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# Preservice Special Education Teachers' Beliefs About Effective Reading Instruction for Students with Mild/Moderate Disabilities

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Preservice Special Education Teachers' Beliefs about Effective Reading  
Instruction for Students with Mild/Moderate Disabilities

Nari J. Carter

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of  
Brigham Young University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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Brigham Young University

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## DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Preservice Special Education Teachers' Beliefs about Effective Reading  
Instruction for Students with Mild/Moderate Disabilities

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Doctor of Philosophy

No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2002) mandated that all students learn to read and specified that instructional practice in schools be informed by scientifically-based research. NCLB specifically aimed to improve reading achievement among struggling readers, students with disabilities, and other marginalized students. The National Reading Panel and reading experts have identified instructional practices for teaching reading to struggling readers; and yet, teachers do not always implement effective practices in their classrooms. To identify factors that influence teachers' practice, I conducted a literature review of teachers' beliefs about reading instruction. The results of the review were mixed in terms of whether teachers believed that research-validated practices were effective for teaching reading to struggling readers. In some instances, teachers' beliefs acted as barriers for addressing students' instructional needs, and teachers' beliefs and practices were both congruent and incongruent.

If teachers fail to implement effective practices, the long-term outlook for poor readers is dismal, particularly for students with disabilities. Considerable research indicates that students with disabilities need intense, explicit, skill-based instruction to acquire basic reading skills. Although some of the studies reviewed provide evidence that special education teachers believe that explicit, skill-based approaches are effective for teaching reading to students with disabilities, more research is needed to understand how special education teachers' beliefs influence their instructional practice.

The purpose for this research was to describe preservice special education teachers' beliefs about reading instruction for students with mild to moderate disabilities. Results indicated that preservice special education teachers held varying beliefs about reading instruction. The preservice teachers described explicit, skill-based instruction as effective for teaching reading to students with disabilities, and they also thought that skill-based instruction, combined with balanced literacy, addressed students' instructional needs. Affective response and teaching experience influenced teachers' beliefs. Teachers who perceived that the use of explicit, skill-based methods contributed to students' progress implemented such practices in their classrooms. Those who did not believe that the use of explicit methods for teaching reading supported student learning, implemented practices that did not align with research-validated perspectives.

*Keywords:* special education, teacher, beliefs, reading instruction, disability

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I am among the first to graduate with an Educational, Inquiry, Measurement, and Evaluation (EIME) Ph.D. from Brigham Young University. Thank you to Richard Sudweeks, Barbara Culatta, and Dean Richard Young for having the vision to design this program, and for obtaining approval for implementing the program. Completing EIME program requirements has been a tremendous experience. I am particularly appreciative of those who provided funding that enabled me to complete the EIME program on a full-time basis.

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## DESCRIPTION OF STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

This dissertation, *Preservice Special Education Teachers' Beliefs about Reading Instruction for Students with Mild/Moderate Disabilities*, is written in a hybrid dissertation format. The hybrid format brings together dissertation processes and journal publication formats. The preliminary pages of the dissertation reflect requirements for submission to the university. The dissertation report is presented as a journal article, and conforms to length and style requirements for submitting research reports to education journals. An expanded methods section is included in Appendix A. Appendixes B through L contain forms used for the dissertation study, the interview protocols, and examples of data analysis procedures. The literature review is included as a second research article. The review is a research study and is written in journal article format.

When the No Child Left Behind Act (2002) was reauthorized, lawmakers communicated the expectation that all students would learn to read and emphasized using research-validated methods for teaching reading. In special education, students with disabilities typically struggle to learn to read and need effective reading instruction if they are to acquire skills necessary for becoming proficient readers. Some research suggests that reading instruction in special education classrooms is poor and does not reflect research-validated practices (Bentum & Aaron, 2003; Swanson, 2008; Vaughn, Levy, Coleman, & Bos, 2002; Vaughn, Moody, & Schumm, 1998). Why reading instruction in special education is poor remains unclear.

Researchers have suggested that teachers lack knowledge of effective reading practice and hold beliefs that act as barriers for implementing effective instruction (Cunningham, Perry, Stanovich, & Stanovich, 2004; Joshi et. al., 2009; Moats & Foorman, 2003; Swanson, 2008). Currently, there is very little research of special education teachers' beliefs about effective

reading instruction for students with disabilities (see Appendix A). Specifically, we do not know if preservice special education teachers accept research-validated methods as effective for teaching reading, and if they implement effective practices in their classrooms when they begin teaching. The purpose of this dissertation was to describe preservice special education teachers' beliefs about reading instruction for students with mild to moderate disabilities in order to inform teacher preparation practice.

Multiple case study methodology was used to investigate teachers' beliefs about reading instruction (see Appendix B). Interview, observation, and artifact data were collected from eight preservice special education teachers as they completed their final year in their teacher preparation program. Results indicated that preservice special education teachers held a range of beliefs that included explicit, skill-based instruction. Affective response influenced beliefs, as did experience teaching students with disabilities.

**ARTICLE 1: Preservice Special Education Teachers' Beliefs about Effective Reading  
Instruction for Students with Mild/Moderate Disabilities**

### Article Abstract

The No Child Left Behind Act (2002) mandated that all students, including students with disabilities, learn to read. If students with disabilities are to learn to read, they must receive instruction that enables them to acquire basic reading skills. Consequently, their teachers must be prepared to provide effective instruction. Although preservice special education teachers are taught research-validated methods for teaching reading, we do not know if they believe that such methods are valid. The purpose for this research was to describe preservice special education teachers' beliefs about reading instruction for students with mild to moderate disabilities. Data were collected as a qualitative multiple case study. Results indicated that preservice special education teachers held a range of beliefs that included explicit, skill-based instruction. Teachers' emotional response to explicit instruction, their perceptions of students, and their experience teaching influenced their beliefs.

## Background

Fifteen years ago, Lyon (1996) stated that the “long-term outcomes for the majority of individuals with learning disabilities who did not receive appropriate early reading instruction [were] bleak” (p. 71). Students with reading disabilities were likely to continue their reading difficulties throughout their school years and into adulthood if they were not provided with effective reading instruction. Unfortunately, many students with disabilities do not receive effective reading instruction in special education. For example, research has documented that reading instruction in some resource classrooms is poor, and not reflective of effective practice (Bentum & Aaron, 2003; Swanson, 2008; Vaughn, Levy, Coleman, & Bos, 2002; Vaughn, Moody, & Schumm, 1998).

Although researchers have documented poor reading instruction in special education classrooms, it is unclear why teachers do not provide better instruction. Effective practices for teaching reading have been identified. The National Reading Panel (NRP, 2000) determined that reading programs should include instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Additionally, a considerable amount of research in special education has indicated that students with disabilities improve reading ability when teachers provide explicit, skill-based instruction that systematically builds reading skills. Explicit instruction that includes teacher demonstration of skills, guided practice, high rates of student response, teacher feedback, and distributed and cumulative practice is particularly effective for students with disabilities (Archer & Hughes, 2011; Foorman & Torgesen, 2001; Gersten, Fuchs, Williams, & Baker, 2001; Jitendra et al., 2004, Swanson, 2000, 2001; Torgesen et al., 2001; Vaughn, Gersten, & Chard, 2000; Wanzek, Wexler, Vaughn, & Ciullo, 2010).

Some explanations as to why special education teachers do not implement effective practices have been offered. Swanson (2008) and Vaughn et al. (2002) suggested that the absence of research-validated practices in special education classrooms indicates that teachers lack knowledge of effective instructional approaches for teaching reading. Other researchers have provided evidence that teachers lack knowledge necessary for teaching reading (Cunningham, Perry, Stanovich, & Stanovich, 2004; Joshi et. al., 2009; Moats & Foorman, 2003). However, emerging research in special education indicates that beginning special education teachers may have a reasonable amount of knowledge for teaching basic decoding and comprehension skills to students with disabilities; nevertheless, they do not always apply knowledge when teaching (Brownell et al., 2009). If teachers lack knowledge necessary for teaching reading, or do not apply knowledge, unapplied and insufficient knowledge may explain poor reading instruction.

Another significant factor that may influence classroom practice is teacher beliefs. Examining teacher beliefs is as important as evaluating teacher knowledge because beliefs are inextricably linked to knowledge (Calderhead, 1996; Woolfolk-Hoy, Davis, & Page, 2006). Teacher beliefs are thought to strongly influence both what preservice teachers learn in preparation programs and teachers' practice in classrooms (Calderhead, 1996; Cunningham, Zibulsky, Stanovich, & Stanovich, 2009; Kagan, 1992; Lyon & Weiser, 2009; Pajaras, 1992; Richardson, 1996, 2003).

As constructs, beliefs and knowledge overlap (Borko & Putnam, 1996; Woolfolk-Hoy et al., 2006). However, some distinctions have been made between beliefs and knowledge.

Teachers' beliefs do not hold epistemic warrant (Richardson, 2003). That is, they do not hold the

claim of reflecting objective truth. Belief systems tend to have stronger affective and evaluative aspects than knowledge systems, and beliefs are typically tied to experience (Nespor, 1987).

Beliefs develop before prospective teachers begin preparation programs and they influence learning and teaching behavior. Teacher beliefs tend to form early in apprenticeships of observation (Lortie, 1975). Apprenticeships of observation occur when individuals observe others teaching (usually during elementary and secondary school), and formulate conceptions of teaching based on observations. Established beliefs act as filters that process information, screen, define, and even distort thinking—acting as barriers for new learning (Pajaras, 1992). Beliefs play a critical role in defining behavior and in structuring knowledge and information. Teacher beliefs are thought to strongly influence instructional actions (Calderhead, 1996; Cunningham, et al., 2009; Kagan, 1992; Lyon & Weiser, 2009; Pajaras, 1992; Richardson, 1996, 2003).

Considering how beliefs can affect knowledge acquisition and teaching practice, understanding preservice special education teachers' beliefs about reading instruction is particularly important for identifying factors that influence teachers' instructional practice. In special education, there is little research about teachers' beliefs of reading instruction. In a search of multiple academic databases, using keywords such as *belief\**, *perception\**, *teacher\**, *read\**, *instruction\**, and *disability\**, I identified 1,600 titles related to teachers' beliefs. Out of the 1,600 titles, I located only four published research reports that investigated special education teachers' beliefs about reading instruction for students with disabilities (see Appendix B for details of the literature review study) (Bos, Mather, Dickson, Podhajski, & Chard, 2001; McDaniel, Duchaine, & Jolivette, 2010; Narkon, Black, & Jenkins, 2009, Rabren & Darch, 1996). Preservice special education teachers were participants in only two of these research studies, and the results were mixed in terms of their describing explicit, skill-based instruction as effective for teaching

reading to students with disabilities (i.e., some preservice special education teachers described explicit, skill-based instruction as effective, and others preferred constructivist approaches for teaching reading) (Bos et al., 2001; Narkon et al., 2009).

With so little research on preservice special education teachers' beliefs about effective reading instruction, we do not know if or to what extent preservice special educators believe that research-validated practices (i.e., systematic, explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension) constitute effective instruction. If preservice special education teachers do not accept and believe research-based evidence of effective reading instruction as they complete teacher preparation programs, their beliefs may act as filters that prevent them from acquiring the knowledge necessary for effectively teaching reading. Beliefs may also act as barriers for implementing validated practices in classrooms, which could explain why poor reading instruction occurs in special education classrooms.

The purpose of this research was to describe preservice special education teachers' beliefs about effective reading instruction for students with mild to moderate disabilities in order to inform teacher preparation practice. The following questions guided the investigation:

1. What are preservice special education teachers' beliefs about effective reading instruction for students with mild to moderate disabilities when they begin a reading methods course and complete coursework for their teacher preparation program?
2. How do preservice special education teachers' beliefs about effective reading instruction for students with mild to moderate disabilities relate to their classroom practice in student teaching and internship settings?



### Method

Qualitative methodology was used to obtain rich descriptions of the participants' perspectives (Hatch, 2002). Qualitative researchers "study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them" (Creswell, 1998, p. 15). The phenomenon of interest in the present study was preservice special education teachers' beliefs. Teacher beliefs are not directly observable and must be inferred from statements, behavior, and predispositions (Pajaras, 1992). As preservice special education teachers completed their final year in their preparation program, interview, observation, and statement data were collected to make inferences about preservice teachers' beliefs about reading instruction for students with disabilities. These data were collected as a multiple case study.

For the present study, qualitative case study methodology was appropriate for understanding the meaning teachers have constructed regarding reading instruction for students with disabilities (Merriam, 1998). Case study research is "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context," (Merriam, 1998, p. 27) and focuses on single units, programs, events, individuals, groups, or communities. Understanding the uniqueness of individual cases and contexts is important in understanding phenomena (Stake, 1995). The unit of analysis in this study was individual preservice special education teachers. Eight teachers were included in the multiple case study.

Multiple case studies are a type of instrumental case study (Stake, 1995; 2005). With instrumental case studies, a case is studied mainly to provide insight into an issue related to an external interest. In the present study, the external interest was reading instruction for students with disabilities. Data were collected to determine how preservice special education teachers'

beliefs might influence classroom practice for teaching reading to students with disabilities. With multiple case studies, the instrumental study is extended to include several cases. Multiple cases are selected because it is believed that studying more than one case enhances understanding of the phenomenon of interest (Stake, 2005).

Case studies are bounded systems—bounded spatially or temporally (Creswell, 1998; Gerring, 2007). The present study was bounded temporally during the preservice special education teachers' final year in their preparation program— from January 2010 to the end of December 2010. The conditions under which this multiple case study was conducted are described in the following sections, which include a description of the research stance and my identity, as well as the parameters of the method.

### **Research Stance**

The research stance was post-positivist. The ontological perspective of post positivism is that an objective reality exists but cannot be completely apprehended due to human limitations. However, although reality may not be completely apprehended, researchers strive to maintain objectivity in studying phenomena (Hatch, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 2003; Phillips & Burbules, 2002). My position while conducting the study was that of an observer/participant (Merriam, 1998). Interactions with the preservice teachers were limited to data collection activities and did not include activities in which I participated in the participants' lived worlds beyond the study.

### **Researcher Identity**

During the time that I conducted this research I completed coursework for a doctorate degree in educational research. My master's degree is in special education. I have supervised and trained preservice special education teachers, and have taught them explicit methods for teaching reading and math. I have a strong commitment to using research-validated methods for

instructing students with disabilities. A bias of this study is in favor of explicit, skill-based methods for teaching reading.

### **Setting**

The present study took place at a large, private university in the western United States. Preservice teachers who were completing their final year in the university's special education bachelor degree and post-baccalaureate licensure programs were recruited to participate. During the preservice teachers' final year in their preparation programs, they completed reading and math methods courses, a behavior management course, a special education law class, and secondary and elementary teaching practicum courses.

The study commenced when the preservice teachers began their special education reading methods course. The content of the reading methods course focused on using explicit methods to teach basic reading skills (i.e., phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension). While enrolled in the course, the preservice teachers studied Reading Mastery®, an explicit, skill-based program for teaching reading to kindergarten through third-grade students. The preservice teachers used the program to teach reading during their elementary teaching practicum, which began the summer following completion of their reading methods course. The elementary teaching practicum was an intense summer-school session during which each preservice teacher taught reading to small groups of children with disabilities ninety minutes a day for approximately six weeks.

Following the practicum course, the preservice teachers enrolled in student teaching, or began internship work. Student teachers were assigned to cooperating teachers and worked inside the cooperating teachers' classrooms. Interns were hired by the district and had their own classroom of students with a mentor teacher assigned to them. Student teaching and internship

placements were in school districts within the vicinity of the university. Preservice teachers were placed in elementary and secondary schools. The study concluded during the final weeks of the preservice teachers' student teaching course, and the interns' corresponding first semester of internship teaching.

### **Participants**

To recruit participants for the study, I attended the last session of a required course offered Fall Semester 2009. I explained the purpose of the study, distributed the consent form, and asked for volunteers. Twenty-four preservice special education teachers out of thirty-two consented to participate in the study. From the group of 24 volunteers, I selected a smaller group for the multiple case study. For case study participants, pseudonyms were used to maintain confidentiality.

In selecting case study participants, purposive sampling was used. Patton (1990) and Miles and Huberman (1994) described sampling strategies and recommended theory-based sampling to explore a theoretical construct. In the present study, the conceptual framework of teacher beliefs accounts for teachers' prior experience and knowledge in belief structures. I purposively selected teachers with differing levels of prior experience and education to explore how such factors might influence beliefs.

To select case study participants, I consulted with special education faculty and with the department secretary to determine levels of education of those who had signed the consent forms (i.e., those who were enrolled in the special education bachelor degree or post-baccalaureate licensure program). I also obtained recommendations for individuals who would be likely to cooperate with requests for interviews and observations. Based on recommendations and preservice teachers' levels of education, I selected 10 case study participants.

Of the ten individuals selected for case studies, eight completed the study. One participant was dropped from the study because he did not plan to complete student teaching within the time frame of the study; a second participant withdrew from the study. Three of the eight preservice teachers who completed the study were post-baccalaureate licensure students who had bachelor's degrees in other fields (i.e., secondary education, psychology, and liberal arts), and five were completing the special education bachelor degree program. Six participants were females, and two were males. Ages ranged from 19 to 51, with an average age of 32. When the preservice teachers were recruited for the study, they did not know if they planned to student teach or to obtain internship positions. Those decisions were made mid-way through the study. Six of the preservice teachers completed student teaching and two obtained teaching internships.

### **Data Collection Sources**

Data collected from the preservice teachers included interview and observation data, preservice teachers' belief statements about reading instruction, debrief discussions of lessons taught, reflections on reading instruction, and life-impact maps. Creswell (1998) recommended creating a data collection matrix for case study data to illustrate the type of data collected and when. Figure 1 is the data collection matrix for this study.

### **Data Analysis**

Data were analyzed as they were collected (Merriam, 1998). Interviews were transcribed shortly after completing each interview, and transcripts were verbatim. Observation, belief statement, lesson debrief, and reflection data were coded as data were collected.

Data analysis was accomplished in several phases. During the initial phase of analysis, codes were developed using interview data. Initially, three representative interviews were selected to develop coding categories for the coding scheme. As I read the interviews I assigned

preliminary codes to quotations based on questions asked, the content of the quotations, and a priori categories. For example, quotations in which teachers discussed the mechanics of reading such as phonemic awareness and phonics were categorized as *mechanics*, with subcategories for *phonemic awareness* and *phonics*. The codes reflected both the NRP's identification of basic reading skills, and vocabulary the preservice teachers used to describe reading processes and instruction.

After coding the first three interviews, I wrote code definitions for the codes and coding categories. Then, using the preliminary codes and definitions, I recoded the three interviews to determine if codes, coding categories, or definitions needed to be revised based on the content of the interviews. After revising codes and definitions, I coded the complete first set of interviews, and subsequently used the same codes and categories for coding other data collected.

To check the coding processes, I randomly selected two interviews from each set of interviews, and four belief statements for an external auditor to check. The external auditor had no involvement with the study and was a college-educated individual with experience in education. I gave the auditor a list of codes, coding categories, and code definitions, along with coded quotations from the interviews and belief statements. The auditor read the quotations and codes, and if the auditor agreed with the coding the auditor marked a plus. If the auditor disagreed with a code, the auditor marked a minus. Coded quotations were counted, and the agreement rate was 98% (296 agreements/302 total coded statements).

Observation notes, lesson debrief notes, and teaching reflections were coded using the same codes as were used for the interviews. To check the coding of lesson observations, lesson debriefs, and reflections, opportunity was provided for each case study participant to review the categorization of notes made from lessons taught, and to respond to summaries of data collected

from them. In addition, at the conclusion of the study, I verbally summarized the results of the study for each participant and asked participants to describe their perceptions of themselves related to the findings. By having the participants describe their perceptions of themselves, I checked if my interpretations of their responses reflected their beliefs.

After coding, data were condensed and organized in case-level displays in meta-matrices to summarize and compare data across participants for identified themes. Meta-matrices are master charts that assemble descriptive data from each of several cases in a standard format (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Meta-matrices were created for each set of interviews, and for all compiled data. During analysis, when discrepant cases were identified, all data were analyzed to identify patterns of difference that were significant.

### **Credibility Indicators**

Lincoln and Guba (1985), Creswell and Miller (2000), and Brantlinger, Jimenez, Klinger, Pugach, and Richardson (2005) described credibility indicators in qualitative research. For the present study, the engagement with participants was prolonged—spanning approximately one year. Multiple sources of data were collected, and data were triangulated with participants who were not case study participants. An audit trail was kept of all data analysis processes and an external auditor reviewed data coding. Participants evaluated and responded to emerging and final results, and research processes were discussed in peer debriefing discussions. The case study descriptions provide particulars about beliefs within the context of each teacher's experience.

### **Results**

During the course of their final year in their preparation programs, some of the preservice special education teachers' beliefs remained stable, while others developed, and changed as the

teachers acquired knowledge of instructional methods for teaching reading to students with disabilities, and as they gained experience teaching students with disabilities. In this section, the results are organized chronologically with the teachers' beginning beliefs discussed first, followed by beliefs during practicum, and concluding with beliefs at the end of the study.

### **Beginning Beliefs**

At the commencement of the study (January 2010), the preservice teachers described a range of beliefs regarding reading instruction for students with mild to moderate disabilities. Some entered their programs unsure as to what would constitute effective reading instruction for students with disabilities, and others had well-developed beliefs about reading instruction that reflected different approaches for teaching reading such as explicit instruction, balanced literacy, and hands on cooperative learning (see Table 1).

In the following sections, the cases of LeAnne and Tessa represent teachers whose beliefs were not established. Julie, Novalea, and Alex are representative of teachers who began the study with established beliefs.

