

2-13-2014

TEACHER EFFICACY WITHIN TIER II OF THE RtI FRAMEWORK

Madelyn P. Serna Marmol

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/educ_teelp_etds

Recommended Citation

Marmol, Madelyn P. Serna. "TEACHER EFFICACY WITHIN TIER II OF THE RtI FRAMEWORK." (2014).
https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/educ_teelp_etds/26

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Education ETDs at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Teacher Education, Educational Leadership & Policy ETDs by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact disc@unm.edu.

Madelyn P. Serna Mármol

Candidate

Educational Leadership and Organizational Learning

Department

This dissertation is approved, and it is acceptable in quality
and form for publication:

Approved by the Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Arlie Woodrum, Chairperson

Dr. Allison Borden

Dr. Viola Flórez

Dr. Anne Tafoya

TEACHER EFFICACY WITHIN TIER II OF THE Rti FRAMEWORK

By

Madelyn P. Serna Mármol

B.A., Government and Spanish, University of Notre Dame, 1985

M.A., Political Science, George Washington University, 1988

M.A., International Education, Framingham State University, 2005

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

**Doctor of Education
Educational Leadership**

The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico

December, 2013

©2013, Madelyn P. Serna Mármol

Dedication

I want to acknowledge the exceptional educators in my life. My parents Leonila and Ramón Serna, my first teachers. My maternal grandmother Eufemia Durán whose value of education was an inspiration. My elementary teachers and librarian Mrs. Evangelina Quintana who taught me to read, Mrs. Mary Cruz and Mrs. Lucy Cruz who taught me to love reading, and Ms. Dorothy Crutcher who taught me to seek out the facts. My secondary teachers the López brothers Frutoso and Ernie and Mr. Virgil Gutierrez who motivated me and believed in my academic achievements. Mrs. Ruby Ortiz, Mr. Leo Gonzales, and Mrs. Nancy Jenkins whose love of poetry and literature motivated and inspired my love of the written word. I also want to acknowledge the university professors who helped me attain my four degrees and whose high expectations motivated me to achieve excellence in education.

This study is dedicated to the brave, opinionated, and formidable educators and administrators that fight every day to make a difference in the lives of the children of the world, the Dominican Republic, the United States, New Mexico, and North Mountain.

“Be the change you want to see in the world.” Mahatma Gandhi

Acknowledgements

First and foremost I thank my immediate family who tolerated my weekends and summers away from them, first in the Dominican Republic and then again when I began the Educational Leadership Program at the University of New Mexico. My parents Ramón and Leonila Serna you are my driving forces and my educational guides. With a combined total of over 80 years of teaching and educational experience between the two, you are the gurus of teaching and most certainly educational leadership. You encouraged me to get my Ph.D. in 1988 and it only took me 25 years to fulfill my dream. My sons Rafael Erasmo Mármol, III and Ramón Cristóbal Mármol you listened to me, let me nap when I came home from a long weekend, and were amazing throughout this life-changing process. My friend, Dra. Xiomara Abud, you encouraged me to reignite my passion for education by encouraging me to begin the doctorate program in the Dominican Republic. *¡Mil gracias, los quiero muchísimo!*

Thank you to my cousins Christine and Rick Walker and their children Dagmar and William Meierer who housed me and cared for me during my summers and semesters at UNM. Thanks Dags for sharing your room with me. *Besos.*

Thank you to the Educational Leadership professors and the members of my Dissertation Committee. My Dissertation Chair Dr. Arlie Woodrum, you are a mentor and a treasure to all the students who are fortunate enough to learn from your vast wealth of knowledge. My Dissertation Committee Members Dr. Allison Borden, Dr. Viola Flórez, and Albuquerque Public Schools Special Education Executive Director Dr. Anne Tafoya you are my role models and I stand on your shoulders. Thank you to my fellow Taoseña Dr. Alicia Chávez for your advice and support. Thank you to Representative Roberto J. Gonzales for believing in me and supplying me with educational data from the New Mexico State

Legislature. You all inspire me to be a better educator and I will always cherish your words of encouragement, your guidance, and leadership. *Un fuerte abrazo.*

I want to thank my Cohort 12 colleagues: Gabriella Durán Blakey, Pete Vallejo, Ron Christopherson, Elaine Romero, Carlos Rey Romero, and Tim Schroeder. Your support and friendship was inspiring. I could not have asked for a better cohort. *Los respeto.*

Thank you to the teachers of North Mountain School District (NMSD) who dedicate their lives to the children of North Mountain. Thank you to the administrative staff of NMSD that took time from their busy schedules to assist me with data and information. *Suerte.*

TEACHER EFFICACY WITHIN TIER II OF THE RtI FRAMEWORK

By

MADELYN P. SERNA MÁRMOL

B.A., Government and Spanish, University of Notre Dame
M.A., Political Science, George Washington University
M.A., International Education, Framingham State University
Ed.D., Educational Leadership, University of New Mexico, 2013

ABSTRACT

This qualitative case study explores teacher efficacy in the decision making process within the Response to Intervention (RtI) Framework: from the initial Student Assistance Team (SAT) process through the Tier II interventions and the possible referral to Tier III. The study focuses on one elementary school of a rural northern New Mexico school district, collecting data from certified regular education teachers, the current principal, the former principal and the district Special Education Director. Teachers are categorized as either novice, intermediate, or veteran based on their years of experience.

The Response to Intervention (RtI) process, if properly administered, may substantially reduce the numbers of students with disabilities being served in segregated settings. RtI is not a silver bullet that will magically reform the study site, schools in New Mexico, or the United States. Properly trained teachers and administrators who successfully develop and implement RtI interventions may, however, decrease the number of students recommended for Tier III. Teachers at the study site are not unlike teachers in other school districts around New Mexico and the nation. Teachers have not been properly trained in the process at the university level and do not receive sufficient professional development once

hired in the school district. This study finds that teachers at the research site were not efficacious in the development and implementation of Tier II of the RtI process.

Key words: Response to Intervention, Student Assistance Team, teacher efficacy, Tier II interventions

Table of Contents

List of Figures.....	xiv
List of Tables	xv
Chapter I Introduction	1
Educational Background for the Study	1
History of the Region.....	11
Introduction.....	14
Statement of the Problem.....	17
Purpose of the Study	18
Research Question	19
Theoretical Framework	19
Delimitations.....	20
Significance of the Study	20
Chapter II Review of Literature.....	22
Introduction and Summary of Review	22
Historical Context of Special Education Eligibility.....	22
Response to Intervention (RtI).....	24
RtI in New Mexico.....	26
Teacher Efficacy	28
Teacher Acculturation and Retention	29
Professional Development	30
Collaboration.....	32
Poverty	33

ELL Students	36
Paradigm Shift	39
Gaps in the Literature.....	40
How the Review of Literature Informs This Study	41
Summary	42
Chapter III Research Design	45
Summary of Study	45
Mode of Inquiry: Qualitative	45
Research Philosophy/Paradigm	47
Research Methodology	47
Case study.	47
Research Methods	48
Design.	48
Instrumentation.	50
Context of the Study	50
Research site.	50
La Loma Elementary School.	51
Sampling.	51
Data Collection Methods	53
Data Analysis	54
Ethics Review	56
Standards of Quality	58
Limitations	59

Concluding Remarks.....	59
Chapter IV Research Findings	61
Introduction.....	61
Summary of Findings.....	61
Themes	63
Teacher efficacy.....	63
Teacher retention and acculturation.....	73
Professional development.	74
Collaboration.....	76
Paradigm shift.	78
Poverty.	80
ELL.	80
Sub Themes.....	82
Systematic focus.	82
Time.	84
Research Conclusions	85
Chapter V Discussion and Next Steps.....	87
Purpose of the Study	87
Meaning of Findings in a Larger Educational Context.....	89
National.....	89
New Mexico.....	91
NMSD and LLES.....	93
Typical student/parent/teacher at LLES.....	95

Comparison and Contribution of Findings to Current Research	96
Recommendations and Practice Implications for Future Research	98
Inter-lingual students.	98
Parents.....	99
Additional schools and districts.....	100
Native Americans.....	100
Charter schools.....	101
Rural vs. urban.	101
Conclusion	102
References.....	105
Glossary of Terms.....	121
Appendices.....	124
Appendix A Response to Intervention (RtI) Self-Assessment Survey	125
Appendix B New Mexico Annual Yearly Progress (AYP)	127
Appendix C NMPED School Grading.....	129
Appendix D TIER I.....	132
Appendix E NMPED TIER II.....	133
Appendix F NMPED RtI Framework	134
Appendix G NMPED Behavior Fact Sheet	135
Appendix H NMPED SAT Fact Sheet.....	136
Appendix I NMPED TIER III.....	137
Appendix J NMPED RtI Fact Sheet	138
Appendix K Interview Protocol for Regular Education Teachers	139

Appendix L Interview Protocol for Former School Principal	142
Appendix M Interview Protocol for Current School Principal	144
Appendix N Interview Protocol for District Special Education Director	146
Appendix O District Permission to Conduct Research.....	148
Appendix P Recruitment Flyer	152
Appendix R Research Prospectus	159
Tables	160

List of Figures

Figure 1. Multi-tiered Instruction in RtI.	15
Figure 2. Mármol Research Design.	56

List of Tables

Table 1	La Loma Elementary School Proportion Number of REGED Teachers to be Interviewed	160
Table 2	Novice Question and Vignette Responses	161
Table 3	Intermediate Question and Vignette Responses	164
Table 4	Veteran Question and Vignette Responses	169

Chapter I

Introduction

Educational Background for the Study

In 2011, the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) conducted an expedited review of data submitted by school districts to determine the reason for a notable rise in the special education student population (NMPED, 2011a). On April 12, 2011, superintendents, charter school officials, local board presidents, and business managers in New Mexico received a memorandum announcing an audit of school districts that showed “noteworthy differences from the previous year or other unusual trends” in special education reporting (NMPED, 2011a, ¶12). Two days later, a news release was sent out by the NMPED listing 34 New Mexico school districts that were part of the audit. Two weeks later, on April 27, 2011, the 34 Public School Districts across New Mexico received a letter from the Public Education Department Secretary-Designate identifying each of the districts and distinguishing the level at which each district was to be audited. The letter further stated that each district had “exceeded the average statewide growth by at least 200 percent, the initial statistical bar set for the audit” in their special education population (NMPED, 2011a, ¶2).

The rural Northern New Mexico school district where this study was conducted was listed in the April 27, 2011 letter as “Districts Selected for Additional Audit Measures Based on Initial Findings” (NMPED, 2011c, ¶5). For purposes of this study the District will be referred to as the North Mountain School District (NMSD). During the 2010-2011 school year, 25 percent of the total of the above school district’s population were students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) (NMPED, 2011a), 19 percent of whom were students with

disabilities. The percentage of students with disabilities was approximately five percent above the national average of 14 percent (Dillon, 2007).

I conducted a pilot qualitative study in 2010 of two elementary schools in the North Mountain School District in fulfillment of a class assignment in the Educational Leadership Program at the University of New Mexico by surveying certified regular education teachers. The study utilized an instrument (Appendix A) that was inspired by an existing survey: Teacher Efficacy Beliefs and Behaviors Scale (TEBBS) developed by Nunn (1998). The survey measured how “teachers, support staff, administrators, and parents generally view the influence of such things as instruction, motivation, and external factors affecting school success and performance” (Nunn, 1998, ¶2). Question number nine came directly from the TEBBS survey; with the replacement of “Teacher” for “I” since the study was targeting not only self-efficacy beliefs but teacher efficacy in general (Nunn, 1998, ¶2). In addition, questions one through five were developed after an interview of the two district special education diagnosticians who received and approved or returned Student Assistance Team (SAT) referral packets from regular education teachers or counselors throughout NMSD.

The Teacher Efficacy Beliefs and Behaviors Scale (TEBBS) consists of 23 questions that measure self-efficacy and organizational efficacy to rate the level of agreement and disagreement of each item. The target respondents of the survey in the study were educators, particularly certified regular education teachers. Previous research by Nunn has demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency of both measures ranging from .78 to .89 and test-retest reliabilities of .76 for the TEBBS (Nunn 1998, ¶6).

The preliminary study enabled me to conduct further research within the school district. School C of the pilot study, which is the largest elementary school in the district with

630 students in 2010, was not adequately surveyed. A month after the assignment was due, the principal handed me an envelope with one survey inside from School C and therefore, the school was not included in the pilot study. Since School C did not contribute data to the pilot study, I made it the site of this study. For the purposes of this study, School C will be referred to as La Loma Elementary School (LLES). The NMPED documentation, the pilot study, and subsequent data sources inspired this study examining teacher efficacy in the Response to Intervention Process (RtI) at La Loma Elementary School of the North Mountain School District.

LLES is the largest district non-charter elementary school and is located in the center of the town of North Mountain. It is a fusion of old buildings converted from a secondary school and recently built new buildings with upgraded technological features. The buildings are spread out over a three-acre campus. Though traditionally a school with two principals or a principal and a vice-principal, the school in SY11-12 and SY12-13 was led by only one principal. The school has an active Professional Learning Community (PLC) which was described in a New Mexico Public Education Department audit as “strong and committed” (NMPED, 2013d, p. 4). Although each grade has a department chair, it is incumbent on the principal to make all the educational and disciplinary decisions in one of two offices, one located on the north side of campus in an early childhood wing and another office in the main building of the school. Subsequently, the teachers take on many academic and minor disciplinary issues. The teachers also rely on grade-level teachers for guidance and assistance. The school houses one of two district pre-schools for students with developmental delays. Thus, students from pre-kindergarten to fifth grade attend LLES.

According to the former principal, LLES was unofficially considered the special education magnet school for at least a decade. The 2012-2013 80th day School Demographics report showed that the school population totaled 633, an increase of 27 students from SY11-12. Of the total population: 333 were male and 300 were female; 113 students were English Language Learners (ELL); 124 students had a primary learning disability; and 13 were gifted. The 2011-2012 District Detail Report revealed that for the 80th day, the school population totaled 606: 122 students were ELL; 137 were Special Education with a primary learning disability; and 15 were gifted. The LLES attendance rate for the same school year was 94 percent and dropped slightly in SY12-13 by .7 percentage points.

The school has not met Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) (Appendix B) in the last four years and had a Restructuring 2 (R-2) designation for SY 2012-2013 (NMPED, 2012a). In SY10-11 La Loma Elementary School received a preliminary grade of C (Appendix C) (NMPED, 2011a). Then in SY11-12 the elementary school received a school grade of D, a decrease in 1.7 points from the previous year. The official grade for SY12-13 was F, a drop of 11.2 points from SY11-12 (NMPED, 2013a). In individual categories, LLES received a grade of F with the exception of Opportunity to Learn (OTL) for which the school received a B. The OTL score is based on a survey of classroom practices and on student attendance. In reading, 40.4 percent of the student population is proficient and advanced and in math 27.3 percent of students are proficient and advanced (NMPED, 2013b). New Mexico Standards Based Assessment (NMSBA) scores indicate that the school has dropped in reading proficiency percentage points from SY2011 to SY2012. In 2011, 45 percent of students were proficient in reading and in 2012, 43 percent of students were proficient—a decrease of two percentage points.

In SY12-13, there were 47 certified teachers at La Loma Elementary School, ten of whom were special education teachers and four were specials teachers (art, librarians, physical education, and music) leaving 33 possible teachers to interview. Ten percent of the total teacher population at LLES was male and ninety percent was female. A breakdown of the ethnic/racial background of the teachers revealed: 55 percent Hispanic; 34 percent Caucasian (not Hispanic); 6 percent Native American; 2.5 percent Black; and 2.5 percent Asian. Sixty four percent of all certified teachers had a Bachelor's Degree and 36 percent of all teachers had a Master's Degree (NMPED, 2012a). Twenty eight percent of the teachers had Bilingual Endorsements and 40 percent had Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) endorsements (NMPED, 2013a, c).

The school participated in the K3 Plus Program, which was developed by the NMPED in 2007 to narrow the achievement gap among students. The program extends the school year by at least 25 days at school with at least 85 percent of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch (NMPED, 2013b). Most students who are recommended for the program are poor, Hispanic, Native American or ELL students. The program is "making positive differences for the neediest students" in New Mexico (NMPED, 2012c, p. 8). In a recent study of students who attend the summer program, it was shown that students who participated in two years of the K3 Plus Program outperformed students who only attended one year of the program (NMPED, 2012c).

The school is ethnically diverse and is attended by students from all three of the primary ethnic/racial groups living in the Town of North Mountain: Hispanic, Caucasian, and Native American. The majority of students, or nearly 81percent, are Hispanic, 8.4 percent are Native American, and almost eight percent are Caucasian. In addition, a small percentage of

students, less than one percent, are Black or Asian. Poverty levels in the school are high, as 100 percent of students receive free and reduced lunch. In addition, LLES is a Title I school, which is a federal program to ensure that economically disadvantaged students “have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education” and improve their academic achievement (US Department of Education, 2013, ¶2). A majority of students at LLES are insured through the New Mexico Medicaid program. Anecdotal information from the LLES staff showed that many children are from single-parent households or being raised by grandparents. In fact, 41 percent of grandparents across the nation are responsible for their grandchildren (US Census Bureau, 2007-2011).

