THE IMPACT OF INTERVENTIONS ON STRUGGLING STUDENTS UTILIZING A
RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION MODEL

By

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
Department of Educational Leadership

DECEMBER 2011

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To the Faculty of Washington State University:

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank my lovely wife Adrienne and darling daughters Madeline and Kate for all the love, support, patience, encouragement, and time to write on weekends and nights. I know the amount of time away from family activities has been difficult at times, but your understanding, support, and encouragement have helped me to reach this goal. It is my hope and wish that this process has helped us all learn, grow together, and appreciate each other even more. I promise I’ll make all the time up to you.

I would like to thank my chairperson, Dr. Paul Goldman, for his mentorship and guidance during this research study. His constant questioning, feedback, encouragement, and patience have helped me reach this point. I would also like to thank my other committee members, Dr. Michael Dunn, Dr. Gay Selby, and Dr. Gene Sharratt, for their guidance, feedback, and willingness to share their expertise and extensive knowledge. In addition, I want to thank Dr. Kristin Huggins for her time, feedback, encouragement, and persistence keeping me on track during this project.

Finally, I want to thank everyone I work with and the staff that participated in the study. Without their support, time, effort, expertise, and commitment to education this research study would not have been possible. I greatly appreciate all that they do and give everyday to improve the lives of staff, parents, and students.
THE IMPACT OF INTERVENTIONS ON STRUGGLING STUDENTS UTILIZING A RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION MODEL

Abstract

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December 2011

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The purpose of this action research study was: (a) to explore the relationship of student achievement in reading employing the Woodcock Interpretation and Instructional Interventions Program (WIIIP) within the Response to Intervention (RTI) model (b) to examine the relationship between the WIIIP and the rate of progress of four students who participated in Reading Mastery, one student who participated in Corrective Reading, and one student who participated in both Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading and (c) to determine if staff involved in the intervention process believe the WIIIP data program interventions impacted the rate of progress for each student.

Methods included quantitative and qualitative elements that involved case studies of six students attending one of three elementary schools implementing an RTI model during the 2010-2011 school year as well as data about each student’s reading progress over time. In addition, the study included an analysis of documents and interviews with those educators engaged in the diagnosis and interventions for the students. The staff involved included the school psychologist, special education teacher, intervention instructor, and general education teacher involved with the case study students. These data produced information that contributed to the understanding of factors that impact the staff roles and experiences implementing RTI, the RTI implementation process, the
alignment of specific reading interventions, awareness and communication, and the
overall perceptions of staff and assessment data regarding the impact on individual
reading progress.
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Dedication

To my wife Adrienne and daughters Madeline and Kate
Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Since the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA; 2004) and No Child Left Behind (NCLB; 2001) new models of instruction and intervention have emerged to address the educational needs of every child. Appendix A offers definitions of NCLB and IDEA. Amongst these is the Response to Intervention (RTI) model (Appendix A). RTI provides a way to address the challenges and potential of NCLB and IDEA for improving the outcomes for all students, including students with disabilities. RTI integrates assessment and interventions within a school’s multi-tiered prevention system to maximize student achievement and minimize behavior concerns. Schools utilizing an RTI model identify students at risk for poor learning outcomes, monitor student progress, provide evidence-based interventions and modify interventions based on progress-monitoring data.

RTI has the potential to initiate early intervention for students with academic difficulties, rather than waiting for them to fail before receiving assistance, or being tested and found eligible for special education services. Some advocate that RTI caters to the cultural and linguistic differences when designing interventions, reducing the disproportionate identification of minority students for special education (National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems, 2005). Typically, RTI is divided into two intervention stages for the delivery of services. One is the problem-solving approach and the other is the standard protocol approach (Fuchs and Fuchs 2007; Gresham 2007; Hollenbeck 2007).
Problem-Solving Approach

The problem-solving approach is typically a three-tiered leveled system of support targeted to solve student achievement problems and sometimes behavior problems. It involves problem identification, problem analysis, plan implementation, and evaluation (Batsche, et al., 2006; Fuchs, Mock, Morgan and Young, 2003). This systematic approach reviews student strengths and weakness, guided by an analysis of instructional strategies that are designed to isolate target skill deficits and shape targeted interventions (Barnett, Daly, Jones & Lentz, 2004). Problem-solving models include early intervention in the general education classroom with supports and ongoing progress monitoring. The cycle of selecting interventions and collecting data is repeated with the assistance of grade level team members, a problem-solving team, or intervention specialists. The collaborative nature of the approach is one of the key attributes that make the problem-solving model effective. The use of systematic problem analysis involves collaboration with school personnel (e.g., special education teachers, school psychologists, and intervention staff) utilizing consultation and questioning to pinpoint the allocation of resources (Burns, Wiley, & Viglietta, 2008).

Standard Protocol Approach

The standard protocol approach involves a “universal screener,” usually an instrument that measures oral reading fluency, to identify student learning problems. Students identified by the screener receive delivery of research-based intervention programs focused on specific skill sets. The standard protocol approach incorporates a structured intervention process and fixed instructional content, with students receiving additional interventions in a small group setting. The standard protocol allows more
students to be served with commonly accepted and used treatment protocols (Fuchs et al., 2003). Since the intervention is predetermined (usually a reading program), there is little time spent determining which interventions might target the weaknesses of the individual student.

RTI integrates assessment and intervention within a multi-level prevention system to maximize student achievement and to reduce behavioral problems. Through the application of RTI, schools identify students at risk for poor learning outcomes, monitor student progress, provide evidence-based interventions, adjust the intensity and nature of those interventions depending on a student’s responsiveness, and identify students with learning disabilities or other disabilities (National Center on Response to Intervention, n.d.).

The implementation of a RTI model requires educational leaders and school personnel to use research-based strategies to adjust systems and structures within the district and schools to support the educational process and remove any barriers. Current research of RTI can be characterized as having two strands: (1) intervention studies investigating the efficacy and delivery of special remedial methods, and (2) field studies evaluating the RTI process itself (National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities [NJCLD], 2005, p. 11). The NJCLD in 2005 noted that there is little information in existing intervention studies regarding the RTI process and student success over time.

In addition, Reynolds and Shaywitz (2009) identified the apparent lack of student-based data to guide the effective selection of approaches and components of intervention in existing studies. LaRocco and Murdica (2009) seem to be leading the next wave of research with a comparative case study that involved two urban elementary schools that
were awarded a competitive grant to develop a specific RTI framework and scale-up of scientific research-based implementations (SRBI).

Reynolds and Shaywitz (2009) recognized that RTI models of diagnosis and intervention are being implemented rapidly throughout schools across the nation. The principle of the RTI model provides high quality instruction, interventions, and research-based curriculum to maximize student achievement. However, RTI models are being put into practice without adequate research, systematic support, and guidance on how to best implement the model. District and school teams need research data and leadership on how to create an effective RTI system and increase academic achievement of all students. Thus, this research sought to study the reading achievement of six students provided Corrective Reading (Engelmann, Meyer, Carnine, Becker, Eisele, & Johnson, 1998) or Reading Mastery (Engelmann & Bruner, 1995) and interventions recommended from the Woodcock Interpretation and Instructional Interventions Program (WIIIP; Schrank, Wendling, & Woodcock, 2008) within the Cascade School District’s RTI model. Appendix A offers definitions of Corrective Reading, Reading Mastery and the WIIIP.

The WIIIP (2008) is a computer software program designed to help school psychologists create comprehensive psychological and educational reports that describe the performance of individuals who were administered the Woodcock Johnson III Tests of Cognitive Abilities and/or the Woodcock Johnson III Tests of Achievement NU Complete (WJ III NU; Woodcock, McGrew, & Mather, 2001, 2007). For students who demonstrate limited proficiency on one or more WJ III tests, the WIIIP generates evidence-based instructional interventions that are targeted at addressing each
individual’s specific limitations according to a pattern analysis of the results of the WJ III NU tests.

Thus, the purpose of this action research study was: (a) to explore the relationship of student achievement in reading, employing the Woodcock Interpretation and Instructional Interventions Program (WIIIP) within the Response to Intervention (RTI) model (b) to explore the relationship between the WIIIP and the rate of progress of three to four students who participated in Reading Mastery curriculum, one student who participated in Corrective Reading curriculum, one student who participated in both Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading curricula and (c) to determine if staff involved in the intervention process believe the WIIIP interventions impacted the rate of progress for each student.

The RTI model is designed to combine the efforts of general and special education teachers in a proactive process to assist all students in meeting academic standards by providing support through tiered instruction in reading. Interventions are provided in the general education setting to attempt to decrease the number of students qualified with a Specific Learning Disability (SLD) in reading. The RTI framework has strong potential with regard to how its multi-layered structure can be implemented in the early grades to strengthen the intensity and effectiveness of reading instruction for at-risk students (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006).

The most common RTI multi-tier service delivery model recommended in literature is the three-tier model (Marston, 2005; O’Connor, 2003; Tilly, 2003; Vaughan, 2003). Considerable knowledge is available with regard to RTI models utilizing tiered interventions, while very little is known about utilizing the WIIIP in conjunction with
intervention programs within an RTI model. Specifically, the purpose of the study is to determine if the use of interventions generated from the WIIIP data program positively impact the reading performance of Tier 2 and Tier 3 students and results in the reduction of the initial referral rate of students for special education in the area of reading within the RTI model. Research questions addressed through the study include:

1. What is the relationship between student achievement in reading and employing the Woodcock Interpretation and Instructional Interventions Program (WIIIP) within the RTI model?

2. What is the relationship between the WIIIP and the rate of progress of four students who participated in Reading Mastery, one student who participated in Corrective Reading, and one student who participated in both Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading?

3. Did the school staff involved in the intervention process believe the WIIIP interventions impacted the rate of progress for each student?
Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Special Education Policy History

In 1975, Congress passed Public Law 94-142 (Education of All Handicapped Children Act), later reauthorized as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In order to receive federal money, states needed to develop and implement policies that assured students with disabilities received a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). Thus, once students with a disability were determined to be eligible for special education services, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) was developed to shape a student’s educational program in order to ensure FAPE. To help provide FAPE for students with disabilities, IDEA also included the Child Find mandate. The Child Find process required all school districts to identify, locate and evaluate all children with disabilities from birth through age twenty-one. IDEA and the Child Find identification process greatly increased the number of students identified with a disability and eligible for special education services.

As the implementation of IDEA increased, the number of students identified as having a disability continued to grow. Students with disabilities were identified and qualified into one of fourteen specific disability categories. The category that demonstrated the most exponential growth was students identified as having Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD). This led states to ask Congress for assistance in identifying children with a Learning Disability (LD). Appendix A contains definitions of SLD and LD.

In 1977, the U.S. Office of Education, in an effort to assist states, formalized a
severe discrepancy model as the primary criteria for identifying a Learning Disability (LD), or more commonly known as a Specific Learning Disability (SLD) for special education eligibility. Criterion for qualification was established in an attempt to reduce the over-identification of students as having a SLD. Martinez, Nellis, and Prendergast (2006) noted that according to PL 94-142 a team assessing students for special education services needed to show that a student exhibits, “…a severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability,” in one or more of seven achievement areas (e.g., reading comprehension and mathematics calculations). As stipulated in the federal regulations, each state was given jurisdiction to operationalize procedures for determining a severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability (Martinez, Nellis, and Prendergast, 2006). Most states chose to represent a severe discrepancy as a numerical difference between a norm-referenced measure of academic achievement and a standard score on a standardized intelligent quotient (IQ) test.

Currently, the process of establishing a severe discrepancy typically involves the administration of individualized potential and academic (achievement) tests utilizing a direct comparison of obtained standard scores (generally based upon a student's age rather than grade placement). The IQ score is derived from one of several different standardized tests designed to assess the child’s potential for learning. The resulting information is used to determine whether a child's academic performance is commensurate with his or her cognitive ability. If a cognitive ability is much higher than his or her academic performance that indicates a severe discrepancy and the student may be diagnosed with LD. Many researchers (Vellutino, Scanlon, Sipay, Small, Chen, Pratt, & Denckla, 1996) consider a score in the 25th percentile or lower in academic
achievement on the Woodcock Johnson III test to be “true LD.” While forty-eight out of the fifty states have required a severe IQ-achievement discrepancy in their SLD eligibility criteria, there has been variability in the magnitude of the discrepancy required (Martinez et al., 2006). Required discrepancies range from a fifteen-to-thirty point difference between expected and actual student performance on assessment measures (Reschly, Hosp, & Schmeid, 2003).

Despite over three decades of implementing a severe discrepancy model the number of students found eligible, as having SLD, has continued to grow. The number of students classified as LD has increased two-hundred percent since 1977 (Bradley, Danielson, & Doolittle, 2005; & Kavale, 2008). In addition, Bradley et al. (2005) note that about half of the students evaluated for special education had IQ scores in the borderline to low average range of abilities (seventy-one to eighty-five), and many of the students in this range did not demonstrate a severe discrepancy between ability and achievement. Additionally, Kavale and Reese (1992) indicated that up to fifty percent of the SLD populations have been found to not meet the required discrepancy criterion. Over a decade later, Wedl (2005) found that potentially up to seventy percent of students that have been identified, as SLD did not meet the established criterion for identification. Furthermore the U.S. Department of Education, Special Education Programs (2007) reported that forty-four percent of all students with disabilities are classified as LD.

The traditional severe discrepancy model approach to SLD diagnosis has been considered inconsistent among states and widely criticized (Ysseldyke, Algozzine, & Epps 1983). There are several issues regarding the criteria for LD eligibility. Gresham
(2001, p. 1) noted, “Findings over the past fifteen years have pointed out the lack of consistent definition in policy or practice in the identification of LD students.”

Lyon et al. (2001) noted the result of the severe discrepancy model is an over-reliance on discrepancy, meaning that children must fail or fall below a predicted level of performance before they are eligible for special education services. “Because achievement failure sufficient to produce a discrepancy from IQ cannot be reliably measured until a child reaches approximately nine year of age, the use of IQ-discrepancy constitutes a ‘wait-to-fail’ model” (Lyon et al., 2001, p. 266). The result is a system that requires students to experience significant and persistent failure across the early elementary years before they can be identified as SLD based on the severe discrepancy model. Gresham, VanDerHeyden, and Witt (2005) note that waiting to serve children until later in the elementary years (that is, grade one to grade four) increases their odds of being identified as having a learning disability by 450 percent. The United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services noted the need to move away from the severe discrepancy model because “the IQ-discrepancy criterion is potentially harmful to students as it results in delaying intervention until a student’s achievement is sufficiently low so that discrepancy is achieved” (Gersten and Dimino, 2006, p. 101).

A consensus was formed amongst education professionals, parents, community members, and legislators that the traditional IQ/Achievement Discrepancy model for identifying students as LD was not working. LD remained one of the least understood and most debated disabling conditions that affected school-aged children (Fletcher et al., 1992; Siegel, 1992; Kavale, 2001; Lyon et al., 2001; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 2002;
Stuebing, Fletcher, LeDoux, Lyon, Shaywitz, & Shaywitz, 2002; President’s Commission on Excellence in Special Education, 2002). The traditional method for identifying students led the federal government to explore new ways to address this issue. Thus, education reform during the past twenty years began to focus on sound prevention programs to significantly reduce the number of students identified as LD, developing methods that focused on early identification and research-based instructional practices (Lyon et al., 2001; Martinez et al., 2006).

The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 2001 focused federal and state attention on the academic achievement of all students by looking at the academic achievement of subgroups of historically underperforming students, including students with disabilities. Trimble (1998) noted that the achievement gap between students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers increased across different grade levels. Additional findings from the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) summarized the passing rates for students with disabilities and students without disabilities across several states. In every state reviewed, the passing rate for students identified with disabilities was found to be lower than non-disabled peers (Ysseldyke et al., 1998). The difference in passing rates between disabled students and non-disabled students ranged from twenty-three percent to forty-seven percent, with an average difference of thirty-seven percent (Thurlow et al., 2000).

In 2001, Gresham’s seminal article Responsiveness to Intervention: An Alternative Approach to the Identification of Learning Disabilities highlighted the problems associated with the LD identification process, the research history of alternative identification processes, and presented the concept of RTI based on the use of a
discrepancy approach using pre- and post-intervention levels of performance rather than between ability and achievement. The concept of RTI and the focus on early identification and intervention programs were recommendations contained within the Commission on Excellence in Special Education report in 2002.

In 2002, Congress amended ESEA and reauthorized it as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). The major focus of NCLB addressed the need to close student achievement gaps by providing all children with a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education. To accomplish the goal that all students, regardless of their subgroup, meet or exceed the State’s standards, NCLB established timelines in order to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). NCLB, Sec. 111 (b)(F), requires that “each state shall establish a timeline for adequate yearly progress (AYP).” AYP is a diagnostic tool that determines how schools need to improve and where financial resources should be allocated. Those schools that do not meet AYP for two years in a row are identified as “schools in need of improvement” and are subject to immediate interventions by their State Education Agency.

The reauthorization of the IDEA in 2004 further supported the goal of the ESEA that seeks “to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach or exceed minimum proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments” (Sec. 1001, Part A, Title 1 of ESEA; 20 U.S.C. 6301).

Similarly to the way NCLB (2001) has focused on the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education curriculum, IDEA (2004) provided the mechanism to monitor the progress of children in the general education environment and the use of
special education as a strategy after other interventions have been used with struggling learners. IDEA (2004) focused national attention on a growing potential practice in the general education setting and RTI as a tool to assess and work with struggling learners.

Due to major changes found within IDEA, RTI was highlighted in the law:

(1) “…when determining whether a child has a specific learning disability as defined in section 602, a local education agency shall not be required to take into consideration whether a child has a severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability…” [P.L. 108-446, 614(b)(6)(A)];

(2) “In determining whether a child has a specific learning disability, a local education agency may use a process that determines if the child responds to scientific, research-based intervention as a part of the evaluation procedures…” [P.L. 108-446, 614(b)(6)(B)]

In 2004, states and school districts were provided the option of adjusting the special education eligibility system by discontinuing the use of the severe discrepancy model as the primary criteria for identifying SLD. IDEA (2004) noted that the lack of appropriate instruction in reading and math is a determining factor in prohibiting a student from being found eligible for special education services. Appendix A offers the definition of IDEA. The lack of appropriate instruction, combined with educators and families dissatisfaction with the current system for identifying educational disabilities, led to the consideration for eligibility for these specialized services being expanded beyond only the use of the severe discrepancy model. IDEA (2004) established new provisions for SLD identification, including: (a) no longer requiring consideration of IQ-
achievement discrepancy, and (b) permitting Response To Intervention (RTI) as part of SLD evaluation procedures.

The language used in both IDEA (2004) and NCLB (2001) required school districts to use some form of scientifically-based research to guide intervention decisions, with the focus on early intervention services for students who need additional academic or behavioral support to succeed in the general education setting. This scientific, research-based intervention model for delivering differentiated instruction is commonly known as RTI.

Through RTI, the focus has shifted from the identification of students who fail to a systematic framework, concerned with individual interventions to improve the outcomes of all students. Currently, every state has incorporated an RTI model framework or initiative, or has published guidelines for districts to use in crafting their own evidenced-based evaluation and intervention programs (Griffin, 2010).