**Beliefs not established.** At the beginning of the study, LeAnne and Tessa did not express established beliefs about effective reading instruction. Prior to enrolling in the special education teacher preparation program, LeAnne and Tessa worked in special education classrooms. Tessa was a post-baccalaureate licensure student who worked as paraeducator prior to enrolling in the licensure program, and LeAnne was an undergraduate who as a volunteer briefly taught a reading group in a resource classroom. When asked about reading instruction for students with disabilities, LeAnne said, "I guess I don't really know what kids with learning disabilities need [for learning to read]." In defining effective reading instruction, Tessa said that she didn't know



what would be effective, and defined effective instruction in saying, “I don’t know [what effective reading instruction is]; I’m taking a class right now. I would say a lot of one-on-one.”

Although LeAnne and Tessa did not clearly identify beliefs related to effective reading instruction, they were both concerned about students’ affective response toward reading. Tessa emphasized creating a safe learning environment, addressing attention and motivation, and having fun when teaching reading. LeAnne recognized the need for supporting student success and stated, “I do know that [students with disabilities] don’t need to know that they are failing like always, that you really need to celebrate their small successes even if they are just small.”

**Established beliefs.** In contrast to LeAnne and Tessa, the rest of the participants described established beliefs at the beginning of the study. Those with established beliefs defined *effective reading instruction* as (a) explicit, skill-based instruction (Julie, Susan, Bob, and Maddi); (b) as a combination of explicit, skill-based instruction and balanced literacy (Novalea); and (c) as hands-on activities and cooperative learning (Alex).

**Julie.** Julie entered the bachelor degree program with significant prior experience with individuals with disabilities. Julie has a son with autism and throughout his years in school was involved with special education as she participated in special education processes. At the beginning of the study, Julie thought that students with disabilities needed explicit instruction, which she defined as step-by-step instruction. She also mentioned instruction in foundational skills as she stated the following:

I feel like with kids with disabilities, the more explicit the better, and teaching in that way, you really have to give them that foundation before they can do the exploratory parts of reading—the vocabulary, the phonemic awareness, the phonics, the basic structures of reading.

*Novalea.* Novalea is an English language learner who learned English as an adult. As she was completing the special education bachelor degree program, she was also completing courses for a Teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) bi-lingual endorsement. Prior to enrolling in the special education teacher preparation program, Novalea worked as a paraeducator and had responsibility for teaching reading to English language learners (ELLs) with disabilities. Although Novalea said that she had little experience teaching reading, her beliefs were established when she began the reading methods course. During the first interview, Novalea stated the following:

If you are working in basic skills, you teach them, but teaching the sounds depends on what method you are using, it depends a lot on what kind of school you have, like if you are whole language or phonics. I'm trying to be in the middle . . . I think it is true you need some drilling and you need some repeating of skills. At the same time . . . you need meaningful interactions in the classroom with the text or with the things they are reading.

*Alex.* Alex's conception of reading instruction was different from that of the other preservice teachers. Alex was completing the post-baccalaureate licensure program. His bachelor's degree was in secondary education for teaching history, and he had an ESL endorsement. During Alex's first year in the special education licensure program he was introduced to explicit instruction in an introductory methods course. When asked about his conception of effective reading instruction, Alex stated that he couldn't envision using "direct instruction with reading." He said, "I don't see it happening, personally." Alex thought that hands-on activities and cooperative learning would be effective approaches for teaching students with disabilities how to read. Alex described effective reading instruction as follows:

More hands on activities. The teacher is not just sitting there instructing the whole time, maybe an activity that is a little guided with instructions and stuff, . . . smaller group type setting where they have hands on activities. . . I'm really big on allowing people to work together to share their ideas, collaboration and working together.

### **Beliefs During Practicum**

The teachers' beliefs about reading instruction varied and represented a range of beliefs. Across time, there was consistency, variation, and change in beliefs as the preservice special education teachers completed their reading methods course and teaching practicum. Beliefs were influenced by participants' affective response and experience teaching students with disabilities. Contextual factors tended to engender positive and negative emotions related to reading instruction (see Figure 2).

During the time that the preservice special education teachers learned and practiced explicit methods for teaching reading, all of them had some level of negative reaction to the instructional method. For most, negative responses were mediated by experience with students. That is, when the teachers perceived that the use of explicit instruction enabled students with disabilities to make progress learning to read, their perceptions of explicit instruction became more positive, and they believed that the approach was effective for teaching reading. In cases where the preservice teachers did not believe that their students made reading progress or their experience teaching was particularly difficult, they questioned the effectiveness of explicit methods for teaching reading.

In the following sections, Alex represents teachers whose experience mediated negative affective response, and Susan represents teachers whose experience did not alter negative perceptions during practicum.

*Alex.* Alex's emotional response to using explicit methods for teaching reading was intensely negative. He experienced tremendous difficulty using explicit methods for teaching reading and described his practicum teaching experience as a "nightmare." The following describes some of Alex's challenges during practicum:

But things were not working well for me with direct instruction. I was not consistent enough, the students weren't responding, I couldn't get them to respond, I felt like I was doing direct instruction, it wasn't working, they weren't doing their thing, I started changing it and not doing it as well, . . . I was the robot, read, sound it out, get ready, read, I was drilling like I was a drill sergeant and when they wouldn't respond, I was like okay, I was trying to praise a little bit, but it was more just try it again, you all have to do it. . . it was not me. . . it was me a mechanical robot up there and that's what I did not like about DI when I first heard about it.

Despite his difficulty adapting to a new instructional method, by the end of practicum Alex believed that students with disabilities needed explicit, skill-based instruction. He reported that his motivation for changing his perspective about reading instruction for students with disabilities was his desire to become a teacher. In explaining why he thought explicit, skill-based instruction was effective for students with disabilities, he described his experience teaching an ELL with disabilities. He related that she could decode words, but had difficulty with automatic retrieval for fluently reading words and for comprehending printed texts. Alex stated that including choral responding and repetition in lessons, as well as focusing on the development of basic reading skills created the best opportunity for the student to learn.

*Susan.* As a preservice teacher, Susan was completing the bachelor degree program along with courses for an ESL endorsement. Her perception of explicit methods for teaching reading

was negative at the beginning of practicum and intensified as she taught. In a lesson debrief discussion she stated that she felt depressed every morning of practicum knowing that she had to use explicit methods for teaching reading. She thought that she was torturing students during reading lessons by requiring them to sit quietly and attend to teacher-directed instruction. Instead of providing explicit instruction for teaching reading, Susan wanted to read to her students. Susan enjoyed reading out loud and reported that her students enjoyed listening to her read.

At the end of practicum, Susan did not believe that explicit, skill-based approaches for teaching reading were effective. She based her beliefs on end-of-practicum data that indicated that her students did not make progress with reading. After practicum ended Susan's description of effective instruction was different from beliefs expressed at the beginning of the study. In describing effective instruction Susan stated the following:

I think that they need to have as many angles as possible, try and find as many different facets until there is something that will click with them. I think that it is the teacher's responsibility to find as many different ways to present the material so they can have a multitude of opportunities to look at it.

### **Ending Beliefs and Instructional Practice**

The preservice special education teachers taught elementary, junior high, and high school-age students. In some of their student teaching placements they were required to use district mandated programs to teach reading; in others they implemented programs that they developed or that their cooperating teachers developed. Support for teaching from cooperating teachers ranged from high levels of support with classroom teachers teaching in the same room and frequently meeting with and mentoring the student teachers, to little structured support.

**Congruous beliefs with instruction.** In most cases, based on interview and observational data, the type of instruction the teachers provided was congruous with expressed beliefs; meaning, their descriptions of effective reading instruction aligned with the type of instruction they provided in their student teaching/internship settings. In this section, LeAnne's experience as an intern illustrates congruence of stated beliefs and practice.

LeAnne taught first- through sixth-grade elementary students with mild to moderate disabilities. She enjoyed her internship work and hoped to secure a full-time position at her school upon completing her internship. LeAnne's cooperating teacher developed the reading program used in the classroom and provided significant support as LeAnne was learning the classroom system. LeAnne frequently met with her cooperating teacher to discuss student performance and instruction.

LeAnne's cooperating teacher implemented a skill-based approach for teaching reading that included modeling and guided practice in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. LeAnne used lessons designed by the cooperating teacher to teach basic reading skills, and she thought the lessons were exactly what her students needed. She based her opinion on her assessment of students' reading skills and on midterm progress monitoring that indicated that all but one of her students made good progress learning to read. LeAnne related that it was exciting to see data that represented student progress. She attributed her students' progress to instruction that addressed their learning needs.

**Incongruous beliefs with instruction.** Compared with the other participants in the study, Susan, Maddi, and Tessa's stated beliefs were the most incongruous with their observed teaching practices. Their beliefs and practices reflected incongruity in different ways. For Susan, there was initial incongruity during student teaching in that her beginning beliefs did not align with the

intense instructional approach she was required to use. Maddi firmly believed that explicit, skill-based methods were effective for teaching reading, yet she did not always design or provide explicit lessons. Tessa's classroom teacher required her to provide structure and support for learning; however, Tessa wanted to create a less structured environment.

*Susan.* At the beginning of student teaching, Susan's beliefs seemed incongruous with the type of instruction she was providing. She taught small groups (one to five students per group) of elementary-age students and used the Wilson Reading System® and Treasures® to teach reading—both district mandated programs. The Wilson Reading System® is an intense, explicit, skill-based approach for teaching reading. Considering that Susan described such an intense dislike of explicit methods at the end of practicum, teaching reading using intense, explicit methods seemed to be a mismatch. Midway through student teaching Susan stated that the semester was challenging and she could not imagine teaching for another eight weeks. However, during a lesson debrief discussion and interview at the end of student teaching, Susan said that she enjoyed her experience teaching, and she was positive about using explicit methods for teaching reading. Susan attributed her changed perspective to not being constrained by scripts (unlike Reading Mastery®, the Wilson Reading System® is not scripted) and to an increased understanding of her students' instructional needs.

In explaining her beliefs, Susan related that her students with disabilities had skill deficits in phonemic awareness and phonics, and that they needed explicit instruction in those areas to learn how to decode. Susan compared students with disabilities to ELLs. Susan was completing an ESL practicum concurrently with special education student teaching and related that her ELLs needed language development and vocabulary instruction. Although she thought that students with disabilities had some of the same instructional needs as ELLs, Susan believed that students

with disabilities needed more intense, explicit decoding and comprehension instruction. Susan related that consistently collecting data on student performance helped her to understand her students' instructional needs and to gauge their progress learning to read.

**Maddi.** Throughout the study, Maddi was the most positive about explicit methods for teaching reading. Maddi was completing her bachelor's degree in special education and she firmly believed that using the "effective teaching cycle" was critical for teaching students with disabilities. In describing the effective teaching cycle, Maddi stated the following:

You can't throw in any curve balls until they have the basics . . . you have to be consistent and show them exactly what they have to do first, and you have to practice it together. . . With students with disabilities, you have to do it multiple times, do it again, again, and again, until you can see the light go on, then they can do it independently--so that structure of effective instruction. There's a reason why it's called the effective teaching cycle.

After completing the summer teaching practicum, Maddi said she felt "empowered" using explicit methods for teaching reading. Her practicum students made progress learning sounds and words, and Maddi attributed their progress to the instructional program used. Although she thought that using a script to teach reading was "boring," she planned to incorporate explicit instruction principles in lessons in her own classroom and expected to teach phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

As an intern, Maddi taught junior high students. Her district did not specify instructional programs for remedial reading, Maddi had to acquire instructional materials and develop her own curriculum. Although she had expected to incorporate principles of effective instruction in her reading lessons, across the observed lessons, her lessons were mostly independent practice.



During classroom observations, she asked students to silently read (for 20 minutes during one 50-minute lesson), independently practice fluency, and complete worksheets for comprehension. She provided modeling and guided instruction for less than 10 minutes of a 50-minute lesson during one observation.

Maddi wanted to provide explicit reading instruction. However, she acknowledged that her lessons did not reflect the effective teaching cycle and related that personal struggles interfered with her ability to provide explicit instruction. Maddi thought that her students primarily needed comprehension instruction, but she said that she did not know how to structure explicit comprehension lessons. During her elementary teaching practicum, Maddi taught beginning readers letter names and sounds. Prior to becoming an intern Maddi did not acquire experience teaching comprehension to older students.

In developing classroom instruction, Maddi stated that she received little guidance from experienced teachers and developed her own comprehension lessons. Her conception of explicit instruction was that explicit lessons included sequences of steps. To Maddi, teaching sequences of steps for identifying events or for stating main ideas did not make sense and was not effective for improving students' comprehension. By the end of her first semester of internship work, Maddi's perception of reading instruction had changed as she doubted the effectiveness of using explicit methods for teaching comprehension. She stated that she developed explicit lessons to meet requirements for teaching observations but would prefer to try other approaches such as asking questions or discussing meaning with students to help them develop comprehension skills.

**Tessa.** Tessa's perception of explicit instruction became more negative during student teaching. Tessa taught high school reading-skills classes. She provided whole class instruction to

groups of 15 or more students. Tessa's cooperating teacher required her to implement the program that she had developed. The program included explicit instruction for decoding and some explicit instruction (i.e., some modeling and guided practice) for teaching vocabulary and comprehension. In Tessa's classroom, students independently engaged in activities to build fluency, and the classroom teacher devoted time during every class period to reading out loud to the students. In lessons observed, 30-40 minutes of 90 minute class sessions were devoted to reading aloud to students as they followed along in their books.

As a student teacher, Tessa did not have latitude to significantly change the program, or to design her own instruction. When asked about her instructional perspective, she said that she didn't know what she thought would be effective and related that "thinking for myself is one of the hardest things to do." According to Tessa, she was not allowed to make significant instructional decisions or to direct her own lessons. During all of the observed lessons the classroom teacher frequently interrupted Tessa's lessons to clarify concepts. Tessa felt powerless and frustrated in her student teaching setting.

Like Maddi, Tessa stated that if she had a choice, she would use different instructional approaches for teaching reading than what she implemented during student teaching. She did not like structure and wanted to create an environment in which students explored reading and had opportunities to listen to the teacher read. She thought that less structure would enhance students' interest and motivation for reading.

### **Discussion**

The National Reading Panel recommended that reading programs address phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Researchers in special education have determined that explicit, skill-based instruction is effective for improving reading among

students with disabilities (Foorman & Torgesen, 2001; Gersten, et al., 2001; Jitendra, et al., 2004; NRP, 2000; Swanson, 2000, 2001; Swanson & Hoskyn, 1998; Torgesen et al., 2001, Vaughn, et al., 2000). Some of the preservice special education teachers in the present study expressed beliefs that align with research-validated recommendations for teaching reading to students with disabilities. This finding is consistent with emerging research that suggests that preservice special education teachers believe that explicit, skill-based approaches for teaching reading are effective (Narkon et al., 2009) and indicates that preservice teachers may hold beliefs that reflect research-based perspectives.

Within the group of preservice teachers who believed that explicit, skill-based instruction is effective for teaching reading were teachers who also thought that students needed meaning-based, comprehension instruction. In the present study, preservice teachers who espoused such beliefs were completing their ESL endorsements in conjunction with finishing the special education teacher preparation program. It is possible that formal learning in their ESL program influenced their perceptions of instruction for students with disabilities (Richardson, 1996). Specifically, the teachers may have integrated the ESL perspective of providing meaning-based comprehension instruction to ELLs with their beliefs about reading instruction for students with disabilities. More research is needed to understand how simultaneously completing programs with different theoretical foundations influences teachers' beliefs about reading instruction for specific populations of students.

One teacher, Tessa, did not describe well defined beliefs at the beginning or end of the study. With such a small sample of teachers, it is difficult to know if Tessa's beliefs reflect those of other preservice teachers who might complete preparation programs. Based on data collected

as part of this study, Tessa's beliefs were different from the group of case study participants and from the broader group of preservice teachers who submitted belief statements.

Teacher belief research indicates that teachers' beliefs tend to be stable and resistant to change (Britzman, 1991; Calderhead & Robson, 1991; Kagan, 1992; Pajaras, 1992, Richardson, 2003; Woolfolk-Hoy et al., 2006). In the present study, teachers' beliefs reflected stability—with some teachers expressing essentially the same beliefs from the beginning to the end of the study. Development, variation, and change in beliefs was also evident as teachers expressed different beliefs across time.

The teachers whose beliefs vacillated and changed the most expressed greater negative emotions related to explicit instruction than other teachers included in this study. Beliefs are thought to have affective and evaluative aspects (Calderhead, 1996; Nespor, 1987, Pajaras, 1992). Schutz, Cross, Hong, and Osborn (2007) theorized that teachers' emotions, beliefs, and goals are inextricably related in multi-directional, transactional processes. They stated the teachers' emotions begin with appraisals or judgments related to their identities, beliefs, goals, and their perceptions of how particular activities relate to goals. Judgments can occur rapidly and without awareness, yet are essential for emotions to emerge. The preservice teachers who appeared to vacillate and change beliefs all reported negative emotions related to using explicit methods during practicum. It is possible that their appraisal of instruction was that activities (e.g., teaching Reading Mastery® lessons) were not going well, or congruent with personal goals, and they judged the problem to be with mandated curriculum (Schutz et al., 2006).

In addition, teachers' appraisals of students' instructional needs also appeared to have influenced their beliefs and acted as a mediating factor in shaping or changing beliefs. LeAnne's beliefs developed as she interacted with students and acquired understanding of students with

disabilities' instructional needs. For Alex, Bob, Susan, and Maddi, experience with students caused them to examine, rethink, or change beliefs. Acquiring experience working with students in conjunction with methods course instruction has been reported as a factor in shifts in thinking among preservice teachers, with practical experience resulting in teachers adopting desired perspectives (Amuzie & Winke, 2009; Milner, 2005; Ng, Nicholas & Williams, 2010). In the present study, experience appears to be related to shifts toward and away from the program perspective depending on the degree to which the preservice teachers experienced negative affect. More research is needed to understand how preservice special education teachers' appraisal of students' instructional needs and progress relates to beliefs and emotion.

When beliefs change, change can be difficult. Conceptual change is thought to involve cognitive and affective processes (Gregoire, 2003; Pintrich, Marx, & Boyle, 1993; Posner, Strike, Hewson, & Gertzog, 1982). Ashton and Gregoire-Gill (2003) developed a model of conceptual change that illustrates how cognitive conflict (emotions of dissatisfaction) interacts with prior beliefs and motivation goals to produce negative or positive emotions that then influence change or resistance to change. For Alex, cognitive conflict centered on dissonance related to his background and the program perspective. His desire to become a teacher served as motivation for altering beliefs.

As far as the relationship between teachers' beliefs and instructional practice, results of the present study were mixed. Generally, the preservice teachers indicated that their beliefs influenced their instructional practice, which is supported by literature on teacher beliefs (Fang, 1996; Pajaras, 1992; Richardson, 1996, 2003). However, in the present study, incongruity between beliefs and practice was also evident. Other researchers have reported inconsistencies in teachers' beliefs and practices (Courtland & Leslie, 2010; Fang, 1996; Jorgensen et al., 2010;

Ogan-Bekiroglu & Akkoc, 2009; Simmons et al., 1999, Speer, 2005; Theriot & Tice, 2009; Wilcox-Herzog, 2002).

Teacher development and contextual factors explain inconsistencies in beliefs and practices. Development and contextual factors are powerful influences on teachers' beliefs and classroom practice (Fang, 1996; Hammerness et al., 2005). In this study, Maddi attributed her difficulty with belief enactment to contextual factors and to inexperience developing curriculum; Tessa's context influenced her ability to enact what she believed would be effective—her cooperating teacher did not allow her to experiment with instructional methods. Considering how these teachers' contexts differed from other participants, and their beginning teacher status, context and development appear to have been significant factors in explaining incongruities in beliefs and practice.

### **Limitations**

The results of this study may or may not reflect the beliefs of other preservice special education teachers who complete licensure and bachelor degree programs. The present study included a small number of participants and the results are specific to the time and conditions under which the research was conducted. As discussed previously, teachers' beliefs are not directly observable. The results reflect inferences made about beliefs that were based on teachers' behaviors, statements, and written products.

In this research, case study participants self-selected to participate. It is possible that the beliefs of the preservice teachers who self-selected to participate do not represent beliefs of those who did not volunteer to be case study participants. However, in checking case study participant responses' with those of the entire group of participants, case study teachers' beliefs appear to be within the same range of other preservice teachers who completed the program, with the

exception of Tessa. Also, two of the case study participants were interns and not student teachers, and their internship work extended beyond the time frame of the study. Data were not collected during the interns' final semester of internship work. Finally, the bias in favor of evidence-based practices shaped the analysis and design of the study. Had the study reflected a constructivist approach (with open-ended interviews questions), the teachers' responses may have been different.

### **Implications**

The results of the present study are encouraging in that some of the preservice special education teachers believed that research-validated practices are effective for teaching reading to students with mild to moderate disabilities. Teacher educators in special education should continue to provide instruction on research-validated practices for teaching reading, and create opportunities for preservice special education teachers to acquire practical teaching experience while learning instructional methods.

Preservice teachers who respond negatively to instructional approaches taught in preparation programs particularly need to perceive that instructional methods taught are effective. Student teaching placements are important for providing preservice teachers with structure and support for understanding that students with disabilities benefit from the implementation of research-validated practices. Additionally, preservice teachers may need guidance in analyzing and understanding data in order to mitigate the effects of negative affective response.

Teachers who enter preparation programs with knowledge and experience that reflects different philosophical foundations for teaching may integrate competing philosophical perspectives into belief structures; or, they may experience considerable cognitive and affective

dissonance as they attempt to adopt new perspectives. Teacher educators should provide opportunity for preservice special education teachers to examine and make beliefs explicit to identify motivational factors that may facilitate belief development or change. When preservice teachers' beliefs conflict with program perspectives, teacher educators should address preservice teachers' cognitive dissonance, and assist them in identifying and overcoming factors that act as barriers for accepting new learning.