LLES had the highest concentration of ELL students in the district in SY12-13, the majority of whom were Mexican national or children of Mexican nationals. Language acquisition has been a challenge for many of the ELL and Hispanic students at LLES. Language for purposes of this study has been categorized into basic interpersonal communicative skills and cognitive/academic language proficiency (Cummins, 1984). Throughout the United States and particularly in states represented by a large percentage of ELL students, for example, California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and New York, educators noted “that students who appeared to have good conversational English skills were not necessarily capable of using the language in cognitively demanding ways in the classroom” (Gándara & Contreras, 2009, p. 136). Students may be able to carry on superficial social conversations with their peers and even translate for their parents, but they were not proficient enough to meet the academic rigors of learning English in the classroom. In addition, the students “lack facility with reading comprehension, vocabulary, text analysis, and writing” (Gándara & Contreras, 2009, p. 140).

Many of the students in the North Mountain District face the same issues as other ELL students nationwide. Although they speak conversational English, they are not prepared to confront the cognitive and academic language in the classroom. They also come from low socio-economic status (SES) households with families or parents who may have only attained a high school diploma or the equivalency. However, there are two different groups of students who are tackling issues with oral and written academic language acquisition at LLES. There are immigrant students and students whose parents are immigrants and then there are local Hispanic and Native American students.

Recent immigrants, the majority of whom are Mexican nationals or the children of Mexican nationals, are confronted with the same problems as the ELL students researched by Gándara & Contreras (2009). The students are learning English and Spanish simultaneously and often serve as the family translators since their parents are not conversant in English. The majority of those students are placed in the school's dual language program. LLES has a "strong" dual language program (NMPED, 2013d, p. 1). There were 184 students in the program in SY12-13. The program spans kindergarten through fifth grade and has been a model for the other two elementary schools in the district. Another elementary school in the district began the program in SY12-13 and the third elementary school in the district will inaugurate a program in SY13-14. The English Language Learners at LLES met all three NMPED Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs): AMAO #1 – ELL students Making Progress in learning English, AMAO #2 – ELL students Attaining English Proficiency, and AMAO #3 - ELL students Achieving Academic Proficiency in Reading and Mathematics (NMPED, 2013, d).

Dual language programs have been the focus of a major longitudinal study by Collier and Thomas (2004). The researchers found that dual language programs enhanced “student outcomes” and fully closed “the achievement gap in [the] second language” (Collier & Thomas, 2004, p. 1). “No other program has closed more than half of the achievement gap in the long term” (Collier & Thomas, 2004, p. 5). Additional studies suggest that dual language is the most effective strategy for educating English speakers and non-English speakers with the final objective of developing fully bilingual and biliterate students (Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Harris, 2012). States that have previously attempted various forms of bilingual programs such as those in Texas and total English-only immersion programs as in California, are now investigating the preliminary success of dual language programs in New Mexico and other states in the Southwest.

The second group of students at LLES is not the traditional ELL students who are immigrants or children of immigrants; they are local Hispanic and Native American students. Local Hispanic families have lived in the area for over four hundred years and Native American families have inhabited the region for over 1,000 years ([North Mountain] Historical Society, 2012). Children from both groups began to acquire English in public schools most predominately after New Mexico statehood in 1912. Spanish and Native American pueblo languages were forbidden on school grounds and punishment was given to any student speaking a language other than English. Most teachers were neither Hispanic nor Native American, nor were they from New Mexico. Traditional Spanish and Native American languages were still spoken at home (Bills & Vigil, 2008). Traditional Spanish refers to the Spanish dialect spoken in Northern New Mexico “made up of archaic sixteenth-century Spanish, Mexican Indian words, mostly from the Nahuatl, a few indigenous Rio

Grande Indian words, and words and idiomatic expressions peculiar to the Spanish of Mexico” (Cobos, 2003, p. ix). The cycle of punishment for not speaking English in school lasted well into the 1960s. Due to these circumstances, children were not taught their home language by their parents but they continued to hear the language spoken by their grandparents or *abuelos* and/or tribal elders.

This linguistic and cultural experience occurred in my own home. My grandparents learned English at school after the turn of the 20th century but continued to speak Spanish at home. My parents also spoke Spanish at home and were taught English at school. In my mother’s elementary school, which is within the NMSD, the Hispanic students took an extra year of elementary school called pre-first so that they were able to learn English. In my generation, not only were we not taught Spanish by our parents, we were all given English first names. Fortunately we spent time with our *abuelos* so we heard and understood oral Traditional Spanish. Unfortunately, our grandparents spoke to us in Spanish and we responded in English. Native American children were required to learn their home language in order to participate in tribal rituals and ceremonies but those who left the region soon forgot their language. The same happened to our cousins who lived in Albuquerque or Phoenix who also lost their connection to their cultural and linguistic roots. “Caught in the ebb and flow of cultural crosscurrents, Norteño (Northern Hispanic) is unsure how to respond to cultural and linguistic erosion” (Roberts, 2001, p. 51).

Numerous students at LLES and district-wide are either living with, being raised by or living in close proximity to their grandparents or extended family. Those grandparents and/or extended family members speak Traditional Spanish or a Native American language in the home. The Home Language Survey (2012), completed by LLES parents, reveals that 116 or

18 percent of students speak Spanish at home. However, teachers working directly with the students and parents stated that the percentage of students who speak or understand and listen to Spanish at home was much higher. The Survey also showed that although no Native American students spoke a language other than English at home, the Native American tutor at LLES stated that more than 50 percent of Native American students speak a pueblo or tribal language at home especially during traditional training and ceremonies when their native language is required. The Native American tutor also estimated that 90 percent of Native American students at LLES live with their grandparents or the grandparents live in their home.

In addition, the majority of parents or guardians at LLES do not have the educational or social capital to sustain academic English or understand the importance of sustaining cognitive language in the home (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). Although students are not proficient in Standard Spanish or a Native American pueblo language, the influence of the home language and a lack of rich academic language in the home have led students to become inter-lingual¹.

Traditional Spanish has not evolved in Northern New Mexico as has Standard Spanish and thus “Spanglish” or English words are utilized to bridge the vocabulary gap. Traditional Spanish is spoken among the local Hispanic population north of Albuquerque and in Southern Colorado. The language has “survived on a remote fringe of the Spanish-speaking world” (Bills & Vigil, 2008, p. 2). The dialect comes from many years of isolation and has been referred to as the equivalent of speaking Old English with hints of “Spanglish.” Local Hispanic students may understand Traditional Spanish but do not necessarily speak it

¹ For purposes of this study, inter-lingual refers to utilizing two or more languages simultaneously and not being literate in either of the two languages cognitively or academically.

nor do they speak Standard Spanish. Because these students are bicultural “there is a high frequency of code switching between English and Spanish” (Urrea & Gradoville, 2006, p.3). In addition, the Native Pueblo languages have not evolved to include academic or modern technological language and often borrow from Spanish and English. Thus local Hispanic and Native American students have limited use of cognitive and academic language outside of the school.

History of the Region

According to the local Historical Society (2012) and town government information (2012), North Mountain is inhabited by three major cultural groups: Hispanic, Anglo, and Native American. The Native Americans have lived in the area for 1,000 years. Spanish explorers arrived in the region in the mid-1500s and the area became a Spanish village by the early 1600s. French trappers and other Europeans began entering the area in the 1700s. The town was incorporated in the 1930s and has a mayor and town council. North Mountain is “overflowing with a long proud history, three cultures living side by side, and a heritage of colorful people. Its’ diversity makes the community a very interesting and desirable place to live and do business” ([North Mountain] Town Government, 2012, ¶10). The community has also experienced “geographic isolation” creating conditions that “have inspired the development of a multi-textured, resilient, and creative community” ([North Mountain] CARES Health Council, 2009, p. 14).

The majority or 84 percent of people live in the county as opposed to the town proper; the county population as of 2010 was 32,937 (US Census Bureau, 2010). The population density is 14 people per square mile. The majority of the population is Hispanic or Latino at 55.8 percent, followed by White/Not Hispanic at 36.3 percent, and American Indian and

Alaska Native at 6.2 percent. The county has a majority of racially white, yet ethnically Hispanic, inhabitants. The percentage of foreign-born residents is almost four percent of that population, 67.5 percent are not U.S. citizens (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011). Although the county has received Mexican immigrants for decades, the immigrant population has increased in the last ten years, causing some friction between Hispanic and newly arrived Mexican-nationals.

One fifth (20.9 percent) of the county population lives below the poverty line, seven percentage points more than the total U.S. population that lives below the poverty level (13.2 percent) (City-Data, 2003-2010). A large number of wealthy and older people have moved into the community, which “has resulted in the creation of distinct subcultures that are less integrated into the traditional cultures of [North Mountain]” ([North Mountain] CARES, Health Council, 2009, p. 14). The new residents have caused a division that has created two communities, “one that is enjoyed by an affluent population that takes advantage of a lifestyle” steeped in luxury and another in which abject poverty prevails ([North Mountain] CARES, Health Council, 2009, pp. 14-15).

Educational attainment data in the county shows that almost a third of residents, 27 percent, have a high school diploma or its equivalency and that 24 percent have some college but no degree (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011). The trend in the last five years has been for many struggling and ELL students to leave high school and enroll in a local university-sponsored General Educational Development (GED) program. Results of a U.S. Census Bureau survey on language spoken at home reveals that 45 percent of the county population speaks a language other than English, 40 percent of whom speak Spanish as their second

language (2007-2011). No specific information was provided by the survey for any of the Native American pueblo languages spoken in the county.

Females outnumber males in the county by two percentage points. Twenty percent of the population is employed in educational health or social services; 19.1 percent are employed by the arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services; 12.8 percent in retail trade; and 10.1 percent in construction. Other statistics for the county include: median resident age at 39.5 years; average household size 2.3 people; average household income \$31,112; and the unemployment rate in March of 2011 was nine percent.

North Mountain district does not keep records nor does it have actual statistics on the SES of the parents of students at LLES, but the high percentage of free and reduced lunch and the fact that the entire school is Title I indicate that the parental demographics, especially in terms of poverty, mirror those of the county at large. A local health and wellness council's five-year Community Health Improvement Plan revealed that three of its five community goals were to reduce substance abuse, increase family resiliency, and increase learning and economic development capacity ([North Mountain] CARES, Health Council, 2009). Although a majority of students have Medicaid coverage, an estimated 33 percent of adult county residents are without health insurance coverage and gaps are even higher for undocumented residents of the county ([North Mountain] CARES, Health Council, 2009). The plan also showed that, in 2006, 61 percent of all births in the county were to single mothers ([North Mountain] CARES, Health Council, 2009). The use of tobacco, marijuana, and alcohol among residents is also higher than the national average. Suicide rates in the county are over 40 percent, nearly four times the rate of the U.S. and double that of New Mexico. Results of a risk and resiliency survey at the public non-charter high school revealed

that 21 percent of students had seriously contemplated suicide, six percentage points higher than the national average ([North Mountain] CARES, Health Council, 2009).

Introduction

“Educators have long complained about the onerous special education procedures required by law and those complaints are indeed meritorious. These required procedures are not only time consuming and immensely expensive but they provide minimal information that is actually useful for instructional decision-making which should be the real purpose of initiating these processes in the first place” (Wedl, 2005, p. 17). Since 2006 when the RtI process was mandated in New Mexico, district administrators in the North Mountain School District have heard arguments about the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of the SAT process for identifying students with potential disabilities or giftedness from teachers, ancillary staff, and parents.

During Administrative Council meetings, administrators in the district generally believed that there were a disproportionate number of students in special education and it was the perception of those administrators that the teachers generally believed the RtI process was rigorous and excluded students from qualifying for special education services in a timely manner. In faculty meetings around the district, regular education teachers revealed that the Tier II phase in the three-tier model of student intervention was cumbersome and placed the onus solely on their methods of intervention and documentation. Teachers have also expressed concerns about the insufficient district-wide initial and ongoing RtI professional development and training. Administrators, teachers, and special-education-related-services staff believed that professional development was deficient in the area of teacher-developed remediation plans and the Academic Improvement Plans (AIP) developed by the SAT. The

above factors may provide an explanation as to why the district is five percentage points over the national average for identification of students with disabilities and the target of a state-wide audit. According to the New Mexico Public Education Department (2009):

Response to Intervention (RtI) theory was based upon recognition that while most children respond to conventional teaching methods, there are some children who do not. The research has disclosed two possible theories for this problem. The first was that perhaps the student has a disability that interferes with his or her ability to learn in the same fashion as the majority of the other students. The second was that perhaps the student had received either the proper and/or adequate teaching in the area of delay (p. 60).

The RtI framework is a NMPED mandate and since 2006 has been implemented throughout New Mexico. RtI consists of a three-tier model of student intervention:

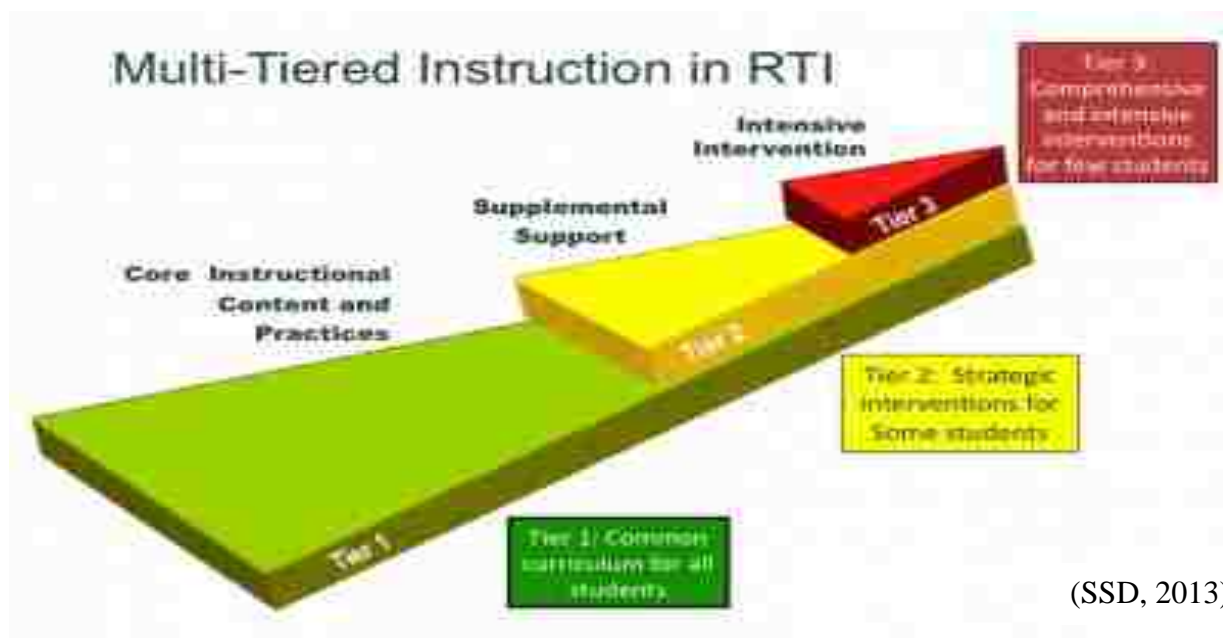


Figure 1. Multi-tiered Instruction in RtI.

Tier I and Tier II deal with regular education. Tier I involves core instruction where assessment is universal screening and intervention involves whole-class strategies. Tier I requires supplemental instruction, assessment in the form of weekly progress monitoring, and intervention with the use of solid instructional fundamentals. The Tier I (Appendix D) approach is “all about data and differentiated instruction” (NMPED, 2009, p 32). Tier II (Appendix E) interventions are more individualized and targeted to a specific need whether academic (Appendix F) or behavioral (Appendix G). A Student Assistance Team is convened to identify the individualized needs of a student in general education. The SAT (Appendix H) is “a school-based team whose purpose is to develop supplemental Tier II support for students who are not responding to the Tier I core program with universal interventions” (NMPED, 2009, pp. 43-44).

Tier II interventions are vital to the correct functioning of the RtI process. If students do not receive appropriate interventions with sufficient time for those interventions to function properly, then it may lead to an over-identification of students in special education. Tier III (Appendix I) is placement into a special education program where a student has an Individual Education Plan (IEP). In Tier III, the student receives individualized services according to their primary and/or secondary disability category.

“The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B regulations at 34 CFR Sec. 300.8, defines thirteen categories of disabilities: autism, deafness, deaf-blindness, hearing impairment, intellectual disability, multiple disability, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, serious emotional disturbance, specific learning disability that includes Dyslexia, speech language impairment, traumatic brain injury, and visual impairment, including blindness. In New Mexico, developmental delay is

considered a disability under special education for children aged three - nine”

(NMPED, 2012b, p. 1).

