PRINCIPALS AS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS IN TARGETED READING INTERVENTION SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

Martinette Venable Horner: Principals as Instructional Leaders in Targeted Reading Intervention Schools
(Under the direction of Kathleen M. Brown)

School leaders in the 21st century must negotiate a number of competing demands, working as managers as well as instructional leaders. However, with the onslaught of high-stakes accountability measures and increased expectations for student achievement, the principal as instructional leader emerges as a critical role. Educational leadership literature suggests that principals indeed have an impact on student learning outcomes, albeit indirectly. Particularly for elementary school principals, instructional leadership practices that support reading achievement are a high priority since early literacy skills serve as a foundation for future learning in all content areas. Principals leading for reading achievement attend to many aspects of a comprehensive literacy program that is responsive to students’ evolving needs. One aspect of a comprehensive literacy program is a structured approach to addressing the needs of struggling readers who need additional supports and may require more specialized, targeted instruction. The Targeted Reading Intervention (TRI) is a type of support that individualizes instruction for struggling readers.

The researcher used a mixed methods approach to investigate the instructional leadership practices associated with principals whose schools made significant gains after implementing TRI. A conceptual framework consisting of five themes of leadership actions served as a lens through which to analyze the leadership practices of ten elementary school principals in three
rural districts in the southeastern United States. After ranking principal leadership practices using the themes, the researcher compared the principal leadership practices to school gains in an effort to identify which practices were likely to have influenced the greatest gains.
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<td>AYP</td>
<td>Adequate Yearly Progress</td>
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<td>DIBELS</td>
<td>Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills</td>
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<td>ECLS-K</td>
<td>Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Cohort</td>
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<tr>
<td>EOG</td>
<td>End of Grade</td>
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<td>GE</td>
<td>Grade-Equivalent</td>
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<td>GOR</td>
<td>Guided Oral Reading</td>
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<td>HPS</td>
<td>High-Performing Schools</td>
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<td>LPS</td>
<td>Low-Performing Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>LWI</td>
<td>Letter-Word Identification</td>
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<td>NAESP</td>
<td>National Association of Elementary School Principals</td>
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<td>NCDPI</td>
<td>North Carolina Department of Public Instruction</td>
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<td>NCLB</td>
<td>No Child Left Behind</td>
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<td>PC</td>
<td>Passage Comprehension</td>
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<td>PLC</td>
<td>Professional Learning Communities</td>
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<td>RCT</td>
<td>Randomized Control Trial</td>
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<td>Response to Intervention</td>
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<td>Spelling of Sounds</td>
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<td>Targeted Reading Intervention</td>
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<td>US DOE</td>
<td>United States Department of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>Word Attack</td>
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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Background

The role of school principals is increasingly complex, rife with multiple and sometimes competing responsibilities. The ever-increasing expectations for improving student learning outcomes expanded the principals’ roles in schools from managers to instructional leaders (Goddard, Goddard, Kim, & Miller, 2015; Lynch, 2012; Sherman, 2007). As accountability schemes increased the emphasis on student performance as measured by standardized tests, the pressure on principals likewise increased (Lynch, 2012).

The high stakes accountability movement assumes that principals play a role in student learning outcomes as evidenced by the consequences for poor school performance. When schools repeatedly failed to meet adequate yearly progress (AYP) under the No Child Left Behind mandates, principals could be removed as one measure to address the school’s poor performance (No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2002). Later, the federal Race to the Top grant incentivized states to adopt an intervention model in which chronically underperforming schools would implement turnaround measures, implement transformation measures, restart, or close (United States Department of Education, 2009). In both instances, principals’ jobs were at stake as these sanctions and interventions required some type of change in school leaders as part of a package of remedies (NCLB, 2002; US DOE, 2009). Over time, these accountability pressures fundamentally changed the role of principals from managers to instructional leaders who are more concerned with instructional matters than ever before. Such management includes
providing instructional support and monitoring the progress of students, teachers, and the school (Seashore-Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010).

For elementary school principals, leading and managing the school’s literacy instructional program is understandably a high priority for other reasons in addition to the accountability pressures. First, literacy is often considered the foundation for all learning and early literacy skills are the building blocks for more complex reading in all curricular areas. In addition to learning the basic literacy skills, students must also use these skills to learn in other areas (Bean & Swan Dagen, 2012). Second, building these foundational literacy skills starts in the elementary school where early literacy and reading achievement are important predictors of future student success (Mackey, Pitcher, & Decman, 2006; Sherman, 2007). Given the importance of acquiring such foundational literacy skills during the elementary school years, managing the literacy instructional program is a high priority for elementary principals. Among other tasks, managing the literacy instructional program involves monitoring student progress and identifying those areas of instruction where children are not making progress (Fletcher, Greenwood, Grimley, & and Parkhill, 2011).

The context of this dissertation study is the leadership practices of ten principals in elementary schools implementing the Targeted Reading Intervention in the southeastern United States. The Targeted Reading Intervention (TRI) is a tiered intervention designed to help general classroom teachers target reading instruction based on struggling readers’ most pressing literacy needs. TRI leverages the skills of general education teachers to deliver instruction as part of their literacy instructional program (Vernon-Feagans, Kainz, Amendum, Ginsberg, Wood, & Bock, 2012). Since TRI is a part of general education in the elementary setting, principals can be
considered to assume an important role in TRI implementation as part of their instructional program management.

**Statement of the Problem**

One aspect of managing an elementary school’s literacy program is making decisions about which approaches to adopt to meet students’ learning needs and specifically the needs of struggling readers who must make rapid progress in their skills. There are a multitude of approaches and reading interventions that make claims about positive influences on student achievement. Knowing how to choose and implement effective reading programs, often within budget constraints, presents difficulties to principals.

One issue of *Better: Evidence-based Education*, published by Johns Hopkins University School of Education’s Center for Research and Reform in Education (2011), was devoted to examining the available research on programs designed to help struggling readers from early childhood to secondary age range. The review included 96 studies that compared various reading approaches and found that phonetic-based programs featuring one-to-one instruction by teachers were most effective (Center for Data-Driven Reform in Education; Slavin, Lake, Davis, & Madden, 2011). The Targeted Reading Intervention is one such intervention designed to equip teachers with the skills to help individual struggling early readers make rapid progress (Vernon-Feagans, et al., 2012; Vernon-Feagans, Kainz, Hedrick, Ginsberg, & Amendum, 2013). The current study features schools within three districts in a southeastern state where TRI was offered.

TRI trains classroom teachers to use strategies designed to help struggling early readers make rapid progress. Teachers work one on one with students in 15-minute sessions while TRI coaches observe via webcam. After the 15-minute session, coaches debrief and provide
feedback to teachers. Principals in schools such as those that implemented the Targeted Reading Intervention (TRI) face pressure to manage the literacy programming at their schools. The reading achievement gains of students who received TRI instruction are highly dependent on consistent implementation, which includes interactions with the TRI literacy coach. However, there is an assumption that as instructional leaders, principals’ decisions, leadership practices, and behaviors directly or indirectly influence reading program implementation. To date, not much is known about the role of principals in schools implementing TRI.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to identify specific leadership practices and behaviors of the principals in Targeted Reading Intervention schools where students made significant gains in reading. This study sought to start filling a gap in the leadership literature about leadership and reading achievement. Currently, much is known about the impact principals have on student learning outcomes in general (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Leithwood, 2010; Lynch, 2012; Marks & Printy, 2003; Marsh, 2015; Nettles & Herrington, 2007). The small literature base about leadership for reading achievement mirrors the broader body of work on leadership for learning. However, there is little to no overlap in the research that sheds light on leadership behaviors and practices that enable or constrain instructional practices designed to rapidly improve student achievement in reading, such as TRI. Unpacking these dynamics is arguably useful to both practitioners and researchers.

**Significance of the Problem**

As leaders who manage their schools’ instructional program, principals make decisions about which approaches to adopt that best address their students’ learning needs. Choosing instructional approaches from a vast array of options, combined with the pressures to produce
high student achievement, create a sense of urgency for principals to prioritize their tasks and leadership practices to those that improve student learning. Just as federal accountability policies influenced changes in principals’ leadership roles, a similar sense of urgency about student reading achievement locally only adds to existing pressures (United States Department of Education [US DOE], 2009). From a local and state context within North Carolina, improving the instruction, support, and progress of student reading achievement, particularly in the early years of reading development, has been recognized as important (NC Read to Achieve, 2013; Manning, 2014).

In 2012, state legislation that required schools and districts to monitor student progress in attaining early literacy skills was passed (NC Read to Achieve, 2013). The law required the use of assessments starting as early as kindergarten along with data dashboards that track student progress in early literacy skills. The legislation specified that students were to be prepared for increasingly more demanding texts that would subsequenty appear during a student’s college or career years and recognized that early literacy is the foundation of reading skills in later years. The data dashboard was designed to allow teachers and school personnel to administer assessments, track progress, intervene when students show signs of struggle or do not progress, and communicate with parents about student progress (NC Read to Achieve, 2013). The law established levels of intervention for students who are not proficient on third grade reading tests, including remedial instruction in summer camps and/or possible retention in third grade. Sponsors of the legislation sought policy levers to address what is often referred to as “the reading problem” in response to persistently low reading achievement scores in grades 3-8 as measured on the North Carolina End of Grade (EOG) tests (NC Read to Achieve, 2013; Manning, 2014).
As part of the ongoing monitoring of the “Leandro” case, Superior Court Judge Howard Manning issued a report outlining the “reading problem” (Manning, 2014). In Leandro v. State of NC (1997), plaintiffs from five low-wealth counties argued that the state did not provide adequate funding to the districts to be able to deliver a high-quality education to children. The original plaintiffs were from largely rural districts but were later joined by six urban school districts who argued that the state funding formula was insufficient to educate at-risk students and students for whom English was not their primary language. The state Supreme Court ruled that the state’s constitution guaranteed every child the opportunity to receive a sound basic education in the public schools (Leandro v. State, 1997). A sound basic education was defined as students having sufficient ability to read, write, and speak the English language; having sufficient knowledge of fundamental math and science, geography, history, and political systems; having sufficient academic and vocational skills to engage in post-secondary or vocational training; and having sufficient academic and vocational skills to be able to compete in formal education or gainful employment (Leandro v. State, 1997). The case became a landmark school funding case with continuous oversight by Judge Manning.

In the report outlining the reading problem, Judge Manning chronologically traced the precipitous drop in reading scores on the 2008 EOG tests in grades 3-8 when the State Board of Education adopted more stringent standards. The court found that far too many students were not reading on grade level and were unable to meet the higher standards for proficiency. The court then focused its attention to the “four years of reading and writing instruction” prior to the third grade year when students first encountered end of grade tests (Manning, 2014). A most interesting feature in this report was the judge’s focus on school leaders’ role in monitoring whether teachers actually use the assessment systems to make important instructional decisions.
to help students most at-risk for failure due to reading challenges. In the report, Judge Manning went as far as indicting school leaders as failures if they abdicate their responsibilities in supporting teachers to make better instructional decisions based on the reading assessment data. Judge Manning (2014) argued, “The bottom line is that the principals that sit in the office, fail to analyze the assessment data…and do not become proactive in seeing the K-3 assessment system is being properly and effectively used by all teachers to drive individualized instruction in literacy are not performing at a level that is expected to provide their students and faculty with the leadership needed to be successful…” (p. 27). The report also gave a specific scenario to suggest the actions a school leader might take using the assessment. In the scenario, Judge Manning stated that a competent school leader would constantly monitor the data dashboard, identify students in a grade level who are struggling with particular skills as indicated by colored levels, and then convene the grade level team to re-group students with teachers who exhibited success in teaching those particular reading skills (Manning, 2014). This scenario suggested that Judge Manning viewed principals as integral to solving this problem.

In both instances, the Read to Achieve legislation and Judge Manning’s report on the “Reading Problem,” signaled an intense interest in the use of data to inform instruction and leadership to support early student reading achievement. Both have a common goal that students graduate from NC high schools as college or career ready. However, what is most interesting for the context of the current study is the focus on early reading skills and the implications for the principals’ roles in elementary schools. According to Judge Manning (2014), if schools “have not formatively assessed, intervened with individualized instruction…then the child will more likely than not score below grade level at the 3rd grade EOG reading summative assessment” (p. 28).
Principals and teachers face mounting pressures from federal and local policies to improve student achievement especially in reading (Manning, 2014; Slavin et al., 2011). However, these pressures expose challenges for the principals and teachers that this study can begin to address. One challenge is the obvious need for extensive professional development and ongoing support for professional learning for teachers to provide high quality instruction and intervention. Another challenge is that current educational trends to improve learning outcomes for struggling readers point to a tiered model of interventions that begins with specialized instruction by regular classroom teachers as opposed to pull-out instructional models that rely on specialists and tutors (Amendum et al., 2011). This is a shift that connects to the need for professional development and ongoing support to train general education teachers in fulfilling the roles that specialists once solely held. An additional challenge is that the multitude of programs and frameworks for supporting struggling readers makes it difficult for principals and teachers to make strategic and informed choices about which interventions might meet their students’ needs. The TRI is one of the numerous research-based reading intervention programs. Because principals are instructional leaders charged with managing their schools’ instructional program, the actions they take to respond to pressures to improve student achievement and their leadership practices are significant problems to study.

As school districts and teachers grapple with ways to respond to legislative and judicial mandates, principals occupy a middle-manager role in which they must support the necessary structures that lead to high impact instruction while staying attuned to the faculty’s professional learning needs to sustain improvements. Ample research is available that reinforces general leadership practices that support positive student learning outcomes. The decades of research on principal leadership suggests that instructional leadership or leadership for learning contributes
to improvement in student learning outcomes (Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Marsh, 2015; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008). At the same time, a growing body of research on TRI emerged regarding professional development that increases teacher capacity to address the needs of struggling readers, (Vernon-Feagans, Kainz, Amendum, Ginsberg, Wood, & Bock, 2012; Vernon-Feagans, Kainz, Hedrick, Ginsberg, & Amendum, 2013). However, a gap in the literature exists concerning principal instructional leadership practices and what practices and behaviors support successful implementation of reading programs or interventions that raise student achievement. This is a significant problem given the aforementioned pressures on principals to improve student achievement outcomes and the expectation that principal leadership actions mediate reading achievement.

**Research Questions**

The primary research question for the current study is as follows: What were the actions and decisions of principals in schools where students made gains when implementing the Targeted Reading Intervention (TRI)? The secondary research questions are as follows: What is the relationship between the school instructional climate and student growth in TRI implementing schools? Do principal leadership practices enable or constrain implementation of the Targeted Reading Intervention? Which leadership practices enable or constrain implementation?

**Conceptual Framework**

For the purposes of this study, the theoretical or conceptual framework had to meet the following criteria in order to be used as a lens for studying principal practices and behaviors in TRI schools: 1) reflect findings from studies of principal leadership practices that influence student learning; and 2) address principal leadership practices related specifically to improving student reading achievement. Based on the criteria, this dissertation study used a conceptual
framework from Fletcher, Greenwood, Grimley, and Parkhill (2011) that identified five consistent themes among principals who raised achievement in reading. The five themes are: 1) participating in sustained professional development in literacy along with staff; 2) using standardized assessments in reading to monitor achievement and identify specific needs; 3) fostering a collaborative environment in which there is whole-school commitment to goals of professional development; 4) working collaboratively alongside teachers and literacy specialists; and 5) articulating and developing a school-wide expectation of achievement for all learners (Fletcher et al., 2011). This conceptual framework met the first criterion because the themes reflected rather than contradicted the categories of school leadership practices that influence student learning outcomes. The school leadership research, comprised of large-scale quantitative and qualitative studies, categorizes leadership practices that influence student learning outcomes as: 1) setting directions; 2) developing people; 3) redesigning the organization; and 4) managing the instructional program (Hallinger et al., 1996; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Seashore-Louis et al., 2010). Each theme in the conceptual framework fit one or more of these leadership practice categories.

Related to the second criterion, the conceptual framework was specific to leadership for reading achievement. Because the Targeted Reading Intervention was one part of a broader literacy instructional program at the 10 implementing schools, a framework that focused specifically on leadership for literacy or reading achievement was most useful. Using a specific framework for literacy assumed leadership practices for student achievement differed depending on content areas. As outlined in the significance of the problem, specific attention to leadership for literacy and reading achievement in the context of an intervention was a worthwhile topic to study.
Other theoretical frameworks were considered and rejected. The first theoretical framework considered was instructional leadership theory. This theory explains how school leadership practices indirectly affect student achievement when school leaders set directions and goals focused on learning and instruction, manage the instructional program, and actively support instructional improvement (Hallinger, 2005; Robinson et al., 2008; Supovitz, Sirinides, & May, 2010). A second consideration was distributed leadership theory. The distributed leadership theory is a lens for studying and understanding leadership and management that enables informal and formal leaders to work collectively to improve student outcomes (Spillane & Healey, 2010).

While both theories support the direction of the dissertation study, which was to directly examine principal leadership practices in the context of the TRI, they were not specific enough for leadership practices that improve reading achievement. The instructional leadership theory is a broader theoretical framework that does not focus on leadership for literacy or reading alone, but rather encompasses leadership for general student outcomes regardless of subject area or content. Instructional leadership theory encompasses practices, processes, and conceptions that make it too broad to be useful in a study examining specific leadership behaviors and practices for reading achievement. Likewise, the distributed leadership theory broadly encompasses the interactive leadership practices of multiple actors who influence student learning in a school. Neumerski (2012) actually argued that a more distributed lens is needed to better understand how the interactions of teachers, principals, and instructional coaches influence teaching and learning in context. While the TRI involves an array of instructional leaders, the distributed leadership theory is too broad in scope with ill-defined constructs to be useful in the current dissertation
study. Both theories supported the broader scope of this study but were not specific enough to serve as a framework for analyzing principal practices.

**Methodology**

This study used a mixed methods design to analyze secondary data from a randomized controlled trial (RCT) of the Targeted Reading Intervention (TRI). The RCT took place in ten elementary schools across three rural school districts in one state in the southeastern United States over three years. However, the specific data for this study were collected in the last year of the RCT. Qualitative data for this study consisted of principal interviews from the participating schools and principal focus group transcripts. Quantitative data consisted of the mean grade-equivalent achievement gains as measured by the Woodcock Johnson III test of reading and teacher responses from a teacher survey of which 15 questions were related to the instructional or learning focused climate.

This mixed methods study sought to identify principal leadership actions and decisions in the ten TRI schools. In this study, a triangulation mixed methods design was the most appropriate research method to analyze the quantitative and qualitative data that were different but complementary. As a variant of a triangulation design, the convergence model allowed the researcher to compare and contrast the quantitative results with qualitative findings to interpret the principal leadership actions associated with the TRI sites that experienced the most significant student gains in reading. The convergence design model allowed for the separate but concurrent analyses of both the quantitative and qualitative data that were then used to compare and contrast findings for interpretation of phenomena (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). While the quantitative and qualitative data were different, they were also complementary as the principal leadership practices corroborated the student reading achievement gains in most cases.
The principal interviews and focus group transcripts were coded for themes that reflected principal actions, behaviors, and decisions related to the TRI implementation, training, use of data, and professional learning support for teachers. The researcher used the literacy leader conceptual framework to determine the degree to which principals engaged in the practices described in the framework. The researcher looked for representations or signals of the following actions and decisions:

- Principal attended TRI summer institute
- Principal referred to reading assessment data
- Principal created time in master schedules for team meetings, coaching sessions, and professional development related to TRI
- Principal communicated with teachers and TRI coaches about student progress and implementation
- Principal discussed expectations and sets goals for student reading achievement

The researcher ranked the means of grade-equivalent achievement gains from the Woodcock Johnson III assessment by school. The scores reflected student growth from pre- and post-assessments for the duration of the TRI treatment. Finally, the researcher compared principal leadership rankings to student reading achievement gains to see whether the schools with high grade-equivalent gains were led by principals who exhibited the literacy leadership behaviors that were in the literacy leaders conceptual framework.

**Assumptions and Limitations**

The researcher identified several assumptions and limitations of the study for consideration. One assumption was that the principal interviews and focus group transcripts would yield enough data about principal leadership actions and decisions related to the TRI or
literacy in general. This assumption related to the first limitation of the study, which was the use of secondary data. The data were collected as part of a larger randomized controlled trial of the Targeted Reading Intervention that spanned three years. However, principal data interviews were conducted only in the last year of the study. In some instances, principal leadership changed during the three years of the study. As such, these data reflected a principal who was new to the project and whose responses, practices, and decisions may have been impacted by their unfamiliarity with the intervention. Related to the assumption, however, was whether the interviewers and facilitators of the focus group captured enough about principal leadership actions and decisions to make claims about principals’ leadership practices.

Another limitation was the small sample size. The study included a total of ten elementary schools and their principals in three school districts in one state. A third limitation was the narrow scope of the study. Because the Targeted Reading Intervention was specific to early literacy, student achievement data and teacher survey data were collected from kindergarten and first grade classrooms only for one academic year. Such a limited scope of grade levels meant small numbers of students who received the intervention and even smaller numbers of teachers. The narrow scope of grade levels compromised generalizability of findings about literacy leadership practices because of sample limitations. Finally, there was also an assumption that the quantitative and qualitative data would converge, agree, or corroborate findings, which was a particular challenge of the research design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).
Definition of Terms

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP): Adequate yearly progress as defined by a state describes the amount of yearly improvement each Title I school and district is expected to make in order to enable low-achieving children to meet high performance levels expected of all children (US DOE, 2009, Retrieved from http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/standardsassessment/guidance_pg5.html).

Data dashboard: With the adoption of Read to Achieve legislation (NC Read to Achieve et al., 2013), North Carolina public schools began using mClass Reading 3D, an on-going formative and diagnostic assessment system with three benchmarking periods. The assessment system is a web-based system downloaded to an electronic touch-screen device that teachers use to administer benchmark assessments. The system also includes reports for teachers to use to identify in which area(s) of reading students need support. Other reports are for school level and district leadership. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction expanded the implementation of the mClass Reading 3D diagnostic system state-wide in the 2013-2014 school year as required by Read to Achieve legislation (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction [NCDPI], 2015).

Distributed leadership theory: The perspective of understanding the interactions of school leaders, followers, and their context (J. P. Spillane, Camburn, Stitziel, & Lewis, 2008)

End-of-grade tests (EOG): North Carolina End-of-Grade tests are part of the statewide assessment program. The multiple choice tests of reading comprehension and mathematics are administered to students at grades 3-8, and science tests are administered at grades 5 and 8. The assessments align to the North Carolina Standard Course of Study
Grade-Equivalent Scores: The Woodcock Johnson III diagnostic reading battery provides several scores that can be interpreted to understand student performance. Grade-equivalent (GE) scores are comparative scores that indicate levels of development. A GE score reflects the student’s performance in terms of the grade level of the norming sample.

Instructional leadership: For the purposes of this study, instructional leadership is the collective leadership practices and actions that support a learning focused environment leading to school improvement. Effective schools, that is schools that produce positive student outcomes, are characterized by strong instructional leadership that is focused on learning, goal-oriented, and shared among informal and formal leaders (Costello, 2015; Neumerski, 2013; Robinson et al., 2008).

Leadership for learning: Instructional leadership evolved to a broader concept of leadership for learning. This concept broadens the scope of leadership focus from just the individual principal to informal and formal leaders who work collectively to improve student learning. Leadership for learning is concerned with a learning climate that includes the learning of staff as well as students; incorporates the styles of both transformational leaders and instructional leadership; and is distributed (Hallinger, 2011; Hallinger & Heck, 2010).

Student growth: For the purposes of this study, student growth is the difference between fall and spring assessment scores as measured by the Woodcock Johnson III Diagnostic Reading Battery (Jaffe, 2009). The reading assessment is comprised of four subtests: 1) Word
Attack (WA), 2) Letter-word Identification (LWI), 3) Passage Comprehension (PC), and 4) Spelling of Sounds (SS).

Targeted Reading Intervention (TRI): Vernon-Feagans et al. (2013) define the TRI as a reading intervention designed to help struggling readers make rapid progress in reading; Teachers are trained in the model during a summer institute and are coached by TRI coaches using webcam technology.

Summary

This dissertation study sought to identify the principal behaviors, practices, and decisions in schools that had significant student gains when implementing the Targeted Reading Intervention. Given the increased focus on the role of principals as instructional leaders, this study addressed an often overlooked aspect in the principal leadership literature. Practitioners, principal preparation programs, and Targeted Reading Intervention team could benefit from the findings of this study. Principals of elementary schools would benefit from learning what actions they could take to support the early literacy development of struggling readers and the professional learning needs of teachers. Principal preparation programs would benefit from a growing research base of specific practices for instructional leadership. While the aim of the study was not to create a checklist of leadership behaviors for reading achievement, much can be learned about leading learning environments for improving learning outcomes within specific contexts. Finally, the Targeted Reading Intervention team could benefit from the study because the analyses could inform their professional development for principals whose schools implement the intervention.
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study was to identify the actions and behaviors of principals in ten schools implementing the Targeted Reading Intervention (TRI) and to then compare and contrast the actions of those principals in schools showing significant gains with principal actions in the schools that did not see comparable growth. Inherent in this study is an assumption that principals in some way affect student learning outcomes and particularly in the context of a reading intervention. To that end, this literature review synthesized the literature on principal effects on student learning outcomes, which includes instructional leadership theory. The next part of the review explored the literature about principal leadership practices for reading achievement, ending with a literacy leadership conceptual framework for which the researcher argued was a lens to identify and interpret principal practices in the ten TRI implementing schools. Finally, the literature review presents what is known about TRI to contextualize the study within this specific reading intervention. The literature review concludes with a summary of major points.

Principal Influence on Student Learning Outcomes

The role of school principals changed and expanded from primarily serving as school managers to instructional leaders because school leadership is considered critical to school improvement and school success (Seashore-Louis et al., 2010). There is little disagreement about the importance of strong school leaders for all schools, but especially for schools in crisis due to poor student outcomes. However, policymakers and scholars continue to search for the ways in which school principals make a difference leading some to actually question if principals
can actually make a difference in student learning (Hallinger et al., 1996; Leithwood, 2010; Seashore-Louis et al., 2010). With ever-increasing expectations for student achievement, principals play an integral role in creating conditions that help schools meet these expectations (Goddard et al., 2015; Sherman, 2007).

**Mediated Paths of Influence**

The principal leadership research spans the effective schools era of the 1980s, to large-scale school improvement studies in the 1990s, to instructional leadership in the 2000s (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008). Scholars became more interested in the role of principals in school transformation and school improvement contexts in a quest to better understand the principal effects on student learning outcomes. Studies from the 2000s looked more closely at leadership practices and researchers concluded that among other things, leaders with a laser focus on instruction positively affected student learning (Hallinger, 2011). Through primarily qualitative case studies and large-scale quantitative studies, researchers found that principals’ effects on student learning are small, but measurable and statistically significant, while largely indirect (Hallinger, 2011; Leithwood et al., 2008; Leithwood, 2011; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012). In fact, Leithwood, et al. (2008) argued that “school leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on pupil learning” (p. 7).

The literature primarily defined the effects of principal leadership on student learning as mediated along various paths (Hallinger, 2011; Leithwood, 2011). There has been consensus among researchers that leaders’ actions affect school variables along different paths and these paths differentially affect student learning outcomes. Table 1 summarizes the way scholars defined the paths of leadership influence and practices and includes which paths the scholars found to be most significant from their studies.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Base</th>
<th>Leadership Dimensions or Mediating Paths Affecting Student Outcomes</th>
<th>Most Significant Path of Leadership Influence According to the Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leithwood, Patten, &amp; Jantzi (2011)</td>
<td>1. Rational 2. Emotional 3. Organizational 4. Family</td>
<td>By mean effect size Organizational (.56) and rational (.57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robinson, Lloyd, &amp; Lowe, (2008)</td>
<td>1. Establishing goals and expectations; 2. Strategic resourcing; 3. Planning, coordinating, and evaluating teaching and the curriculum; 4. Promoting and participating in teacher learning and development 5. Ensuring an orderly and supportive environment</td>
<td>By mean effect size Promoting and participating in teacher learning and development (0.84)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In some instances, the paths of influence are called leadership dimensions that influence student learning outcomes. Following the table is a more in depth exploration of how the scholars arrived at their conclusions regarding the paths of influence.

Hallinger (2011) identified three paths of influence through which principals indirectly affect student learning. Those paths were: 1) vision and goals; 2) academic structures and
processes; and 3) people. Hallinger (2011) found vision and goals as the most significant path of influence according to the researcher’s synthesis of school leadership effects research. According to Hallinger, vision is defined as “the broad direction in which the school should move” and goals as “specific targets that must be achieved moving towards the vision,” (Hallinger, 2011, p. 129). Goals enable and constrain staff activity by enabling staff to sift through innumerable priorities to focus on what is important.

Leithwood, Patten, and Jantzi (2010) categorized the influence of leadership practices on student learning along four paths: rational, emotional, organizational, and family. Each path has distinct variables or conditions that more or less directly impact students’ school and classroom experiences. Principals make decisions about the leadership variables along the paths that impact student learning outcomes. The rational path includes knowledge and skills of school staff about curriculum, teaching, and learning as well as knowledge of the technical core of schooling, problem solving, leadership practices. The emotional path includes social appraisal skills, morale, engagement, collaboration, and trust. Variables along the organizational path include structures, culture, policies, standard operating procedures, school’s infrastructure, and working conditions. The family path includes such variables that foster parental involvement in the school and visits to the home by school personnel (Leithwood, Patten, & Jantzi, 2010).

The variables influenced school culture, instructional practices, and emotional states of faculty and the community. When variables improved along each path, school and classroom experiences were enriched, which led to greater learning, according to Leithwood et al. (2010). For example, in a 5-year study in Canada that sought to improve elementary school student achievement in reading and math by improving leadership quality, academic press, as a variable along the rational path, was reported to have a significant, positive relationship on student
achievement with an effect size of .23 (Leithwood et al., 2010). In this same study, the scholars found almost equally as strong effect sizes along the rational and organizational paths with effect sizes of .56 and .57, respectively (Leithwood et al., 2010). Variables along the rational path encompass staff knowledge about curriculum, teaching, and learning, which are often referred to as the core of schooling. When principals exercise influence on these variables, they use their knowledge of curriculum, teaching, and learning; skills for problem solving; and knowledge of relevant instructional practices (Leithwood et al., 2010). Along the organizational path are variables that frame the relationships and interactions among school staff such as structures, school culture, policies, and standard operating procedures. Together, these variables make up teacher working conditions (Leithwood et al., 2010).

Similarly, Sebastian and Allensworth (2012) investigated the role of mediating pathways between principal leadership and student learning. The pathways were actually a part of a larger framework of essential supports identified by Bryk et al. (2010) that include professional community, ties to the parent community, learning climate, and program quality. The professional community path examines the capacity of the staff to affect improvement through a “combination of skills, beliefs, dispositions, and work arrangements of teachers” (Bryk et al., 2010, p. 54). A key component of the professional community is the degree to which teachers interact with one another around teaching and learning (Bryk et al., 2010).

Another path, ties to parents and community, included engaging parents in the core program, learning about students and their local community, and maintaining community partnerships (Bryk et al., 2010). The learning climate path refers to the beliefs, values, and daily interactions among school faculty, parents, and students in a safe and orderly environment. Program quality refers to the quality of instruction that students receive. Principals act within
this path by directly working with teachers on classroom instructional practices or indirectly by increasing professional capacity, parental involvement, or the learning climate.