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Table 1

*Results Summary*

| Teachers                         | Beginning beliefs                            | Mid-study beliefs  | Ending beliefs  | Belief stability and change   | Beliefs and practice change   |
|----------------------------------|--|--|---|---|---|
| Data sources for results summary |  |  |   |   |   |
|                                  | Interview                                    | Lesson debrief, belief statement, teaching reflection, interview | Lesson debrief, belief statement, teaching reflection, interview            | Lesson debrief, belief statement, teaching reflection, interview  | Observation, interview, lesson debrief  |
| Alex                             | Hands on activities and cooperative learning | Explicit, skill-based instruction; fun creative lessons          | Explicit, skill-based instruction   | <b>Changed</b><br>Changed from hands on cooperative learning to explicit, skill-based instruction   | <b>Congruous</b><br>Thought explicit, skill-based instruction effective and developed his own explicit instruction program  |
| Bob                              | Explicit, skill-based instruction            | Explicit instruction and balanced literacy                       | Explicit, skill-based instruction with an emphasis on application of skills | <b>Some Vacillation</b><br>Described balanced literacy during practicum, and explicit, skill-based instruction at the end of student teaching | <b>Congruous</b><br>Believed explicit, skill-based instruction was effective, used the classroom teacher's explicit instruction program, thought it was not explicit enough |
| Julie                            | Explicit, skill-based instruction            | Explicit, skill-based instruction                                | Explicit, skill-based instruction   | <b>Stable</b><br>Consistent across the study  | <b>Congruous</b><br>Believed explicit, skill-based instruction was effective, used explicit instruction methods   |
| LeAnne                           | Teach phonics, wasn't sure                   | Explicit, skill-based instruction                                | Explicit, skill-based instruction   | <b>Developed</b><br>Adopted the explicit, skill-based   | <b>Congruous</b><br>Thought explicit, skill-based instruction was   |

|         |  |   |  |   |  |
|---------|--|---|--|---|--|
|         |  |   |  | instruction perspective   | effective, implemented lead teacher's explicit instruction program   |
| Maddi   | Explicit instruction   | Explicit, skill-based instruction   | Explicit instruction except for teaching comprehension                 | <b>Vacillated</b><br>Consistent until the end of the internship; doubted explicit instruction for comprehension instruction   | <b>Incongruous</b><br>Thought explicit, skill-based instruction was effective, lessons included a significant amount of independent work   |
| Novalea | Explicit, skill-based instruction and balanced literacy      | Explicit, skill-based instruction and balanced literacy                                     | Explicit, skill-based instruction and balanced literacy                | <b>Stable</b><br>Consistent across the study  | <b>Congruous</b><br>Thought explicit, skill-based instruction was effective, used a district mandated explicit instruction program   |
| Susan   | Explicit, skill-based instruction                            | Construct meaning; vary methods for teaching reading; exposure to various reading materials | Explicit, skill-based instruction balanced with an emphasis on meaning | <b>Vacillated</b><br>Explicit instruction at the beginning, meaning based during practicum, and explicit, skill-based instruction plus meaning based instruction at the end | <b>Incongruous</b><br>Initially, during student teaching, did not want to use explicit instruction, was required to use a district mandated explicit, skill-based instruction program to teach reading |
| Tessa   | Didn't know, possibly one-to-one and sight words and phonics | Methods other than explicit instruction for teaching reading, clear directions              | Make reading enjoyable and be flexible,<br>Not sure                    | <b>Undeveloped</b><br>Vacillated throughout the study. Did not describe definite beliefs at the end   | <b>Incongruous</b><br>Did not like structured programs, wanted less structure than what she implemented during student teaching  |

*Note.* Beliefs were categorized as **stable** if the teacher's descriptions of beliefs were consistent across the study, **vacillated** meant that the teacher's beginning and ending beliefs were essentially the same, but during the study, there was variation in how the teacher described reading instruction, **changed** was assigned when a teacher's beginning and ending beliefs were not the same, **undeveloped** meant the teacher did not describe definite beliefs at the beginning and end of the study, and **developed** meant the teacher was initially unsure of beliefs and beliefs developed during the study. Beliefs and practice were categorized as **congruous** if the type of instruction that the teachers described as being effective characterized the type of instruction they provided for teaching reading; beliefs were categorized as incongruous if the teachers' preferences for instruction did not match the type of instruction they provided for teaching reading.

| Data to be Collected  | All Participants who Signed the Consent Form | Case-study Participants | When Collected  | Method for Recording  | Total Collected and Duration   |
|---|--|-------------------------|---|---|--|
| Interviews<br>Semi-structured interviews (see Appendix F for the interview protocol for interview 1)  |  | X                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 at the commencement of the study (January 2010)</li> <li>1 after reading methods courses (April 2010)</li> <li>1 after the teaching practicum (July 2010)</li> <li>1 during student teaching/internship (December 2010)</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Digital recordings</li> <li>Verbatim transcriptions</li> </ul>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>32 Interviews, 4/case study participant</li> <li>30 minutes to 1 hour per interview</li> </ul>  |
| Life impact map (Komph, 1993) (a brief description of events that influenced preservice teachers' decisions to study special education.                       |  | X                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At the commencement of the study (January 2010)</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher created documents</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8 life-impact maps</li> </ul>   |
| Reading belief statements   | X  | X                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 written during the reading methods course, and 1 written during student teaching (January 2010 and November 2010)</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher created documents</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>38 Belief statements collected from participants</li> </ul>   |
| Observations and lesson debriefings (Observations were running records of teaching behaviors, lesson debriefs were discussions of elements of lessons taught) |  | X                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 observation during the teaching practicum (July 2010)</li> <li>3 observations during student teaching (September, October, and November 2010)</li> <li>1 lesson debrief during the teaching practicum (July 2010)</li> <li>1 lesson debrief during student teaching (December 2010)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Field notes of observations</li> <li>Digital recordings of lesson debriefings</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>32 observations, 4/case study participant</li> <li>16 debriefs, 2/case study participants</li> <li>Observations were 30 minutes to 1 hour</li> <li>Lesson debriefs were 15 to 30 minutes</li> </ul> |
| Reading reflections (reflections of experiences teaching reading)   |  | X                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 during the teaching practicum (July 2010)</li> <li>1 during student teaching (December 2010)</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher created documents and descriptions of experiences</li> </ul>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8 written reflections</li> <li>8 verbal reflections</li> </ul>  |

Figure 1. Data were collected from January 2010 to December 2010 and included data from all participants and from case-study participants.

**FACTORS THAT INFLUENCED TEACHERS' BELIEFS**

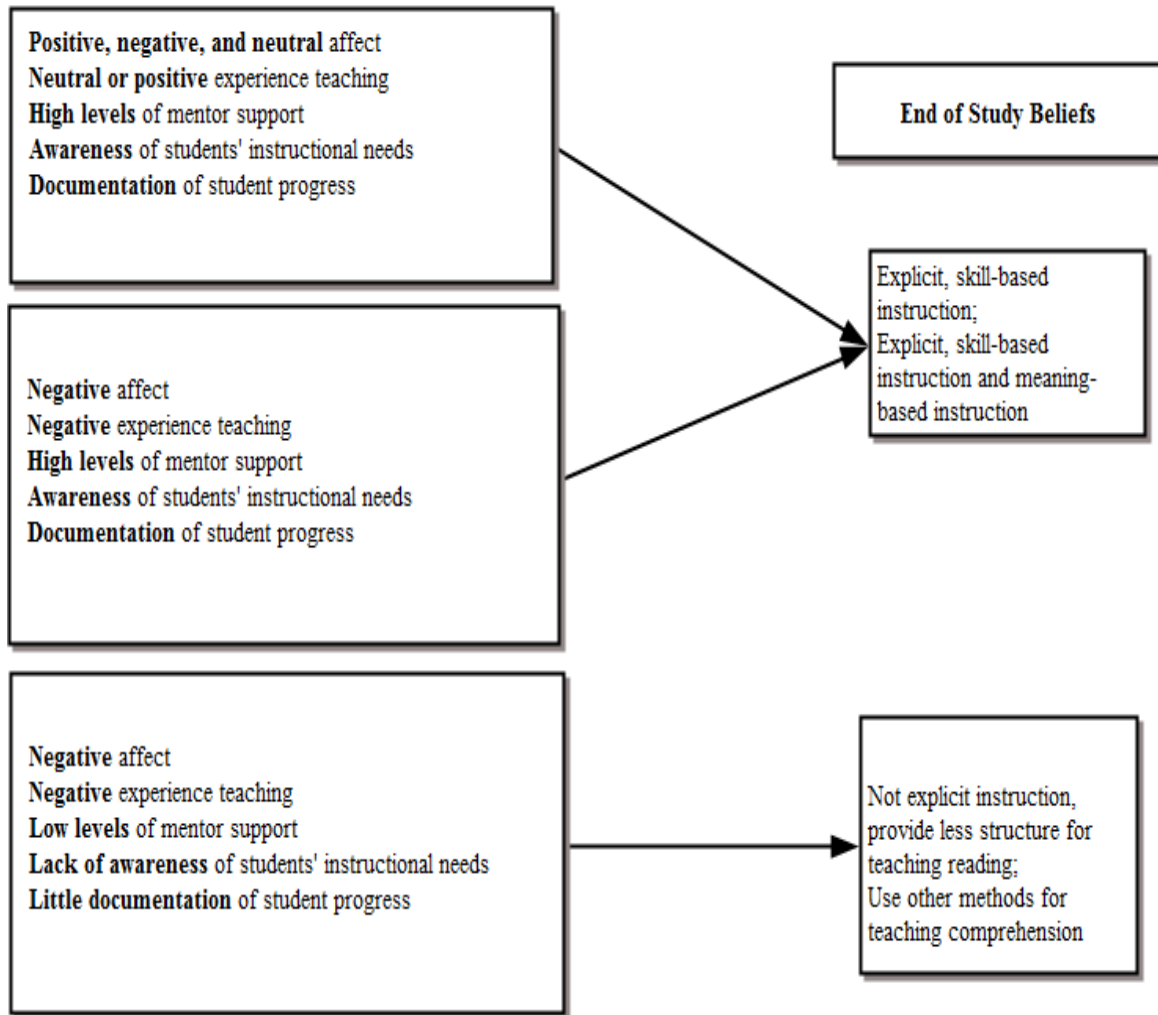


Figure 2. Preservice teachers' affective response, experience teaching, and perceptions of students with disabilities influenced their perceptions of reading instruction.

**ARTICLE 2: Teachers' Beliefs about Reading Instruction for Struggling Readers:  
A Review of Literature**

### Article Abstract

No Child Left Behind (2002) mandated that all students learn to read and specified that schools used scientifically-validated instructional programs. The intent of the law was to improve reading achievement among marginalized students. Much research has been conducted to identify effective instructional practices for teaching reading to students with disabilities, and at-risk, struggling readers; and yet, teachers do not always implement effective practices in classrooms. To identify factors that may explain ineffective practice, we conducted a literature review of teachers' beliefs about reading instruction. We were interested in determining if teachers accepted research-based practice as valid for teaching reading to students with disabilities, and at-risk, struggling readers. The results indicated that some general education and special education teachers held beliefs that aligned with research-support practice and others did not. In some cases, teachers' beliefs acted as barriers for addressing students' instructional needs, and beliefs and practices were both congruent and incongruent.

## Background

In 2002, when the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (2002) was renamed No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the new name communicated expectations for student achievement—that all children enrolled in public schools would learn to read. In mandating that all students learn to read, the legislation specifically aimed to improve the reading achievement of marginalized groups of students such as students with disabilities, culturally and linguistically diverse students, minority students, and students living in poverty who typically demonstrated poor reading achievement (Hess & Petrilli, 2007; U.S. Department of Education, 2009).

Essentially the intent of NCLB was to close achievement gaps for students with poor reading achievement, thereby improving reading achievement for *all* children. To accomplish this goal, NCLB emphasized implementation of scientifically-based practices for teaching reading, which are instructional practices that researchers have validated as effective for improving reading among poor readers (Hess & Petrelli, 2007). The rationale for implementing scientifically-validated practices is that such instruction would be more effective in helping students achieve academic success than the use of unproven methods (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

In 2000 the National Reading Panel (NRP) conducted an extensive review of 438 reading research studies. The panel's resulting recommendations were that effective programs include instruction in phonemic awareness (awareness of the sound structure of words), phonics (knowledge of the symbolic representations of sounds), fluency (the ability to read quickly, accurately, and with expression), vocabulary (understanding of the meaning of words), and comprehension (ability to abstract meaning from written text) (NRP, 2000).

A considerable amount of research indicates that explicit, systematic instruction in foundational skills such as phonemic awareness and phonics, as well as higher level reading skills such as fluency and comprehension, improves reading achievement among students with disabilities and at-risk, struggling readers (Foorman & Torgesen, 2001; Gersten, Fuchs, Williams & Baker, 2001; Jitendra et al., 2004, Swanson, 2000, 2001; Torgesen et al., 2001; Vaughn, Gersten, & Chard, 2000; Wanzek, Wexler, Vaughn, & Ciullo, 2010). The use of explicit instruction for teaching reading to these populations of students is recommended because implementation of explicit methods produces greater positive effects than other instructional approaches (Adams & Engleman, 1996; Forness, Kavale, Blum, & Lloyd, 1997; Gersten, 1998; Lloyd, Forness, & Kavale, 1998; Swanson & Hoskyn, 1998).

*Explicit instruction* is a structured, systematic method for teaching academic skills that focuses on critical content and sequences skills in a logical order (e.g., easier skills such as learning sounds for short vowels are taught before more difficult skills such as learning *r*-controlled vowels). Explicit lessons include clear statements of lesson objectives, review of prerequisite skills, step by step demonstrations of new skills, guided and supported practice, high rates of student response, affirmative and corrective feedback, and distributed and cumulative practice (Archer & Hughes, 2011).

Although researchers have recommended the content and structure of effective reading instruction, research suggests that general and special education teachers may not provide instruction that aligns with research-based recommendations and that poor readers do not receive instruction that enables them to improve reading ability (Hall, 2006; Bentum & Aaron, 2003; Swanson, 2008; Vaughn, Levy, Coleman, & Bos, 2002; Vaughn, Moody, & Schumm, 1998). A variety of explanations have been offered for this problem. Swanson (2008) for example,



suggested that the absence of research-validated practices in classrooms indicated a lack of “acceptance [of research-based practices], knowledge, or skill” (p. 131) among the teachers studied. Vaughn et al. (2002) also concluded that poor reading instruction represented a research-to-practice gap and that practicing teachers needed more professional development on principles of effective reading instruction.

Although prior research suggests that teachers lack the knowledge necessary for teaching reading (Cunningham, Perry, Stanovich, & Stanovich, 2004; Joshi et al., 2009; Lyon & Weiser, 2009; Moats & Foorman, 2003), emerging research indicates that beginning special education teachers may have a reasonable amount of knowledge for teaching basic decoding and comprehension skills (Brownell et al., 2009). However, Brownell et al. (2009) also reported that beginning teachers do not always apply knowledge in classroom practice. Thus, if teachers lack appropriate knowledge for teaching reading or fail to apply what they know, insufficient teacher knowledge might explain poor reading instruction.

Research suggests that another factor that significantly influences teachers' instructional practice is their beliefs. Understanding teacher beliefs is as important as assessing knowledge because beliefs strongly influence both what teachers learn in preparation programs, and teachers' practice in classrooms (Calderhead, 1996; Cunningham, Zibulsky, Stanovich, & Stanovich, 2009; Kagan, 1992; Lyon & Weiser, 2009; Pajaras, 1992; Richardson, 1996, 2003).

As constructs, beliefs overlap knowledge (Borko & Putnam, 1996; Woolfolk-Hoy, Davis, & Page, 2006). However, some distinctions between the two have been described. According to Richardson (2003), unlike knowledge, teachers' beliefs do not hold epistemic warrant; they do not reflect objective truth. Rather, belief systems tend to have stronger affective and evaluative aspects than knowledge systems, and beliefs are typically tied to experience (Nespor, 1987).

Beliefs develop before prospective teachers begin preparation programs and influence their learning and behavior. In synthesizing research on teacher beliefs, Pajaras (1992) reported that teacher beliefs about teaching and learning tend to form early in individuals' lives as they experience an apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975) as students in classrooms. Subsequently, these beliefs act as filters that process information, screen, define, and even distort thinking about classroom practice. Additionally, beliefs are prioritized in relation to other beliefs and cognitive structures, and play a critical role in defining behavior and in structuring knowledge and information. Beliefs also strongly influence teaching behavior and are thought to be stable and resistant to change (Kagan, 1992; Richardson, 2003).

Although teachers' beliefs have been the focus of a great deal of research, little is known about how these beliefs influence teachers' preparation for teaching reading and their instructional practice with students with disabilities, and at-risk, struggling readers. I posit that if teachers do not accept research-based evidence of effective reading instruction as they complete teacher preparation programs, their preexisting beliefs may act as filters that prevent them from acquiring the knowledge necessary for effectively teaching reading to struggling readers. In addition, they may not implement research-based practices in their classrooms because they do not accept them as valid.

The extant research on teachers' beliefs about reading instruction for students with disabilities and at-risk, struggling readers has not been synthesized to determine the function of beliefs in relation to classroom practice. Considering the importance of beliefs to knowledge and practice, and the need for understanding issues that influence teachers' thinking, I conducted a literature review of studies examining teachers' beliefs about reading instruction for students

with disabilities, and at-risk, struggling readers. Specifically, I sought to answer the following questions:

1. What type of research has been conducted on teachers' beliefs about reading instruction for students with disabilities and at-risk, struggling readers, and what is the quality of that research?
2. What are teachers' perceptions of reading instruction for students with disabilities and for at-risk, and struggling readers?
3. What are the implications for future practice and future research?

### **Method**

To review literature of teachers' perceptions of reading instruction for students with high incidence disabilities and at-risk, struggling readers, I searched Academic Search Premiere, ERIC, Psych Info, Psych Articles, and Social Works Abstracts for published articles and dissertation reports. The following search terms were used to locate research reports to review: *read\**, *literacy*; and *belief*, *attitude*, *perception*, *opinion*, *knowledge*, *meaning*; and *disability\**, *struggl\**, *exceptional*, *learning disability\**, *special education*, *reading disabilit\**, *handicap*, *difficult\**; and *teacher*. I imposed search limits on database searches and only searched for periodical articles, reports, reviews, and dissertations published between 1990 and 2010. I selected these years because there was little research conducted in this area prior to 1990, and I wanted to include research conducted 10 years before and after the publication of the NRP's (2000) report on reading instruction. The search extended beyond published articles to include more research of special education teachers' beliefs about reading instruction for students with disabilities. There is very little research of special education teachers' beliefs about reading instruction, and research on their beliefs is important for understanding how teachers perceive

students with disabilities and at-risk, struggling readers. The initial search yielded approximately 1600 titles.

Articles were then selected for review if they met the following criteria: (a) the publication described a research study and was not a theoretical or opinion piece, (b) the research was conducted in the United States, and (c) the study investigated teachers' (both preservice and inservice) beliefs about reading instruction for school-age students (grades K-12) at-risk for reading failure, struggling readers, or students with high incidence disabilities (i.e., learning disabilities, attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder, emotional/behavioral disorders, and mild to moderate intellectual disabilities). There were 17 published articles and dissertations that met the selection criteria.

## **Results**

In this section I present the results of the literature review. To answer the first research question, I provide descriptive information about the type of research conducted on teachers' beliefs about reading instruction for students with disabilities and at-risk, struggling readers, and discuss the quality of that research (see Table 2). Next, I present the results of the research reviewed organized according to themes, which were extracted from the results of the studies reviewed. After a discussion of the results, I address the third research question, suggesting implications for practice.

### **Teachers' Beliefs**

Together, the studies reviewed reported the perceptions of 631 preservice teachers (547 general education, 84 special education, and 21 bi-lingual teachers), 527 inservice teachers (403 general education, 83 special education, and 61 bi-lingual and other service providers), and 1,281 Title 1 teachers. Topics addressed in this body of research included teachers' perceptions of

tutoring experiences (Broaddus & Bloodgood, 1999), instructional programs and strategies for teaching reading (McDaniel, Duchaine, & Jolivette, 2010; McKee, 2008; Moody & Vaughn, 1997; Rabren & Darch, 1996; Schummn, Moody, & Vaughn, 2000), reading instruction for students with disabilities and struggling readers (Duffy & Atkinson, 2001; Hensel, 2009; Howerton, 2007; Narkon, Black, & Jenkins, 2009; Nierstheimer, Hopkins, & Dillon, 2000; Scharlach, 2008; Tyler, 2008), and teachers' beliefs about reading instruction practices (Munchmore, 1994; Powers, Zippay, & Butler, 2006). Teachers' knowledge and perceptions of early literacy instruction were also reported (Bos, Mather, Dickson, Podhajski, & Chard, 2001; Mather, Bos, & Barbur, 2001). Twelve of the studies were qualitative research, three quantitative, and two studies were mixed-methods.

Analysis of the qualifying research reports was accomplished in three stages. First, each study was coded on the following descriptive variables: purpose, participants (i.e., preservice, inservice, general, or special education teachers), method and analysis, and results. Next, I developed checklists to assess the quality of the research. Checklists were developed based on recommendations in published articles (Brantlinger, Jimenez, Klingner, Pugach, & Richardson, 2005; Gersten et al., 2005; Thompson, Diamond, McWilliam, Snyder, & Snyder, 2005). Finally, the quality of the 17 studies was analyzed by type of research conducted (i.e., qualitative or quantitative). For the two mixed-methods studies, quality was assessed for both qualitative and quantitative aspects of the studies. To assess quality, I reviewed each study according to the checklists, identifying whether the items listed were addressed in the published reports. For example, for the quantitative studies, I recorded reliability coefficients for instruments used and marked the checklists based on information recorded about measurement instruments. Items included in Tables 3 and 4 reflect qualitative and quantitative research-quality checklist items.