The National Center on Response to Intervention (2010, p. 2) supported the New Mexico criteria and added the component of behavior in its definition, “Response to intervention integrates assessment and intervention within a multi-level prevention system to maximize student achievement and to reduce behavior problems.”

This three-tier organizational system is an avenue by “which schools design and deliver instruction, and allocate resources, creating an integrated service delivery approach” (Figure 1) (NMPED, 2009, p. 11). The RtI is a serious and thus rigorous process for all of the stakeholders involved. Rigorous in the sense of the demands and requirements of the RtI process itself and the time and energy a teacher expends to complete the state and district paperwork required to prove that the necessary interventions and strategies are being implemented. RtI necessitates a rigorous process because of the significant amount of school district human resources that are utilized in teacher manpower as they are designing and providing interventions, in the evaluation process, and ultimately in the ancillary and monetary expenditures necessary to provide a student with special education services (Miller & Lolic, 2011).

Statement of the Problem

North Mountain School District is five percentage points over the national average of 14 percent (Dillon, 2007) for students with disabilities. In addition, the school has double the number of students in gifted education when compared to any other school district of its size in the State of New Mexico. Principals and/or counselors in the school district have referred a higher than average amount of SAT documentation to the District diagnosticians who review

the records and conduct evaluations to determine Tier III or special education eligibility. For example, in SY2010-2011, approximately 80 SATs or 12.7 percent of the total school population were referred from the study site to the special education department for review.

Much has been written about the validity of the RtI process and the impact in student proficiency compared to the discrepancy model (meaning *low or large differences in achievement scores as compared to grade-level peers and a learning rate substantially below grade-level peers*) (NMPED, 2012b). This study will explore the implementation of RtI and professional development. It is reasonable to ask that the district provide professional development to assist teachers in creating and documenting scientifically researched-based interventions if over 12 percent of the student population in LLES require special education services. Moreover, RtI is based on data and documentation, teachers and administrators must progress-monitor students in order to better serve at-risk and struggling students (Brown-Chidsey & Steege, 2005; Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006b; Lose, 2007; NCRTI, 2010; NMPED, 2009).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to identify teacher efficacy and their professional decision-making process regarding the initial SAT process and Tier II interventions. If teachers understand the RtI process and are properly trained then the North Mountain School District could be closer to or below the national average of students who qualify for Tier III. District and on-site administrators should be trained in the RtI process and understand the importance of providing teachers with guidance and professional development. The analysis of the existing data, data collection, and the new findings from

this study may determine the efficacy of Tier II in the RtI process implemented by teachers in the largest elementary school in the NMSD.

Research Question

How does teacher efficacy affect the Student Assistance Team (SAT) process and the delivery of the Tier II interventions? Efficacy referred to the effectiveness of the Tier II and SAT process in identifying or not identifying students for special education. The research study underscored teacher efficacy in terms of teacher preparation, training, delivery of interventions, and on-going professional development. The study also defined Tier II of the RtI process and the teachers' concerns with the current intervention process. The study focused on teacher decision-making in terms of the steps a teacher took upon suspecting that a student had a learning disability that was impeding academic growth or was believed to be gifted and would require enhancement services. A sub-question of this research study was: What is the teachers' understanding of the process from beginning interventions and then recommending placement into Tier III or Special Education?

Theoretical Framework

The Theoretical Framework for this study stems from social cognitive theory. Social cognitive theory and the study of teacher efficacy are based on Bandura's seminal research on self-efficacy. Bandura (1977, p. 195) identified four "sources of efficacy expectations: mastery experiences, physiological and emotional states, vicarious experiences and social persuasion". Social cognitive theory lends itself well to the analysis of the educational issues in this study and the school environment at LLES and in NMSD. Teacher motivation, behavior and understanding were essential to analyzing the data and interpreting the findings of this study. "Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory emphasizes how cognitive, behavioral,

personal, and environmental factors interact to determine motivation and behavior”

(Crothers, Hughes, & Morine, 2008, ¶2).

Delimitations

This study was confined to one non-charter public elementary school in the North Mountain School District. While the study focused on certified regular education teachers separated into three categories: novice (0-5 years of experience), intermediate (6-14.5 years of experience), and veteran teachers (15-35 years of experience), not all teachers were interviewed. For the purposes of this study, a proportional percentage of the teachers was selected as representatives of each of the three categories and those teachers were purposefully chosen to be interviewed. In addition, three administrators, the current principal, the former principal, and the district Special Education Director, were interviewed. While the RtI process involves a Student Assistance Team that includes a counselor, parents, and an administrator, only certified regular education teachers were interviewed as the teachers serve the primary role in the Tier II stage of the RtI process.

Due to the small sample size, this study is not generalizable to all rural school districts in New Mexico or rural school districts in the United States. Because the school was small and in a rural surrounding with limited economic and human resources it was also not generalizable to urban districts in New Mexico or the United States. The study explores teacher efficacy and the self-efficacy beliefs of the certified regular education teachers in La Loma Elementary School of the North Mountain School District.

Significance of the Study

The study concentrated on teacher efficacy within the Response to Intervention Framework in this rural public school district. As previously mentioned, in terms of the

qualitative research study, efficacy referred to the effectiveness of the Tier II and SAT process in identifying students for special education. The research design was directed towards a qualitative study of Tier II of the RtI process, the phase before students were qualified for Tier III or special education.

The primary data source of this qualitative research case study entailed interviewing a sampling of the certified regular education teachers, the former principal, and the current principal of the La Loma Elementary School, and the Special Education Director of the North Mountain School District. In addition, the study involved performing an analysis of District data and an analysis of the interview data. The interviews and vignettes revealed the teachers' general understanding of the RtI process and their role in that process. The study also focused on the participants' reflective process while making the decision of how to design an academic plan and develop interventions and when or if to begin the SAT process.

Chapter II

Review of Literature

Introduction and Summary of Review

The review of literature primarily focused on Teacher Efficacy in Tier II of the RtI process in an historical as well as the national arena and in New Mexico, citing the seminal works of Fuchs and Fuchs (2006), Wedl (2005), Bandura (1977), Woolfolk Hoy (2000), Gándara and Contreras (2009) among others. Additional themes that have surfaced in this review of the relevant literature are special education eligibility, collaboration, professional development, student achievement, poverty, and ELL students. This literature review brings us one step closer to answering the research question of this study: How does teacher efficacy affect the Student Assistance Team (SAT) process and the delivery of the Tier II interventions?

Historical Context of Special Education Eligibility

Prior to 2004, students identified as needing special education services were qualified based on an Intelligence Quotient (IQ) achievement discrepancy model. The discrepancy model was the “cornerstone” of the identification of a Specific Learning Disability (SLD) (Shinn, 2007, p. 602). The model had been utilized since 1975 and held a vetted and accepted distinction among regular education teachers and in the special education community. The discrepancy model identified learning disabilities in students on the basis of their Intelligence Quotient (IQ) or severe discrepancies between aptitude and achievement in order to place them in special education. Teachers referred students struggling with regular education class work for special education evaluation. The students were assessed and based on their cognitive level, either plus or minus a pre-determined number of standard deviations, were

placed in special education. The discrepancy model did not provide early detection or early intervention and relied heavily on teacher judgment and IQ tests. In addition, the model failed to make a clear distinction among learning disabled, mentally retarded (intellectual disability), and low-achieving students (Wedl, 2005).

“RtI was developed starting in the late 1970s by numerous researchers seeking a method of identifying learning disabilities that avoids the problems of the discrepancy model. Unlike the discrepancy model, RtI allows for early and intensive interventions in the regular education setting based on a student's learning characteristics before any referral to special education” (Lohman, 2007, ¶2). The 2004 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEIA) addressed the shortcomings of the discrepancy model by proposing RtI as an option for schools to utilize in the identification of students with learning disabilities or giftedness. The law states:

When determining whether a child has a specific learning disability as defined in §602 (29), a local educational agency shall not be required to take into consideration whether a child has a severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability in oral expression, listening, comprehension, written expression, basic reading skills, reading comprehension, mathematical evaluation, or mathematical reasoning. In determining whether a child has a specific learning disability, a local educational agency may use a process that determines if the child responds to a scientific, research-based intervention as part of the evaluation procedures [P.L. 108-446 § 614(b)(6)].

Response to Intervention (RtI)

RtI is configured as a three-tier approach to identify students before they are evaluated for special education. RtI “clearly lays the groundwork for bringing a new focus on enhancing the performance of all students including those with disabilities through a common system in which classroom teachers, special education teachers, and other specialists can work together” (Wedl, 2005, pp. 1-2). The RtI model is designed to provide “high-quality instruction using evidence-based best practices, progress monitoring that is expected to reveal students’ resistance to this high quality instruction, and an instructional scaffold that becomes more responsive to student needs as assessments indicate” (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006, p. 93). The National Center on Response to Intervention (2013) espouses four foundations of the RtI process: 1) multi-level prevention system; 2) universal screening; 3) progress monitoring; and 4) data-based decision making. According to the Council of Exceptional Children, the RtI advantage “is that children do not have to ‘wait to fail’ before they receive help” (Lohman, 2007, ¶2).

The RtI model is seemingly the answer to the tedious process of identifying students for special education or providing collaboration between special education and regular education teachers. The interventions are mandated by IDEIA (2004) to be scientifically research-based. The interventions, however, should “be appropriately intensive, delivered without delay, and tailored precisely to the individual child” (Lose, 2007, p. 277). The mandate for individual interventions is in accordance with special education, where an IEP is developed for each student. Educational or therapeutical service plans are created and progress monitored to specifically meet the needs of each student.

“In some cases, because of the success of these interventions verified with data, the child will not need special education services at all” (Wedl, 2005, p. 19). However, Tier I and Tier II interventions may not be adequate and appropriate for a student with a Specific Learning Disability (SLD). What then happens to the student who continues to struggle? Students who “struggle,” even after the use of best practices have been documented by the teacher and class instruction has been adjusted to meet the students’ individual needs, require more intensive instruction than general education can provide (Bryant & Barrera, 2009, ¶1). However, students in special education must be taught in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), which means they must be included in a regular education classroom to the full extent possible. Bryant and Barrera (2009) further affirmed, “much the same as the push for inclusion necessitated that the role of special and general educators change to better meet the needs of students with disabilities in inclusive settings, the increase in the use of RtI models will likely necessitate a change in how both special and general educators respond to the needs of struggling students before they are considered for special education services” (¶ 2).

School districts, however, must go beyond the discrepancy model where teacher judgment, best practices or simple accommodations were acceptable. The RtI process moves towards scientifically, researched-based interventions. In fact IDEIA (2004) recommended four levels of Tier II intervention delivery: 1) effective scientifically research-based instructional practices in the general education setting; 2) scientifically researched-based small group intervention instruction in the general education classroom 3) intensive, individualized instruction in general education; and 4) evaluation and qualification for possible special education program services (Brown-Chidsey & Steege, 2005).

RtI in New Mexico

In New Mexico, RtI “is the organizational system by which schools design and deliver instruction, and allocate resources, creating an integrated service delivery approach” (NMPED, 2009, p. 11). The RtI process in New Mexico reflects the recommended practices executed throughout the U.S. Tier I (Appendix D) consists of universal screening, appropriate core instruction, and universal interventions; Tier II (Appendix E) begins with the Student Assistance Team (SAT) process, intervention plan, and progress monitoring; Tier III (Appendix I) is referral and the multidisciplinary evaluation process for admittance to special education or the gifted program (NMPED, 2009, pp. 3-4).

Tier I is the core academic program for all students. When a student is struggling in Tier I (Appendix F), a teacher may then suggest moving the student to Tier II. Tier II (Appendix E) originates with the SAT process (Appendix H). The Student Assistance Team consists of the school counselor, regular education teacher, administrator, parents and the student. A special education therapist or representative may attend to give advice, but Tier II is still a regular education responsibility. In many school districts throughout New Mexico, the SAT develops an Academic Intervention Plan (AIP) or a Behavioral Improvement Plan (BIP) (Appendix G). The plans are corrective action measurements that assist a “low-performing” or “struggling” student to advance or serve as a guide for an IEP team when developing special education goals (NMPED, 2009, 40). It is necessary that those goals are continually monitored and documented. Continual progress-monitoring and data driven decision-making is essential to the success of RtI (Appendix J) (Brown-Chidsey & Steege, 2005; Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006b; Lose, 2007; NCRTI, 2010; NMPED, 2009).

Teachers and other educational professionals must work together throughout the RtI process. “Collegial communication within a comprehensive approach” and “shared-accountability” to ensure that students’ needs are quickly identified and strategies formulated to meet those needs is essential (Lose, 2007, p. 277). Student Assistance Teams must also guarantee the integrity of interventions proposed during Tier II (Duhon, Mesmer, Gregerson, & Witt, 2009, p. 34). Each team member must provide input and the team must work collaboratively to create the intervention plan. Progress monitoring utilizing student assessment data, differentiated-instruction strategies, and research-based interventions that demonstrate student growth and/or proficiency are essential to the Tier II process (NCRTI, 2010). “RtI is not a student placement model, a location, a classroom, a class/course, a computer program/software, a teacher, a label, a boxed program, merely a special education initiative, or a quick fix for low achievement” (NMPED, 2009, p. 6).

RtI is an unfunded mandate in New Mexico. In the RtI Manual (NMPED, 2009) the NMPED offers suggestions delineating how each district should finance and budget the program. School districts with limited resources in New Mexico often fall short while implementing an efficient RtI program. LaRocco and Murdica (2009) studied the implementation side of RtI. The researchers’ findings underscored the deficiencies in teacher training and administrative support for teachers’ feelings of frustration and anxiety as they attempted to implement interventions. Teachers were anxious and frustrated with the RtI model (LaRocco & Murdica, 2009, p. 22). In order for the model to be successful, they stated, “teachers must embrace RtI, examine whether they are using research-based practices, and modify their teaching.” Embracing the process may not be enough if teachers are not proficient in the process.

Teacher Efficacy

Teacher efficacy is closely associated with research on self-efficacy as conducted by Bandura (1977). Bandura's work stemmed from social cognitive theory. Social cognitive theory is concerned with "human agency" and "the self-regulatory social, motivational, and affective contributors to cognitive functioning" and key to the exercise of self-regulation is a sense of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1993, pp. 117-118). Thus, the historical underpinnings of the teacher efficacy stem from the psychological and sociological study of self-efficacy. Bandura defined self-efficacy as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute a course of action required to produce a given attainment" (1994, ¶ 1). Self-efficacy would tap into the understanding of teachers' own sense of worth and ability. Although this study utilizes the concepts of self-efficacy as defined by Bandura (1977), the central research question was based on efficacy and this study concentrates primarily on teacher efficacy. This definition is significant, as this study will ascertain how teachers suspect, determine, and begin formulating interventions for at-risk students. Bandura (1993, p. 140) stated, "teachers who believe strongly in their instructional efficacy create mastery experiences" and those who are "beset by self-doubts" "undermine students' sense of efficacy and cognitive development." Efficacy therefore influences students' academic development and stresses teachers' technical ability to diagnose, evaluate, and determine if the student requires Tier II interventions.

Taking it a step further, Bandura developed a teacher efficacy scale. From the research, Bandura (1977, p. 195) identified four "sources of efficacy expectations: mastery experiences, physiological and emotional states, vicarious experiences and social persuasion." Since the development of the assessment in 1977, researchers have conducted

qualitative studies to address teacher efficacy by first identifying self-efficacy. “In assessing (self-perceptions of teaching competence), the teacher judges personal capabilities such as skills, knowledge, strategies, or personality traits balanced against personal weaknesses or liabilities in this particular teaching context” (Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2000, p. 482). This study draws upon Bandura’s research on self-efficacy but the main focus is on teacher efficacy in the RtI process. Teacher efficacy is vital to the implementation of RtI particularly in Tier II of the process.

Teacher Acculturation and Retention

Student learning and achievement are incumbent on competent and well-trained teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2003). Due to the inception of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the onus was placed on school districts to provide highly qualified teachers at every grade level and in every subject area. Schools began to expect novice teachers and all new teachers to the district to begin a school year performing at the highest level. The dual pressures of lack of experience and high stakes assessments caused higher attrition among novice teachers especially in low SES school districts nationwide. “The evidence indicates that schools in low-income communities encounter far more turnover than those in moderate-income or high-income communities, and that teachers who transfer from one school to another consistently move to schools serving higher-income students” (Johnson, 2006, p.16).