In a study of high schools in Chicago, Sebastian and Allensworth (2012) used multilevel structural equation models to investigate the interactions among principal leadership, school organizational factors, instruction, and student achievement. They detected significant differences in classroom instruction and student achievement between schools as related to principal leadership. The study results showed a standardized path coefficient of .25, which the scholars found to be positive and significant. The relationship between principal leadership and classroom instruction mediated by the school learning climate showed that schools with stronger leaders were more likely to be safe and orderly with higher academic standards (Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012). These differences resulted in better student gains on tests and grades because classroom instruction was uncompromised. Just as in the pathways described in Leithwood’s et al. (2011) model, principals make decisions along many dimensions along all the paths. Deciding how to focus efforts or concentrating on certain variables in some paths over others should be the goal of leaders seeking to improve instruction for student achievement, depending on the context (Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012).

Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe’s (2008) meta-analysis of differential effects of leadership types actually produced another way of thinking about the paths of leadership influence that they actually called leadership dimensions. They inductively derived five leadership dimensions from a meta-analysis of the leadership literature: 1) establishing goals and expectations; 2) strategic resourcing; 3) planning, coordinating, and evaluating teaching and the curriculum; 4) promoting and participating in teacher learning and development; and 5) ensuring an orderly and supportive environment. These leadership dimensions and their meanings are briefly described in the table
below. Promoting and participating in teacher learning had an effect size of 0.84, which is at least double the effect size of the other dimensions (Robinson et al., 2008). This leadership dimension supports a climate in which everyone’s learning is important to meet the school’s goals.

Table 2. *Five Leadership Dimensions and Effect Sizes on Student Outcomes*
Robinson et al. (2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Dimension</th>
<th>Definition of Dimension</th>
<th>Mean Effect Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establishing goals and expectations</td>
<td>Setting, communicating, and monitoring of goals, standards, and expectations, and the involvement of staff and others in the process for clarity and consensus</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic resourcing</td>
<td>Aligning resource selection and allocation to priority teaching goals;</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning, coordinating, and evaluating teaching and the curriculum</td>
<td>Direct involvement to support and evaluate teaching through regular classroom visits; formative and summative feedback to teachers; direct oversight of curriculum through schoolwide coordination</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting and participating in teacher learning and development</td>
<td>Leadership not only promotes but directly participates in formal or informal professional learning with teachers</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring an orderly supportive environment</td>
<td>Protections of teaching and learning time from external pressures and disruptions; orderly and supportive environment in classrooms and school</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While there was some consistency among the literature about the paths of principal influence on student learning, scholars treated the importance of each area differentially in the literature. The relative differences created somewhat of a challenge because practitioners and scholars alike struggle to generalize leadership practices for improving student learning outcomes. At the same time, scholars, policymakers, and practitioners sought more specific
leadership practices that impact student learning, an almost impossible task (Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012). The numerous studies of leadership practices contributed to an overwhelming, and at times, contradictory volume of scholarship that suggested different approaches to leadership for school improvement. Among the crowded field is a theory of instructional leadership that seeks to explain how principals impact student learning.

**Understanding Instructional Leadership**

At a very basic level of understanding, instructional leadership is defined as the improvement of instruction (Reitzug, West, & Angel, 2008). Costello (2015) used simple terms to define instructional leadership as “anything that leaders do to enhance teaching and learning” (p. 3). Early notions of instructional leadership situated the individual principal as the primary staff member responsible for monitoring teaching and learning and managing the instructional program. While these early studies substantiated the importance of instructional leadership, practitioners, policymakers, and scholars needed to understand what principals specifically do to improve instruction or what it means to enact instructional leadership.

Unfortunately, pinpointing specific practices of instructional leadership is difficult for a number of reasons. One major issue is ill-defined constructs of instructional leadership and what it looks like to be an instructional leader in action, making it hard to capture in empirical studies. The occasional contradictions in the literature added to the difficulty of understanding instructional leadership. The contradictions seemed to suggest differing priorities that principals should attend to such as whether they should focus on classroom instruction or managing the organization. Inherent to all of the issues is the lack of attention to a wide variety of variables in differing contexts that shape actions and decisions of leadership. Nevertheless, there is consensus that instructional leadership matters in school improvement. However, knowing the
importance of instructional leadership “is very different than specifying exactly what principals
do to improve instruction in their schools” (May & Supovitz, 2011).

The researcher synthesized from the vast literature base, three specific domains of
practice that characterize instructional leadership theory. These domains provided more insight
into the proverbial “black box” of instructional leadership both theoretically and practically. The
following discussion highlights each domain and how scholars reached these conclusions.

Domains of Instructional Leadership Practice

At times, the literature distinguished between practices and processes of instructional
leadership. Some scholars focused on leadership practices related to setting directions,
developing people, redesigning organizations, and actively supporting instructional improvement
with learning at the core (Leithwood, 2011; Supovitz, May & Sirinides, 2012). Other leadership
practices that occurred frequently in the literature included identifying and focusing the mission,
vision and goals; developing the capacity of others; building structures for collaboration and trust
in the building; maintaining a learning focused climate; engaging family and community; and
maintaining high academic press.

Leadership processes literature tended to focus on ways that leaders facilitate
instructional improvement. Some of these processes placed principals more closely to the work
of teaching such as when they gave feedback on instruction, promoted reflective dialogue about
practice through inquiry processes, and modeled by teaching. Other processes looked at
structures that supported collaboration among teachers, redesigning the organization,
implementing action research, and applying principles of adult learning theory (Hallinger, 2005;
Heck & Hallinger, 2010; May & Supovitz, 2011; Southworth, 2011; Terosky, 2014).
Distinguishing between instructional leadership practices and processes can be overwhelming and confusing, which might explain the issue of ill-defined constructs of instructional leadership. Because of the many overlapping characteristics, a more productive approach to understanding what instructional leadership looks like is to categorize the practices and processes into three domains: 1) vision, mission, and goals; 2) learning focused climate; and 3) developing the capacity of others (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010; Hallinger, 2011; Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins 2008; Leithwood and Louis 2011; Robinson, Lloyd, Rowe, 2008; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012; Supovitz, Sirinides, & May 2010). Nearly every study cited in the following discussion addressed the same domains but may have stressed the importance of each differently.

**Vision, Mission, Goals**

Several scholars found vision, mission, and goals as critical elements of an instructional leader’s practice. Articulating a vision and mission and setting related goals serve a number of important functions for school improvement and student learning. In one study, Leithwood et al. (2008) used a path-analysis model, and found that school leaders’ vision, mission, and goals, strongly influenced teachers’ beliefs about working conditions. Teacher perceptions of the working conditions or learning climate were more strongly connected to student achievement (Leithwood et. al, 2008). Together vision, mission, and goals help set directions for activity in the organization and help develop shared understandings of the context and the work (Leithwood et al., 2008). Connecting with the previous discussion of mediated pathways, vision, mission, and goals are variables along the organizational pathway described in Leithwood et al.’s (2010) findings.
Vision, mission, and goals also organize the work in schools. Staff rally and organize their work around a broadly defined vision of a desired status and focused goals (Hallinger, 2011). Vision and goals appeal to the desire to contribute to the collective mission of an organization. Goals serve as filters to focus staff activity on desired outcomes (Hallinger, 2011; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004; Robinson et al., 2008). Leithwood et al. (2004) cited evidence from a compilation of studies that suggests school leadership practices included in setting directions “account for the largest proportion of a leader’s impact,” explaining up to 25% of the differences across schools (p. 8).

Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008) likewise identified “establishing goals and expectations” as one of five leadership dimensions with considerable mean effect size of 0.42 on student outcomes. The scholars derived the mean from 49 effect sizes in seven studies and defined this dimension as inclusive of: setting, communicating, and monitoring learning goals, standards, and expectations, and “the involvement of staff and others in the process so that there is clarity and consensus about goals” (Robinson et al., 2008, p. 656). As others have noted, Robinson et al. (2008) also maintained that goals have the effect of focusing a school community and coordinating the work of teachers suggesting that goal setting must be a part of school and classroom routines. Clear goals help teams focus work and use feedback to “regulate performance” (Robinson et al., 2008, p. 659). Similarly to Leithwood et al. (2004), the authors in this study emphasized vision and goal setting as a leading indirect effect of principal leadership (Robinson et al., 2008).

A more recent study of instructional leadership processes featured recurring themes that affirm the importance of vision, mission, and goals in instructional leadership in New York City public schools. The purpose of the study was to understand the principals’ experiences, and
enactments of instructional leadership especially as they negotiated managerial roles (Terosky, 2014). The principals were nominated by colleagues, supervisors, parents, students, and educational reviewers from within a New York City Department of Education network of schools, as instructional leaders (Terosky, 2014). The researcher provided nominators who were network leaders or achievement coaches with a working definition for instructional leadership that describes “a principal who develops a vision, team, and structure that prioritizes and enhances the instructional environment of a school” (Terosky, 2014, p. 8). After receiving nominations, the researcher validated the nominees’ reputations as instructional leaders by looking at other evidence that either matched or disputed the nomination. This corroborating evidence came from two NYC DOE data sources: 1) the school survey, which would include teacher, parent, and student perceptions of the learning environment, academic expectations and 2) the school quality review in which experienced and trained educators evaluate a school’s ability to improve instruction and assessment while meeting the needs of students, parents, and teachers (Terosky, 2014). Terosky (2014) employed qualitative and interpretive methods in a study of 18 K-12 public schools in New York City, finding evidence that principal participants used leadership processes grounded in a learning imperative.

An emerging theme from this study that was consistent with the previous research was that these NYC school leaders grounded the vision and mission of the school in learning. Several examples illustrated this theme. First, Terosky (2014) found that all but one principal in this study created learning centered vision and mission statements in collaboration with staff. The learning imperative was communicated at every turn in faculty meetings and email correspondence; professional development sessions; individual meetings with teachers; memos to staff; and parent newsletters (Terosky, 2014). Terosky (2014) reported that more than half of
the participants created faculty book clubs on issues relevant to learning and subject matter content. Four participants reported teaching a course each year to stay current.

While there was consensus among the aforementioned scholars that leaders who affect student learning set a vision and goals for learning, there were some slight differences in the weight they give to this leadership practice (Hallinger et al., 2008; Hallinger, 2011; Robinson et al., 2008). While Hallinger (2011) found that setting a vision and goals for the school organization was the most significant indirect effect of principal leadership on student learning, other scholars did not give this influence as much weight as other principal influences. In fact, Robinson et al. (2008) actually found that principal participation in professional learning alongside teachers had the largest effect, with an effect size of .84. This slight departure was not significant enough to claim contradictions in the literature about the importance of setting a vision and goals in student learning outcomes. Rather, it reaffirmed that this practice of influence is a part of a package of leadership practices that do not work in isolation but instead interact in context.

**Learning Focused Climate**

Principals also influence student learning by creating and maintaining a learning focused climate (Seashore-Louis et al., 2010; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012). For the purposes of this study, instructional climate and learning focused climate were used interchangeably to reference the same idea. Maintaining a learning focused climate is a broad dimension of leadership practice that includes student and staff learning. Seashore-Louis et al. (2010) suggested that leaders’ actions and practices set a tone or culture in the organization that supports continual professional learning. These actions impact the instructional climate (Seashore-Louis et al., 2010).
In a mixed methods study of 127 schools, Seashore-Louis et al. (2010) found that principals who scored high based on teacher responses to surveys exhibited the following actions and practices: 1) articulated high expectations and vision for all students to achieve at high levels; 2) were keenly aware of the teaching and learning in their schools; 3) have direct and frequent involvement with teachers providing formative feedback about teaching and learning; and 4) empower teachers to learn and grow according to the vision established for the school. In contrast, low scoring principals were more concerned with standards, delegated their instructional leadership to coaches, and rarely observed or provided feedback beyond perfunctory administrative duty (Seashore-Louis et al., 2010). Additionally, principals who focused on the learning and instructional climate emphasize the value of research-based strategies (Seashore-Louis et al., 2010).

Creating and maintaining orderly and supportive learning environments are practices that focus on the learning climate as principals protect learning time from distractions. Some literature referred to this as maintaining the disciplinary climate (Hallinger, 2005; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Leithwood, 2010). These practices affect variables along the organizational and rational paths previously discussed (Leithwood & Louis 2011; Robinson et al., 2008). Promoting a positive learning environment included protecting instructional time and decreasing disruptive behaviors that interrupt teaching and learning (Hallinger, 2005; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008). Leaders protect teaching and learning time by shielding teachers from various distractions and maintaining an orderly learning environment (Hallinger, 2011).

Robinson et al. (2008) suggested that the learning focused climate includes more than just student learning. Principals promoting and participating in teacher learning and development create an environment for both staff and students that is “conducive to achieving academic and
social goals” (Robinson et al., 2008, p. 664). The nuance was that principals who supported a learning focused environment did more than just sponsor professional development learning opportunities for staff. They also actually participated in both formal and informal learning alongside staff (Robinson et al., 2008; Southworth, 2011). The authors suggested that this dimension was most strongly associated with positive student outcomes and found that it had the largest indirect effects on student learning than the other identified dimensions with an effect size of 0.84 (Robinson et al., 2008). Leaders who are involved in teacher learning “deepen their understanding of what staff need to sustain changes for improvement” (Robinson et al., 2008, p. 667). This particular finding was key in a later discussion of the literature about principal leadership for reading achievement.

Supovitz et al. (2010) conceptualized instructional leadership of principals as 1) setting a mission and goals, 2) encouraging an environment of collaboration and trust among staff, and 3) actively supporting instructional improvement. The study focused on a midsized urban school district in southeastern United States where 58% of the students received free or reduced-price lunch. The student population was made up of 66% Black students, and 27% White students. Using teacher surveys, two years of student records data from Grades 1 through 8, scales of principal leadership, peer influence, and change of instruction, the authors used a multilevel structural model with latent variables to find a “positive association for both principal and peer influence with teachers’ change in instructional practices in reading and math” (Supovitz et al., 2010, p. 43). The findings were significant:

- Principal leadership predicted teachers’ change in instruction for English Language Arts with a standardized path coefficient of .18 and in math with a standardized path coefficient of .14 mediated through teacher peer influences.
Teacher peer influence had a direct association with change in instruction which explained the positive student learning outcomes in English Language Arts with a standardized path coefficient of .21 and .26 in mathematics (Supovitz et al., 2010). This study provided empirical evidence of the indirect effects of principal leadership on student learning as a function teachers’ instructional practices (Supovitz et al., 2010). While teacher peer influence directly impacted teacher instructional practices, it was principal leadership that structured opportunities for collaboration and communication around instruction among peers/teachers (Supovitz et al., 2010). Structuring these opportunities is a specific leadership practice that encourages trust and collaboration and actively supports instruction (Supovitz et al., 2010).

However, the scholars’ findings about collaboration and active support for instructional improvement deserve close attention. They found that active support of instruction included hands-on support for teaching and learning. Hands-on support for teaching and learning included practices such as monitoring through analysis of student data and outcomes, being visible in classrooms observing teachers at work, and providing feedback (Southworth, 2011; Supovitz et al., 2010). Other examples of principals’ active support of the instructional or learning focused climate included examining lesson plans and providing formative feedback about teaching and learning, and attending team meetings (Seashore-Louis et al., 2010).

A learning focused climate was not exclusive to student learning but encompassed professional learning with the goal of improving practice for improved student outcomes. There was wide agreement that the content of goals in a learning focused climate is specific in scope, focused on academic achievement, and aligned to desired student learning outcomes (Hallinger, 2011; Robinson et. al., 2008).
Developing the Capacity of Others

Over the last three decades, scholars paid considerable attention to the instructional leadership practices associated with developing people or developing the capacity of others. This domain, while closely related to the learning focused climate, included a component of developing leadership capacity in others. Scholars identified a variety of ways in which effective leaders developed the capacity of others. One significant way is through the “the development and improvement of teaching and teachers’ pedagogical practices and knowledge,” according to (Southworth, 2011, p. 6). Interested in what school leaders do to support professional learning, Southworth studied small and large elementary schools as well as high-performing departments in high schools serving marginalized communities (Southworth, 2011). From this study, Southworth (2011) identified three strategies of leadership practices that develop people: modeling, monitoring, and dialogue. Through modeling, leaders were an example and role model to others when they showed an interest in learning and instruction. Monitoring referred to leader processes in which school leaders analyzed student progress and outcomes, conducted observations, and provided feedback to teachers about instruction. Monitoring in this sense was not to inspect but rather to assess needs and strengths in instructional practices. While modeling and monitoring focused solely on the principal’s individual role in leadership for learning, dialogue was a process that developed teacher practice by leveraging the collective assets of a learning community. Dialogue was about creating opportunities for teachers to collaboratively learn about teaching practices and student learning from each other (Southworth, 2011).

An important idea from Southworth’s (2011) study was that leaders created structures and opportunities for colleagues to talk about and learn about practice as a way to develop capacity. These opportunities to talk to and learn from one another are the hallmarks of
productive teacher collaboration, which yields significant results for student learning. When instructional leaders created structures for teacher dialogue, teachers expanded their repertoires of pedagogical skill and improved teaching practices, according to Southworth (2011). Through dialogue, teachers described teaching practices but they also analyzed what happened with student learning. This articulation of tacit knowledge of teaching becomes more explicit through dialogue and is the means through which teachers develop practice and co-construct knowledge. The role of dialogue then, is to increase understanding, knowledge, and skills of teaching in collaboration with other practitioners.

Goddard, Goddard, Kim, and Miller (2015) argued that principal instructional leaders structured opportunities for teacher collaboration which leads to improved student outcomes. In a study of 93 elementary schools serving a high-poverty, rural community in the Midwestern United States, Goddard et al. (2015) found a positive strong relationship between principal leadership and teacher collaboration with an effect size of .70. Teacher collaboration for instructional improvement was a strong direct predictor of collective efficacy beliefs, according to Goddard et al., 2015. Most importantly, the researchers found that this collective efficacy was a significant and positive predictor of student achievement. In schools with a robust sense of collective efficacy, students experienced greater levels of achievement (Goddard et al., 2015). In these professional conversations or dialogues, teachers gained from the collective knowledge of the group and therefore impacted student learning. Instructional leaders who supported structures for collaboration influence student learning by allowing for such capacity building among teachers.

Revisiting Terosky’s (2014) recent study, another theme emerged related to processes that increased the capacity of teachers. The participants in Terosky’s (2014) study all created
personal and teacher schedules that enabled individual and collective learning through group study. More importantly, the “learning spaces” were protected from bureaucratic disruptions, which signaled the importance of the space and time for professional learning (Terosky, 2014). All of the participants provided professional development through off-site workshops, utilizing consultants and peer observations which promoted professional learning and agreed that developing people was critical to the school’s learning imperative stance. The goal of these activities was to increase teachers’ pedagogical skills (Terosky, 2014).

Leithwood’s (2011) study of 12 principals and 65 teachers across 12 elementary, middle, and secondary schools serving students from similar mid- and low socio-economic backgrounds, also affirmed the importance of developing capacity. Schools were selected based on the quality of teachers’ instructional practices from classroom observations. Teachers who were observed were also interviewed about approaches to teaching, their principals’ role in guiding and supporting their work, factors that had the greatest influence on student learning, district influences, professional development opportunities, the school community, parental involvement, and what they would tell a new teacher about what it is like working at the school. Principal interviews addressed the principal’s leadership in setting goals for student achievement, vision for the school, student learning, and decision-making about instruction.

Leithwood (2011) found high levels of agreement among teachers and principals about the importance of three particular practices: 1) focusing the school on goals and expectations for student achievement (100% of principals, 66.7% of teachers); 2) keeping track of teachers’ professional development needs (100% of principals, 84% of teachers)—teachers planned for and sometimes provided on-site professional development themselves; and 3) creating structures and opportunities for teachers to collaborate (91.7% of principals, 66.7% of teachers). These
practices were associated with the instructional leadership domains, but of particular interest was the difference between teachers in low-performing schools (LPS) and high-performing schools (HPS) regarding the practices related to developing capacity. The relevant leadership practices included: supporting teacher collaboration for purposes of instructional improvement (HPS 85%, LPS 56%); helping to ensure consistent approaches to student discipline (HPS 18%, LPS 38%); providing teachers with instructional resources and materials (HPS 6%, LPS 25%) (Leithwood, 2011). Teachers in the HPS placed more value on leadership practices that allowed collaboration, which is central to developing the capacity of others. This study merely supports the idea that collaboration among other things was valued in the high performing schools as a function of the instructional leadership. What is missing from this study is an analysis of contexts that may explain how context enables and constrains leadership practices the foster collaboration. Perhaps the interaction of context with leadership practices would explain the large differences of opinions held by the teachers in both the HPS and LPS. Table 3 summarizes teacher values in low performing and high performing schools related to this study.

Table 3. Agreement on Importance of Principal Leadership Practices in HPS and LPS (Leithwood, 2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Principal Leadership Practice</th>
<th>Agreement of teachers in Low Performing Schools (HPS)</th>
<th>Agreement of teachers in High Performing Schools (LPS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supporting teacher collaboration for purposes of instructional improvement</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping to ensure consistent approaches to student discipline</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing teachers with instructional resources and materials</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting parental involvement in student learning</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thus far, the literature strongly supported developing capacity as a significant mediator of principal leadership influence (Robinson et al., 2008; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012; Southworth, 2011). However, there was a slight departure in the literature about the significance of this leadership practice. Leithwood et al. (2008) downplayed the significance of developing capacity as a way principals influenced student learning. In a mediated effects model Leithwood et al. (2008) illustrated that while developing capacity was important, principals had more influence on teacher motivation and the working conditions of the school; yet, a change in capacity was more likely to influence altered practices that impacted student learning and achievement. This differed from Robinson et al.’s (2008) findings that suggested leadership practices such as developing capacity had a stronger but indirect influence on student learning. However, more is needed to understand what these areas of influence look like in practice and in particular contexts. The available literature on principal leadership is lacking in this understanding about leadership practices in specific contexts. More importantly, attention to context must be considered to avoid over generalization of practices and appropriating practices to checklists that do little to provide insight and guidance about where school leaders should spend their time. Context as a mediator of principal leadership actions is an important variable that has been hard to capture in the prevalent studies on school leadership.

Connections Across the Literature

While Hallinger’s (2005) work reflected the broader literature base about the three domains of instructional leadership practice, the *Instructional Management Framework* aligned leadership process with specific practices that of instructional leadership. This framework paired ten specific leadership practices along three dimensions of leadership processes. The framework’s dimensions of leadership processes are nearly the same as the three domains of
instructional leadership previously discussed. More importantly, this framework specifically identifies the leadership practices in each domain, which further defines instructional leadership from theory to practice. According to Hallinger’s (2005) framework, principals who develop academic goals collaboratively or alone and communicate those goals clearly, define the school mission. Likewise, principals who supervise and evaluate instruction and monitor student progress are managing the instructional program (Hallinger, 2005). Finally, leaders who protect instructional time, promote professional development, maintain high visibility, and incentivize teachers and learning create a positive school climate (Hallinger, 2005). Table 4 illustrates the leadership practices associated with the three dimensions or processes. The Instructional Management Framework reflected the domains of instructional leadership with specifically coordinated practices which further clarified the construct of instructional leadership.

Table 4. *Instructional Management Framework of Leadership Processes and Practices* (Hallinger, 2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Processes</th>
<th>Coordinating Leadership Practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defining School Mission</td>
<td>• Communicating clear school goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Framing the school’s academic goals by the principal or in collaboration with staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing the Instructional Program</td>
<td>• Supervising and evaluating instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Monitoring student progress; monitoring, stimulating, and supervising instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Coordinating the curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating Positive School Learning Climate</td>
<td>• Protecting instructional time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Promoting professional development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Maintaining high visibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Providing incentives for learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Providing incentives for teachers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Evolution of Instructional Leadership to Leadership for Learning

Much of the early literature suggested a monocular focus of instructional leadership as being the responsibility of one person, the school principal (Hallinger, 2005). The unit of analysis tended to be the principal and how their practices and processes defined instructional leadership and affected student learning outcomes. However, as the concept of instructional leadership evolved, researchers and practitioners recognized the futility of such an expectation of principals being the sole responsible parties for instructional improvement and more nuanced ideas of instructional leadership emerged (Hallinger, 2005; Robinson et al., 2008; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012; Spillane & Healey, 2010).

Researchers recognized that these earlier notions of instructional leadership failed to capture the full range of leadership practices by not only principals but also other staff in influencing positive student learning outcomes (Neumerski, 2013). Likewise, practitioners realized that they could not possibly fulfill such demands alone (Hallinger, 2011). As these earlier notions were too dependent on an individual’s leadership and responsibilities for instruction and learning, the concept of instructional leadership evolved to encompass leadership for learning (Hallinger, 2011; Leithwood, 2011; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Neumerski, 2013; Southworth, 2011; Spillane & Healey, 2010). This discussion of the evolution of instructional leadership is relevant because the concept of instructional leadership expanded to encompass more than just the principal.

Leadership for learning is a broader conceptualization that incorporates a wider range of leadership sources, additional focus of action, and a school-wide focus on learning (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Hallinger, 2011). From the literature, three main ideas about leadership for learning surfaced as the concept more aptly described leadership in 21st century
schools. The first main idea of leadership for learning is concerned with not just student learning outcomes, but also adult learning for the purpose of improving instructional practices suggesting a climate for teaching and learning in the overall school. While a more traditional instructional leader’s role had been thought of as an inspector, the idea of staff learning shifts the role of leaders to facilitator of teaching (Reitzug et al., 2008). Leaders for learning recognize the importance of developing people and create structures to enable improvements in teaching that impact student learning. This concept reflects the previous discussion about the domains of instructional leadership. Leaders for learning structure opportunities to develop teachers’ pedagogical practices and knowledge (Neumerski, 2013; Robinson et al., 2008; Southworth, 2011). Just as importantly, the professional learning is likely to be co-constructed among leaders, teachers, and students (Neumerski, 2013). Leaders of learning collaborate, reflect, and analyze student achievement data and structure a learning focused environment that assists teachers in developing instructional practices (Neumerski, 2013; Southworth, 2011). Most notable is Printy, Marks, and Bowers’ (2009) definition of leadership for learning that does not identify who is learning but instead situates learning as a “community-wide activity and responsibility” that values “learning partnerships” (p. 94). This concept resembled the previous discussion about instructional leadership domains.

The second main idea of leadership for learning is that this concept incorporates the styles of transformational and instructional leadership (Hallinger, 2011; Printy et al., 2009). While instructional leaders set academic and achievement goals, monitor curriculum and assessment, transformational leaders stimulate the intellectual climate and get staff to buy in to the vision to work towards reaching academic goals (Printy et al., 2009). The highest performing
schools in a study of 22 sample schools revealed leadership patterns that were high in principal transformational leadership and high in shared instructional leadership (Printy et al., 2009).

The third main idea is that leadership for learning is distributed or shared, debunking the focus on individual principals as those solely responsible for positive student learning outcomes (Burch & Spillane, 2003; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Mayrowetz, 2008; Tian, Risku, & Collin, 2015). While instructional leadership previously focused on the role of the principal, leadership for learning changed the focus from an individual to multiple sources of leadership in which there is shared responsibility of instruction. More importantly than identifying who practices leadership, leadership for learning considers the interactions of formal and informal leaders to affect student learning outcomes and school improvement (Neumerski, 2013).

A growing body of research suggests that school leaders’ work with and through other leaders in schools to influence instruction (Supovitz et al., 2010). More importantly, this distributed leadership improves student learning outcomes. Leadership in schools tends to be distributed among a variety of people in different roles (Heck & Hallinger, 2014).

Hallinger and Heck (2010) suggested that collaborative leadership directly affects a school’s academic capacity, arguing that this change in academic capacity positively affected student growth in reading achievement. In a longitudinal study of school improvement in 192 elementary schools in one state, the authors utilized surveys of teachers and parents to understand the patterns of change in the collaborative leadership and academic capacity in their schools over four years. Perceptions from the surveys were then compared with reading achievement scores of 12,480 elementary students as they matriculated from third to fifth grade. The authors sought to monitor how leadership processes contribute to changes in school improvement over time. Results indicated that positive change in collaborative leadership was
significantly related to growth in academic capacity. This relationship between the change in academic capacity and student growth in reading were significant and substantial with a path coefficient of .20 (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). The results of this study supported the premise that processes associated with collaborative leadership impacted student growth indirectly through building academic capacity (Hallinger & Heck, 2010).

Spillane & Healey (2010) argued that distributed leadership is more of a lens for studying and understanding leadership and management. This lens aims to build a theory of distributed leadership and not necessarily measure the strength of the concept in affecting student learning outcomes (Spillane & Healey, 2011). However, simply aggregating leaders as individual actors of leadership is insufficient. Understanding the ways individual actors collectively arrange themselves to contribute to positive student learning outcomes is more useful than counting who is leading (Neumerski, 2013; Spillane & Healey, 2010). Gronn (2008) argued for more attention to the “concertive action” among formal and informal leaders within their situations, suggesting a study of leadership as a situated activity (p. 23). Therefore, a study of leadership as a situated activity would include the study of the artifacts, tools, and contexts that enable or constrain leadership practices (Mayrowetz, 2008). This aspect also recognized that school staff move in and out of leadership and management roles depending on the situation or activity (Spillane and Healey, 2010).

Similarly, Neumerski (2013) suggested an integration of studies on principals, teacher leaders, and instructional coaches might create a more comprehensive framework on instructional leadership. Neumerski (2013) used “snowball sampling” of the relevant literature about principal, teacher, and coaching to understand what is known about those who lead or manage instruction. In this review, there were a plethora of studies and literature about principal
instructional leadership, a small number of studies examining teacher leaders, and a growing body of literature about instructional coaches (Neumerski, 2013). While these reviews showed a dramatic move from principal as lone instructional leader, there is little integration about how principal leaders, teacher leaders, and instructional coaches actually lead learning for improvement (Neumerski, 2013). Therefore, Neumerski (2013) argued for the use of a more distributed lens to understand these interactions of context, teaching, and learning among all instructional leaders.

**Principal Leadership and Reading Achievement**

While there have been numerous studies of principal leadership and its impact on student learning in general, very few empirical studies explore the relationship between principal leadership and reading achievement (Mora-Whitehurst, 2013). Student achievement related to principal leadership is typically treated with a broad stroke rather than a specific focus on reading or math achievement, when studied in leadership literature (Burch & Spillane, 2003). However, in one earlier study, researchers found that principals indirectly affect student reading achievement. Hallinger, Bickman, and Davis (1996) found that principals do not directly affect student achievement in reading, but indirectly affect reading achievement through the actions they take to shape school climates that support reading, similar to the broader research on leadership and student learning (Leithwood et al., 2008; Leithwood, 2011; Hallinger, 2011; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012). Subsequent studies of principal leadership and reading achievement delve more specifically into instructional leadership practices that support student reading achievement. The following discussion explores these studies.

The earlier study by Hallinger et al. (1996) tested three models to study the effects of principal leadership on student achievement in reading. The first model was a direct-effects
model in which the researchers tested a bivariate, direct-effects concept that included measures of principal leadership and student reading achievement. This model showed no significant effects of principal leadership on reading achievement and was not generally supported theoretically or empirically in other studies (Hallinger et al., 1996). Another model included antecedent variables of principal leadership, which were conditions that might affect how principals enact leadership in their schools such as parental involvement, student socio-economic status, principal gender, and prior teaching experience (Hallinger et al., 1996). In this study, the data did not show a direct path between principal leadership practices and reading achievement outcomes (Hallinger et al., 1996).