In April 2009, the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), the Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE), the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE), Spectrum K12 School Solutions and State Title 1 Directors joined together to conduct their third annual web-based survey of K-12 district administrators to gauge the extent to which RTI has been adopted and implemented (McGraw-Hill Education Policy Paper: Response to Intervention [RTI]). Among their findings were the following:

• Adoption and implementation rates for RTI have continued to rise in 2009, with seventy-one percent of respondents saying their districts are either piloting a RTI program, in the process of district-wide implementation, or have RTI in
district-wide use (versus sixty percent in 2008 and forty four percent in 2007); 

• RTI is increasingly being introduced across all grade levels, with a significant rise in high school implementation (fifty one percent having some level of implementation in 2009 compared to sixteen percent in 2008); 

• Eighty percent of districts do not yet have enough data to determine if RTI has led to an improvement in AYP. Of the districts with sufficient data, more than twice as many report RTI led to an improvement in AYP than those reporting no improvement; 

• Of districts with enough data, eighty three percent indicated RTI has reduced the number of referrals to special education; 

• Most districts are using a three-tier model of RTI, with seventy nine percent of districts reporting the use of three tiers, up from seventy three percent in 2008; and 

• A majority of districts continue to report RTI implementation is being led through a unified effort between general education and special education (Griffin, 2010, p. 6)

*Philosophy of Response to Intervention*

Several definitions of RTI as a service delivery model of instruction and intervention for all students have been described by various organizations. For example, the National Center on Response to Intervention offers the following definition of RTI that reflects what is currently known from research and evidence-based practice:

Response to intervention integrates assessment and intervention within a multi-level prevention system to maximize student achievement and to reduce behavior
problems. With RTI, schools identify students at risk for poor learning outcomes, monitor student progress, provide evidence-based interventions and adjust the intensity and nature of those interventions depending on a student’s responsiveness, and identify students with learning disabilities or other disabilities (2010, p. 2)

Another definition from the National Research Center on Learning Disabilities (NRCLD, 2011, p.1) defines RTI as: “…an education model that promotes early identification of students who may be at risk for learning difficulties.” Currently no formal definition of RTI exists, nor is there an RTI model that is well established and widely endorsed by researchers and educators (Cortiella, 2006).

Mellard (2003) noted that RTI is comprised of seven core principles that represent recommended RTI practices. These included: 1) use of all available resources to teach all students; 2) scientific research based intervention/instruction; 3) monitor performance; 4) conduct universal screening/benchmarking; 5) multi-tier model of service delivery; 6) data-based decision making; and 7) monitor progress frequently. Graner et al. (2005) identified eight primary features of RTI. These included 1) high quality instruction; 2) research based instruction; 3) classroom performance measures; 4) universal screening; 5) continuous progress monitoring; 6) research based interventions; 7) progress monitoring during interventions; and 8) fidelity measures.

The RTI model has generally been referred to in the literature as the three-tier model (e.g., Simmons, Kame’enui, & Good, 2002; Vaughn Gross Center, 2005). Figure 1 below represents a typical RTI three-tiered model.
The model encompasses all students within a school using a universal screener and a system placing students into various tiers. Each tier of the model represents a group of students and a level of support that is necessary for those students to be successful. The tiers are defined as Tier 1, or Benchmark; Tier 2, or Strategic; and Tier 3, or Intensive. The instruction and level of intervention provided to each student is based on the tier that the students are placed into after completion of a universal screener.

Tier 1 students are provided the core curriculum. Core curriculum is generally defined as scientific research-based general education curriculum that covers the standards and benchmarks that all students at a grade level receive. Tier 1 students’ progress is monitored at least three times per year to measure student growth and performance based on state standards.
Tier 2 students need supplemental instruction in addition to the core curriculum to become proficient and have their needs met. These students have not responded to the core curriculum alone and need supplemental instruction/intervention. Supplemental instruction/intervention is usually delivered in groups of three to six students. Supplemental instruction/intervention can range from additional time (30-35 minutes) in the core curriculum to strategically planned supplemental instruction/intervention. Usually ten weeks of supplemental instruction/intervention will be provided in a cycle with the option of an additional ten-week cycle being available if student performance warrants it (Tilly, 2006). The frequency of progress monitoring increases at this tier to once or twice per week. The supplemental instruction/intervention is implemented for an extended period of time, generally nine to twelve weeks. Students that respond successfully and do not need supplemental instruction/intervention return to Tier 1. Those students that do not respond positively to the supplemental instruction/intervention either receive additional supplemental instruction/intervention or move on to Tier 3.

In Tier 3 students generally have more extensive and significant needs. Students receive additional intensive supplemental instruction/intervention matched to the student’s need. Torgesen (2004) noted that individual student characteristics apply at this level of instruction as well, and both the amount and intensity of instruction at this level are even more concentrated. Intensive instruction for students is typically individualized in both type and amount. For many students with intensive instruction, 180 minutes of explicit, intensive instruction a day may be required (Tilly, 2006). Instruction is provided in individual or small groups. Students’ progress is more frequently monitored, generally on a daily or weekly basis. The goal is to accelerate their learning to a rate where they
can begin to close the achievement gap between themselves and their peers. For students who close the gap in Tier 3, they move to Tier 1, or possibly Tier 2. For those students who do not close the gap and continue to fall behind in Tier 3, the students continue Tier 3 intensive interventions, or they are referred for a comprehensive special education evaluation to determine eligibility for services and an Individualized Education Program (IEP). See Appendix A for the definition of IEP.
Chapter 3

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Background Information

The Cascade School District is located in Washington State and had seventeen elementary schools at the time of this study. During the 2008-2009 school year, the board adopted an RTI policy and procedures permitting the implementation of a three-tier RTI model designed to serve students kindergarten through sixth grade in the area of reading. According to district policy and procedures, research-based interventions with at least three levels of assistance that increase in intensity were to be provided.

The district began to put into practice an RTI model to ensure that all students receive high quality, scientific, research-based general education core instruction and, as appropriate, strategic and intensive intervention supports matched to student needs. The district utilized the core principles of the RTI process, which combines systematic assessment, decision-making and a multi-tiered services delivery model. The district’s process is designed to identify students’ challenges early and provide appropriate instruction to ensure improved student performance in the area of reading.

RTI Procedures

Universal Tier 1 instructional screenings in the area of reading, using a criterion-referenced assessment called the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), are conducted at least three times throughout the school year in September, January, and June, to identify each student’s level of reading proficiency. Universal screenings are administered and scored by trained members of the RTI problem-solving teams. In addition, several schools also have a group of professionals that meet
approximately every six weeks to monitor student reading performance using DIBELS. DIBELS assesses student performance in the area of reading, specifically the areas of phonological awareness, alphabetic understanding, and automaticity (See Appendix A).

DIBELS is a one-minute oral reading fluency measurement used to monitor the emergency and development of reading skills. Specifically, DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency (DORF) which identifies the number of words read correctly in one minute is used to both screen and progress-monitor students starting in the first grade. The DIBELS Data System is used to compare and monitor individual student performance against grade level peers and targeted benchmarks of performance. The elementary schools use the established cut scores of the district-approved universal screener DIBELS to determine which students are at academic risk. Following each universal screening administration, the school’s RTI team reviews the program and progress of any student who does not score at the Tier 1 benchmark to assure the student is receiving differentiated, needs-based instruction. In addition, the team reviews the fidelity of program implementation, and the pacing and appropriateness of instructional groupings.

Tier 1 includes the research-based core curriculum ensuring student access to high quality, effective and engaging instruction. Such programming is delivered in the general classroom setting by a general education teacher and is designed to meet the needs of all students through differentiated instruction. Tier 1 progress monitoring uses DIBELS in addition to summative and formative assessments to diagnose specific areas of need to inform instructional programming. If, after using summative and formative data to adjust programming, the teacher determines the student is still not on a trajectory to meet end-
of-year benchmarks, the teacher initiates a grade level meeting to develop strategic Tier 2 interventions and progress monitoring.

Tier 2 strategic interventions are designed by the grade level teams and delivered primarily in the general education setting. Interventions may be delivered in other settings and may be provided by other trained staff to the specific intervention in reading as appropriate. Tier 2 interventions are scientific researched-based, matched to student need and implemented with fidelity and monitored. Typically, Tier 2 interventions are provided in addition to regularly scheduled core instruction in the general education curriculum and delivered in a small group setting according to the Tier 2 intervention schedule. Tier 2 interventions are delivered for at least nine complete weeks (five school days a week), unless progress-monitoring data reveals a need for a change in intervention, frequency, or duration. DIBELS probes are administered at least twice a month, or as determined by the RTI team. Probe results are compared against normed benchmarks set within the approved progress-monitoring system. After a minimum of nine complete school weeks of Tier 2 strategic intervention, the RTI or grade level team meets to review the student’s program and progress. Based on the review, the team determines whether the intervention should continue because progress-monitoring data indicates the intervention is working, or that the student should return to Tier 1 core instruction with continued progress monitoring because the student has met benchmark, or that the student is non-responsive to the Tier 2 strategic intervention. If the student is non-responsive and has not made progress at a rate consistent with the trajectory aim line (i.e. three consecutive progress-monitoring data points below the aim line and is not on a trajectory to meet end-of-the year benchmark), the RTI or grade level team guide the
teacher or intervention instructor to analyze the intervention delivery to ensure fidelity of program implementation, pacing, and appropriateness of instructional groupings and student access. Based on the review, the team determines if additional district-approved diagnostic assessments are warranted, changes to the instructional interventions are required, or the student requires Tier 3 intensive intervention.

Tier 3 intensive interventions provide students with research-based intervention supplemental curriculum (Reading Mastery for grades K-3, and Corrective Reading for grades 3-6). General education teacher(s) or an intervention instructor (general education, Learning Assistance Program (LAP) teacher, or special education teacher) provide Tier 3 intervention curriculum in small groups. Tier 3 interventions can be in addition to the regularly scheduled core instruction. In addition to summative and formative assessments, DIBELS probes are administered at least twice a month, or as determined by the RTI team, grade level team, or intervention instructor. Probe results are compared against normed benchmarks set within the DIBELS progress-monitoring system. If, after a minimum of nine complete school weeks (five school days a week) of Tier 3 intensive intervention the student has made progress toward benchmarks and progressed at a rate consistent with the trajectory aim line, the RTI or grade level team meet to review the student’s program and progress so as to assure the student is receiving differentiated, needs-based instruction. In addition, the team’s review includes the fidelity of program implementation, pacing and appropriateness of instructional groupings. Based on the review, the team determines whether the intervention should continue because progress-monitoring data indicates the intervention is working, or that the student should return to Tier 1 core instruction or Tier 2 strategic intervention with continued progress monitoring
because the student has met benchmarks, or that the student is on trajectory to meet end-of-year benchmarks, or that the student is non-responsive to the Tier 3 strategic intervention. If, after a minimum of nine complete school weeks of Tier 3 interventions, the student has failed to make progress toward benchmarks and respond to documented adjustments to instructional delivery as indicated by at least three consecutive data points below the aim line, the RTI team will meet to review the student’s program and progress to assure the student is receiving differentiated, needs-based instruction. In addition, the team’s review includes fidelity of program implementation, pacing, and appropriateness of instructional groupings. Based on the outcomes of the review, the RTI team determines if additional diagnostic assessments are warranted, additional changes to the instructional interventions are required, or a referral for an initial evaluation for special education is required to determine eligibility for services and an IEP. A student who is referred for an evaluation for special education has failed to make progress toward benchmarks and respond to documented adjustments to instructional delivery as indicated by at least three data points below the aim line. In addition, the team reviews the fidelity of the program implementation, pacing, and instructional grouping.
Figure 2 below represents the relationship of the essential components of the RTI three-tier model.

Figure 2.

Response to Intervention Model Cascade School District

Improved Student Performance

Problem Solving Teams – Data-Based Decision Making

Multi-Level Tiered Intervention System (Tier 1, 2, and 3)

Screening ← Intervention ← Progress Monitoring

The implementation of RTI, in combination with the changes in federal and state regulations that no longer required the intelligence quotient (IQ/achievement discrepancy as a requirement for diagnosis of LD) has created an opportunity for the Cascade School District’s elementary school psychologists to put into practice RTI as a part of the eligibility process for special education in the area of reading.

In the spring of 2009 the Cascade School District School Psychologist Team proposed, wrote, and received a grant to use the Woodcock Johnson (WJ) III Normative Update (NU; 2010) Complete within the RTI program model. The WJ III NU included the WJ III Cognitive, WJ III Achievement, and the Woodcock Interpretation and Instructional Interventions Program (WIIIP). See Appendix A for the definitions of the WJ III Cognitive, WJ III Achievement, and WIIIP. The WIIIP; 2008 was included in the grant as a system for interpreting the WJ III Cognitive and Achievement test results and offered a direct link between assessment data and evidence-based instructional
interventions. Specifically, the WIIIP analyzes and creates specific interventions based on a student’s results on the cognitive and achievement assessments. The grant supported research and the development of a model for identifying cognitive processing deficits and SLD for special education eligibility and assisted problem-solving teams to determine appropriate and effective interventions for students within the RTI model. The implementation of RTI incorporating the WJ III NU and WIIIP provided the opportunity to conduct an action research study to: (a) explore the relationship of student achievement in reading employing the Woodcock Interpretation and Instructional Interventions Program (WIIIP) data program within the Response to Intervention (RTI) model, and (b) explore the relationship of WIIIP data program and the rate of progress of four students who participated in Reading Mastery curriculum, one student who participated in Corrective Reading curriculum, and one student who participated in both Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading curricula, and (c) determine if staff members involved in the intervention process believe the WIIIP data program interventions impacted the rate of progress for each student.

At the time of this study, the level of RTI implementation varied among all the elementary schools. For example, some schools focused on one or two grade levels while other schools focused on grades kindergarten through sixth grade. The three elementary schools included in the study-Oak, Foothills, and Lake-implemented an RTI model that provided services to students kindergarten through sixth grade.

*Oak Elementary*

Oak Elementary served approximately six hundred students, preschool through sixth grade (Cascade School District, 2009-2010). The school had approximately thirty-
five classroom teachers. They averaged fourteen years of teaching experience and seventy-seven percent had a master’s degree. All of the teachers were considered Highly Qualified under the ‘No Child Left Behind’ Act. The school received Learning Assistance Program (LAP) funds to provide additional assistance in reading to students who qualified for the program. The assistance involved small group instruction for strategic and intensive students and included a take home reading program.

*Foothills Elementary*

Foothills served approximately six hundred twenty students, preschool through sixth grade (Cascade School District, 2009-2010). The school researched and designed an RTI model prior to opening during the 2009-2010 school year and has continually refined its RTI model during the past two years. The school had about thirty-seven classroom teachers. They averaged six years of teaching experience and sixty-two percent had a master’s degree. All of the teachers were considered Highly Qualified under the ‘No Child Left Behind’ Act. The school received Learning Assistance Program (LAP) funds to provide additional assistance in reading to students who qualified for the program. The assistance involved small group instruction for intensive students and included a take home reading program for kindergarten and first grade students. Intensive students not eligible for LAP services receive small group instruction (7 or 8 students per group) from special education staff. Both the LAP and special education staff used Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading to instruct intensive students. General education teachers primarily provide reading instruction to benchmark and strategic students. Occasionally, a general education teacher provided reading instruction to intensive students.
Lake Elementary

Lake Elementary served approximately five hundred fifty students, preschool through sixth grade (Cascade School District, 2009-2010). The school experimented with different intervention service models resembling an RTI process four years prior to implementing the current RTI model during the 2010-2011 school year. The school had about twenty-four classroom teachers and sixty-eight percent had a master’s degree. All of the teachers were considered Highly Qualified under the ‘No Child Left Behind’ Act. The school received Learning Assistance Program (LAP) funds to provide additional assistance in reading to students who qualified for the program. The assistance involved small group instruction for strategic and intensive students. Intensive and strategic students not eligible for LAP services received small groups (seven or eight students per group) instruction from a grade level general education teacher who implemented Reading Mastery or Corrective Reading.
Chapter 4

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Mixed Method Design

This chapter outlines the research methodology and design that was used in this action research study and includes sections addressing the nature of the research study, school descriptions, participants, data collection, and data analysis. The purpose of this study was: (a) to explore the relationship of student achievement in reading employing the Woodcock Interpretation and Instructional Interventions Program (WIIIP) within the Response to Intervention (RTI) model (b) to explore the relationship of WIIIP and the rate of progress of four students who participated in Reading Mastery curriculum, one student who participated in Corrective Reading curriculum, and one student who participated in both Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading curricula and (c) to determine if staff involved in the intervention process believe the WIIIP interventions impacted the rate of progress for each student. The primary research questions addressed through the study included:

1. What is the relationship between WIIIP-generated reading interventions and Reading Mastery or Corrective Reading for Tier 2 and Tier 3 students within an RTI model?

2. What effect will the implementation of the RTI process in combination with the WIIIP interventions have on the rate of reading progress for each student involved in the study?

Considerable knowledge is available with regard to RTI models utilizing tiered interventions (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006; Mellard & Johnson, 2008; Vaughn, 2003).
However, very little is known about RTI models using highly individualized interventions within a standard RTI framework. Wanzek and Vaughn (2007) reviewed eighteen studies conducted with primary students with significant reading difficulties utilizing some level of standardization within their interventions and none of the eighteen studies reported using problem-solving or highly individualized interventions.

Due to the high level of accountability that has occurred in public education in the last decade, educators are increasingly using scientifically-based research to engage in educational reform involving multiple areas of practice. Scientifically-based research is the process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data in order to understand a phenomenon. NCLB (2001, Part A-Definitions [SEC. 9101 DEFINITIONS]) defines scientifically-based research as “research that involves the application of rigorous, systematic, objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs.”

The method design for this study consisted of both quantitative and qualitative elements that included the case studies of six students attending one of three elementary schools in the Cascade School District implementing an RTI model during the 2010-2011 school year. A quantitative and qualitative method design has the advantage of building theories by employing deductive and inductive analysis in the same study and the ability to design a single research study that answers questions about both the complex nature of phenomenon from the participant point of view and the relationship between measurable variables (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003; Creswell, 2003). To understand complex programs, it is useful to study the persons and operation at several locations. A multicase study design is appropriate to closely examine several cases linked together (Stake,
Researching documents and records can provide significant information from which a jointly constructed account will be formulated (Stringer, 2007). Furthermore, Yin (2009) states, “Some case study research goes beyond being a type of qualitative research, by using a mix of quantitative and qualitative elements” (p.19).

The quantitative component of the study utilized a single subject design to learn about each student’s reading progress over time. Specifically, an A/B design consisting of observing and measuring behavior during a trial period (A) and administering an intervention while observing and measuring the behavior after the intervention (B) was used (Creswell, 2005, p. 321). The researcher that uses a single subject design seeks to determine if an intervention impacts the outcome of a participant. Single subject research has the advantage of providing data on single individuals, such as the learning of children with disabilities, where a person-by-person is needed (Creswell, 2005, p. 321). More specifically, the quantitative component of this study was appropriate to focus on examining the rate of growth, or progress data, of six students provided reading intervention curricula and the WIIIP-recommended interventions utilizing a variety of descriptive statistics: rate of progress (pre-intervention DIBELS reading score and post intervention DIBELS score) and the number of minutes each student spent in Reading Mastery or Corrective Reading. See Figure 3 for proposed A/B design illustrating the quantitative component.

The descriptive statistics about each student (grade, gender, ethnicity, and disability identified) are depicted in Table 1.
The qualitative component of the study included data collection in the form of interviews with selected personnel engaged in the intervention process concerning the case study students (See Appendices E, F, and G for the interview protocols). Individual interviews were conducted with eleven participants whose job responsibilities were related to one or more of the students selected to be part of the study. The interviewees included three special education teachers, five general education teachers, one intervention teacher, and two school psychologists. One general education and one intervention teacher declined to be interviewed for the study. The interviews examined the relationship between WIIP-generated interventions and Corrective Reading, or Reading Mastery, implemented with the six students involved in the RTI model. Additionally, documents of in-school meetings, assessment information, and IEPs (including but not limited to problem-solving team notes or minutes, pre-referral team minutes, cognitive and/or academic assessments, progress-monitoring data, DIBELS, and WIIP summary reports) regarding each student were reviewed. The analysis of the qualitative data helped to explain the collected quantitative data.