Twelve studies used qualitative methodology, five used quantitative methods, and two were mix-methods studies. The research reports of the studies that included qualitative data reflected attention to quality. Most of these reports included clear statements of purpose, discussions of relevant research, adequate descriptions of participants, triangulation with research and multiple forms of data, descriptions of controls of research processes, and discussions of limitations. Conclusions were supported by data presented. Areas of deficiency were noted in discussions of framing theory, in descriptions of researcher identity, in analysis of disconfirming evidence, and in relating research findings to theory and practice. Table 3 provides a summary of the analysis of quality for qualitative studies and mixed methods studies. Generally, the reports of the studies that utilized quantitative methodologies addressed multiple quality indicators. Authors discussed research purposes, provided demographic information about participants, included relevant research and theory in literature reviews, assessed the reliability of study data, used appropriate procedures for analyzing study data, and drew conclusions that were supported by data. Areas of deficiency were noted in descriptions of instrument validity for the research studies, low reliability of some instruments used (e.g., Bos et al., 2001), and in relating results to research and theory. Some authors did not describe study limitations. Table 4 summarizes the analysis of quantitative studies and mixed methods studies.

### **Teachers' Perceptions of Reading Instruction**

Preservice and inservice teachers' perceptions of reading instruction generally reflected preparation program perspectives. That is, those prepared as general educators tended to describe constructivist perspectives related to reading instruction and those prepared as special educators tended to adopt behaviorist beliefs. Teachers' beliefs about reading instruction seemed to be influenced by their assessment of students' instructional needs, attributions of reading difficulty,

and by experience instructing students with disabilities, and at-risk, struggling readers (i.e., experience in classrooms, and in tutoring settings in which teachers provided one-to-one and small group instruction for poor readers). Some preservice teachers' beliefs changed as they acquired experience teaching reading to at-risk readers. In some cases teachers' beliefs aligned with their instructional practices for teaching reading, and in other cases beliefs did not align with what they practiced.

**General education and special education beliefs.** Teachers' perceptions of reading instruction somewhat reflected different preparation program perspectives for teaching reading. Title 1 general education teachers and preservice general education teachers thought that students should be taught reading strategies such as establishing goals or purposes for reading, relating the text to past experience, and monitoring comprehension; they did not necessarily address skill development (i.e., phonemic awareness, and phonics, and decoding) to improve reading ability (Muchmore, 1994; Nierstheimer et al., 2001). In comparison, preservice and inservice special education teachers were more positive toward explicit methods (i.e., using modeling and guided practice for teaching phonemic awareness and phonics) than general education teachers. They approved of and described explicit, skill-based instruction as appropriate for teaching reading to students with disabilities (Bos et al., 2001; McDaniel, 2010; Narkon et al., 2009; Tyler, 2009).

Both general and special education teachers thought that students should receive explicit phonemic awareness and phonics instruction. Yet both groups of teachers favored using contextual clues to teach children how to read unfamiliar words (Bos et al., 2001; Mather et al., 2001).

For grouping practices, general education teachers tended to prefer whole-group instruction (Moody & Vaughn, 1997; Schummn et al., 2000). Schummn et al. (2000) reported

that general education teachers used the same reading materials for all students in their classes, even when students with disabilities were included in whole class instruction. These teachers did not provide differentiated, or explicit, skill-based instruction for reading, and most teachers reported that whole class instruction was easier to plan and manage when instructing students. In contrast, inservice special education teachers favored grouping students in small, ability-based groups for reading instruction (Hensel, 2009; Moody & Vaughn, 1997).

**Assessment of learning needs.** Teachers' preferences for reading instruction reflected their assessment of students' reading difficulty. Special education preservice teachers, who were obtaining dual-licensure in special and general education, thought that students without disabilities learned faster than those with disabilities, could generalize learning and comprehend reading materials, and were fluent readers who did not need reading instruction. In contrast, the same teachers believed that students with disabilities were dysfluent readers who were unable to comprehend reading and generalize learning (Narkon et al., 2009). In conjunction with such beliefs, the teachers held constructivist stances for teaching students without disabilities and believed that explicit, skill-based instruction was preferable for teaching students with disabilities how to read.

For teaching comprehension skills to all students in their reading classes, general education teachers in McKee's (2009) study utilized various strategies such as summarization, repeated readings, graphic organizers, and behavioral reinforcement to support learning. The teachers incorporated memory, organization, text-processing, and behavior strategies in all lessons because they perceived that students with disabilities needed instructional support to learn to read. Although they provided the support primarily for students with disabilities, they



believed that all students in their classes would benefit from incorporating strategy instruction in reading lessons.

Preservice general education teachers in Duffy and Atkinson's (2001) study valued assessing students' instructional needs to inform instruction. During tutoring sessions, preservice teachers assessed students' reading strengths and weaknesses, and used assessment information to target specific skills for instruction.

Although many general education teachers expressed awareness of students' instructional needs, special education teachers in Tyler's (2009) study did not perceive differentiated instructional needs among English language learners (ELL) with disabilities, and students with disabilities who were not learning English. Consequently, the teachers provided explicit, skill-based instruction for ELLs with disabilities and provided few modifications to support language acquisition.

**Attribution of reading difficulty.** Teachers' appraisals of the causes of reading difficulty affected their willingness to provide instruction for students with disabilities and at-risk, struggling readers. In two studies, preservice general education teachers attributed reading difficulty to students and their home environments, and expressed reluctance to assume responsibility for teaching struggling readers (Nierstheimer et al., 2000; Scharlach, 2008). Middle school language arts teachers believed that struggling readers were apathetic and not resourceful (Howerton, 2007), and stated that their role as a teacher did not involve teaching struggling readers how to read. However, the same middle school teachers held positive perceptions of students with disabilities and were more willing to provide instructional support for students with disabilities than for struggling readers.

### **Stability of Beliefs**

Some teachers' beliefs about reading instruction for at-risk, struggling readers, and students with disabilities changed as teachers engaged in intense instructional interactions with at-risk and struggling readers (Duffy & Atkinson, 2001). Initially, the preservice general education teachers in Nierstheimer et al.'s (2000) study did not accept responsibility for instructing struggling readers. However, after the general education teachers tutored struggling readers, they not only assumed more responsibility for teaching struggling readers, but the preservice teachers also described how they would address reading difficulty in their future classrooms. Similarly, Broaddus and Bloodgood (1999) reported that practicing first grade teachers adapted their instruction and placed more emphasis on word study skills and fluency development as they taught groups of at-risk readers.

### **Beliefs and Instructional Practice**

Although many teachers in the research studies expressed understanding of students' instructional needs, and a willingness to address students' needs, it is difficult to determine the extent to which teachers' beliefs aligned with their instructional practice for teaching reading. Munchmore's (1994) results indicated a weak correlation between teachers' beliefs and practice, while Hensel (2009), McKee (2008), and Powers et al. (2006) reported consistency as well as inconsistency between teachers' beliefs and instructional practices.

### **Discussion**

Facets of effective reading programs have been identified by reading experts and researchers in special education. The NRP (2000) recommended that effective reading programs include instruction in five skill areas: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. In special education, small group, sequenced, skill-based teacher-directed

instruction is effective for improving reading ability among students with disabilities (Foorman & Torgesen, 2001; Gersten, Fuchs, Williams, & Baker, 2001; Jitendra, et al., 2004; Swanson, 2000, 2001; Swanson & Hoskyn, 1998; Torgesen et al., 2001, Vaughn, et al., 2000). The most current studies included in this review indicated that preservice and inservice special education teachers preferred explicit, skill-based instruction for students with disabilities (McDaniel et al., 2010; Narkon et al., 2009; Tyler, 2009). Their beliefs were consistent with research-validated practices.

However, one study indicated mixed preferences for instructional approaches among special education teachers (Bos et al., 2001). It is possible that during the last decade, with the NCLB (2002) emphasis on improving the reading achievement of all students and using research-based practice, that special education teachers support the use of research-validated methods. With so few studies on this topic, more research should be conducted on preservice and inservice special education teachers' perception of reading instruction.

General education teachers tended to prefer implicit instructional methods and strategy approaches for teaching reading. However, research of general education teachers' perceptions of reading instruction is almost a decade old (Bos et al., 2001; Mather et al., 2001; Muchmore, 1994; Schumm, 2000) and may not reflect current perceptions. Berliner (2002) discussed challenges with conducting research in education and stated that educational issues are difficult to understand because of the "decade by findings interactions," meaning that research conducted in previous decades often does not reflect current educational contexts. Legislation has changed since these research reports were published (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2004; NCLB, 2001) and teachers' perceptions may be different given the current educational climate.

If, however, results reflect current perceptions, general education teachers' beliefs may be an issue. Most of the general education teachers preferred implicit, strategy-based, whole group instruction, which does not align with recommendations for students with disabilities.

Considering that the majority of students with mild to moderate disabilities spend 80% or more of their school day in general education classes (U. S. Department of Education, 2009), general education teachers' perceptions are a particular concern. Research should be conducted in this area to determine if general education teachers' beliefs contribute to students' difficulties in learning to read (Calhoon, Sandow, & Huner, 2010).

Teachers' perceptions of instruction for at-risk, struggling readers present similar issues. Based on strong research evidence, the Institute of Education Sciences (IES, 2009) recommended intense, systematic, small group instruction on up to three foundational reading skills for struggling readers. Wanzek, Wexler, and Vaughn's (2010) review of 20 years of reading interventions for struggling readers indicated that multi-component interventions demonstrated promise for increasing students' achievement in reading; and Rupley, Blair, and Nichols (2009) emphasized the use of explicit methods for teaching reading to struggling readers. In this review, general education teachers did not prefer flexible grouping for teaching reading, nor did not they describe using explicit, skill-based approaches for addressing reading difficulty. It is possible that teachers lack knowledge of how to address the instructional needs of at-risk, struggling readers.

Teachers' knowledge is a particular concern, as are teachers' attitudes toward at-risk, struggling readers. General and special education teachers tended to attribute students' reading difficulty to internal causes, which reflects deficit model thinking (Howerton, 2007; Narkon et al., 2009; Nierstheimer et al., 2000; Scharlach, 2008). The deficit model is based on a medical

model and defines disability within a normal/abnormal binary of Western scientific tradition (Hacking, 1990). Disabilities are assumed to be internal to individuals, and the aim of educational treatments is to normalize students (Baglieri & Knopf, 2004, Fitch, 2003; Hacking, 1990).

Deficit perspectives are not necessarily problematic when perceptions provide the rationale for using research-based methods. That is, the argument that regardless of the cause of the difficulty, students who have reading skill deficits need skill-based instruction (Narkon et al., 2009), and students who have cognitive processing difficulty need support for learning (McKee, 2009). However, deficit perspectives become problematic when teachers attribute learning difficulty to internal characteristics, blame students for learning problems, and do not link learning difficulty with the need for specialized instruction. Research indicates that teachers with such perspectives are less likely to modify teaching practices (Brady & Woolfson, 2008) and provide the type of instruction that struggling readers need to improve reading ability (Enriquez, Jones, & Clarke, 2010; Reutzel & Smith, 2004).

Results of this review suggest that teachers' assessments and attributions reflect misconceptions, such as struggling readers are disengaged, unmotivated readers (Howerton, 2007), and English language learners with disabilities need the same kind of instruction as students who are not learning English (Tyler, 2009). Results also indicate that these misconceptions act as barriers for addressing students' instructional needs (Howerton, 2007, Scharlach, 2008).

Despite some teachers' reluctance to assume responsibility for instructing at-risk, struggling readers, studies included in this review also indicated that when teachers engaged in one-to-one tutoring experiences while participating in methods course instruction, their

perceptions of struggling readers changed (Broaddus & Bloodgood, 1999; Duffy & Atikenson, 2001; Nierstheimer et al., 2000). Other researchers have reported that preservice teachers' perceptions about instructing struggling readers changed as they collected and analyzed data on student performance and engaged in instructional interactions with students (Linek, Sampson, Raine, Klakamp, & Smith, 2006; Massengill-Shaw, Dvorak, & Bates, 2007; Risko et al., 2008; Rohr & YeHe, 2010). Acquiring experience working with students in conjunction with methods course instruction appears to be an instructional factor in shifts in thinking among preservice teachers (Amuzie & Winke, 2009; Milner, 2005; Ng, Nicholas & Williams, 2010).

Although the possibility of belief change is an encouraging finding, beliefs must be enacted for students to realize benefits. The extent to which beliefs are congruous with teachers' practice is unclear. Researchers have suggested that beliefs strongly influence behavior (Pajaras, 1992; Richardson, 2003); however, there is also evidence of inconsistencies in teachers' beliefs and practices (Courtland & Leslie, 2010; Fang, 1996; Jorgensen, Grootenboer, Niesche, and Lerman, 2010; Ogan-Bekiroglu & Akkoc, 2009; Simmons et al., 1999, Speer, 2005; Theriot & Tice, 2009; Wilcox-Herzog, 2002).

Methodological issues provide some explanation for contradictions in research results. Fang (1996) pointed out that reported inconsistencies may reflect difference in researchers' and practitioners' perceptions of terms, and weak research designs often fail to include self-report data coupled with observations. I found similar problems. For example, the Munchmore study had a weak design. Munchmore (1994) surveyed teachers without observing their teaching, so I believe that it is difficult to conclude that beliefs did not align with practice. In the Powers et al. (2006) study, the teachers whose beliefs and practice were most incongruous did not express well-defined beliefs at the outset of the study, and Powers et al. did not address the issue. Powers

et al.'s interpretation of inconsistent beliefs may not have accounted for ill-defined beliefs at the outset of the study. Finally, McKee (2008) also noted inconsistencies between teachers' stated beliefs and their classroom instruction. McKee attributed differences in teacher behavior and beliefs to differences in how teachers and researchers described the same behavior. McKee acknowledged research limitations in interpreting the relationship between teachers' beliefs and classroom instruction.

Measurement limitations may also explain inconsistent results. In a review of teacher education and teacher belief literature, Tatto and Coupland (2003) pointed out that most researchers did not assess the validity of instruments used to measure teacher beliefs. It is possible that researchers are not measuring constructs that they purport to measure. In this review, the instrument Hensel (2009) used for observations was not assessed for reliability or validity.

Apart from methodological issues, teachers' ability to enact beliefs is influenced by teacher knowledge and development (Hammerness et al., 2005), personal attributes, and teaching contexts (Alverman & Moore, 1991; Braunger, Donahue, Evans & Galguera, 2005; O'Brien et al., 1995; Stewart, 1990). The influence of these factors should be considered when analyzing teachers' beliefs and instructional practice. Bishop, Brownell, Klinger, Leko, and Galman (2010) reported that the interplay of beginning special education teachers' personal attributes, preparation for teaching reading, and their school environments were powerful determinants of teachers' levels of accomplishment in teaching reading. I found that researchers did not describe how teacher attributes, teaching contexts, and teacher knowledge influenced teachers' beliefs and reading instruction.

### **Implications for Practitioners**

The results of this review have implications for researchers, teacher educators, and teachers. More research is needed on teacher beliefs as it relates to instructing at-risk, struggling readers and students with disabilities. Teacher educators and teachers themselves can use information from this review to better understand issues involved in teaching reading to diverse learners.

**Researchers.** To understand how general and special education teachers perceive instruction in the current educational climate, more research is needed of teachers' perceptions of reading instruction for students with disabilities, and at-risk, struggling readers. More rigorous methodologies need to be developed and utilized to understand the complex relationship between teachers' beliefs and their instructional practices. Contextual factors should be considered as well as teacher attributes. In studying teacher beliefs, researchers could collaborate with teachers to develop innovative forms of research that study teachers' beliefs and practice.

**Teacher educators.** Teacher educators must consider the instructional needs of at-risk readers and students with disabilities in preparing preservice teachers to teach reading. The reading achievement of all students continues to be an educational priority (NCLB, 2001), and response to intervention models are being implemented in schools to address instructional needs of at-risk, struggling readers and students with disabilities (IES, 2009). Expectations are increasing for general and special education teachers to prevent and effectively respond to reading difficulty. Preservice teachers need to be taught research-validated methods for addressing reading problems.

Teachers may hold beliefs about groups of students, such as struggling readers and English language learners, that are inaccurate. In addition, teachers' attributions may act as



barriers for providing responsive instruction. To support belief change, teacher educators should provide opportunity for preservice teachers to make their beliefs explicit and require them to collect and analyze data on student performance (Risko et al., 2008). In addition, based on my analysis, teacher educators should incorporate supervised tutoring experiences in course work, and explicitly teach preservice teachers how to effectively address reading difficulty.

**Teachers.** Student diversity in classrooms is increasing, and teachers instruct students with a wide range of needs for reading instruction. To provide appropriate instruction, teachers must understand students' instructional needs and become informed as to effective approaches for addressing reading problems. Teachers may need to examine their beliefs and practices to determine if instructional climates in classrooms support the learning needs of diverse learners.

### **Conclusions**

I conducted this review to identify research of teachers' beliefs about reading instruction for at-risk, struggling readers, and students with disabilities. The results are both encouraging and concerning. Teachers expressed beliefs that aligned with research recommendations for teaching reading to at-risk populations of students and also expressed beliefs that did not reflect understanding of how to address reading difficulty. Deficit-model perceptions of students served as facilitators and barriers for providing appropriate instruction. The results of the present review indicate that questions remain as to how beliefs influence instructional practice for students with disabilities and at-risk, struggling readers. Such questions should not remain unanswered considering the mandate to improve the reading ability of all students.

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*\*Denotes research included in the review.*

Table 2

*Summary of Reviewed Research*

| Study                         | Purpose   | Participants  | Method  | Analysis   | Results  |
|-------------------------------|---|---|---|--|--|
| Bos et al. (2001)             | Examine teachers' perceptions and knowledge of early reading instruction  | Inservice and preservice elementary (n=407), special education (n=138), and bilingual teachers (n=55) | <u>Survey</u><br>Teacher Perception of Early Reading and Spelling.<br>Teacher Knowledge Assessment<br>Structure of Language | ANOVA<br>Descriptive statistics                      | Preservice and inservice teachers expressed stronger agreement with explicit instruction than implicit. Special educators were more positive toward explicit instruction than general educators. Both inservice and preservice teachers demonstrated limited knowledge of the structure of the English language. |
| Broaddus and Bloodgood (1999) | Describe teachers' perceptions of a school-based early tutoring program for struggling readers                                      | 3 first-grade teachers<br>2 Title 1 teachers  | <u>Qualitative</u><br>Interviews, observations, and written artifacts   | Content analysis                                     | In conjunction with the tutoring experience, teachers changed their emphasis on teaching strategies (i.e., placing more emphasis on word study strategies), and they altered the amount of time they spent on instructional activities (i.e., more time for fluency).  |
| Duffy & Atkinson (2001)       | Describe elementary school preservice teachers' beliefs, understandings, and instruction for struggling and non-struggling readers. | 22 preservice elementary teachers   | <u>Qualitative</u><br>Written assignments   | Content analysis of preservice teachers' assignments | Preservice teachers valued the use of diagnostic assessment to inform instruction of struggling readers. They valued their experience tutoring struggling readers and perceived it would influence their whole-group instruction. Teachers' ability to examine best practice increased.                          |
| Hensel (2009)                 | Describe belief systems and instructional   | 13 elementary special education teachers  | <u>Mixed-methods</u><br>Adapted Class Climate Survey,   | Descriptive statistics, Wilcoxon                     | The teachers believed that small group, individualized instruction with student pairings should be used frequently   |

|                        | practices of elementary special education teachers   |   | Special Education Teacher Belief Survey, Observations               | Sign Test, Constant comparative analysis | with students with disabilities. Teachers' reported beliefs did not align with their practice.  |
|------------------------|--|---|---|--|---|
| Howerton (2007)        | Describe teachers' perceptions and beliefs about providing reading instruction for struggling readers  | 26 middle school language arts teachers                                 | <u>Qualitative</u> Interview and focus group                        | Interpretive analysis                    | The majority of middle school language arts teachers did not perceive their role was to teach reading—they tended to focus on teaching content. While the teachers accepted instructional responsibility for teaching students with disabilities, they did not believe it was their responsibility to address reading problems of struggling readers. |
| Mather et al. (2001)   | Examine the perceptions and knowledge of general education teachers toward early literacy instruction for students at-risk for reading failure | Preservice (n=293) and inservice (n=131) K-3 general education teachers | <u>Survey</u> Teacher Perceptions Toward Early Reading and Spelling | ANOVA                                    | Teachers with more than three years of experience held more positive perceptions of explicit instruction. There was a disparity between teachers' beliefs about reading instruction (i.e., belief in the importance of phonemic awareness instruction) and their preparation to teach reading.  |
| McDaniel et al. (2010) | Describe teachers' and students' perceptions of Corrective Reading for students with emotional, behavioral disorders                           | 4 special education teachers<br>18 students                             | <u>Qualitative</u> Interview  | Constant comparative                     | Teachers perceived that the Corrective Reading program was effective for students with EBD. When using the program their students made progress and increased productivity.   |

|                      |  |  |  |                             |  |
|----------------------|--|--|--|-----------------------------|--|
| McKee (2009)         | Examined general education teachers' perceptions of their use of instructional strategies and interventions for reading comprehension instruction for students with disabilities | 3 elementary general education teachers                                | <u>Qualitative</u><br>Interview, observation and artifacts                 | Comparison with standards   | Teachers believed that interventions used addressed students' comprehension needs. Teachers' self-perceptions of teaching behaviors differed from observers' perceptions.  |
| Moody et al. (1997)  | Understand general and special education teachers' perceptions of grouping for reading instruction   | 49 elementary teachers (29 general education, 20 special education)    | <u>Qualitative</u><br>Interview  | Constant comparative        | General education teachers felt constrained by school demands in making instructional decisions. They predominately used whole class group formats and supported mixed-ability grouping. Special education teachers preferred varied formats for grouping and preferred same-ability grouping. |
| Munchmore (1994)     | Determine the extent to which Chapter 1 reading teachers' beliefs and practices are related  | 1,279 Chapter 1 reading teachers in Kentucky                           | <u>Survey</u><br>Adapted Deford (1985) and Duffy and Metheny (1979) survey | Chi-square frequency counts | The Title 1 teachers' dominant orientation for reading instruction was a strategy orientation. Their orientation for reading was not primarily skill based. The relationship between Title 1 reading teachers' beliefs and practices was weak.   |
| Narkon et al. (2009) | Describe dual-preparation preservice teachers beliefs about teaching reading to students with and without disabilities   | 5 undergraduate dual-preparation special education preservice teachers | <u>Qualitative</u><br>Interview, observation, artifact                     | Open and axial coding       | Teachers expressed higher expectations for students without disabilities than for students with disabilities. They thought comprehension was a significant instructional need and they described explicit instructional methods for  |

students with disabilities.