Due to the pressure and high expectations placed on new teachers, many leave the profession early on in their careers. “Steep attrition in the first few years of teaching is a long-standing problem. About one-third of new teachers leave the profession within five years” (Darling-Hammond, 2003, p. 2). Novice teachers who leave a district place a financial drain on a school district. “To reduce high teacher turnover rates that impose heavy costs on

schools, we must improve working conditions, insist on effective teacher preparation, and provide support for new teachers” (Darling-Hammond, 2003, p. 1). Teacher acculturation is essential to retaining teachers and lowering attrition rates especially among novice teachers. Mentoring and collaboration are necessary for producing and retaining highly qualified teachers. Resources are scarce in many school districts across the country and in New Mexico in particular. Mentoring programs and professional development are necessary yet place a strain on the school budget. Not only is the budget a factor, but so is time as “good mentoring takes time, which must be coordinated carefully so that the mentor and novice teacher can observe one another and meet” (Johnson, 2006, p. 8).

Professional Development

Administrators and veteran teachers must be aware of the professional development, mentoring, and social needs of novice teachers. “Efficacy may be most malleable early in learning, thus the first years of teaching may be critical to the long-term development of teacher efficacy” (Woolfolk Hoy, 2000, p. 2). In addition, “Efficacy beliefs influence teachers’ persistence when things do not go smoothly and their resilience in the face of setbacks” (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001, p. 783). Therefore, the stability and capability of novice teachers is essential to their efficacy.

Bringing teachers into the fold early during pre-service preparation and the first year of teaching may be the key to establishing teacher efficacy throughout their career. This fact would include universities in the process; not only would districts be held accountable for teacher efficacy, but so would pre-service teacher programs at the post-secondary level. Assisting novice teachers gain a sense of the whole in order to eliminate the sense of isolation and/or intimidation early on can increase greater satisfaction, positive reaction, and

less stress throughout their instructional leadership journey (Woolfolk Hoy, 2000). In addition, research has linked teacher efficacy with student achievement, which lies at the crux of the mission and vision of education today (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Moore & Esselman, 1992; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001; Yost, 2002). Therefore, the school district and specifically the educational leader is tasked with the responsibility of assuring that novice teachers have a clear understanding of the mission of the school, the plan for student success, and the teacher's role in the greater collective school system (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001; Woolfolk Hoy, 2000).

Teachers, especially novice teachers, must understand the dynamics of the school system and feel that they are an important piece of the whole. Principals must bring new teachers into the fold by providing mentoring, coaching, professional development and support. Principals are responsible for “reducing isolation, increasing capacity, providing a caring environment, and promoting quality” educators (Bower, 2008, p. 125). For example, principals must mentor, observe and evaluate individual teachers while concentrating on the school as an entire system (Bower, 2008; Waters, Marzano & McNulty, 2003). Teachers are tasked with teaching an entire group of students by utilizing differentiated instruction and in the case of special education, a teacher must utilize the Common Core Standards for students within the confines of an Individual Education Plan (IEP). “Teachers must have a system of professional growth that reflects the sophistication and importance of their work, and they must have a meaningful voice in that system” (Phillips & Weingarten, 2013, p. 37). Teacher efficacy is vital for the school system to function successfully, sustain competency, and address student achievement. “Our educational systems must transform themselves to better meet the dramatically changing needs of our children” (Deprés, 2008, p.16).

Collaboration

Senge (2000) espoused the need for educators and school leaders in particular to focus attention on collaboration and on systems-thinking where “administrators should be attentive to both the competence and task dimensions of efficacy” (p. 392). Supervisors need to be aware of the educational and experiential background of their teachers. Teachers must understand how to function in a system and collaborate with their colleagues. They must also recognize which of their colleagues they may rely on to complete certain tasks and which teachers can be counted on to serve as mentors. “When teachers believe they are members of a faculty that is both competent and able to overcome the detrimental effects of the environment, the students in their building have higher achievement scores than students in buildings with lower levels of collective teacher efficacy” (Senge, 2000, p. 394). Teachers will be more efficacious when they are confident, trained, and know who they may turn to in times of self-doubt or ignorance on a specific issue or process.

“Teachers who were successful in working with slow learners had developed skills to address students’ cognitive and motivational needs” (Burgner, 2010, ¶5). Burgner (2010) defined slow-learners as those students who did not qualify for special education but continue to struggle in the regular education setting. His findings revealed that “by working toward continual improvement of the collaboration process and keeping the lines of interactive communication open, school teams should be able to provide the foundation for slow-learners to raise their level of academic achievement and improve their organization and social skills” (¶6). Nunn and Jantz (2009, p. 600) also examined the impact of RtI involvement and implementation variables associated with teacher efficacy beliefs. The researchers found that a powerful indicator of “how teachers perceive their empowerment to

influence positive learning outcomes [is] teacher efficacy.” The results of the study indicated, “there is a substantive link between what the teacher does and what positive outcomes accrue as a function of those actions” (p. 601). There is a perception of high teacher efficacy as the teachers became more involved and began to implement more strategies in the RtI process, thus influencing instructional and motivational outcomes.

Collaboration is strongly associated with teacher efficacy. Collective efficacy is also vital to student achievement. Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) have linked teacher efficacy to student outcomes such as achievement, motivation, and self-efficacy beliefs. “In a series of studies, Roger Goddard and colleagues found the collective efficacy of a school had a greater positive impact on student achievement than the locale of the school (i.e. urban, suburban, rural) and individual student demographic variables (e.g. race, gender, socio-economic status)” (Silverman & Davis, 2009, ¶14).

Poverty

Children in the U.S. such as those residing in New Mexican rural communities are entering kindergarten without the formal educational readiness skills necessary for a successful transition to public school (Espinosa, Thornburg, & Mathews, 1997; Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Heckman, 2008; Kid’s Count, 2010). Many factors may contribute to this phenomenon including: poverty, family circumstances, access to resources, social capital, single-parent households, health and nutrition, and self-efficacy. La Paro & Pianta (2000, p. 475) state, “factors other than the child’s skills account for the majority of the individual variability in academic/cognitive and social/ behavioral performance in the early grades.” Public school educators function with a deficit model curriculum, much the same as special education utilizes for students with development delays, to address the needs of their

students. The achievement gap grows wider with each year and by third grade the rate of non-proficiency may be too great to overcome. Of the variables listed above, poverty may be the most significant factor leading to the deficiency in early development and learning and thus the lack of skills necessary to make a successful transition from home to school (Jensen, 2009; National Education Goals Panel, 1995; Rebell & Wolff, 2012).

Poverty affects behavior and academic performance in all areas of a student's daily academic life. Children raised in poverty are faced with "overwhelming challenges that affluent children never have to confront, and their brains have adapted to suboptimal conditions in ways that undermine good school performance" (Jensen, 2009, ¶5).

Twenty percent of all US schools have poverty rates over 75 percent. The average ranking of American students still reflects this. The problem is not public schools; it is poverty. And as dozens of studies have shown, the gap in cognitive, physical, and social development between children in poverty and middle-class children is set by age three (Barkan, 2001, p. 2).

Poverty hinders the development of early childhood growth and learning. The research has shown that poverty is an accurate predictor of academic and social achievement in schools due to the lack of access to supports that children in middle- and high-income families possess (Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Jensen, 2009; Kids Count Data Book, 2010, p. 5; Tough, 2008; Williams, 2003). Children in poverty are not as successful in school due to a lack of academic and social resources. Ackerman and Barnett (2005, p.11) stated, "children from low-income or less-educated families are less likely to have the supports necessary for healthy growth and development, resulting in lower abilities at school entry." In fact several studies have shown that, "Parental education seems to be the best predictor of academic and

social-behavioral success in grade school because more parental education is usually associated with an educationally better home environment, better financial security, and fewer social or environmental risk factors for children” (Mehaffie & McCall, 2002, p. 2).

Twenty nine percent of New Mexico children under the age of five are living in poverty compared to the national average of 23 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). The poverty rate for all ages in New Mexico is 18.2 percent, 4.1 percentage points higher than the national average. New Mexico is the fourth poorest state in the Union (New Mexico Department of Health, 2009). The poverty rate places New Mexico students “at a great disadvantage in accessing opportunities to thrive, develop, and learn” (NMDOH, 2009). The median household income in the U.S. is \$50,221 and in NM \$42,830 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). Only Los Alamos, Sandoval, and Santa Fe Counties surpass the national average.

“Living in a rural area can also indirectly affect children’s readiness. Limited employment opportunities may mean parents have to work more than one job to provide food and housing, decreasing the amount of time they can spend with their children” (Ackerman & Barnett, 2005, p. 11). Access to a quality education, resources, and opportunities are more difficult in a rural school setting. Rural communities and schools have difficulty in attracting and retaining highly-qualified professionals in all areas. Moreover, rural public schools often lack the resources to hire ancillary specialists such as speech pathologists, diagnosticians or psychologists. “Small schools have been shown to mitigate the influence of poverty on academic achievement, but in many places, small community schools also may be linked to school segregation” (Williams, 2003). In fact, data concerning enrollment in charter schools in Northern New Mexico have shown the disparity in social economic status, diversity, and have created a rift in the communities.

“New Mexico has a higher percentage of single mothers and fathers heading households than does the US as a whole” (Kids Count Data Book, 2010, p. 15). Children living in single-female headed households have the tendency to confront more risk factors than children in two-parent households. They are more likely to live in poverty, have teenaged mothers, and have access to fewer social, emotional, and economic supports (Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Jensen, 2009; Kids Count Data Book, 2010, p. 15; Tough, 2008; Williams, 2003). The combined total of single-male and single-female headed households in the U.S. is 14.3 percent and in New Mexico it is 18 percent. San Miguel County has the highest percentage of single-male headed households at 12.4 percent, while the national average is 3.3 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). All counties with the exception of Doña Ana and Lincoln surpassed the national average for single-male headed households and only Eddy, Lincoln, Otero, and Rio Arriba counties are under the national average for single-female householder families by one percentage point.

ELL Students

The ELL population is growing rapidly throughout the United States. The total amounts to 10 percent of the overall public school population (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, 2007). Spanish speakers are the majority among ELLs and “one of the groups least well served by US schools (as measured by high school completion), quality teaching and testing in Spanish can be a crucial step towards closing the achievement gap in English” (Collier & Thomas, 2004, p. 5). In addition, literacy is a key factor in academic success and 76 percent of ELL third graders in the US performed below grade level (Zehler, Fleischman, Hopstock, Stephenson, Pendzick, & Sapru, 2003). ELL students struggling to acquire a second language are behind monolingual English speakers when they

begin school. The achievement and ability gap, particularly in terms of language skills, places a child at a disadvantage with regard to their peers, and they are often not ready to transition to school (Heckman, 2008; Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Kids Count Data Book, 2010, p. 15; Tough, 2008; Williams, 2003). Although ELL students may speak their mother tongue, they are not proficient in their native language. Many of these students are not academically proficient in either language (Harris, 2012, ¶18).

Resources are another factor in a schools ability to address the needs of ELL students. “Many schools nationwide lack the resources to teach these students, including teachers with the right training” (Harris, 2012 ¶9). Teachers may not have the academic training or the right licensure to teach ELL students and teachers who do have licensure in Bilingual Education or TESOL may not have the proper training in the acquisition of academic language. For example, “too often, teachers focus on highly technical words instead of more common academic words, the ‘connective tissue’ of language” (Harris, 2012, ¶28).

Teachers are also hesitant to identify ELLs as learning disabled. Federal and State guidelines are vague in identifying and assessing ELLs for learning disabilities or as gifted (Haager, 2007). Teachers’ hesitancy may be a result of a deficiency in the skills and training to properly assess and recommend students for special education. “Before considering a student for special education, educators must determine whether the student’s academic difficulties more likely reflect a learning disability or limited English proficiency” (Sun, Nam, & Vanderwood, 2010, p. 4).

Poverty and language are strongly associated with the largest achievement gaps in New Mexico (NMPED, 2012c). Many teachers are not trained to address diversity in the classroom and do not possess the credentials or licensure to teach students in a second

language. Moreover there is a shortage of teachers with Bilingual and/or TESOL endorsements. An obstacle to English proficiency is a shortage of qualified elementary school bilingual education and ESL teachers (Hart, 2006).

Furthermore, educators must assess whether language and culture are validated in New Mexican schools. With a majority of its students being of Hispanic and Native American descent, what is being done to address cultural and language needs? “If students are isolated from the curricular mainstream for many years, they are likely to lose ground to those in the instructional mainstream” (Collier & Thomas, 2004).

“The need for additional supports is particularly true for instruction aimed at higher-level content and comprehension of academic texts” (Goldenberg, 2013, p. 6). It is imperative that teachers receive training on RtI in a post-secondary institution or professional development provided by their school district. Many of the same strategies utilized in Tier II of the RtI are those recommended for ELL students such as sheltered instruction, which contributes to the development of academics and skills (Goldenberg, 2013). Recent research recommends utilizing continual RtI progress monitoring, interventions, and assessments for ELL students (Gerston, Baker, Shanahar, Linan-Thompson, Collins & Scarella, 2007). The supports and modifications for ELLs reflects Tier II strategies such as: using pictures, demonstrations, and real life objects, providing hands-on, interactive activities and providing differentiated instruction (Goldenberg, 2013). The earlier the interventions are provided, the more successful they will be for struggling or at-risk students. “When intervention occurs before third grade, most students can acquire adequate literacy skills” (Sun et al., 2010, p. 1).

As mentioned earlier, sheltered instructional strategies are similar to Tier II of the RtI process as are strategies recommended for dual language programs. Studies related to dual

language programs have shown that the programs “promote achievement in the primary language” (Goldenberg, 2013, pp. 9-10). Dual language enrichment models in many states like Texas, New York, California, Washington, Illinois, Washington, D.C., and in New Mexico are the curricular mainstream taught through two languages (Collier & Thomas, 2004). Collier and Thomas (2004) found that students in dual language programs made more than one year’s progress every year, in both languages unlike remedial programs that focused on achievement one small step at a time (p. 2). Dual language programs have increased student achievement and are addressing the language and cultural needs of students across the U.S. including students in New Mexican public school districts.

Current research suggests that educators should “use children’s native language where possible, apply specific strategies for building English language skills, and build bridges with families to support children’s learning” (Goldenberg, Hicks, & Lit, 2013, p. 29). In addition, researchers caution that the “language of intervention should correspond to the language of classroom instruction” (Sun et al., 2010, p. 2).

Paradigm Shift

RtI therefore is a “paradigm shift” that has implications for professional development and “pre-service” teacher programs (Richards, Pavri, Golez, Canges, & Murphy, 2007, p. 59). Yet there are unanswered “questions as to how best prepare all teacher candidates with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to implement the RtI model” (p. 60). Institutions of higher education must restructure teacher education programs to include the RtI process. Pre-service teachers are stepping into schools without the proper training to design interventions and differentiate instruction for students who are struggling to sustain the rigors of the educational system. “New teachers need to receive the expertise from the

institutions charged with training them” (Rickenbrode & Walsh, 2013, p. 35). The most important factor in implementing RtI is “sustained implementation” (Zelenka, 2010, ¶1). It is imperative to note that teachers were able to address the needs of at-risk students; however their perceptions of their roles and responsibilities influenced their delivery of Tier II interventions (2010, ¶3). “Teacher development and evaluation must be a vehicle to achieve the mission of public schooling” (Phillips & Weingarten, 2013, p. 36). The effectiveness of RtI implementation relied on consistent and quality teaching at each of the tiers. In addition, general education teachers must progress monitor all students continuously, either weekly or every two weeks, to determine if interventions are effective and to tweak or re-direct the process at each tier of the RtI process (Brown-Chidsey & Steege, 2005; Lose, 2007; NMPED 2009; Wedl, 2005).

“The decision has been made by Congress and educators alike, that instead of determining first that the problem must lie with the child, the evaluator should assume that the problem is with the instruction. Consequently, recognition of the principles of the three-tier system has been developed” (NMPED, 2009, p. 60).

Gaps in the Literature

Response to Intervention is a fairly new intervention process and therefore, the research and studies on the process are limited. In addition, teacher efficacy research is based almost entirely on Bandura’s (1977) work on self-efficacy, which has roots in the psychological and sociological arenas and has been adapted to correlate with teacher efficacy. Furthermore, there is insufficient research in the “common practices or recommendations for practice with the more than 5 million” English Language Learners

throughout the nation “many of whom come from families in poverty and attend lower-resourced schools” (Goldenberg, 2013, p. 4).

Research on Hispanic and Native American students living in rural areas in the United States, the Southwest, and in New Mexico was limited. Empirical research studies on Native American students were extremely limited, especially research on students from the Rio Grande Pueblos or Northern New Mexico. Moreover, it was difficult to obtain information on the parents in the research site. Neither the school district nor the New Mexico Public Education Department currently maintains records on the educational attainment of parents or their socio-economic status.

How the Review of Literature Informs This Study

This Literature Review helped me target major themes in my qualitative study and utilize those themes to guide me in the formulation of the interview questions. The literature review helped me focus my questions and target major themes in my qualitative study. Instead of utilizing the four-page New Mexico Public Education Department self-assessment (NMPED, 2009) for schools, I was able to focus on the essential questions for my interviews of the participants. I asked for spontaneous answers from the certified regular education teachers and administrators I interviewed. I did not intend for educators to research the questions beforehand or ask others for ideas or answers to the interview questions or the vignettes. It was crucial to interview all teachers within a short period to obtain a current snapshot of what was going on in the school and the technical ability of each teacher in the RtI process.