![Figure 3. A/B Design](image-url)
Information gained by this research study noted the importance of fidelity in the implementation and coordination of individualized intervention strategies/reading programs within the RTI model. Monitoring of fidelity reduces inconsistency with the program structure and communication. In addition, professional development, utilization of assessment resources, and communication amongst general education teachers, special education teachers, and school psychologists had a direct impact on the fidelity of the RTI model and the interventions impacting the reading rate of six students. Focused instruction and communication benefited students whose teachers did not operate in isolation but in collaboration.

Participants

Participants in this study consist of certificated school staff and six students who had been assessed with the WJ III NU materials and were participants in a Tier 2 strategic, or Tier 3 intensive, reading intervention curricula (Reading Mastery or Corrective Reading) within an RTI model. Two district school psychologists trained in the implementation of the WJ III NU materials volunteered to be a part of the study. Each of the school psychologists purposefully selected a sample of three students who participated in the Reading Mastery intervention, with at least one student whose assessment identified him or her as having a learning disability in reading, in contrast with one or two who did not. Also selected were three students who participated in the Corrective Reading intervention, with at least one student whose assessment identified him or her as having a learning disability in reading, in contrast with one who did not. Purposeful sampling for information-rich cases provides the researcher with a great deal of information about issues of central importance to the purpose of the study (Patton,
The descriptive statistics about each student selected for the study (grade, gender, ethnicity, and disability identified) are provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Student Descriptive Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Qualified Special Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mandy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>American Indian/Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>Math, Reading, Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Math, Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Reading, Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>Not Tested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tony</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Hispanic/Latino/White</td>
<td>Did Not Qualify</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection for this study consisted of interviews, document review and DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency scores. The two school psychologists involved in the research study provided the researcher with the names of the six students who met the criteria for the study. The criteria consisted of students who have been assessed with the WJ III NU and received Corrective Reading or Reading Mastery. I contacted and received permission from each parent (See Appendix C) to collect quantitative data regarding each of the six students. The general education teacher of each student, the building intervention teacher (if applicable), the special education teacher, and the school psychologist were contacted and made aware of the purpose of the study, the data collection process, and asked to participate in the research study.
Interviews

The qualitative data included interviews with teachers and specialists who worked with one or more of the case study students. Interviews were scheduled individually with each participant based upon their schedule and held at a location of their choice. The interview questions consisted of both structured and unstructured questions. An interview protocol was developed specifically for the different job roles related to the study, which included school psychologist, special education teacher, and general education teacher. The interview protocols are included in Appendices D, E, and F.

At Oak elementary, the interviewees were the school psychologist, the special education teacher, one-third grade teacher and one-second grade teacher. At Foothill elementary, the interviewees were the school psychologist, the special education teacher, a fourth grade teacher, a third grade teacher, and a fourth grade intervention teacher. At Lake elementary, the interviewees included the same school psychologist that also serves Foothill elementary, the special education teacher and a third grade teacher.

A total of eleven interviews were conducted. Specifically, three special education teachers, five general education teachers, one intervention teacher, and two school psychologists were interviewed. Each participant volunteered to be part of the study and was interviewed after signing a consent form to participate in the study (See Appendix B). Each of the individual interviews lasted approximately one hour. All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. In addition, notes were taken while the interviews were conducted. The written notes helped to identify important information and remind the researcher of other potential probes or follow up questions.
Documents

Individual student documents related to reading interventions and progress including but not limited to IEPs, problem-solving team notes or minutes, and pre-referral team minutes, were collected and analyzed. Individual student documents related to reading interventions and student progress were collected and analyzed and included, but were not limited to IEPs, problem-solving team notes or minutes, and pre-referral team minutes. All documents collected were printed from databases or photocopied as needed and a content analysis was conducted for each collected document based on the research questions.

DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency Scores.

The primary quantitative data collected in this study consisted of the DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency scores of each case study student. The DIBELS benchmark assessment is conducted at least three times throughout the school year-September, January, and June-to identify and progress monitor each student’s level of proficiency. These scores are collected and stored in a district data system. District-required DIBELS benchmark scores, as well as progress-monitoring scores, were obtained from the school psychologists and the district assessment coordinator.

Ethical Considerations

Permission to conduct the study was obtained by the Cascade School District and the Washington State University IRB committee. While conducting the study, district and IRB guidelines and procedures were followed to ensure the highest ethical standard.

Each interviewee was provided copies of the letter of informed consent (Appendix B) and interview protocols (Appendices D, E, and F) in advance of the
scheduled interview. In addition, each of the eleven interviewees read the letter of consent and interview protocols prior to conducting the interview. The letter of consent described the study, role of the interviewee, privacy information, and contact information. A signed copy of the letter of consent was provided to each interview to keep for their records. Interviewees were also notified both in writing and verbally that participation in the study was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the interview at any time. Prior to the interview each interviewee read the consent form and was asked if he or she had any questions. Interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed to guarantee accuracy of records and enabled note-taking and focusing on the interviewee responses. Each interview lasted approximately 60 minutes on average. Furthermore, each interviewee was provided a pseudonym for confidentiality.

In order to complete documented reviews of each student’s assessment scores, IEPs, and a variety of in-school meeting minutes (team notes, pre-referral meeting minutes, and RTI forms) parent permission was required for the study. Initially, each parent was contacted by phone and informed of the study, the child’s role, and tentative approval for their child to participate. Each parent verbally agreed to have their child’s assessment scores, IEPs, and documents included in the study. After obtaining verbal permission for their child to participate in the study, a parent permission form (Appendix C) was mailed home and a follow-up phone call was conducted to review the form and answer any questions regarding the study and their child’s role. Parents were also notified, both in writing and verbally, that participation in the study was voluntary and at any time they could withdraw their child from the study. A signed copy of the parent permission form was provided to each parent to keep for his or her records. All
identifiable student information was removed to protect personal information and identities. Furthermore, each student was provided a pseudonym for confidentiality.

Given the personal nature of this research study, it was essential to maintain confidentiality and anonymity. The researcher collaborated with the participants to address privacy issues. All digitally recorded interviews, transcribed interviews, and documents were kept confidential and secured in a locked and alarmed office. The participants’ names, district, and school names were changed to protect their true identities.

Positionality

As the Executive Director of Special Services, my responsibilities include supervision of special education teachers and itinerants (school psychologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech language pathologists, and nurses). I had to be aware that my position in the research study would influence the participants involved. Thus, I had to be cognizant of my position as their supervisor and know that they cannot separate that during the study. During the 2007-2008 school year, I began setting the stage of planning a research process by establishing contact with various stakeholders (special education teachers and school psychologists). I helped facilitate several focus group meetings consisting of various participants within the special services department to gather and analyze information that might extend our understanding of the current referral process and aligned interventions. The various participants included special education teachers, English Language Learner teachers, school psychologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech language therapists, parents, administrators, and school board members. After a year of analyzing each participant’s
job role in relation to the referral process and intervention strategies, participants initiated projects to improve the quality of the referral process and intervention strategies targeted to student need. For example, school psychologists creatively formulated an action research project and requested my support in writing a grant for additional assessment materials that would allow them to become more involved with the existing RTI process at the elementary schools. This provided an opportunity for me to facilitate an action research project that utilized look, think, and act to reduce barriers and assist the group to obtain materials, in professional development, and in implementation in the form of an action research project.

I also have a vested interest in the study as an employee, leader, and parent in the district. This study provided an opportunity to initiate an effort to address a real problem that could potentially have a number of positive outcomes for students, parents, school personnel, and the community. At all times, I needed to keep in mind my bias, role, and responsibilities so I could be thoughtful throughout the action research study. This also required listening deeply to the comments of others and time to research literature for additional information.

Limitations of the Study

A primary limitation of the study was that interviews were conducted within a relatively short period of time, between April and June with three schools in one district. In addition, many significant events occurred during this time: negotiations, teacher layoffs, district testing, and end of the year activities. These events may have impacted the climate of individual buildings and the district. Anxiety, personal bias, or the emotional state of the interviewee could have resulted in limitations that could have
potentially impacted the participants’ ability to accurately recall information and facts during the interview process. Thus, these factors may have contributed to the ability to generalize and apply the study findings to other schools and districts.

Finally, a limitation that may have impacted this study was my potential bias, which was identified earlier in the positionality section. I tried not to let my bias influence any of the participants during this study. My professional purpose in researching this topic was to gain a better understanding of the use of the WJ III NU and WIIIP within the existing RTI process and the overall impact on student reading progress. I believe the information gained will help educators continue to improve our educational system and benefit all students.

Data Analysis

The quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously as the study was completed from April to June 2011. Document reviews, assessment reviews, and interviews provided a greater depth of understanding and clarity regarding each interviewee’s experience within the RTI model, the use of the WIIIP data program, and each student’s rate of reading progress. Multiple sources of data allow the researcher to conduct the development of converging lines of inquiry, a process of triangulation and corroboration that cover a broad range of historical and behavioral issues (Yin, 2009). Triangulation for a multi-case study helps to ensure that the audience has a clear and meaningful picture, relatively free of personal bias, that is unlikely to mislead the reader (Stake, 2006). Furthermore, Yin (2009) states that “any case study finding or conclusion is likely to be more convincing and accurate if it is based on several different sources of information” (p.116).
The initial stage of data analysis consisted of gathering the documentation and DIBELS oral reading fluency scores for each of the six students, while simultaneously interviewing the participants, creating a data base, and organizing the data. After each interview was completed and transcribed, each one was reviewed for accuracy by listening to the digital recording. In addition, each transcribed interview was cross-referenced against notes that were taken during each interview to ensure accuracy and identify topics, patterns, and themes.

As part of the second stage of the data analysis process, each transcribed interview was reviewed and interesting and meaningful data were highlighted and noted. The highlighted information and notes were then reviewed with the documents (problem-solving team notes, WIIIP summary evaluation reports, IEPs, etc.), assessment scores (DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency scores and WJ III NU assessments), and interview questions, which created initial patterns and themes. The transcribed interviews were reviewed again using the initial themes created from the combined transcribed interview and document review.

In the third stage of data analysis process, multiple issues were narrowed down to five. The transcribed interviews and documents were reviewed a third time and meaningful information and the frequency of data was entered into an excel spreadsheet to organize and identify important information.

The fourth component of this study included a variation of descriptive statistics: Rate of progress (pre-intervention DIBELS oral reading fluency score and post-intervention DIBELS oral reading fluency score) and the number of minutes each student received Reading Mastery or Corrective Reading. In this study, the DIBELS Oral
Reading Fluency (DORF) subtest was administered as a screening measure to identify students at risk for reading problems, establish their Tier intervention level and monitor reading progress during the school year. The DORF is a brief, individually administered, standardized, and timed assessment. During DORF administration, students were asked to read aloud a passage for one minute three times. The average words read correctly from the three one minute passages were used to establish each student's DIBELS benchmark score for September, January, and June. In addition, one minute passage reading was also used for progress monitoring.
Chapter 5

FINDINGS: INTERVENTIONS AND STUDENT PROGRESS

Chapter Five presents the findings from the interviews, document reviews, and student’s DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency (DORF) scores. To help facilitate a better understanding of each school’s RTI implementation and alignment with the referral process, background information from interviews and documents regarding each school’s RTI and referral process is included. Each student’s experience is explained using information from interviews, documents, and assessment scores including recommended interventions, the implementation of interventions, and assessment information, including DIBELS scores. The combined information from each school’s RTI referral processes and individual student case studies frame the context and impact of each student’s reading fluency.

Oak Elementary Students: Sam, Amanda, and Mandy

Prior to the 2008-2009 school year, Oak had been researching and experimenting with reading intervention service models to address the needs of students who did not meet standard in reading. In 2009-2010, Oak instituted a RTI model where intensive and strategic students not eligible for LAP services received small group (seven to eight students per group) instruction from grade level general education teachers implementing Reading Mastery or Corrective Reading. The RTI model changed slightly during the 2010-2011 school year because of a decrease in the student population. This resulted in grade-level classroom teachers teaching reading to benchmark and strategic students. Intensive students received their intervention reading instruction from the LAP and special education teachers and not general education teachers. In addition, the school
wanted to strengthen the RTI model and referral process. The ASSIST, a pre-referral problem-solving team, asked the staff to implement and document interventions before bringing a student of concern to the ASSIST team. Stephanie, the school psychologist provided the following description:

We assigned what’s called a liaison to the teacher and help them identify or kind of put into words … what the concern is and try to identify that more and do some interventions on their own. And if things still aren’t going well, then we’ll sign them up for an ASSIST meeting.

Since that time, the staff continued to refine the referral process, including incorporating additional testing using the WJ III NU and WIIIP within its RTI model. The Oak elementary school psychologist, Stephanie provided the following description: How we would like it to work is if the liaison has been working with the teacher, and they’ve been developing some interventions and they’ve been doing those consistently, and progress monitoring, and the student is not making progress, then we would bring them to an ASSIST team. And at that point, we might say, “Maybe we should look at doing the brief academic screener or more subtests within the WJ III Brief, to try and pinpoint more of what is going on with the student.” That’s where we would like to see some of those things to happen. There is a little bit of disagreement on when this part should happen because our administrator felt like, “Oh, if we have all the information at the beginning, we can make better decisions.” So…and we have few cases like that where we would do a whole lot at the beginning and it felt like we’re doing a special education evaluation before we even got to that point.
Barb, the special education teacher at Oak confirmed that the process had changed during the 2010-2011 school year, and the ASSIST team members continued to work on the ASSIST referral process. She went on to explain:

We’ve changed our ASSIST team process, and I think there have been a lot of walls put up because the teacher’s don’t want to document intervention. So, we are working to fix it. We try to use Foothills’ model, and we are tweaking that, and when they saw the folder with all the checklist and they just see papers, it was like it’s too much for … no we’re not doing that and so we’ve kind of gone to different teachers or whoever on our ASSIST team to help them work through it as a liaison and help them understand what interventions are, and what we need to do.

Barb also added that the WIIIP interventions have been helpful. For example, she shared the following:

They’ve been helpful, however, you find that [with] some of the interventions, you are already using those interventions, but you also find that they are helpful for the families to use at home. It’s helpful to show the teacher. To give them ideas of what they could be doing.

In September, the school used a team of teachers to screen all students into the different Tiers, solely using DIBELS scores. However, if a teacher felt that a student needed to be placed into a different Tier, they could appeal the placement by providing additional data to support the Tier adjustment. The students are placed into Tiers and given the Reading Mastery Placement Test or Corrective Reading Placement Test to sort out the intensive students into the proper starting place in either curriculum. The
following description explains the RTI and referral process involving Sam, Amanda, and Mandy as provided via interviews, documents, and DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency scores.

_Sam_

Sam was a ten-year-old boy in the fourth grade who had attended Oak elementary since the first grade. He participated in the LAP program in kindergarten at another school and finished the year reading on grade level. In first grade, his report card indicated difficulty with reading fluency and he ended the year slightly below grade level. By the second grade, his DIBELS oral reading fluency scores indicated that he was at some risk and need strategic support. Sam ended his second grade year slightly below grade level in reading. In third grade, he participated in a strategic reading group. At the end of third grade, Sam’s DIBELS oral reading fluency scores indicated he was still at risk and in need of intensive support. His regular education teachers consistently noted that Sam was friendly, kind, and helpful. Teacher concerns included lack of attention and finishing work in a timely manner.

According to the Barb, the special education teacher:

He was [at] sixty-seven correct words per minute, so the powers that be put him a strategic group, and then looking at his progress monitoring, we adjusted his Tier level. I think he was the kind of kid that we found because of RTI. I mean, the teachers thought he was doing better but actually he ended up intensive.

In fourth grade, Sam’s September DIBELS score of sixty-seven correct words per minute (CWPM) placed him at risk and in need of intensive support. His fourth grade teacher was concerned with his low fluency rate and requested an ASSIST team meeting.
The ASSIST team, including his parents, classroom teacher, the intervention teacher, special education/LAP teacher Barb, and the school psychologist Stephanie, met on November 16, 2010 to discuss both Sam’s strengths and areas of concern. Minutes and documentation from the meeting noted general inattention and talking out. In addition, the school psychologist administered the WJ III Tests of Achievement on November 10, 2010 just prior to the ASSIST meeting. The WJ III assessment results revealed that his letter word identification standard score was within the average range when compared to others his age. His school psychologist noted that his sight-reading ability was average to advanced “he will probably find age-level tasks requiring reading decoding and the ability to identify words easy.” The WIIIP interventions included the following: (1) oral language presented with the late first grade to late second grade range; (2) games to practice listening, following directions, and giving directions; (3) direct instruction in vocabulary used in directions which may facilitate his ability to understand oral discourse sequence, spatial orientation; (4) words that signify relationships between words, such as pronouns, conjunctions, and synonyms; (5) directed vocabulary-thinking activities to help him learn how to use context to infer the meaning of words he does not know; and (6) practice with key words and have him guess the definition of each word.

The team agreed that tiered interventions for reading should continue. After the ASSIST team meeting in November, they increased his reading intervention time by ninety minutes per week, focusing on decoding. Sam’s reading rate of progress continued to increase and accelerated according to his benchmark testing scores. Even though Sam’s reading fluency was increasing, he was still below grade level. In March 2011 both the parent and the teacher requested a special education referral. The special education
evaluation summary group meeting occurred in April 2011. The evaluation summary report described Sam as caring and reserved, but also distractible. He frequently failed to give close attention to details or made careless mistakes. His fourth grade teacher reported that his basic reading and comprehension skills were rated as very limited. The evaluation results indicated that Sam qualified for math and reading. According to Sam’s benchmark assessment data, he started the year at risk and in need of intensive support and improved by the end of the year to some risk and in need of strategic support. Unfortunately, both Sam’s general education and intervention teacher declined to be interviewed for the study. As a result, it is difficult to determine what effect the WIIIP interventions in combination with Reading Mastery had on his reading rate of progress. Figure 4 represents Sam’s DIBELS Benchmark Assessment Scores with a standard reading intervention program (Reading Mastery) and an additional ninety minutes per week of Reading Mastery decoding which aligns with the recommendations from the WIIIP recommended interventions.
Figure 4.

Sam's Reading Rate of Progress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Pre Interventions</th>
<th>Post Interventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DIBLES</td>
<td>Reading Mastery</td>
<td>Reading Mastery and WIIP Interventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORF Scores</td>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>plus Reading Mastery decoding 90 min. a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forth Grade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Graph showing number of correct words per minute over the number of weeks with Pre and Post interventions data points.]