|                            |  |  |   |                                  |  |
|----------------------------|--|--|---|----------------------------------|--|
| Nierstheimer et al. (2000) | Examine preservice elementary teachers' beliefs about children who struggle to learn to read | 67 preservice elementary education teachers  | <u>Qualitative</u><br>Interview, observation, focus group, and artifacts      | Cross-case analysis              | Teachers' beliefs changed in that they tended to accept responsibility for teaching struggling readers how to read. They attributed reading difficulty to the child's home, inadequate repertoire of reading strategies, and ineffective instruction.  |
| Powers et al. (2006)       | Examine and describe changes in teachers' beliefs and practices in literacy                  | 4 graduate students<br>2 elementary teachers, one reading resource teacher, and a high school teacher at an alternative school | <u>Qualitative</u><br>Observation, survey, interview, and reflective journals | Cross-case analysis              | Teachers demonstrated alignment of beliefs and practices, and inconsistencies between stated beliefs and literacy instruction practice.  |
| Rabren & Darch, (1996)     | Describe students' and teachers' perception of comprehension instruction                     | 1 special education elementary teacher<br>1 general education elementary teacher   | <u>Qualitative</u><br>Interviews (structured and unstructured)                | Analysis procedure not described | Both the general education and special education teachers wanted their students to enjoy reading. The general education teacher expressed willingness to adapt instruction to meet her students' needs; she measured progress by assessing specific reading skills. The special education teacher did not describe adapting instruction and her assessment strategy focused on assigning students' grades. |



|                      |   |  |   |  |  |
|----------------------|---|--|---|--|--|
| Scharlach (2008)     | Examine preservice teachers' beliefs about teaching struggling readers  | 6 preservice education graduate students   | <u>Qualitative</u> Interview, observation, artifacts                              | Cross-case analysis                    | Four out of six preservice teachers believed that it was someone else's responsibility to teach struggling readers. They tended to have lower expectations for student performance.  |
| Schumm et al. (2000) | Examine teachers' perceptions and practices for grouping students for reading instruction                         | 29 general education third grade teachers with students with disabilities included in their classes. | <u>Mixed Method</u> Elementary Reading Attitude Survey, interview and observation | Descriptive statistics, data reduction | The teachers endorsed pull-out instruction for reading for students with learning disabilities. Overall, teachers relied on whole class instruction. They used the same materials for all students, including students with learning disabilities, and did not differentiate instruction for students with disabilities. |
| Tyler (2008)         | Explore teachers' beliefs about effective reading instruction for middle school English language learners with LD | 5 middle school special education language arts teachers   | <u>Qualitative</u> Interviews, observations, and artifacts                        | Inductive analysis                     | Teachers perceived that good reading instruction for ELLs with LD was the same as good instruction for native speakers with LD. Teachers preferred direct instruction methods and emphasized the development of core reading skills such as decoding, fluency, comprehension and vocabulary.                             |

Table 3

*Quality Analysis of Qualitative Studies*

| Study                       | Purpose | R & T | Sample | Design | Identity | Multiple | Disconfirm | Quality           | CD & QU | Systematic | Limitations | R & T | Conclusions | Total |
|-----------------------------|---------|-------|--------|--------|----------|----------|------------|-------------------|---------|------------|-------------|-------|-------------|-------|
| Broaddus & Bloodgood (1999) | 1       | 2     | 1      | 1      | 1        | 1        | 1          | C, PD, AT, MC, PE | CD,QU   | 1          | 2           | 2     | 2           | 22    |
| Duffy & Atkinson (2001)     | 0       | 2     | 1      | 1      | 1        | 1        | 1          | C, PD, PE         | QU      | 1          | 2           | 1     | 2           | 17    |
| *Hensel (2009)              | 1       | 2     | 1      | 1      | 1        | 0        | 0          | C                 | -       | 1          | 2           | 2     | 2           | 14    |
| Howerton (2007)             | 1       | 2     | 1      | 1      | 1        | 1        | 0          | C, PD, AT, MC, RR | CD,QU   | 1          | 2           | 2     | 2           | 21    |
| McDaniel et al. (2010)      | 1       | 1     | 1      | 1      | 0        | 0        | 0          | C, PD             | QU      | 1          | 2           | 1     | 2           | 12    |
| McKee (2008)                | 1       | 1     | 1      | 1      | 1        | 1        | 0          | AT, CC            | CD,QU   | 0          | 2           | 1     | 2           | 15    |
| Moody & Vaughn (1997)       | 1       | 2     | 1      | 1      | 0        | 1        | 0          | C, PD             | QU      | 1          | 2           | 1     | 2           | 15    |
| Narkon et al. (2009)        | 1       | 1     | 1      | 1      | 1        | 1        | 0          | MC, PE            | CD,QU   | 1          | 2           | 2     | 2           | 17    |
| Nierstheimer et al., (2000) | 1       | 2     | 1      | 1      | 1        | 1        | 0          | C, PD, PE         | QU      | 1          | 2           | 2     | 2           | 18    |
| Powers et al. (2006)        | 1       | 2     | 1      | 1      | 0        | 1        | 0          | C, PD, PE         | CD,QU   | 1          | 1           | 1     | 2           | 16    |
| Rabren & Darch, (1996)      | 1       | 1     | 1      | 1      | 0        | 0        | 0          | Not described     | QU      | 0          | 1           | 0     | 2           | 8     |
| Scharlach (2008)            | 1       | 2     | 1      | 1      | 1        | 1        | 0          | Not described     | CD      | 1          | 2           | 1     | 2           | 14    |
| *Schummn et al. (2000)      | 1       | 1     | 1      | 1      | 0        | 1        | 1          | C, PD, AT, PE     | QU      | 1          | 0           | 0     | 2           | 14    |
| Tyler (2008)                | 1       | 2     | 1      | 1      | 1        | 1        | 0          | PD, AT, MC, RR    | CD,QU   | 1          | 2           | 2     | 2           | 20    |

*Note.* \*Denotes mixed-methods studies. Purpose was stated clearly (1); R/T- Research and theory were discussed (1=research only, 2=R&T); Sample described in detail (1); Design was appropriate for study type (1); Identity- the authors described their identity and background (1); Multiple data sources meaning more than one type of data were collected (e.g., interview, observation, artifact)(1); Disconfirm- authors described seeking disconfirming evidence (1); Quality indicators which included, collaboration (C), peer debriefings (PD), audit trail (AT), external audit (EA), member check (MC), researcher reflexivity (RR), prolonged engagement (PE), coding check (CC) (1 for each quality indicator); CD-case descriptions included in results, QU – quotations included in results; Systematic - authors described systematic procedures for coding qualitative data (1); Limitations discussed (1=limitations were minimally discussed, 2=limitations were discussed in detail); R & T-Findings discussed in terms of relevant research and theory (1=research only, 2=research and theory); Conclusions were appropriate for research questions and for limitations of the study (1=conclusions were discussed, 2=conclusions were well developed and supported by data).

Table 4

*Quality Analysis of Quantitative Studies*

| Quantitative studies  | Purpose | Introduction research and theory | Sample | Validity | Reliability | Statistical analysis | Discussion research and theory | Limitations | Conclusions | Total |
|-----------------------|---------|----------------------------------|--------|----------|-------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------|
| Bos et al., (2001)    | 1       | 1                                | 1      | 0        | 2           | 2                    | 1                              | 2           | 1           | 11    |
| *Hensel (2009)        | 1       | 2                                | 1      | 1        | 2           | 2                    | 2                              | 2           | 2           | 15    |
| Mather et al. (2001)  | 1       | 1                                | 1      | 1        | 2           | 2                    | 1                              | 1           | 2           | 12    |
| Muchmore (1994)       | 1       | 2                                | 1      | 1        | 0           | 2                    | 1                              | 1           | 1           | 10    |
| *Schumm et al. (2000) | 1       | 2                                | 1      | 0        | 1           | 2                    | 1                              | 0           | 2           | 10    |

*Note.* \*Denotes mixed-methods studies. Purpose was stated clearly (1); Research and theory were discussed in the introduction (1=research only, 2=research and theory); Sample was described in detail which included average age, years in U.S., and gender (1); Validity was described for the instrument and interpretations (1=instrument, 2= instrument and interpretation of results); Reliability for instrument and for study data (1=reliability of instrument reported, 2= instrument and study data reliability reported); Statistical analyses were appropriate (1=appropriate but not optimal, 2=appropriate and optimal procedures to use); Research and theory were discussed in the discussion section (1-research only, 2= research and theory); Limitations (1=limitations were minimally discussed, 2=limitations were discussed in detail); Conclusions (1=Most, but not all conclusions were supported by data, 2=conclusions were well developed and supported by data).

### DISSERTATION REFERENCES

Bursuck, W. D., & Damer, M. (2007). *Reading instruction for students who are at risk or have disabilities*. Boston: Pearson.

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## APPENDIX A: DETAILED METHODS FOR ARTICLE ONE

In the dissertation article, the description of the methods was abbreviated to conform to length requirements for journal submission. This appendix provides a more detailed description of the methods and includes greater detail about the setting, participants, data collection, and data analysis.

### Methodology and Epistemological Stance

Qualitative methodology was used to obtain rich descriptions of the participants' perspectives (Hatch, 2002). Qualitative researchers "study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them" (Creswell, 1998, p. 15). The phenomenon of interest in this study was preservice special education teachers' beliefs. Teacher beliefs are not directly observable and must be inferred from statements, behavior, and predispositions (Pajaras, 1992). Interview, observation, and statement data were collected to make inferences about preservice teachers' beliefs about reading instruction for students with disabilities as the teachers completed the final year of their preparation program. These data were collected as a qualitative multiple case study.

Qualitative case study methodology was appropriate for understanding the meaning teachers have constructed regarding reading instruction for students with disabilities (Merriam, 1998). Case study research is "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context" (Merriam, 1998, p. 27), and focuses on single units, programs, events, individuals, groups, or communities. Understanding the uniqueness of individual cases and contexts is important in understanding phenomena (Stake, 1995). In the present study, the unit of analysis was individual preservice special education teachers. Eight teachers comprised the multiple case study.

Multiple case studies are a type of instrumental case study (Stake, 1995; 2005). With instrumental case studies, a particular case is studied mainly to provide insight into an issue related to an external interest. In the present study the external interest was reading instruction for students with disabilities. Data were collected to determine how preservice special education teachers' beliefs might influence classroom practice for teaching reading to students with disabilities. With multiple case studies, the instrumental study is extended to include several cases. Multiple cases are selected because it is believed that studying more than one case will lead to better understanding of the phenomena of interest (Stake, 2005).

Case studies are bounded systems—bounded spatially or temporally. The present study was bounded temporally during the preservice special education teachers' final year in their preparation program— from January 2010 to the end of December 2010 (Creswell, 1998; Gerring, 2007). The conditions under which this multiple case study was conducted are described in the following sections, which include a description of the research stance and my identity, as well as the parameters of the method.

### **Research Stance**

The research stance was a post-positivist. The ontological perspective of post positivism is that an objective reality exists, but cannot be completely apprehended due to human limitations. However, although reality may not be completely apprehended, researchers strive to maintain objectivity in studying phenomena (Hatch, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 2003; Phillips & Burbules, 2002).

To remain objective, my interactions with the preservice teachers were limited to data collection activities. My position reflected an observer/participant perspective in which I was primarily an observer, not a participant in the preservice teachers' worlds beyond the study

(Merriam, 1998). As an observer, I collected statements the preservice teachers completed for their university course assignments and did not engage in discussions with the preservice teachers when I visited their classes (I sat behind instructional groups and did not disrupt instruction). I acted as a participant when I conducted interviews and lesson debriefs, and directly interacted with the preservice special education teachers.

### **Researcher Identity**

Researchers are instruments in qualitative research, and providing information about the researcher identifies positions and interests that may influence the research. During the time that I conducted this research, I was a doctoral student completing a degree in educational inquiry, measurement, and evaluation. Before beginning doctoral studies, I obtained a master's degree in special education and completed coursework for obtaining a special education license. I have supervised and trained preservice teachers enrolled in special education preparation programs. I have a strong commitment to improving educational opportunities for students with disabilities and am particularly concerned about improving reading achievement among students with disabilities who struggle to learn to read. A bias of this study is in favor of explicit, skill-based methods for teaching reading. (Appendix B provides more information about my background and life events that have influenced my perspective of students with disabilities.)

### **Setting**

The present study took place at a large, private university in the western United States. The special education department at the university offers two programs for obtaining a special education mild/moderate license. One program is a bachelor's degree in special education, and the second program is a licensure program for post-baccalaureate students. During the final year of both programs, preservice teachers are required to complete various methods courses, teaching

practicums, and student teaching and/or internship work (specific courses are listed below). Both bachelor degree and post-baccalaureate licensure students complete the same courses during their final year, except the bachelor degree students complete a special education multicultural education and a collaboration course in addition to the courses listed below.

#### Bachelor Degree and Post-Baccalaureate Licensure Final-Year Course Requirements

- Teaching Reading/Language Arts to Students with Disabilities
- Practicum: Teaching Students with Mild/Moderate Disabilities
- Curriculum and Instruction for Secondary Students with Disabilities
- Practicum in Secondary Education: Mild/Moderate Disabilities
- Social and Behavioral Strategies for Students with Mild/Moderate Disabilities
- Teaching Math to Students with Disabilities
- Practicum Preparation: Students with Mild/Moderate Disabilities
- Legal Issues Influencing Collaboration In Special Education
- Capstone Seminar: Students with Disabilities
- Student Teaching: Students with Mild/Moderate Disabilities, or Academic Internship: Special Education

The courses of direct interest for the present study were Teaching Reading/Language Arts to Students with Disabilities; Practicum: Teaching Students with Mild/Moderate Disabilities; Student Teaching: Students with Mild/Moderate Disabilities; and Academic Internship: Special Education. To provide understanding of the context of this study, I include a brief description of these courses in the following sections.

**Reading course.** The preservice special education teachers enrolled in Teaching Reading/Language Arts to Students with Mild Disabilities Winter Semester, 2010. While



enrolled in the course, the preservice teachers read and studied *Reading Instruction for Students who are At-risk or Have Disabilities* (Bursuck & Damer, 2007) to learn how to use explicit methods to teach basic reading skills (i.e., phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension). The teachers also learned Reading Mastery®, an instructional program for teaching reading. The teachers then devoted seven three-hour class sessions to studying instructional methods for teaching basic reading skills, and three class sessions were spent learning and practicing Reading Mastery®.

Reading Mastery® is a published, full year curriculum. The program is designed to provide explicit, systematic instruction for reading, and the preservice teachers studied the program for use in kindergarten through third grade. Lessons associated with grade level books are scripted and include instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Depending on reading level, lessons cover more or less of specific skills such as phonemic awareness and comprehension. For example, beginning lessons focus heavily on phonemic awareness and phonics; whereas, lessons for more advanced students devote less time to word analysis skills and focus more on developing comprehension ability. The preservice teachers were expected to learn Reading Mastery® lessons to prepare to teach the lessons during their elementary teaching practicum.

**Practicum course.** After completing Teaching Reading/Language Arts to Students with Disabilities, the preservice teachers did not complete any other reading courses before they enrolled in Practicum: Teaching Students with Mild/Moderate Disabilities. The practicum course overlapped the Spring and Summer terms at the university (June 2010 to July 2010). The elementary practicum was designed to give the preservice teachers experience applying learning

during a supervised teaching experience. Both post-baccalaureate licensure and bachelor degree students enrolled in the practicum course.

At the commencement of the teaching practicum, the preservice teachers were assigned to teach at one of three practicum locations. Each practicum location was an elementary school operated by a school district within the vicinity of the university. The school districts recruited elementary-age students with disabilities to attend the summer sessions. Parents of school district children were informed that instruction during the summer program was provided by preservice special education teachers, and was not part of regular special education services.

At each practicum site, three to four university students were assigned to teach in a classroom that was supervised by a licensed mentor teacher. The daily schedule for each practicum classroom included instruction in literacy (90 minutes), math (45 minutes), social skills (15 minutes), and arts (25 minutes). The number of school district students in each classroom ranged from 15 to 20 students. Classrooms were divided by grade levels, with each practicum site having three to four classes of students spanning grades one to five. In each classroom, the preservice teachers divided the students into small groups, and taught groups of three to eight students for literacy and math instruction. Social skills and art instruction was delivered using whole class instruction.

To teach reading, the preservice teachers prepared for and provided 90 minutes of daily literacy instruction. The teachers taught Reading Mastery® lessons for 45 minutes, and the remaining 45 minutes were devoted to spelling and writing instruction. The preservice teachers who were case study teachers taught students who were in first through fifth-grade. Although the teachers taught at different sites, all of them followed the same schedule for reading instruction,

and all of them used Reading Mastery® scripts and lessons to teach reading skills. The preservice teachers taught reading five days a week for six weeks—holidays excluded.

**Student teaching/internship courses.** After completing the elementary teaching practicum, the preservice special education teachers enrolled in Student Teaching: Students with Mild/Moderate Disabilities, or Academic Internship: Special Education (Fall Semester, 2010). Student teaching placements and internship employment were at school districts within 30 miles of the university. The duration of student teaching was one semester (Fall Semester 2010), and teaching internships spanned an entire school year (Fall Semester 2010 through Winter Semester 2011). The preservice teachers taught in both elementary and secondary schools. As student teachers and interns, the preservice teachers were supervised by university and school district personnel.

### **Participants**

To recruit participants for the study, I contacted the chair of the Special Education Department and obtained permission to recruit students enrolled in one of the department's courses. I attended the last session of a required course offered Fall semester 2009, explained the purpose of the study, distributed the consent form (see Appendix C), and asked for volunteers. Before preservice special education teachers signed the consent form I explained to them that I expected to collect belief statements from everyone who signed the consent form, and would also select some participants for in-depth case studies. Out of the 32 special education teachers, 24 consented to participate in the study.

In selecting individuals for case studies, I consulted with special education faculty and with the department secretary to determine levels of education of those who had signed the consent forms (i.e., those who were enrolled in the special education bachelor degree or post-

baccalaureate licensure program). Patton (1990) and Miles and Huberman (1994) described sampling strategies and recommended theory-based sampling to explore a theoretical construct. In the present study, the conceptual framework of teacher beliefs accounts for teachers' prior experience and knowledge in belief structures. In selecting participants who had different levels of education, I expected to have a sample that would allow me to explore differences in beliefs as they were influenced by prior understanding, and levels of education.

Education was not the only consideration in selecting participants. I also considered who would be likely to cooperate with requests for interviews and observations, and solicited recommendations for participants from faculty, and from the department secretary. Based on recommendations, I selected 10 individuals for multiple case studies. Half of the selected preservice teachers had bachelor degrees and were enrolled in the special education post-baccalaureate licensure program. The rest of the teachers were completing the special education bachelor degree program.

After selecting 10 case study participants, I contacted each participant to schedule the first interview. Nine of the ten selected preservice teachers responded to my request for an interview. One preservice teacher did not respond to any of my attempts to contact her. I then tried to recruit another participant with the same background (i.e., someone who was completing a bachelor's degree), but none of the other preservice special education teachers who had signed the consent form agreed to be a case study participant.

I began the study with nine participants. During the first set of interviews, one of the preservice teachers said that because of scheduling concerns, he did not plan to student teach during the time frame of the study. Consequently, I dropped him from the study. Eight preservice special education teachers completed the study. Three of the preservice teachers were post-

baccalaureate licensure students who had bachelors' degrees, and five were completing the special education bachelor degree program.

When I recruited participants, the preservice teachers did not know if they would be student teaching or seeking internship positions—those decisions were made mid-way through the study. Six of the preservice teachers enrolled in student teaching, and two preservice teachers obtained internship positions with local school districts. Table 5 provides demographic information about the participants who completed the study.

For student teaching and internships, the preservice teachers taught at schools located in four school districts within 30 miles of the university. The school districts included suburban and rural areas. The socio-economic status of the schools the teachers taught in varied, as did the designation of the schools (i.e., elementary, junior high, and high school). Table 6 summarizes the teachers' student teaching and internship placements, and describes teaching contexts.

### **Data Collection Sources**

Data collected from the preservice teachers included interview and observation data; preservice teachers' belief statements about reading instruction, debrief discussions of lessons taught, reflections on reading instruction, and life-impact maps. Creswell (1998) recommended creating a data collection matrix for case study data to illustrate the type of data collected, and when. Figure 1 is the data collection matrix for this study. Data were collected during the final year of the preservice teachers' preparation program (from the time they began methods courses in reading [January 2010] until they completed student teaching or their first semester of internship work [December 2010]).

The data collection matrix describes data collected from case study participants. In addition, belief statements were also collected from all preservice teachers who signed the

consent form. The purpose for collecting belief statements from all participants was to triangulate data for comparison purposes. The belief statements of the case study participants were compared with to those of the larger group to determine the range of beliefs. Belief statements were also analyzed to determine if beliefs expressed by the case study participants were similar to or different from those of other preservice special education teachers.

All data were collected as the preservice teachers completed their final year in their preparation program. The following sections provide descriptions of each type of data collected.