Summary

Collaboration, professional development, and teacher efficacy are key elements in the success of the RtI model and the ultimate goal of student achievement. “Future research should explore the ways in which various forms of professional development affect teacher concerns” and or “efficacy” (LaRocco & Murdica, 2009, p. 23). Tier II interventions are most effective when the SAT works in a collaborative manner where everyone plays an integral role in the process and consequently in the success of a student. The SAT plays a vital role in the RtI framework and the foundation of the Tier II process. “The SAT’s role is to be a support and resource to the teacher – not to replace or relieve the teacher of his or her responsibility for educating the student” (NMPED, 2009, p. 44). Therefore, the members of the SAT must be well-trained in the formulation of interventions and Tier II process. “Professional development in implementing and sustaining multitier prevention models” is the key to success of RtI (Kratowill, Volpiansky, Clements, & Ball, 2007, p. 618). Given that the primary responsibility for formulating and executing Tier II interventions relies on general education teachers, teacher efficacy is of primary importance in executing the RtI model. Implementing and promoting professional development of pre-service teachers and regular education teachers is paramount in the success of the RtI model.

When executed properly, RtI is a comprehensive process of possibly reducing the number of students identified for special education and keeping students academically engaged in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE); a primary objective of IDEA. Properly in terms of this study means with sufficient resources, professional development, sustained implementation, and self-examination. RtI is a powerful intervention model for teachers in regular education in an inclusion setting. The model allows teachers to utilize specific

interventions in the regular education classroom setting. The framework provides students with effective classroom instruction first and allows “low-performing students” to receive “increasingly intensive, individualized interventions” (Fuchs, Compton, Fuchs, Bryant, & Davis, 2008, p. 415). Educators may view educational initiatives like RtI as temporary and fleeting. Unfortunately, some teachers may see RtI as a passing educational fad and an unfunded State of New Mexico mandate. “For the teaching profession to thrive, its members must be deeply familiar with the body of research-based knowledge about what will work to better educate children” (Rickenbrode & Walsh, 2013, p. 35).

No single model provides a perfect solution to addressing the needs of low-performing students or students with learning disabilities. The research has revealed, however, that RtI has addressed many of the flaws of the discrepancy model. The RtI model does require collaboration to be successful. The program has also placed the onus on regular education to develop and implement individualized interventions, but this is not to say that there can be no collaboration between regular and special education.

Response to Intervention is not the answer to all of the problems facing students that are struggling or at-risk. RtI is also not a “canned” program and no one intervention will address the needs of all students. Factors such as SES, English language acquisition, and resources in rural schools must be taken into consideration when administering interventions. Research has shown, however, that RtI, when administered efficaciously, has served to address the needs of struggling and at-risk students. There is no “silver bullet” in education, but there are “silver tools” like RtI (Wedl, 2005, p. 19). Nonetheless, Tier II interventions can be successful and could substantially reduce the numbers of students with disabilities being served in segregated settings. Furthermore, RtI could prevent students from entering special

education when teachers are efficacious in the process, work collaboratively, and receive ongoing professional development.

Chapter III

Research Design

Summary of Study

This study focuses on teacher efficacy within the Response to Intervention Framework in a rural public school district in New Mexico. In terms of this qualitative research study, efficacy referred to the effectiveness of the Tier II and SAT process in identifying students for special education. The research design is directed towards a qualitative study of Tier II of the Response to Intervention (RtI) process, the phase before students are qualified for Tier III or special education.

The primary data collection method of this qualitative case study entailed interviewing a sampling of the certified regular education teachers categorized in terms of novice, intermediate and veteran teachers, the current principal and former principal of the La Loma Elementary School and the Special Education Director of the North Mountain School District. In addition, the study involved performing an analysis of public district data and an analysis of the interviews, vignettes, SAT meetings, and observational data of the general school atmosphere. The study also focused on the teachers' reflective process while making the decision about how to design interventions and when or if to begin the SAT process, professional development, and the culture of the school district.

Mode of Inquiry: Qualitative

Bodgen and Biklen (1998) described qualitative research as a funnel. One begins a research topic with a broad perspective of a particular phenomenon and then continually narrows the focus of the subject being studied. As an educator working in a small, rural, economically-depressed area, I have often asked questions about why the schools in my

district were not proficient in terms of NCLB standards or New Mexico State grading (Appendix C). Is it because our small town does not have the human or economic resources to assist our students? Do our teachers lack the proper teacher training or professional development? Or are our students ill prepared to begin school? Does our school culture preclude us from the progression necessary for our students' to achieve academic success? These questions weighed heavily on my mind and led me to research these topics.

I was eager to learn more about school readiness and found at least 20 indicators that affect school readiness, a rather broad topic or the beginning of my funnel. As I traced the indicators backed to my own school district I identified approximately ten indicators that directly affected school readiness and student achievement like physical well-being of a student, social development, parental involvement, self-expression, cognitive development, and inquisitiveness, but four factors; namely poverty, lack of resources in a rural community, language development, and teacher efficacy resonated within me and inspired this study. Then a state-wide special education audit of New Mexico schools occurred and the spotlight on my district and the funnel narrowed once again to the research question presented in this study.

Utilizing a qualitative approach allowed me to view educators from a different perspective and to gain insight into their daily lives. I was able to carry on frank conversations with teachers and administrators who have the best intentions, but may be struggling or frustrated with real life, tangible educational issues. While interviewing each participant face to face, each nuance of their gestures or inflection in their voice became relevant to this study. "The qualitative research approach demands that the world be examined with the assumption that nothing is trivial, that everything has the potential of

being a clue that might unlock a more comprehensive undertaking of what is being studied” (Bogden & Biklen, 1998, p. 6). The student achievement gap is certainly not trivial and the overabundance of SAT referral packets in the North Mountain District merited a qualitative study.

Research Philosophy/Paradigm

Constructivism, particularly Social Constructivism first proposed by Vygotsky (1962), takes Constructivism as defined by Piaget (1953) one step further to include collaboration and the environment of social learning. Piaget concentrated on the individual, while Vygotsky took a more holistic approach identifying the importance of a social interactive environment (Powell & Kalina, 2009). Vygotsky (1962) explored themes such as cognitive dialogue, the zone of proximal development, social interaction, and culture and inner speech to push Piaget’s theories further. Teaching is a social activity that occurs by interacting and collaborating. Collaboration is key to teacher efficacy. Thus, identifying and defining teacher efficacy must include the philosophy of social constructivism.

Utilizing a Social Constructivist philosophy to guide this study allowed me to broaden my knowledge base to become more informed about the district in which I serve and develop more insightful meaning of the RtI process. My research goal led me to rely on, to the greatest extent possible, the participants’ knowledge and views of the RtI process, and their role in that process (Cresswell, 2007, p.20).

Research Methodology

Case study. This study represented a case study as defined by Cresswell (2007). This study also involved one issue, teacher efficacy in the RtI process, viewed through the eyes of certified regular education teachers and three administrators, within one school or “bounded

system” (Cresswell, 2007, p. 73). I developed “an in-depth description and analysis of a single case” or one elementary school and provided “an in-depth understanding” of that case (Cresswell, 2007, p. 78). As the study is bounded in nature, with a unit study of one school, it is a case study.

Research Methods

Design. I utilized three methods of data collection in this study: (1) Existing Data (2) Interviews (Appendices K, L, M, N) and (3) Informal Observations. I obtained demographic information regarding the district, school, students, parents, and teachers from the NMPED and the district Student Teacher Accountability Reporting System (STARS) Coordinator. In addition, I obtained historical and demographic information regarding the community and its residents from the U.S. Census Bureau and the New Mexico Department of Health.

Individual interviews were conducted with regular education teachers and three administrators: the former school principal, the current school principal and the Special Education Director. I contacted the current and former principals in person to explain my study. The Special Education Director was contacted via email at the behest of her secretary as she was not available on the two occasions that I visited her office.

During my initial meeting with the current principal, she gave me approval to speak to the staff at LLES during an early-dismissal staff meeting. She also asked that I send her an email with the information concerning my study so that she could distribute it to her staff before the staff meeting. I attached my resumé and District Permission to Conduct Research form (Appendix O) to the email sent to the staff by the principal. I also distributed the Recruitment Flyer (Appendix P) to teachers at the staff meeting. Four teachers gave me their contact information at the staff meeting. The other teachers who volunteered to be

interviewed contacted me via email or by telephone. At the behest of the teachers, I scheduled the interviews at the school. Interviews were conducted after school in each teacher's classroom. I interviewed one teacher in my classroom on a district holiday and another asked me to meet her on a Saturday.

Over the course of the study, I interviewed each participant once. I provided a consent form for the interviewees (Appendix Q). The interviews were audio recorded with a digital voice recorder. I took steps to protect the participants from risk by conducting interviews in empty classrooms. I erased digital audio recordings of the interviews from my personal digital recorder and shredded notes immediately after transcribing the interviews and downloading the information into my encrypted folder on my personal password-protected computer. I used qualitative data analysis as well as a summary (Creswell, 2007). The data collection period was May - June 2013.

I contacted the school principal for a time and date of a Student Assistance Team (SAT) meeting that I might observe. She suggested I speak to the school counselor who was in charge of scheduling the SAT meetings. The counselor informed me of the time and dates of the two SAT meetings I was invited to attend in May of 2013. The SATs were conducted in the school counselor's private office. No students were present in the SAT meetings I observed. I provided a consent form for all of the SAT members. I also took field notes before, during, and after the meeting. I shredded the notes after I had transferred them to the encrypted folder on my personal password-protected computer.

All three administrators asked that I interview them in June after the school year had ended and after the mandatory professional development sessions that occurred the first week of June. I interviewed each one in the same week in their respective offices. I took field notes

and recorded the interviews on my digital recorder. I provided each administrator with a consent form which each signed. Once the interviews were transcribed, I erased them from my digital recorder and transferred all information to the encrypted folder on my personal password-protected computer.

Instrumentation. The instrumentation for the case study relied heavily on in-depth, face-to-face interviews including questions and vignettes with certified regular education staff members and administrators. Vignettes were added to the interviews to ascertain an understanding of the individual teachers' knowledge of the RtI and SAT process. Reacting to each vignette gave teachers an opportunity to draw from their own practices and experiences. The interviews included open-ended questions (Appendices K, L, M, N). I recorded field notes on my observation of the general atmosphere of the school. I was systematic in recording the data by noting the date, time and place of each interview and creating a case record for each interviewee and each question (Bassey, 1999, p. 4). I kept a daily journal with the raw data from each interview and then my observations before, during, and after each interview. For example, what was the atmosphere of the school when I walked in for the interview or did the time of day seem to affect the teacher? These data along with the transcriptions of each interview were recorded.

Context of the Study

Research site. This study was obtained utilizing a sample within North Mountain School District consisting of one high school, one alternative school, one cyber school, one middle school, three elementary schools, and three charter schools. The sample was obtained from one non-charter elementary school serving general education and special education students. The 120th Day Counts for SY2011-2012 indicated that the total student population

of the District was 2,880 students; a loss of 114 students from SY2010-2011. The student population of the Special Education Department (including District charter schools) was 705 (157 gifted) students, 24 percent (5.4 percent are gifted) of the total student population. Teachers number approximately 200 with 17.5 percent or 35 of them in special education and eight counselors. The district utilizes a traditional curriculum based on the New Mexico Standards. For SY2012-2013, the district utilized the mandatory New Mexico Common Core Standards in grades K-3rd grade. The number of regular education, special education, and specials teachers at La Loma Elementary School for SY 2012-2013 is 47.

School C or La Loma Elementary School was the focus of this case study. Both initial school district data and data from the interviews were analyzed. Initial review of district data for School revealed the following information:

La Loma Elementary School. LLES is the largest District non-charter elementary school and according to the former principal was unofficially considered the special education magnet school for at least a decade.

Sampling. Participants for this study included certified regular education teachers in La Loma Elementary School and three administrators. I obtained a list of teachers with their years of experience from the district STARS Data Coordinator. From that list, I ascertained the same percentage of each category of teachers from each of three groups: novice, mid-range, and veteran. Ten of the 37 regular education teachers at LLES or 27 percent are novice teachers with 0 to 5 years of experience (Table 1). A proportionate number of teachers to interview in this category would be three. Of the 37 regular education teachers, 22 teachers or 41 percent are intermediate teachers with six to 14.5 years of experience. A proportionate number of teachers to interview in this category would be six. Of the 37 regular teachers, 13

or 32 percent are veteran teacher with 15 to 35 years of experience. A proportionate number of teachers to interview would be four. The total number of teachers to be interviewed would be at least thirteen. Although specials teachers (physical education, art, library, and computer) were included in the presentation and e-mails to all of the LLES teachers, none of the specials teachers asked to participate as three out of the four teachers that I spoke to believed they could not contribute to the study as they did not participate in the RtI process. I also conducted a brief data analysis of the student population to identify the percentage of students in the district with IEPs and then disaggregated the data to determine which students were learning disabled and which were gifted. Results of the data analysis were submitted to the district's School Board of Education (Mármol, 2011).

The sampling was a purposeful stratified sampling of certified regular education teachers in the largest non-charter public elementary school in the district. A percentage of teachers were chosen from three different categories: novice, intermediate, and veteran. This type of sampling was most useful in my case as I have an understanding of the daily operation of the school and I know the principal and have access to the teachers at the school. The study included 14 certified regular education teachers, three administrators, and three members of a Student Assistance Team (SAT).

The primary characteristic for inclusion in this study was membership at the school site as a certified regular education teacher, the current principal, former principal, and the District Special Education Director. I was invited to two Student Assistance Team (SAT) meetings, but observed one actual meeting for background and procedural knowledge that included two teachers, and a counselor. The student was not involved in this SAT meeting. Although the parent was not at the meeting, the teachers and counselor were able to conduct

a frank conversation about the student's strengths and weaknesses and include parental concerns from previous informal conversations between the parent and the teachers.

Data Collection Methods

I submitted a Permission to Research form with the district Director of Instruction (DI) and received permission from the Director of Instruction and the Superintendent to begin the primary data collection. I also presented the principal of La Loma Elementary School, the former principal, and the Special Education Director with a copy of my District Permission to Research form signed by the Superintendent and the Director of Instruction (Appendix O) and my research prospectus (Appendix R).

I advised the teachers that the face-to-face interviews could be scheduled for their preparatory period, before or after school. All but two teachers preferred interviews in their classrooms after school. Although I had planned to interview all teachers in one week to avoid the possibility of participants talking among themselves and comparing answers to the questions and because of the larger number of participants and time constraints, the interview took place within a three-week period in May 2013. The administrators were interviewed within a one-week time period in June 2013.

I created interview protocol forms (Appendices K, L, M, N) as proposed by Cresswell (2007, p. 136) to keep track of each interview and the interviewee. All the teachers interviewed at La Loma Elementary were asked the same interview questions (Appendix C) and were given the same vignettes. I did not ask additional questions and I did not deviate from the script. All interviews and vignettes were transcribed verbatim and coded. I created a collection matrix to determine patterns and themes of the participants' responses (Tables 2, 3, and 4). In addition, I created a table to keep descriptive notes and reflective notes for each

interviewee (Cresswell, 2007). Observational notes were taken to describe the atmosphere of the school and the tone or inflection of the interviewees' responses and their gestures or facial expressions as they answered each question.