**Number of Weeks**

- Second Grade: Reading Slightly Below Grade Level
  - 03/17/2009: Administered WJIII Brief
- Third Grade: RTI Strategic Reading Mastery
- Fourth Grade: RTI Intensive Reading Mastery
- Qualified for Special Education (SLD) Reading Comprehension and Math
- 11/10/2010: Administered WJIII Brief-WIIP
- 11/16/2010: ASSIST Meeting
- 4/18/2011: Administered WJIII NU Test of Achievement
Amanda

Amanda was a seven-year-old second grade student who had attended Oak Elementary since kindergarten. Her Kindergarten report card noted that she met standard in all areas except for knowing Kindergarten sight words. In addition, DIBELS scores from kindergarten noted that she was at risk and in need of intensive support. According to the ASSIST team meeting notes from May 18, 2010, Amanda participated in LAP in first grade, receiving Reading Mastery level K. Her first grade teacher noted that Amanda was quiet, polite, and friendly. She was easily distracted by noises and had trouble attending to tasks. At the end of first grade, Amanda completed lesson 121 in Reading Mastery (K) and met standard in the program. At the beginning of second grade, she was placed in Reading Mastery (K) lesson sixty-five. In addition, Amanda’s September DIBELS oral reading fluency score was seventeen CWPM (forty-four correct words per minute is a standard score for fall second grade). Amanda was at risk and in need of intensive support. The ASSIST team met again on October 12, 2010 to review progress and decided to request a special education evaluation. The ASSIST notes contained the following information from Amanda’s second grade teacher, Jane: “Amanda started second grade reading seventeen words per minute and put on medication for ADHD. They started the ASSIST process with her in first grade.”

On October 19 and November 1, Amanda was administered the WJ III Tests of Cognitive Abilities and Achievement. The summary report indicated that Amanda’s basic reading skills were within the average range when compared to others her age. According to the WJ III NU, Amanda’s reading comprehension standard score was within the low average range (percentile rank range of eight to twenty-five; standard score range of
seventy-nine to ninety) based her age. Amanda’s reading comprehension was limited and reading comprehension tasks above the age six-years-and-nine-months level would be quite difficult for her. The WIIIP instructional interventions and recommendations included reading instruction presented within the middle to late first grade range. Starting in November 2010, in addition to the fifty minutes of Reading Mastery instruction in LAP, Amanda received an additional fifty minutes per week reading instruction. She also participated in the LAP take home program. Jane, Amanda’s teacher also provided word work with the entire class for about twenty minutes twice a week focused on phonic skills. In addition, Jane described a take home intervention strategy and the twice a week twenty-minute-block intervention for Amanda:

Every night she would take home a new book at her level. She would choose it, take it home and practice reading that with the parent and they would decide whether she needed a new book or more time on that book, so she did that. She also, once a week they did … it’s kind of like the Read Naturally, it was based on the Read Naturally Program … she would take a book, she would choose whatever book she took home at least once a week, and she would do a cold read on it and her mom would time her. Her mom didn’t do it consistently, so I would just write notes, please do this, time her for a minute and then she would read it, again time her for a minute and then read it again and time her for a minute and I really think that helped her a lot.

Jane also shared that she consistently monitored each student’s reading progress:

Every day we would do silent reading, [and] I would do Developmental Reading Assessments (DRAs). I knew where all my kids were and they would read from
their bag of books and she sometimes had a hard time staying on task with that, just staying focused, but everyday she would take a book from her bag of books at her level and that would be her silent reading so she was getting a lot of reading [practice] during the day.

The special education evaluation group met in December 12, 2010 to review the evaluation results, which included information from the WJ III Tests of Cognitive Abilities and Achievement. The evaluation reported noted that Amanda was cooperative throughout the examination but appeared restless some of the time. When compared to others at her grade level, Amanda’s standard scores were average in basic reading skills, basic writing skills, and written expression. Her broad reading, brief reading, math reasoning, broad written language, and brief writing scores are low average. According to the Washington State Severe Discrepancy Tables (WAC 392-172-130), a severe discrepancy exists between Amanda’s cognitive ability and academic performance in the area of Math Reasoning. In summary, Amanda qualified with a SLD in math only.

During second grade, Amanda’s DIBELS score increased from seventeen CWPM in September (At-risk is defined as seventy to eighty nine CWPM), to fifty-three CWPM in January, and by June, Amanda’s oral reading fluency score was seventy-six CWPM (Some risk is defined as seventy to eighty-nine CWPM). She had progressed from an at-risk level needing intensive support in the fall, to being at some risk and needing strategic support by spring. In addition, by the end of second grade, Amanda completed Reading Mastery (K) lesson 130.

Figure 5 represents Amanda’s DIBELS Benchmark Assessment Scores with a standard reading intervention program (Reading Mastery) and additional ninety minutes
per week reading interventions that align with the recommendations from the WIIIP recommended interventions.

Figure 5.

**Amanda's Reading Rate of Progress**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Pre Interventions</th>
<th>Post Interventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DIBLES</td>
<td>Reading Mastery</td>
<td>Reading Mastery:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORF Scores</td>
<td>50 min. per day, 5 days a week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Grade</td>
<td>50 min. per week intervention group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20 min. per day 2 days a week with teacher-WIIIP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Diagram showing Amanda's Reading Rate of Progress](image-url)
Mandy

Mandy was a nine-year-old second grade student who had attended Oak Elementary since kindergarten. Meeting minutes from April 28, 2009 reported that she was polite, well-behaved, friendly, and a hard worker. Concerns included academic progress, attendance, attention, and gross motor. Mandy did not start kindergarten until October and in March she started participation in an intervention group with the instructional coach four times a week. She missed twenty school days during kindergarten. Since kindergarten she had remained at risk and in need of intensive support according to her DIBELS scores. In first grade, Mandy participated in the LAP program with a certificated teacher for sixty minutes each day. She received numerous interventions established by the classroom teacher and intervention liaison. For example, Mandy received an additional thirty minutes a week in an RTI reading group. Intervention data showed little or no growth and attendance continued to be a concern with Mandy missing twelve school days by the beginning of January according to the ASSIST pre-referral team meeting minutes. The ASSIST team met again on January 12, 2010 to review progress and requested additional testing utilizing the WJ III NU assessment. On February 4, 2010 the school psychologist, Stephanie administered the WJ III Tests of Cognitive Abilities and Achievement. The summary report noted that Mandy’s basic reading skills are comparable to those of the average individual at age of six years and five months. Her standard score is within the low range (percentile rank range of two to five; standard score range of seventy to seventy-six) for her age. “Her basic reading skills are negligible; tasks measuring reading skills above the age six-years-eight-months level will be quite difficult for her.” The WIIP instructional
recommendations and interventions suggested that Mandy would probably gain the most from reading instruction presented within the late kindergarten to early first grade range. Specifically, the interventions included: (1) random capital and lower case identification activities; (2) the use of explicit, systematic, synthetic phonics program; (3) increased time spent reading to increase exposure to printed words; (4) word recognition strategies (Word Walls, Flow Lists, Word Banks, Flash Cards and Games); (5) oral practice of new words in isolation before reading words in connected text; and (6) repeated reading to increase fluency. Mandy’s teacher, Lisa, at the time of the interview, could not recall the WIIP interventions that were recommended for Mandy. Lisa shared, “To be honest, I don’t know anything about that. The special education department works more with her than I do throughout the day.”

On March 17, 2010 Mandy, as a first grader, became eligible for special education services. In second grade, Lisa, the second grade teacher reported that Mandy tried very hard to complete work within the general education classroom. As noted in the IEP dated March 2, 2011, she participated in the Take Home Reading Mastery Program, but did not bring her packet from home to school regularly. She received thirty minutes of reading in the resource room and participated in Reading Mastery Level K program, and as of February 2011 was on lesson ninety-six. Furthermore, Mandy’s IEP stated,

Given that much of Mandy’s performance in cognition, adaptive behavior, academics, and in speech/language fell within the intellectual disability range, this category was considered. However, it was rejected at this time because the evaluation team is uncertain to what extent significant language delays, visual motor/perceptual/oculomotor delays, and ADHD are impacting Mandy’s
educational performance. A significant difference between the traditional WJ III Cognitive and the Comprehensive Test of Non Verbal Intelligence (CTONI), with the latter being in the low average range is further indication that at this time, the Intellectual Disability category is not appropriate.

Mandy’s September 2010 DIBELS score was seven CWPM. In January 2011 her oral reading fluency score was nine, and by June 2011 her oral reading fluency score increased to fourteen CWPM. Figure 6 represents Mandy’s DIBELS Benchmark Assessment Scores with a standard reading intervention program (Reading Mastery) and an additional 150 minutes per week in special education receiving reading interventions aligned with the recommendations from the WIIP recommended interventions.
Mandy's Reading Rate of Progress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Pre Interventions</th>
<th>Post Interventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DIBLES</td>
<td>Reading Mastery</td>
<td>Reading Mastery:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORF Scores</td>
<td>Second Grade</td>
<td>60 min. per day, 5 days a week plus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Special Education 120 min. a week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of Weeks
At Oak, Sam, Amanda, and Mandy participated in the RTI model, went through the school’s ASSIST process, and were assessed using the WJ III and WIIIP. All of the interviewed staff members commented on the consistency of the use of the universal screener and progress monitoring of the RTI process. Each of them noted that the RTI model was effective and making a difference for students. For example, Lisa stated, “I think for the most part it is fairly effective.” However, of all the general education teachers interviewed at Oak, only Jane, Amanda’s teacher, alluded to the use of WIIIP interventions within Amanda’s program. Documents and Jane’s interview noted that the interventions for Amanda were consistent to those recommended by the WIIIP.

Sam, Amanda, and Mandy increased their fluency scores during the school year as measured by their DIBELS scores. The DIBELS scores pointed out that Sam’s rate of reading progress doubled after he was assessed with the WJ III NU and provided an additional 120 minutes of Reading Mastery decoding. Even though Sam did qualify for both Reading and Math, his oral reading fluency increased from being at risk and in need of intensive services in the fall, to being at some risk and in need of strategic services in the spring.

Amanda’s oral reading fluency increased dramatically after being tested with the WJ III NU and provided interventions that aligned with interventions recommended from the WIIIP. She also received individualized interventions in both the classroom and at home in addition to the standard protocol reading intervention (Reading Mastery). Amanda progressed from being at risk and in need of intensive support in the fall, to being at some risk and in need of strategic intervention in the spring. In addition, after
being tested for special education, Amanda was found eligible for special education in the area of math.

Mandy’s DIBELS scores doubled from September to June. There was a noticeable increase in her oral reading fluency after being assessed with the WJ III NU and WIIIP. Mandy did qualify for special education in the areas of reading, math, and written language.

The information gained from the data suggests that students made progress in the area of reading while the RTI model at Oak Elementary continued to evolve. The interviews produced evidence that the school was trying to change things as the RTI model was being implemented. They continued to fine-tune and refine the RTI process while implementing it. The staff was immersed in the change process, which brings some frustrations and resistance. The school psychologist, Stephanie summarized:

We are still getting the teachers to use this tool (WIIIP) … because like everything it takes time and we have to find value in it, keep finding value in it, and show teachers that it is valuable and then they’ll want to use it more and we’re still working on those pieces.

The role of the WJ III and the WIIIP, as part of the RTI process was unknown in a large degree by the general education teachers interviewed for this study. The documents from the ASSIST meetings indicate that the school psychologist, Stephanie, reviewed the WIIIP summary report at each student’s ASSIST meeting. Both teachers, Lisa and Jan were present at the ASSIST meetings. However, during the interview, Lisa and Jan could not recall the WIIIP, or specific recommended interventions. Jan, however, did implement interventions that aligned with the WIIIP. Successful implementation of RTI
requires that teachers and specialists collaborate and communicate important and pertinent knowledge, data, intervention strategies and implementation practice. RTI represents a conceptual shift in the goals of the provision of academic and behavioral interventions in classroom settings. It presupposes that a careful assessment for intervention will allow many students to have their needs met by targeted efficacious instruction designed and implemented by teachers and specialists sharing the same beliefs and conceptualization of the relevant issues (Knotek, 2005). Furthermore, documents and interviews revealed that the lack of time for the intervention specialist and classroom teacher contributed to a lack of awareness and communication regarding each student’s Reading Mastery, Corrective Reading level, and WIIIP interventions. For example, Jane shared, “I can tell you what other teachers have shared with me about it: ‘We don’t have time.’ It is finding time to even meet, to go over information.”

Foothills Elementary Student: Tony

The school researched and designed an RTI model as part of the planning process prior to opening during the 2009-2010 school year. The staff continued to refine the RTI model during the past two years. Intensive students not eligible for LAP services received small group (seven or eight students per group) instruction from special education staff. Both the LAP and special education staff used Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading to instruct primarily intensive students. General education teachers provided reading instruction to benchmark and strategic students. Occasionally, a general education teacher provided reading instruction to intensive students.

At Foothills, DIBELS is the primary screening assessment used to determine tiered placement for students. Initially, students are given three one-minute fluency
readings, based on the average score each student is assigned to a Tier (Tier 1, 2, or 3). Depending on the grade level, teachers may also use a teacher-generated comprehension assessment in addition to the DIBELS score when determining a student’s Tier. In addition, a liaison staff member is assigned to any teacher concerned with a student’s academic progress prior to referral to their Student Intervention Team (SIT). The liaison facilitates interventions and data collection as part of the RTI process. Linda, the school psychologist added:

So basically, they use the DIBELS and they determine, based on cutoff scores … whether or not a student is benchmark, strategic, or intensive. And then, they also…try to triangulate the data so that they can make sure that we’re not just using one measure to determine whether a student would stay at benchmark, strategic, or intensive. They look at different data. The DIBELS is the main source … [to] get an idea of where they should be, and then they use the other data to make sure that the DIBELS was accurate.

Students who were considered hard to teach or significantly below grade level according to their DIBELS scores and not making positive growth were referred to the SIT. Mary, a fourth grade general education teacher explained, “The SIT is a problem-solving model to look at individual kids once the system has been explored to make sure that it’s not the system that’s the issue for the child not learning.” At Foothills, teachers described the SIT process as a system to identify student needs and determine what interventions are needed to help students be successful. Mary, Tony’s fourth grade general classroom teacher also, added:
Here at Foothills, I am participating in RTI through being the general education teacher. We have our dedicated time that students may or may not be pulled out for RTI; those would be students that were deemed intensive under a certain amount of fluency words per minute. Most of the time, I keep all of my students benchmark and strategic and only the intensive students leave my classroom for intensive work through either LAP or special education program. So while I am in the classroom, my benchmark students will be served, and also my strategic students will be served, every day by myself, and so different strategic groups based off of fluency [and] comprehension, [so that they can learn] any skills that they need that I deem important for them to provide their success in reading.

Tony

Tony was a ten-year-old fourth grade student who attended Foothills Elementary. He attended a different elementary school in the Cascade School District during second grade where he received LAP services for reading. At the beginning of his third grade year, Tony transferred to Foothills Elementary. Mary, Tony’s third grade teacher, immediately had concerns about his reading and referred him to the SIT team, and was assigned a liaison on February 5, 2010 because he had an extremely difficult time reading. Mary shared:

I had Tony on my radar for quite a while and so after the initial progress monitoring in third grade, he was significantly below the grade level requirements. So that is when I initially went right to the Student Intervention Team (SIT). The process didn’t require a lot of paperwork and they went ahead
and ran the test with the WJ III NU and were able to identify areas [where] he needed [help].

The initial SIT meeting on February 5, 2010 noted that Tony’s September 2009 DIBELS score decreased from nineteen CWPM to seven CWPM according to his January 2010 benchmark score. His reading skills decreased, and decoding became very difficult. In Reading Mastery, he was having trouble tracking when reading. The team agreed to focus on decoding and sight words as individual interventions. The intervention documentation list dated February 23, 2010 noted that he participated in Corrective Reading Level B Decoding forty minutes a day for five days a week, Corrective Reading A Comprehension forty minutes a day for five days a week, and Fast Phrases (high frequency words) daily. In addition, the following interventions were noted in the meeting documentation: 1) all Accelerated Reader (AR) tests read to Tony to identify comprehension skill (From November to February he met his AR goal of 7.7 points), 2) words given to Tony when he can’t decode when taking a comprehension quiz, and 3) letters are told to Tony when he can’t identify the actual letter.

The school psychologist, Linda agreed to do an academic assessment using the WJ III NU Tests of Academic Achievement. The team also decided to have Linda consult with Mary, the classroom teacher, on lesson connection with Reading Mastery. They decided to assign Tony sight word flash cards for home, Fast Phrases (an online program) for extra reading practice, Read Naturally (decoding version), participation in a small group of students receiving speech therapy, and continuation with Reading Mastery. On March 9, 2010, Tony was administered the WJ III NU Tests of Achievement, and the summary report stated that Tony’s overall reading ability is comparable to that of the
average individual at age seven years and five months. When compared to others of his age, his standard score was within the borderline range of abilities (percentile rank of two to seven; standard score range of sixty-nine to seventy-eight). His overall reading ability was very limited; reading tasks above the age of seven years and ten months would be quite difficult for him. Tony would likely require intensive instructional support and targeted interventions in reading.

The WIIIP-generated instructional recommendations and interventions suggested that Tony would probably gain the most from: (1) reading instruction presented within the late-first-grade to middle-second-grade range; (2) increased time spent reading to increase Tony’s exposure to printed words resulting in an increase in the number of words that he can recognize orthographically; (3) word recognition strategies to help Tony build automatic sight-word recognition (strategies include word walls, flow lists, word banks, flash cards, and games; (4) repeated reading, a fluency building intervention that would also be helpful; (5) phrase drill error correction procedure, involving immediate feedback combined with rehearsal of the corrected error; (6) linking new facts to Tony’s prior knowledge about a topic to increase inferential comprehension; (7) incorporating self-monitoring strategies to help Tony recognize and resolve his comprehension errors as they arise; (8) the 3 H strategy (Here, Hidden, Head), a mnemonic designed to aid reading comprehension by teaching Tony how to ask and answer questions about text; (9) cross-age tutoring to improve Tony’s ability to efficiently decode passages; and (10) encouraging Tony and his parents to spend time reading every day outside of school. At the follow up SIT meeting, the notes indicated that implementation of Ravenscourt books was not consistent. Tony moved to second
grade and was progress-monitored in Reading Mastery. In addition, he continued receiving high frequency word practice using Ravenscourt.

Tony’s teacher, Mary, shared the following thoughts:

When we received the report and saw sight words were a big opportunity for us to take him to the next level, it was something we could be very specific and strategic with in addition to Corrective Reading, so with the intermingling of being able to identify the skills that he needed and the Corrective Reading, we’ve seen great success for him. When we initially started, he started with first grade progress monitoring and now he is on fourth grade progress monitoring. In addition to his Corrective Reading small group, we decided that I would meet with him for an additional ten to twenty minutes a day. Just being able to see that progress has been amazing and being able to see him not laboring over every single word, it’s just been great [that] his confidence is increasing.

Although Tony was responding positively to reading intervention his DIBELS scores indicated he was at risk and required intensive services in both second and third grades. By fourth grade, Tony’s reading progress began to show steady growth. For example, his DIBELS scores given a fourth grade passage during the 2011-2012 school year were thirty-three CWPM in September 2010, fifty-six CWPM in January 2011, and sixty-eight CWPM in June 2011. Linda, the school psychologist added:

He has made amazing progress. Some of it, I believe, was based off of some of the interventions that we recommended in the beginning, but also there has been a lot of people working with this kiddo, so there’s been a lot going for him. I did the Brief, and then the WIIIP. The team took those and started doing some things and
then … we realized we need to align that so they took everything, looked at it, and figured out what do we need to do to align them so that what’s happening in that area, happens in the other.

Mary, his teacher shared:

One thing that was interesting about our SIT team process is that it wasn’t something that we were doing to push him into special education. It was something to identify his needs so we could almost keep him out of that label and out of the assistance because with Tony, he is a very capable student.

Figure 7 represents Tony’s DIBELS Benchmark Assessment Scores with 480 minutes a week of Corrective Reading and WIIIP interventions during the 2010-2011 school year. No baseline hours are noted because Tony was assessed with the WJ III NU during the 2009-2010 school year.

