervention, yet many schools do not seem to value RTI literacy interventions.

Conclusion

My experience as a pre-k teacher and former Minnesota Reading Corps pre-k literacy tutor guides my decisions about literacy interventions. I have found certain themes in my experience and wanted to know what other teachers have found in their experiences. Thus, I wanted to know what full day pre-k teachers thought about literacy interventions, so I conducted a group interview of pre-k teachers.

My interview results showed that pre-k teachers are familiar with literacy interventions and understand how to use student progress monitoring data to create their own literacy interventions. These teachers further strived to monitor their students' progress so that they can focus on learning new skills once their students had mastered previous skills. Teachers also agreed that literacy interventions can and should be used with all students since all students have learning needs whether it is letter identification or as advanced as spelling or segmenting words. Two barriers teachers face are Finding ways to reinforce skills. It can be difficult for a teacher because some students may not be socially and emotionally ready in their home lives, and therefore not ready to learn in their school lives, either. Other times, students may not care to learn at all. Secondly, because of mental health issues, some students are not even in a good

emotional place to learn when their mental health needs are not yet met. Thus, students may be unprepared emotionally for the rigors of learning in a full-day pre-k program.

The findings from my research study further demonstrated the following important ideas: 1) literacy interventions were short in duration; 2) these literacy interventions were fun for the students; 3) students showed interest and involvement as the literacy interventions were implemented; 4) students felt empowered and successful after literacy interventions were implemented; 5) teachers focused their attention on one student at a time when providing literacy interventions. Therefore, I conclude that pre-k teachers believe that literacy interventions have a positive effect on their students' learning as well as their future reading success—with the potential of helping to close gaps in achievement for students in U.S. schools.

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Appendix A: Data Collection Instruments

Mini Paper and Pencil Survey

- 1) How many years have you been teaching?
- 2) What is your specific teaching license?
- 3) Have you ever been a member of Minnesota Reading Corps?
- 4) Have you ever worked directly (in your classroom) with a member of Minnesota Reading Corps?
- 5) Have you ever used Response to Intervention in your position?
- 6) Have you ever worked in Reading Recovery?

Group Interview Questions

- 1) What does the term “literacy” mean to you?
- 2) Share your experiences with literacy interventions?
- 3) What types of professional development or college training did you receive for small group or tier 2 literacy instruction/interventions?
- 4) What types of professional development or college training did you receive for 1 or 2 student tier 3 literacy instruction?
- 5) What do you feel are important factors to know about the children before giving them a literacy intervention?
- 6) How do you identify a child as a candidate for a literacy intervention?
- 7) What struggles or challenges do you face in regards to literacy interventions?
- 8) Have you ever created your own literacy intervention with individual students, small groups or large groups of students? If so, tell me more.

Appendix B: Research Study Documents

Factors that contribute to how pre-k teachers make decisions about implementing teacher-created literacy interventions in their classroom

Informed Consent

You are invited to participate in a research study of literacy interventions. You were selected as a possible participant because you teach in a full day pre-k program.

This research project is being conducted by Jessica Richter to satisfy the requirements of a master's Degree in Child and Family Studies at St. Cloud State University.

Background Information and Purpose

The purpose of this study is to find out if teachers are using literacy interventions, know how to use data to drive instruction, know how to create their own literacy interventions.

Procedures

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to answer interview questions which will be recorded and later transcribed by myself. The interview will take one hour or less on a one-time basis.

Risks

It is possible you may feel uncomfortable answering questions on the spot. To minimize this discomfort, I will send the interview questions to you in advance via email to allow for more detailed and thorough answers also.

Benefits

These questions will allow a thought process around additional ways to help your teaching. If you are not familiar with the topic of intervention, I hope these questions allow you to explore the world of literacy interventions.

Confidentiality

Information obtained in connection with this study is confidential and will be reported as aggregated (group) results. Although the names of individual subjects will be kept confidential, there is a possibility that you may be identifiable by your comments in the published research. You will have an opportunity to review the text and withdraw comments prior to publication.

Research Results

Upon completion, my thesis will be placed on file at the St. Cloud State University's Learning Resources Center. At your request, I am happy to provide a summary of the research results when the study is completed.

Additional Resources

If you'd like to know more about pre-k literacy interventions, you may be interested in the following: _____

Contact Information

If you have any questions right now, please ask. If you have additional questions later, you may contact me at 763.639.7700/ rije0301@stcloudstate.edu or my adviser, Jane Minnema, at 320.308.3969/ jminnema@stcloudstate.edu. You will be given a copy of this form for your records.

Voluntary Participation/Withdrawal

Participation is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with St. Cloud State University, the researcher, or Jane Minnema. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

Acceptance to Participate

Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years of age, you have read the information provided above, and you have consent to participate. You may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty after signing this form.

Signature

Date