Data Analysis

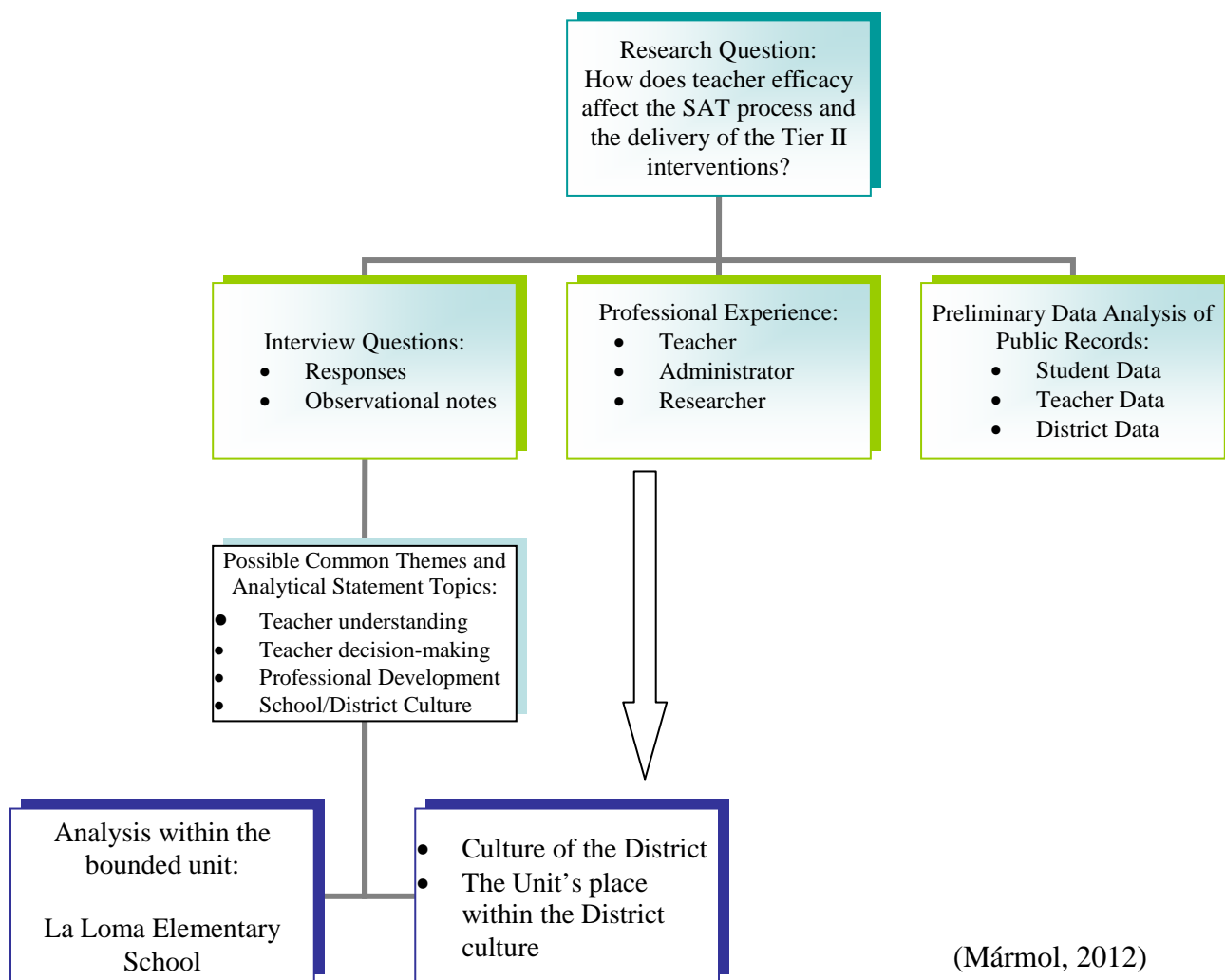
The data for the research findings were obtained from the interviews, information from informal observations of the school atmosphere that I carried out before, during, and after the interviews at the school site. Demographic information and assessment data were obtained from public records of the school and district.

As I began to think about the data analysis, I went back to my original research question: How does teacher efficacy affect the Student Assistance Team (SAT) process and the delivery of the Tier II interventions? I believed that this question was successfully addressed with the interviews I conducted, the preliminary data analysis of the information obtained through public records and the knowledge that I have working in the district as a teacher and an administrator. I expected common themes or analytical statements to emerge from the raw data such as: What is the teacher decision-making process? How does professional development or lack of professional development play a factor in teacher efficacy? What is the teachers' understanding of the RtI process? Does the school culture affect the process or is it a symptom of the greater District culture? From those themes, I began to generate second-level analytical statements (Bassey, 1999) to better define teacher efficacy. I tested these statements against the data generated by the sampling of regular education teachers to analyze the data.

Of the possible 33 regular education certified teachers that were not considered specials teachers, the total number of teachers interviewed were 14: three teachers or 21

percent of the teachers interviewed were novice teachers, six teachers or 43 percent of the teachers interviewed were intermediated teachers and five teachers or 36 percent of the teachers interviewed were veteran teachers. The average years of experience of the novice teachers was four years, the average years of experience of the intermediate teachers was 11 years and the average years of experience of the veteran teachers was 21 years.

Through this process, it was my expectation not only to analyze this bounded unit of study, but to understand how the unit or school operates within the district. It was my intent to better understand teacher efficacy at La Loma Elementary School as a microcosm of the North Mountain School District and to shed some light on the possible resistance to change in the administrative culture that is working within the district. I envisioned the steps for a research design for this case study as follows,



(Mármol, 2012)

Figure 2. Mármol Research Design.

Ethics Review

The University of New Mexico Institutional Review Board approved the study in April of 2013. I gave participants an overview of the research process and informed consent was insured by providing an informed consent form (Appendix Q) that was explained to each participant. Each participant was given time before the interview to read, sign, and initial the consent form. Participants were free to ask me questions concerning the consent form. If they agreed to participate, then they signed the consent form and initialed the form to allow me to

use my digital recorder to record the interview and initialed so that I could take observational notes.

Participation in this study was strictly voluntary and pressure or coercion to participate in the study was completely absent. I made it clear to each potential participant that participation was voluntary and that participation in the study may be withdrawn at any time.

I did not anticipate any physical, psychological, economic, or legal risks through this study. The anticipated risk of social harm was minimal, and existed only in the event of an unanticipated break of the confidentiality standards and data security procedures described in the IRB application. The very minimal risk involved with participation was the very minimal possibility that a potential breach of privacy may occur with the interviews or observations. I took steps to protect this risk by conducting interviews in classrooms after school and erasing digital audio recordings of the interviews from the digital recorder immediately after transcribing and shredding notes immediately after downloading the information onto my encrypted folder on my personal password-protected computer.

The analysis of the themes helped determine if there were commonalities/differences among the novice, intermediate or veteran teachers. The interviews conducted with the teachers were also coded using themes that helped me determine the level of efficacy for each group of teachers regarding the Response to Intervention framework. The open-ended interviews offered a broad overview of the needs of the teachers in each category. All files will be destroyed after completion of the dissertation.

Participants' names and contact information (phone or electronic mail) were necessary for scheduling interviews. Participants' interviews were digitally recorded for data

analysis. Identifiers were linked through pseudonyms because voice recordings from the interviews needed to be linked for data analysis and to complete member checks with participant's interviews.

All links of identifiers and pseudonyms were typed in a document and stored in my encrypted folder on my personal-password-protected computer. The link was stored in a secure location and separated from the main study database. All personal identifying information was removed from all study information. Personal identifying information was not available to anyone other than the research personnel or entities.

Standards of Quality

Validity is defined by Vogt (2007, p. 118) as “the relevance of the design or measure for the question being investigated or the appropriateness of the design or measure for coming to accurate conclusions. A valid research design tells researchers what they want to know about their subject.” Validity concerns the crucial relationships between concept and indicator (Carmine & Zeller, 1979). I intend to validate the data by utilizing a “triangulation of methods” in comparing the teachers’ perspectives, transcribing and coding the interview data, creating coherent matrices, and analyzing the district and community data (Maxwell, 2005, p. 153).

In addition, I was guided by the eight considerations for “trustworthiness” that Bassey (1999, pp. 10-11) set forth in his alternative to reliability and validity, which the researcher stated “successfully illuminates the ethic of respect for truth in case study research.” The considerations include: 1) Prolonged engagement with data sources, 2) Persistent observation of emerging issues, 3) Check raw data with sources, 4) Sufficient triangulation of raw data, 5) Hypothesis tested against analytical statements, 6) Critical friend should challenge

findings, 7) Account of research sufficiently detailed to give reader confidence in the findings, 8) Case record should provide adequate audit trail.

Limitations

Limitations may include “design issues” such as the time of the year this study took place, time of the day teachers were interviewed, and even the time constraints for teacher interviews (Bogden & Biklin, 1998, p. 61). My proposed timeline was to interview the teachers in the spring. Teachers were saturated with assessments, grades, and SAT paperwork during the spring attempting to meet end of the year deadlines. This may have affected the answers to the questions and vignettes that I was proposing.

I think that the teachers may have been more optimistic or enthusiastic closer to the beginning of the school year in early fall than at the end of the year when I interviewed them. I also believed that if I interviewed teachers during the work day and during their preparatory time they would tend to be more fatigued in the afternoon rather than the morning or if taking away the only possible break they had from the students would make them more anxious to finish the interview quickly to get it over with and this would affect the answers to the questions or vignettes that I had posed. The majority did express their fatigue before the interviews began, but it did not dissuade them from completing the interview nor did the teachers attempt to finish their interviews quickly.

Concluding Remarks

“Change is serious because the goal is to improve the life of people. Change is complicated because beliefs, lifestyles, and behavior come into conflict. People who try to change education, be it in a particular classroom or for the whole system, seldom understand how people involved in the changes think” (Bogden & Biklen, 1998, p. 211). Educators

should embrace change by keeping up with the latest trends and Federal or State mandates.

The field of education, as is the case with any other profession, is consistently evolving; new curriculum or programs are developed or recycled and as professionals, educators must self-educate and self-advocate for professional development.

This study was intended to target the concerns of teachers and administrators in one school district and in one school; however, I would like to eventually extend the study to multiple rural Northern New Mexico school districts as I believe that many other school districts are facing similar concerns and challenges in regards to the Response to Intervention process.

Chapter IV

Research Findings

Introduction

This study was guided by the following question: How does teacher efficacy affect the Student Assistance Team (SAT) process and the delivery of the Tier II interventions? Efficacy referred to the effectiveness of the Tier II and SAT process in identifying or not identifying students for special education. A sub-question of this research study was: What are teachers' understanding of the process from beginning interventions and then recommending the student or not recommending the student for placement into Tier III or Special Education? Of the possible 33 regular education teachers at LLES, 14 teachers were interviewed. In addition, three administrators were interviewed. Both the interview questions and the vignettes facilitated in the identification of strengths and weaknesses in teacher efficacy in Tier II of the RtI process.

Summary of Findings

Teachers seemed to be reflective at the end of the school day and the imminent end of the school year. I met teachers in their own classrooms. Teachers were not hesitant to talk or share their ideas; rather they hesitated to respond to certain questions because of lack of professional development, training, schooling, and/or general knowledge.

In reference to the Regular Education Teacher Interview Protocol, question number nine, "What system is in place..." caught nearly all teachers off guard. Several teachers asked me to repeat the question as they needed clarification or they asked "what system." No teacher, or the current or former principal could articulate what system was in place to track RtI interventions. Another important question was number fourteen asking teachers if they

had any additional information they wanted to express concerning the RtI process. It gave teachers a chance to reflect on the RtI process, their role in that process, and their needs.

The vignettes gave teachers an opportunity to reflect cognitively about their role in a student's journey through the three tiers of the RtI and possibly the SAT process. My interviews with the teachers were similar to a debriefing session especially in the vignette sections. In many instances, the teachers tried to associate each one of the vignettes with students they had taught throughout the years. The vignettes helped teachers focus on students with problems or struggling students. One teacher suggested that they should receive professional development using vignettes to help them reflect on best practices. The teacher specifically said that if teachers were trained using vignettes they might be able to reflect on their own teaching practices and be able to use the information in a manner of "If this, then that."

Many of the teachers had been professionally directly affected by the recent death of one of the special education teachers. According to the study participants, the special education teacher was a vital expert whom they turned to for assistance with SAT paperwork, accommodations, and intervention advice. Lower elementary teachers were frustrated at not being able to refer students to the SAT and were told by a special education diagnostician that kindergarten and first grade students should not be referred for Tier III because many of their academic and behavioral issues were developmental. One teacher confessed to experiencing sleepless nights over not being able to retain a student because the Special Education Department was not taking referrals for students in the lower elementary.

A notable phenomenon that occurred was when I turned off my digital recorder teachers were more relaxed and able to vent, to express their opinions, to share their

frustrations, and to complain about the SAT process and RtI, especially in terms of professional development. Professional development in general was deemed to be insufficient and piecemeal. The teachers painted a portrait of the district administrators as having “a fever to begin with professional development” that then dwindled as time went on. Teachers referred to professional development as one or two hour sessions on a Wednesday, an early dismissal afternoon. Only one teacher had received training at the State level. None of the teachers received information or formal training on the RtI process or the three tiers at the university level. Some teachers had learned about the SAT process in college but only superficially. Part of that may be attributed to the fact that many teachers had attended university prior to the RtI process initiation in 2006.

The principals identified human and capital resources as a necessity for administering the RtI process. The former principal said that there were not enough resources to differentiate instruction. Resources were identified by the former principal as administrative assistance, teacher man-power, and funding. The current principal identified funding as the resource necessary to make the system work. The current principal stressed that it was not enough to have a State mandate on RtI but that the State needed to back it up with sufficient funding to facilitate the RtI process.

Themes

Teacher efficacy. For purposes of this study, efficacy was defined as effectiveness of the Tier II and SAT process in identifying students for special education. The foundation of the concept of teacher efficacy derives from the psychological and sociological study of self-efficacy. Bandura (1997, p. 3) defines self-efficacy as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute a course of action required to produce a given attainment." This

definition is significant as this study attempts to ascertain how teachers suspect, determine, and begin formulating intervention for at-risk or struggling students. The interviews revealed the teachers' general understanding of the RtI process and their role in that process. This study also focused on the individual teacher's reflective process while making the decision about how to design interventions and when or if to begin the SAT process. Interview questions three, seven, eight, and twelve and vignettes one through four most closely revealed the first theme of teacher efficacy in the RtI process.

There is a perception of high teacher efficacy as the teachers became more involved and begin to implement more strategies in the RtI process; thus influencing instructional and motivational outcomes. Nunn and Jantz (2009) also examined the impact of RtI involvement and implementation variables associated with teacher efficacy beliefs. The researchers found that a powerful indicator of "how teachers perceive their empowerment to influence positive learning outcomes" is "teacher efficacy." The results of the study indicated, "that there is a substantive link between what the teacher does and what positive outcomes accrue as a function of those actions" (p. 601).

In response to question three, *What do you know about the Response to Intervention Process (RtI)?*, two of the three novice teachers knew the three tiers of the process. One novice teacher frankly stated, "I don't know." The teachers explained that they had not received any information or training on RtI. All intermediate teachers knew and could explain what the Response to Intervention was and that it included three tiers. Some teachers could explain the process in more detail than others. One teacher knew the percentage of the school population that each tier should include.

The veteran teachers knew about RtI but did not give enough details to explain the process accurately. Of the veteran teachers, three of the five knew about the three tiers and the SAT process, one knew about the SAT process but did not mention the three tiers, and the other said that she knew about the process but did not articulate the information.

Comparing all three groups, eleven of fourteen teachers knew the three tiers of the RtI process, but gave varying details on the tiers and the process itself. Some teachers believed that Tier I was where teachers began individualized interventions for struggling students while others questioned whether or not Tier III was special education. Two teachers actually took out their copy of the RtI pyramid and looked over each tier before answering the question.

In response to question four of the principals' interview questions, *What was/is your role in the Student Assistance Team (SAT)?*, both principals stated that their role on the Student Assistance Team was as the school administrator and they took an active role in the process. Although, the former principal did quantify her response by saying that she attempted to attend as many SATs as possible, she further stated that she found it challenging to attend all the meetings as she was the only administrator in an elementary school with a large student population.

In response to question seven, *What is Tier II of the Response to Intervention Process?*, no significant comparisons were noted in any one of the three groups. Answers varied in each of the groups. Among the three groups, nine of the fourteen teachers could not clearly explain the RtI process, gave inaccurate answers or honestly said that they did not know what the process entailed. Three teachers in particular said that the process was "not clear," or that they were "not sure." Many of the teachers referred to canned programs such

as Reading Rockets and an Apple application used for iPad to describe the interventions that are utilized to assist students in Tier II of the RtI process. In fact, one intermediate teacher was disappointed that the school did not have a class set of iPads for all of her students to use. She utilized an application on her own personal iPad as an intervention for some of her students. In addition, the current principal told me that the school purchased a program called Phonics Blitz as a Tier II intervention. In the NMPED RtI Manual, it clearly states that “RtI is not a student placement model, a location...a boxed program...a quick fix for low achievement” (NMPED, 2009, p. 6).

In response to question eight, *Can you remember a time when the RtI worked and did not work for a particular student whom you taught?*, the majority of teachers could remember when the RtI worked for a particular student whom they taught, but most explained the SAT process and not necessarily Response to Intervention or the three tiers.

In response to question twelve, *What are some Tier II strategies (reading, math or behavior) you use in your class?*, the answers varied widely. Of all the Tier II strategies that a teacher may use for reading, math or behavior the novice teachers had two commonalities: small group and one-on-one. Question number twelve elicited the widest variety of responses as compared to the responses for any other of the fourteen questions. All of the novice teachers were able to achieve commonality on two of the strategies, but none of the other teachers in the other two groups were able to achieve consensus.

Vignettes one through four gave the most insight into teacher efficacy. Teachers were read the vignettes and then asked what they would do if they were the teacher of each of the four students.

Vignette one: Maria is 10 years old in the fourth grade. She has lived in the US for four years and has been in the District for three years. Both her parents are from Mexico and do not speak fluent English. Maria has a limited vocabulary and mixes up English and Spanish in her writing. She is not a fluent reader and her reading comprehension is two grades below the average cut score. She is also struggling with multi-syllabic words. Maria has not shown adequate progress as compared to her classmates on standardized or summative assessments.