Figure 7.

Tony’s Reading Rate of Progress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Post Interventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DIBLES ORF Scores</td>
<td>Corrective Reading: 40 min. per day, 5 days a week decoding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forth Grade</td>
<td>40 min. per day, 5 days a week comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10-20 min. per day WIIIP interventions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Foothills Elementary opened as a new school during the 2009-2010 school year with a planned RTI process. The school psychologist, Linda, played a key role in the development of the SIT team and RTI process. She had the opportunity to define her role as a school psychologist within the school’s RTI model after having a conversation with the building principal and participating on the planning team. All school staff were trained on the RTI process prior to the opening of school.

Tony looped with his teacher, Mary, from third grade to fourth during the 2010-2011 school year. He was assessed with the WJ III NU and WIIIP in third grade and the standard protocol and individualized interventions continued in fourth grade. Tony continued to make steady progress according to both his teacher and the DIBELS scores. Tony’s DIBELS scores indicated that he progressed from reading thirty-three CWPM in September to reading sixty-eight CWPM in June.

Tony made progress in the area of reading while the RTI model at Foothills Elementary underwent systematic adjustments. Staff continued to work on fidelity of the system to ensure issues regarding a child’s learning are not a system issue. Staff received
multiple trainings on the fidelity of Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading. Similar to Oak Elementary, Foothills’ implementation of the universal screener and progress monitoring are well established.

Interviews with staff members indicated that they were happy with the WJ III NU and WIIIP program, while other staff, such as the special education teacher, noted that they were not fond of Corrective Reading Comprehension. Mary, Tony’s general education teacher, spoke positively about the WIIIP interventions and used the recommended interventions to individualize Tony’s educational program. Mary elaborated:

The WIIIP summary report gives me a wealth of knowledge of things that I need to focus on … so I can be strategic in my teaching. What I like about it is that it’s very specific and targeted. It was something that we could be very specific and strategic with in addition to Corrective Reading with him and so with the intermingling of being able to identify the skills that he needed and the Corrective Reading, we’ve seen great success from him.

Crystal, the special education teacher, elaborated:

I am not happy with the Corrective Reading Comprehension. I don’t think it specifically targets the areas of comprehension. There is a big focus on parts of speech, nouns, and verbs and how to use that word in different forms.

Crystal went on to share that they were looking to address this issue the following year.

The RTI process at Foothill Elementary was an evolving process with the potential to be a positive model to address the reading deficits of students. Fidelity issues
were being addressed regarding curriculum and systems. In addition, awareness and communication are other areas that may need additional attention and clarification.

*Lake Elementary Student: Fred and Mike*

Lake was in its second official year of RTI implementation with student progress, monitored through the use of academic screeners, common formative assessments, in-program assessments, and Washington State’s Measurement of Student Progress (MSP). Collaboratively, staff members used ongoing data to identify areas of strength and learning deficits to inform individual instruction and deliver focused interventions. As a school system, grade level teams and intervention teams met on a regular basis to analyze assessment data, review student work, determine the effectiveness of their instructional interventions, and make adjustments as necessary. Three times each year, the grade level teams hold Collaborative All Staff Teaming (CAST) meetings with intervention team members, including the principal, school counselor, instructional coach, special education teacher, LAP teacher, and support staff to identify individual students who are not making adequate progress and determine a plan to support improved achievement.

At Lake, DIBELS was the primary screening assessment used to determine tentative Tier (Tier 1, 2, or 3). Grade level general education teachers used teacher-developed comprehension assessments to either confirm or adjust each student’s Tier.

*Fred*

Fred was a nine-year-old third grade student who attended Lake Elementary since the second grade. Previous to attending Lake Elementary, he was retained in second grade at another school within the Cascade School District. Student benchmark assessment data indicates that he was at risk in the second grade and required intensive
support in LAP. In second grade, his classroom teacher at Lake Elementary referred him
to the school’s Positive Assist Team (PAT) on February 26, 2010 because of his reading
difficulties. According to the PAT minutes, Fred was respectful, willing, followed
directions, and met expectations in math. He struggled with tracking, did not recognize
his mistakes, and was inconsistent with sight words and spelling. Furthermore, Fred
participated in Reading Mastery, Read Naturally, and the LAP Take Home Program. The
PAT team requested that Linda, school psychologist, conduct an academic screening. On
March 23, 2010 and April 24, 2010, Linda conducted the WJ III NU Tests of
Achievement, and the PAT met again in April to review the results. The parents, second
grade classroom teacher, and Crystal, the special education teacher, attended. The WJ III
NU Tests of Achievement indicated low reading fluency, low phonological awareness,
low short-term memory, and average encoding. The team recommended continuing LAP
services and focusing on sight words daily. In addition, the team selected using flash
cards with a letter-sound focus from the WIIP recommendations. The PAT met again on
June 11, 2010 to discuss his progress, and meeting minutes noted that his letter/word
recognition had increase from twelve percent in September to ninety-one percent in June,
his oral reading fluency went from twenty-six CWPM in September to thirty-seven
CWPM in June (ninety CWPM is the expectation). The team recommended practicing his
sight words, reading aloud, and a summer reading intervention program (Read Naturally
for comprehension). During the 2010-2011 school year, Fred’s third grade year, he
received Reading Mastery for four days a week for forty-five minutes a day. According
to Sue, his third grade teacher, she continued to be concerned with Fred’s academic
progress:
The school psychologist suggested testing him further for special education and his mom didn’t want to go that route yet. Mom wanted to do some things at home from the WIIIP recommendations. I do remember we started sending home Read Naturally passages, that he seemed to enjoy. Our LAP teacher did a short intervention with the Lindamood Phoneme Sequencing (LIPS) program. She did something with that for probably six or eight weeks and Fred was her star student. She said that he was trying really hard and seems to get the most of it. I think some of the successes have been short lived, like with the LIPS I think that he focused on it for a little while, but we were supposed to get … a little card that they can look at to see what their mouth is supposed to be doing and we never got the card in the classroom, so he couldn’t use it in the classroom and apply it. I feel like he is just a puzzle that we haven’t solved. It would have been nice to be able to give him testing for special education just to see where they found holes. I feel like we haven’t assessed him.

Linda, the school psychologist also shared:

I’m not positive what happened. Things were happening in the classroom. Lindamood was recommended for him. I know Lindamood Phoneme Sequencing didn’t happen for a while. It should have happened at the beginning of the year when they got into groups. There were other interventions but he is not making the best growth. We need to work on fluency with him.

During the 2010-2011 school year, Fred made progress. He read twenty-six CWPM in September 2010 and forty-two CWPM in January 2011, ending the year reading fifty CWPM in June 2011. Although he made progress, he was still considered at
risk and in need of intensive support, according to the district’s Benchmark Assessment Data.

Figure 8 represents Fred’s DIBELS Benchmark Assessment Scores with 210 minutes a week of Reading Mastery during the 2010-2011 school year. No baseline hours are noted because Fred was assessed with the WJ III NU during the 2009-2010 school year.

Figure 8.
Fred’s Reading Rate of Progress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Post Interventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading Mastery: 45 min. per day, 4 days a week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Graph showing Fred's Reading Rate of Progress](image-url)
Mike was a 9-year-old male student in the third grade attending Lake Elementary. He attended Lake Elementary since the first grade. In second grade, his classroom teacher reported that Mike was well behaved, friendly, well liked, and easy going. In addition, the classroom teacher noted that Mike struggled with decoding. She was concerned with his reading and referred Mike to the school’s Positive Assist Team (PAT). Mike’s DIBELS score in second grade indicated that he was at risk and in need of intensive support. In second grade, he received Reading Mastery thirty minutes a day, four days a week. He also participated in the LAP reading take home program. In the third grade, Mike’s DIBELS score put him at risk in September, with seventeen CWPM. In October, the PAT met again concerned that his current oral reading fluency was eighteen CWPM, while the expectation at that time was seventy-seven CWPM. The documentation noted
that he was being progress monitored weekly on second grade passages at twenty-five CWPM and his decoding skills had improved. It was also noted that he was taking medication for Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). The team recommended increasing the size of the font of reading materials and conducting an assessment of his reading ability. On November 4, 2010, Linda, the school psychologist, assessed Mike with the WJ III NU Test of Academic Achievement and reviewed the results with PAT on December 2, 2010. Nancy, the third grade teacher, described Mike as happy, sociable, and independent. Nancy reported, that Mike needed more one-to-one attention, completed less schoolwork than most boys his age, demonstrated withdrawal behaviors in the classroom, and had inattentive behaviors. Nancy rated his levels of oral expression and listening comprehension as average. His levels of basic reading and reading comprehension were rated as limited. The WJ III NU Tests of Academic Achievement indicated that Mike’s standard scores were low average in broad reading and brief reading when compared to others at his grade level. The WIIIP recommendations included: (1) presenting reading instruction within the late first grade to middle second grade level; (2) increasing time spent reading to increase exposure to printed words; (3) word recognition strategies (flash cards, games, and a word wall); (4) a sight-word list, multisensory methods and, rereading passages; (5) increased time reading aloud; (6) linking new facts to Mike’s prior knowledge; and (7) incorporating self-monitoring strategies to help recognize and resolve comprehension issues. Mike started the year receiving Reading Mastery from Brenda, the third grade intervention teacher. PAT meeting notes from December 2, 2010 indicated that Mike was “cruising through Reading Mastery and he should change groups.” The team opted to move him briefly from Reading Mastery to Corrective
Reading, and implement flash cards because they felt he wasn’t making enough progress. In January 2011, his DIBELS oral reading fluency score was eighteen CWPM. After less than seven weeks in Corrective Reading he was moved back to Reading Mastery and implemented recommendations from the WIIIP. Nancy, Mike’s third grade teacher, stated:

Mike started in Brenda’s Reading Mastery intervention group and he wasn’t making the progress we thought he should be making. We did some assessments and found that his ability to remember the way certain sounds worked together was an issue, so we moved him up to Corrective Reading thinking that maybe he just missed some phonics cues and we just needed to re-teach in that area. He made some gains, however not necessarily significant growth, so we moved him back to Reading Mastery.

Brenda, the intervention teacher noted, “Mike only comes to my room for RTI. I had Mike for Reading Mastery when we did RTI. He did really well and kept it him focused.” When asked about the WIIIP intervention, Brenda said:

I have not seen a list of interventions; I mean, I have been doing a scripted program that keeps his attention. I wish I could look at the list of interventions. When we have IEP meetings, or we have team meetings, we meet with the reading specialist and LAP teacher involved … [and] interventions are recommended, but I don’t know that they are coming from the WIIIP list. So I have not seen the list, and if some [one] has shown me the list, I feel really bad for not remembering. The team is probably using it as a guide for the wonderful recommendations they are giving us.
Nancy, Mike’s third grade teacher, also shared:

November 4, 2010, Mike was assessed, and we found the sound blends that he needed to work on, and we started working on him three days a week for twenty minutes doing some additional blending and sound work with the LAP teacher. Mike is more confident as he gets quicker, his fluency increases, he is more confident, and more willing to read with the rest of the group. I didn’t like make the decision in a vacuum because I was like, “I am so confident that I am going to make the right decision here,” and we are fluent with it, we changed [it] if we have [good reasons to] like with Mike. He wasn’t able to keep up sometimes in Reading Mastery, and then when we found out where his focus area should be.

We decided, well, let’s try this … then when that wasn’t working, we moved back to something and tried some other things added to that to see if we could make the interventions work. Our school psychologist told us everything that her results showed, and she pointed out what that meant in the classroom. We looked at three parts of reading, how they worked together and what is missing, and his parts that is missing is where we focused our intervention, and that is why we moved him up to Corrective Reading, and then when we moved him back to Reading Mastery. We kept up the new interventions to get that phonological awareness and continue to keep that ability to put words together. So the additional interventions added to Reading Mastery, that combination has had a greater impact, now that we can narrow what we’re going to work on. The February-March timeframe is where we started the new interventions based on the WJ III NU and look at the jump. We had four months of no growth, and now we have
seen some growth, and so it shows me that after we did the pinpointing of what interventions would work for this kid and we implemented it, it made a difference and helped him go gain some fluency and some growth.

Additionally, Nancy shared that Mike was progress monitored at the second grade level instead of the third grade level because third grade was just too challenging for him. Mike was tested at the third grade level during the three benchmark assessments in September 2010, January 2011, and June 2011. Mike’s DIBELS oral reading fluency score increased from eighteen CWPM in January to thirty-five CWPM in June. Mike continued to remain at the at risk level and in need of intensive support. However, he made good progress.

Figure 9 represents Mike’s DIBELS Benchmark Assessment scores with the standard reading intervention program (Reading Mastery) and an additional seventy-eight minutes per week, receiving Corrective Reading for seven weeks, and then back to Reading Mastery aligned with the recommendations from the WIIIP recommended
interventions.

Figure 9.

Mike's Reading Rate of Progress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Pre Interventions</th>
<th>Post Interventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Corrective Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7 weeks then back to Reading Mastery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of Correct Words per Minute

**Number of Weeks**
At Lake Elementary, the RTI process, including universal screening and progress monitoring, was well established. DIBELS scores, as well as teacher-generated comprehension assessments, were used to determine Tiers for Reading Mastery or Corrective Reading. The CAST meetings offered staff the opportunity to move students between Tiers based upon their oral reading fluency scores and other additional assessment information as needed. Communication and awareness of the WIIIP interventions seemed to be an area that may need additional attention. As Brenda, the intervention teacher, pointed out:

I don’t believe I have seen the list of interventions, but I know that when I attend IEP meetings, we talk about interventions for kids, so I am assuming that may be where the psychologist and the special education teacher is getting those interventions. I am not very familiar with that.

However, Nancy, Mike’s teacher, shared:

Our school psychologist told us everything that her results showed, and she pointed out what that meant … in the classroom. We looked at the three parts of reading, how they worked together, and what is missing, and his parts that is missing is where we focused our intervention … that is why we moved him up to Corrective Reading, and then back to Reading Mastery. We kept up new interventions aiming at that same area.

In summary, Lake Elementary had an evolving RTI model that showed evidence of success. Teachers had multiple opportunities to meet to discuss student performance, interventions, and problem solving. The use of professional learning communities to discuss student performance and interventions was noted. In addition, the CAST
meetings three times a year allowed the staff to adjust student placement and interventions as needed.
Chapter 6

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS

This chapter presents the teachers’ and school psychologists’ perceptions and interpretations of the relationship of the WJ III NU assessments, the WIIIP program, and the impact on the reading rate of progress of six students within an RTI model. Additionally, this chapter explores the screening process, Tier determination, implementation of interventions, reading intervention programs, progress monitoring, and effect on the reading rate progress. Finally, this chapter addresses future recommendations.

In an RTI model, it is critical for an educational leader to communicate the context and frameworks of the tiered system amongst staff to ensure fidelity. Evaluation of the systems and reading intervention programs are critical leadership responsibilities to improve the implementation process, reading intervention programs, and student responsiveness to the RTI model. This study explored the relationship of the WJ III NU assessments and WIIIP program interventions with Reading Mastery, or Corrective Reading, within a RTI model at three different elementary schools involving six students.

Relationship between the WIIIP and Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading

The summary discussion and conclusion are based upon data used to explain the RTI experience gathered through the interviews and document review. The data collected produced three findings that contributed to understanding the relationship between the WIIIP and reading interventions within the RTI model of three elementary schools. The three results that emerged were specific components of the RTI process: (1) the
screening process and Tier determination; (2) the implementation of interventions; and (3) progress monitoring.

**Screening Process and Tier Determination**

The interviews with the teachers and school psychologists, including the documentation for each of the six students confirmed that the screening and Tier determination processes were very similar at Oak, Foothills, and Lake. The DIBELS scores were the primary universal screener used at each school to determine a student’s reading fluency and Tier of benchmark, strategic, or intensive. Graner et al. (2005) identified the universal screening as one of the primary features of an RTI model. Furthermore, the DIBELS oral reading fluency subtest was administered as a universal screening measure to identify students at risk for reading problems and had a high rate of validity (Good & Kaminski, 2002b). However, individual educators from each school also shared that professional judgment was utilized in specific situations when a student seemed to lack comprehension. In addition, teacher interview responses elaborated on the issue of comprehension with some students and the role of additional assessments to help support, confirm, or adjust the initial results of the screening process in determining a student’s Tier. For example, at Lake Elementary, Linda, the school psychologist who helped administer the DIBELS screening shared:

So basically, they (teachers) use the DIBELS and they determine based on cutoff scores basically whether or not a student is benchmark, strategic, or intensive. And then … they try to triangulate the data so that they can make sure that we’re not just using one measure to determine whether a student would stay at benchmark, strategic, or intensive; they kind of look at other data. The DIBELS is
the main source, though, to get an idea of where they should be … then they use
the other data to make sure that the DIBELS scores were accurate. Sometimes
they use the Analytical Reading Inventory (ARI) or they’ll use the Measurement
of Student Progress (MSP) data as well. They use DIBELS. And then, they … for
the older kids, look at their MSP data as well to see whether or not … the kid
might be at benchmark, but their MSP wasn’t as high as they like, so they might
make that student strategic so that student is getting some of their holes filled.

In addition, Nancy, a third grade teacher at Lake Elementary, stated, “We divide them by
where we think the student should be served; we take into account their DIBELS scores
and we also take into account a comprehension assessment that each classroom teacher
does.” Another third grade teacher from Lake, named Sue confirmed, “We use our
DIBELS scores for pretty much most of the kids and there are those kids that can read
really quickly, but they don’t comprehend a whole lot, so sometimes we use professional
judgment.” At Oak Elementary Stephanie, the school psychologist, stated:

This building looks at the DIBELS to look at the reading fluency piece and,
depending on where they (the student) fall with that, they’ll be assigned to either
benchmark, which would be on grade level, [or] strategic, which is a little bit
below grade level. They might need a little bit of help, or [be assigned to]
intensive, where they need a lot of help.

Jane, Amanda’s teacher at Oak, confirmed the screening process as “purely DIBELS
score.”

Although the screening and initial Tier determination processes were similar
between the Oak, Foothills, and Lake, the duration of placement in a Tier differed among
schools. Readjustment of groups at Foothills depended primarily on behavior, pace, and MSP scores. For example, Kate, special education teacher at Foothills Elementary, stated:

One of the big reasons is we had some behavior kids that we needed to separate out in order to provide the most beneficial instruction to the main group. But we also found that we had some kids that really were struggling … So we thought we better do something mid-year, and it wasn’t even mid-year … we realized that we’re having some difficulty. So we did some reassessment, and then we did some regrouping of students, which worked way better. There was some real interesting pieces as far as placing some of our initial kids, because the criteria with passing the MSP kind of affected some of the LAP kids … they kind of came under the radar as intensive and yet, whoops, we looked and they had passed the MSP. So I think you have to use all kinds of assessment tools to determine if a student really does need help. Because if you were cut and dry and said, “I’m sorry, they passed the MSP,” we’re not going to serve them as an intensive student. You know, that kid could be struggling all year.

At Lake, CAST meetings were held approximately three times a year to review student data and placement. Crystal, the special education teacher, stated, “We meet twice a year and go through all the data, the benchmark tests, the DIBELS test, and [use] professional judgment to decide who needs interventions, what level of intervention, and who would be responsible.” At Oak the special education teacher, Barb reported that the team shared the DIBELS scores and placement tests, as well as Reading Mastery, or Corrective Reading placement tests. Unlike Lake, students at Oak tended to stay at the same Tier throughout the school year. For example, Jane shared:
We found out last year, which was our first year (2009-2010) if a student made enough progress to go into a higher group (Tier), we found out that we pushed them too quickly into a higher Tier and then they dropped when they got into third grade. So this year if they qualify for intensive, we kept them there all year.