However, a third model tested a more “recursive” path that showed principal effects on reading achievement occurred through mediating school climate variables. Principal instructional leadership was most significant on the school climate variable of clear mission with a path coefficient of .354. Raised teacher expectations for learning resulted from having a sense of a clear mission, which led to positive student outcomes in reading (Hallinger et al., 1996). This study reaffirmed the idea that school context is an important factor in principal instructional leadership practices, suggesting that principals adapt these practices to the community context (Hallinger et al., 1996). Such models help to explain the path of principal leadership practices starting with antecedents or variables that bear on principal decision-making and then how these decisions impact other variables along paths that lead to student reading achievement. Similarly to other leadership research, however, this study does not expand one’s knowledge of what specific practices influence reading achievement. This and similar studies simply show that principals have an effect.
However, a few, smaller studies shed some light on the relationship between specific practices and student gains in reading. These studies suggest subject-matter knowledge and focused leadership strategies in literacy are important for principals in elementary schools and their improvement efforts, whereas subject-matter knowledge and expertise are more teacher directed in secondary school settings (Burch & Spillane, 2003). Not surprisingly, some of the findings in these smaller studies echo the findings in the larger literature base for instructional leadership that positively impacts student learning outcomes (Burch & Spillane, 2003; Fletcher et al., 2011). This is particularly important for principals leading elementary schools where early literacy and reading achievement are important predictors of future student success (Mackey et al., 2006; Sherman, 2007).

In one small study of diverse primary schools in New Zealand, researchers identified five consistent themes among principals who raised achievement in reading (Fletcher, et al., 2011). The findings suggested that the behavior of principals was associated with better than normal reading achievement. The themes of principal leadership behavior were: 1) participating in sustained professional development in literacy along with staff; 2) using standardized assessments in reading to monitor achievement and identify specific needs; 3) fostering a collaborative environment in which there is whole-school commitment to goals of professional development; 4) working collaboratively alongside teachers and literacy specialists; and 5) articulating and developing a school-wide expectation of achievement for all learners (Fletcher et al., 2011). Not surprisingly, these themes echo the research on principal leadership effects on student learning explored in early sections of this paper.

In the first theme, researchers of some primary schools in New Zealand found that principals not only articulated the importance of sustained professional development but also
participated alongside teachers and literacy specialists based at their schools (Fletcher et al., 2011). This participation increased the principals’ own knowledge of theoretically sound reading pedagogy based on recent research and helped them engage in professional discussions with their teachers and literacy specialists in attendance. Because principals were actively involved in the professional development as learners, they were able to collaborate with others on their staff to problem solve. During the professional development, principals explored and refined school literacy plans with their staff in response to what was learned (Fletcher et al., 2011).

This particular theme resonates with the findings of two pieces of leadership literature previously explored. Returning to the meta-analysis of studies on principal leadership effects on student learning, Robinson et al. (2008) found a large effect size of .84 from principals promoting and participating in teacher learning and development. In this one theme, the principals in the study of New Zealand primary schools did more than just arrange the professional development; they were actively engaged. This active engagement with professional learning also supports one of Southworth’s (2011) claims in which the scholar identified monitoring, modeling, and professional dialogue as critical instructional leadership dimensions. By actively participating in the professional learning, the principals in the New Zealand study promoted a culture of school-wide learning in which they observed instruction (monitoring), and participated in the professional dialogue about student reading achievement and teaching practices (modeling; Fletcher et al., 2011).

Similarly, the second theme, using standardized assessments school-wide to monitor achievement and identify specific needs, also resonates with Southworth’s (2011) monitoring dimension as principals in the New Zealand study used assessment for more than just
accountability measures (Fletcher et al., 2011). The monitoring behaviors using standardized assessment data equipped principals, literacy leaders, and teachers with data to make decisions about interventions and key strategies for struggling readers to raise their reading achievement (Fletcher et al., 2011).

The third theme that emerged was that principal leaders who raised reading achievement created collaborative environments in which there was whole-school commitment to the goals and to the professional development. In explicating this theme, the authors noted that this environment took some time to develop as relational trust among teachers, principals, and literacy specialists evolved (Fletcher et al., 2011). Principals in the New Zealand study identified the need to develop teachers’ pedagogy in literacy. Because of its complex nature, developing reading pedagogy to increase reading achievement involves multiple people on a school staff (Fletcher et al., 2011). A collaborative environment is necessary to de-isolate teaching practices such as what Southworth (2011) found in the professional dialogue leadership dimension. Similarly, principals leading for reading achievement create structures that facilitate such dialogue about professional practice such as release time for peer observations and joint planning with literacy specialists (Fletcher et al., 2011).

The fourth theme, principals work collaboratively alongside teachers, resonated with Neumerski’s (2013) suggestion that there is more to learn about how the integrated instructional leadership practices of teachers, specialists, and formally identified school leaders work together to improve student learning outcomes. In this theme, Fletcher et al. (2011) found that principals, literacy specialists, and teachers worked in concert to plan, model, and observe practice to make improvements. Furthermore, this theme is explained by the distributed leadership theory that suggests that school leaders’ work with and through a variety of people in different roles to
influence instruction that improves student learning outcomes (Heck & Hallinger, 2014; J. P. Spillane et al., 2008).

The last theme was that principals articulate and develop a school-wide expectation of achievement for all learners (Fletcher et al., 2011). Articulating such expectations signaled that principals and staff would be strategic about resources to make sure all students’ needs were met. This theme emerged when the principals in the New Zealand schools deployed human and capital resources where they were needed most. For example, teacher assistants were scheduled to assist in classrooms to work with individual students and too provide additional instruction across several classrooms where needed. The principal leadership literature is consistent in finding that vision and goal setting by school leaders impacts student learning and focuses decision-making (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010; Hallinger, 2011; Leithwood, 2011; Leithwood et al., 2008; Robinson et al., 2008; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012; Supovitz et al., 2010;).

In another study of 15 elementary school administrators and 15 curriculum coordinators from 8 urban elementary schools, Burch and Spillane (2003) discovered that leaders’ views of school subjects shaped and were shaped by leadership strategies, suggesting a reciprocal relationship. In this 4-year longitudinal study of elementary school leadership, scholars conducted structured and semi-structured interviews, collected video footage of leadership practices, and observed leaders in practice, 3-4 days per week over a ten-week period (Burch & Spillane, 2003). The researchers found that school leaders’ views of subjects influenced decisions about how they allocated human and capital resources as well as influenced their approaches to improving student outcomes in the subject areas. For example, while the principals largely agreed that math and reading were core to the curriculum, an overwhelming
percentage (83%) thought that skills in literacy support learning in other subjects, compared to only 17% who thought that math supported learning in other subjects (Burch & Spillane, 2003). The school leaders felt that teachers should work on reading and writing throughout the school day because students read and write in every other content areas (Burch & Spillane, 2003).

Furthermore, the school leaders believed that the primary source of expertise for improving literacy instruction was internal as opposed to the external community, whereas they sought training for mathematics from external sources (Burch & Spillane, 2003). Teachers were given more input into professional learning opportunities and school activity around literacy than in mathematics. Just as principals’ views of subject matter impacted their approaches, their leadership practices also informed their knowledge of the subject (Burch & Spillane, 2003). Leaders reported more direct interactions with teachers around literacy such as repeated observations of teachers as they implemented new activities and offering substantial feedback (Burch & Spillane, 2003). Because of this active involvement and engagement in classrooms around literacy, some leaders actually recognized the need for external expertise to support the teachers in literacy reform practices whereas they previously depended on the internal expertise of teachers (Burch & Spillane, 2003). It was their active engagement in professional learning around literacy practices that helped principals in these schools to recognize that teaching practices needed to be more informed by the latest research on reading instruction, rather than relying on the assumed internal expertise of the teachers, just as Robinson et al. (2008) and Fletcher et al. (2011) suggested.

In another small study of elementary principals and their influence on their schools’ reading programs and student reading scores, three concepts emerged that explained how principals influence reading achievement and programming in a school (Mackey et al., 2006).
The three concepts were the principal’s vision of the reading program, the educational background of the principal, and how the principal defines their role as an instructional leader in the school (Mackey et al., 2006). This smaller study emerged from a larger study designed to examine reading strategies of second graders in four urban schools using four different reading programs (Mackey et al., 2006). The researchers used a constant comparison approach to develop emerging themes and created a composite profile of the schools. The composite profile consisted of triangulated ethnographic data, further analysis of that data within five standards of the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), and student reading test scores for the years prior to, the year of, and the year after data collection.

From this study, the principal’s vision for the reading program emerged as the first concept that influenced decision-making and monitoring of instruction. The researchers found that principals who delegated leadership of the reading program to someone else such as a reading specialist did not understand the theoretical basis of the reading program and were less likely to intervene when instructional practices were misaligned with the program (Mackey et al., 2006). The second concept that emerged noted differences in principal decision making based on educational backgrounds and was closely related to how the principal defines and applies their role as an instructional leader (Mackey et al., 2006). The principal who had the strongest background in reading had a masters degree in reading and completed all but the dissertation for a doctorate in educational leadership. This principal, therefore, exhibited great understanding of the research behind the reading program chosen for their school. Rather than delegate the supervision, professional development, and feedback to teachers, this principal led the instructional improvement directly. This principal sought additional understanding from
specialists invited into the classrooms to provide feedback about instructional practices (Mackey et al., 2006).

Another principal in the study had a speech-language background and their understanding of language needs influenced the decision to adopt the reading program most focused on vocabulary development through direct instruction. While lacking knowledge of reading research, this principal created additional afternoon programs to meet the needs of students that the direct instruction reading program did not address (Mackey et al., 2006). The two principals with the least amount of knowledge and experience in reading delegated more of the instructional leadership responsibilities to others such as reading specialists, district specialists, and faculty and could not address implementation issues of the reading programs in their schools (Mackey et al., 2006).

Not surprisingly, the school whose principal had knowledge of reading instruction, led the vision for the reading program, directly engaged in the professional learning, and in turn led the professional development for their school saw the greatest, sustained gains in second grade reading test scores for the periods captured in this study. This principal used a reading program called Open Court but enhanced the program with a balanced literacy approach because of what he observed to be missing in the Open Court program alone and how these missing components did not serve the children in the school (Mackey et al., 2006). The second grade percentile ranks on the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills went from the 35th percentile from the year prior to the study to 55th percentile during the year of the study and sustained at 55th percentile in the year after the study (Mackey et al., 2006). The authors carefully noted that for each year during which the percentile scores were collected, a new crop of second graders were tested suggesting
that the school culture responded positively to the instructional leadership efforts of this principal in making reading improvements (Mackey et al., 2006).

Another, more recent study of elementary school principals in two school districts in the southeastern United States sought to determine how principals acted as instructional leaders in reading (Sherman, 2007). In this study, researchers used an inductive approach to analyze data from interviews of principals whose schools had passed the state’s standardized reading tests or had won national awards for school improvement and whose schools had a large population of students living in poverty. The study identified five core beliefs and actions of principals that were consistent across the schools (Sherman, 2007).

One common belief held by the principals interviewed was the belief that instructional practices must be personalized to meet the needs of students. They did not have a one-size-fits-all view of reading instruction. As a corollary to this belief, principals from this study encouraged teachers to use a balanced reading approach to instruction that includes phonics and whole-language. The principals strongly advocated for balanced reading programs and for teachers to use all available resources such as basal readers, trade books, and computer programs. A third core action was protected and reserved time for reading instruction. Classroom interruptions were few and the school instructional schedule designated 60 to 90-minute blocks of time for reading instruction. These school leaders also limited the use of pull-out, remedial programs that often took the students away from core classroom instruction (Sherman, 2007). In addition to these scheduled times, principals in this study also supported afterschool and before school tutoring, small group and individual tutoring.

A most significant finding in the study, was principal belief in flexible student grouping for reading instruction (Sherman, 2007). They used staff in flexible ways to accommodate
cross-classroom and cross-grade level grouping to meet students’ needs. Staff members in addition to regular classroom teachers were also utilized to support flexible grouping, suggesting a collective responsibility of all staff in the school. Lastly, the principals in this study carefully collected and analyzed student achievement data using the information to support strategic decisions. Common to most principals in this study was a background or knowledge of reading instruction, strategic use of funds to support professional learning including their own alongside teachers, and connections to students’ home and community (Sherman, 2007).

In summary, principals make a difference in student reading achievement through instructional leadership practices. Principals indirectly affect reading achievement of students through the actions they take to shape school climates that support reading. Principal values, often informed by reading expertise and knowledge of reading research as well as the lack of such expertise, influenced their leadership practices. These practices led to structures and processes that support student reading achievement (Burch & Spillane, 2003; Mackey et al., 2006; Sherman, 2007,). Notably, understanding the ways principals can influence student reading achievement would be of interest to elementary school principals, policy makers, and those who prepare principals to lead.

The Table 5 summarizes the key findings about principal effects on reading achievement and how this research connects to the broader leadership literature that explained how principals affected student learning. Because of the strong overlap, the researcher will use the five leadership for reading achievement themes from Fletcher et al. (2011) as the conceptual framework for the proposed study.
Table 5. *Summary of Key Findings on Principals and Reading Achievement*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Practices for Reading Achievement</th>
<th>Connections to Leadership Literature</th>
<th>Researchers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Participating in sustained professional development in literacy along with staff                           | • Leadership dimension whereby principals promote and participate in teacher learning and development; effect size of 0.84  
• Modeling leadership strategy                                                                             | • Robinson et al., 2008  
• Southworth, 2011                                                                                           |
| Using standardized assessments in reading to monitor achievement and identify specific needs              | • Monitoring leadership strategy                                                                      | • Southworth, 2011                                |
| Fostering a collaborative environment in which there is whole-school commitment to goals of professional development | • Create structures for dialogue  
• Hands-on support for teaching and learning  
• Professional community  
• Collective efficacy is strong predictor of student achievement                                            | • Bryk et al., 2010  
• Goddard et al. 2015  
• Southworth, 2011  
• Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012  
• Supovitz et al., 2010                                                                                     |
| Working collaboratively alongside teachers and literacy specialists                                        | • Distributive leadership for learning                                                                  | • Spillane & Healey, 2010  
• Neumerski, 2013                                                                                            |
| Articulating and developing a school-wide expectation of achievement for all learners                        | • Vision, mission, goals  
• Establishing goals and expectations                                                                        | • Hallinger, 2011  
• Leithwood and Louis (2011)  
• Robinson et al., 2008                                                                                     |

**The Targeted Reading Intervention**

The next section of the literature review explores what is known about TRI. TRI is a literacy intervention that uses coaching via webcam technology to help classroom teachers individualize instruction for struggling readers who are not responding to general classroom reading instruction. TRI teachers are trained and coached to provide individualized instruction to struggling readers in one-on-one, 15-minute sessions, 3-4 times a week until the struggling
reader makes rapid progress, generally in 6-8 weeks. When the teacher, assisted by the literacy coach, determines a struggling reader has made progress, the teacher switches one-on-one instruction to another struggling reader (Vernon-Feagans et al., 2013). Professional development and distance coaching sessions assist teachers in learning and implementing specific literacy strategies to address the most pressing literacy needs of struggling early readers.

**Teacher Professional Development for TRI**

TRI teacher training includes several components. The first component consists of professional development for TRI teachers and relevant school personnel such as their principals and curriculum coaches in a summer institute that precedes the start of the school year in which teachers will implement the intervention. At the TRI Institute, teachers receive TRI materials and learn diagnostic reading strategies aimed to help struggling readers. Teachers watch video examples and modeling by coaches, participate in role-play using TRI strategies, and practice using strategies independently with children. Teachers are trained to use specific strategies to boost reading fluency and comprehension through re-reading familiar texts, word work, and guided oral reading (Vernon-Feagans et al., 2013). TRI teachers use a TRI Diagnostic Map to chart children’s daily progress. Also during the institute, teachers are introduced to the TRI website that provides continued professional development and houses TRI content, including PDFs of strategies, TRI teaching tools, and videos of TRI teaching strategies (Vernon-Feagans et al., 2013).

During the summer institute, teachers are given TRI materials, including a white board, letter-sound tiles, TRI Reference Tool, and four bins of books matched to TRI levels, which they use during the following activities in each TRI session. TRI sessions include training on the three main components of the intervention, which are:
Re-reading for Fluency (2 minutes). The student re-reads part of a book that s/he read at least once the previous day. The teacher typically times and charts the student’s reading speed for one minute, and might model or scaffold fluent, expressive reading with some or all of the text, depending on the skill level of the child.

Word Work (10 minutes). Teachers use several instructional strategies to help the child manipulate, say, and write words based on progress monitoring and the TRI Diagnostic Map. There are four basic Word Work levels matched to the child’s instructional level (see Table 6). At each level of Word Work, basic reading strategies are used to help children progress rapidly, including Segmenting Words; Change One Sound; Read, Write, and Say; and Pocket Phrases. These strategies are each adapted to the four levels of Word Work and are situated within words and text,

Table 6. Levels of TRI Word Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Pink</td>
<td>The first level of Word Work is geared to children who need to learn short vowel sounds within 2- and 3-sound words. Teachers help children with beginning blending and segmenting as they gain understanding of the alphabetic principle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Blue</td>
<td>The second level is aimed at children who have some knowledge of short vowel sounds but expands their knowledge to 3- to 6-sound words. Children at this level learn more advanced blending and segmenting skills in words like ‘camp’ and ‘dream.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Green</td>
<td>The third level helps children with advanced phonics, including long vowel sounds, where one sound can have more than one combination of letters, such as in ‘slow’ and ‘boat.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Purple</td>
<td>The fourth level helps children blend and segment multisyllabic words like ‘little’ and ‘glorious.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

demonstrate the alphabetic principle, help students learn phoneme-grapheme (sound-symbol) relationships, develop students’ segmenting and blending abilities (phonemic awareness tasks), and develop students’ sight word vocabulary. Vocabulary checks are completed throughout the session to make sure children understand the words they are decoding.
**Guided Oral Reading (GOR).** At the end of the session, teachers choose a text at the child’s instructional reading level, as guided by the Word Work and the Diagnostic Map. Teachers pay particular attention to scaffolding children’s abilities to summarize, predict, and make connections and inferences. Guided Oral Reading in TRI is distinguishable from contemporary guided reading in small group classroom instruction in two ways: (1) the text is more closely matched to the individual student’s needs; and (2) TRI teachers offer greater focus on word-level, moment-by-moment scaffolding, as well as a focus on fluency and comprehension strategies (Vernon-Feagans et al., 2013).

The second component of teacher professional development is the use of trained TRI coaches who work directly with teachers during the school year. The literacy coaches function in a number of ways to support teachers in delivering instruction. Literacy coaches observe the intervention sessions virtually and provide immediate feedback about the teachers’ instruction. The coaches also assist teachers in using diagnostic literacy strategies to individualize instruction for low-performing struggling readers (Vernon-Feagans et al., 2013). One half-time literacy coach works with 12 to 15 teachers via webcam each week. During weekly webcam coaching sessions, TRI coaches meet individually with each classroom teacher to watch and give feedback during a TRI session, answer questions teachers may have, and problem solve with the teacher. Coaches email feedback and answers to teacher questions as follow-up to the coaching session. Using observation and diagnostic tools, coaches and teachers decide which strategies are most appropriate for an individual child. Coaches fade their scaffolding over time as coaching sessions are designed to make teachers independent experts in teaching reading (Vernon-Feagans et al., 2013). During weekly and eventually bi-weekly team meetings, TRI coaches meet with the school-based TRI teaching team via webcam for 30 minutes. At least two times each
semester during team meetings, coaches provide face-to-face professional development, building on teachers’ needs and enhancing teachers’ TRI practices (Vernon-Feagans et al., 2013).

**TRI Research**

In a series of randomized control trials (RCTs) results indicate significant findings regarding the effects of TRI for struggling readers. One particularly significant finding is that TRI produced effect sizes of .30 to .70 for struggling readers (Amendum, Vernon-Feagans, & Ginsberg, 2011; Vernon-Feagans et al., 2012; Vernon-Feagans et al., 2013). In one study of TRI conducted in the southwestern region of the United States, kindergarten and first grade students who received TRI outperformed struggling readers who did not receive the intervention in the spring, after controlling for fall scores (Amendum et al., 2011). The effect sizes in this study ranged from .40 to .72, one-half standard deviation higher than focal students in the control group. The reading areas most significantly impacted were higher word attack skills, letter-word identification, passage comprehension, and spelling of sounds as measured by the Woodcock Johnson Diagnostic Reading Battery, III (WJ-DRB III; Amendum et al., 2011). In another study researchers tested the effectiveness of TRI with a larger sample of students. They sought to understand which students might benefit the most from the intervention. The findings revealed an average effect size of .41 (Vernon-Feagans et al., 2012). In yet another study, TRI effect sizes ranged from .36 to .63 across a broad range of reading assessments for kindergarten and first grade struggling readers over a one-year period of instruction (Vernon-Feagans et al., 2013). Effect sizes were reported for each subtest as follows: reading comprehension, .48; spelling, .63; word reading, .36 and .54 (Vernon-Feagans et al., 2013).

In a review of studies on instructional approaches for struggling readers, Slavin (2011) expanded on a much earlier meta-analysis by Elbaum, Vaughn, Tejero and Watson (2000),
which reported on effective one-to-one instruction programs for struggling readers. In Elbaum et al.’s (2000) review, a meta-analysis looked at 29 studies from 1975-1998. The landscape of alternative instructional approaches expanded greatly since that time and Slavin (2011) captured more recent studies of approaches designed to help struggling readers. Slavin (2011) reviewed 97 studies that included 1:1 instruction by teacher, 1:1 instruction by paraprofessionals, small group tutorials, classroom instructional process approaches, classroom approaches with instruction, and instructional technology approaches. TRI was one of eight 1:1 instruction by teacher programs reviewed. From a review of TRI studies, Slavin (2011) reported an overall effect size of .45 for TRI. For the specific components of reading that were tested, the effect size for word attack (WA) was reported as .30, letter-word identification (LWID) as .45, and passage comprehension (PC) as .56. Other reading interventions that used 1:1 instruction by teacher were Reading Recovery, Auditory Discrimination in Depth, Early Steps/Howard Street Tutoring, Reading Rescue, Reading with Phonology, Intensive Reading Remediation, and TEACH (Slavin et al., 2011). Table 7 summarizes the overall effect sizes, the number of studies referenced in Slavin’s (2011) review, and characteristics of the sample population for the approaches that used 1:1 tutoring by teachers.

A significant finding of TRI studies is that non-struggling readers in TRI classrooms have also profited from the intervention, signifying that TRI teachers were able to generalize TRI practices to benefit all children in their classrooms (Amendum, Vernon-Feagans, & Ginsberg, 2011; Vernon-Feagans, Kainz, Hedrick, Ginsberg, & Amendum, 2013). Non-struggling readers at TRI schools had higher word attack, letter-word identification, and passage comprehension scores than non-struggling readers from control schools with effects sizes of .34 to .61 (Amendum, et al., 2011). This finding suggested a positive relationship between teachers’
participation in TRI and children’s reading performance across reading domains even when non-struggling readers did not receive the one-on-one TRI instruction (Amendum, et al., 2011).

Another important finding in TRI studies is that general education teachers successfully implemented an intervention for struggling readers with the support of literacy coaches (Vernon-Feagans et al., 2013). While most reading interventions considered successful use specialized tutors or teachers to deliver instruction outside of the regular classroom, such as Reading Recovery, TRI findings demonstrated that its method of coaching regular classroom teachers is just as effective with comparable effect sizes (Vernon-Feagans et al., 2013).

Table 7. Summary of 1:1 Instruction by Teacher Reading Interventions
Slavin (2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1:1 Instruction by Teacher Intervention</th>
<th>Overall Effect Size</th>
<th>Number of Studies Reviewed</th>
<th>Sample Population</th>
<th>Grade Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Recovery</td>
<td>+ .19</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>• International</td>
<td>1st; ages 5-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Urban, suburban, rural mid-western United States</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• High poverty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auditory Discrimination</td>
<td>+ .90</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>• 50% White</td>
<td>K-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 49% African-American</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Steps/Howard Street Tutoring</td>
<td>+ .86</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>• High poverty</td>
<td>1st/2nd-6th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• African-American</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• English language learners (ELLs)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Urban and midwestern United States</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Rescue</td>
<td>+ 1.08</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>• Spanish-speaking</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading with Phonology</td>
<td>+ .65</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>• Rural</td>
<td>Ages 6-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Northern England</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensive Reading Remediation</td>
<td>+ .85</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>• Upstate New York</td>
<td>2nd; 3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targeted Reading Intervention (TRI)</td>
<td>+ .45</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>• Rural southeastern and southwestern United States</td>
<td>K-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Title 1 schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEACH</td>
<td>+ .19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>• Middle class</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Suburban San Francisco</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Vernon-Feagans et al. (2013) found great efficiencies afforded by TRI given that teachers “were able to implement TRI literacy strategies with relatively little training and with relatively modest instructional time per student” with comparable effect sizes to other reading interventions (p. 1185). This finding is significant in that the low-wealth, rural contexts where TRI studies were concentrated have fewer resources available for professional development and the hiring of specialized personnel. Teachers were able to deliver instruction to help prevent reading failure in struggling readers within the instructional day (Vernon-Feagans, 2013).

The data from TRI studies suggest the intervention is an efficient and effective approach to equipping teachers with targeted instructional strategies to help struggling readers using web-cam coaching. Three independent groups who have conducted independent analyses with TRI data have endorsed the TRI, which is one of very few early reading programs receiving these endorsements: Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development (Annie E. Casey Foundation), Promising Practices Network (Rand Corporation), and Best Evidence Encyclopedia (Center for Research and Reform in Education, Johns Hopkins University).

**Summary of Main Ideas**

The proposed study aims to identify the actions and behaviors of principals in 10 schools implementing the Targeted Reading Intervention and to then compare and contrast the actions of those principals in schools showing statistically significant growth with principal actions in the schools that did not see growth. The literature review first addressed the assumption that principals have some effect on student learning outcomes. In doing so, the review uncovered competing theories and concepts that explain the effects principals have on student learning.

Some research focused on principal influences on variables along different pathways that indirectly affect student learning. A specific theory, instructional leadership, emerged in the
leadership literature to explain how principals affect student learning outcomes. Other scholars pointed to overlapping leadership practices that were categorized in three domains, suggesting that principals who focused their actions in these domains influenced student learning outcomes indirectly. The domains are: vision, mission, and goals; learning focused climate; and developing people. The literature review traced the evolution of instructional leadership from a broad focus on principal actions related to instruction to the more encompassing concept of leadership for learning. This concept recognized that while principals do not act alone in improving school environments, their practices result in processes that enable others to collectively improve student learning outcomes.

Connecting to the specific context of the study, the literature review then focused on leadership for reading achievement and an exploration of the TRI. Leadership for reading achievement, which closely resembled the research that broadly explained principal effects on student learning, suggested that principals who, 1) participate in sustained professional development in literacy along with staff; 2) use standardized assessments in reading to monitor achievement and identify specific needs; 3) foster a collaborative environment in which there is whole-school commitment to goals of professional development; 4) work collaboratively alongside teachers and literacy specialists; and 5) articulate and develop a school-wide expectation of achievement for all learners, were likely to positively influence reading achievement in their schools (Fletcher et al., 2011). Because of the strong connections to the larger leadership research base, the leadership for reading achievement conceptual framework was used to analyze the principal actions in TRI schools. This study can addressed a current gap in the leadership literature about principal practices and actions in a specific context such as the Targeted Reading Intervention.
Chapter III: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Chapter III outlines the methods of the dissertation study. The chapter begins with a review of the purpose of the study and research questions. In order to contextualize the study, a description of the data and sample population follows. The chapter explains the research design rationale, procedures, and the conceptual framework for analysis, followed by a summary of the methodology.

Purpose of the Study

Given the interest in the role of school principals as instructional leaders, the purpose of this study was to identify specific leadership practices and decisions of elementary principals in schools that implemented the Targeted Reading Intervention. One of the chief concerns of principals at the elementary school level is student reading achievement. While the larger school leadership literature identified the ways in which principals influence student learning outcomes, little is known about principal leadership for improving learning outcomes in reading.

Research Questions

The research questions followed a continuum of inquiry into the actions, decisions, and leadership practices of principals whose schools implemented TRI. The study began with an attempt to identify and understand principal practices by using the five themes of the leadership for reading achievement framework. With the understanding that principals influence teaching and learning through their influence on the instructional climate, the inquiry attempted to detect the influence of the ten principals on the instructional climate in their respective schools.
Finally, the research on TRI already established that consistent implementation of TRI yields improved reading achievement for struggling and non-struggling readers. Therefore, the study sought to investigate how and if principals influenced teachers’ abilities to implement TRI strategies. The research questions were: What were the actions and decisions of principals in schools that made gains when implementing the Targeted Reading Intervention (TRI)? The secondary research questions are as follows: What is relationship between the school instructional climate and student growth in TRI implementing schools? Do principal leadership practices enable or constrain implementation of the Targeted Reading Intervention? If yes, which leadership practices enable or constrain implementation?

**Targeted Reading Intervention Data**

The dissertation study used data collected as part of a randomized controlled trial (RCT) of the Targeted Reading Intervention (TRI), funded by an Institute of Education Sciences (IES) grant. The TRI is a literacy intervention that uses virtual coaching via webcam technology to help classroom teachers individualize instruction for struggling readers who are not responding to general classroom reading instruction.

The RCT focused on raising the capacity of regular classroom teachers in ten low wealth, rural schools in the southeastern region of the U.S. Spanning three years, the study trained teachers to effectively identify and instruct struggling readers in the regular classroom (Vernon-Feagans et al, 2013). In addition to a summer institute, the TRI training was delivered by literacy coaches to classroom teachers in real time via webcam technology. Principals of the ten schools also had the opportunity to attend the summer institute. All kindergarten and first grade classrooms in the ten school districts participated in the study. Half of the classrooms were randomized as treatment classes and half were comparison classes. During the three years of the
study, 119 teachers and 556 struggling readers and 556 non-struggling readers participated. As part of the randomization procedures, 305 struggling readers were assigned to the treatment group while 251 were assigned the comparison group.

In 2013-2014, the final academic year of the IES-funded study, researchers interviewed the ten principals individually and as part of a focus group (see Appendix A for the Focus Group protocol and Appendix B for the Principal Interview Questions). Because the dissertation study focuses on the ten principals’ actions and decisions related to TRI implementation, the researcher will use both the quantitative and qualitative data from the 2013-2014 year for analysis. To date, quantitative studies on the TRI describe correlational and causal relationships between variables and validate findings (Amendum et al., 2011; Vernon-Feagans et al., 2012; Vernon-Feagans et al., 2013).