All three Novice teachers would utilize some form of the Student Assistance Team (SAT). Each one would call a SAT meeting, start a SAT or fill out SAT forms. In addition all three would involve parents in the process. The intermediate teachers all believed that the student in vignette one needed assistance with language. Four of the teachers mentioned that since the elementary school was a dual language school, then the student should have been or should be placed in a dual language classroom. The other two suggested that the student be assessed in Spanish or receive TESOL strategies in the regular education setting. All but one veteran teacher believed that the student in vignette one should be placed in a dual language classroom.

Comparing all three groups, eight of fourteen teachers suggested that the student in vignette one be transferred or be provided services in a dual language classroom. This response is understandable as the elementary school is a dual language school. Four teachers, three of whom were novice teachers, thought they should convene a SAT on the student.

Vignette two: Chris is a 9 year-old boy in the 3rd grade. He is articulate and participates in class discussions. He does not volunteer to read aloud. You have noticed that when he is read to his comprehension is proficient to advanced, yet when

he reads his fluency and comprehension are at a 1st grade level. Although he expresses his ideas orally, his spelling and writing are also at a 1st grade level. He has demonstrated proficient levels in standardized math assessments but not in reading.

Novice teacher answers did not coincide in any manner except for two teachers who suggested student number two be placed in a small group to receive interventions. The other teacher did suggest the student be assessed and should be recommended for a SAT. Two intermediate teachers suggested the student be assessed, while two believed that a SAT should be convened. One said that he should practice English although it was not proposed that student number two was an English Language Learner.

In general, vignette number two elicited the least amount of commonalities among all teachers. Three of the fourteen teachers mentioned that the student might have Dyslexia, should be assessed, and that a SAT should be convened.

Vignette three: Jorge is a five-year old kindergartener. His phonological awareness is not in the average range of a student in kindergarten. He does not participate in the class and hesitates when asked a direct question. He is having difficulties in expressing himself and his speech is unintelligible. He has demonstrated proficient levels on standardized assessments.

Each one of the novice teachers mentioned seeking assistance in one form or another from a speech therapist or speech teacher. One teacher in particular stated that she would call in a speech therapist to conduct an observation. Four of the six intermediate teachers interviewed believed that the student needed to be assessed or receive services from a speech

therapist or speech teacher. Two veteran teachers believed that a SAT should be arranged and one recommended that a speech therapist observe.

Although there was no information that indicated that the student in vignette number three was a Spanish speaker, many teachers assumed that the student needed assistance in learning English. Nine of fourteen teachers believed that the student should be tested for speech or that the speech therapist should observe or assess the student. Nearly 50 percent thought the student should go through a SAT.

Vignette four: Stacy is a 6 year-old girl in the 1st grade. Her reading fluency and comprehension are at a 4th grade level. On her own, she reads fiction chapter books and non-fiction books on a wide-range of subjects. She has an extended vocabulary and her writing is proficient to advanced. Her math skills are at a 1st grade level. She completes her assignments with ease and then becomes engrossed in a book, but it is difficult to get her back on task. In addition, she is having trouble making and sustaining friendships.

Two of the three novice teachers proposed that student number four be recommended for the Enhancement or Gifted Program. Four of the six intermediate teachers interviewed said that the student in vignette four should be assessed or receive services in the Enhancement Program. Four out of five veteran teachers believed that the student in vignette four was a gifted and talented student. One teacher said the student should be tested for enhancement, one teacher said that the student was a “typical” gifted student, and another teacher said that the student was “obviously” gifted.

Ten of fourteen teachers suggested that the student in vignette four be assessed for the Gifted and Talented or Enhancement program. While many teachers believed that the

student's reading skills should be honored, they wanted to assist in making math more interesting and encourage or motivate the student to pay more attention to math.

Three administrators were also interviewed. The Special Education Director was interviewed in June of 2013 after her first school year as the director. When asked if there have been changes in SY2012-2013 in the intake process for SAT referrals, the Special Education Director stated "There wasn't a proper SAT being done before," and with the use of the student database TIENET, regular education teachers have the proper forms. The Director also stated that the Student Assistance Teams were accustomed to convening one meeting and "calling that a SAT." They were also unaccustomed to "using research-based interventions" so the department is now "requiring that (research-based interventions be performed) in order to have testing done." Testing in this case means diagnostic assessments for determining Tier III or special education placement.

The SAT meetings I attended also offered an insight into teacher efficacy and the efficacy of the system in place at LLES. I was initially invited to the second meeting of a Student Assistance Team meeting in May of 2013 for a student whose teacher had started the SAT referral process in September of 2012. I arrived at the counselor's office at the appropriate time and the SAT was essentially over as the parent was present to sign the permission to test documents stating that the student would be assessed for the Enhancement Program for gifted students. The regular education teacher, Enhancement teacher, and counselor were present. No administrator or ancillary special education staff member was present.

The student's teacher was one of the study participants. While interviewing her, prior to the SAT meeting, she mentioned her frustration with the SAT process and the length of

time it took for the student to be possibly identified as Gifted and assessed for the Enhancement Program. The teacher expressed her frustration at the length of the process by saying “We’ve cheated this child.” She did explain that despite the lengthy process, the student had received Tier II interventions in her classroom.

I was invited to a second SAT scheduled for 2:30 p.m. I arrived at 2:20 and waited with the counselor until 2:40 p.m. when the reading interventionist arrived, followed shortly afterwards by the regular education classroom teacher. The counselor called the parent/guardian with no success. Although behavior was an issue, neither the behavior specialist nor a social worker was present. The school principal and the Native American tutor were not invited to the meeting by the counselor. At 2:50 p.m. the counselor called the guardian again and left a message and then decided to begin the meeting.

The counselor began by filling out an initial SAT summary form, from TIENET, for the student. The student was an eight-year-old Native American male who had been retained in first grade by his previous school. He was in a regular education classroom but received tutoring from the Native American tutor especially in Guided Reading. The student’s vision, hearing, and speech were fine. His self-esteem was normal to poor and his behavior was challenging. The student struggles with academic language and his reading and writing were substantially below level. The student’s guardian had turned down his participation in the K-3 Plus Program. The counselor also asked who would be responsible for the Behavior Plan.

The teacher who submitted the referral spoke first about her observations and concerns. The student was being recommended for possible retention. The teacher was concerned that the student had difficulty with comprehension and retention of information. The student demonstrated problems with attention, ability to focus or concentrate and this

affected the student's behavior. The student was also becoming increasingly defiant. In addition, the teacher stated that the student had little number sense and made reversals in his handwriting and this affected his work production. The teacher specified that the student was a tactile and kinesthetic learner and did not do well with choral reading. Tier II multisensory interventions included carpet writing and the use of salt trays, and looking at the analog clock for the time had been implemented by his teacher. The teacher noted that the student had shown minimal progress all year long.

The reading teacher noted that the student was receiving 30 minutes daily of Tier II reading intervention. The December guided reading level was a G and the May guided reading running record indicated that the student's instructional level in reading was F and the Benchmark Assessment was a G. The goal for a first grader at the end of the school year was level I-J. The STAR reading and STAR math assessment was substantially below grade level. The DIBELS May score was well below the fluency level for first grade.

Recommendations from the SAT included diagnostic testing to rule out a learning disability and/or Dyslexia and a Behavior Plan. Both the teacher and reading interventionist recommended that the counselor call the guardian to sign papers for testing, since interventions had already been done. Despite the student receiving Tier II reading interventions with the reading interventionist and the Native American tutor and the teacher's documented interventions, the student had not shown adequate progress. The counselor reminded the other team members that this meeting was an initial meeting and that the Special Education Department required two SAT meetings before paperwork could be submitted for diagnostic testing. The team concluded that the follow-up meeting be scheduled at the beginning of SY13-14.

Teacher retention and acculturation. Teacher acculturation and mentoring is essential to retaining highly qualified teachers and lowering attrition rates, particularly among novice teachers. Educational funding and resources are scarce in many school districts across the country and especially in New Mexico. “Good mentoring takes time, which must be coordinated carefully so that the mentor and novice teacher can observe one another and meet” (Johnson, 2006, p. 8). In addition, “The evidence indicates that schools in low-income communities encounter far more turnover than those in moderate-income or high-income communities” (Johnson, 2006, p.16).

Attrition is a problem throughout the United States. “About one-third of new teachers leave the profession within five years” (Darling-Hammond, 2003, p. 2). Novice teachers who leave a district place a financial drain on a school district. “To reduce high teacher turnover rates that impose heavy costs on schools, we must improve working conditions, insist on effective teacher preparation, and provide support for new teachers” (Darling-Hammond, 2003, p. 1).

Although “steep attrition in the first few years of teaching is a long-standing problem” nation-wide, it is not necessarily a problem at La Loma Elementary School (Darling-Hammond, 2003, p. 2). Seventy four percent of the teachers on staff have only taught at LLES, the range of experience is from one year to 32 years. Another 23 percent of teachers have been at LLES over five years. The current principal explained that the attrition rate is low because of a high level of collaboration at the school.

In response to question seven from the current/former principal interview, *Was/is there mentoring of novice teachers? If so, what was its impact?*, both principals stated, “yes,” there is mentoring of novice teachers. The former principal stated that the program was not as

strong after funding for stipends was eliminated for mentor teachers. The current principal said that there was only one novice, first-year teacher who has a mentor teacher but added that the novice teacher is a strong teacher and does not need as much assistance. One of the intermediate teachers said that she had an informal mentor when she started at the school and has served as a mentor teacher for novice teachers in the building.

In response to question nine of the current/former principal interview, *Did teachers turn to you for help you when they were unsure of how to proceed with a student who was struggling or needed additional assistance? Can you recall how you assisted a particular teacher?*, the principals acknowledged that the teachers turned to colleagues to assist them when a student is struggling or needs additional assistance. The current principal mentioned that during the Professional Learning Community (PLC) collaborative sessions teachers assist each other. The former principal encouraged teachers to observe each other.

Both principals acknowledged at some point during the interview that they administered a large school. The student population over the last five years has been over 600 students. The former principal spent a year of the three-year tenure at La Loma Elementary School without an additional principal or vice-principal. The current principal has a student population of 633 and went through SY2012-2103 without a vice-principal. In addition, the LLES campus is sizeable, encompassing four major buildings. The large student population and campus were common topics among the regular education teachers interviewed. Many turned to their colleagues for assistance and/or mentoring rather than disturbing the principal.

Professional development. Professional Development and on-going training are essential to the success of any educational program. RtI and the SAT process are complicated programs and require a high degree of professional development. “Professional development

in implementing and sustaining multitier prevention models” is the key to success of RtI (Kratochwill et al., 2007, p. 618). Given that the primary responsibility for formulating and executing Tier II interventions relies on general education teachers, teacher efficacy and on-going professional development are imperative in executing the RtI model. Implementing and promoting professional development of pre-service teachers and regular education teachers is paramount in the success of the RtI model. The members of the SAT must be well-trained in the formulation of interventions and Tier II process.

In response to question five, *Since you started working in the district, have you received professional development in RtI? If yes, When did you receive the training and for how long?*, all the responses from Novice teachers were “no.” None of the novice teachers could recall a time when the district provided professional development in RtI. Five of the six intermediate teachers acknowledged receiving sporadic training and one teacher said “no.” The results from the veteran interviews mirrored the intermediate teachers. One of the five veteran teachers said they had not received RtI professional development.

Although five of the fourteen teachers interviewed stated that since they started working for the district they have not received professional development in RtI, another seven teachers stated that they have received very little training in the process, most stating that they received one or two short trainings on their Wednesday, early-dismissal days. One teacher showed me an agenda and PowerPoint handout for a brief RtI overview in a training that lasted approximately 20 minutes in May of 2013. Many teachers expressed the need for professional development, initial training, and follow-up training plus time to understand the process and time to work on scenarios.

Both principals received training at the State level when RtI was first introduced in New Mexico. One of the principals actually trained the staff. In terms of District training, both principals have experienced limited or informal training.

The Special Education Director, as did the teachers and principals, identified the necessity for professional development in the RtI process. The director mentioned upcoming professional development for teachers in SY13-14 that will include TIENET training and additional training requested from the Public Education Department in IEP development, SAT, and the transition process. When asked about district-wide initiatives for professional development she stated that the superintendent was responsible for the district although the aforementioned training opportunities were being scheduled for SY13-14.

Collaboration. Collaboration is key to teacher efficacy. “It is not enough to hire and retain the brightest teachers - they must also believe they can successfully meet the challenges of the task at hand” (Senge, 2000, p. 394). Teachers are more effective when they know to whom they may turn in times of self-doubt or ignorance on a specific topic or process. “By working toward continual improvement of the collaboration process and keeping the lines of interactive communication open, school teams should be able to provide the foundation for slow-learners to raise their level of academic achievement and improve their organization and social skills” (Burgner, 2010, ¶6).

In response to question two, *Have you/do you teach students in special education in your class right now? Do you receive assistance administering their accommodations?*, two of the three novice teachers have taught students with IEPs, but no teacher received assistance with administering student accommodations. Four of the six intermediate teachers interviewed taught special education students in their classes for SY2012-2013. Of the four

teachers, three did not receive assistance or much assistance administering the students' accommodations in their classrooms. One teacher specifically said that her special education students received pull-out assistance. All veteran teachers interviewed taught special education students in the classes in SY 2012-2013. Three of the five teachers received assistance from special education teachers in administering the students' accommodations. Eleven of the fourteen certified regular education teachers interviewed did teach students in special education in SY2012-2013. Not all of those teachers received assistance with interventions or accommodations.

In response to question eight, *Can you remember a time when the RtI worked and did not work for a particular student whom you taught?*, two of three novice teachers stated that RtI works. Four of the six intermediate teachers could recall when the RtI process worked. One intermediate teacher remembered when one of the SAT recommendations was sent back and another recalled a time when RtI worked in groups. Four of the five veteran teachers interviewed could recall a time when the RtI worked for a particular student whom they taught. Two of those teachers mentioned that the SAT process was either a lengthy procedure or that the turnaround was slow.

In response to question thirteen, *To whom do you turn for help when you are unsure of how to proceed with a student who is struggling or needs additional assistance? Can you recall how that person assisted you?*, novice teachers had similar responses to question number thirteen. They each turn to other teachers and two of the three teachers turn to their grade level teams specifically. Five of the six intermediate teachers collaborate with their peers and one teacher collaborates with the special education teacher.

Four of the five veteran teachers interviewed achieved commonality on question thirteen as they did on question number eight. The teachers all mentioned that they turn to other teachers particularly grade level teachers for assistance if they are unsure of how to proceed with a student who is struggling or needs additional assistance. Two of the teachers explained that the grade-level group meets once or twice a week. Of all the teachers interviewed, twelve of the fourteen teachers stated that they collaborate with other teachers particularly their grade-level teams.

Although the Special Education Director did specify that RtI is “generally a general ed responsibility,” she did acknowledge that the Special Education Department supports RtI and helps with interventions. The Director has participated in SAT meetings and is allowing ancillary staff such as the district behavior specialist and social workers to “sit in on the SAT meetings.” The former principal encouraged teachers to observe their peers. The current principal has not worked directly with teachers on the RtI process but rather has directed them towards interventions they may utilize.

Paradigm shift. RtI is a paradigm shift that not only has implications for professional development but for “pre-service” university courses (Richards et al., 2007, p. 59). Are universities instructing pre-service teachers on the RtI and SAT process? There are unanswered “questions as to how best prepare all teacher candidates with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to implement the RTI model” (p. 60). Of the teachers interviewed, 10 out of 14 or 71 percent received their B.A.s, M.A.s or both at New Mexico institutions of higher education. The most important factor in implementing RtI is “sustained implementation” (Zelenka, 2010, ¶1). The majority of the teachers in this study had not

received any instruction on the RtI process in their university studies, even those who graduated after the NM state mandate.

In response to question four, *Did any of your university courses include instruction on the RtI or SAT process?*, two out of the three novice teachers did not receive instruction on the RtI. One novice teacher had received some instruction in RtI in a class on diversity. All but one intermediate teacher did not receive instruction on the RtI or SAT process in one of their university courses. None of the veteran teachers received instruction on the RtI or SAT process in their university courses. Many noted that their university degrees were completed before the inception of RtI or when the RtI process became a State of New Mexico mandate. Only two teachers received instruction on RtI or the SAT process in their university courses. Many admitted that they attended college classes before the inception of RtI and its eventual mandated status in New Mexico.

Question fourteen, *Is there any additional information that you would like to share concerning the RtI process?*, gave teachers an opportunity to reflect on the RtI process and their role in that process. Not quite 50 percent of the teachers said that they needed professional development. Two teachers did not want to share any additional information. Two teachers wanted to learn more terminology, and another wanted to learn more about the special education programs offered at NMSD.