**Life impact maps.** At the commencement of the study I collected the teachers' life impact maps and conducted the first interview. The purpose for collecting life impact maps was to acquire information about factors that influenced the preservice teachers' decisions to enroll in the special education programs. To collect the life impact maps, I emailed the Life Impact Map to each of the teachers (see Appendix D), and asked them to bring the completed forms to their first interview.

**Interviews.** All interviews, except the final interviews, were conducted in an interview room in the university's education building. The interview rooms were small rooms that contained two desks and two chairs. During interviews I placed two digital recorders on the table in the center of the room and sat across from each participant while conducting interviews. The interview rooms were soundproof rooms without windows. When interviews were conducted, no other persons were present other than me and each participant. Interviews ranged from 30 minutes to approximately one hour per interview.

I conducted four interviews with each teacher. The interviews took place (a) as the preservice teachers began the reading course, (b) as the teachers completed the reading course, (c) after the teachers completed their elementary teaching practicum, and (d) during the last two

weeks of student teaching or first-semester internship work (see Appendix E for interview protocols). The purpose for interviewing the teachers at the beginning of their reading course was to describe the teachers' beliefs before they had formal exposure to instructional methods for teaching reading. The preservice teachers completed Teaching Reading/Language Arts to Students with Disabilities course at the end of April, 2010, and I interviewed them during the final two weeks of the course to obtain a post-course description of their beliefs about reading instruction. The elementary teaching practicum took place during June and July, 2010. During the final week of the teaching practicum (July, 2010), I conducted the third set of interviews. Final interviews were conducted at the preservice teachers' schools during November and December (2010). Interviews were scheduled during the preservice teachers' lunch breaks, and before and after school. In all cases, supervising and mentor teachers were not in the classrooms during the interviews.

**Observations and lesson debriefs.** I observed each teacher four times, and conducted two lesson debriefs. During the elementary teaching practicum, I observed each of the case study teachers teach one Reading Mastery® lesson. After each teacher's observation, I met with the teacher to discuss the lesson. Specifically, I asked the following questions as the preservice teachers reviewed the components of the lessons taught (the teachers referred to their lesson manuals and used my notes to discuss lesson components).

- Why is that component included in the lesson?
- What do you think about that component?
- What is your reaction to teaching this lesson/component?
- How do you anticipate structuring reading lessons in your own classroom?

During the time that the preservice teachers were student teachers and first semester interns, I observed them teach three reading lessons. The first observations were during the first month of school in September, the second during October, and the final observations were completed during the last week of November and the first week of December. While observing the preservice teachers teach, I kept a running record of teaching activities. After completing observations, I used the running records to summarize the structure and content of each teacher's reading lessons (see Appendix F for examples). The summaries of the lessons were reviewed with the teachers during the second lesson debrief.

For the second lesson debrief, I expected to conduct the debrief discussion after each teacher's final observation. However, because of time constraints, the teachers preferred to conduct the lesson debrief during the final interview. To review observed lessons, I showed the teachers my summary of their three lessons. I asked them to discuss the components of their lessons, and I also asked the same questions about their lessons that I had asked during the previous lesson debrief. As the teachers discussed their lessons, they explained their instructional approaches and described how they planned for, and provided reading instruction throughout the semester. For example, one preservice teacher said that he taught phonemics awareness and phonics lessons on Mondays and Tuesdays, addressed fluency and vocabulary on Wednesdays, and worked on comprehension on Thursdays and Fridays.

**Belief statements.** I collected belief statement data from all preservice teachers who signed consent forms—including the case study participants (see Appendix G). Two sets of belief statements were collected during the course of the study. The first belief statement was collected as part of the final exam for Teaching Reading/Language Arts to Students with Disabilities course (April 2010), and the second was collected as an assignment for Capstone



Seminar: Students with Disabilities (Fall, 2010). Statements that were completed for course work were not graded and were for the benefit of individuals who completed them. Although I expected to collect the same number of belief statements during Fall, 2010 as I collected in April, 2010, not all preservice teachers enrolled in the capstone course Fall, 2010. Consequently, they did not complete a second belief statement. Three case study teachers did not complete the second belief statement.

**Reading reflections.** Two reading reflections were collected from the case study teachers—one written and one verbal (see Appendix H for a copy of the form). The first reflection was collected as the teachers completed their elementary teaching practicum course. During the final week of practicum, I sent an electronic version of the Reading Reflection form to the case study teachers, and they brought the completed form to their third interview. I collected the second reading reflection during the final two weeks of the teachers' student teaching or internship semester (December 2010). Originally I anticipated that the preservice teachers would write their response for the second reflection. However, due to time constraints, the preservice teachers preferred to describe significant teaching experiences during the final interview.

### **Data Analysis**

Data were analyzed as they were collected (Merriam, 1998). Interviews were transcribed verbatim shortly after completing each interview (see Appendix I for an example of a portion of a transcribed interview). Observation, belief statement, lesson debrief, and reflection data were coded as data were collected.

Data analysis was accomplished in several phases. During the initial phase of analysis, codes were developed using interview data. I selected three representative interviews to develop

coding categories for the coding scheme. As I read the interviews I assigned preliminary codes to quotations based on questions asked (e.g., responses to questions about teachers experience were coded as experience), the content of the quotations, and a priori categories. For example, quotations in which teachers discussed the mechanics of reading such as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension were categorized as *mechanics*, with subcategories for *phonemic awareness*, *phonics*, *fluency*, *vocabulary*, and *comprehension*. The codes reflected both the NRP's identification of basic reading skills, and vocabulary the preservice teachers used to describe reading processes and instruction.

After coding the first three interviews, I wrote code definitions for the codes and coding categories. Then, using the preliminary codes and definitions, I recoded the three interviews to determine if codes, coding categories, or definitions needed to be revised based on the content of the interviews. I used the revised codes, categories, and definitions for coding the remainder of the interviews in the first set of interviews (see Appendix J). For all subsequent interviews, I used the same codes and categories for coding quotations. Figure 3 illustrates the coding scheme.

To check my coding processes, I randomly selected two interviews from each set of interviews, and four belief statements for an external auditor to check. The external auditor had no involvement with the study and was a college-educated individual with experience in education. I gave the auditor a list of codes, coding categories, and code definitions, along with coded quotations from the interviews and belief statements. The auditor read the quotations and codes, and if the auditor agreed with the coding the auditor marked a plus. If the auditor disagreed with a code, the auditor marked a minus. Coded quotations were counted, and an agreement rate was calculated by dividing the number of agreements by the total number of coded quotations. The agreement rate was 98% (296 agreements/302 total coded statements).

Observation notes, lesson debrief notes, and teaching reflections were coded using the same codes as were used for the interviews. To check the coding of lesson observations, debriefs, and reflections, I provided opportunity for the case study participants to check the categorization of notes made of lessons taught, and to respond to summaries of data collected from them (see Appendix K for an example of a summary of data collected from one participant).

Prior to the third interview I provided each participant with a summary of data collected through July. With each participant I discussed the summary and asked for comments or clarifications. In addition, at the conclusion of the study, I verbally summarized the results of the study for each participant and asked them to describe their perceptions of themselves related to the findings. By having the participants describe their perceptions of themselves, I was able to check if my interpretations of their responses reflected their beliefs.

After coding data, I condensed coded data and created case-level displays in meta-matrices to summarize and compare data across participants for identified themes. Meta-matrices are master charts that assemble descriptive data from each of several cases in a standard format (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I created meta-matrices for each set of interview data, and for all compiled data. By summarizing data in meta-matrices, I created ordered displays that allowed for comparisons across cases (see Appendix L for an example of a meta-matrix). In comparing cases, I noted similarities and differences among the case study participants. When discrepant cases were identified, I analyzed all data to identify patterns of difference that were significant.

### **Credibility and Quality Indicators**

There are differing opinions as to what constitutes quality in qualitative inquiry. Carter and Little (2007) suggested that aligning ontology, epistemology, methodology, and methods is the best indicator of quality work. I have explicitly stated my epistemological stance. The design

of the study, the data analysis, and my position in relation to the participants reflected a post-positivist stance. My position was not participatory, and I reviewed my interpretations of the findings with participants as a check against researcher bias.

Lincoln and Guba (1985), Creswell and Miller (2000), and Brantlinger, Jimenez, Klinger, Pugach, and Richardson (2005) also described credibility indicators in qualitative research (see Table 7). Table 7 describes how controlling the quality of the research was addressed based on their recommendations.

Table 5

*Participant Demographic Information*

| Participant | Degree status  | Experience with individuals with disabilities          | Student teaching or internship |
|-------------|--|--|--------------------------------|
| Alex        | Post-baccalaureate licensure program, B.A. History, ESL endorsement    | Substitute taught in a special education class         | Student teacher                |
| Bob         | Post-baccalaureate licensure program, B.S. Psychology, ESL endorsement | Paraeducator in a special education class              | Student teacher                |
| Julie       | Special education bachelor degree program                              | Grown child with autism                                | Student teacher                |
| Maddi       | Special education bachelor degree program                              | During high school tracked a student with disabilities | Intern                         |
| LeAnne      | Special education bachelor degree program                              | Childhood friend with disabilities                     | Intern                         |
| Novalea     | Special education bachelor degree program, ESL endorsement             | Paraeducator in an ESL class                           | Student teacher                |
| Susan       | Special education bachelor degree program, ESL endorsement             | Paraeducator in a special education class              | Student teacher                |
| Tessa       | Post-baccalaureate licensure program, B.A. Liberal Arts                | Paraeducator in a special education class              | Student teacher                |

Table 6

*Student Teaching and Internship Placements*

| Participant | Grade level | School district percent of minority enrollment (ME), school percent receiving free- and reduced lunch (FRL) | Program used for instruction   | Instructional grouping   | Supervision   |
|-------------|-------------|---|--|--|---|
| Alex        | Grades K-6  | 34% ME<br>37% FRL   | Reading A to Z®  | Small group – 3 to 5 students  | Supervising teacher not in the classroom. Two other special education teachers taught in the same room. |
| Bob         | Grades 9-12 | 12% ME<br>27% FRL   | Rewards®, Reading Advantage®, Teacher developed vocabulary and comprehension Instruction | Whole class – 5 to 8 students  | Supervising teacher frequently in the classroom   |
| Julie       | K-6         | 12% ME<br>16% FRL   | Reading Mastery® for Grades K-3, Phonics for Reading® Grades 4-6                         | Small group – 3 to 5 students  | Supervising teacher taught in the same classroom  |
| LeAnne      | Grades K-6  | 19% ME<br>26% FRL   | Mentor teacher's program   | Small group – 3 to 5 students (rotated groups with classroom teachers) | Mentor and one other teacher taught in the same classroom   |
| Maddi       | Grades 7-9  | 13% ME  | Developed own  | Whole class – 5  | No mentor teacher in the  |

|         |             |                              | program                               | students                      | classroom   |
|---------|-------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| Novalea | Grades K-6  | 27% FRL<br>13% ME<br>74% RFL | Wilson Reading System®,<br>Treasures® | Small group – 3 to 5 students | Supervising teacher and one other teacher taught in the classroom |
| Susan   | Grades K-6  | 34% ME<br>81% FRL            | Wilson Reading System®,<br>Treasures® | Small group – 3 to 5 students | Supervising teacher taught in the same classroom                  |
| Tessa   | Grades 9-12 | 12% ME<br>16.72% FRL         | Rewards®,<br>Reading Advantage®       | Whole class – 15 students     | Supervising teacher always in the classroom                       |

Table 7

*Credibility Measures for Qualitative Research*

| Credibility measure          | Credibility measures for this study   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Triangulation                | Observation, interview, and artifact data were collected. Data were also collected from preservice teachers who were not case study participants.                       |
| Disconfirming evidence       | I searched for discrepant cases as I conducted the cross-case analysis.   |
| Member checks                | I checked interpretations with participants as I formulated hypotheses, and provided opportunity for participants to review and comment on the results and conclusions. |
| Peer debriefing              | I engaged in periodic de-briefings with my dissertation chair.  |
| Audit trail                  | I recorded when, where, and how data were collected. I kept records of research decisions and data analysis processes.  |
| Prolonged engagement         | The duration of the study was one year.   |
| Thick, detailed descriptions | In the results I included quotations and excerpts of data that provided evidence of interpretations and conclusions.  |
| Particularizability          | Case-study descriptions documented the particularities of the teachers' perceptions.  |



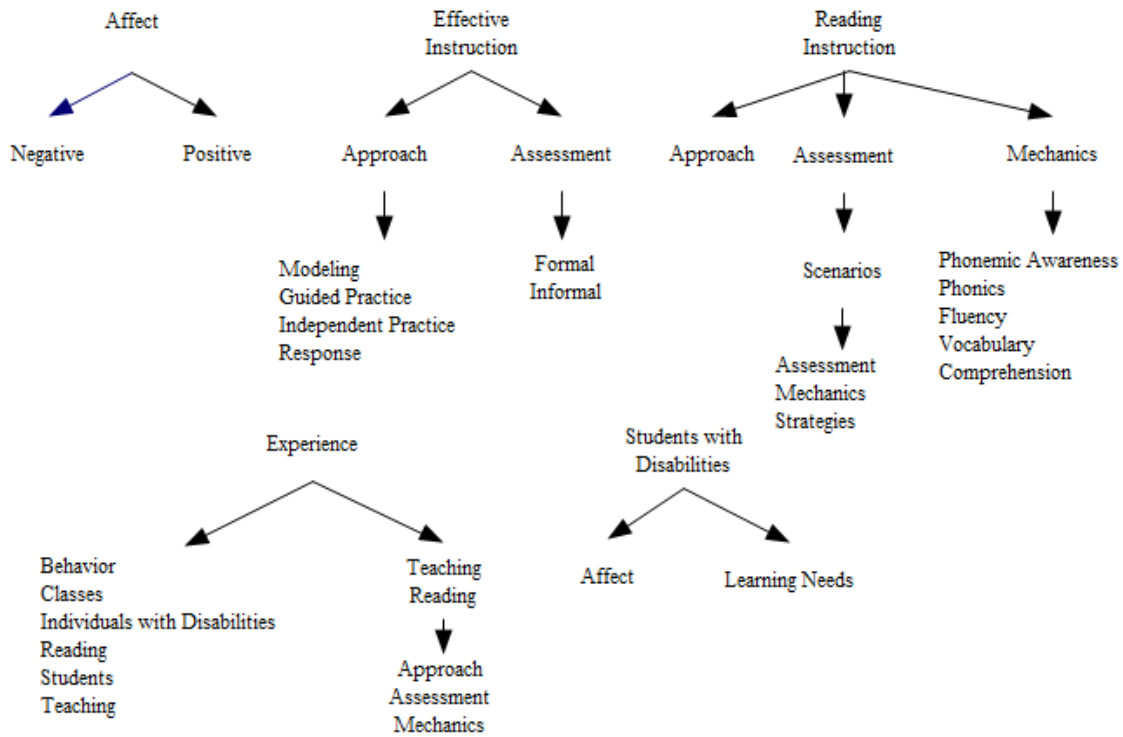
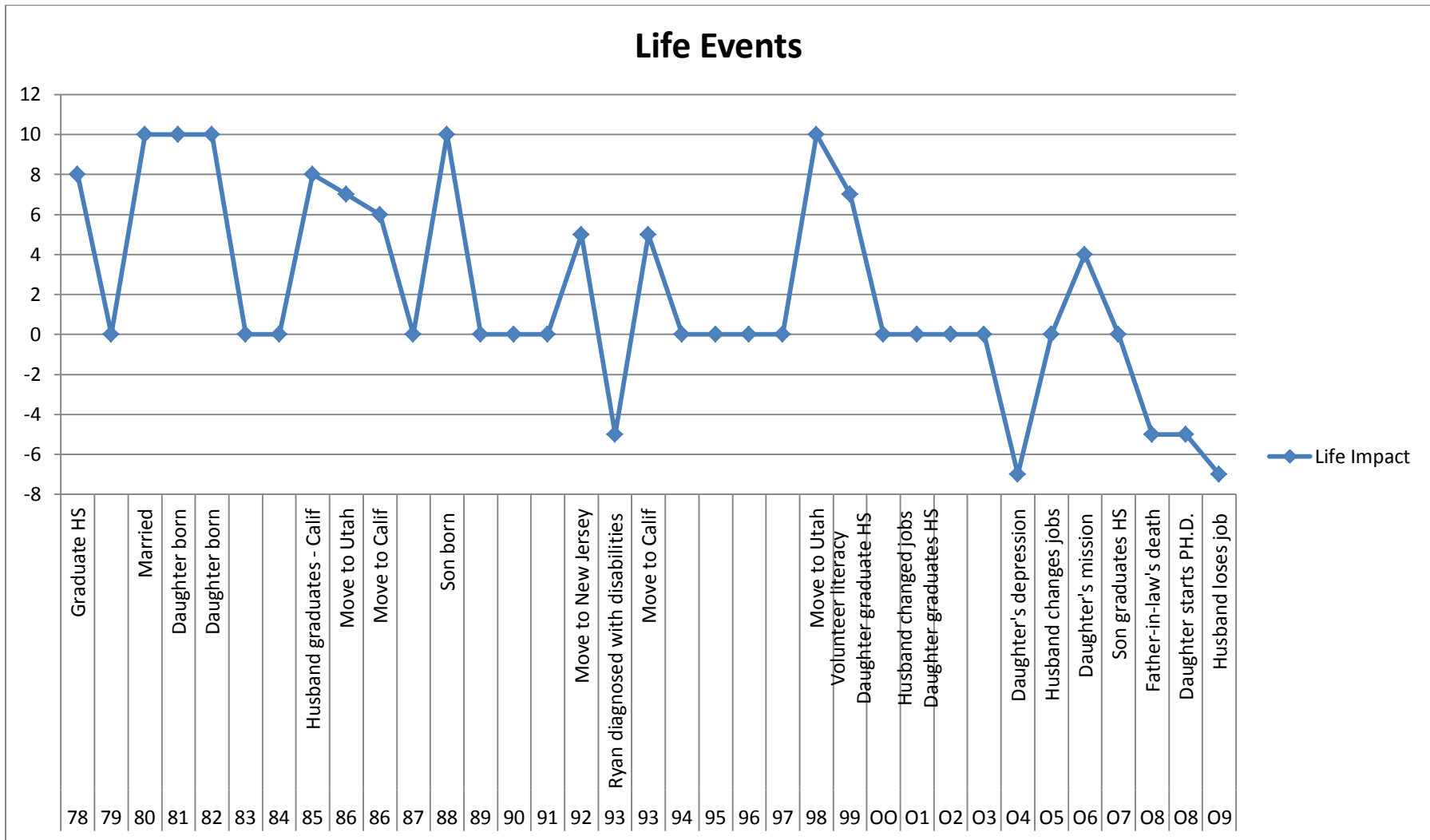
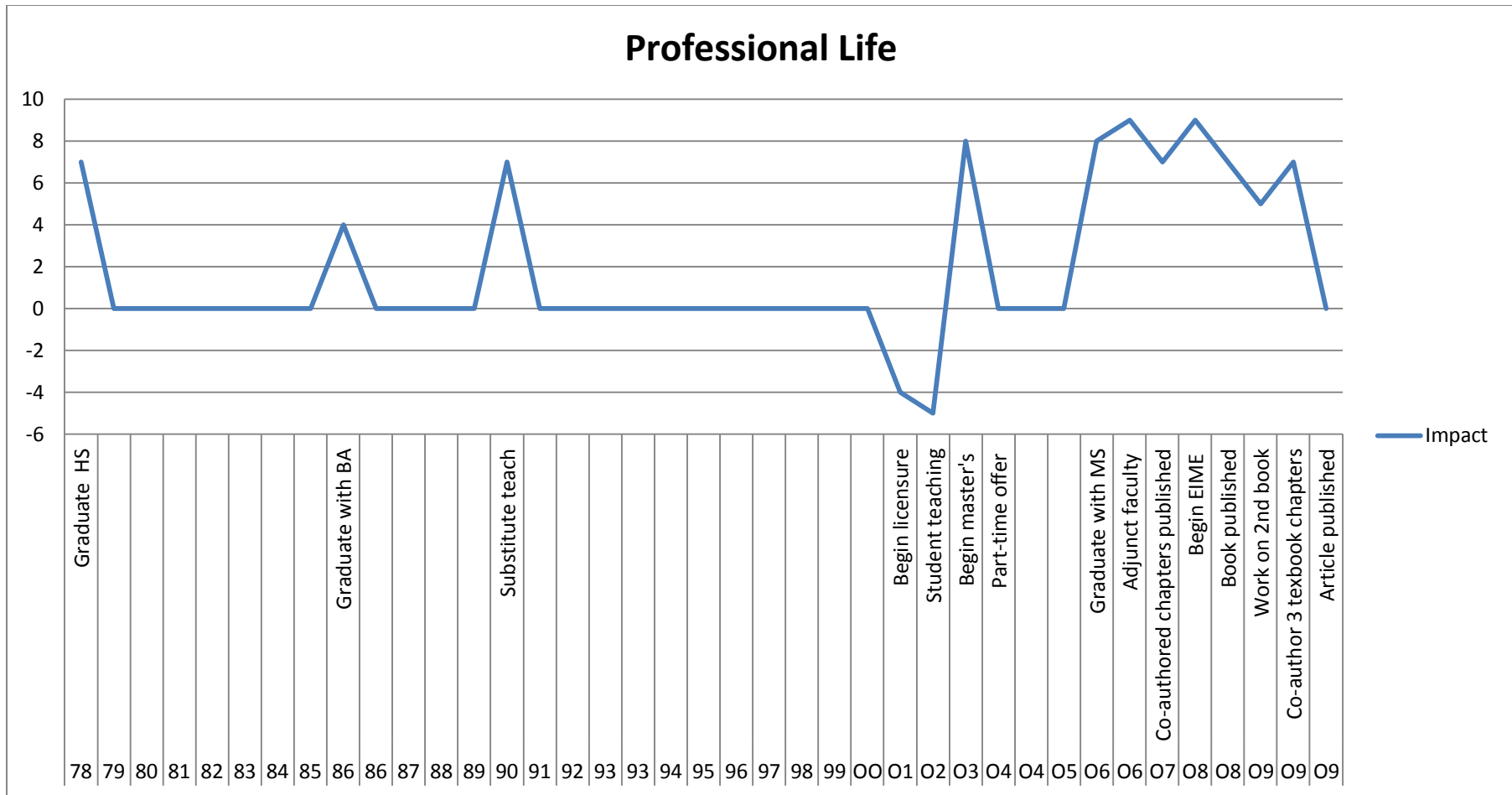


Figure 3. Coding scheme for data analysis

**APPENDIX B: LIFE IMPACT MAP**





## APPENDIX C: CONSENT TO BE A RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

### Introduction

This research study is being conducted by Nari Carter, a graduate student in the Educational Inquiry, Measurement, and Evaluation Ph.D. program. Nari is supervised by Dr. Mary Anne Prater, Chair of the Counseling Psychology Special Education Department. The purpose of the study is to describe teachers' perceptions of reading instruction for students with disabilities.