Implementation of Interventions

The WJ III NU and the WIIIP were originally intended to provide specific interventions to help educational staff address the needs of struggling Tier 2 and Tier 3 students, preferably before the student became eligible for special education. The research revealed that the WJ III NU and the WIIIP are currently being implemented in two ways: 1) as an assessment to generate student-specific intervention ideas to help both general and special education students struggling academically in the area of reading, written language, and math and 2) as an assessment to qualify students for special education. The interviews and documentation reviews provided the following information regarding the role of the WJ III NU and WIIIP in relation to the RTI process utilizing both a standard and problem-solving approach.

Foothills continued to focus on implementing more of a problem-solving approach in combination with the standard protocol approach utilizing Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading. Linda, the school psychologist at Foothills, was very involved with the RTI process and helped to design the Student Intervention Team (SIT). Linda shared that the SIT team is, “the problem-solving model to look at individual kids once the system has been explored to make sure that it is not the system that is the issue for the child not learning.” When the team at Foothills had a student who is not responding to the standard protocol approach using interventions (Reading Mastery or Corrective Reading),
they analyzed their data. If the data and the results are mixed, they collected additional information using standardized assessments (such as the WJ III NU) to provide more information on a specific student to see how they compared to their peers. At Lake, Linda was not involved in the planning of the Positive Assist Team (PAT) and functions more as a traditional school psychologist, evidenced by her following statement:

I do come in when the team at Lake, the PAT, wants to look at the student further to get more information about what’s going on with a kiddo. They will ask me to do some screenings. And then, I run the WIIIP program based on those screenings, and then help develop interventions for the student. So that’s where I am involved with RTI at both schools. In both schools, I do help with DIBELS as well, which is the screening tool we use for reading benchmarking and determining whether a student is intensive, strategic, or benchmark. I am still trying to break into the RTI process over at Lake and let them (the PAT) know there’s other things that I can do … it’s a work in progress.

The difference between Foothills and Lake is that Foothills uses the school psychologist as an active member of the SIT who works proactively to identify strengths and weaknesses before the student falls significantly below grade level. In addition, Foothills reviewed existing data sources for example, DIBELS scores, curriculum-based assessments, Reading Mastery or Corrective Reading placement assessments, to plan and implement interventions for students before referring students for a special education evaluation. If the SIT identifies conflicting student data results or the student is not progressing, then they bring in Linda, the school psychologist, and utilize the WJ III NU and WIIIP to confirm areas of strength and weakness as well as specific problem-solving
interventions for the individual student. By contrast, at Lake, the school psychologist was usually not involved as much with the preliminary PAT meetings. She would typically have been contacted when the team wanted to assess a student who is below grade level and may be in need of a special education referral. At Lake, Linda functioned more in the role of a traditional school psychologist, implementing the WJ III NU and WIIIP as part of the initial data collection process for students that were struggling academically. At Oak, Stephanie, school psychologist, shared that:

We are trying to focus more on the intervention piece and doing a lot of the data collection on known information before we get to a meeting. We used to spend so much time talking about what’s going on with the kids rather than getting to solutions. So we are trying to change how we do things along the way. So … here’s a lot of frustration changes. It’s always hard, so the teachers have been a little resistant, and we’re still trying to figure it out. We assign a liaison to the teacher and help them identify or kind of put into words … what the concern is, and try to identify that more, and do some interventions on their own. And then if things still aren’t going well, then we’ll sign them up for an assist meeting so the whole team can talk about it.

The ASSIST team at Oak was the problem-solving group that worked with teachers seeking assistance with students who were struggling both behaviorally, academically, or both. The ASSIST was the group that suggests doing a WJ III NU to pinpoint a student’s strengths, weaknesses, and recommended intervention strategies based on the assessment results. The ASSIST team spent time during the year discussing the protocol for utilizing WJ III NU within the RTI model. The staff interviewees expressed different points of
view regarding the use of the WJ III NU and WIIIP. One expressed belief was that the WJ III NU should be given at the first sign of academic risk. However, another staff member mentioned that using the WJ III NU and WIIIP initially mirrors a special education evaluation without considering the outcomes of other interventions and response to core instruction. Still, staff members felt that the WJ III NU and WIIIP should be implemented only after other documented interventions had been tried. This would include the standard protocol approach utilizing Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading. It is evident that the implementation of the WJ III NU and WIIIP within the RTI model at Oak probably could have benefited from further discussion and consensus.

**Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading**

The interviewed school psychologists had very little knowledge of Reading Mastery (2008), or Corrective Reading (2008). This was not unusual considering that the typical school psychologist role involves primarily testing and generating evaluation reports. However, both Linda and Stephanie expressed a desire to become more involved with the RTI process beyond assessment. For example, other school psychologists in the district taught Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading groups. Linda and Stephanie noted that it would be beneficial if they had more training with Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading to enhance their knowledge of the reading intervention programs and the alignment with individual reading strategies generated from the WIIIP.

Two of the interviewed special education teachers noted that Corrective Reading seemed to lack a comprehension component and expressed a desire for better measurement of that aspect of reading. The general education teachers interviewed did not currently teach Reading Mastery, or Corrective Reading, groups. Typically, each
student in the study received Reading Mastery, or Corrective Reading, from an intervention teacher, special education teacher, LAP teacher, or another general education teacher. Some of the teachers interviewed commented that they had some initial professional development in Corrective Reading, or Reading Mastery in prior years. Overall, the teachers felt that the Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading contributed to their students’ improvement in reading. In addition, the use of Reading Mastery, or Corrective Reading, paired with individual interventions from the WIIIP contributed to an increase in oral reading fluency scores.

*WJ III NU and WIIIP Implementation*

The school psychologists spoke positively about the interventions recommended by the WIIIP. According to Stephanie, school psychologist at Oak, “it gives a lot of nice interventions. It's nice to be able to hand that to teachers and parents when we done some testing with the students and we can give them some things that they could actually do.” Linda and Stephanie, both school psychologists, commented that being able to provide specific, individual reading strategies targeted to areas of need was extremely beneficial to teachers and parents implementing interventions designed to increase student success.

The special education teachers did not elaborate much regarding the WJ III NU and WIIIP interventions, nor was information specifically identified as WIIIP recommendations noted in the IEPs. However, Barb, special education teacher at Oaks indicated “I think the WIIIP is very helpful for the teachers. It helps both the identified student and the interventions can help other students as well.” The researcher and supervisor were surprised to find that the special education teachers were not as knowledgeable regarding the alignment of the WJ III NU and the WIIIP. The lack of
knowledge regarding alignment and benefits of the WJ III NU and WIIIP was also noted with the interviewed general education teachers. Some of the interviewed teachers did not know anything about the WJ III NU and WIIIP intervention recommendations. Of the teachers who did speak specifically about the WIIIP interventions, they believed that the individual interventions aligned with Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading.

**Alignment with Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading**

Stephanie, the school psychologist at Oak, explained, “We've also found out a lot of interventions that come from the WIIIP are things that we are already doing in some of our reading classes.” Linda, the school psychologist at Lake and Foothills, shared “It seems like they're always able to make it fit or align with what is happening in their Corrective Reading, or Reading Mastery program.” Barb, special education teacher at Oak, noted, “Alignment of interventions with Corrective Reading or Reading Mastery hook back to the classroom and home.” Mary, general education teacher at Foothills elaborated:

The interventions I bring into my classroom give me a wealth of knowledge and allow me to be more strategic in my teaching. We had evidence to try this intervention within the RTI time, and within my classroom time, and we started to see improvement.

Since most of the teachers interviewed were not familiar with the WIIIP interventions and were not teaching Reading Mastery or Corrective Reading, it was not surprising that they could not elaborate on the alignment of the WIIIP interventions and Reading Mastery or Corrective Reading. However, the alignment of WIIIP interventions with Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading indirectly manifested itself when
reviewing each of the student’s progress-monitoring benchmark scores. The data indicated an increasing trend in the rate of reading progress after the implementation of the WIIIP according to the progress monitoring.

*Progress Monitoring*

All three schools defined progress monitoring in terms of the formation and adjustment of groups. In addition, progress monitoring was used to place individual students into Tiers, as a method to assess a student’s oral reading fluency performance, and track the student’s growth using interventions within the general education or intervention/small group setting. The district-required progress monitoring occurs three times during the school year (September, January, and June). All students were assessed with DIBELS passages at their grade level and their scores were inputted into the district’s data system. Grade level teams and/or building teams adjusted groups within each Tier. In addition, teachers from Lake and Foothills reported that grade level teams reviewed strategic and intensive groups approximately twice a month, and students who are strategic or intensive were progressed-monitored at least once a month or more. Some teachers also take it upon themselves to monitor strategic and intensive students every week. For example, Mary, a fourth grade teacher at Foothills, shared that she individually monitored intensive students every week:

Three times a year they are progress monitored again, officially, and adjusted within those groups. However, bi-monthly students are progressed monitored if they are deemed intensive or strategic, so I’m always taking their fluency timings pretty much every other week unless they are very intensive which means that they would be progress-monitored using off-grade level passages, and so if I have
students who are significantly below grade level then I, possibly, am one week
testing them on grade level passages, and another week testing them on an off-
grade level passage. Using a lower grade level passage allows the teacher and
student to be able to see improvement within the grade level that they are working
with.

Progress monitoring is an important component of RTI to confirm the
effectiveness of interventions and identify students who may need additional
interventions. Assessment and progress monitoring is a way to both measure learning and
aid in the decision-making process (Kashima, Schleich, & Spradlin, 2009). In addition,
progress monitoring should be frequent and ongoing to evaluate the effectiveness of
instruction and intervention as well as the Tier placement for students.

Effect on the Reading Rate of Progress

The summary discussion and conclusion are based upon data used to explain the
effect of the implementation of the WIIIP interventions with Reading Mastery and
Corrective Reading on the rate of reading progress of each student involved in the study.
Data was gathered through the interviews, document review, and DIBELS benchmark
data scores. Findings from the interviews and document reviews identified awareness and
communication as an important outcome of the study.

Awareness and Communication

The school psychologists commented that WIIIP interventions were shared as part
of the evaluation results meeting with each school’s referral team. Mary, a general
education teacher at Foothills, confirmed that the WIIIP interventions are shared with the
teaching staff:
And so with the WIIIP report, the recommendations needed are the things that I would go in turn, and bring into my classroom, and be able to identify in my classroom. I do use the recommendations to help improve this student who has had this evaluation report. And so it gives me a wealth of knowledge of things that I need to focus on, but also it is not an overwhelmingly large report. So I can be more strategic in my teaching, in my improvement of the child’s skills.

Sue, a general education teacher at Lake, also recalled the school psychologist sharing the WIIIP summary report and remembered that she started sending home Read Naturally passages with Fred. However, several of the teachers did not recall the WIIIP summary report and were unaware of any specific interventions, other than their student participating in Reading Mastery or Corrective Reading. For example, Crystal, special education teacher at Lake shared:

I don't believe I have seen the list of interventions, but I know that when I attend IEP meetings, we talk about the interventions for the kids, so I am assuming that may be where the psychologist and special education teacher is getting those interventions.

A few of the other participants in the study could not remember the specific interventions from the WIIIP. For example, Samantha, general education teacher at Oak said, “To be honest, I don’t know anything about that.” In addition, Jane, general education teacher at Oak, shared, “I don’t remember. I think the meeting was mostly on how she had done on the tests and what she qualified for, you know in her scores, but I don’t remember any interventions.”
The lack of awareness and implementation of individualized interventions for Tier 2 and Tier 3 students within the RTI model is counter to what researchers have identified as important components for an effective RTI model. For example, Torgesen (2004) and Tilly (2006) confirmed that individual student characteristics apply at this level of instruction and intensive interventions for students are typically individualized in both type and amount. In addition, the absence of communication regarding individualized interventions among teachers negatively impacts the effectiveness and fidelity of the RTI program. To ensure fidelity of implementation, both special education, school psychologists, general education teachers, and administrators must not only implement all the components of RTI, they must keep open the lines of communication (Johnson, Mellard, Fuchs, & McKnight, 2006).

**Staff Perception on Reading Rate of Progress**

School Psychologists, general education teachers, and special education teachers shared their appreciation of the WIIIP intervention summary report because it provides them with something to analyze and work from. The summary report helps staff members focus what they were doing with the student to the point where it could give that student what he or she needed. The data indicated that the reading rate of progress increased significantly after the school psychologists shared the interventions recommended from the WIIIP. School psychologist, Linda, shared her perception of the successes with the WIIIP interventions:

Well, the very first successes have been just wonderful. I don’t know for a lack of better words, it was going into a meeting and giving some ideas and have people go, “Oh, do you mean this?” and I can say, “Yes” “Oh, I can do this,” and they just take the more specific intervention rather than saying, “Oh, they need
Corrective Reading.” So to give them something more specific that will really look at the child’s deficit and help with that, that’s been very … rewarding. And I think, like I said, the teachers, not only the classroom teacher but the LAP teacher, they really appreciate that we could get more specific and really focus on the issue along with doing Corrective Reading, or Reading Mastery.

Special education teacher, Crystal stated, “What I like about the interventions is that the interventions are pretty down to earth and pretty easy to understand.” Barb, the special education teacher at Oak, added, “Some are helpful to both staff and parents.”

Linda, school psychologist at both Lake and Foothills, stated:

Tony has made amazing progress; I know I did the WJ III NU Brief and then the WIIIP. I have made some recommendations, the team took those, and started doing some things and then it was kind of some things were happening here, different things were happening in a different area and then we realized we need to align them. So the team members took everything, looked at it, and figured out what to do. We need to align them so that what's happening in that area, happens in another.

The research highlights the positive relationship noted between the interventions recommend from the WIIIP and the alignment with both Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading. Generally speaking, the teachers that implemented some of the interventions from the WIIIP in combination with Reading Mastery or Corrective Reading spoke highly of the of the relationship. For example, Nancy, a teacher at Lake, shared:

The WIIIP interventions in combination with Corrective Reading and Reading Mastery has had a greater impact, now that we narrowed what we're going to
work on … four months no growth, then with combining Reading Mastery and interventions from the WIIIP, we have seen growth.

The interviews and documents revealed that some of the interventions taken directly from the WIIIP aligned with Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading. As far as the effect on the reading progress of each student, there is definitely an increase in the reading rate of progress using Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading. However, when Reading Mastery or Corrective Reading is combined with specific individualized interventions recommended from the WIIIP, there seems to be an even greater impact on students’ rate of reading progress. Figure 10 highlights the rate of progress in oral reading fluency of each student during the 2010-2011 school year.

Figure 10.

Oral Reading Scores 2010-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIBELS Scores</th>
<th>Pre Intervention</th>
<th>Post Interventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Corrective Reading or Reading Mastery and WIIIP</td>
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</table>

![Graph showing oral reading fluency](image)

Overall, these findings suggest that all the students increased their oral reading fluency by participating in the RTI model using the standard protocol approach utilizing Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading. In addition, students who received Reading
Mastery or Corrective Reading and specific interventions from the WIIIP program through a problem-solving approach, made significant progress.

However, teachers recognized that more work, analysis, and communication would be needed to continue to improve the RTI model in all of the elementary schools noted in this study. As Stephanie, the school psychologist for Oak, shared:

We have been working on this a lot. We’re fine-tuning and tweaking. We’ve always had a really good ASSIST process, and this year we’ve adopted some new processes and forms from another school in our district and we’re just trying to make those work for our team. We’re trying to focus more on the intervention piece and doing a lot of the data collection of known information before we get to a meeting. So we’re trying to change how we do things along the way. So…there’s a lot of frustration and changes. It’s always hard so the teachers have been a little resistant and we’re still trying to figure it out. So we’ve got more tweaking to go but I think that it is good. A lot of teachers are coming more prepared and they have more data.

Linda, the school psychologist at Lake and Foothills, added:

We are getting teachers to look at interventions and being able to target some of those interventions and really keep data ... do those with fidelity and ... we're still working … [on] getting teachers to … buy into it 'cause they often come to our meeting with their ideas already established for a student and sometimes it can be hard for them to kind of open up and have a new perspective.

Another interviewee, Crystal, a special education teacher at Foothills Elementary, noted:
I think RTI can be very successful. It is a ton of work … a lot of work involved, a lot of planning, you have to have systems in place, and you have to have your administrator’s support, and people on board.

The success of RTI hinges on the fidelity of the model, including coordination of staff, resources, assessments, curriculum, intervention curricula, and highly trained professionals. For RTI to be successful, effective leadership from the building principal is essential: “When the administrator is actively involved in adopting the model and sends the message through ongoing meetings and discussions that it is a school priority, there is greater chance of success” (Haager & Mahdavi, 2007, p. 260). Development of a school culture that promotes caring and trust among staff is essential in monitoring and adjusting any system within a district or school. Educational leaders must provide opportunities for staff to collaborate in order to meet the challenges created within the context of which they work. The following recommendations originated from the data collected and the findings of this research study.
Chapter 7

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

In the years after the passage of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Response to Intervention (RTI) has emerged as one of the primary intervention models for addressing the academic and behavioral needs of struggling students. Reynolds and Shaywitz (2009) noted that RTI models of diagnosis and intervention are being implemented rapidly throughout schools across the nation. RTI has the potential to initiate early intervention and target individualized strategies for students with academic and behavioral difficulties, rather than waiting for them to fail before receiving assistance, or being evaluated and found eligible for special education services. To sustain successful RTI models, educational leaders and school personnel need to support the educational process, remove barriers, and address individual student academic or behavioral issues, utilizing research-based interventions. However, the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities in 2005 noted that there is little information in existing intervention studies regarding the RTI process and student success over time. Furthermore, very little has been known about the utilization of the WJ III NU and WIIIP in conjunction with the RTI process and student success over time.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this action research study was to (a) to explore the relationship between reading and employing the WIIIP within the RTI model; (b) examine the relationship of the WIIIP and rate of progress of four students who participated in Reading Mastery, one student who participated in Corrective Reading, and one student
who participated in both Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading; and (c) to determine if staff involved in the intervention process believe the WIIIP interventions impacted the rate of progress for each student.

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

**Relationship of the WIIIP and RTI**

The research established that Oak, Lake, and Foothills Elementary Schools did implement a three-tier RTI model consistent with the research literature (e.g., Simmons, Kame’enui, & Good, 2002; Vaughn, Gross, & Center, 2005). Teachers and school psychologists reported that each school continued to explore and implement systems and protocols to improve the efficiency of their RTI with the goal to increase the reading fluency for all students. For example, Oak Elementary was in the process of implementing a liaison position and written protocols from the Foothills Elementary RTI model, while Lake Elementary continued to examine the roles and responsibilities of various staff members at CAST meetings as a part of the RTI process. Although each school’s RTI model utilized the WJ III NU and WIIIP with the students involved in the study, the intentional use of the WJ III NU and WIIIP varied between the schools. For example, at Foothills Elementary, the WJ III NU and WIIIP were conducted when the SIT team wanted to gain more information and intervention recommendations to target specific areas of need after multiple interventions had been implemented with limited success. The practice of using the WJ III NU and WIIIP at Foothills was similar to that at Lake Elementary. However, the school psychologist reported limited involvement with the PAT team regarding the implementation and monitoring of the WIIIP intervention recommendations. In addition, the special education teacher at Lake Elementary relied
more on teacher recommendations than on the interventions recommended by the WIIIP. At Oak Elementary, the WJ III NU and WIIIP were used at the first sign of academic risk to give the ASSIST team a comprehensive picture before implementing problem-solving individualized interventions. Each school integrated assessments and interventions within an RTI model that aligned with the National Center on Response to Intervention definition of RTI,

Response to Intervention integrates assessment and intervention within a multi-level prevention system to maximize student achievement and to reduce behavior problems. With RTI, schools identify students at risk for poor learning outcomes, monitor student progress, provide evidence-based interventions and adjust the intensity and nature of those interventions depending on the student’s responsiveness, and identify students with learning disabilities or other disabilities (2010, p. 2).