The current dissertation study will utilize secondary data, integrating both the quantitative and qualitative data for a mixed methods approach. Qualitative data consist of principal interview and focus group transcripts, TRI Principal Reference Tool (see Appendix D), and principal demographics. The quantitative data used for this dissertation study include teacher surveys in which instructional climate variables were isolated (see Appendix C for the Teacher Questionnaire) and student mean scores from the Woodcock Johnson III reading achievement test (Woodcock, Mather, & Schrank, 2004). In this study, the student grade-equivalent scores will be analyzed for 119 struggling and non-struggling readers who were a part of the treatment group, meaning they received the TRI one-on-one instruction with their teacher. A total of 26 teachers at ten schools in three school districts were a part of the study. Table 8 summarizes the types of data and sources this study used for analysis. The subsequent Measures section describes the data in more depth.
Table 8. Summary of Qualitative and Quantitative TRI Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualitative Data</th>
<th>Principal interview transcripts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principal focus group transcript</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TRI Reference Tool for principals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principal demographic data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative Data</td>
<td>School level means of grade-equivalent scores from WJIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School level means of grade-equivalent scores from WJ III by subtest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher climate survey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Measures

Teacher Questionnaire

A 37-item Teacher Questionnaire was used in the current study. A series of 31 questions regarding teacher attitudes toward teaching and their teaching practices were adapted from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Cohort (ECLS-K; National Center for Educational Statistics, 2001). Reliability data for the ECLS-K items ranged from .84 to .96. An additional 6 items about teacher educational background, personal demographic information, and whole-class demographics were also included. Teachers participating in the Targeted Reading Intervention study completed online questionnaires twice per year, once in the fall and once in the spring. Teachers completed the questionnaire once in the fall and again in the spring of the 2013-2014 academic year. Twenty-six teachers completed the questionnaire. Prior to filling out questionnaires electronically, teachers were given a letter, which explained the procedures, provided an online link and a unique and confidential username and password, and requested teachers to complete the surveys at their convenience. Teachers were asked to complete the
questionnaires within four weeks of being provided the link. The questionnaires required approximately 15–20 minutes of the teachers’ time. Upon completion, teachers received a $50 stipend. There were 24 responses to the teacher questionnaire in the last year of the study. This study looked specifically at items 13 a-u.

**Woodcock Johnson III – Diagnostic Reading Battery**

Targeted Reading Intervention research assistants assessed students on the Woodcock Johnson Diagnostic Reading Battery, III (WJ-DRB; Woodcock, Mather, & Schrank, 2004). Two subtests of the WJ-DRB (Letter-Word Identification and Word Attack) were administered to confirm children’s risk status following DIBELS screening. DIBELS stands for Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills, and assesses the acquisition of early literacy skills. The short, usually one minute fluency measures are used by early childhood teachers to monitor the development of these early skills. In the state where the TRI study took place, all teachers in the early grades administer DIBELS as part of a battery of literacy assessments. Letter-Word Identification measures the child’s word identification skills. Initial items require the child to identify letters that appeared in large type. Remaining items require the child to pronounce words correctly, with items becoming increasingly difficult as the selected words appear less frequently in written English. Letter-Word Identification has a median reliability of .91 in the 5-to-19 age range (Woodcock et al., 2004). Word Attack measures the child’s skill in applying phonic and structural analysis skills to the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed sounds and words. Initial items require the child to produce sounds for single letters. Remaining items require the child to read aloud letter combinations that are phonetically-consistent, or regular, patterns in English orthography but are non-words or low-frequency words, with items becoming
progressively difficult. Word Attack has a median reliability of .87 in the 5-to-19 age range (Woodcock et al., 2004).

Students who were selected as struggling or non-struggling readers were administered two additional WJ-DRB subtests (Passage Comprehension and Spelling of Sounds). Initial items from Passage Comprehension measure the child’s symbolic learning and require the child to match a rebus or word picture puzzle with an actual picture of an item. The more advanced items employ a modified cloze procedure that require the child to read a short passage and provide a missing key word, which make sense within the context of the passage. The items became increasingly difficult by removing pictorial support and by increasing passage length and difficulty as well as vocabulary complexity. Passage Comprehension has a median reliability of .83 (Woodcock et al., 2004). Spelling of Sounds measure the child’s spelling ability, particularly phonological and orthographical coding skills. Initial items require the child to write single letters for sounds. Remaining items require the child to spell letter combinations representing regular patterns in English. Items increase in difficulty by requiring more complex spelling patterns. Spelling of Sounds has a median reliability of .74 (Woodcock et al., 2004).

The WJ-DRB generates three types of scores or statistics: 1) level of development, 2) comparison with peers, and 3) degree of proficiency. In this study, statistics about degree of proficiency are not used. Instead grade equivalent scores indicate levels of development. A grade equivalent (GE) or grade score reflects the student’s performance in terms of the grade level of the norming sample. For example, a first grader who received a GE of 2.0 on a test is said to perform at the second grade level in that test. In this dissertation study, grade equivalent and grade equivalent gains are used to compare school performance.
Principal Interviews

The principal interviews took place over the summer of 2013. See Appendix B for the principal interview protocol. The TRI Intervention Director wrote the principal interview protocol and conducted ten interviews with the help of three members of the research team who were also coaches. The protocol contained 23 semi-structured questions and probed for principal-teacher interactions related to TRI implementation, principal relationships with coaches, and ways principals mitigated teacher resistance to implementation. Interviews lasted on average 45 minutes. Principal interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed by the research team. The Intervention Director noted that suggestions and requests learned through these interviews informed the principal's reference tool. See Appendix D for the Principal Reference Tool.

Principal Focus Group

The principal focus group took place during a principals’ summit in September of 2013. The summit took place after the summer teacher training institute. While some principals also attended the summer teacher training, the summit was focused on principals solely. The Intervention Director conducted the focus group with eight of the principals and it lasted approximately 45-60 minutes. The purpose of the focus group was to get principal input for future training for school leaders and to understand what worked or did not work for their schools. The audio recording of the focus group session was transcribed. See Appendix A for the focus group protocol.
TRI Sample Population

The following section generally describes the school contexts and principals that are part of the dissertation study. In the larger TRI study, 569 struggling readers and 569 non-struggling readers participated and were assessed using the WJ-DRB. In this study, the student n = 119 which also includes struggling and non-struggling readers. Tables 9, 10, and 11 summarize demographic data by school district. A brief discussion of the data follows each table. The three school districts are similar in that they serve a large number of economically disadvantaged, minority students who struggle with reading as shown by the percentage of third grade students performing at grade level as measured by end-of-grade (EOG) tests. Ten schools participated in the TRI in 2013-2014.

District 1 is located in the north central region of the state and serves just under 5,000 students. Almost 61% of the district is considered low-income. Of the seven elementary schools, three participated in the TRI study: Schools 5, 8, and 4. School 5 is a small school serving only 197 students, which is well under the district average of 326 and state average of 496 students in elementary schools. One other elementary school in the district had a higher percentage of low income students than School 8; however, this school did not participate in the TRI. School 8 also had the largest racial minority population as well as the largest percentage of low income students of the three participating schools. Only 17.2% of third grade students performed at grade level in reading in School 8. While School 8 is smaller than the average elementary school in the state, the school has nearly three times the concentration of Black students. In contrast, 82.1% of the third grade students performed at grade level at School 4. Table 9 summarizes the demographic information for the District 1 schools.

The experience and educational preparation of the principals leading the three schools in
District 1 are quite diverse. School 5’s principal holds a Bachelor’s degree in education and added-on a principal’s lesson from a state university. This principal participated in the Distinguished Leadership Program hosted by a state school administrator’s group. The program engaged practicing principals in experiences to build leadership capacity for themselves and in their schools over the course of a year. The principal was most recently named Principal of the Year for District 1 in 2014.

Table 9. *Demographic Information for Schools in District 1*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>School 5</th>
<th>School 8</th>
<th>School 4</th>
<th>District Average</th>
<th>State Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Size</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Population by Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other races including multi-racial</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of School Population as low income</td>
<td>74.75%</td>
<td>87.28%</td>
<td>68.21%</td>
<td>61.65%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of 3rd grade students meeting grade level standards in reading</td>
<td>52.8%</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
<td>82.1%</td>
<td>62.4%</td>
<td>60.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The principal of School 8 was once a high school history teacher before becoming an assistant principal in another elementary school in District 1. After one year as assistant principal, the principal was appointed to School 8 to lead. The principal of School 4, now retired, is a 24-year veteran elementary school principal. Under this principal’s leadership, School 4 was awarded the National Title I School of Distinction in 2011-2012. Like School 5 School’s principal, this principal was named Principal of the Year for District 1 in 2014.
Six elementary schools participated in the TRI in District 2. The average elementary school size in District 2, by population, is 655. School 10 and School 7 are much larger than the average elementary school in District 2 with 806 and 881 students, respectively. A large percentage of the population at Garden, Hill, and School 2 schools are racial minorities, with over 80% of the students identified as Black and Hispanic. Notably, School 2 is nearly an all-Black student population. The percentage of low income students at these schools trends similarly to the percentage of minority students.

With just over 30% of its population identified as racial minorities and 43.39% of its population identified as low income, School 7 School’s demographics differ quite substantially. Both Whalen and School 9 schools appear to be the outliers, demographically, among the TRI implementing elementary schools. These schools have a much larger population of White students and just under half the population of low income students compared to the other participating elementary schools. The two schools also had the highest percentage of third graders performing at grade level on the reading EOG tests, 43.4% and 56.3% respectively. School 2 is noticeably smaller than the other participating elementary schools in District 2. This school serves children in grades Pre-kindergarten to fourth grade which may explain its dramatically smaller size.

Of the six principals in TRI schools in District 2, the principal of School 10 holds a bachelor’s degree in elementary education. The principals of Hill and School 7 have doctoral degrees in educational leadership from a state university. With teaching experience at the middle school, the School 7 principal was also a fellow in two state programs that provided tuition and stipends for teacher and principal preparation. The principal at School 1 studied educational administration at the University of Phoenix while the other principals received their school
leadership credentials from state universities. Table 10 summarizes demographic and performance data for participating schools in District 2.

Table 10. Demographic Information of Schools in District 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>School 10</th>
<th>School 6</th>
<th>School 1</th>
<th>School 7</th>
<th>School 2</th>
<th>School 9</th>
<th>District Average</th>
<th>State Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Size</td>
<td>806</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>881</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>631</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Population by Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other races including multi-racial</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of School Population as low income</td>
<td>92.23%</td>
<td>94.68%</td>
<td>96.07%</td>
<td>43.39%</td>
<td>97.52%</td>
<td>55.56%</td>
<td>62.77%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of 3rd grade students meeting grade level standards in reading</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
<td>37.3%</td>
<td>39.3%</td>
<td>43.4%</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
<td>56.3%</td>
<td>49.6%</td>
<td>60.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

District 3 had only one elementary school implementing the TRI. The district is smaller than Districts 1 and 2 with only three schools serving students in grades pre-kindergarten through sixth grade. Two of these schools serve students in pre-kindergarten through sixth grade while one elementary school has fourth through sixth grades only. The participating school in this study serves students in grades pre-kindergarten through third grade and is the largest of the elementary schools in the district. Nearly the entire school is low income and serves a large percentage of Black students (78%). Forty-two percent of the third graders met grade level
standards in reading. The principal of School 3 in District 3 is a veteran educator of 31 years having taught middle school, first, and second grades in the district. Serving as School 3’s assistant principal in 2001, the principal became the school’s leader just two years later in 2003. Under this principal’s leadership, School 3 was recognized as a Reading First Exemplary School. Reading First was a mandate from the No Child Left Behind (US DOE, 2009) that held schools accountable for using research-based reading programs. Table 11 shows the demographic data for the TRI school in District 3.

Table 11. Demographic Information for Schools in District 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>School 3</th>
<th>District Average</th>
<th>State Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Size</td>
<td>746</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Population by Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other races including multi-racial</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of School Population as low income</td>
<td>91.95%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of 3rd grade students meeting grade level standards in reading</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>40.6%</td>
<td>60.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section 1208 (3) of Title I lists the following as the essential components of reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, and reading comprehension strategies (United States Department of Education, 2009). Schools receiving the award were recognized for demonstrating an upward trend of improved student achievement and increasing proficiency on the states end-of-grade tests in reading (State Board of Education, May 2010).
Research Design and Rationale

Secondary Data Analysis

This study used secondary data collected as part of a larger IES-funded, randomized controlled trial of the TRI. While a number of definitions describe secondary data analysis, there is some consensus that secondary data analysis is further analysis of existing dataset(s) (Church, 2002; Heaton, 2004; Hewson, 2006; Smith, 2008). Hewson (2006) defined secondary analysis as “the further analysis of an existing dataset with the aim of addressing a research question distinct from that for which the dataset was originally collected and generating novel interpretations and conclusions” (p. 274). Some definitions emphasize the usefulness of re-using primary datasets to: verify original research findings; answer new research questions using different theoretical frameworks than the primary research; and allow for emergence of additional questions or issues which add depth to the original research (Heaton, 2004). Other definitions emphasize the practical advantages of secondary data analysis that include time and cost savings with the use of already established databases, large-scale and longitudinal data sets (Hewson, 2006).

This dissertation study posed decidedly different questions about TRI than the primary studies. The primary studies were randomized controlled trials studying the effectiveness of the reading intervention, the pace at which struggling readers receiving the intervention would gain compared to non-struggling readers, whether struggling readers receiving the intervention could gain more than struggling readers who did not receive the intervention, and how the use of webcam technology could impact classroom teacher efficacy and implementation of the intervention (Amendum, 2011; Vernon-Feagans et al., 2012; Vernon-Feagans et al., 2013). These studies used quantitative data to measure intervention effects and implementation fidelity.
Another dissertation study utilized qualitative data from interviews and surveys of teachers and principals to examine teacher resistance and coaching in the intervention.

This current dissertation study will use the existing quantitative and qualitative data to explore principal influence in TRI schools and whether this influence is detectable in the reading achievement growth as measured by the grade-equivalent gains of WJ-DBR III. Using both the qualitative and quantitative data, this dissertation study shifted the focus to school leadership in the 10 implementing schools.

**Mixed Methodology**

The dissertation study used a mixed methods design to analyze both the qualitative and quantitative data from the randomized control trial of TRI. A mixed methods study “involves the collection or analysis of both quantitative and/or qualitative data in a single study in which the data are collected concurrently or sequentially, are given a priority, and involve the integration of the data at one or more stages in the process of research” (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003). The convergence design model allowed for the separate but concurrent analyses of both the quantitative and qualitative data that are then used to compare and contrast findings for interpretation of phenomena (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The researcher compared and contrasted the quantitative results with qualitative data to interpret the principal leadership actions associated with the TRI sites that experienced the most significant student gains in reading. While the quantitative and qualitative data are different, they are also complementary as the principal leadership practices may corroborate the student reading achievement gains.
Procedures

The procedures for analyzing both the qualitative and quantitative data were designed to identify whether there is a match between the schools that made gains in reading achievement as measured by the Woodcock Johnson III assessment and principals whose actions and decisions were consistent with themes from a literacy leadership conceptual framework. The following matrix, Table 12, aligns the research questions with the possible data sources the researcher analyzed to answer the research questions.

Table 12. Research Question and Data Source Alignment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What were the actions and decisions principals in schools that made gains?</td>
<td>FG 1, FG 4, FG 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PI Coaching: 1c, 1d, 1e, 1f, 1g, 1h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PI Teachers: 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PI Resistance 1a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PI Barriers 1a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is relationship between the school instructional climate and student growth</td>
<td>TQ 13 c, d, e, g, h, i, j, k, l, m, n, p, r, s, t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in TRI implementing schools?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do principal leadership practices enable or constrain implementation of the TRI?</td>
<td>FG 1, FG 4, FG 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PI Background: 1a, 1b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PI Principal Institute: 1, 1a, 1b, 1d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PI Coaching: 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e, 1f, 1g, 1h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PI Teachers: 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PI Resistance: 1, 1a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PI Barriers: 1a, 1c</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: FG=Focus Group; PI=Principal Interview; TQ=Teacher Questionnaire

One source of data is the principals’ focus group (see Appendix A) convened during a TRI Principal Summit. Principals to responded to six questions about their experiences with the TRI coaches and opportunities for faculty to learn from one another. Sources labeled as FG followed by a number indicate which Focus Group question was used as the data source.

Another more important source of data is Principal Interviews (see Appendix B) in which questions are categorized as background, principal institute, coaching, teachers, resistance, and
barriers. Each category contains one main question followed by several bullets that go into more depth about the main question. The researcher assigned letters to the questions in lieu of bullets in order to reference questions. Data points labeled as PI indicate a source from the Principal Interview. A final source of data was the Teacher Questionnaire (see Appendix C), which contains 37 questions that ask about teacher demographics, classroom instructional practices, school-wide approaches to instruction, and instructional climate in the school. One section of the questionnaire asks teachers to respond to statements about the school’s climate. Out of 21 questions in this section, the researcher isolated 15 that were more specific to instructional and learning focused climate. Sources labeled as TQ followed by a number and letter indicate which Teacher Questionnaire responses will be used as the data source.

**Constant comparative analysis.** The study used constant comparative analysis in which incidents in the data were compared with other incidents for similarities and differences (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). In this study, incidents were principal actions and decisions around TRI implementation in their schools and as interpreted through the five themes of the leadership for reading achievement conceptual framework. The constant comparisons were used to categorize principals along a continuum for each theme by finding similarities and differences in the ways they responded and articulated their actions. The recursive coding and comparisons ensured trustworthiness of findings. Figure 1 illustrates the process used in the qualitative data analysis.
Figure 1. Coding qualitative data.
The literacy leadership conceptual framework consists of five leadership actions of principals who positively affect student reading achievement. The actions are categorized as: 1) participating in sustained professional development in literacy along with staff; 2) using standardized assessments in reading to monitor achievement and identify specific needs; 3) fostering a collaborative environment in which there is whole-school commitment to goals of professional development; 4) working collaboratively alongside teachers and literacy specialists; and 5) articulating and developing a school-wide expectation of achievement for all learners (Fletcher et al., 2011). The researcher developed a rubric with each theme of the literacy framework as descriptors for principal leadership practices. Throughout the analysis, the researcher established criteria and assigned points for principal leadership practices in each theme. Table 13 shows an alignment between the five themes of the conceptual framework and the available data sources.

Table 13. Literacy Leadership Framework and Data Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literacy Leadership Theme</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participating in sustained professional development in literacy along with staff</td>
<td>Principal Institute and Teacher Training attendance sheet, TRI continuing education credit certificate (PI 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using standardized assessments in reading to monitor achievement and identify specific needs</td>
<td>PI Background: 1b, PI Coaching: 1e, FG 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fostering a collaborative environment in which there is whole-school commitment to goals of professional development</td>
<td>PI coaching 1f, PI Teachers 1b, 1e, FG 2, 4, TQ 13g, 13h, 13i, 13 n, 13 s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working collaboratively alongside teachers and literacy specialists</td>
<td>PI Coaching 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e, 1f, 1g, 1h, PI Teachers 1a, 1b, 1c, 1e, PI Resistance 1a, FG 1, 4, 5, TQ 13 l</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulating and developing a school-wide expectation of achievement for all learners</td>
<td>PI Barriers 1a, 1b, TQ 12c, 12d, 12e</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary

Chapter III reviewed the purpose of the dissertation study and research questions to justify the subsequent methods of analysis. The description of the secondary data and sample population provided a context for understanding the schools, students, and principals where the TRI implementation took place is 2013-2014. The research design rationale explained the use of secondary data analysis and mixed methods that were the best fit for this dissertation study. The procedures for analyzing the qualitative and quantitative data explained the approach the researcher used to compare principal actions and decisions with school grade-equivalent scores on the WJIII reading assessment after receiving the TRI intervention. Finally, matrices aligned the research questions and literacy leadership conceptual framework with the data sources that were anticipated to provide data for analysis as the researcher develops the leadership profiles that will be used to match principals with rank-ordered schools.
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

This chapter analyzes both the qualitative and quantitative data for this study. The qualitative data consist of ten principal interviews and one focus group transcripts. Using the five themes from Fletcher et al.’s (2011) leadership for reading achievement as a template, the qualitative analysis clustered principals based on their decisions and actions as understood from the interview responses. The quantitative analysis used data from the TRI teacher questionnaire and school performance on the Woodcock Johnson III reading assessment. Finally, the analysis compared the school rankings of scores on the Woodcock Johnson III reading assessment to the principal rankings based on both the confirmed and emergent themes of leadership for reading achievement.

Leadership for Reading Achievement

Fletcher et al. (2011) identified five consistent themes among principals who raised achievement in reading. The analysis of qualitative data used the five themes as an initial lens to analyze ten principals’ decisions and practices related to TRI in their schools. For each theme, the researcher categorized principal actions as low, medium, or high based on criteria established by the researcher.

Participating in Sustained Professional Development in Literacy

This theme addressed principal participation in sustained professional development for literacy alongside their staff. The data suggested three distinct clusters of principals for this theme: 1) No participation; 2) Perfunctory participation; and 3) Sustained participation. In lieu
of using principal names or pseudonyms, principals are randomly identified as Principal 1 through Principal 10, accordingly followed by a school pseudonym throughout the analysis.

The researcher created criteria for determining how principal participation would be ranked. Figure 2 shows the characteristics of each category of participation in sustained professional development and is followed by an explanation of each category.

Figure 2. *Categories of principal participation*
Table 14 summarizes the principal rankings in the participation in sustained professional development theme.

Table 14. Participation in Sustained Professional Development Alongside Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal Identifier</th>
<th>No Participation</th>
<th>Perfunctory Participation</th>
<th>Sustained Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Principal 1</td>
<td>Principal 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 4</td>
<td>Principal 5</td>
<td>Principal 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 6</td>
<td>Principal 7</td>
<td>Principal 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No participation. Principals at this level of participation did not demonstrate knowledge of TRI instructional strategies, were generally unaware of the TRI coach’s role at their school, or spoke in broad terms about the coach’s role. Principal 2 did not attend the summer institute and her knowledge of TRI and the coach’s role appeared to be limited. Although interview responses demonstrated a lack of specific knowledge of how TRI strategies were being used, or the coach’s role, Principal 2 surmised that the TRI teachers and students have “done well with it.” For instance, Principal 2 referred generally to coaches as being a support for teachers and helping them “know when they are doing things [using TRI strategies] right.”

Similarly, Principal 4 did not attend the summer institute and was unable to articulate specific benefits of TRI for teachers or students or improvements she would like to see. The principal also lacked any knowledge of the coach’s role and work with teachers at School 4, citing the lack of adequate time as a factor.

Principal 4 suggested that her limited knowledge of the coach was due to her time constraints, stating:
It’s not like we’ve had a lot of time to sit down and talk. It’s been very brief but that’s not your fault, it’s been a time factor. You’ve got a principal who has 430 students and 60 staff members and there is no AP in the building. So it is not like I have time to stop and have a long conversation with you. I mean you can put that in your notes.

Principal 4 lamented that she would like more communication and more involvement with TRI “if there was more time available” but appeared to give up on trying to learn more about TRI and to be more involved due to this issue. The principal stated further, “Well there is not anything you could about it, but I wish there were more time for, you know, my involvement but there is nothing you can do about it…it’s just nothing you can do about that.”

While Principal 6 attended the institute, he left early because he shared a ride with another principal who became ill and needed to leave. Principal 6 found the little time spent at the institute as beneficial, but wanted a professional development session that was “strictly on the administrative level for principals.” Principal 6 wanted a principal reference tool to be presented at an administrative retreat.

It’s good to have us all come together as one; however, there is so much going on you really need time or a couple days where principal-principal, principal-teacher, teacher-teacher, and then come together as principal-teacher, principal-teacher. However, once again that could have been done but I had to leave early.

The only thing for improvement I would say is have maybe a couple of days where principals come in once again and do administrative type activities with the principals and make the principals more knowledgeable on what we should look for when we walk into a classroom with TRI specifically.

Perfunctory participation. Principals in this cluster attended the summer institute but there was no evidence of sustained participation in school-based professional development with TRI coaches and teachers. They had general knowledge of TRI and the role of the coach while one principal was able to articulate specific strategies of TRI. The principals in this cluster did not otherwise get involved with TRI implementation or professional development except to intervene if there were issues or they read the emails and newsletters from TRI staff.
Although Principal 1 attended the institute, she indicated the need for more knowledge of the “intricacies” of the intervention in order to support teachers.

But I know there are some other intricacies and they relate to the program that I was completely unaware of. I just want to be able to lead my teachers. And I don’t want to when they come to me with questions or they need something, I want to be able to confidently give them some answers and right now, you know, I’m not quite there…I’m hoping that I can get the support that I need to be able to lead my teachers.

This statement led the researcher to conclude that the principal did not participate in any of the school-based professional development led by the coach, which would have at least exposed the principal to the TRI “intricacies.” While Principal 1 did not appear to participate in the professional development, she was still somewhat familiar with the coach’s role. In general, Principal 1 described the coach’s role was to support teachers, celebrate their successes, and provide feedback. Principal 1 appreciated the nature of the feedback stating that it was “very specific in nature.”

Principal 5 participated in the summer institute and observed a practice session with a teacher who had implemented TRI in the school the year before. This principal shared that the principal institute was useful but could be more useful if principals could have practiced the intervention alongside teachers.

It gave me an idea of, of what our teachers would be doing. I found it to be a, to be pretty useful, but again I think it would have been more useful if I were to actually put it in practice and been in the, the classes more when the actual sessions were going on with TRI. Again that’s the thing, you don’t use it you lose it type of thing. I didn’t monitor the TRI piece, uh I guess as, as effectively as I could’ve. I monitored other things, but not necessarily just TRI.

While Principal 5 was knowledgeable about some components of TRI, specifically naming some of the instructional strategies observed, she was generally unaware of the coach’s role. The principal admitted, “I don’t really know everything that’s involved, I just know that coaching happens.”
Principal 7 attended the summer institute and thought the institute was beneficial for principals who did not have an elementary education background or expertise with reading in the elementary grades. This principal taught middle school and high school. While Principal 7 observed teachers using TRI and observed the coach modeling a lesson in the teachers’ classroom, the principal was still unsure of the coach’s role. When asked, Principal 7 admitted, “I honestly don’t know. I’m not sure if they’re actually ones who…are they the ones who actually come over the…do the conference calls over the Mac book?” Finally, Principal 7 realized that the coach was the one working with teachers via webcam and that they had received emails as a summary of the sessions as expected. She expressed a wish to know the coach better, “to communicate more with her, and to be a resource for her if there are some things that need to be improved on our end.” The discussions that actually occurred between the coach and principal via email were about assessment expectations, choosing which students would receive the intervention, and summaries about coaching sessions in general. Principal 7 “hoped” the coach would “be a support to the teachers if they have questions about different models or strategies that they’re using…just as that reference or that support that when they need help they can call them or Facebook them or Skype them.”

Sustained participation. Principals in this category attended the summer institute and sustained their engagement with TRI professional development. The principals’ knowledge of TRI and the coaches’ roles were decidedly different than principals in the previous cluster. Principal 3 saw benefits of participating in the professional development with staff. In fact, the principal insisted that participating in the professional development with the teachers was more “meaningful” than being pulled out for the principal-only sessions. The following statement illustrated this point:
The staff development that has been provided is so much more meaningful when I am with the teachers... Truthfully because I work right there with them but then you pull us all out... But that being with the teachers was more meaningful to me because number one they see me as learning with them... we’ve got to understand what they’re doing too or it isn’t meaningful. When I went down to first grade to be able to say, “Ok we are in this intense training...” We would talk about it and I was able to take them out at night and get even more perspective, “What did you think of this, what did you thank of that?” So it’s been something that we can continue dialoguing.

Principal 3 shared that they could better support teachers when they expressed needs, when they shared TRI strategies with other teachers who were not trained during student support team meetings, and when teachers wanted to rearrange teaching assignments based on the training they received. This principal’s knowledge of TRI seemed to enable her to participate more fully in conversations about reading instruction. Interestingly, Principal 3 saw this participation as a contribution to fostering the positive relationship between the teachers and principal because of the shared experiences. She shared,

The fact that both of us (motions to the AP) were there... so us going out there and being with them and seeing that relationship getting stronger and they to me... we even talked about how now they are going to block in second and first grade.

Teachers on the team who received the TRI training wanted to block instruction on their grade level, which would have allowed them to be the reading teachers for the grade level since they were all trained in TRI. The principal was cautious about allowing them to block reading instruction but these teachers had other mechanisms for sharing strategies to benefit other struggling readers through the school’s student support team structure.

Principal 3 also had extensive knowledge of the coach’s role in the school with TRI teachers. The principal saw the relationship between teachers and the coach as crucial to collaboration and receiving timely feedback. Principal 3 said, “You know I feel like she’s [first grade coach] part of our family and that’s crucial. Even the ones that come and do the testing, you know the ones that come and do that... it’s just unbelievable.” Principal 3 instantly
connected the coach-teacher relationship to teacher learning in that the relationship is what helped teachers to learn strategies so they could help struggling readers.

We got to know her. I cannot think of a negative experience. The teachers were excited to see them when they came. They trusted her and they valued her feedback. You know it was not like you’re catching me when I’m doing something wrong—it’s helping me to learn…you’re helping me be a better TRI teacher…

Principal 8 likewise attended the summer institute and sustained engagement with the professional development upon returning to school. Similarly to Principal 3, Principal 8 made connections between concepts and ideas from the professional development in order to have substantive conversations with TRI teachers. The principal reported that while both the teacher and principal sessions were helpful, he wanted to complete the teacher training and tutor struggling readers, one-on-one while being coached, just as the teachers did. Principal 8 self-described as a “learner-by-doing” and felt he “would actually need to take all of that [training] and go back into a classroom and take some kids” in order to be able to talk even more in depth with TRI trained teachers. While attending the summer institute, Principal 8 and teachers from his school were already discussing different students who would benefit from the one-on-one instruction. Because he was familiar with the students being discussed, it was easier to participate in the conversation with the teachers while connecting what was learned during training. However, Principal 8 felt that he needed to know more and would learn more “by doing,” which sounded similar to Principal 1 who also wanted more hands-on experiences for herself.

During the teacher training session, Principal 8 observed coaches modeling and commented that he felt like he was conducting a classroom “walk through” and this really helped connect the content from the principals-only session with what he would be seeing in classrooms at school. This signaled the principal’s intention to monitor TRI implementation and continue
conversations with teachers about their practice. Principal 8 regarded the coaching model as one way the professional development continued after the institute and something in which he could continue to participate, stating,

The thing I like is continued professional development. That’s what we’re always looking at as most successful. You don’t necessarily need to be there every single day but you need to prepare them, you need to give them everything they need and then constantly provide feedback and help them grow and I think that’s how the program has been set up. So I think that it’s already set up with a successful model.

Principal 9 attended the summer institute and professional development led by the coach at her school. Just as the other principals did in this cluster, Principal 9 observed coaching sessions and liked the immediate feedback coaches gave to teachers. This participation informed the principal’s knowledge of TRI and the coach’s role. The principal stayed informed through the emails shared by the coach summarizing coaching sessions and the TRI newsletter. Principal 10 regarded the coach as “a foundation and that’s why it’s [TRI] working.”

Principal participation in sustained professional development along with staff seemed most closely related to the two other framework themes that were concerned with the ways principals foster a collaborative environment in which there is whole-school commitment to goals of the professional development and work collaboratively alongside teachers and literacy specialists. For the purposes of this study, TRI coaches were considered literacy specialists. The researcher concluded that this first theme about principal participation in professional development anchored subsequent analyses because principal actions in this theme appeared to influence their other actions and decisions. Also, principal responses about participating in sustained professional development shed light on principal attitudes and approaches to their leadership practices. For these reasons, the available data provided a richer analysis of the first theme compared to subsequent analyses.
Fostering a Collaborative Environment and Working Collaboratively

The following analysis combined the collaboration themes from the conceptual framework for two important reasons. First, the themes were related in that both involve ways that principals foster a collaborative environment and how they worked collaboratively in that environment alongside teachers and literacy specialists. Secondly, the researcher ranked the principals the same in both themes, with just one exception.

There were three distinct categories of principals for the combined themes about collaboration. The categories differed by the way principals used structures to facilitate collaboration and whether evidence suggested principals collaborated with teachers and coaches. The three categories were: 1) no evidence of structures for collaboration and/or principal collaboration; 2) some evidence of structures for collaboration but no principal collaboration; and 3) evidence of structures for collaboration and principal collaboration.