### Procedures

The study will span one year (January 2010 to December 2010). You will be asked to submit copies of reading belief statements that you write for CPSE 430 and for CPSE 490. A few of you will be asked to complete a life impact map of your prior experience in education, and to write 2 reflections on teaching reading. You will be interviewed (4 times) and observed teaching (4 times), and will be asked to discuss 2 reading lessons that you teach.

### Risks/Discomforts

There may be minimal risks for participation in this study. Although the chair of the special education department is involved in the study, individuals not associated with your program of studies (e.g., courses, and internship assignments) will collect and analyze the data. The greatest risk involves your time. If you are selected for interviews and observations, the study could consume up to 8 hours of your time.

### Benefits

There is the possibility that as you are interviewed and observed, and as you reflect on your practice, you will have insights that will help you become a better teacher of students with disabilities.

### Confidentiality

All information provided will remain confidential and will only be reported with no identifying information. All data, including demographic information, will be kept in a locked drawer and only those directly involved with the research will have access to them. After the research is completed, the raw data will be destroyed.

### Compensation

Participants selected for interviews and observations will receive a \$20 gift card during the final interview.

### Participation

Participation in this research study is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any time or refuse to participate entirely without any jeopardy to your program of studies in Special Education at BYU.

### Questions about the Research

If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Dr. Mary Anne Prater, (801) 422-1592 or [prater@byu.edu](mailto:prater@byu.edu); or Nari Carter (801) 472-9788 or [narij@comcast.net](mailto:narij@comcast.net)

**Questions about your Rights as Research Participants.** If you have questions you do not feel comfortable asking the researchers, you may contact: IRB Administrator, A-285 ASB, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602, 801-422-1461, [irb@byu.edu](mailto:irb@byu.edu).

### Check here:

\_\_\_ I have read, understood, and received a copy of the above consent and desire of my own free will to participate in this study.

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone number(s) \_\_\_\_\_(home) \_\_\_\_\_(cell)

Demographic Information (All participants)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

1. Please list any experience teaching. Include volunteer work as well as formal teaching experience.

| Teaching experience | Duration |
|---------------------|----------|
| _____               | _____    |
| _____               | _____    |
| _____               | _____    |
| _____               | _____    |
| _____               | _____    |

2. Please list any experience teaching reading. Include volunteer work as well as formal teaching experience.

| Teaching experience | Duration |
|---------------------|----------|
| _____               | _____    |
| _____               | _____    |
| _____               | _____    |
| _____               | _____    |
| _____               | _____    |

3. Please describe formal education (e.g., year in school, degrees, and certifications).

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

4. Please describe experience or significant interactions with individuals with disabilities. For example, tutored children with disabilities, or have a sibling or child with disabilities.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX D: LIFE IMPACT MAP FORM**

List approximate dates and provide brief descriptions of any events that influenced your decision to become a special education teacher. For example, giving birth to a child with disabilities, tutoring children at a literacy center, being a nanny for a family that had a child with a disability.

|             |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|-------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Life Events |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|             |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|             |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|             |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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|             |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|             |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Dates

## APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

Interview #1 (At the commencement of the study)

**Grand Tour Questions, Planned Prompts, and Auto-Driving** (McCracken, 1988)

### **Reading**

Describe a memorable experience related to reading or learning to read.

#### **Students with Disabilities**

1. Describe any prior experience with children with disabilities.

#### **Planned Prompts**

- a. What are your beliefs about disabilities?
- b. What are your perceptions of students with disabilities' instructional needs?

#### **Instructing students with disabilities**

2. Describe any teaching experience prior to starting the special education program.

#### **Planned Prompts**

- a. Describe what you think your role as a teacher of students with disabilities will be. (What are you responsible for, and what are students responsible for?)

#### **Teaching students with disabilities to read**

3. What do you envision teaching students with disabilities to read will be like?
  - a. Before you started the special education program, did you think about reading instruction for students with disabilities? If so, what did you think?
  - b. What do you think students with disabilities' instructional needs are for reading?
  - c. What does that mean for you as a teacher?
  - d. What is your perception of effective reading instruction for students with disabilities?
  - e. What is your perception of what is NOT effective reading instruction for students with disabilities?
  - f. How will you know when instruction is effective?

#### **Auto-Driving**

*David is in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. When you watch David read you notice that David reads in a monotone voice. He reads slowly and makes numerous mistakes reading words. When he doesn't correctly read words that are printed, he substitutes words, leaves some words out, and omits word endings. For example, he reads "the baby laughed at the antics of the clown" as "the baby laugh at actions of the clown." David correctly answers 3 questions out of 8 that you ask about the passage.*

Describe instruction you would provide for David.

How will you know if your instruction for David is effective?

*Mary is in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. When you assess her reading, you note that she reads very quickly and makes few mistakes as she reads. When you ask Mary to summarize the passage she read, Mary summarizes the last sentence of the passage and not the entire passage. When you ask her to state the main idea, Mary again summarizes the last sentence. Mary correctly answers 2 out of 5 questions that you asked about the passage.*

Describe instruction you would provide for Mary.

How will you know if your instruction for Mary is effective?

**Interview #2 (After teachers have completed their reading methods courses)*****Students with Disabilities***

1. For this semester, describe any experience you've had with students with disabilities.

***Planned Prompts***

- a. What are your perceptions of students with disabilities?
- b. What are your perceptions of students with disabilities' instructional needs?

***Instructing students with disabilities***

2. Describe any teaching experience you've had this semester.

***Planned Prompts***

- a. Describe what you think your role as a teacher of students with disabilities will be. (What are you responsible for, and what are students responsible for?)

***Teaching students with disabilities to read***

3. What do you envision teaching students with disabilities to read will be like?
  - a. What do you think students with disabilities' instructional needs are for reading?
  - b. What does that mean for you as a teacher?
  - c. What is your perception of effective reading instruction for students with disabilities?
  - d. What is your perception of what is NOT effective reading instruction for students with disabilities?
  - e. How will you know when instruction is effective?

***Auto-Driving***

*Markus is in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. When you watch Markus read you notice that Markus makes many mistakes reading. He reads quickly, but frequently omits words such as it, on, the, and substitutes words for words that are printed. For example, he reads "city" for circus, and "crowd" for clown. Markus answers 2 out of 6 questions about the passage correctly.*

Describe instruction you would provide for Markus.

How will you know if your instruction for Markus is effective?

*Jefferson is in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. You ask him to read a passage about a factory and a hurricane. Jefferson reads at a very slow rate and he makes many errors reading the passage. He omits words and reads words incorrectly. When you ask Jefferson to explain what a hurricane is, he tells you it is a blizzard. In describing a factory, Jefferson says a factory is a dump truck.*

Describe instruction you would provide for Jefferson.

How will you know if your instruction for Jefferson is effective?



**Interview #3 (During the summer practicum)*****Students with Disabilities***

1. Describe your experience with students with disabilities.

***Planned Prompts***

- a. What are your perceptions of students with disabilities?
- b. What are your perceptions of students with disabilities' instructional needs?

***Instructing students with disabilities***

2. Describe your experience teaching.

***Planned Prompts***

- a. Describe what you think your role is, and your perception of students' roles.  
(What are you responsible for, and what are students responsible for?)

***Teaching students with disabilities to read***

3. What did you envision teaching students with disabilities to read would be like?
4. What is it like to teach students with disabilities how to read?
  - a. What do you think students with disabilities' instructional needs are for reading?
  - b. What does that mean for you as a teacher?
  - c. What is your perception of effective reading instruction for students with disabilities?
  - d. What is your perception of what is NOT effective reading instruction for students with disabilities?
  - e. How do you know when instruction is effective?

***Auto-Driving***

Think of the student in your reading group who struggled the most with reading. In detail, describe what you noticed when you listened to the student read.

Describe the instruction you provided for the student, and explain your rationale for what you did.

*Manny is in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. When you watch Manny read you notice that Manny makes many mistakes reading. He reads quickly, but frequently omits words such as over, each, the, under, and substitutes words for words that are printed. For example, he reads "apple" for apricot, and "organ" for orchard. Manny answers 2 out of 6 questions about the passage correctly.*

Describe instruction you would provide for Manny.  
How will you know if your instruction for Manny is effective?

*Jose is in 3rd<sup>th</sup> grade. You ask him to read a 100 word passage about a frog. Jose reads at a good rate. He occasionally makes mistakes reading words, but is able to read most words correctly. When you ask Jose questions about the passage, he answers 1 out of 5 questions correctly. He is unable to explain what words in the passage mean.*

Describe instruction you would provide for Jose.  
How will you know if your instruction for Jose is effective?

**Interview #4 (During student teaching)*****Students with Disabilities***

1. Describe your experience with students with disabilities.

***Planned Prompts***

- a. What are your perceptions of students with disabilities?
- b. What are your perceptions of students' with disabilities instructional needs?

***Instructing students with disabilities***

2. Describe your experience teaching.

***Planned Prompts***

- a. Describe what you think your role is, and your perception of students' roles.  
(What were you responsible for, and what were students responsible for?)

***Teaching students with disabilities to read***

3. What did you envision teaching students with disabilities to read would be like?
4. What is it like to teach students with disabilities how to read?
  - a. What do you think students with disabilities' instructional needs are for reading?
  - b. What does that mean for you as a teacher?
  - c. What is your perception now of effective reading instruction for students with disabilities?
  - d. What is your perception of what is NOT effective reading instruction for students with disabilities?
  - e. How do you know when instruction is effective?

***Auto-Driving***

Think of a student in one of your reading groups who struggled the most with reading. In detail, describe what you noticed when you listened to the student read.

*Evie is in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. When you watch Evie read you notice that Evie reads in a monotone voice. She reads slowly and makes numerous mistakes reading words. When she doesn't correctly read words that are printed, she substitutes words, leaves some words out, and omits word endings. For example, she reads "the big patchwork blanket" as "the pitch blank."*

Describe instruction you would provide for Evie.

How will you know if your instruction for Evie is effective?

*Sam is in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. When you assess his reading, you note that he reads very quickly and makes few mistakes as he reads. When you ask Sam to summarize the passage he read, Sam summarizes the last sentence and not the entire passage. When you ask him to state the main idea, Sam again summarizes the last sentence. Sam correctly answers 2 out of 5 questions that you ask about the passage.*

Describe instruction you would provide for Sam.

How will you know if your instruction for Sam is effective?

**APPENDIX F: OBSERVATION RUNNING RECORD AND SUMMARY****Observation Running Record – Kathy, Observation 3**

8:48

Yes, who is Theodore – do you think they will answer that in the book, or will we have to think about it.

Both – I think they will answer it in the book and we will have to think about it.

I have a question – why do you think they were looking at the house on the hill – do you think they will tell us, or do we have to figure it out.

\*I think it doesn't tell us.

Did it answer our question – they were pointing at it because there was smoke.

Why do you think that was such a big deal

\*because nobody lives there

That's a good answer.

Did they tell us that, or did we figure it out by ourselves?

(So – continues to read . . . students listen)

\*Other 2 groups are working on other activities – one group is working on fluency, another on writing activities

(Continues to read . . . students listen)

Why are they surprised to see stuff coming from the chimney

Right – they thought he was dead, and there was stuff coming from the chimney

(Continues to read . . . students listen)

\*have you watched the kid show haunted house –

Good, one thing I love is that you are making connections to things you already

That's another great strategy that good readers use.

Why do you think that the author took time to describe that, to say that his body was sprawled out?

\*because he wanted to use detail,

Right – details make it more interesting.

Is that something the author told us, or did we figure it out?

We figured it out – the author didn't tell us why he put that detail in.

Not only can you ask questions about what is in the book, you can ask questions about why the author put it in there.

Let's keep going and see what happens in the book.

(Continues to read . . . )

What kids do you think he's talking about?

8:54

Let's see if it answers it in the story

(Continues to read . . . )

What did we just learn about Doug?

What did we find out?

**Lesson Summary – Bonnie Observation 1**

| <b>Lesson Component</b>   | <b>Reading Instruction</b>       | <b>Instructional Approach</b>                                 |
|---|----------------------------------|---|
| Students read sounds as teacher points to them  | Phonics                          | Teacher directed<br>Guided practice<br>High rates of response |
| Do what the picture says  | Comprehension                    | Independent practice  |
| Say words fast with picture prompt  | Phonemic awareness<br>Vocabulary | Guided practice   |
| Worksheet<br>Cross out sounds<br>Follow dotted line say sound<br>Color and say sounds | Phonics                          | Independent practice  |

**APPENDIX G: BELIEFS ABOUT READING INSTRUCTION FORM**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please respond to the following questions. Provide enough information to fully explain your beliefs about effective reading instruction for students with disabilities.

1. What have you learned about effective reading instruction for students with disabilities?
2. What do you think about what you've learned about effective reading instruction for students with mild to moderate disabilities?
  - a. Describe what you think is important (based on what you discussed in #1).
  - b. Describe what you think is NOT important (based on what you discussed in #1).
  - c. Discuss what you agree with (if anything,) in terms of reading instruction for students with disabilities.
  - d. Discuss what you what you disagree with (if anything) in terms of reading instruction for students with disabilities.
  - e. Describe experiences you've had that support and/or conflict with what you have learned.
3. What is your approach for providing reading instruction for students with disabilities?

**APPENDIX H: REFLECTIONS ON READING INSTRUCTION**

| Describe an experience teaching reading. | What did you think about the experience? | Did the experience influence your thinking about reading instruction?<br>How? | Did the experience influence your teaching? How? |
|--|--|---|--|
|  |  |   |  |

## APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

### Portion of an Interview Transcript

#### Julie – Interview 3

#### (R-Researcher, Part- Participant)

R- How was the experience in practicum?

Part - I have to say I think my favorite part ended up being the Reading Mastery and I don't know why. I think once we got in the rhythm of it and felt comfortable with it, it was easier to do for me, um. . . the kids. . . the group was easy to work with, they kind of knew the system, yeah, it ended up being my favorite part of the day. . . the Reading Mastery part

R- That wasn't the case at the beginning when you started. . .

Part - No, for the first couple of weeks I was really frustrated with it and struggling with actually getting the materials, cause, I practiced this way, with second grade, where you just kind of read it, and 1<sup>st</sup> grade you are holding it so getting the system down, you are holding it so they can read it.

R- And try to look at it and read it sideways yourself.

Part - That was a little bit of a challenge. Once I got the system down, you know what is coming, you see similar things, just different words, it was actually easier than I thought once you got into the rhythm of how it worked, it – like I said, it was my favorite part of the day.

R- That's great.

Part - On my little experience that I shared, the very last day, the kids knew that that was the last day and we had to turn everything in, we were into a story, I wrote this on there, it was one of those that had 5 or 6 different segments, and we were only on the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>, parts – when recess came, they asked if they could stay in, and finish their story instead of going to recess – two of the kids, we're not going to be here. . . so I let them stay in from the break, so that they could read the story, and that was a success to me, because I was worried about is this engaging enough, this really structured way that we're reading and just insisting on the correctness of each sentence, and I thought it would be distracting to them, it was encouraging to me to see that they were engaged in the story, they wanted to know what happened, that was a success at the end – it was kind of a testimonial – this really was effective

R- You were worried about it being boring – that's what you said previously

Part - I thought the kids weren't going to be engaged, I thought it lacked the discovery part of reading, but the kids did really have that and they were excited about the story, I also worried that my students were in 4<sup>th</sup> grade and they were at a 1<sup>st</sup> grade reading level, so I was worried about content if they would be interested enough. . . but they were

## APPENDIX J: CODE DEFINITIONS

**Affect** (personal affective response). Includes discussion about motivation for working with children with disabilities, pursuing a degree in special education, and descriptions of how participants felt about experiences (i.e. reading, working with students with disabilities, taking classes).

**Negative** – describes negative emotions and uses words such as: hard, difficult, worried, not confident, scared, embarrassed, dislike

**Positive response**- describes positive emotions and uses words such as favorite, easy, surprised, nice, comfortable, like

**Effective instruction.** Includes participants' thoughts and opinions about instruction. This differs from experience in that participants only describe thoughts or ideas. If participants describe giving instruction, or working with a student to teach, it is coded as experience.

**Approach**--general descriptions of instruction that are not particular to teaching reading, including instructional design, strategies, approaches, and concern for student affect/motivation. Descriptions of approaches for teaching include step by step instruction, behavior expectations, what the participant believes is effective instruction, focusing on basics, and simplifying instruction.

**Modeling** – descriptions of demonstrating skills, or the teacher demonstrates a skill to students while instructing.

**Guided Practice** – descriptions of guiding the students as they practice a skill, or instances where the teacher asks questions, provides prompts to solicit student response while instructing.

**Independent Practice** – descriptions of the students completing work independently, or instances where the teacher gives students an assignment and students complete the assignment independently with little or no guidance from the teacher.

**High rates of response** – observations of teachers requiring students to respond to instruction 3 or more times per minute.

**Assessment**- describes procedures for assessing student learning including descriptions of types of tests such as CBA, descriptions of finding out where students are, if they are ready for instruction, and if they got it.

**Reading instruction.** Descriptions of how reading instruction should be provided, what should be covered, what is not effective, and how to assess progress learning to read.

**Approach**- includes general ideas about teaching reading such as activating prior knowledge, the teachers' goals, providing rationales, knowing students, breaking down instruction into steps, using a variety of techniques, motivating students, managing behavior, using explicit methods, and direct instruction.

**Assessment**- descriptions of assessing reading progress including discussions of determining where students are and using specific tests such as DIBELS, CRT, CBA.

**Mechanics**- descriptions of teaching reading skills including “Big 5”, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.



**Phonemic Awareness** – description of teaching students to segment, identify, or blend sounds in words; instances where the teachers ask students to say, identify, or blend specific sounds.

**Phonics** – descriptions of teaching letter representations of sounds and include teaching blends, diagraphs, vowels and so forth; instances where the teacher taught letters or combinations of letters to represent sounds.

**Fluency** – descriptions of providing opportunity for the students to become fluent readers (reading quickly, with accuracy and expression); instances where teachers provide opportunity for students to develop fluency such as reading and re-reading a words, phrases, or a passage, and timed readings.

**Vocabulary** – descriptions of teaching the meaning of words; instances where teachers explained the meaning of words, or had students define words.

**Comprehension** – descriptions of teaching students how to abstract meaning from text; instances where teachers asked students questions about text meaning or taught strategies for understanding text.

**Not Effective** – descriptions of what the teacher thinks would not be effective instruction includes the words not effective, wouldn't work, lacking

**Experience.** Describes participants' prior experience (prior to starting the program), experience in the program, and experiences teaching. Quotations coded as experience also describe background information about the participant such as the participant learned English as an adult.

**Behavior** – describes approaches for managing student behavior, or issues with student behavior. For example, descriptions of completing a conferencing form about a student's behavior, spending instructional time managing behavior (e.g., 80% of my instruction is managing behavior).

**Classes-** describes information learned in college classes, topics discussed in classes, or experience in classes. Also includes descriptions of observations in other teachers' classrooms.

**Kids with disabilities** – describes experience with kids with disabilities. Descriptions of experience are of interactions with individuals with disabilities outside of school settings.

**Reading** – includes descriptions of the participants' experience learning to read or as a reader in school, for example: I read before I started school, I took reading tests in school, etc.

**Students-** descriptions of individuals with disabilities in school settings. Descriptions can be of interactions with individuals, or of small groups of students. Describes how students responded to instruction, or describes a particular experience with a student or group of students.

**Teaching** – describes prior experience teaching that was not part of program classes. Including helping with a high school class, teaching ESL students as a tutor, and volunteering in a special education classroom.

**Teaching reading** – descriptions of experience teaching reading which include what the teachers taught, how they assessed learning, how students responded to instruction.

**Approach** – describes general approaches for teaching reading lessons and includes descriptions of explicit, teacher-directed instruction, step by step reading instruction, duration of lessons, and activities included in lessons.

**Assess-** descriptions of how the teacher assesses reading progress including descriptions of specific tests such as DIBELS, CBA, CRT, as well as informal approaches for assessing reading such as listening to students read, asking questions, and having students complete worksheets.

**Mechanics** - descriptions of what the teacher focuses on in teaching reading such as the big 5, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary.

**Scenarios.** Participants' responses to 2 scenarios given at the end of each interview.

*Assess* – teachers describe how they would assess whether their instruction was effective. Includes listening to students read, asking questions, giving formal assessments such as DIBELS and CBA, and keeping running records.

*Mechanics-* identification of specific reading skills such as phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. Includes descriptions of decoding difficulty.

*Strategies-* descriptions of how the teachers would address the identified difficulty such as asking questions, providing word lists, teaching sight words, having the student practice reading passages, requiring the student to read passages correctly, telling the student to slow down.

**Students with disabilities.** Descriptions of perceptions of students' characteristics. Includes descriptions of students' affective/behavioral, and instructional needs.