WIIIP and Reading Rate of Progress

Previous research points out that additional time using strategically planned supplemental instruction/intervention in addition to the core curriculum can have a positive impact on reading fluency (Tilly, 2006). The findings in this study align with the research advocating for the use of a standard protocol approach (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). The district and school implemented either Reading Mastery and/or Corrective Reading to all Tier 2 and Tier 3 students. In addition, for selected non-responsive students participating in the standard protocol approach using Reading Mastery and/or Corrective Reading, each school implemented a problem-solving approach including individualized recommended interventions from the WIIIP. This problem-solving approach included
each of the six students who participated in the study. The problem-solving approach is consistent with past research. Tilly (2003) noted that rather than relying on one intervention for non-responsive students, a problem-solving approach requires staff to continually and directly monitor student progress, adjusting interventions based on their performance, which may increase student success over time. The DIBELS data indicates that when the WIIIP data interventions were implemented with Reading Mastery, or Corrective Reading, each student’s oral reading fluency increased. Specifically, in the cases of Tony and Amanda, where the teachers reported implementation of individualized interventions recommended from the WIIIP, the oral reading fluency of both students increased significantly. Their reading rate of progress doubled from September to June, according to the DIBELS scores.

Amanda was reading well and continued to improve her reading, moving from Tier 3 intensive support to Tier 2 strategic support. Tony, Sam, and Fred who were struggling with reading, showed significant improvement in their reading fluency. However, all three continue to be at risk and in need of Tier 3 intensive supports. Mike continued to struggle with reading fluency. Although Mike improved his reading fluency, he qualified for special education in the area of reading and will continue to receive Tier 2 strategic support next year. Mandy, who was already qualified for special education in the area of reading and receiving Tier 3 intensive interventions, made little progress. Next year, Mandy will continue to receive special education support in a self-contained setting. The researcher believes that combining and implementing a standard protocol approach and a problem-solving approach has the potential to accelerate and better meet the needs of struggling learners. The data suggests that after individualized
WIIIP interventions were provided in combination with the standard protocol approach four of the six students reading rate of progress increased. The combined use of a standard protocol approach and a problem-solving approach warrants additional research.

*Staff Involvement with the WIIIP*

The interviews and document reviews revealed a lack of awareness and the need to both increase and improve the systematic collaboration and targeted communication regarding each individual’s reading progress utilizing Reading Mastery or Corrective Reading, along with specific individualized interventions recommended by the WIIIP. Even though documentation indicates that the WIIIP interventions were shared at team meetings, it was evident that some of the general education teachers were unaware of the WIIIP-generated interventions. A lack of awareness and communication impacts the ability of the school and team to implement targeted and aligned interventions utilizing a problem-solving approach for the benefit of the student. Increasing the fidelity and refinement of the RTI protocols requiring documented communication regarding the use of WIIIP-generated interventions, along with each student’s Reading Mastery or Corrective Reading progress data, could improve communication, determine intervention effectiveness, and guide next steps to support student learning. In addition, interviews and documentation alluded to the importance and positive impact when the WIIIP interventions were communicated amongst not only the teaching staff, but parents as well. Again, in the cases of Tony and Amanda, parents utilized specific interventions at home and their teachers believed that these efforts had a direct and positive affect on their oral reading fluency.
Recommendations

The findings of this study identified several systematic and protocol implications to be considered by the district, schools, and staff members involved in implementing RTI to improve the overall effectiveness of the model. Based on the findings of this study, the following are recommendations for future use: providing targeted professional development; increasing awareness, collaboration, and communication; combining a standard protocol approach and problem-solving approach with non-responsive students; increasing parent involvement in the RTI model; and building leadership commitment.

Professional Development

In the area of professional development, interviews and documentation revealed specific recommendations for school psychologists, special education teachers, and general education teachers. Administrative leadership and support is key to the availability of high quality professional development. Quality targeted professional development combined with systematic, engaging delivery is critical to improving the RTI model.

For school psychologists, two specific professional development opportunities are recommended. First, professional development in Corrective Reading, Reading Mastery, WJ III NU, and WIIIP could increase their knowledge of each curriculum, assessment, and recommended interventions. Additionally strategic professional development aimed at calibrating and increasing the overall fidelity of Reading Mastery, Corrective Reading, WJ III NU, and WIIIP may improve the effectiveness of the problem-solving approach utilizing the WIIIP interventions. Second, it may be beneficial to explore the use of other Riverside Publishing products, including other assessments and checklists to generate
specific patterns of student response, resulting in a targeted list of WIIIP recommendations. Riverside Publishing provides assessments and checklists that can be used and inputted into the WIIIP to generate more specific recommendations. Targeted, specific interventions would allow teachers to focus on implementing individualized interventions with at-risk students in alignment with Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading to accelerate their oral reading fluency. In addition, school psychologist should attend Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading professional development opportunities with special education and general education teachers to increase their knowledge base of literacy instruction.

The interviews and document reviews revealed a need to provide additional training to special education teachers on the benefits and implementation of the WJ III NU and WIIIP. The lack of awareness, communication, and incorporation of the recommendations into the IEP indicates a need for additional professional development and collaboration with the school psychologists. This could be accomplished by combining the monthly school psychologist and special education teacher professional development trainings. Another strategy to enhance professional development would involve combining the existing professional learning communities of the special education teachers and school psychologists to maximize time to discuss issues, reflect on intervention strategies, and analyze student results.

Professional development for general education teachers includes four specific recommendations. The first recommendation is to provide professional development in Corrective Reading (2008) or Reading Mastery (2008) to increase the teachers’ knowledge of each curriculum and the alignment with the core curriculum. Secondly,
professional development regarding the WJ III NU (2007) and WIIIP (2008) data program would increase teacher knowledge of the assessments used to targeted and remediate specific reading difficulties. Thirdly, by implementing initial and ongoing professional development opportunities, teachers will have the knowledge to align individual interventions recommended from the WIIIP with Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading. Some of the teachers interviewed in this study reported that they were only provided an initial one-day training in Reading Mastery or Corrective Reading. Killion and Hirsch (2007) noted that single professional development training opportunities have little impact on teacher practice and are ineffective in impacting the belief system that drives what happens in the classroom. Ongoing, embedded professional development in Reading Mastery or Corrective Reading, aligned to individual problem-solving interventions could increase the fidelity of implementation within the RTI model and student achievement. Fourthly, several general and special education teachers mentioned in the interviews that additional comprehension instruction and practice is needed with Corrective Reading to enhance and strengthen its effectiveness. Strategic professional development focused on the comprehension component of Corrective Reading would benefit both staff and students.

Awareness, Collaboration, and Communication

To increase awareness, collaboration, and communication, a variety of potentially useful strategies could be utilized among school psychologists, special education teachers, and general education teachers to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the RTI model. The district should focus on developing school psychologist leadership, awareness, and collaboration. School psychologists currently utilizing the WJ III NU and
WIIIP within the RTI model can create a culture of learning and “buy in” by sharing implementation strategies and student results at monthly professional learning communities, scheduled training opportunities, and summer institute training. School psychologists and special education teachers meeting together during monthly meetings and professional learning communities would provide an opportunity to deliver professional development trainings, maximize collaboration, and increase communication. Haager and Mahdavi (2007) noted that there is a need for ongoing collaboration and communication in addition to professional development. Significant time, resources, and money are needed in order to increase collaboration, communication, and ongoing professional development to affect a positive RTI outcome. Systematic communication and collaboration amongst all teachers involved would be extremely beneficial to the fidelity and effectiveness of the RTI model. This should be based on a common, shared goal of bringing together intervention teachers and general education teachers in order to improve the quality of instruction for all students, including those with disabilities.

Combined Standard Protocol Approach And Problem-Solving Approach

The results of this study indicate that combining the RTI standard protocol approach, using Corrective Reading or Reading Mastery, with the problem-solving approach, using individualized interventions from the WIIIP, significantly increased the reading rate progress of four of the six students selected for this study. The other two students did increase their reading rate of progress, but not significantly. Additional communication and coordination regarding the individual, specific interventions between
intervention teachers, general education teachers, and parents had the potential to increase the rate of reading progress for students.

*Parent Involvement*

Much has been written about parent involvement in schools and the link to student outcomes. When parents are involved in their children’s learning and collaborate to support student learning, there is often an improvement in student outcomes (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). The data suggests that in two of the six case studies where parents used aligned interventions at home, there was a notable increase in reading fluency. It is critical for staff involved in the RTI process to communicate with parents to improve collaboration and utilize specific targeted interventions. Staff should encourage parents to spend time at home reading with their children, attend literacy events, and provide literacy training for parents. This would increase parent involvement and benefit student reading progress. More work is needed to collaborate and involve parents as schools continue to refine their practice to support student learning in an RTI model.

*Leadership Commitment*

The school board, superintendent, and administrators need to be informed of the study findings. This research study could be presented at a school board study session and at regularly scheduled principal academies in order to share the information gained, and to build an RTI instructional leadership approach. In addition, ongoing walk-throughs by the superintendent, central administrative staff, and building principals would provide monitoring, feedback, and reinforcement regarding the importance of an effective RTI system. Administrative participation in staff development opportunities would also increase individual knowledge and enforce the importance of the training. It is
critical to gain administrative leadership and commitment to provide targeted professional development, increase awareness, collaboration, and communication, reinforce the need to increase parent involvement in the RTI process, and implement alignment of a RTI standard protocol approach with a problem-solving approach.

In addition to professional development, communication, parent involvement, and a systematic RTI model, supportive leadership is critical to sustain RTI efforts (Fuchs & Deshler, 2007). Two of the teachers interviewed mentioned the importance of supportive leadership to bring people on board and increase the effectiveness of RTI. Furthermore, effective and supportive leaders create strong and supportive communities within the schools and encourage the growth of students (Kashima et al., 2009). Professional development for administrators regarding the combination of the standard protocol and problem-solving approaches, utilizing the WIIIP interventions, could increase the overall effectiveness of the RTI model and the rate of progress of students struggling in the area of reading.

In order to implement the above recommendations, the support of administration is needed to ensure that targeted professional development opportunities and strategies are provided, awareness, collaboration, and communication is encouraged, the combination of a standard protocol approach with a problem-solving approach is utilized with non-responsive students, and informing parents of their role within the RTI model is critical to addressing the needs of struggling students. Administrative leadership and support focused on the RTI system structure, intervention implementation, and monitoring will help support second order change, which is needed to improve effectiveness of the RTI model.
Despite the uncertainty of education reform and the challenges of a new initiative, RTI has the potential to address the needs of at-risk students by increasing collaboration and resources of general education and intervention personnel to close the achievement gap and reduce the overall numbers of students qualifying for special education. This is an area that will continue to need research and support.
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BIOGRAPHY

Robert Maxwell was born on February 28, 1963, in Camden, NJ. Son of Robert and Margaret Maxwell, he grew up with four siblings Melinda, Kevin, Bryan, and Tina. He spent his childhood traveling the United States and attended three different high schools in New Jersey, Indiana, and Virginia. After graduating high school he attended Utah State University and received a Bachelor of Science degree in Fish and Wildlife Management in 1986. After a brief time working for the Utah State Fish and Wildlife department, he began working for the Los Angeles County Office of Education as a naturalist and attended California State University San Bernardino where he received a professional teaching credential. He spent several years teaching at a middle school in San Bernardino County. During this time, he attended Azusa Pacific University and received a Masters degree in Education Administration in 1994. He moved to Washington State and was employed as an elementary principal for seven years. He then switched positions and he became employed as an Executive Director of Special Services.
APPENDIX A

DEFINITION OF TERMS

A number of terms are used throughout this study to explain a Response to Intervention model. The following are operational definitions of terms related to this study and are noted in alphabetical order:

*Accelerated Reader:* A computer software program that promotes reading, offering reading quizzes on thousands of books at every grade level.

*Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP):* A diagnostic tool that determines how schools need to improve and where financial resources should be allocated.

*Benchmark:* Tier 1 of a multi-tiered RTI model. The general education core curriculum is provided to all students. Successful academic achievement on a benchmark would indicate that students can perform at grade level expectations.

*Benchmark Assessments:* A universal screening method that is updated on a consistent basis through assessments to chart student growth.

*Corrective Reading:* A reading program designed to provide intensive sustained direct instruction to address deficiencies in decoding and comprehension.

*Core Curriculum:* A scientific, research-based general education curriculum that is provided to all students.

*Developmental Reading Assessment:* A tool designed to determine a student’s instructional level assessing three components of reading: reading engagement, oral reading fluency, and comprehension.

*Discrepancy Model:* A model of identifying students as having a SLD. This is determined by administering a standardized, norm-referenced, intellectual achievement test and an academic achievement test to determine if there is a discrepancy between ability (potential) and achievement.

*Differentiated Instruction:* A way of adjusting curriculum and instruction by providing accommodations to meet the needs of all students.

*Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS):* A universal screener that measures reading fluency and is used to monitor literacy development in children. These are standardized, brief assessments that are individually administered.
**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 2004:** A federal law that outlines rights, regulations, and provisions of special education students.

**Instructional Interventions:** Curricular and instructional strategies determined through evidence-based research.

**Intensive:** Tier 3 of a multi-tiered RTI model. Students in this Tier have not responded to Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions. Individualized and intensive interventions including additional time, small group instruction, and modified curriculum are provided to the students.

**Learning Disability:** A classification including several disorders in which a person has difficulty learning reading, writing, and/or math in a typical manner, usually caused by an unknown factor or factors.

**Lindamood Phoneme Sequencing:** A program that stimulates phonemic awareness by helping individuals become aware of mouth actions that produce sounds.

**Measurement of Student Progress (MSP):** Washington State’s annual exam of student progress in reading, math, and science for students in grades three through eight.

**No Child Left Behind (NCLB):** The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 that became effective in 2002. This act outlines accountability for schools and students including addressing standards based education and highly qualified teacher status.

**Progress Monitoring:** A method to assess a student’s performance and track student growth using interventions within the general education or intervention/small group setting. The once-to-twice-weekly data point(s) is/are charted and used to monitor the effectiveness of interventions and guide instruction.

**Ravenscourt:** Chapter books aligned to Corrective Reading.

**Reading Mastery:** A direct instruction curriculum that teaches phonemic awareness, sound-letter correspondence, and progresses to word and passage reading, vocabulary development, and comprehension, building oral reading fluency.

**Read Naturally:** A reading curriculum that supports fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and phonics.

**Response to Intervention (RTI):** An education reform initiative that provides assessment and interventions for all students. It integrates universal screening, progress monitoring and intervention within a multi-tiered structure of interventions. Using scientifically researched curricula and interventions, teams review data and adjust interventions depending on a student’s responsiveness to interventions. This ongoing data and
monitoring system can be used to identify a student with a SLD (2010, National Center on Response to Intervention).

Specific Learning Disability: A special education category where a psychological processing disorder manifests itself through a person’s ability to perform tasks in one or more of the following areas: oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, basic reading skills, reading fluency skills, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation, or mathematics problem solving. This has traditionally been determined through a Severe Discrepancy Model, but may now also be determined through a RTI model.

Strategic: Tier 2 of a multi-tiered RTI model. Students in this Tier have not made sufficient gains in academic achievement using the core curriculum alone. Supplemental materials and more prescriptive instructional interventions are provided to students.

Universal Screening: A brief assessment administered to all students to identify whether they are potentially at-risk for learning difficulties. These results assist in placing students into RTI tiers.

Woodcock Interpretation and Instructional Interventions Program (WIIP): A program that provides an expert system for interpreting test results and offers a direct link between assessment data and evidence-based instructional interventions.

Woodcock-Johnson III Brief Battery: An assessment that provides more in-depth diagnostic information on specific academic strengths and weaknesses.

Woodcock-Johnson III (WJ III) Diagnostic Reading Battery: An individually administered diagnostic test that assesses reading achievement and important related reading abilities.
APPENDIX B

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY VACOUVER
College of Education

Dissertation Interview Study Consent Form

Dissertation Topic Study Title:

Investigating the impact of interventions on struggling students utilizing an RTI model. The specific question of interest is as follows: What impact or effect does the Woodcock Interpretation and Instructional Interventions Program (WIIIP) have on the rate of progress in reading for students receiving reading interventions within an RTI model?

Principal Investigator:

Dr. Paul Goldman, Professor, Educational Leadership
pgoldman@vancouver.wsu.edu 360.546.9114

Participation:

You are being asked to participate in a research study regarding the impact of interventions on Tier 2 and Tier 3 students within an RTI model. The results of the interviews will not be used for any other purposes.

This form explains the research study and your part in it if you agree to participate. Please read the form carefully, taking as much time as you need. Ask the doctoral student to explain anything you don’t understand. You can decide not to participate, or change your mind later or quit at any time. There are no consequences to you or the students if you decide not to participate.

What is this study about?

This research study investigates the current reading interventions (Corrective Reading and Reading Mastery) and the Woodcock Interpretations and Instructional Intervention Program intervention recommendations provided to selected Tier 2 and Tier 3 students within the district’s RTI model.

You are being asked to take part because of your position as an educator. Participation is on a voluntary basis and you are in no way obliged to take part in this study. Taking part in the study will take about one and half hours.

What will I be asked to do if I am in this study?

If you take part in the study, you will be asked to:
Respond to interview questions. You will be asked to give permission for audio taping, which you can refuse or request to stop at any time.

**Are there any benefits to me if I am in this study?**

By taking part in this study, you will benefit by knowing that you have contributed to the understanding about the effectiveness of the Woodcock Interpretation and Instructional Interventions Program (WIIIP) within the Response to Intervention model in the Bethel School District.

**Will my information be kept private?**

The data for this study will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by federal and state law. No identifiable information will be used. All names of individuals, places, and schools will be coded to ensure anonymity. No published results will identify you, and your name will not be associated with the findings. The only individuals who will have access to the data will be the principal researchers and the staff of the Institutional Review Board. The results of this study may be published or presented at professional meetings, but the identities of all research participants will remain anonymous. Finally, the data will be stored digitally for an indefinite number of years.

**Are there any costs or payments for being in this study?**

There will be no costs to you for taking part in this study and you will not receive money or any other form of compensation for taking part in this study.

**Who can I talk to if I have questions?**

If you have questions about this study or the information in this form, please contact the Dissertation chair, Dr. Paul Goldman, pgoldman@vancouver.wsu.edu 360.546.9114 or the graduate student, Robert Maxwell, rmaxwell@bethelsd.org, 253.683.6921. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or would like to report a concern or complaint about this study, please contact the Washington State University Institutional Review Board at (509) 335-3668, or e-mail irb@wsu.edu, or regular mail at: Albrook 205, PO Box 643005, Pullman, WA 99164-3005.

**What are my rights as a research study volunteer?**

Your participation in this research study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to be a part of this study. There will be no penalty to you if you choose not to take part. You may choose not to answer specific questions or to stop participating at any time.

**What does my signature on this consent form mean?**

Your signature on this form means that:

- You understand the information given to you in this form.
• You have been able to ask the researcher questions and state any concerns.
• The researcher has responded to your questions and concerns.
• You believe you understand the research study and the potential benefits and risks that are involved.