No evidence of structures and/or principal collaboration. Principals in this category indicated that they did not do anything specifically to support TRI teachers nor did they indicate collaboration alongside teachers and TRI coaches. When asked what they did to support the teachers and TRI in the school, principals in this category did not indicate specific support above and beyond structures already provided to teachers. For example, Principal 4 said no additional time was provided for collaboration beyond the teachers’ planning time because, “I mean there is no other time other than that because outside of that teachers are teaching students so there is no other time.” Figure 3 shows the continuum of principal actions and decisions.
On the other hand, Principal 4 stated more generally:

I give the teachers the time to understand the program. The time to come to the training. The time to work with coaches. The materials they may need. The support they may need from within the building from each other. Everything they may need to get the job done—they have it.

While on the one hand Principal 4 indicated there was no additional time beyond the planning period for teachers and coaches to collaborate, Principal 4 declared that she gives teachers time for activities related to implementing TRI. Principal 4 stated further that teachers “know that they have the support and that they are encouraged to do the right things for kids and that we are all a team working towards the same goals.” However, from interview notes, the Intervention Director indicated that the principal actually fostered a more unsupportive environment when one teacher was placed on a corrective action plan for not implementing TRI “the right way” (Principal 4 Interview Notes, n.d.). Such contradictions and the principal’s lack of familiarity with the coach’s role suggested a lower ranking in this category.

While Principal 2 acknowledged the worthwhile goals of TRI professional development to provide teachers with strategies to help kids, her efforts to foster collaboration further strained
relationships between the coach and teachers. The principal attempted to collaborate with teachers and the TRI coach by mediating teacher-coach relationships with some resistant teachers who would not cooperate with their coach. However, the principal’s involvement in this issue backfired in that the principal’s efforts further exacerbated the resistance among teachers. It was just a couple of teachers and honestly, I feel like that was just because they were already overwhelmed with being new teachers and having a lot to do. They sort of viewed the coach as one more they had to answer to. At a certain point, I did have to intervene between our coach and those teachers to get them to cooperate and to get them to do what she was asking them to do. And I think that instead of improving that relationship, I think that it sort of made it much more strained.

Principal 6 indicated no special arrangements were made to facilitate coach-teacher collaboration. More insightful, however, is the principal’s lack of knowledge about the coach’s role because this demonstrated that the principal did not collaborate alongside the teachers and TRI coach.

I don’t really know what the role of the TRI coach is in our school. I know they come into the school, I see them come in quite often. They stop by the office to let me know that they are here and they tell me they are with TRI but I really don’t know what they are supposed to be doing while they are here.

Structures for collaboration but no principal collaboration. Principals in this category provided structures related to time and coverage that support collaboration. All the principals in this category scheduled some type of intervention time during which teachers could instruct students one-on-one using TRI strategies. The intervention blocks often included grade levels regrouping students across classrooms for instruction. Teachers also engaged with their coaches via webcam during this time for coaching sessions. Other structures included master schedules in which principals added 15 minutes to the literacy block to allow for TRI. These principals felt that teachers could not otherwise find a way to “fit in” TRI until the principal specifically scheduled the additional 15 minutes. Principal 1 stated the need for scheduling the
additional 15 minutes in the master schedule to “to take away any excuses among teachers for why intervention can’t happen.”

While these principals created structures to foster collaboration between the teachers and coaches, there was no evidence that they actually collaborated with teachers and coaches. The principals were often uncertain of the coach’s role suggesting little more than informal interactions with the coaches such as when coaches signed into the office before visiting teachers. Principal 10 demonstrated this coach-principal relationship in the following statement, “I don’t really know everything that’s involved, but I know there’s coaching involved with what they’re doing in the classrooms…”

**Structures for collaboration and principal collaboration.** Principals in this category not only provided structures to facilitate collaboration but also collaborated alongside teachers and coaches. The structures for collaboration did not differ greatly as these principals also scheduled intervention blocks during which targeted students received TRI instruction. They also strategically planned for coverage by using teacher assistants to cover classes when teachers needed to meet for professional development or as extra support when teachers worked one-on-one with students during intervention time.

Principals 3 and 9 were rather unique in that they provided extended amounts of time for collaboration as well as fostered collaboration across grade levels. In stark contrast to Principal 4 who felt that teachers’ planning time would have to be sufficient for collaborating, both Principals 3 and 9 saw the need for a longer block of time if teachers were going to collaborate around TRI professional development across grade levels. Principal 3 described such collaboration:

They needed space, they needed time to meet cause sometimes they would just meet, they just needed to get together and meet not necessarily with [coach]. So I just think just
constantly supporting what they are doing and when they bring strategies for the student support team we are very much aware of it…

The student support team was made up of teachers across grade levels who assisted other teachers in coming up with strategies to support struggling students. Similarly, Principal 9 recognized some value in the cross-grade level dialogue about TRI.

So I try to give my teachers that time…sometimes they need that long period of time…When they need time together, like the two grade levels need time together…a grade level can meet easily during their planning time when they need to meet. But if they need to meet across grades, I schedule time, I provide them coverage if they come to me and need something.

The distinguishing action of principals in this category was their collaboration with teachers and coaches. These principals went beyond just making sure structures were in place to facilitate collaboration between teachers and coaches. They collaborated alongside their teachers and TRI coaches. In some instances, the collaboration involved working strategically with teachers and coaches when teachers struggled to implement TRI. One example is the support Principal 7 provided to teachers by trying to “take things off their [teachers’] plate or “put in some extra support with assistants” as teachers lamented that TRI was just “one more thing to do.” The principal shared that teachers already felt overwhelmed by state mandates for assessment and student performance, for instance. When teachers began feeling overwhelmed with implementing TRI or participating in the webcam coaching and TRI team meetings while also working to meet requirements by the district and state, she not only provided time but also tried to “cut down on their paperwork load.” Principal 8’s interactions with teachers were another example of principal-teacher collaboration. In addition to formally observing teachers during their TRI instruction time, Principal 8 engaged in specific conversations with TRI teachers about students receiving the intervention. Principal 8 and one teacher in particular
reviewed summaries of coaching sessions about students to decide on next steps for their instruction.

Principals in this category were also more aware of the coach’s role and indicated they had observed coaching sessions and lessons modeled by coaches at the school. They also stayed informed through the TRI newsletters and closely followed the emails that coaches sent after coaching sessions, though Principal 7 was a bit overwhelmed by the volume of emails. The principals reported that they and their teachers regarded the coaches as integral to their success in implementing TRI. Principal 9 thought of the coach as “a foundation and that’s why it’s [TRI] is working.” Principal 9 also recognized the reflective practice between the coach and teacher as the coach provided specific feedback from a coaching session. Aside from recognizing the value of TRI strategies to students, this principal’s intimate knowledge of the coach’s role at this school supported the principal’s decisions to put supportive structures in place to make sure teachers could have access to their coach. Principal 3 went further to describe the importance of the relationship with the coach at the school,

You know I feel like she’s [first grade coach] part of our family and that’s crucial. They trusted her and they valued her feedback. You know it was not like you’re catching me when I’m doing something wrong; it’s helping me to learn…you’re helping me be a better TRI teacher… So the way these teachers are going to grow is because of the relationship they have with us but especially with the coach.

Principals who collaborated alongside teachers and TRI coaches typically participated in the professional development and team meetings in some way. They also engaged in dialogue about the professional development and how teachers implemented TRI. Dialogue among principals, teachers, and coaches occurred through emails as well. The structures that principals put in place to foster a collaborative environment usually related to providing time and coverage of classrooms which gave teachers and coaches the chance to engage in further professional
development, coaching, and team meetings. The researcher suggests that by participating in sustained staff development with staff and coaches, principals were able to stay connected to teachers’ work and their needs enabling them to make informed decisions when they respond to needs. Principals invested in the professional learning and understood the value of supporting collaboration among teachers and coaches to maintain implementation. Table 15 summarizes the rankings of principals in the collaboration themes.

Table 15. Collaboration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal Identifier</th>
<th>No evidence of structures and/or principal collaboration</th>
<th>Some evidence of structures for collaboration but no principal collaboration</th>
<th>Evidence of structures for collaboration and principal collaboration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Principal 1</td>
<td>Principal 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Principal 4</td>
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<td>Principal 5</td>
<td>Principal 7</td>
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<td>Principal 6</td>
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<td>Principal 10</td>
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<td>Principal 1</td>
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<td>Principal 9</td>
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<td>Principal 5</td>
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<td>Principal 10</td>
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Using Standardized Assessments in Reading

The next theme was principals’ use of standardized assessments in reading to monitor achievement and identify specific needs. For this theme, the researcher coded principal interviews and focus group responses for the ways principals referred to their use of data from assessments. The assessments could include EOG test scores, Reading 3-D, or TRI assessment data.

There were three categories of codes related to this theme: 1) no reference to use of standardized assessments; 2) summative use of standardized assessments; and 3) formative use of assessment data to monitor and identify student needs. Figure 4 summarizes the characteristics of each category. Four principals did not mention assessments, data, or ways they
used data to inform instruction or intervention strategies. While the remaining principals indicated they used assessment data for summative purposes, no principals fit the last category, which is perhaps a more desirable use of assessment data when school leaders need to be strategic about deploying resources for school improvement.

Figure 4. Use of standardized assessment data.

A more constructive use of standardized assessment data would be to monitor student reading progress. In this category, ‘formative use of assessment data,’ principals would ideally use real-time data to lead teachers in restructuring the school day, regrouping students based on needs, and identifying professional development needs in an effort to improve outcomes. Formative assessment data serves as one part of a continuous feedback loop for principals and teachers to help them make decisions about instruction and interventions based on students’ needs. There was no indication that any of the principals used standardized assessment data for this purpose. The available data only addressed principals who appeared to use or wanted to use standardized assessment data for summative purposes.

Summative use of assessment data. Most of the principals were categorized in category two, which is summative use of assessment data. These principals referred to data from TRI assessments or school-based Reading 3-D assessments. However, these references pertained to
one or two areas of principal interest: 1) student performance and growth after receiving TRI instruction, and 2) comparison of TRI assessment data to school-based Reading 3-D assessments. This use of data is after the fact; that is, after students received instruction with TRI strategies, with no chance for re-grouping or decisions about instruction based on student needs. The following statement from Principal 8 is typical of principals who were more interested in seeing how student reading performance changed after receiving one-on-one instruction in TRI strategies: “those children that we’ve targeted, we’ve seen some increase. I mean I can look at their reading 3-D and see the growth over the year. So I mean, I think it’s very helpful.” Others were eager to see a comparison of data from school-based, Reading 3-D assessments and TRI assessments. Principal 5’s statement is representative of these principals:

I have my data for what my data says for those kids, you know from the benchmarking and Reading 3-D, but not necessarily some of the data that you guys get and I want to see if it kind of aligns with what we’re seeing as well.

In neither instance do the principals use the data to make changes in instruction, student grouping, or intervention strategies. The principals were interested in summative uses of the data well after the assessments could be used to identify specific needs. Table 16 summarizes the principal rankings in the three categories based on how principals described their use of standardized assessments.
Table 16. Use of Standardized Assessments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal Identifier</th>
<th>No Reference to Assessment Data</th>
<th>Summative use of assessment data</th>
<th>Formative use of assessment data to monitor and identify student needs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal 2</td>
<td>Principal 4</td>
<td>Principal 1</td>
<td>Principal 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Principal 6</td>
<td>Principal 10</td>
<td>Principal 5</td>
<td>Principal 7</td>
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<td>Principal 10</td>
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<td>Principal 8</td>
<td>Principal 9</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>None</td>
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**Expectation of Achievement for all Learners**

The next theme of the conceptual framework focuses on principals articulating and developing a school-wide expectation of achievement for all learners. The distinctions between principals in this category are based on how principals viewed barriers to students learning in their schools. Principal responses were sorted into three categories: 1) deficits prevent learning, 2) no discernible expectations, and 3) student as priority. Principal responses were quite varied and suggested stark differences in expectations. The language they used to describe barriers to student learning signaled their expectations for achievement for all learners. Figure 5 describes the continuum of principals in this theme.
Deficits prevent learning. In this cluster, when specifically asked, principals pointed to poverty and students’ home environments as barriers to their ability to achieve. Principal 1 pointed to the lack of resources at home and the low priority of school in students’ lives as the biggest barriers to student achievement. She stated,

Our kids are poor…98% of them come to us at least two years behind and I think that stems from they don’t have the resources, the necessary resources at home and school is not a priority at home because it has to start first at home and it’s not a priority there…they don’t have any of the materials, they don’t have anyone making them…just not taking advantage of the opportunities you know throughout the day. The parents are not equipped enough to give them what they need in order to be successful at school…not because they don’t want to, it’s simply because they don’t know how to support.

Principal 4 echoed these thoughts and added,

…their parents’ lack of understanding of the need for their education prior to them coming to school, their socio economic status, not having materials at home, and their parents not having the education to provide prior education before they come to school…Young parents. It’s just a number of things.

Principal 6 summed up the sentiments of principals in this category by stating:

Education is not a priority at home. Our students, when they go home have to deal with extreme poverty and extreme violence; so the focus is not on education. In addition to that, our parents of our students are not highly educated themselves. There are so many environmental circumstances that prevent our children from having a good focus on education, it’s ridiculous.
While none of the principals suggested that students living in these circumstances cannot learn, their responses pointed to challenges endemic to student communities that prevent them from learning. The principals in this group appeared to use students’ circumstances to explain the barriers they face in school.

**No discernible expectations.** For three of the principals, the researcher was unable to discern how and if the principals articulated expectations of achievement for all learners. Principals in this category did not refer to a vision or expectation for learning nor did they discuss barriers to student learning.

**Students are the priority.** Five principals placed students as the priority in their schools’ collective work. As such, making students the priority signaled an expectation of achievement for all learners. While several of these principals acknowledged the same challenges students face as the previous principals did, they nonetheless viewed the collective work of the school to mediate the barriers to learning. For some principals in this category, instruction for the students is a mediator or priority when trying to help students succeed. Considering TRI as “another form of instruction,” Principal 7 also considered TRI a priority.

Principals 2 and 8 represented a very different view of barriers to student learning. Their views signaled that student learning was the school’s collective responsibility “no matter where they [students] are.” Principal 2 actually rejected the notion that children’s home lives and backgrounds were barriers. While still acknowledging the challenges of poverty, Principal 2 felt the barrier to students learning was access to effective teachers. In a very different tone from principals in the first category, Principal 2 argued:

> Of course, you have the factor that they [students] don’t really have a lot of support, support outside of school. But I talk all the time about that not being something that we can use as an excuse. I don’t though, feel like it really impacts their ability to learn…you know, to me the biggest indicator of student learning, is an effective teacher. So I think
with the kids who struggle, the biggest barrier is the teacher just hasn’t found a way to reach them yet.

Because if that teacher finds a way to reach that kid using sound strategies they are going to grow. They might not grow at a pace as some others who have things in line and life is just wonderful for them, tend to grow [snaps several times to indicate a fast pace of growth among students with resources]. But those kids can grow. They can grow… nothing else matters. So I think that the biggest barrier to my struggling kids is my teachers haven’t found a way to reach them yet.

Principal 2 felt that TRI strategies gave teachers tools to help the most struggling learners. Principal 8 suggested that helping students learn is a collective responsibility. According to Principal 8, “it takes a village to raise a child.” Principal 8 added, “So, while I may not be able to help this child, I can put this child in a position where my colleague can help this child and I can still help this child.” Table 17 shows principal rankings in this category.

Table 17. Expectation of Achievement for all Learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal Identifier</th>
<th>Deficits prevent learning</th>
<th>No response about expectations or vision</th>
<th>Students as priority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal 1</td>
<td>Principal 1</td>
<td>Principal 5</td>
<td>Principal 2</td>
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<td>Principal 4</td>
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<td>Principal 10</td>
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<td>Principal 8</td>
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<td>Principal 10</td>
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<td>Principal 9</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Summary

The themes from Fletcher et al.’s (2011) conceptual framework provided a useful lens for analyzing principal actions and behaviors related to TRI implementation in their schools. In the absence of direct principal observations, the researcher studied principal responses to interview and focus group questions to rank them along a continuum for each theme based on. Focus group responses did not differ from the individual interview responses. In fact, the individual
principal interviews yielded greater insights about leadership practices. Eight of the ten schools were represented at the focus group and two of these participants were actually assistant principals, not the principals. Two of the principals dominated the focus group conversation leaving some principals to simply agree or say, “She said what I was thinking.” For these reasons, the individual principal interviews were more insightful.

Some of the themes appeared related. For example, the qualitative analysis showed a pattern among principals who participated in sustained professional development and the way they provided structures for collaboration and collaborated with teachers and coaches. The collaboration themes were another example of related themes but with some important nuances. With one exception, principals who fostered a collaborative environment also worked collaboratively alongside teachers and coaches. Principal 5 was the exception because while she provided structures to foster a collaborative environment, there was no evidence that she actually collaborated with staff and coaches related to TRI implementation. This exception was an example of how ranking the principals along a continuum in each theme, however, proved useful.

Due to differing descriptors for each theme and the fact that principal rankings spanned the low-medium-high continuum, the researcher assigned points based on the rankings. Principals were assigned 0 points if the researcher determined their actions ranked low among each theme. One point was assigned to principals in the medium or middle categories, while principals in the high categories received two points. These points determined an overall leadership ranking of low, medium, and high used to compare and contrast principals.

In most instances principal rankings spanned low and medium or medium and high categories. For instance, the rankings for Principal 10 spanned the low and medium categories.
Principals 3 and 7 spanned medium and high categories. However, only Principal 2 ranked low in four of the five themes while ranking high in another. Principal 2 ranked high in the theme of articulating expectations of achievement for all learners, yet her other leadership practices as understood from the available data did not rank as high or even in the medium category.

Because principals spanned categories, the researcher assigned points to provide a general sense of principals’ leadership practices and actions overall. The points allowed the researchers to categorize the principals overall. Principals 4, 6, and 2 had an overall, confirmed low ranking. Principals 1, 5, and 10 were generally ranked in the medium category, while Principals 3, 7, 8, and 9 were generally ranked as high. Table 18 summarizes Horner’s rankings across the five themes. Table 19 shows the points assigned to each principal based on the rankings.

Table 18. Leadership for Reading Achievement Conceptual Framework Rankings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes of Conceptual Framework</th>
<th>Low= 0 points</th>
<th>Medium=1 point</th>
<th>High=2 points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participating in sustained professional development</td>
<td>P6, P4, P2</td>
<td>P1, P5, P7, P10</td>
<td>P3, P8, P9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using standardized assessments in reading to monitor</td>
<td>P6, P4, P2, P10</td>
<td>P1, P5, P7, P8, P9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fostering a collaborative environment in which there is whole-school commitment to professional development goals</td>
<td>P6, P4, P2</td>
<td>P1, P5, P10</td>
<td>P3, P7, P8, P9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working collaboratively alongside teachers and literacy specialists</td>
<td>P6, P4, P5, P2</td>
<td>P1, P10</td>
<td>P3, P7, P8, P9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulating expectations of achievement for all learners</td>
<td>P1, P4, P6</td>
<td>P5, P10</td>
<td>P2, P3, P7, P8, P9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 19. Leadership Rubric Points Totaled

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low 0-3 points</th>
<th>Medium 4-7 points</th>
<th>High 8-10 points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P4= 0 points</td>
<td>P1= 4 points</td>
<td>P7= 8 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6= 0 points</td>
<td>P5= 4 points</td>
<td>P3= 9 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2 = 2 points</td>
<td>P10=4 points</td>
<td>P8= 9 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>P9= 9 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Emergent Themes

Two themes emerged from the data that were important to discuss. They were: teacher leadership and influence, and large-scale use of TRI strategies. Principals recognized the power of teacher leadership and expressed the desire for large-scale use of TRI strategies because they felt that many more students to benefit from TRI strategies if they are struggling readers.

Teacher Leadership and Influence

Principals like Principal 1 and 3 recognized the influence of teacher leaders. Teacher leaders appeared to make decisions and make arrangements to help further their own learning. They seemed to have some influence on other teachers’ willingness to implement TRI and learn more about TRI strategies. On the first grade team at Principal 3’s school, teachers took the lead to support implementation of TRI by finding coverage and additional blocks of time to work with coaches without seeking input from the principal. Principal 3 described that the first grade team felt empowered to take the lead.

First grade started taking the lead and doing it themselves. We’d find that we would walk in a room and they would be in [teacher’s room] having a session so that was good because they took that lead because sometimes they couldn’t find either one of us case we were doing observations so that they took that responsibility off of us. They would find their coverage because a few of them have full time assistants some of them don’t but they would find coverage; so they would take the lead.

Principal 1 also recognized the power of teacher influence on peers when she described a scenario in which the attitude of one initially resistant teacher seemed to shape other teachers’
acceptance of TRI. The principal used this knowledge of the teachers’ influence to gain buy-in from the team.

And also I will say, um Ms. H, because she is older, so her power on the grade level…if her attitude is… [pause] [laughs] then they just kind of followed suit but once we were able to turn her around then everybody jumped on board. Every single time I would have to present about anything I would somehow weave her into the conversation and just talk about how the master teacher she is… and just really celebrate her and it just turned things around…it turned things around and it got everybody else on board. That piece of time and really celebrating the leaders on that grade level…because when things are good for her, things are good for all and you know that’s just the way it is but…really celebrating their successes and really just celebrating them, it made the biggest difference and that was something very small…

Another example of teacher leadership that emerged was the way TRI teachers shared strategies they had learned with teachers who were not trained. Sometimes this sharing occurred among grade level team members, as was the case at Principal 3’s school. At other times this sharing occurred through student assistance teams where a team of teachers would gather to brainstorm interventions and supports for teachers seeking assistance with struggling students. Principal 7 wanted teachers who have completed the TRI training to train others in the school and looked forward to staff meetings as occasions for trained teachers to share what they have learned. She shared that she depended on the teacher leaders to evaluate the usefulness of programs and to problem solve. Principal 7 was one of the few principals who explicitly spoke about developing teacher leadership capacity. She stated,

“I’m about building capacity and leadership with my teachers… she [TRI literacy coach] was able to do some of that for me and I really liked that model of building a teacher leaders-someone who they can talk to directly rather than going through me, them, and back to TRI-so I like that.”
Large-scale Use of TRI

Another reoccurring theme that emerged was the principals’ desire to see more students benefit from TRI. Principals 1, 2, 7, and 9 all expressed a desire for TRI trained teachers to take what they have learned and apply to other students in the classroom. Principal 9 questioned, “So how can more children benefit from TRI?” She wondered,

Well if I think it’s good for that child that we picked, it’s probably good for other children. And just because they’re not the lowest or the bottom those children are missing out on skills that they might benefit from, too.

The principal wanted to see the whole class benefit from the teacher’s application of TRI instructional strategies.

Although they used the program for one child, but they can be doing that on a larger scale you know the same strategies, the same. I’m not saying they don’t, but this is not something that it’s just a TRI time…and then you turn it off and it’s shut down and you don’t use those interventions or strategies…they can be used for the whole class…

Several principals saw benefits of TRI strategies and wanted to leverage the leadership of their trained teachers to reach a wider swath of children.

The researcher included the two emergent themes because there were strong patterns among the principals. Principals were not ranked in the emergent themes because the researcher determined these were not actions or decisions to be ranked. Rather, these themes occurred repeatedly in the principal responses and were worth mentioning.

Thus far, the qualitative analysis discussed principal actions and decisions through the lens of Fletcher et al.’s (2011) leadership for reading achievement framework. Using the findings and conclusions from the studies on principal leadership that influences student reading achievement, the researcher defined criteria and ranked principals based on their responses in the principal interviews and focus group. However, central to the study was whether the practices,
actions, and decisions matched the performance gains in reading. The next step of the data analysis looked at the quantitative data.

**Quantitative Results**

The quantitative analysis focused on the gain scores on the Woodcock Johnson III assessment and teacher questionnaire data. Table 19 reports the fall and spring grade-equivalent means for struggling students only, non-struggling students only, and the combined grade-equivalent means for both groups. Schools were sorted by grade-equivalent gain scores from lowest to highest and clustered. The cut-offs for each cluster were arbitrarily assigned by the researcher. The absence of a correlational analysis resulted in loss of precision for the clusters based on grade-equivalent gains. The clusters were less than one year, 1 to 1.5 years, and more than 1.5 years gains. Schools in the lowest cluster had mean grade-equivalent gains that ranged from 0.67 – 0.96, or less than a year’s gain. The medium cluster of schools experienced grade-equivalent gains that ranged from 1.13 – 1.46, which was from slightly over a year but just under a 1.5 years of gains. The schools that experienced the largest gains had mean grade-equivalent scores of just over 1.5 years to over 2.0 years, ranging from 1.52 – 2.09. The grade-equivalent mean gains for struggling and non-struggling readers are emboldened in the Table 20.
Table 20. Summary of Woodcock Johnson III Grade-Equivalent Scores by School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Grade Equivalent Fall</th>
<th>Grade Equivalent Spring</th>
<th>Grade Equivalent Gain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>S2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-0.26</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-0.31</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>S6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S10</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-0.37</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-0.22</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>S7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-0.39</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-0.50</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-0.20</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-0.39</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As part of the larger TRI study, teachers responded to a questionnaire adapted from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Cohort (ECLS-K; National Center for Educational Statistics, 2001). In addition to classroom demographic and teacher background questions, teachers responded to a range of questions about classroom and school practices. Of the 21 questions about the school climate, the researcher isolated 15 questions specific to the instructional climate. Teachers completed online questionnaires twice per year, once in the fall and once in the spring. They responded to questions related to the instructional climate and school leadership using a Likert scale. On a scale of one to five, one indicated that a respondent strongly disagreed with a statement, while a five indicated strong agreement. A score of three indicated that a respondent neither agreed nor disagreed with a statement. Table 21 summarizes the school climate means with schools ranked from lowest to highest.

Table 21. School Climate Means

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal ID</th>
<th>Number of Responses N</th>
<th>School Climate Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal 5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The * indicates that a standard deviation cannot be calculated because there was only one response to the survey.
One half of the schools had mean climate ratings that that ranged from 3.5 – 3.9, indicating that respondents neither agreed nor disagreed on statements about their schools’ instructional climate. The other five schools had an average climate rating that ranged from 4.0 – 4.5.

**Missing Pieces from the Framework**

While the framework was largely helpful, there were some aspects of instructional leadership in general and for reading achievement that were not addressed. In this next section, the researcher explores these missing components relative to the two principals whose leadership profile rankings did not match their school gains. The missing components include principal background knowledge and expertise in research based reading instruction and the influence of context on leadership.

**Background Knowledge and Expertise in Reading**

Principal values about reading instruction, often informed by reading expertise and knowledge of reading research, influence leadership practices. Leadership practices, then, inform structures and processes that support student reading achievement (Burch & Spillane, 2003; Mackey et al., 2006; Sherman, 2007). For example, principals who delegated leadership of the reading program to someone else such as a reading specialist lacked understanding of the theoretical basis of the reading program and were less likely to intervene when instructional practices were misaligned with the program (Mackey et al., 2006). Less effective principals often delegated instructional leadership to coaches (Seashore-Louis et al., 2010). These findings suggested that principals with the greatest influence are more hands-on with supervision, professional development, and feedback to teachers. While the work of school leaders makes being subject-matter experts in all subjects impossible, some background knowledge and focused
leadership strategies in literacy are important for principals leading reading improvement in elementary schools (Burch & Spillane, 2003).

**Context**

Hallinger et al. (1996) suggested that principals adapt leadership practices according to the school context. Variables such as the socio-economic status of the school and school climate influenced principal leadership. In the cases of Principals 3 and 4, the contexts in which they worked were different. While both were situated in rural geographic regions of the state, the level of poverty in their respective schools and districts are quite different. At School 3, where Principal 3 leads, 91.9% of the school population come from low-income homes. The district average of low-income students is around 83%. School 3 is located in an economically depressed area of the state where poverty is endemic in the communities these schools serve. The district is one of 68 low wealth counties, which means the district receives supplemental funding from the state because its local revenue base per student is below the state average. The district’s size, property tax base, and per capita income are factors used to designate low wealth districts. On the other hand, the school population at School 4 is 68% low-income and close to the district average of 61% low income students. District 1 is less isolated geographically and is within an hour’s drive to two major economic hubs.

Student performance is one aspect of the each school’s context that may explain more about the differences in student gains than any other factor. Third grade end-of-grade reading scores show very different trajectories for School 4 and School 3. As of the 2014-2015 academic year, only 45.2% of the third graders at School 3 were proficient in reading compared to 70% at School 4. While both schools exceeded their respective district averages, School 4 also exceeded the state performance for third graders proficient in reading.
The Intervention Director reported a drastically different approach by Principal 3 in collaborating to mitigate resistance. Principal 3 reportedly worked with resistant teachers to understand the reasons for their hesitation or inability to implement TRI and then collaborated to find solutions so they could move forward. The tone of the school was described as very familial to include the TRI coaches. Principal 3 actually referred to TRI coaches as being a part of the School 3 family. The Intervention Director actually described Principal 3 as a caretaker of the staff, the coaches, and the students.

The framework has no way of capturing the nuances of leadership that might impact the instructional environment. These leadership styles depend as much on individual principals as well as the contexts in which they work. Contextual factors may not only explain the differences in gain scores but the ways in which the Principals 3 and 4 enact leadership at their respective schools. Louis et al. (2010) contended that successful leaders need to be “highly sensitive to the contexts in which they work…as different contexts call for quite different enactments of the same basic set of successful leadership practices” (p. 17). Therefore, Principal 4’s leadership practices differed from Principal 3’s enactment of leadership perhaps due to contextual factors that were not accounted for in the framework that was used to understand principal leadership actions related to reading achievement.

The absence of principal background knowledge and expertise and context in the framework did not make it any less useful in starting to understand the principal actions and decisions that support reading achievement related to TRI. However, this study is a reminder of the importance of principal background knowledge for leaders in elementary schools and that context must be a part of any inquiries into leadership practices.
CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

Chapter V includes a discussion of the research questions, a brief review of instructional leadership theory connecting the results to the theory, and discusses how 80% (8 out of 10) schools seemed to generally align with Fletcher et al. ’s (2011) framework while 20% (2 of the 10 schools) did not seem to align. Limitations of the study and findings are also part of the discussion. Finally, a discussion of possible paths for further study are presented.

Research Questions

The research questions were: What were the actions and decisions of principals in schools that made gains when implementing the Targeted Reading Intervention (TRI)? The secondary research questions were as follows: What is relationship between the school instructional climate and student growth in TRI implementing schools? Do principal leadership practices enable or constrain implementation of the Targeted Reading Intervention? If yes, which leadership practices enable or constrain implementation?

To answer the research questions, a table combining both the qualitative and quantitative data serves as a reference for the discussion. The table combines the qualitative data represented by Horner’s leadership rankings and the quantitative data of the mean grade-equivalent gains for both struggling and non-struggling students. Table 22 combines the analyses, showing schools clustered as low, medium, or high. Principals ranked as high according to Horner rankings appear as emboldened text, to make their rankings in other categories more visible.
Table 22. Summary of Principal and School Rankings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster Rankings</th>
<th>Low (Climate M)</th>
<th>Medium (Climate M)</th>
<th>High (Climate M)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Horner Rankings</td>
<td>Principal 2 (4.2)</td>
<td>Principal 1 (4.0)</td>
<td>Principal 3 (3.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principal 4 (4.0)</td>
<td>Principal 5 (3.5)</td>
<td>Principal 7 (3.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principal 6 (3.7)</td>
<td>Principal 10 (4.5)</td>
<td>Principal 8 (3.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Principal 9 (4.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade Equivalent Gains</td>
<td>Principal 2</td>
<td>Principal 6</td>
<td>Principal 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principal 1</td>
<td>Principal 10</td>
<td>Principal 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principal 3</td>
<td>Principal 5</td>
<td>Principal 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principal 4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Principal 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Boldface indicates principals scored as high on Horner’s Leadership rankings.