*Affect* – describes students' affective characteristics such as motivation, interest, and attention characteristics. Also includes discussions about students' needs for behavioral support such as limits, boundaries, structure, and behavior characteristics.

*Learning needs* – describes learning characteristics and reading difficulty including decoding problems, comprehension difficulty, perceptions of students aptitude for learning (all students with disabilities can learn, and students need for instructional support (e.g., they need tasks broken down, put into steps).

**APPENDIX K: MEMBER CHECK SUMMARY****Susan – Summary of interview and observation data collected through the end of practicum****Effective instruction:**

Sequenced instruction with repetition and review, explicit instruction with group responding, provide emotional support for learning, make environment supportive, vary instruction, and provide content exposure for students.

**Reading instruction:**

- Instruction in 5 reading skill areas (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension). Teach decoding skills and make connections for comprehension, balanced approach for teaching reading (i.e., teach all reading skills rather than focusing on just phonics). Select books at students' reading levels.

**Direct instruction**

- Not a fan of direct instruction, scripts are restrictive (boxed in), plans to incorporate some direct instruction in lessons (choral responding, explicitly teaching students what to do).

**Students with disabilities:**

- Need content exposure, need to make connections.

**Assessment**

- Use formal and informal assessments to measure progress.

**Instructional Perspective:**

- The design of effective instruction is sequenced to build skills and involves step-by-step instruction. A variety of methods should be used when teaching. Affective aspects of learning should be addressed (i.e., helping students become motivated to learn).
- All 5 areas of reading skills should be addressed. The approach for teaching reading should be balanced.
- Direct instruction is restrictive, students need exposure to a variety of reading materials.
- Students need exposure to content material; they need to make connections to comprehend what they are reading.

**APPENDIX L: COMPARISON MATRIX FOR INTERVIEW 4**

|      | Affect  | Effective instruction   | Experience   | Reading   | Scenarios  | Students   |
|------|---|---|--|---|--|--|
| Alex | <p>Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Wants to become a teacher like his mentor</li> <li>•Wants to become more fluent with knowledge of word structure and language</li> <li>•Awesome teaching reading</li> <li>•Likes doing phonemic awareness and decoding</li> </ul> | <p>Approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•DI Valuable approach in special education</li> <li>•Quick responding, very effective</li> <li>•Teachers should be open to constantly learning and trying different methods</li> </ul> | <p>Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•History background and ESL, whole class instruction, not small group, not DI</li> <li>•Taught to build relationships with students</li> </ul> <p>Classes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Taught DI – explicitly teach skills</li> </ul> <p>Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Had student like scenario – could read but not comprehend</li> <li>•Had new student read with group – not effective</li> </ul> <p>Teaching Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Students improved on reading CVC and CVCC words</li> <li>•Uses visuals, my turn, your turn, DI format, teaches phonics, decoding</li> <li>•Decoding critical</li> <li>•Build fluency and comprehension</li> <li>•Breaks lessons into different activities per day to focus on different skills</li> <li>•Tracks errors students make while reading</li> </ul> | <p>Not Effective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Not knowing students and making assumptions about reading skills</li> <li>•Giving students a book and expecting them to read</li> <li>•Not effective having a student read when he didn't know her reading level</li> </ul>  | <p>Assess</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Have student read, is student more confident and reading with expression</li> <li>•Ask questions, check answers,</li> <li>•Can students discuss reading material</li> </ul> <p>Mechanics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Decoding, fluency</li> </ul> <p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Slow down, ask questions, predict – formulate questions before</li> <li>•Praise student</li> <li>•Write answers</li> </ul> | <p>Learning needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Younger grades need phonemic awareness more than older, older blends, diagraphs, advanced consonants, word analysis</li> </ul>        |
| Bob  | <p>Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Exciting seeing techniques work</li> <li>•Likes read-a-louds but has students do something</li> </ul> <p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Would wear him out the way the teacher is instructing</li> </ul>    | <p>Approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•DI most effective teaching model, model, guide, assess, correct errors</li> <li>•Assess</li> </ul>  | <p>Classes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Classroom teacher does her own twist, not as strong on DI – doesn't do reading advantage like manual</li> </ul> <p>Student</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•ESL student was motivated to learn</li> </ul> <p>Teaching Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Assess by entering assignment scores into computer system</li> <li>•Connects reading to life skills like getting a job</li> </ul>  | <p>Approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Have decoding first, use more DI</li> <li>•Do more modeling, guided practice</li> <li>•Likes using graphic organizers with comprehension</li> <li>•Balanced approach – connect reading activities to life</li> <li>•DI for reading more effective</li> </ul> <p>Mechanics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Balance all 5</li> </ul> <p>Not Effective</p> | <p>Assess</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Chart progress with scores, CBA, graphic organizers, ask questions</li> </ul> <p>Mechanics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Fluency, comprehension</li> </ul> <p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Graphic organizers</li> <li>•Say words correctly, rate fluency</li> <li>•Teach memory tricks</li> </ul>   | <p>Affect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Miss school a lot</li> </ul> <p>Learning needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Different levels</li> <li>•need decoding</li> </ul> |

|        |   |   |   |  |  |   |
|--------|---|---|---|--|--|---|
|        |   |   |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not using DI – have to reteach individual students not as effective as teaching everyone first</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main ideas and supporting ideas</li> </ul>  |   |
| Julie  | <p>Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surprisingly liked DI</li> <li>• Really like Reading Mastery – all 5 components in one program – 25 minute lesson</li> <li>• Likes like DI</li> <li>• Lessons written- easy to pick up</li> <li>• Rewarding to learn theories and see application</li> <li>• Relying on intuition – giving confidence</li> <li>• Loves Reading Mastery – fun to see how cooperating teacher incorporates creativity</li> </ul>   |   | <p>Teaching Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focused on learning letters – realized students could move to next level and read words like Sam</li> <li>• Implementing what was taught = effective reading instruction</li> <li>• Cooperating teacher taught one-to-one correspondence</li> <li>• Students could blend when she was teaching letter names and sounds</li> <li>• Kids picking up reading with Reading Mastery</li> <li>• Dolce sight words, blending</li> <li>• One-to-one correspondence, poems, nursery rhymes</li> <li>• Language games</li> <li>• Repetition – high rates of response</li> <li>• Breaking skills into steps, letter names and sounds</li> </ul> <p>Assess</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counted sight words</li> <li>• Assessed PLP</li> <li>• DRA, DIBELS, timed readings</li> </ul> <p>Mechanics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fluency, phoneme, letter sounds</li> </ul> |  | <p>Assess</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CBA, DIEBLS</li> </ul> <p>Mechanics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phonics, fluency, comprehension, phonemic awareness problems</li> </ul> <p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move back a level</li> <li>• Require reading correctly</li> <li>• Ask questions, make connections, visualize, illustrate, break down</li> </ul> | <p>Affect/behavior</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student sensory issues</li> </ul> <p>Learning Needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Older students need PA, go back to the beginning</li> <li>• Need big 3</li> <li>• Younger phonics, PA, older need more comprehension and fluency -</li> </ul>  |
| LeAnne | <p>Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom teacher great model</li> <li>• Hopes to stay at school – really likes it</li> <li>• Nice to see students progressing</li> <li>• Nice to know she's learned stuff and it actually works</li> <li>• Believing what teachers said and trying it and seeing it work – nice</li> <li>• Exciting to see students improve in skills</li> </ul> <p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doesn't like collecting data daily – thinks weekly is adequate</li> </ul> | <p>Approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have to involve interactions with students, get kids responding</li> <li>• Assess</li> <li>• Need to assess learning and see where students are- adjust instruction</li> </ul> | <p>Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteered in preschool</li> <li>• Students</li> <li>• 1<sup>st</sup> grader is remembering sounds in middle of words</li> <li>• Trying to decide what to do with student – absent a lot, but might be dyslexic – thinking about Wilson group</li> <li>• Rockets motivate students – one student completes work to shoot off rocket</li> <li>• Student reads incorrectly because of attention – looks around the room a</li> </ul>  | <p>Approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have students read aloud- not silent</li> </ul> <p>Mechanics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure students are getting everything – all 5</li> </ul> <p>Not Effective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Silent reading – not correcting errors when silent reading</li> <li>• Not interacting with the teacher,</li> <li>• Not checking responses</li> </ul> | <p>Assess</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check reading and errors, mark errors see if improving</li> <li>• Collect data</li> <li>• MAZE</li> <li>• Ask questions</li> </ul> <p>Mechanics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decoding</li> <li>• Comprehension is lacking, not fluency or decoding problem</li> </ul> <p>Strategies</p>   | <p>Affect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading is hard for students because they are so far behind – get frustrated</li> <li>• Some behavior issues – one student apathetic</li> <li>• Finishing work issue for some students</li> <li>• Motivated by rockets</li> </ul> <p>Learning needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need decoding and a lot of practice decoding and understanding words</li> </ul> |

lot

Teaching Reading

- With younger children don't change groups
- Rotate with older – teach basic skills – big 5
- Uses my turn, our turn, and your turn for teaching phonics to younger
- Gave probes before conference, students made lots of progress
- Good to show parents progress
- Use DIBELS, MAZES for comprehension

- Teach decoding
- Explicitly teach letter names and sounds
- Comprehension discussions
- Teach vocabulary
- Ask questions
- Monitor reading
- Stop and talk about reading

- Fluency, has impact on comprehension, need help with fluency and comprehension

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| <p>Maddi</p> | <p>Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loves DI for teaching math</li> <li>• Exciting to see progress with kids</li> <li>• Likes teaching reading</li> <li>• Joy in special education</li> </ul> <p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not fair to the kids to do a DI lesson only for observer – tough doing the step for comprehension when she doesn't believe its effective</li> <li>• Doesn't expect students with disabilities to be strong readers</li> <li>• Doesn't know how to teach reading skills – frustrating</li> <li>• Hasn't been able to create lessons that include all elements of effective teaching cycle</li> <li>• Tough to do the effective teaching cycle for reading – in every lesson</li> <li>• Tough not knowing what to teach – doesn't remember learning how to comprehend</li> <li>• No materials, tough bringing in big 5 in lessons</li> <li>• Lost at the beginning of the year</li> <li>• Don't know where to begin to teach – struggle didn't know how to effectively teach big 5</li> <li>• Frustrating not knowing what to teach and having to develop</li> </ul> | <p>Approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wants instruction to be intense -</li> </ul> | <p>Behavior</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conference with the student – need to contact his parents and find a translator</li> <li>• Had previous conferences – one last week – that's why contacting parents</li> <li>• Student laying on floor refusing to work – has to pick battles with him</li> <li>• Students hard to keep track of</li> <li>• Wasn't going to give up on student</li> <li>• When behavior is bad thinks lessons are lacking</li> <li>• Doesn't take behavior problems personally when thinking it's about instruction</li> <li>• Student wants to escape work – not going to let him</li> <li>• Most difficult kids in her classes</li> </ul> <p>Classes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In reading class mostly focused on DIBELS- introduced to big 5 but not taught how to teach them.</li> <li>• For observations she has to include steps and have the students repeat the steps</li> </ul> <p>Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student can read anything – but doesn't comprehend material – said he learned that words have meaning</li> </ul> | <p>Approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to focus on comprehension – experience with student – words mean something</li> <li>• Searched online for comprehension strategies and worksheets</li> <li>• Wants to focus on functional reading skills, menus, job applications, etc.</li> <li>• Comprehension is most important to teach</li> <li>• Connect reading to their lives</li> <li>• Direct teaching cycle super important</li> <li>• Need to understand rationale for what they are learning</li> <li>• Thinks structured program has lots of strengths – effective teaching cycle complete in one lesson</li> <li>• DI instruction with steps for comprehension, doesn't work, need strategies (talking, making connections)</li> <li>• Teach vocabulary using DI</li> <li>• High rates of response</li> </ul> <p>Assess</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mechanics</li> <li>• Not Effective</li> <li>• Steps for teaching comprehension skills</li> </ul> | <p>Assess</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress monitor fluency, reading words correctly, phonics, and comprehension</li> <li>• DIBELS</li> <li>• Ask questions</li> <li>• Retell count errors</li> </ul> <p>Mechanics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needs phonics and decoding and fluency,</li> <li>• Comprehension, decoding good, and fluency</li> </ul> <p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take his time, read every word, set up expectation for accuracy</li> <li>• Stop after every sentence, draw a picture, make a connection,</li> <li>• Teach how to answer questions</li> </ul> | <p>Affect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need routines – super strong knowing what to do</li> </ul> <p>Learning needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can read for one minute – have problems reading for sustained periods of time</li> <li>• Aren't going to be strong readers -</li> </ul> |
|--------------|--|---|--|--|---|--|

curriculum by self

- Asking for help and not getting help she needs, not knowing what she is doing
- Creating effective lessons with effective teaching cycle is difficult
- 2 full time jobs- one curriculum developer, one teacher
- Difficult to develop curriculum and individualize instruction

Teaching Reading

- One day mostly individual
- Typical days, fluency, phonics, comprehension practice and strategies, writing
- Tries to model and guide practice
- 2 minutes of phonics
- Modeling and guided practice
- Vocabulary practice
- DIBELS
- DAZE
- Fluency charting
- Calls back a student and reads with him, asks questions
- Practice word lists, phonics, fluency and decoding
- Does individualized phonics
- Teaches comprehension skills, main ideas and details, sequencing,
- PA and phonics not a big focus
- has academic vocabulary list she is teaching

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| <p>Novalea</p> | <p>Positive<br/>Likes her program as a program for students with disabilities</p> <p>Negative<br/>• Hard to find topics that connect with other things in students' lives<br/>• Bad person – does hard core decoding instruction<br/>• Hard to get the students engaged with the decoding instruction<br/>• Classroom management is hard<br/>• Hard to motivate students to want to read</p> | <p>Approach<br/>• Need to keep students engaged and need to be positive with students<br/>• Build their confidence<br/>• Be careful on how to correct errors<br/>• ESL different than special education – don't need intensive decoding instruction, get comprehension, language and vocab.<br/>• Get students to engage<br/>• Get students to connect<br/>• Make information accessible for students<br/>• ESL and spec. ed. go hand in hand –</p> | <p>Experience<br/>• Learning a second language – need to connect through experience<br/>• First year of tutoring, didn't have any idea of what to do<br/>• Home schooled<br/>• Worked with Dr. Martin with ESL research<br/>• ESL work definitely influences thinking</p> <p>Behavior<br/>• Managing behavior 80% of energy</p> <p>Reading<br/>• Learned to read on her own<br/>• Mother encouraged her to read<br/>• Matthew effect positive for her<br/>• Reads a lot</p> | <p>Approach<br/>• Connect reading and reading skills to life to transfer more easily<br/>• Need to create a product – read something, write something<br/>• Involve parents – have students read at home and on their own<br/>• Students need to read</p> <p>Assess<br/>• Don't let students know you are marking errors – discourages them</p> <p>Not Effective<br/>• If instruction is boring and they are not engaged</p> | <p>Assess<br/>• Keep running record for 2 weeks, record errors, do fluency assessment count words – check every two weeks<br/>• Check vocabulary knowledge<br/>• Assess whether difficulty is a comprehension issue or memory problem.<br/>• See how student responds to instruction</p> <p>Mechanics<br/>• Decoding, sight words, increase fluency<br/>• Comprehension difficulty<br/>• Needs more decoding skills, balance of comprehension and decoding</p> | <p>Affect<br/>• Students not motivated to read because reading is hard – will do anything else<br/>• Kids have attention problems<br/>• Need motivation for reading</p> <p>Learning needs<br/>• Need decoding practice – needs to be balanced, also need comprehension and need to connect reading to lives<br/>• Can decode well, comprehension is an issue, and fluency<br/>• Hard to transfer skills for comprehension<br/>• All students different</p> |
|----------------|--|---|---|--|--|--|

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|-------------------|--|--|---|
| language learning | <p>Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student was reading CVC words, now reading multi-syllable words</li> </ul> <p>Teaching Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Takes running records of reading word lists – marks errors</li> <li>• Learning the rules as students are learning them – experience with chamber saying it incorrectly</li> <li>• Makes connections to students' lives when introducing new concepts</li> <li>• Program focuses more on basic skills than on grammar – mandatory to teach</li> <li>• Teaches a new comprehension skill once a week</li> <li>• Program is DI with structure, gives scaffolding</li> <li>• Not balanced with writing</li> <li>• Other teacher guided writing and teaches</li> <li>• For comprehension group, teaches comprehension 20 minutes, other skills rest of the time,</li> <li>• For decoding group – 35 minutes decoding and 10 minutes reading a passage and comprehension</li> <li>• Wilson very intensive with rules and decoding practice</li> </ul> | <p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work on sequencing</li> <li>• Act out, teach decoding rules</li> <li>• Take notes, teach memory strategies,</li> <li>• Teach main idea and details, triumphs</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need support at home</li> <li>• Have decoding problems</li> <li>• Fluency is an issue</li> <li>• Students need 30 minutes of hard core decoding instruction</li> </ul> |
|-------------------|--|--|---|

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|-------|---|--|--|--|---|
| Susan | <p>Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strongly believe kids need comp.</li> <li>• Glad to do other reading besides Wilson</li> <li>• Does not feel expected to be robotic with Wilson</li> <li>• Wilson good for building skills</li> <li>• Structure of Wilson good</li> <li>• Nice not to have to read a script</li> </ul> <p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Snapping and DI in practicum felt false</li> </ul> | <p>Classes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easier for ESL students to transfer reading skills if they learned to read in their native language – most know how to read</li> </ul> <p>Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student confident with Wilson</li> <li>• Student makes up words while reading</li> <li>• ESL student misdiagnosed</li> <li>• Groups compete to get through lessons</li> <li>• One student good at tapping out</li> </ul> | <p>Approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell expectations to tap/decode words</li> <li>• Explain rules and encourage generalization</li> <li>• Use an established program</li> <li>• ESL and spec. ed. mixed in her class</li> <li>• Explain rationale and tell expectations for decoding words using skills</li> </ul> <p>Mechanics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decoding, bigger focus on comprehension, teach students to ask themselves questions</li> <li>• Not Effective</li> <li>• Give them a book and tell them to read</li> </ul> | <p>Assess</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have read, is using skills, watch decoding, chart words, require accurate reading</li> </ul> <p>Mechanics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fluency, decoding, need comprehension</li> </ul> <p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Break up passages, ask questions, retell,</li> <li>• Teach inflection</li> <li>• Word by word reading, slow down, read out loud</li> </ul> | <p>Affect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need structure and routines for learning</li> </ul> <p>Learning needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehension poor-don't generalize</li> <li>• Have language barriers</li> <li>• Read without knowing they don't understand</li> <li>• Need decoding and comprehension</li> </ul> |
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|-------|---|---|---|--|---|--|
|       |   |   | <p>Teaching Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Wilson – 10 elements</li> <li>•Word structure</li> <li>•Not a lot of comprehension</li> <li>•Chart words read in program</li> <li>•Fluency, decoding, PA, - classroom reader treasures covers comprehension</li> </ul>  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Break up passages, ask questions, summarize</li> </ul>  |  |
| Tessa | <p>Affect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Some students grew on her, others didn't</li> </ul> <p>Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Relieved to hear other people struggle too</li> <li>•Fun to read Hunger Games and have students want to hear more</li> </ul> <p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•First day with overhead terrible</li> <li>•Work with overhead bad</li> <li>•Student teaching hard- doesn't know what the teacher expects – pull back, no, do more,</li> <li>•Hardest thing in student teaching is thinking for herself</li> <li>•Couldn't do the worksheets anymore – didn't like the structure – didn't think it was helping students like reading</li> <li>•Doesn't like doing whole rewards thinks students pay more attention when don't go through one section</li> </ul> | <p>Approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Need to be flexible to meet kids' needs</li> <li>•Adjust curriculum</li> <li>•Doesn't have enough experience to know what to do</li> <li>•Need hands on activities</li> </ul> | <p>Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Worked at a high school for a couple of months – worked with elementary kids all year</li> </ul> <p>Classes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Not really prepped for high school setting, mostly elementary</li> <li>•Different experience with supervisors – mentor in practicum would coach other teachers</li> </ul> <p>Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•A couple of students don't know how to handle books</li> <li>•Kids didn't like the worksheets</li> </ul> <p>Teaching Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•At first used worksheets with read aloud book – didn't like them, quit using them</li> <li>•Have students do Facebook pages about characters</li> <li>•Independent reading every 4 or 5 weeks</li> <li>•Trying to break away from worksheets – include something more tangible</li> <li>•Assessing fluency periodically, correcting worksheets</li> <li>•Does reading rewards – for 10 minutes every week or 2</li> <li>•Fluency practice</li> <li>•Uses reading advantage program periodically</li> <li>•Vocab daily</li> </ul> | <p>Approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Wants students to enjoy reading so they are motivated to comprehend themselves</li> <li>•Wants students to understand characters in book to relate to their own life</li> <li>•Need support for reading material</li> <li>•Students need to picture what's going on</li> <li>•Be flexible and keep a watchful eye on students</li> <li>•See needs of specific readers</li> <li>•Work in smaller groups</li> <li>•Use reading rewards, read with them,</li> <li>•Have parents help</li> <li>•Support at home</li> </ul> <p>Not Effective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Throwing reading material at students without support</li> </ul> | <p>Assess</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•See how student does re-reading the same passage, or another one at the same level</li> <li>•Have student summarize</li> </ul> <p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Have student read out loud, don't correct every mistake</li> <li>•Work with mom at the back of the room</li> <li>•Have student re-read some sentences</li> <li>•One-to-one instruction</li> <li>•Summarize passages</li> </ul> | <p>Affect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Students have hardest time with attention – following along</li> <li>•Need confidence</li> </ul> <p>Learning needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Students' minds shut off if it is too much</li> <li>•Need one-to-one</li> <li>•Some of students don't need choral responding</li> <li>•Pull them aside</li> </ul> |