Statement of Consent:
I give my voluntary consent to take part in this study. I will be given a copy of this consent document for my records.

__________________________________  ____________________  
Signature of Participant  Date

Printed Name of Participant

Statement of Person Obtaining Informed Consent
I have carefully explained to the person taking part in the study what he or she can expect. I certify that when this person signs this form, to the best of my knowledge, he or she understands the purpose, procedures, potential benefits, and potential risks of participation. I also certify that he or she speaks the language used to explain this research, reads well enough to understand this form or, if not, this person is able to hear and understand when the form is read to him or her, and the participant does not have any problems that could make it hard to understand what it means to take part in this research.

__________________________________  ____________________  
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent  Date

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent  Role in the Research Study
Study Title: The Impact of Interventions on Struggling Students Utilizing an RTI Model

Researchers:

Principal Investigator:
Dr. Paul Goldman, Professor, Educational Leadership
pgoldman@vancouver.wsu.edu 360.546.9114

Co-Investigator:
Robert Maxwell, Graduate Student
rmaxwell@bethelsd.org 253.683.6921

You are being asked to allow your child to take part in a research study carried out by Dr. Paul Goldman and Robert Maxwell. Please read this form carefully, taking as much time as you need. Ask the researcher to explain anything you don’t understand.

You may refuse to give permission, or you may withdraw your permission for your child to be in the study, for any reason. Even if you give your permission, your child can decide not to be in the study or to leave the study at any time.

What is this research study about?

This research study is being conducted to explore the effectiveness of the Woodcock Interpretation and Instructional Interventions Program (WIIIP) (reading interventions) within the Response to Intervention model.

We are asking your permission for your child to be in the study because he or she is currently receiving reading interventions at school within a Response to Intervention model.

Taking part in the study will not take any time from the student or parent. The student will not be interviewed and only existing student data, team meeting minutes, individual education plans (if applicable) and assessment results will be reviewed.
What will my child be asked to do if he or she is in this research study?

If your child takes part in the study, he or she will not be asked to participate in any interviews. School personnel will be asked to provide copies of pre-referral documents, meeting minutes, individual education plans (if applicable), and assessment scores for the student. The Principal Investigator and Co-investigator will view the document and assessment results. Data to be reviewed and used for the study is the same information for which teachers already have access and treat as confidential.

Are there any benefits to my child if he or she is in this research study?

There is no direct benefit to participants. Future students will benefit from the knowledge gained.

Are there any risks to my child if he or she is in this research study?

The procedures involving your child involve very little risk. The data used for the study is the same information for which teachers already have access and treat as confidential. All data will be kept confidential and secure in locked files.

Will information about my child be kept private?

The data for this study will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by federal and state law. No identifiable information about your identity will be used or attached to the reports or interviews. All names of individuals, places, and schools will be coded to ensure anonymity. The data and findings will not identify you or your child or school or district. The only individuals who will have access to the data will be the principal researchers and the staff of the Institutional Review Board.

The results of this study may be published or presented at professional meetings, but your child’s name will not be used or associated with the findings. The data for this study will be kept for 3 years after the completion of the study.

Are there any costs or payments for your child being in this research study?

There will be no costs to you or your child for taking part in this study. You will not receive money or any other form of compensation for taking part in this study.

Who can I talk to if I have questions?

If you have questions about this study or the information in this form, please contact the researcher Robert Maxwell, Co-investigator, 516 - 176th Street East Spanaway, WA 98387, rmaxwell@bethelsd.org 253-683-6921. If you have questions about your rights or your child’s rights as a research participant, or would like to report a concern or complaint about this study, please contact the Washington State University Institutional Review Board at (509) 335-3668, or e-mail irb@wsu.edu, or regular mail at: Albrook 205, PO Box 643005, Pullman, WA 99164-3005.
What does my signature on this permission form mean?

Your signature on this form means that:
- You understand the information given to you in this form
- You have been able to ask the researcher questions and state any concerns
- The researcher has responded to your questions and concerns
- You believe you understand the research study and the potential benefits and risks that are involved for your child.
- You understand that even if you give your permission, your child may choose not to take part in the study.

Statement of Permission

I give my voluntary permission for my child to take part in this study. I will be given a copy of this permission form for my records.

__________________________________  _______________________
Signature of Parent                    Date

__________________________________
Printed Name of Parent
APPENDIX D

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

**Research question:** What impact or effect does the WJ III assessment materials (including the Woodcock Interpretations and Instructional Interventions Program) have on the rate of reading progress for students receiving reading interventions within an RTI model?

**Purpose:** To explore the relationship of Tier 2 and Tier 3 student achievement in reading employing the WJ III assessment materials and the Woodcock Interpretation and Instructional Interventions Program (WIIIP) within the Response To Intervention (RTI) model.

**Interviewer** Robert Maxwell
**Interview #** ______________
**Date** ______________ **Beginning time** ____________ **Ending time** ____________
**Interviewee Name** ____________________________
**Interviewee Title** ____________________________
**Phone** __________________
**Relationship of Interviewer to Interviewee** ___________________________________
**Location of Interview** ___________________________

**Interview Protocol:**
- Review consent form to explain purpose and secure participants signature.
- Ask if it is okay if you tape record the interview, state that you will be taking notes.
- This is an hour and a half interview.
- Provide the interviewee with a copy of the questions before the interview.
- Provide the interviewee with a copy of the questions so they can follow along while you ask the questions.

**Materials:**
- Digital recorder
- Note taking materials

**Introduction:**
Thank you for volunteering to take part in this research study. I want to talk with you about your experiences as a school psychologist with regard to the following interventions: Corrective Reading or Reading Mastery and interventions provided by the WIIIP data program within the RTI model.

1. Tell me about your educational background and how you came to be a school psychologist.

2. Tell me about your role and experience with the RTI model at your school.
3. Tell me about the screening process for determining a student's benchmark status.

4. Tell me about the process for determining if a student will receive Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions within the RTI model.

5. Tell me about your experience with Corrective Reading.

6. Tell me about your experience with Reading Mastery.

7. Tell me about the referral process for additional testing using the WJ III assessment materials for Tier 2 and Tier 3 students who are non-responsive within the RTI model.

8. Tell me about your experience with the interventions recommended from the evaluation report (WIIIP).

9. Tell me about the successes of the interventions provided by the evaluation report (WIIIP).

10. Tell me about the challenges of the interventions provided by the evaluation report (WIIIP).

11. How do you perceive the interventions provided by the evaluation report (WIIIP) align with the reading intervention program(s)? (Corrective Reading or Reading Mastery)

12. Which of the WIIIP interventions do you observe being used the most? Why do you think those interventions are used the most?

13. Tell me how the interventions generated from the WIIIP data program are shared with the special education, general education teacher, and parent.

14. Tell me about the impact on each student’s reading progress utilizing the RTI process in combination with the evaluation report (WIIIP) interventions.

Is there anything else you would like to share?
APPENDIX E

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Research question: What impact or effect does the WJ III assessment materials (including the Woodcock Interpretations and Instructional Interventions Program) have on the rate of reading progress for students receiving reading interventions within an RTI model?

Purpose: To explore the relationship of Tier 2 and Tier 3 student achievement in reading employing the WJ III assessment materials and the Woodcock Interpretation and Instructional Interventions Program (WIIIP) within the Response To Intervention (RTI) model.

Interviewer Robert Maxwell
Interview # __________________
Date ___________ Beginning time ___________ Ending time ___________
Interviewee Name ______________________________
Interviewee Title ______________________________
Phone __________________
Relationship of Interviewer to Interviewee ______________________________
Location of Interview ___________________________

Interview Protocol:
• Review consent form to explain purpose and secure participants signature.
• Ask if it is okay if you tape record the interview, state that you will be taking notes.
• This is an hour and a half interview.
• Provide the interviewee with a copy of the questions before the interview.
• Provide the interviewee with a copy of the questions so they can follow along while you ask the questions.

Materials:
• Digital recorder
• Note taking materials

Introduction:
Thank you for volunteering to take part in this research study. I want to talk with you about your experiences as a special education teacher with regard to the following interventions: Corrective Reading or Reading Mastery and interventions provided by the WIIIP data program within the RTI model.

1. Tell me about your educational background and how you came to be a special education teacher.

2. Tell me about your role and experience with the RTI model at your school.
3. Tell me about the screening process for determining a student's benchmark status.

4. Tell me about the process for determining if a student will receive Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions within the RTI model.

5. Tell me about your experience with Corrective Reading.

6. Tell me about your experience with Reading Mastery.

7. Tell me about the referral process for additional testing using the WJ III assessment materials for Tier 2 and Tier 3 students who are non-responsive within the RTI model.

8. Tell me about your experience with the interventions recommended from the WJ III evaluation report (WIIIIP summary).

9. Tell me about the successes of the interventions provided by the evaluation report (WIIIIP).

10. Tell me about the challenges of the interventions provided by the evaluation report (WIIIIP).

11. How do you perceive the interventions provided by the evaluation report aligning with the reading intervention program(s)? (Corrective Reading or Reading Mastery)

12. Which of the interventions recommended do you use the most? Why do you think they are useful?

13. Tell me about how the interventions generated from the WIIIIP data program are shared with the general education teacher and parent.

14. Tell me about the impact on each student’s reading progress utilizing the RTI process in combination with the evaluation report (WIIIIP) interventions.

Is there anything else you would like to share?
Research question: What impact or effect does the WJ III assessment materials (including the Woodcock Interpretations and Instructional Interventions Program) have on the rate of reading progress for students receiving reading interventions within an RTI model?

Purpose: To explore the relationship of Tier 2 and Tier 3 student achievement in reading employing the WJ III assessment materials and the Woodcock Interpretation and Instructional Interventions Program (WIIIP) within the Response To Intervention (RTI) model.

Interviewer Robert Maxwell

Interview # ____________________

Date ______________ Beginning time ___________ Ending time ___________

Interviewee Name __________________________

Interviewee Title ___________________________

Phone _______________________________

Relationship of Interviewer to Interviewee ______________________________

Location of Interview ___________________________

Interview Protocol:

• Review consent form to explain purpose and secure participants signature.
• Ask if it is okay if you tape record the interview, state that you will be taking notes.
• This is an hour and a half interview.
• Provide the interviewee with a copy of the questions before the interview.
• Provide the interviewee with a copy of the questions so they can follow along while you ask the questions.

Materials:

• Digital recorder
• Note taking materials

Introduction:

Thank you for volunteering to take part in this research study. I want to talk with you about your experiences as a teacher with regard to the following interventions: Corrective Reading or Reading Mastery and interventions provided by the WIIIP within the RTI model.

1. Tell me about your educational background and how you came to be a teacher.

2. Tell me about your role and experience with the RTI model at your school.
3. Tell me about the screening process for determining a student’s benchmark status.

4. Tell me about your experience with Corrective Reading.

5. Tell me about your experience with Reading Mastery.

6. Tell me about the process for determining if a student will receive Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions within the RTI model.

7. Tell me about the referral process for additional testing using the WJ III assessment materials for Tier 2 or Tier 3 students who are non-responsive within the RTI model?

8. Tell me about your experience with the interventions recommended from the WJ III evaluation report (WIIIP).

9. Tell me about the successes of the interventions provided by the evaluation report (WIIIP).

10. Tell me about the challenges of the interventions provided by the evaluation report (WIIIP).

11. How do you perceive the interventions provided by the evaluation report aligning with the reading intervention program(s)? (Corrective Reading and Reading Mastery).

12. Which of the interventions recommended do you use the most? Why do you think they are useful?

13. Tell me about how the interventions generated from the WIIIP are shared with other teachers and/or parents.

14. Tell me about the impact on each student’s reading progress utilizing the RTI process in combination with the evaluation report (WIIIP) interventions.

Is there anything else you would like to share?
APPENDIX G

EXAMPLE WJ III NU AND WJIII SUMMARY REPORT

Name: Sam
School: Lake Elementary
Date of Birth: 04/09/2001
Teacher: Terri Blank
Age: 8 years, 11 months
Grade: 2.7
Sex: Male
Examiner: Linda Rule
Date of Testing: 03/23/2010

TESTS ADMINISTERED
WJ III Tests of Achievement

These tests provide a measure of Sam's academic achievement. A description of each ability is provided. His performance is compared to age peers using a standard score range. His level of task accuracy is described by a comparison to the average individual at a specified age. Sam's proficiency is described categorically; his test performance can be generalized to similar, non-test, age-level tasks.

TEST SESSION OBSERVATIONS Sam's conversational proficiency seemed typical for his age level. He was cooperative throughout the examination; his activity level seemed typical for his age. He appeared at ease, comfortable, and attentive to the tasks during the examination. Sam sometimes responded too quickly to test questions, but he generally persisted with difficult tasks.

Additional achievement test performance observations

Letter-Word Identification measured Sam's ability to identify words. Sam identified the less difficult items rapidly and accurately. He identified more difficult items through increased application of phoneme-grapheme relationships.

Passage Comprehension measured Sam's ability to understand what he had read. The items required Sam to read a short passage and identify a missing key word that made sense in the context of the passage. Sam was able to read initial passages easily but, in a manner typical for his age peers, appeared to struggle as the reading increased in difficulty.

Reading Fluency measured Sam's ability to quickly read simple sentences. Sam appeared to read and respond to the sentences slowly.

ACHIEVEMENT Broad Reading includes reading decoding, reading speed, and the ability to comprehend connected discourse while reading. Sam's overall reading ability is comparable to that of the average individual at age 7-3. When compared to others of his age, his standard score is within the low range (percentile rank range of 2 to 8; standard score range of 69 to 79). His overall reading ability is very limited; reading tasks above the age 7-7 level will be quite difficult for him. Sam will likely require intensive
SUMMARY When compared to others at his age level, Sam's standard scores are low in broad reading and brief reading.

WIIP INSTRUCTIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS & INTERVENTIONS Sam will probably gain the most from reading instruction presented within the late first grade to early second grade range.

It may be useful to determine exactly which capital and lower case letter names that Sam recognizes and can identify. To use this procedure, each of the 26 letters is printed on an index card. There should be one card for the capital and one card for the lowercase letter (52 cards in all). Letters should be presented to Sam in random order and the teacher should keep a list of known and unknown letters. The procedure can be repeated several times. Unidentified letters become instructional objectives. As a higher-level variation on the procedure, Sam may be asked to match capital and lowercase letters.

Sam may begin to think of himself as a reader when he can link printed word forms with words he knows orally.

Use of an explicit, systematic, synthetic phonics program may be beneficial for Sam. These programs begin instruction at the phoneme level and then introduce graphemes. Sam would be taught explicitly the relationship between sounds (phonemes) and letters (graphemes) and then how to blend the sounds to make words. Examples of such programs include Lindamood Phoneme Sequencing Program for Reading, Spelling, and Speech® (LiPS) and Wilson Reading®.

Increased time spent reading may increase Sam's exposure to printed words and may result in an increase in the number of words that he can recognize orthographically.

Word recognition strategies may help Sam build automatic sight-word recognition. These strategies include word walls, flow lists, word banks, flash cards, and games. It is beneficial to use high-frequency words when implementing these strategies, as this will enhance Sam's ability to read independently. For example, a word wall might present five high-frequency words that Sam needs to learn. The teacher engages him in activities, both planned and unplanned, which use the words on the wall. Word walls help build word recognition and analysis skills, vocabulary, and serve as a spelling reference.

Sam may benefit from keeping a word bank, a word recognition intervention. Each word is written on a card and then filed alphabetically. A variety of activities can be done with the word bank to assist Sam in learning or recalling sight words. Some activities include illustrating each word on one side of the card, classifying the words into semantic categories, pairing with another student to read their word cards, using word cards to form sentences, or using the words as flash cards.

A sight-word flow list provides a systematic method to help Sam build automatic sight
word recognition. (This is a list where words are practiced until mastered and then reviewed systematically to ensure retention.) Using 3-5 words Sam fails to recognize in reading, a teacher would write the words on a flow list form. Sam studies the words and then is tested on the words. Provide daily testing and practice until Sam reads each word correctly five days in a row. When the mastered word is removed from the flow list, it is placed in a word bank and a new word is added. One week later the teacher checks the word in the word bank to ensure that Sam can still read it. If an error is made, the word is placed back again on the sight word flow list to be practiced again.

Multisensory methods, such as the Fernald method or the Look-Spell-See-Write approach, will help Sam build sight-word acquisition and word-identification skills. Using the Fernald method, Sam would select a word he wants to learn and the teacher would write the word and discuss its meaning. The teacher models tracing the word and saying each part as it is traced. After this modeling, Sam would trace the word until he feels he can write the word from memory. If there is an error, stop the writing, cover or erase the error, and have Sam use the tracing procedure again before proceeding. Once Sam writes the word from memory correctly three times without the model, have him file the word card in a word bank.

Look-Spell-See-Write is a method to learn sight words independently. In this method, a teacher identifies words Sam needs to master, makes sure he knows what each word means, and then writes the words on cards. Sam is instructed to follow steps in studying the words independently. A cue card can be provided. Sam will look at each word and say it aloud. Then he says each letter in the word. Next, Sam looks carefully at the word, forms a mental picture, and tries to visualize the word with his eyes closed. Sam turns the card over and tries to write the word from memory. He checks the spelling and if correct, turns the card over and writes it again. If incorrect, Sam starts over with the first step. This continues until Sam writes the word three consecutive times with no mistakes.

Providing opportunities for Sam to orally practice new words in isolation before reading the words in connected text may increase his fluency while reading.

Repeated reading is a fluency-building intervention. Sam would read a short passage several times until he can read the passage with ease. Select material that is at Sam's instructional reading level. Have Sam read through the passage aloud. Record the number of errors, as well as the time it took to read the passage. When Sam completes the passage, review the misread words and then have him read it again. Continue this approach until Sam has read the passage three to five times or has reached a pre-established goal for accuracy or rate.

The phrase drill error correction procedure may be helpful for developing Sam's reading fluency. In this procedure, immediate corrective feedback is combined with rehearsal of the corrected error. When Sam makes an error on a word, the teacher or partner models the correct word immediately. Then the teacher or partner would ask Sam to reread the phrase where the error occurred three times.
Linking new facts to Sam's prior knowledge about the topic may increase inferential comprehension. Using a series of questions, the teacher activates Sam's prior knowledge and then models making predictions using a think aloud approach. The KWLS strategy uses a chart to help students organize information into four categories: (1) Know--what they already know about the topic; (2) Want to know--what they want or need to learn from reading; (3) Learned--what they learned from reading; and (4) Still need to learn--what additional information they still need on the topic.

Incorporating self-monitoring strategies may help Sam to recognize and resolve his comprehension errors as they arise. Click or Clunk is one example of a self-monitoring strategy that teaches students to monitor their performance while reading. For example, if Sam understands a word, a point, a sentence, etc., he says, "click." If he doesn't understand, he says, "clunk." Once students can recognize the "clunks," they are taught strategies to address them including use of a glossary, dictionary, a reading checklist, or discussion with a peer.

Encourage Sam and his parents to spend time reading every day outside of school.

Sam may benefit from a cross-age peer-tutoring program either as a tutee or a tutor. To improve Sam's ability to efficiently decode passages, Sam could be paired with an older student from another classroom and then engage in a weekly listening-while-reading intervention. Listening-while-reading requires the more competent tutor to read aloud while the less competent reader follows along. The less competent reader then reads the passage aloud and receives corrective feedback as needed from the tutor.

**TABLE OF SCORES** Woodcock-Johnson III Normative Update Tests of Achievement (Form C) Woodcock Interpretation and Instructional Interventions Program, Version 1.0 Norms based on age 8-11

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