Principal Actions and Decisions

With one exception, principals who scored high on the rubric according to Horner’s rankings led schools that experienced the largest grade-equivalent gains. The actions and decisions of the three confirmed principals, as determined through the conceptual framework shared numerous similarities. From the analysis of their actions and decisions, the evidence suggested the following actions and decisions were common among those principals whose schools made gains:

- Engaged with professional development provided during the summer institute
- Created structures that fostered collaboration among teachers and TRI coaches
- Collaborated with teachers and TRI coaches
- Articulated a vision for student learning that did not “blame” students or their communities for learning barriers

Principals 7, 8, and 9 led three of the schools that made high grade-equivalent gains.
These principals appeared more engaged with the professional development provided during the summer institute and evidence suggested that they continued to collaborate with teachers and TRI coaches when they returned to school. Principals 3, 7, 8, and 9 were representative of this cluster of principals who attended the institute and were more engaged with their teachers during the professional development and sustained their engagement once they returned to their schools. Their representative actions included debriefing with teachers about what was learned throughout the institute and creating plans for implementation once they returned to school. These principals, likewise, created structures to foster collaboration such as master schedules that included time for TRI, TRI coaching, and on site meetings with the coach. Principals in this cluster whose schools also made high gains appeared well aware of the coach’s role in their schools and indicated a team approach to supporting resistant teachers, solving technical and other problems of implementation. Principal 7 in particular, collaborated with teachers to “take things off their plate” in order to help with implementation. She recognized the demands of implementing TRI as well as the other pressing demands. Staying informed and involved helped Principal 7 respond to her staff’s needs. Principals in this cluster indicated that they had observed coaching sessions and/or observed teachers using TRI strategies in one-on-one instruction sessions with students.

However, Principals 3 and 4 were exceptions to these findings. For both Principals 3 and 4, the overall leadership rankings assigned by the researcher were in direct contrast to their schools’ gains. Even though the study does not make causal inferences between principal leadership practices and student reading achievement, the contrast between these principals’ rankings and school gains cannot go unnoticed. Their principal leadership rankings did not match the level of student gains as the majority of the other principals did.
While Principal 3 appeared to take actions and make decisions consistent with the principals described in the high leadership category, her school’s gains ranked among the lowest cluster of schools with a mean grade-equivalent gain of 0.96, or less than a year. In stark contrast, Principal 4 ranked low in all of the leadership themes of the framework, but her school had grade-equivalent gains of just over two years, with a mean gain of 2.09.

These two exceptions prompted the researcher to consider reasons for the differences starting with the principals. Principal 3 had over 30 years of experience in education but started her career as a middle school teacher before teaching first and second grade in the same town where she was principal. She became principal of School 3 two years after serving as its assistant principal. Under Principal 3’s leadership, School 3 received a Reading First Exemplary School Award for making steady progress in reading. Principal 3 seemed to be a champion of reading. She fostered a partnership with the local public library to encourage students to develop an interest in reading. Pre-Kindergarten classrooms visited the library once a month, while the librarian read to pre-kindergarten classes weekly. Principal 3 was recognized as District 3’s Principal of the Year in 2013. Yet, the school’s gains ranked among the lowest cluster of schools.

The available data for Principal 4 suggested a leadership ranking that could be considered almost the opposite of Principal 3. Principal 4 neither participated in sustained professional development nor created structures to foster collaboration, citing the lack of time as a challenge to being more involved. However, her school saw the largest mean gains of all ten schools with a mean grade-equivalent gain score of just over two years. Principal 4 was a 31-year veteran in District 1 with 24 of those years as an elementary school principal and was named the district’s Principal of the Year in 2014. During this time, Principal 4 led School 4 School in steadily
improving student achievement in reading and math, but most remarkably in reading. The school was recognized in 2012 for its work in vastly narrowing the achievement gap between racial minority and majority students with a National Title I School of Distinction award. Minority student achievement rose 23% in two years. School 4 was one of only two schools in the state to receive such recognition that year.

As part of this recognition, Principal 4 was invited to present about best practices that have worked for School 4 to the State Board of Education and other school leaders. From these presentations, the researcher learned of additional efforts and approaches that were not evident or available from the principal interview and focus group. In the presentations, Principal 4 described the efforts as “A Culture of Commitment: Student Achievement” (Principal 4 Name, 2012). These efforts included an infusion of technology for teaching and learning, curriculum nights to engage families around content areas, and partnerships with parent organizations and grant partners to provide resources for students. This commitment also included a focus on collaboration through professional learning communities (PLC). Principal 4 shared that PLCs met twice a week and participated in monthly half-day planning, while maintaining PLC notebooks. Instructionally, Principal 4 described a focus on research based practices listing concept maps, vocabulary development strategies, and summarizing strategies as examples. The presentation included a sample remediation plan that was an example of what teachers presumably used during PLCs for analyzing student performance data and regrouping for instruction. This example remediation plan demonstrated what Principal 4 called the school’s approach to regroup, reteach, reassess, and remediate based on formative assessment data. These efforts shed some light on Principal 4’s experiences in leading the improvements at School 4 that were not exclusive to their implementation of TRI.
While Principal 4’s responses to the TRI interview did not suggest that she fostered a collaborative environment, collaborated with teachers, used assessment data to monitor student progress, or articulated vision for student learning, the presentation suggested that these leadership practices could have happened.

While the secondary data make it difficult to draw conclusions about the principal’s motivations related to TRI, the researcher also wondered if the principal did not see the value of it in her school because of the progress the school was making with its own strategies to improve student outcomes in reading. The principal often lamented about the lack of time to be more involved in TRI or the coach stating, “It’s not like I have a lot of time to stop and talk.” While the principal does not specifically say how her time was used, the researcher surmised that the principal used her time to lead the other endeavors and did not see where she could give more time for her role as a school leader with TRI implementation. On the other hand, perhaps TRI was but one part of a larger collective approach to addressing the literacy needs of the school.

**Implications.** Given the two exceptions, using the framework just for the purposes of understanding leadership actions and decisions related to TRI implementation may have been shortsighted. Perhaps other factors not captured by the themes of the conceptual framework were just as important, yet hard to detect. Principal 3’s school experienced among the lowest gains, while her leadership ranking was considered to be high. None of the additional information about Principals 3 and 4 suggested remarkably different levels of background knowledge about reading instruction and expertise in leading elementary schools where reading achievement is a priority. Both principals have spent a great part of their careers in the elementary school setting as teachers and school leaders.
A review of each school’s data, however, showed very different contexts that may explain the different ending performance results. Both schools had a beginning grade equivalent score of 0 when students were initially assessed in the fall using the WJ-III. The biggest differences were in each school’s student population. At School 4, only 68.2% of the school population was categorized low-income as compared to nearly the entire student population at School 3 (91.95%). School 3 has a largely Black student population compared to a more racially balanced School 4. Perhaps the demographics of each school might do more to explain the differences in school gains than the principal leadership practices. In a study of schools that serve student populations where more than 70% of the population comes from low-income families and schools that served more economically advantaged students, researchers found that average teacher effectiveness was lower in high poverty schools. They also found greater variation in teacher quality in high poverty schools (Sass, T., Hannaway, J., Xu, Z., Figlio, O., Feng, L., 2012). In Principal 3’s school, 15 students were identified as struggling readers for the TRI study, whereas only 6 were identified as struggling readers in Principal 4’s school. Another consideration based on the sample data is that perhaps teachers of fewer struggling readers can be more effective than teachers trying to meet the needs of a larger number of struggling readers.

**Instructional Climate and Student Growth**

The available data about instructional climate, derived from the Teacher Questionnaire, were largely inconclusive. On a scale of one to five, where a score of one indicated a respondent strongly disagreed with a statement while a score of five indicated strong agreement, a score of three indicated that a respondent neither agreed nor disagreed. One-half of the schools had mean climate ratings in the 3 category while the climate ratings for the other five schools ranged from 4.0 to 4.5. In particular, the schools led by Principals 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8 had mean climate ratings
in the 3 category. However, their grade-equivalent gains spanned the low (Principal 3), medium (Principal 5, 6, 7), and high clusters (Principal 8). The data showed no matches or comparisons between the schools’ climate ratings and grade-equivalent gain scores that distinguished them.

Similarly, principals whose mean climate scores ranged from 4.0 to 4.5 experienced various gains in grade-equivalent scores, with one exception. Principals 1 and 2 had school climate scores of 4.0 and 4.2 respectively, yet both schools experienced low gains. Principals 4, 9, and 10 had climate scores of 4.0 and greater and all experienced medium to high gains. In the case of Principal 4, again, the data are contradictory.

While the general agreement among teachers was that Principal 4 maintained a climate that supported achievement other sources painted a conflicting picture. The Intervention Director described a rather “heavy-handed” leadership style when discussing experiences with Principal 4. The director reported that Principal 4 scheduled TRI time in a master schedule to help with implementation challenges, but she also reportedly threatened disciplinary action by way of a memo in the personnel file of a teacher who presented as resistant to TRI implementation. The intervention director also reported that access to teachers at Principal 4’s school was controlled by the principal and the school secretary such that scheduled meetings with teachers and the principal were sometimes cancelled when the coach arrived at the school with no prior warning. Principal 4 reportedly sent messages by the school receptionist that she would not be available to meet with the coach even after scheduling a meeting.

**Implications.** The anecdotes about Principal 4’s leadership would not have suggested that teachers at School 4 would agree that there was a positive instructional climate on the Teacher Questionnaire. However, only two teachers responded in this sample. Once again, the instruments and framework in this study just may not have captured the full range Principal 4’s
leadership for reading achievement. On the other hand, perhaps Principal 4’s “heavy handed” leadership style helped the school stay focused on academic goals and activities she deemed to be disruptive to the instructional program were not tolerated.

With the available data, the researcher failed to draw any conclusions about the relationship between the instructional climate and student gains in reading achievement. First, the school climate means did not exclusively match the schools with high student gains or high leadership rubric ratings. Perhaps these apparent mismatches occurred due to the small sample size. Responses from one or even five teachers proved problematic in that so few teachers do not represent teachers’ perceptions of the overall school climate. Additionally, teachers may have different ideas about leadership practices designed to influence student achievement outcomes. For example, in the case of Principal 4, those leadership practices that were considered “heavy handed” could also be viewed as a principal upholding high academic press, insisting on little to no disruptions during the instructional day. Teachers whose instructional practices may have been scrutinized may not have scored the variables of the instructional climate in the same way as other teachers whose practices were not scrutinized as closely.

The small sample size complicated the analysis to answer this research question. However, Hoy and Hannum (1997) suggested that perhaps the organizational health of a school may be a more important consideration for student achievement than climate. In supporting the organizational health of a school, principals maintain the institutional integrity and academic emphasis by buffering teachers from outside distractions (Hoy & Hannum, 1997). This study did not interrogate the organizational health of the ten schools, though a closer investigation of this measure at School 4 may reveal some explanation of the strong gains in reading.
Leadership Practices that Enable or Constrain

The leadership practices that were most associated with the schools in which students made gains of at least one year’s growth included participation alongside staff in sustained professional development, fostering a collaborative environment for dialogue and professional development, and collaborating with teachers and coaches. However, the researcher assumed that some seemingly more hands-off leadership practices would constrain teacher implementation of TRI thereby affecting student gains. Principal 4, whom the researcher would consider the most hands-off of all ten principals, led a school that actually experienced the most gains as measured by the reading assessment. This principal not only seemed hands-off but almost hostile at times, according to the interview responses. Not only did Principal 4 disengage from the professional development both at the institute and at school, but she also did not seem to make the professional development, coaching sessions, or other related TRI collaboration a priority, citing the lack of time as an issue. In this case, leadership practices that might be considered constraining did not appear to impede student growth.

Implications. Without teacher interview responses about leadership practices that assisted or hindered teachers in implementing TRI, the available data did not reveal enabling or constraining patterns of leadership practices. The absence of correlational analysis complicated the task of identifying specific practices that either helped or prevented teachers from fully implementing the intervention. This challenge confirms the limitation of using secondary data and the research design for answering this research question.
Discussion

Framework Fit

The broader practice domains of instructional leadership theory are reflected in the five themes of the conceptual framework used to analyze principal leadership practices. This study supported the three domains of practice in instructional leadership theory as well as most of the themes in the conceptual framework. The exceptions, Principals 3 and 4, provided an opportunity for a discussion other possible factors of instructional leadership that were not captured in the conceptual framework but may explain the anomalies.

In some ways, the framework was a useful lens to identify principal actions and decisions related to their leadership for reading achievement. Based on the analysis and patterns that emerged from the study, the researcher argued that participation in sustained professional development; fostering collaborative environments with commitment to the goals of the professional development; and working collaboratively alongside teachers and coaches are the leadership practices that seemed to be common among principals whose schools made the largest gains in reading achievement. The three themes seem connected in that principals who participated in professional development with their teachers appear more likely to foster collaboration and collaborate alongside teachers and coaches, as the Horner’s leadership rankings and confirmed.

Other themes of the framework did not appear to be as meaningful in understanding the work of the principals in the context of TRI. Using standardized assessments in reading to monitor and articulating expectations of achievement for all learners were less informative for the purposes of understanding principal practices but illuminated other interesting patterns among the principals. A common pattern among the principals was that many of them were
interested in comparing the data from local reading assessments to data from assessments administered by TRI staff. This need for principals to compare assessment data seemed to be more for purposes of validating TRI for themselves and teachers. They wanted some proof that the intervention worked for struggling readers. However, none seemed to use assessment data, whether local or from TRI, to make instructional decisions. The researcher viewed this use of assessment data for instructional decisions as more ideal because monitoring progress is considered a central practice of instructional leadership. There were no discernible patterns between this theme and other leadership actions related to reading achievement.

The theme, articulating expectations of achievement for all learners, was a theme most closely associated with the principals’ vision for student achievement. Rather than understanding their vision outright though, the data actually shed light on another interesting pattern of deficit thinking that appeared to alter expectations for students in most of the schools. Principals 1, 4, and 6 pointed to the challenges of poverty, lack of parent education, and community priorities as actual barriers to students being able to learn. While Principals 2, 3, 7, 8, and 9 acknowledged the same challenges, they pointed to very different barriers to students learning such as access to effective teachers. Such different responses suggest the two clusters of principals had a different sense of urgency and sense of school efficacy in improving student learning. Principals in the second group spoke of a collective responsibility to mitigate the challenges many of their students faced rather than view these challenges as reasons students struggled with learning.
Instructional Leadership and Reading Achievement

A multitude of leadership studies have established the role that principals play in student learning outcomes. Although principal effects on student learning were found to be small, these effects were measurable, statistically significant, and largely indirect (Hallinger, 2011; Leithwood et al., 2008; Leithwood, 2011; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012). Principals indirectly impact student learning through their influence on the learning environment. Their actions are captured in three domains of leadership practices: 1) vision and mission; 2) learning focused climate; and 3) developing the capacity of others (Bryk et al., 2010; Hallinger, 2011; Leithwood et al., 2008; Leithwood & Seashore-Louis 2011; Robinson et al., 2008; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012; Supovitz et al., 2010).

Leadership practices focused on improving teaching and learning are categorized as instructional leadership. While not exclusive to principals, instructional leadership theory explains how leaders mediate processes that shape the learning environment (Hallinger, 2011; Leithwood, 2011; Leithwood & Seashore-Louis, 2011; Robinson et al., 2008; Salo, Nylun, & Stjernstrom, 2015). This study, however, was specifically concerned with principal instructional leadership practices that support reading achievement. Not unlike instructional leadership in general, identifying the specific constructs of leadership practices that support reading achievement was an elusive task.

In a search of literature for leadership practices that support reading achievement, a conceptual framework emerged that was both specific to reading achievement and mirrored the larger literature base about instructional leadership practices that support student learning outcomes. The framework came from a small study of diverse primary schools in New Zealand
where researchers identified five consistent themes among principals who raised achievement in reading (Fletcher, et al., 2011).

**Vision and Goals**

One domain of instructional leadership is the school leader’s vision for the school’s direction and student learning. According to Hallinger (2011), vision is the broad direction in which the school seeks to move. School leaders articulate a vision for student learning and take actions to realize the vision in ways that focus the individual and collective work of the staff. Principals articulating the vision set a tone of expectations for what takes priority. In a study of principals leading high achieving schools, Louis et al. (2010) determined that instructional leadership practices related to vision serve a focusing role. High performing principals articulate a vision that focuses the school and teachers on goals for student achievement, and focuses teachers’ attention on expectations for student achievement (Louis et al., 2010). Instructional leaders with a vision for high student achievement also value research-based strategies that are likely to help the school realize the vision. However, knowing that an articulated vision for student achievement is necessary for strong instructional leadership and practicing this domain are very different concepts. Given the importance of this domain, according to the broader literature about instructional leadership, it is just as important to understand what this looks like in practice.

The following description of specific practices is not an attempt to reduce instructional leadership practices to a series of checklists, but rather an effort to unpack the “black box” of leadership practices by having specific examples of what it means for a school leader to articulate the vision and goals for the school. One specific practice in articulating the vision and goals is that the principal works with staff to develop specific, focused, measureable, and time-
bound academic goals (Hallinger, 2010; Robinson et al., 2008). Some refer to these goals with the SMART acronym, which describes goals as specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely. Leithwood et al. (2006) and Robinson et al. (2008) argued that these goals must contain an academic focus to be useful. Seashore-Louis et al. (2010) also found that principals with a vision that is centered on high student achievement also emphasize the value of research-based strategies. Appealing to a more affective dimension of leadership, principals with a vision for high academic achievement often express a personal vision with social justice intentions. For instance, they see the school’s role as helping students of poverty break through challenges by providing research-based instruction and meeting their academic needs (Seashore-Louis et al., 2010). Another specific practice is getting staff to buy into and accept the vision and goals for high performance expectations (Hallinger, 2005). In this sense, the vision motivates staff to work toward a higher, moral purpose and serves as a compass to direct decision-making (Leithwood, 2011; Robinson et al., 2008).

Specific to reading, the school leader enacts a vision for student achievement by primarily focusing on ways to personalize instruction and facilitate connections between the school and home and community. Personalizing instruction focuses on the learning needs of each child by monitoring formative assessment data and restructuring instruction. Students are flexibly grouped for whole-group, small-group, and individualized instruction based on needs. However, groups change and high expectations must be consistent to avoid reifying injustices by tracking and trapping students in low-level groupings for instruction. This vision means steering the school away from one-size-fits-all approaches to reading and relying on packaged programs (Sherman & Crum, 2007). Instead, the principal moves the school towards balanced reading instruction that promotes phonics, phonological awareness, vocabulary, word knowledge,
writing, fluency, and comprehension as well as a genuine appreciation of reading. School leaders enlist the participation of mentors and volunteers that the school trains and offers parents workshops to promote reading at home (Sherman & Crum, 2007).

**Connection to the framework.** For this study, principals’ vision and mission related to the framework theme about articulating a school-wide expectation of achievement for all learners. The analysis revealed differences in principal responses regarding their vision for student achievement. Five of the ten (50%) participating principals indicated students as the priority. As such, Principal 8 was representative of these principals who were ranked high in this area when he expressed that helping students learn was the collective responsibility of the staff. Similarly, Principal 2 indicated that because students are the priority then research-based instructional strategies such as TRI are likewise a priority in the school. These principals viewed TRI as one tool that staff can use to move the school towards realizing its vision for student achievement regardless of economic status and community challenges.

The other five participating principals either did not verbalize their vision, or as was the case with three of the principals, they seemed to blame students and external factors such as poverty and home life for low achievement. The principals did not articulate their vision of the school’s role in students’ lives but instead pointed out that their students generally lacked supports from their homes and communities which prevented them from achieving. Principal 6 stated that “education is not a priority” in students’ homes. The principals who articulated a more deficit view seemed to concentrate on the elements outside of the school’s control. The limited vision expressed by this group of principals led the researcher to question if such an outlook affected the collective efforts to raise achievement. After all, individual and collective teacher efficacy are important factors linked to student learning outcomes according to Fletcher.
et al. (2011). In other words, teachers and staff must believe that their efforts can positively influence student outcomes if they are to persist through challenges and raise achievement. Therefore, the implied messages from these three principals’ articulation of barriers to student learning suggested that the school could not impact student achievement because of the perceived deficits in students’ home lives and communities.

Given such differences, the researcher surmised that principals who articulated a more positive, proactive vision of student achievement might lead schools that made great gains on the reading assessment. The researcher expected to see intentional actions that supported TRI implementation since it is a research-based intervention designed to help struggling readers achieve. However, the analysis revealed different results than expected. The analysis did not indicate a match between what principals articulated or wanted the interviewers to believe about their leadership practices related to a positive vision of student achievement and school gains.

In fact, two of the five principals who ranked highly for articulating expectations of student achievement for all were among the schools with the lowest gains. Similarly, two of the lower ranked principals in this theme were among the schools with medium to high student gains. These findings suggest that articulating the vision or expectations for student achievement is certainly insufficient alone and perhaps is not even the most important practice of instructional leadership. Rather, how leaders operationalize the school vision in their everyday decision-making and practice via multiple strategies is more important than articulating the vision alone. The researcher also recognized the possible difference between what the principals articulated in the interviews as good leadership and whether they possessed the skills to enact effective practices.
Learning Focused Climate

The second domain of instructional leadership theory is effective principals maintain a learning focused climate. Principals promote a learning focused climate in a number of ways. First, they instantiate processes that protect teaching and learning time from distractions and maintain an orderly learning environment (Hallinger, 2011; Leithwood et al., 2008; Robinson et al., 2008). They also emphasize the value of research-based strategies (Seashore-Louis et al., 2010). Most importantly, principals attend to both student and staff learning when maintaining a learning focused climate.

Attention to staff learning is critical for school improvement because teachers directly affect student learning outcomes. Effective leaders organize schools around instructional improvements that are anchored by a vision for instructional quality (Supovitz et al., 2010). Therefore, principals must put structures in place to support quality instruction and one obvious way to do so is to focus on teacher learning that leads to improved student outcomes. There are multiple ways effective leaders actively support professional learning. Supovitz et al. (2010) viewed active support for professional learning as being hands-on for school leaders.

A hands-on approach would look like Southworth’s (2011) findings in which highly effective principals model, monitor, and create opportunities for ongoing dialogue. Modeling is when principals “walk the talk” by participating with staff in professional learning and perhaps even implementing strategies by teaching with staff. In this study, Principal 8 actually felt the need to teach a small group of students using TRI strategies to help him learn with his teachers. He felt that he needed the hands-on practice just as his teachers received in order to participate in ongoing dialogue about TRI and student progress. Modeling by teaching might be an unrealistic expectation given the demands of the principalship. However, monitoring, which includes
analysis of data and student outcomes, being visible in classrooms observing teachers at work, and providing feedback to teachers is more practical considering the principal’s typical workload (Southworth, 2011; Supovitz et al., 2010). Monitoring that includes observation of teaching supports a learning focused climate but only when principals follow up with specific feedback to teachers about practice (Seashore-Louis et al., 2010). Principals 1, 3, and 9 recognized the value of teachers receiving specific, timely feedback from their coaches in particular. Finally, structures for ongoing dialogue include providing time for professional learning communities (PLC), which afford teachers the opportunity to further their learning from each other and coaches while honing their skills. Since the proliferation of the PLC concept in schools, the question of principal participation in these communities remains an area of interest.

Another hands-on approach to maintaining a learning-focused climate and supporting instruction is actual principal participation in professional learning alongside staff. Robinson (2008) actually found this practice to be among the most important leadership dimensions. With this practice, principals do more than sponsor the professional development but also participate in formal and informal opportunities for learning with their teachers (Southworth, 2011; Robinson et al., 2008). Their participation signals the importance of the professional learning opportunities that should align with the school’s vision to improve student outcomes. If principals indicated that the professional learning is important, they again “walk the talk” by participating alongside their teachers. By participating in professional learning, principals model expectations for staff and are better equipped to monitor instruction (Fletcher et al., 2011; Robinson et al., 2008; Southworth, 2011). Professional learning opportunities come in the form of both on-site and off-site professional development and participation in PLCs. However, Goddard et al. (2015) also noted informal professional learning outside of formal gatherings for
professional development in environments where collaboration and dialogue were encouraged. The specific practices that describe how an instructional leader maintains a learning focused climate are hallmarks of instructional leadership.

Many practitioners and scholars of educational leadership think of these practices when they consider what instructional leadership looks like in practice. Specific leadership practices for reading achievement in this domain of instructional leadership are not that different. Maintaining a learning focused climate for reading achievement looks like principals protecting and reserving time for reading (Sherman & Crum, 2007). Specific blocks of time for reading instruction are scheduled in the school’s master schedule and the blocks are organized to maximize the use of staff, paraprofessionals, and volunteers. This also means minimizing disruptions to the reading or literacy block by avoiding the overuse of remedial programs that pull students out of class for instruction during this time (Sherman & Crum, 2007). Quite often, the students who are pulled out for additional reading help can ill-afford to miss instruction and may not get the double dose of reading instruction that was intended by assigning them to remedial reading programs. Related to principal professional learning, Sherman and Crum (2007) found that principals who provide leadership for reading must stay current on reading theory and practice. One way for them to do this to participate in professional learning opportunities with their teachers.

**Connection to the framework.** Given the leadership practices associated with maintaining a learning focused climate, the themes from the framework that are most aligned with this domain of instructional leadership are: 1) using standardized assessments in reading to monitor achievement and identify specific needs and 2) participating in sustained professional
development in literacy along with staff (Fletcher et al., 2011). This study had mixed results related to the use of assessments and participation in sustained professional development.

First, the use of standardized assessments in reading to monitor achievement did not seem to be an important practice of principals in this study. The most ideal use of assessment data, as determined by the researcher, would be the use of formative assessment data to adjust instruction, re-group students according to needs, and tracking student progress towards goals (Fletcher et al., 2011). None of the principals in the study indicated such use of available assessment data even though some data were available to them from the local mClass Reading 3D assessments administered by classroom teachers. Instead, the principals did one of two things: they either made no mention of the use of assessment data at all or they expressed an interest in the summative assessment data for purposes of comparing student outcomes or verifying the usefulness of TRI to others. Four of the ten (40%) participating principals made no mention of their use of standardized assessment data, while six of the ten (60%) indicated an interest in summative use of the data. The latter group of principals seemed interested in comparing the data from TRI assessments to the mClass Reading 3D data and seeing how the students grew if they received TRI instruction. While there was interest in the data, these principals did not suggest any helpful use of the data in helping them monitor instruction. This use of assessment data did not seem to make a difference in the other decisions and practices of the principals.

On the other hand, the second theme, participation in sustained professional development, seemed more important in this study. One possible benefit of participation in professional learning is increased principal knowledge of effective reading instruction which helped them better understand what staff needed to sustain the change. However, the study revealed an
interesting pattern among the principals who participated in sustained professional development. These principals appeared to be more proactive in fostering collaborative environments and collaborated with their teachers and coaches over time. Principals 3, 7, 8, and 9 attended the summer institute and learned about TRI along with their teachers. Upon their return to school and subsequent implementation of TRI, these principals created structures that enabled their teachers to have dedicated time for one-on-one instruction including time in master schedules for TRI, team meetings with coaches, and time to work within grade level teams. These principals were aware of the role of TRI coaches in their school as well as the feedback they gave to teachers after coaching sessions. The researcher believes this participation in sustained professional development helped the principals understand the teachers’ needs because they understood the fundamental components of TRI and the demands for teacher engagement. The principals could help problem-solve when teachers were challenged with implementation issues like class coverage or finding dedicated time for the intervention in the instructional schedule. But most importantly, these principals truly believed TRI could help their most vulnerable, struggling readers.

Principals 3, 7, 8, and 9 were ranked medium to high in the theme, participating in sustained professional development. They also ranked high in fostering collaboration and collaborating alongside teachers and coaches. The researcher theorized that it was their participation in the sustained professional development that prompted the collaboration with teachers and coaches. Principal 3 felt that she was better prepared to support the teachers because of her participation in the professional development and thought her participation fostered a more positive working relationship with the teachers because of shared experiences. Principal 8, likewise, felt it was important to participate so that he would know “what to look
for” when observing instruction during classroom walk-throughs and formal observations. He also recognized the specific feedback teachers received from their coach after instruction and wanted to be able to provide similar support. With the exception of Principal 3, students at the schools where principals participated in sustained professional development made gains of at least a year.

In contrast, Principals 2, 4, and 6 did not participate in sustained professional development fully or at all. As pointed out in the analysis, these principals did not make any particular arrangements to facilitate teacher time with coaches or each other related to TRI. However, the schools led by Principals 4 and 6 made at least a year’s gain and slightly over two years’ gain in the case of Principal 4. This finding from the quantitative data was quite surprising, prompting the researcher to search for alternate explanations for such a mismatch between principal leadership practices and school achievement gains.

**Developing the Capacity of Others**

Developing capacity in schools means working with teachers to improve pedagogical and instructional skills and sharing leadership and responsibilities for school improvement. Both areas of developing capacity debunk the myth of the “lone hero” principal by recognizing that the principal alone cannot be expected to improve schools and learning outcomes for children.

Aside from the indirect impact that principals have on student learning, the broader leadership literature positioned principals more as facilitators of teaching and learning (Reitzug et al., 2008). In some of the literature, this leadership is an integral part of managing the instructional program (Hallinger, 2011; Seashore-Louis, 2010). Effective instructional leaders develop teachers’ pedagogical practices and knowledge, thereby increasing the school’s capacity to improve student learning outcomes (Heck & Hallinger, 2014). Principals develop capacity by
prioritizing the development of the professional community, by allocating resources for professional development, and by creating structures for reflective dialogue and collaboration (Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012).

Specific leadership practices related to developing capacity include several actions that have been previously mentioned but are worth noting again in this context. These practices include staying abreast of professional development needs by being visible and observing instruction. A related practice is monitoring implementation of programs in order to provide assistance where needed. These practices do not suggest that the principal would be responsible for providing the professional development. To the contrary, principals may not have the content knowledge or expertise needed to do so and an expectation to do so is unrealistic. However, Mitchell and Castle (2005) argued, and the researcher agrees, that principals cannot afford to delegate these tasks of observing instruction, providing feedback, and monitoring to instructional coaches alone. As an example, Mackey et al. (2006) found that principals who delegated leadership of the reading program to someone else such as a reading specialist did not understand the theoretical basis of the reading program and were less likely to intervene when instructional practices were misaligned with the program (Mackey et al., 2006).

Sharing leadership and responsibilities with others to improve learning is most often facilitated by principals who foster a collaborative culture (Goddard et al., 2015). When teachers collaborate, they increase the collective self-efficacy of staff, which is a strong predictor of student achievement (Goddard et al., 2015). Teachers gain from the collective knowledge of the group and therefore impact student learning when the collaboration and dialogue are productive. Principals must create regular opportunities for embedded professional development through
PLCs, regular sharing of best practices during faculty meetings, and recognized collaborative efforts that support school improvement efforts.

Not surprisingly, the leadership practices for developing capacity in reading are not different. Principals must hold all staff responsible for teaching reading including teaching reading in content areas (Sherman & Crum, 2007). They must develop the capacity of staff by making strategic budgeting decisions that support ongoing professional development to keep all up to date on best practices and theories about teaching reading (Mora-Whitehurst, 2013). Just as importantly, principals must provide space and time for teachers to collaborate about what they learn from professional development and from each other (Southworth, 2011).

Connection to the framework. The theme from the framework that connects best with developing capacity is fostering a collaborative environment and collaboration alongside teachers and coaches. However, another theme emerged that did not necessarily originate from the conceptual framework but emerged from the data. That theme is teacher leadership and influence.

In this study, the principals who were more involved in the sustained professional development seemed better prepared to foster a collaborative environment for teachers with each other and with coaches by providing structures to facilitate collaboration. The structures allowed teachers, principals, and coaches to continue the dialogue about their practice, which, according to Southworth (2011), is crucial to expanding pedagogical knowledge and improving practice.

This study found differences in the actions among the principals who simply provided structures for collaboration and those who also collaborated alongside their teachers and coaches. Those differences surfaced in principal knowledge of the coaches’ specific roles; observations of TRI lessons and coaching sessions; and their approaches to resolve implementation dilemmas.
The principals who participated in sustained professional development also fostered a collaborative environment that supported the commitment to professional development goals and worked collaboratively alongside teachers and literacy specialists.

With one exception, these same principals led schools that saw high to medium gains. Principals 3, 7, 8, and 9 all ranked high in the collaboration categories, which means they fostered a collaborative environment and also collaborated with teachers and coaches. These principals discussed structures they put in place and processes to help teachers continue professional development with coaches and to dialogue with each other. They were very aware of their teachers’ work with the coaches because they were either present for it or stayed in close contact with coaches. Principals 7, 8, and 9 led schools that saw more than a year’s gain. However, Principal 3’s school experienced among the lowest gains. Principals 2, 4, and 6 actually ranked among the lowest of the ten principals in the category of collaboration, while Principals 4 and 6 led schools that saw a year or more of gains. In fact, Principal 4’s school experienced the most gains of all ten schools with just over two levels of growth. As alluded to in Chapter 4, perhaps this performance could be explained by the school’s broader efforts around improving reading achievement. TRI seemed to be one of several efforts to improve instruction that resulted in positive student learning outcomes.

Though teacher leadership was not a construct of the original conceptual framework, it emerged as a theme and connects with the practice of developing capacity. In several instances, principals noted that TRI-trained teachers shared strategies they had learned with teachers who were not trained. Sometimes this sharing occurred among grade level team members while at other times this sharing occurred through student assistance teams or Response to Intervention (RtI) team. Here a team of teachers would gather to brainstorm interventions and supports for
teachers seeking assistance with struggling students. These teams are structures embedded within the school’s support for struggling teachers and students. Teachers and support staff are expected to suggest and use research based strategies to address concerns before students are referred for testing to see if they qualify for more specialized instruction.

Using the research base for TRI effectiveness, TRI-trained teachers who were part of the assistance teams often suggested TRI strategies for struggling readers, according to several of the principals. Principals also wanted teachers who have completed the TRI training to train others in the school and looked forward to staff meetings as occasions for trained teachers to share what they have learned. In the case of teachers at School 3, some TRI teachers took the lead to arrange collaborative team meetings for themselves and were encouraged to do so. Based on Principal 3’s description of the school’s culture, her vision, and approach to supporting teachers, the researcher concluded that the teachers were empowered to make decisions and make arrangements to further their own learning. While the school’s gain scores were relatively low when compared to the gains of the other schools that made a year’s worth of growth or more, the researcher believes these collaborative efforts contributed in some way to the school’s gains. The school’s mean grade-equivalent score in the fall assessment showed that students started with few early reading skills. The grade equivalent mean for both struggling and non-struggling readers was low at the start of the intervention at 0.08. Struggling readers alone had a beginning mean score of -0.31, yet saw gains of not quite a year during the spring assessment (0.95). While this study did not seek to make causal inferences about the relationship between leadership practices and student gains, the gains of the readers at School 3 cannot be ignored given where they started.
Limitations

One limitation of the dissertation study was the use of secondary data. The use of secondary interviews for the principals did not allow for the researcher to probe for additional responses in the individual principal interviews or the focus group. Some aspects of leading for reading achievement that may have been helpful in understanding the leadership practices and actions of the TRI principals were not available to the researcher.

Another study limitation was the small sample size. Ten schools participated in the larger TRI study. The schools spanned three school districts and in one district just one school participated. A total of 26 teachers were a part of this dissertation study. The researcher narrowed the sample to participants in the last year of the larger TRI project because that is the year for which principal interview data were available. Throughout the course of the larger TRI study, many changes in school leadership took place. The total student count included both struggling and non-struggling readers for a total of 132 students. The small sample created a challenge for a correlational analysis between principal leadership practices and student achievement gains.

This study is unable to make causal inferences about principal leadership practices and student achievement gains. Rather the analyses are suggestive of principal impact on teachers, though not conclusive. Principals, due their roles, have a more mediated, indirect effect on reading achievement outcomes. Furthermore, this study was unable to unpack the nuances of the framework practices and leadership domains that explained the apparent mismatches between leadership rankings and performance, as in the cases of Principals 3 and 4.
Recommendations for Future Research

Principals

This study focused on only one of three years of a larger TRI study. The researcher suggests a more longitudinal study of principal leadership related to student reading achievement. While this study focuses on principal leadership related to TRI, it would be particularly helpful to understand a principal’s role in leading a school’s larger literacy program with TRI as one part of it over time. Validating the Horner’s Leadership Rankings as an instrument for studying principal leadership for reading achievement could be a worthwhile area of research that adds to the sparse literature base about principal leadership and reading achievement.

Understanding how TRI fits within the school’s approach to assisting students who are not responding to general instruction could be informative for practitioners and the TRI team. Many schools refer to their assistance framework as Response to Intervention, multiple tiered systems of support, or more generally student and teacher assistance teams. Within these structures, school staff systematically address teacher concerns about struggling students by coming up with research based strategies to address concerns. Several of the principals in this study wondered about the benefits of TRI for many more students than the ones specifically identified as struggling readers. Their TRI-trained teachers often shared TRI strategies with other, non-TRI trained teachers who presented cases of students not making progress with their reading skills. Principal 9 described the connection between the research-based strategies of TRI and the work of these teams.

…Because with the Reading 3D data if you have a child in red, in yellow or red, you’re supposed to progress monitor that child multiple times, after each session. So if that child is getting that 15 minutes, that child probably is a response to intervention child, which says if you are in Tier II or Tier III you should be getting one on one.
In order to lead improvements and manage the literacy instructional program, elementary principals must increase their knowledge of research-based practices in reading (Mackey et al., 2006). This is particularly important for principals who lead elementary schools but have expertise in other content areas and grade levels. One obvious way for principals to increase their knowledge of literacy instruction is to participate in sustained professional development with their teachers. While this may be an unrealistic expectation for principals in secondary schools, it is a necessity for elementary school principals working to improve schools.

Participating in the professional development with teachers helps principals stay abreast of the latest research about teaching reading. The study pointed to other benefits like principals reporting that they were able to more effectively monitor instruction and provide feedback to teachers. Principal 3 summarized the benefits of participating in the professional development in when she said,

The staff development that has been provided is so much more meaningful when I am with the teachers…truthfully because I work right there with them…being with the teachers was more meaningful to me because they see me as learning with them…we’ve got to understand what they’re doing too or it isn’t meaningful.

Further studies should investigate how and if principals’ participation in professional learning with their staff changes their knowledge of reading instruction and whether these changes actually impact their practice as leaders.

Another recommendation for future research is to include observations of principals in practice as instructional leaders. Much of the data available about principal actions and decisions in this study came from principals self-reporting in response to interview or focus group questions. The climate questions from the teacher questionnaire provided limited understanding of the instructional leadership because of the small sample. Observing principals in practice may corroborate or refute principals’ characterizations of their leadership practices.
As discussed earlier in the study, principals must choose from a wide variety of reading programs and interventions. Another line of inquiry would be a focus on principal leadership practices in schools that implement TRI compared to other widely used reading interventions. Of particular interest would be a comparison of implementation, sustained professional learning opportunities, and how the interventions are situated in the school’s literacy program. Attention to contexts such as rural, urban, or suburban settings, historical school performance, predominant first language of the student population and the socio-economic status of the school population would be interesting points of comparison.

Another interest area for further inquiry is principal participation in professional learning communities. Specifically, this line of inquiry could investigate how principal participation in these communities of practice enable or constrain collaboration and dialogue. To what extent do principals cross long-established teacher boundaries or remain on the periphery? This area of research could add to the larger conversation about a sustainable model of principal participation in professional learning alongside teachers that also accounts for the all-encompassing job of the principalship.

One last recommendation for further research is an inquiry as to how principals sustain TRI implementation and the inclusion of their school-based literacy coaches in supporting TRI. Schools utilize their literacy coaches in a wide variety of ways but a basic assumption is that they support teachers in increasing literacy achievement. If TRI is to be one part of the school’s literacy program, then literacy coaches must also be a part of sustaining it once TRI-trained coaches are gone. Principals should consider including literacy specialists in the TRI summer institutes and ongoing professional development that occurs between coaches and TRI teachers at the school. Numerski (2012) argued that leadership among principals, teachers, and
instructional coaches is interdependent and process oriented and that their learning is co-constructed. Because of the prevalence of instructional or literacy coaches in schools nowadays, even amongst the poorest of districts, principals implementing TRI must make them a part of the training and ongoing professional development. An interesting line of inquiry would be to investigate the ways principals utilize the resources like their instructional coaches to sustain TRI.

Understandably, principals must make tough decisions about which competing priorities and activities receive their attention daily. However, principals in schools implementing TRI should also understand the importance of staying involved with the professional development. Some evidence from this study showed that the principals more engaged in the professional learning with their teachers seemed likely to facilitate collaboration for teachers and coaches as well as collaborate themselves with teachers and coaches. Principals 3, 8, and 9 were ranked high in both the participation theme and collaboration themes. The evidence from the analysis showed self-reported examples of specific structures they put in place for teachers and coaches to collaborate as well as how they collaborated based. Except for Principal 3’s school, these principals led schools that experienced high grade-equivalent gains. The leadership literature affirms that sustained engagement with the professional development contributes to the school’s overall improvement efforts because principals are more knowledgeable about the improvements and are better equipped to monitor implementation for the purpose of managing resources to support staff (Robinson et al., 2011).
Targeted Reading Intervention Team

One implication for TRI teams going forward is to pay particular attention to the ways school leaders are engaged in the Principal Summit and ongoing professional development. While access to principals can be difficult given the different demands for their time, this study suggests that principals could benefit from more time to learn alongside their teachers. Principal 8 described his wish for more hands-on professional development like the teachers received because he thought it would “help me have better conversations” with teachers. TRI provides a principals’ reference tool (see Appendix D) to help them understand what they might see when they observe instruction. However, more hands-on development by learning and practicing strategies gives principals shared experiences that they can then use to continue the dialogue about TRI and students. Principal 8 summarized this need best when he said,

I’m a learner by doing, so I would actually need to take all of that and go back into a classroom and take some kids and I was actually thinking that maybe that should be something I should do because for me to be able to talk about it, I need to be able to do it.

Admittedly, principals cannot be expected to hone their skills to the same level as teachers. However, some shared professional development experiences not only increase principals’ knowledge of research based reading strategies but also helps them understand the principals’ reference tool as well. The TRI institute could play a large role in addressing the principal background knowledge especially for those leading schools outside of their professional experiences and expertise.

The TRI training team should explicitly prepare principals for the types of structures that would benefit their teachers. These structures include dedicated time in master schedules during the literacy block or intervention times. Several of the principals in the study were caught off-guard about the challenges teachers faced to find the time for instruction sessions and coaching
sessions with TRI coaches. Successful implementation seems more likely if principals are not overwhelmed by the challenges of teachers who are also overwhelmed by what they perceive as competing demands. Understanding upfront what is needed to support implementation also lessens the amount of time wasted when principals have to track problems after hearing complaints from teachers or hearing about uncooperative teachers from the TRI coaches. This time is better spent making sure the struggling readers receive consistent TRI instruction and teachers receive instructive feedback rather than the time lost trying to figure out where to find 15 minutes.

**Conclusion**

The study provided an opportunity to explore principal leadership practices related to reading achievement in the context of elementary schools implementing TRI. Instructional leadership theory explained one way principals are thought to indirectly affect student learning outcomes through three domains of practice. The domains where effective principals spent their time and energy were: 1) vision and goals; 2) learning focused climate; and 3) developing the capacity of others as areas where. The five themes from Fletcher et al.’s (2011) conceptual framework were useful tools to understand what these instructional leadership domains looked like for the ten elementary principals leading for reading achievement.

Because the themes from Fletcher et al.’s (2011) mirrored the instructional leadership domains, the researcher predicted that principal actions and practices related to these themes would be reflected in their school gains. While this was not always the case, two cases in particular stood out as complete mismatches between principal leadership practices and school performance. Principal 3 was consistently ranked high on the leadership practices yet her school ranked among the lowest in terms of gains. In stark contrast, Principal 4 ranked low on all the
leadership practices whereas her school showed the highest gains of all ten schools. What could possibly explain such different results for these two principals and their schools?

The findings suggest that maybe instructional leadership alone cannot explain all aspects of leadership that impact student achievement. Over the last few decades, researchers were at one time on a quest to determine whether particular leadership styles explained how principals affected student learning outcomes. The two styles that were often compared were instructional leadership versus transformational leadership styles (Robinson et al., 2008; Shatzer et al., 2014). While principals are expected to be knowledgeable of curriculum, instruction, student and adult learning theory, all attributes of an instructional leader, they must also manage interpersonal dynamics, motivate teachers and get buy-in for the vision, celebrate successes, and foster an atmosphere of trust and collective responsibility. These skills are typically considered to be characteristics of transformational leadership. Principals must do both rather than isolate leadership practices as either instructional or transformational. Perhaps the most important thing is for principals to recognize when their schools need more instructional leadership or more transformational leadership. School leaders have to be flexible and respond to the changes in school contexts that may demand one type of leadership over another.

Horng and Loeb (2010) suggest a different way of thinking about principal leadership that improves schools that positions principals as strong organizational managers rather than the traditional idea of instructional leaders. Organizational management makes one think that what happens in classrooms with teaching and learning is not a priority for principals. To the contrary, organizational managers, according to Horng and Loeb (2010) invest in hiring and retaining good teachers and develop structures for improving instruction. They contend that these practices associated with managing the organization allow principals to have greater impact
on school improvement than observing classrooms and teaching. Their argument is somewhat supported by Seashore-Louis et al. (2010) who cautioned against a narrowed focus on classroom instruction to the detriment of other important aspects of the school. Perhaps this notion of organizational management explains the work and gains of Principal 4 for whom there is some evidence suggesting a broader focus on managing what may have been thought of as disruptions to instruction.

Leading schools to improve student learning cannot be reduced to checklists of practices. Checklists do not account for the varied contexts in which principals work. The analysis of Horner’s leadership rankings from this study suggest a few core practices for further inquiry that might enable principals to lead high functioning educational environments that support student reading achievement. Principals should stay up to date on research about best practices. They must strategically allocate resources and time to support ongoing professional learning for staff and actually participate in the learning opportunities. Part of sustaining professional learning means fostering an environment in which teachers feel empowered to collaborate with one another and take risks. Leveraging the role of facilitator, principals must keep the proverbial finger on the pulse of teaching and learning by monitoring implementation of key initiatives designed to improve learning and monitor data in order to make just in time adjustments. Principals cannot afford to abdicate these responsibilities. While principals must empower others to share in the responsibilities of improving learning outcomes for all students, they certainly set the tone for the school community and how it goes about the important work of teaching and learning.
APPENDIX A: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS FOR PRINCIPALS

TRI Principal Summit, September 13, 2013

1. Can you tell me about the experience of having a coach in your school?
2. Do you think that the coach has been influential in helping your staff improve literacy instruction?
3. Can you give me examples of how the coach changed literacy instruction?
4. Has the coach been influential in orchestrating opportunities for faculty members to learn from or with one another, to have productive conversations about instruction, or to collaborate in other beneficial ways?
5. Would any of these opportunities have occurred without the presence of the coach in the building?
APPENDIX B: PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

Thank you for agreeing to speak with me. It should take approximately 45 mins - 1 hour. The primary goal of this interview is to learn about your thoughts about coaching, TRI and how we can make the Principal Institute more effective for you. This interview is completely voluntary and if there is any question you prefer not to answer you can skip it. Your answers will not be shared with the other intervention participants and your name will be changed to protect your privacy. There are no right answers so please answer with candor and honesty. Do you have any questions?

Background:

1. Can you walk me through your first learning of the TRI, how you use it at your school.
   - How do you feel the TRI is going at your school? Tell me about that.
   - Do you feel the TRI is effective at your school? If so – what makes it effective? (Can you share examples?) If not – what do you see would help the TRI to be effective at your school?

Principal Institute:

1. Let’s talk a little about last year’s Principal Institute in Chapel Hill – How useful was the Institute for you last year? (Tell me more….)
   - What would make the Principal’s Institute more useful for you?
   - What would you like to see covered/discussed at the Principal’s Institute?
   - What would you like to see in a Principals reference tool or guide that would be helpful to you?
   - What do you wish you knew about the TRI that you didn’t or do not know now?

Coaching:

1. Let’s talk now about coaching.
   - How would you describe the role of your TRI coach at your school?
   - What kinds of things does your coach do at your school? What have you noticed that your TRI coach does at your school?
   - How you ever met with your TRI coach?
   - How do you feel about your level of familiarity you have with your coach? Do you feel you know your coach well? Well enough? Do you feel you need to know your coach better?
   - What sorts of things have you discussed with your coach? What do you think about the current level of communication between you and your TRI coach? Would you like more or less communication?
• Have you ever taken any special steps to find time for the coach to work with teachers? Please tell me about that.
• Have you observed the coach modeling lessons in teachers’ classrooms?
• Have you observed any of your teachers conducting a TRI lesson? What did you think about what you saw?

Teachers:
1. How do you think teachers at your school perceive the TRI?
   • How do you feel your TRI coach could support your teachers better?
   • What are some things that you do to support the TRI in your school, support your teachers?
   • How do you feel your teachers feel about the support they receive?
   • What do you wish your teachers knew or could do with the TRI that they may not know or do not currently implement?
   • What do you feel you could do to add support for your teachers implementing the TRI?

Resistance:
1. Let’s talk about resistance – what can you say about teacher resistance towards the TRI at your school. What do you think about that? Where does that come from?
   • What can you share about how you have helped teachers overcome resistance towards the TRI?

Barriers:
1. What is the biggest barrier to kids at your school learning to read?
   • What can you say about teacher-student match up and the child learning to read?
   • Can you tell me your thoughts about child's family background and learning to read?
   • Can you tell me your thoughts about coach and teacher match up and the child learning to read?

Concluding Remarks
Thank you so much for sharing your time and your opinions with me this will be very helpful in moving forward and planning the Institute. Is there anything else you want me to know about your feelings about the intervention?

If after looking over my notes, I have any questions, may I contact you? Keeping convenience and confidentiality in mind, what form of communication would you feel most comfortable using?
APPENDIX C: TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements about your school’s climate. CIRCLE ONE NUMBER ON EACH LINE.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Strongly</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
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</table>

a. Many of the children I teach are not capable of learning the material I am supposed to teach them. ………………………..….1…………..2…...........3……..…4…...........5

b. Teachers in this school are able to make a real difference in their students’ lives…………………………….1…………..2…...........3……..…4…...........5

c. The academic standards at this school are too low …………1…………..2…...........3……..…4…...........5

d. School personnel at this school take a deep and personal interest in each of their children as individuals………………………1…………..2…...........3……..…4…...........5

e. This school is committed to high academic standards……..1…………..2…...........3……..…4…...........5

f. You can count on most staff members to help out anywhere, anytime – even though it may not be part of their official assignment……………………...1…………..2…...........3……..…4…...........5

g. Teachers talk with teachers in the next grade in order to get an idea of what their children should know and be able to do when they enter that grade…………………1…………..2…...........3……..…4…...........5
<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<tr>
<td>h. Teachers get worthwhile suggestions for teaching techniques or student activities from other teachers in this school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>i. Teachers have many opportunities to spend at least 15 minutes or more (at a time) meeting with other teachers to work on curriculum and teaching, and/or to discuss other professional matters</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>j. Staff are involved in decisions that affect them</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>k. Teachers and other staff feel comfortable voicing their concerns in this school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>l. The school administrators’ behavior towards the staff is supportive and encouraging</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>m. Staff members are recognized for a job well done</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>n. Teachers have adequate professional development opportunities to upgrade their skills</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>o. Some children, due to their home lives, language backgrounds, or some other reason, are simply not ready to learn when they come to school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>Agree nor Disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
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<td>p. Staff members in this school generally have school spirit.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>q. The level of child misbehavior (for example, noise, horseplay, or fighting in the halls or cafeteria) in this school interferes with my teaching.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>r. I feel accepted and respected as a colleague by most staff members.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>s. Teachers in this school are continually learning and seeking new ideas.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>t. Routine administrative duties and paperwork interfere with my job of teaching.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>u. Parents are supportive of school staff.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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Targeted Reading Intervention

The Targeted Reading Intervention (TRI), developed at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, is a professional development program for classroom teachers to become more effective in reading instruction for struggling readers.

A literacy coach meets with teachers in rural areas weekly via webcam technology, which allows the coach to see and hear teachers as they work one on one with a struggling reader. Coaches can then give teachers real time feedback after their instruction with that child, providing ongoing support to build capacity in teachers’ ability to deliver reading instruction to help prevent reading disability and to promote better reading for all the students in the class.

The TRI professional development process helps teachers build capacity by:

- Learning and using efficient, evidence-based instructional strategies (TRI) that are matched to the skill level of individual children
- Developing diagnostic skills to target the students’ most pressing needs
- Applying their learning for the benefit of targeted readers

The TRI has been endorsed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development (http://www.blueprintsprograms.com) and the Rand Corporation Promising Practices Network (http://www.promisingpractices.net).
What is the TRI?

- **TRI Main Objective** - The main objective of the overall TRI is to train classroom teachers to help struggling readers by using individualized reading strategies in one-on-one short sessions in the classroom to quickly accelerate the children’s reading progress.

- **TRI Literacy Coach** - A key component to the success of the TRI is the Literacy Coach. Each teacher has a literacy coach who meets with the teacher weekly through innovative webcam technology so the coach can see the teacher working with an individual child and the teacher can see the coach. The coach can provide live feedback to the teacher on her instruction and they can problem solve about particular children. Diagnostic information based on the DIBELS, and other teacher diagnostic information is discussed with the coach to decide what strategies would be most appropriate for an individual child.

- **TRI 15 Minute Lesson** - The TRI is initially a 15-minute one-on-one session between the classroom teacher and a struggling reader each day until the struggling reader makes rapid progress and the teacher can switch to another struggling reader. The sessions can begin even if the child has no letter-sound knowledge.

- **TRI Diagnostic Map & Materials** - Each teacher uses a *Diagnostic Map* (see page 18) to chart the child’s daily progress and match this with appropriate strategies. Teachers are given TRI materials that consist of a white board, letter-sound tiles, a TRI Reference Tool, and 4 bins of about 20 books that are appropriate for each level of the TRI (see Appendix C).
15-Minute TRI Lesson

1. **Re-Reading for Fluency (2 minutes):** The teacher asks the student to re-read a selection that she/he has read at least once the previous day for the purpose of developing reading fluency. The teacher might model fluent, expressive reading with some or all of the text, depending on the skill level of the child. This is done even with children who are non-readers through scaffolding and modeling.

2. **Word Work (10 minutes):** *This is the core of the TRI program for beginning struggling readers.* Word Work provides the teacher with a variety of instructional strategies for helping the child manipulate, say, and write words based on reading word assessments from DIBELS and our Diagnostic Map. The TRI has developed strategies that are carefully matched to the child’s instructional level based on the TRI Word Work Levels (see pages 6 and 18). At each level of Word Work, basic reading strategies are used to help children progress rapidly, including Segmenting Words; Change One Sound; Read, Write, and Say; and Pocket Phrases (see Appendix B for descriptions of these strategies). Teachers only need the TRI letter-sound tiles, white board, and markers to execute the strategies.

3. **Guided Oral Reading (GOR):** At the end of Word Work, teachers choose a text at the child's instructional reading level, as guided by the Word Work sessions and Diagnostic Map. Teachers usually choose from a bin of about 20 TRI selected books at each instructional level. Teachers pay particular attention to scaffolding children’s abilities to summarize, predict, make connections, and inferences. Having children orally summarize the story at the end helps the teacher understand if the child truly understood the book.

4. **TRI Extensions:** Encourage teachers to extend the student’s exposure to print at instructional match from beyond the 15-minute session to other opportunities throughout the school day. TRI Extensions are simple independent or small group reading activities, often during literacy centers that the teacher directs her TRI student to attempt after the TRI session is finished.
TRI Word Work Levels

1. The basic first level (PINK) is geared to children who need to learn short vowels within 2 and 3 sound words, including digraphs that help the child with beginning blending and segmenting as they gain understanding of the alphabetic principle.

2. The second level (BLUE) is aimed at children who have some knowledge of short vowels but can expand their knowledge to 3 to 6 sound words. Children at this level are learning more advanced blending and segmenting skills in words like ‘camp’ and ‘drum.’

3. The third level (GREEN) is focused on advanced phonics that includes learning long vowels where one sound can have more than one combination of letters such as ‘slow’ and ‘boat.’

4. The fourth level (PURPLE) helps children blend and segment multisyllabic words like ‘little’ and ‘glorious.’
TRI Sequence of Steps for Instructional Match at the Pink Level

- DIBELS LEVEL
  - Below Benchmark
  - Teacher Identification

- TRI Diagnostic Map
  - Linked to Level of Word work

- Level of Word Work
  - Linked to Reading Strategies

- Reading Strategy
  - Segmenting Words
  - Change One Sound
  - Read, Write, and Say
Targeted Reading Intervention (TRI) Framework
15 minutes

- Re-Reading for Fluency (2-5 minutes)
- Word Work (4-8 minutes)
- Guided Oral Reading (4-8 minutes)

TRI Extensions
re-reading + 1
Effective Implementation Practices
TRI MODEL
What is the students’ most pressing need in reading overall?

TRI PRINCIPAL MODEL
What each stakeholder’s role in implementing the TRI?
Principal Role

COACH
- Inquire about teacher implementation
- Provide schedules and time tables for school
- Create space, time, availability
- Actively endorse coach

STUDENT
- Observe lessons
- Provide feedback to teacher
- Provide support and acknowledgement
- Maintain availability for extension activities (student reads to principal)
- Build positive relationship

TEACHER
- Observe implementation
- Provide support and guidance
- Create space, time, availability
- Check on status of student
**Teacher Role**

**COACH**
- Build positive relationship
- Implement TRI lesson while coach observes
- Receive support and guidance
- Receive live and written feedback
- Check on status of student

**STUDENT**
- Teach TRI Lessons
- Identify Most Pressing Need
- Scaffold for student
- Provide feedback to administration and family
- Provide support and acknowledgement
- Build positive relationship

**PRINCIPAL**
- Implement TRI lesson while principal observes implementation
- Receive support and guidance
- Use space, time, and availability created
- Report on status of student
Coach Role

TEACHER
- Build positive relationship
- Observe implementation
- Provide support and guidance
- Give live and written feedback
- Check on status of student

STUDENT
- Build positive relationship
- Model TRI components with child when necessary
- Provide specific positive feedback during live lesson

PRINCIPAL
- Build positive relationship
- Maintain open communication
- Share questions and concerns
- Provide trainings and feedback
- Offer updates on status of teacher and student
Connection to Assessment Data
### DIBELS

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<td>15-24</td>
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<td>35+</td>
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### TRI Levels of Word Identification

#### 2 and 3 sound short vowel words
**Pink**
- **Success requires:**
  - Knowledge that letters are represented by sounds (alphabetic principle)
  - Early letter-sound knowledge (phonics knowledge)
  - Beginning blending and segmenting skills (phonemic awareness)

- **Examples:** pat, is, hop, sat

#### 4, 5, and 6 sound short vowel words
**Blue**
- **Success requires:**
  - Knowledge that letters are represented by sounds (alphabetic principle)
  - Early letter-sound knowledge (phonics knowledge)
  - Advanced blending and segmenting skills (phonemic awareness)

- **Examples:** camp, plot, sprint, frog

#### Advanced Phonics Knowledge
**Green**
- **Success requires:**
  - Knowledge that letters are represented by sounds (alphabetic principle)
  - Advanced letter-sound knowledge (phonics knowledge)
  - Advanced blending and segmenting skills (phonemic awareness)
  - Knowledge that one sound can have more than one picture (ow, ou, oe, and a)

- **Examples:** boat, slow, like, dream

#### Multiple Syllable Words
**Purple**
- **Success requires:**
  - Knowledge that letters are represented by sounds (alphabetic principle)
  - Early letter-sound knowledge (phonics knowledge)
  - Advanced blending and segmenting skills (phonemic awareness)
  - Knowledge that one sound can have more than one picture (ow, ou, oe, and a)
  - Knowledge that one word can have multi-syllables

- **Examples:** funny, difficult, wonderful

- **2 Chunk**
- **3 Chunk**
- **4 Chunk**
TRI Word Work Descriptions
The Four Components of the Targeted Reading Intervention (TRI)

Word Work

Change One Sound
(Used in Pink/Blue Level)

In Change One Sound the teacher lays several letter-sound cards at the top of the Word Work board in a scrambled order and builds the first word in a chain of words. She makes the word, “best” with the cards and asks her student to change, /bessst/ to /bellllt/ (as she points carefully to each letter-sound card as she says it). If her student makes an error, she offers specific positive feedback, responding to his precise response. For example, “You are right that we don’t need the /s/ in /bessst/ to make “belt.” But this (pointing to his selected letter-sound card) is /n/ and we want to change /bessst/ to /bellllt/. What sound do you hear here (tapping second line) when I say /bellllt/” (with exaggeration and stretching out on the /l/ sound)? With similar responding to the student’s responses, the teacher guides the child to move through a word chain, such as: best, belt, bell, Ben, bend, band.
The Four Components of the Targeted Reading Intervention (TRI)

Word Work

Read, Write & Say
(Used in Pink/Blue Level)

For Read, Write, & Say the teacher selects a word (such as “flag”) from the Levels of Word Work that correspond to the student’s current instructional level and writes it down on the dry erase marker board. She asks her to read the word. Initially, the child needs decoding support. In these cases, the teacher will first ask the child to identify the first two sounds (e.g., /f/ and /l/) and then put them together. If the child is unable to blend the first two sounds together, the teacher models how to “blend as you go.” She covers the word, except for the first two sounds, and asks the child to copy her saying those sounds. Then she uncovers the next sound and asks the child to blend all three revealed letter-sounds. Once the student has correctly read the word and understands its meaning, she says each sound as she writes it.
The Four Components of the Targeted Reading Intervention (TRI)

Advanced Work

Sort, Write & Say
(Used in Green Level)

A foundational strategy for the Green Level is called Sort, Write, & Say. It follows the same procedure as Read, Write, & Say except that the teacher provides several words of a given target sound, such as /ee/ that are spelled in different ways. The child reads the word, determines which column matches the spelling of the sound, and says and writes the word in the appropriate place. For example, “free” would be written under an “ee” column and the child would say /f/, /fr/, /ee/, as he wrote the sounds. Then, he would read, write and say the sounds for “me,” but put it in a column he labels “e.” This simple sorting activity demonstrates a schema (or mental framework) of the code in an organized and more-easily remembered framework. It is a schema that the teacher will prompt the child to recall later during Guided Oral Reading. She might prompt, “This is another spelling for the /ee/ sound,” as he happens to come upon the less-frequent “ie” spelling in “field.”
The Four Components of the Targeted Reading Intervention (TRI)

*Advanced* Word Work

Read, Write & Say with Multi-Syllable Words
*(Used in Purple Level)*

One of the three new strategies at the *Purple* level is called Read, Write, & Say with Multi-Syllable Words. The teacher writes a multi-syllable word on the dry erase board and asks the child to read it chunk by chunk (or syllable by syllable). Depending on the level of difficulty of the word and the child’s reading abilities, the word the teacher writes either will be already separated by syllables, or not. She might write “happ” and “y” with a space between the words in an early Purple lesson. The student’s objective is to read the word in chunks and try to determine a meaningful word based upon his production. Then he writes the word in chunks and says *each chunk* as he writes it, which is a developmental step up from the writing and saying *each sound* he has done in the previous levels. When the child has difficulty with the word, the teacher offers the same types of scaffolding that she has offered in previous levels, *and* she adds a common prompt, “What other way could this be chunked that would help you make a word?”
TRI Lesson
Components & Diagnostic Maps
PINK

At the PINK level, students are working on 2 and 3 sound short vowel words, 15 minutes a day

LESSON COMPONENTS

Rereading for Fluency: Use book from previous day’s Guided Oral Reading Lesson. Use books with mostly pink level words. (2 & 3 sound short vowel words)

Word Work: For Segmenting, Change One Sound and Read, Write and Say, use 2 and 3 short sound vowel words such as "mop" or "cat". Use 3-5 words.
• Segmenting
• Change One Sound
• Read, Write & Say
• Pocket Phrases - Choose a phrase from the Guided Oral Reading text. This is sight word driven. This activity comes after Guided Oral Reading.

Guided Oral Reading: Use books with mostly pink level words. (2 & 3 sound short vowel words)

Extensions: Teacher chooses an extension for a child to work on independently or in centers according to child need.

Success at this level requires:
• Alphabetic Principle: The concept that our written language is a code for sounds; that sounds are represented by letters and letter combinations that make up words.
• Phonemic Awareness: Ability to discern individual phonemes (sounds) within words. Includes the ability to segment, blend, and manipulate phonemes.
# Diagnostic Map

**Student:** Michael Martin (Fiction)  
**Date:** 9/9/13  
**Student's Most Pressing Need:** Blending 3 Sounds

## Today's Plan

### Re-Reading for Fluency

- **Text Read:** Fox Hops  
- **Types of Errors:**  
- **Re-Read same text**  
- **Move to next text**

### Word Work

#### Segmenting Words

- **PINK words:**
  - Able to segment 3 sound words?  
  - Yes  
  - No  
  - Frequent phonics errors:

- **Change One Sound**
  - **PINK words:** (Pink 3a)  
  - Able to manipulate sounds in 3 sound words?  
  - Yes  
  - No  
  - Frequent phonics errors:

### Read Write & Say

- **PINK words:** (Pink 3b)  
- Able to blend 3 sound words?  
- Yes  
- No  
- Frequent phonics errors:

### Pocket Phrases (comes after Guided Oral Reading)

- **Review Phrases:** on top of  
- **New Phrases:** get in bed

### Guided Oral Reading

- **Text Read:** A Bed for Pets  
- **Types of Errors:**  
  - Word Recognition  
  - Comprehension

### Extensions

- **For Decoding/Phonic Knowledge:** Daily 5 Word Work - short vowels  
- **For Fluency/Sight Word Development:** Read to TA, Pocket Phrases  
- **For Comprehension**
- **For Vocabulary**
- **For Motivation**

---

DM 1: Rev 6/13  
183
BLUE

At the BLUE level, students are working on 3, 4, 5 and 6 sound short vowel words, 15 minutes a day

LESSON COMPONENTS

Rereading for Fluency: Use book from previous day's Guided Oral Reading Lesson. Use books with mostly blue level words. (3, 4, 5 & 6 sound short vowel words)

Word Work: For Segmenting, Change One Sound and Read, Write & Say, use 4, 5 or 6 sound words such as "sand," flat" or "print". Use 3-5 words.
- Segmenting
- Change One Sound
- Read, Write & Say
- Pocket Phrases - Choose a phrase from the Guided Oral Reading text. This is sight word driven. (This activity comes after Guided Oral Reading below).

Guided Oral Reading: Use books with mostly blue level words. (3, 4, 5 & 6 sound short vowel words)

Extensions: Teacher chooses an extension child works on independently or in centers according to child need.

Success at this level requires:
- Alphabetic Principle: The concept that our written language is a code for sounds; that sounds are represented by letters and letter combinations that make up words.
- Phonemic Awareness: Ability to discern individual phonemes (sounds) within words. Includes the ability to segment, blend, and manipulate phonemes.
### Diagnostic Map

**Student:** Michael Martin (First Name)  
**Date:** 9/30/13  
**BLUE**

**Student's Most Pressing Need:** Blending 4 Sounds (ccve + ccvec)

#### Today's Plan

#### Assessment of Work

#### Notes for Next Time

---

### Re-Reading for Fluency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Read:</th>
<th>Crab Trap</th>
<th>Types of Errors: ccvc</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>stick, truck</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Re-Read same text**
- **Move to next text**

---

### Word Work

#### Segmenting Words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BLUE words:</th>
<th>Able to segment 4 sound words?</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Repeat segmenting with 4 sound words**
- **Move to another activity**

---

### Change One Sound

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BLUE words:</th>
<th>(blue 3j)</th>
<th>stuck</th>
<th>struck</th>
<th>truck</th>
<th>trash</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- **Repeat changing with 4 sound words**
- **Move to another activity**

---

### Read Write & Say

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BLUE words:</th>
<th>(blue 31)</th>
<th>sled</th>
<th>fish</th>
<th>flash</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- **Model "Blending As You Go"**
- **Repeat blending with 4 sound words**
- **Move to another activity**

---

### Pocket Phrases (after Guided Oral Reading)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Review Phrases:</th>
<th>New Phrases:</th>
<th>is mad</th>
<th>is reading automatic?</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>is stuck on</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Repeat phrase is stuck on**
- **Move to another activity**

---

### Guided Oral Reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Read:</th>
<th>Stuck Duck</th>
<th>Types of Errors:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Word Recognition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Select an easier text**
- **Choose another text at the same level**
- **Choose a higher level text**

---

### Extensions

- For Decoding/Phonics Knowledge: Daily 5 Word Work - Blue words
- For Fluency/Sight Word Development: Read to 5 notecard, Read to 10, Pocket Phrases
- For Comprehension: 
- For Vocabulary: 
- For Motivation: Computer - Starfall.com

---

**DM 3: Rev 4/13**  
**BLUE**

---

185
GREEN

At the GREEN level, students are working on advanced phonics knowledge, 15 minutes a day.

LESSON COMPONENTS

Rereading for Fluency: Use book from previous day's Guided Oral Reading Lesson. Use books with mostly green level sounds. (Such as long "o" as in "boat" "glow" "most" "toe" or "hope")

Word Work:
• Sort, Write & Say: Use long vowel patterns. Make sure to choose at least one word from each long vowel pattern. (For example if working with long "o" choose words with "oa" "ow" "oe" "o" and "o-e".)
• Search for the Sound: The child searches for target sounds within words from the Guided Oral Reading text. The child reads the entire sentence first, then identifies the word with the target sound. (This activity comes after Guided Oral Reading below).

Guided Oral Reading: Use books with mostly green level sounds that were targeted in the Word Work. (Such as long "o" as in "boat" "glow" "most" "toe" or "hope")

Extensions: Teacher chooses an extension child works on independently or in centers according to child need.

Success at this level requires:
• Alphabetic Principle: The concept that our written language is a code for sounds; that sounds are represented by letters and letter combinations that make up words.
• Advanced Phonemic Awareness: Ability to discern individual phonemes (sounds) within words. Includes the ability to segment, blend, and manipulate phonemes.
• Knowledge that one sound can have more than one picture (i.e.: long "o" sound can be represented by ow, oa, oe, o-e and o)
# Diagnostic Map

**Student:** Michael Martin (Fictitious)  
**Date:** 10/2/13  
**Green**  
**Student's Most Pressing Need:** Exposure to e patterns

## Today's Plan
### Re-Reading for Fluency
- **Text Read:** Surfer Girl
- **Types of Errors:**  
  - □ Re-Read same text  
  - □ Move to next text

### Word Work
#### Sort Write & Say
- **GREEN vowel sound:** he, we, Pete, eve, happy, chief, field, see, east, read
- **Demonstrates the ability to read multiple spellings of same sound?**  
  - □ Yes  
  - □ No  
  - □ Repeat sound ___ a  
  - □ Move to new sound a  
  - □ Move to another activity  
  - Picked e up very quickly. Ready for next sound.

#### Search for the Sound (comes after Guided Oral Reading)
- **GREEN vowel sound:** (p.4) Pete, three, sheep
- **Strong in segmenting by sound?**  
  - □ Yes  
  - □ No  
  - □ Search for same sound ___ a  
  - □ Search for a different sound ___ a  
  - □ Move to another activity

### Guided Oral Reading
- **Text Read:** Pete's Sheep
- **Types of Errors:**  
  - □ Word Recognition  
  - □ Comprehension  
  - □ Didn't know about "counting sheep"  
  - □ Select an easier text  
  - □ Choose another text at the same level  
  - □ Choose a higher level text

### Extensions
- □ For Decoding/Phonics Knowledge: Word Work Center - long e, review 6/7, 10/1
- □ For Fluency/Sight Word Development: Stafail.com, Read to Volunteer
- □ For Comprehension: Have him explain "counting sheep" to classmate
- □ For Vocabulary  
- □ For Motivation
PURPLE

At the PURPLE level, students are working on multi-syllable words, 15 minutes a day

LESSON COMPONENTS

Rereading for Fluency: Use book from previous day’s Guided Oral Reading Lesson. Use books with mostly purple level words.

Word Work:
• Read, Write & Say Multiple Syllable
  • 2 syllable, 3 syllable, 4 syllable
• Word Division
  • 2 syllable, 3 syllable, 4 syllable
• Spelling
  • 2 syllable, 3 syllable, 4 syllable

Guided Oral Reading: Use books with many purple level multi-syllable words (such as admit, hamburger and magnificent.)

Extensions: Teacher chooses an extension child works on independently or in centers according to child need.

Success at this level requires:
• Alphabetic Principle: The concept that our written language is a code for sounds; that sounds are represented by letters and letter combinations that make up words.
• Advanced Phonemic Awareness: Ability to discern individual phonemes (sounds) within words. Includes the ability to segment, blend, and manipulate phonemes.
• Knowledge that one sound can have more than one picture (i.e.: long “o” sound can be represented by ow, oa, oe, o-e and o)
• Knowledge that one word can have multi-syllables.
## Diagnostic Map

**Student:** Michael Martin
**Date:** 11/1/13
**Student’s Most Pressing Need:** Purple 2-chunk words

### Today's Plan

#### Re-Reading for Fluency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Read: Goose on the Loose</th>
<th>Types of Errors: across - tried to chunk ac -ross</th>
<th>Notes for Next Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### Word Work

**Read and Write & Say Multi-syllable Words**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2 chunk words: across around about along</th>
<th>Strong in reading by chunk? Yes when I chunck No for him. Needs practice w/ un-chunked.</th>
<th>Repeat w/ Pre-chunked words Repeat w/ un-chunked words Repeat w/ 2 chunks Repeat w/ 3 chunks Repeat w/ 4 chunks Move to another activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 chunk words:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 chunk words:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Word Division

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2 chunk words: cloudy garish little</th>
<th>Strong in identifying chunks? Yes w/a in</th>
<th>Repeat w/ 2 chunks Repeat w/ 3 chunks Repeat w/ 4 chunks Move to another activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 chunk words:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 chunk words:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Spelling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2 chunk words: into leader shouted</th>
<th>Strong in spelling by chunks? Yes Knew most Sounds trouble w/ chunks</th>
<th>Repeat RWS &amp; WD w/ 2 chunks Move to RWS &amp; WD w/ 3 chunks Move to RWS &amp; WD w/ 4 chunks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 chunk words:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 chunk words:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Guided Oral Reading

**Text Read:** The Brown Mouse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Errors: Word Recognition Chunking when decoding</th>
<th>Notes for Next Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Select an easier text</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Extensions

- For Decoding/Phonics Knowledge: Word Work - Chunking group
- For Fluency/Sight Word Development: Read The Brown Mouse - my 7th volunteer home
- For Comprehension: [Comprehension](#)
- For Vocabulary: [Vocabulary](#)
- For Motivation: Have him read Goose on the Loose to last year's teacher.
Resources for Principal Classroom Observations
TRI Principal Classroom Observation

GENERAL QUESTIONS
What is your student’s Most Pressing Need?
Which Extensions are helping the student develop the ability to read words with appropriate rate, intonation, and phrasing (fluency)?
Are any barriers getting in the way of implementing TRI on a daily basis?
Is there anything I can do as principal to facilitate your TRI work?

PINK
Which Pink activities are you choosing to target the Most Pressing Need?
Is the student becoming fluent with Pink level texts?
How can you accelerate the child through Pink? What might happen if you tried some Blue (4 sound) words?

BLUE
Which Blue activities are you choosing to target the Most Pressing Need?
Is the student becoming fluent with Blue level texts?
How can you accelerate the child through Blue? What might happen if you tried some Green (long vowel) words?

GREEN
Which Green activities are you choosing to target the Most Pressing Need?
Is the student becoming fluent with Green level texts?
How can you accelerate the child through Green? Is the child starting to generalize her Advanced Phonics knowledge? What might happen if you tried some Purple words with this Green target sound?

PURPLE
Which Purple activities are you choosing to target the Most Pressing Need?
Is the student becoming fluent with Purple level texts?
How can you accelerate the child through Purple? What might happen if you tried some 3-chunk or 4-chunk words with him?
TRI Principal-Teacher Discussion Stems

Discuss these priorities with your teachers. Ask what supports they need in order to achieve each of them with confidence. Your TRI Coach may be able to help, too.

Are you instructing struggling readers *every day* one-on-one for 15 minutes?

Are you able to follow the 4-part TRI lesson framework, including Extensions (re-reading + 1)? If not, what’s getting in the way?

Are you consistently meeting with your TRI Coach and reflecting on these conversations and emails? If not, what’s getting in the way?

Are you actively participating in focused, problem-solving weekly meetings with your colleagues as they examine student data, including the Diagnostic Maps?

Are you focusing on developing the sound-based (phonemic) approach to decoding/word identification, with multi-sensory cues?

Are you confident using TRI diagnostic-thinking processes, and are you using the Diagnostic Maps daily?

Are you well informed of your struggling students’ up-to-date progress monitoring data to drive instruction across multiple settings (such as…)?

Are you urgently prioritizing *cracking the code* before the end of the school year?
Appendix A

Discussion Checklists
### PINK Discussion Checklist

**Teacher**  
**Student**  
**Principal**  
**Date**

#### Rereading for Fluency

| **Text Read** |  
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Re-reading of book read recently | Book at child’s independent reading level | T offers specific positive feedback | T models good rate and phrasing, if necessary |

#### Word Work

| **Segmenting Words – PINK Words** |  
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Target sounds laid out on board | T models word’s meaning | T or C stretches out words, not segmenting | T or C elaborates on word’s meaning |
| T stretches sounds while running finger under lines on board | T offers specific positive feedback | T checks and blends sounds at the end | T moves quickly between words |
| C says sounds as she moves tiles down (Pull down, say sound) | T “responds to the response” | C checks sounds at the end, if needed |  |
| C segments each sound | T moves quickly between words |  |  |
| T asks C to blend sounds at end |  |  |  |

| **Change One Sound – PINK Words** |  
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Target sounds laid out on board | T or C elaborates on word’s meaning | T checks and blends sounds at the end | T moves quickly between words |
| T stretches sounds while running finger under lines on board | T offers specific positive feedback | C checks and blends sounds at the end |  |
| T: “Change ___ to ___” | T “responds to the response” |  |  |
| C says sounds as she moves tiles down (Pull down, say sound) | T moves quickly between words |  |  |

| **Read, Write & Say – PINK Words** |  
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Target word written on board/paper | T or C elaborates on word’s meaning | C writes word and says sounds as she writes it |  |
| T: “Will you read this word? I’ll help.” | C reads word after writing it | C offers specific positive feedback |  |
| T guides the child to blend as she goes | T or C elaborates on word’s meaning | T or C elaborates on word’s meaning |  |
| T models BATG, if needed | T “responds to the response” | T moves quickly between words |  |
| T encourages child to copy her, if needed | T moves quickly between words |  |  |

| **Pocket Phrases (after GOR)** |  
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Reviews past phrases | T or C elaborates on word’s meaning | T or C elaborates on word’s meaning |  |
| T reads new phrase aloud as she points | C asks child to keep in pocket and review | T or C elaborates on word’s meaning |  |
| C reads aloud | T or C elaborates on word’s meaning | T or C elaborates on word’s meaning |  |
| C re-reads phrase | T or C elaborates on word’s meaning | T or C elaborates on word’s meaning |  |

#### Guided Oral Reading

| **Text Read** |  
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| T introduces book/sets purpose | T or C elaborates on word’s meaning |  |  |
| Book at child’s instructional reading level | T coaches comprehension strategies |  |  |
| C reads aloud | Making predictions |  |  |
| C engaged with text | Summarizing |  |  |
| T offers word-level feedback where appropriate | Making connections |  |  |
| Phonemic manipulation feedback, if needed | Making inferences |  |  |
| Phonics knowledge feedback, if needed | T asks C to respond at the end |  |  |
| Uses context feedback, if needed | Child summarizes |  |  |
| T offers specific positive feedback | Child’s personal response |  |  |
| T elaborates on word’s meaning | Why/How questions |  |  |

#### Directions for TRI Extensions:

- For Decoding/Phonics Knowledge
- For Fluency/Sight Word Development
- For Comprehension
- For Vocabulary
- For Motivation
# BLUE Discussion Checklist

**Teacher**

**Student**

**Principal**

**Date**

## Rereading for Fluency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Read</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>___ Re-reading of book read recently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T offers specific positive feedback</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Book at child’s independent reading level |
| T models good rate and phrasing, if necessary |

## Word Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segmenting Words – BLUE Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>___ Target sounds laid out on board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ T stretches sounds while running finger under lines on board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ C says sounds as she moves tiles down (Pull down, say sound)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ C segments each sound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ T asks child to blend sounds at end</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| ___ T or C elaborates on word’s meaning |
| ___ T stretches out words; not segmenting |
| ___ T offers specific positive feedback |
| ___ T “responds to the response” |
| ___ T moves quickly between words |
| ___ C checks sounds at the end |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change One Sound – BLUE Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>___ Target sounds laid out on board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ T stretches sounds while running finger under lines on board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ T: “Change _____ to _____”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ C says sounds as she moves tiles down (Pull down, say sound)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| ___ T or C elaborates on word’s meaning |
| ___ C checks and blends sounds at the end |
| ___ T offers specific positive feedback |
| ___ T “responds to the response” |
| ___ T moves quickly between words |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Read, Write &amp; Say – BLUE Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>___ Target word written on board/paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ T: “Will you read this word? I’ll help.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ T guides the child to blend as she goes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ T models BAYG, if needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ T encourages child to copy her, if needed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| ___ C writes word and says sounds as she writes it |
| ___ C reads word after writing it |
| ___ T offers specific positive feedback |
| ___ T “responds to the response” |
| ___ T moves quickly between words |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pocket Phrases (after GOR)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>___ Reviews past phrases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ T reads new phrase aloud as she points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ C reads aloud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ C re-reads phrase</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| ___ T or C elaborates on word’s meaning, if necessary |
| ___ T flashes phrases cards |
| ___ T asks child to keep in pocket and review |
| ___ T offers specific positive feedback |
| ___ T “responds to the response” |

## Guided Oral Reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Read</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>___ T introduces book/sets purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Book at child’s instructional reading level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ C reads aloud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ C engaged with text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ T offers word-level feedback where appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Phonemic manipulation feedback, if needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Phonics knowledge feedback, if needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Uses context feedback, if needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ T elaborates on word’s meaning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| ___ T scaffolds comprehension |
| ___ T coaches comprehension strategies |
| ___ Making predictions |
| ___ Summarizing |
| ___ Making connections |
| ___ Making inferences |
| ___ T asks C to respond at the end |
| ___ Child summarizes |
| ___ Child’s personal response |
| ___ Why/How questions |

## Directions for TRI Extensions:

For Decoding/Phonics Knowledge

For Fluency/Sight Word Development

For Comprehension

For Vocabulary

For Motivation

---

35
# GREEN Discussion Checklist

**Teacher**

**Student**

**Principal**

**Date**

## Rereading for Fluency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Read</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>___ Re-reading of book: read recently</td>
<td>___ Book at child’s independent reading level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ T offers specific positive feedback</td>
<td>___ T models good rate and phrasing, if necessary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Word Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sort, Write &amp; Say – GREEN Vowel Sound</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>___ Target word on board/paper</td>
<td>___ T or C elaborates on word’s meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ T: “Will you read this word? I’ll help!”</td>
<td>___ C writes word &amp; says sounds as she writes it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ T guides the child to blend as she goes</td>
<td>___ T includes each spelling at least once</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Teacher models BAYG, if needed</td>
<td>___ T offers specific positive feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ T leads student to discover where word goes</td>
<td>___ T “responds to the response”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Search for the Sound – GREEN Vowel Sound (after GOR)

| ___ T asks child to read phrase/sentence first | ___ T emphasizes sound in word & not letter names |
| ___ T asks child to find word(s) with focus sound | ___ T “responds to response” |
| ___ T asks child to point to/mark spelling of the sound | ___ T or C elaborates on word’s meaning |

## Notes about Try One Strategy, if utilized

---

## Guided Oral Reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Read</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>___ T introduces book/sets purpose</td>
<td>___ T scaffolds comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Book at child’s instructional reading level</td>
<td>___ T coaches comprehension strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ C reads aloud</td>
<td>___ Making predictions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ C engaged with text</td>
<td>___ Summarizing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ T offers word-level feedback where appropriate</td>
<td>___ Making connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Phonemic manipulation feedback, if needed</td>
<td>___ Making inferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Phonics knowledge feedback, if needed</td>
<td>___ T asks C to respond at the end</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Uses context feedback, if needed</td>
<td>___ Child summarizes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ T offers specific positive feedback</td>
<td>___ Child’s personal response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ T elaborates on word’s meaning</td>
<td>___ Why/How questions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Directions for TRI Extensions:

- For Decoding/Phonics Knowledge
- For Fluency/Sight Word Development
- For Comprehension
- For Vocabulary
- For Motivation
# PURPLE Discussion Checklist

**Teacher**

**Principal**

**Student**

**Date**

## Rereading for Fluency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Read</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Re-reading of book read recently</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T offers specific positive feedback</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Word Work

### Read, Write & Say - Multi-Syllable Words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>2 Chunks</strong></th>
<th><strong>3 Chunks</strong></th>
<th><strong>4 Chunks</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target word written on board/paper, chunked as needed</strong></td>
<td><strong>T coaches only one error at a time</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T: “Will you read this chunk by chunk?”</strong></td>
<td><strong>T emphasizes chunks, not individual sounds</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T covers up chunks, if needed</strong></td>
<td><strong>T encourages “try one” strategy, if needed</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T writes the word, saying each chunk as she writes</strong></td>
<td><strong>T “responds to the response” &amp; offers SPF</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T or C elaborates on word’s meaning</strong></td>
<td><strong>T moves quickly between words</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Word Division - Multi-Syllable Words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>2 Chunks</strong></th>
<th><strong>3 Chunks</strong></th>
<th><strong>4 Chunks</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target word written on board/paper</strong></td>
<td><strong>T “responds to response”</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T: “Will you read this word? I’ll help.”</strong></td>
<td><strong>T or C elaborates on word’s meaning</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T: “Underline each chunk as you say it.”</strong></td>
<td><strong>T moves quickly between words</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Spelling - Multi-Syllable Words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>2 Chunks</strong></th>
<th><strong>3 Chunks</strong></th>
<th><strong>4 Chunks</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>T says a MS word and defines or uses in context</strong></td>
<td><strong>T or C elaborates on word’s meaning</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C writes word on board, saying each chunk as she writes</strong></td>
<td><strong>T emphasizes hearing and writing</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T first corrects chunking or phonemic errors</strong></td>
<td><strong>reasonable choices for given words</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T “responds to response” and offers SPF</strong></td>
<td><strong>T writes correct chunks on board and says each chunk</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Guided Oral Reading

### Text Read

| **T Introduces book/set’s purpose** | **T scaffolds comprehension** |
| **Book at child’s instructional reading level** | **T coaches comprehension strategies** |
| **C reads aloud** | **Making predictions** |
| **C engaged with text** | **Summarizing** |
| **T offers word-level feedback where appropriate** | **Making connections** |
| **Phonemic manipulation feedback, if needed** | **Making inferences** |
| **Phonics knowledge feedback, if needed** | **T asks C to respond at the end** |
| **Uses context feedback, if needed** | **Child summarizes** |
| **T offers specific positive feedback** | **Child’s personal response** |
| **T elaborates on word’s meaning** | **Why/How questions** |

## Directions for TRI Extensions:

- For Decoding/Phonics Knowledge
- For Fluency/Sight Knowledge
- For Comprehension
- For Vocabulary
- For Motivation
Appendix B Glossary of Terms
A

Alphabetic Principle
The concept that our written language is a code for sounds; that letters and letter combinations represent sounds that make up words.

B

Blending
Phonemic ability to blend, or connect, sounds (phonemes) to hear a word. Blending develops over time with instruction.

Blending as you go
The phrase used by TRI teachers to scaffold a young reader's developing phonemic awareness and decoding ability. When a child is unable to blend sounds to hear a word (i.e., /m/ /o/ /p/), the teacher can model how to "blend as you go"--beginning with 2 sounds (/mo/) and gradually adding more and more sounds as the child's ability progresses (“mop”).

Blue Level
Incorporates the use of activities such as ReReading for Fluency, Segmenting Words, Change 1 Sound, Read, Write & Say, Guided Oral Reading and Pocket Phrases; focus is on 4, 5 & 6 sound words.

C

Change 1 Sound
Word work activity where student changes one sound of a word to make a new word; all of the tiles necessary for this activity should be placed at the top of the board.

Comprehension
Understanding the written text.

D

Decoding
Using sound-symbol connections to attack unfamiliar words.
E  
**Engagement**
Actively connecting to reading and reading-related tasks.

F  
**Fluency**
Ability to read with developmentally appropriate rate, intonation, and phrasing.

G  
**Green Level**
Incorporates the use of activities such as *ReReading for Fluency, Sort, Write & Say, Word Division, Search for the Sound, Guided Oral Reading* and *Pocket Phrases*; focus is on spelling patterns with a focus sound (i.e. long o, ‘er’, etc.)

**Guided Oral Reading**
Interactive reading aloud with or by the child that happens from the very first lesson and grows in time to be the most important element of the TRI. During Guided Oral Reading, the teacher guides the student to flexibly orchestrate her word identification strategies, sight word knowledge, comprehension strategies, and knowledge of vocabulary and other background information.

L  
**Letter-Sound Knowledge**
Ability of child to see a letter (i.e., "s") or letter combination (i.e., "sh") and identify its common sound (i.e., /s/ or /sh/, respectively).

M  
**More Advanced Phonics Knowledge**
Ability of child to see an advanced letter combination (i.e., "oi" or "ow") and identify its common sounds (i.e., /oy/ and /ō/ or /ow/, respectively).
More Sophisticated Word ID Strategies
Ability of child to read Multisyllable Words, or ability of child to see chunks in words, such as "ent" and to see affixes, such as "pre" and "tion."

Motivation
The desire to read or to learn to read.

Other Word ID Strategies
Ability to draw from other strategies to identify unknown words, in addition to phonemic decoding.

Pink Level
Incorporates the use of activities such as ReReading for Fluency, Segmenting Words, Change 1 Sound, Read, Write & Say, Guided Oral Reading and Pocket Phrases; focus is on 3 sound words

Phonemic Awareness
Ability to discern individual phonemes (sounds) within words. Includes the ability to segment, blend, and manipulate phonemes. Pocket Phrases
A phrase or sentence written on a separate card that the student is to read aloud throughout the day; this phrase or sentence uses high frequency sight words and helps students with fluency.

Purple Level
Incorporates the use of activities such as ReReading for Fluency, Segmenting Words with Multisyllabic Words, Read, Write & Say with Multisyllabic Word, Word Division with Multisyllabic Words, Spelling with Multisyllabic Words, Guided Oral Reading and Pocket Phrases; focus is on multi-syllable words and approaching words by chunking as opposed to sound by sound.
Re-Reading for Fluency
Just like it sounds!

Read, Write and Say
Pink or Blue Word work activity in which teacher writes a word on the white board, asks student to read the word and then the student writes the word while saying each sound.

Read, Write and Say with Multisyllabic Words
Purple Word work activity in which teacher writes a word on the white board, asks student to read the word chunk by chunk and then the student isolates the chunks (not sounds) while writing the word.

Search for the Sound
Teacher asks the child to find words in a text with a focus sound; child emphasizes the sound in the words and does not use letter names.

Segmenting
The phonemic awareness ability to segment, or separate, each sound (phoneme) in a word.

Segmenting with Multisyllabic Words
Purple Word Work Activity in which the teacher has student segment and build multi-syllable words by chunks; student isolates the chunks while writing the words.

Sight Word Knowledge
Ability of child to automatically recognize, or identify, a word.

Sort, Write, and Say
Green Word Work activity in which teacher presents a student with a word that contains a spelling pattern for a focus sound and has the student sort the word based on the various spelling pattern categories.
Spelling with Multisyllabic Words
Purple Word Work activity in which teacher orally dictates a word for a student to spell; the teacher has the student isolate and say word in chunks as student writes the word.

T

TRI Extensions
Activities throughout the rest of the school day that increase that student’s exposure to print at a more fine-tuned instructional match. Try 1 Strategy
Strategy introduced at the Green level; teacher prompts student to try multiple sounds of a spelling pattern to deduce what the word could be.

V

Vocabulary
Oral language knowledge of word meanings.

W

Word Division
Green Word Work activity where teacher writes a word on the board that has a focus sound and has the student underline each sound of the word while reading the word.

Word Identification
Ability to identify, or recognize, words in text; enabled mostly by decoding ability and sight word knowledge.

Word Work
Multi-sensory strategies for manipulating, saying, and writing words and individual sounds in words.
Appendix C

TRI Materials
Selected TRI Materials

Word Work letter-sound tiles and Work Board

TRI Reference Tool

Whiteboard & markers for Word Work

Books for TRI Levels
Appendix D
Notes
Diagnostic Map
Protocol
What’s Working?
How can I help my teachers implement the TRI?
REFERENCES


North Carolina Read to Achieve, 115C-174.12, 115C-174.26. 115C-238.29F, 115C-563, 115C-83.11, 115C-83.15, 115C-83.3, 115C-83.4A, 115C-83.5, 115C-83.7, 115C-83.8, 115C-83.9 (2013).


Neumerski, C. M. (2013). Rethinking instructional leadership, a review: What do we know about principal, teacher, and coach instructional leadership, and where should we go from here? Educational Administration Quarterly, 49(2), 310-347.