One teacher stated that the district needed to “fix the system,” a second replied that the school was “weak” in the RtI process, and a third said that teachers need more time to implement interventions and added, “time is our biggest enemy.” One teacher recalled a student that went through the SAT process in September of 2012 and did not receive an IEP until May of 2013. The teacher said, “We’ve cheated this child.” Another teacher was

concerned about the amount of changes. The teacher said, “Once you’ve made improvements, give everybody a chance to get used to it before you change it again.”

Poverty. Poverty is a significant factor in the lack of academic success throughout the nation. The research shows that students raised in poverty lag behind those students in the middle class (Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Jensen, 2009; Rebell & Wolff, 2002; Tough, 2008; Williams, 2003). Poverty hinders the development of early childhood growth and learning. “Children from low-income or less-educated families are less likely to have the supports necessary for healthy growth and development (Ackerman & Barnett, 2005, p.11).

One intermediate teacher said that many of her students are in survival mode most of the time. The teacher further stated that it was the job of any teacher at LLES to serve the needs of the students and to assist them in any way.

While conducting observations of LLES, I attended a family reading night. The auditorium was full of at least 150 students and parents. The first thing I noticed was that at least half of the parents attending were mono-lingual Spanish speakers. Their children served as interpreters and explained what the guest speaker was saying and the rules of a reading hunt game that the speaker asked the parents and students to play. I asked one of the teachers if the turnout of parents and students was normal. The teacher explained that because food was being served at the reading night, many families showed up to eat. The teacher further explained that the teachers make sure to provide food or a snack to parents so that they will attend parent nights.

ELL. There are more than five million ELLs in the US. Many of those students are struggling with literacy skills. RtI strategies lend themselves to assisting ELLs. There are three major reasons to use RtI for ELLs: 1) universal screening and progress monitoring

allow for true comparison among peers instead of national norms; 2) RtI requires collaboration among teachers and educational specialists; and, 3) struggling students are identified early before falling too far behind (Rinaldi & Samson, 2008, pp. 8-9). Teachers nationwide and in New Mexico often labor with the problem of recommending an ELL student for a SAT because it is difficult to distinguish between a learning disability and the process of language acquisition. In addition, many teachers are not trained in appropriate interventions and are not qualified or certified to address the problems of struggling ELLs. They also feel inadequate to “address the unique issues” ELL students face (Gándara, Rumberger, Maxwell-Jolly, & Callahan, 2003). In addition, schools across the nation have reported the inadequacy of resources and services to address the exceptional learning needs of ELL students with disabilities (Rinaldi & Samson, 2008; Zehler et al., 2003).

A prominent strategy utilized by teachers at LLES like “the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP)” has “yet to demonstrate more than a very modest effect on student learning” (Goldenberg, 2013, p. 7). In addition, “other popular programs such as Project GLAD (Guided Language Acquisition Design) have never even been properly evaluated” and have not shown actual evidence of increasing student achievement (Goldenberg, 2013, pg. 7).

Two of the teachers mentioned concerns about the RtI process and with designing interventions for students in the dual language program the majority of whom are English Language Learners (ELLs). Other students in the program include Hispanic students with a limited knowledge of Spanish and Caucasian students learning Spanish as a second language. The teachers expressed concern over the lack of resources for English Language Learners and the lack of support that they received if they suspected that a student in the dual language

program needed a SAT convened on their behalf. If a dual language or ELL student is struggling then it is generally suspected that it is the result of lack of opportunity or a lack of academic English and not a specific learning disability. In addition, students in the dual language program who were suspected of being gifted were almost always excluded from the Enhancement Program because of the inability of those students to pass the required entrance assessments due to a lack of opportunity to acquire academic English vocabulary.

During the administration of the vignettes, many of the teachers focused on the English acquisition skills of the four students although only student one was identified as an ELL. Many of the teachers, especially the veteran teachers, established early on that the student in vignette one should be placed in the dual language program and should be assessed in Spanish. Teachers also mentioned a review of the student's educational history which is recommended by researchers as a comprehensive review of the historical and progress-monitoring data (Sun et al., 2010).

Sub Themes

Systematic focus. As cited in the NMPED Instructional Audit Report there was concern regarding teachers providing effective instruction in the categories of RtI and the SAT. Both categories were of great concern and needed to be addressed immediately (NMPED, 2013d). In addition, principals and teachers were not able to accurately define the RtI system in place at the school. Answers to questions concerning the RtI process and Tier II interventions were vague and incomplete. One teacher admitted that the system was limited, while another said that the system was “broken.”

In response to question nine, *What system is in place to regularly verify that Tier II interventions for reading, math or behavior are implemented?*, all three novice teachers

asked me to repeat the question. The word “system” caught them off-guard. They needed me to repeat the question and each listened more intently to the question. All three had different interpretations or definitions of the word “system.” The first novice teacher said that system equaled intervention forms; the second said that system equaled interventions and the Title I program, Reading Rockets, and the third said that system equaled the special education department. The intermediate teachers also asked for clarification or repetition of the question. One intermediate teacher honestly admitted that there was “no system” while another asked, “What system? The SAT process is broken right now.” The teacher further explained, “We don’t see every student that needs extra support.” Another teacher said that the system is “going through transition.” The veteran teachers echoed the teachers in the other two categories. One veteran teacher said that the school did not have “an actual system” while another veteran teacher said that the school didn’t have a “system” or rather had the “beginnings of a system not a full-fledged system.”

Among all three groups: novice, intermediate, and veteran, 50 percent of the teachers asked me to repeat the question or clarify the term “system.” The word “system” seemed to be a sticking point or a confusing concept. Many hesitated or paused before they answered question number nine. This question elicited a variety of responses many of which were programs they utilized in their classes or interventions they performed for a particular student, but did not explicitly explain an actual system. One possibility may have been that since there is little evidence of an actual RtI system in place, the word “system” did not resonate with the teachers or administrators. Another possibility may have been that question was not entirely valid and therefore had a problem of construct validity.

In response to a similar question for the current and former principals, *What system was in place to regularly verify that Tier II interventions for reading, math or behavior were implemented?*, neither principal could accurately identify what system was in place to regularly verify that Tier II interventions were being implemented. One principal referred to the system as teacher observations and walkthroughs that they performed on a regular basis. The other principal spoke about the data obtained from short-cycle assessments in reference to the system in place at LLES to verify that Tier II interventions are being implemented. While both of these techniques are essential to Tier II from an administrator's perspective, neither explains an actual verification system that has been in place in the district for the last five years.

The lack of quantifiable information about an actual system in place at the school however was in sync with the responses from the regular education teachers. While none of them could accurately identify a specific system, one intermediate teacher actually said that the "SAT process is broken right now" while another intermediate teacher said that the system was "going through a transition." One of the ramifications of a broken process that is detrimental to students is what the former intermediate teacher continued on with while reflecting on question number nine of the interview by saying, "We don't see every student that needs extra support."

Time. Additional concerns cited in the NMPED Instructional Audit Report in the section regarding the school's instructional program were differentiated instruction and collaboration time for staff. Both categories received a one which was a concern that needed to be addressed but not immediately or necessarily with great haste (NMPED, 2013d). Not only was time a concern for the NMPED but for teachers at LLES as well. Teachers

expressed the necessity to have time to perform actual interventions or develop lessons that differentiated instruction. Other teachers requested time to learn and utilize the RtI and SAT forms before the formats or expectations changed.

In response to question number 14, one veteran teacher said that “time is our greatest enemy.” Teachers recommended teacher-friendly forms and checklists to help with interventions. Teachers also expressed a need for a shorter time period in Tier II to observe, turn in paperwork, and get students’ assessed for Tier III. For example, one veteran teacher expressed frustration when a student spent an entire school year in Tier II waiting for diagnostic testing to enter into Tier III. One teacher was frustrated that lower elementary students cannot be placed in Tier II or assessed for Tier III because shortcomings are a result of developmental stages and not necessarily a disability.

Research Conclusions

The primary source of data for this study were interviews of nearly 50 percent of the certified regular education teachers at La Loma Elementary School, the former principal, the current principal of LLES, and the Special Education Director of the North Mountain School District. I also analyzed district teacher and student data. I also utilized community data to paint a portrait of the parent population.

The teachers were generally open to answering all questions during the interview and became more open and honest when the digital recorder was turned off. The administrators were generally more guarded before, during, and after the interviews.

Teachers hesitated in their responses when answering questions because they lacked the professional development or direct knowledge of the information such as in question 3, *What do you know about the Response to Intervention Process (RtI)?* and question 7, *What is*

Tier II of the Response to Intervention Process?. Either the teachers did not answer the questions at all by honestly stating “I don’t know” or the teachers strayed from the correct responses to the questions.

The responses to the questions on professional development were the one area in which all three levels of teachers and the administrators coincided. The teachers could not recall taking university courses in which they learned about the RtI process. Only one teacher stated she had a special education course that briefly addressed the RtI. Neither the administrators nor the teachers could sufficiently answer with consistency or accuracy when or if the district had provided professional development on the RtI process.

This study was initiated to better understand teacher efficacy in developing and sustaining RtI interventions and the teachers’ reflections on their practice. The Research Question stated, How does teacher efficacy affect the Student Assistance Team (SAT) process and the delivery of the Tier II interventions? The data reveals, for this study, that teacher efficacy substantially affects the SAT process and the delivery of the Tier II interventions. There is no evidence of university training or professional development on RtI once the teachers have been in the district. Teachers do not consider themselves proficient in the RtI process and could not consistently answer questions correctly or provide the correct information when presented with vignettes of students who required Tier II RtI interventions. The SAT team process and RtI system at LLES is broken and affects the disproportionate amount of SAT referrals to the district Special Education Department.

Chapter V

Discussion and Next Steps

Purpose of the Study

“The qualitative research approach demands that the world be examined with the assumption that nothing is trivial, that everything has the potential of being a clue that might unlock a more comprehensive undertaking of what is being studied” (Bogden & Biklen, 1998, p. 6). The student achievement gap, especially among minority, low SES students nationwide, in the state of New Mexico, and at LLES, is far from trivial. This study began with a New Mexico Public Education Department audit that red-flagged the number of students in special education and the acknowledgement by the Special Education staff that there was a far greater number of SAT referral packets submitted to the department in the North Mountain School District.

This qualitative research case study was guided by my need, as the Special Education Director at the time, to identify the reasons for the larger-than-average number of students in special education in the North Mountain School District and the reason why teachers were possibly over-referring students for special education. A previous research assignment on school transition and a pilot study of the efficacy issue in two elementary schools in the district led me to the research question: How does teacher efficacy affect the Student Assistance Team (SAT) process and the delivery of the Tier II interventions? This study underscored teacher efficacy in terms of teacher preparation, training, delivery of interventions, and on-going professional development. Self-efficacy was identified as the teachers’ own reflection on the RtI process and how they believed they were prepared to create and carry out those interventions. The study also defined from the teachers’

perspectives Tier II of the RtI process and the current system to verify that interventions for reading, math or behavior were being implemented. The study focused on certified regular education teachers separated into three categories: novice (0 - 5 years of experience), intermediate (6 - 14.5 years of experience), and veteran teachers (15 - 35 years of experience).

In order to better understand teacher efficacy in developing and sustaining RtI interventions and self-efficacy in teachers' reflections on their practice, the primary source of data for this study was interviews with a sample of the certified regular education teachers, the former principal, the current principal of the La Loma Elementary School, and the Special Education Director of the North Mountain School District. Nearly fifty percent of the current certified regular education teachers were interviewed. The study involved performing an analysis of district data in addition to an analysis of the interview data.

The utilization of interview questions along with vignettes facilitated the understanding of the teacher decision-making process from Tier I, to Tier II interventions, the SAT process, and then eventually recommending a student or not recommending a student for Tier III or special education. A sub-question of this research study was: What are the teachers' understandings of the process from initial interventions to recommending or not placement into Tier III? The study showed the comprehension of the steps a teacher should take from suspecting that a student has a learning disability that is impeding academic growth or a student is believed to be gifted and will require enhancement services. The findings reveal a fragmented or even "broken" system, as identified by the majority of the study participants, currently in place at LLES to verify, implement, and track RtI interventions.

The theoretical framework for this study stemmed from social cognitive theory as a way to gain insight into teacher efficacy. Social cognitive theory and the study of teacher efficacy are based on Bandura's (1977) research. Social cognitive theory was essential to the study of educational issues and the school environment. The research findings brought out the themes of teacher efficacy, collaboration, teacher retention and acculturation, professional development, poverty, ELL students, and a paradigm shift with sub themes of a systematic focus and time. Qualitative research was appropriate in this particular study as it allowed me to gain insight into the practices and beliefs of regular education certified teachers in the school setting (Cresswell, 2007). The research design was crafted as a qualitative study of Tier II of the RtI process, the phase before students are qualified for Tier III or special education.

Meaning of Findings in a Larger Educational Context

National. "RtI is not a student placement model, a location, a classroom, a class/course, a computer program/software, a teacher, a label, a boxed program, merely a special education initiative, or a quick fix for low achievement" (NMPED, 2009, p. 6).

Discrepancy models used prior to the induction of the Response to Intervention model did not differentiate between a child who may have a specific learning disability and one who may have an academic difficulty because of inefficient instruction, poverty, language, or developmental delays (Barbero, 2006). In essence, the models discriminated against minority, low-SES, and ELL students who were identified for special education without accounting for academic opportunity or language barriers. Discrepancy models did not predict how differentiated instruction would benefit students. Furthermore, students had to fail for a considerable amount of time – sometimes years – before they were evaluated for

special education. However if all interventions have failed and RtI has been executed effectively, Gresham (2002, p. 499) stated, “children who fail to respond to empirically validated treatments implemented with integrity might be identified as LD (learning disabled).”

Response to Intervention is “an instructional improvement system that affects both general and regular education” (Barbero, 2006, p. 5). RtI is a pyramid of interventions configured as a three-tier approach to identify students before they are evaluated for special education. RtI was developed to set “the groundwork for bringing a new focus on enhancing the performance of all students including those with disabilities through a common system in which classroom teachers, special education teachers, and other specialists can work together” (Wedl, 2005, pp.1-2). The RtI model was designed to provide “high-quality instruction using evidence-based best practices and progress monitoring that is expected to reveal students’ resistance to this high quality instruction, and an instructional scaffold that becomes more responsive to student needs as assessments indicate” (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006a, p. 93). The RtI advantage “is that children do not have to ‘wait to fail’ before they receive help” (Lohman, 2007, ¶2).

The RtI model became the answer to the drawn-out process of identifying students for special education or providing collaboration between special education and regular education educators. In addition, RtI interventions were created to address the diverse needs of students from a variety of economic backgrounds, ethnicities, and urban and rural schools. The interventions were mandated by IDEIA (2004) so as to be research-based. “Much the same as the push for inclusion necessitated that the role of special and general educators change to better meet the needs of students with disabilities in inclusive settings, the increase in the use

of RtI models will likely necessitate a change in how both special and general educators respond to the needs of struggling students before they are considered for special education services” (Bryant & Barrera, 2009, ¶1).

The RtI was implemented as the method to progress monitor and assess, if necessary, for Tier III or special education. However, the success of RtI as with any other program, hinges on professional development of teachers, sustained training, and collaboration. This study has revealed that teachers at LLES do collaborate but have not received the professional development or sustained training to achieve efficacy in RtI especially in Tier II. The teachers have yet to achieve efficacy and do not have a fully functioning system to monitor interventions or student progress/delay. Teacher Efficacy and professional development are not the only issues for having a successful RtI system in place at a school district, it is also a matter of social justice. All children have a right to a Free and Appropriate Public Education that includes a proper RtI system in place. As long as RtI does not perform its function in every school district, the most vulnerable student population is not receiving justice.

New Mexico. There are 89 public school districts in New Mexico with a total student population of 334,419. Students with Individual Education Plans number 13.7 percent and 15.4 percent of students participate in limited-English proficient programs. The most staggering statistics involve the high poverty rates that New Mexican students face; 87.4 percent of the schools in NM are Title I schools and 65.6 percent of students statewide are eligible for free and reduced lunch (NCES, 20). New Mexico ranked 50th in 2013 by Kids Count down from 49th in 2012 on a series of 16 key indicators that include education, poverty, health, and community (2013). In terms of four key indicators for education, New

Mexico ranks 49th for the second year. In teacher salaries, New Mexico ranks 47th with an average salary of \$33,785 as compared to the U.S. average of \$42,929 (NMPED, 2000-01).

The NMPED has mandated RtI in public schools but has not funded the program so that it will successfully realize its promise of decreasing the student achievement gap. In New Mexico, among other states, the SAT develops an Academic Intervention Plan (AIP) or a Behavioral Improvement Plan (BIP). The plans are corrective action measurements that assist a “low-performing” or “struggling” student advance or serve as a guide for an IEP team when developing special education goals. “Collegial communication within a comprehensive approach” and “shared-accountability” are required to ensure that students’ needs are identified quickly and that strategies are formulated to meet those needs (Lose, 2007, p. 277). Student Assistance Teams must also guarantee the integrity of interventions proposed during Tier II (Duron, Mesmer, Grierson, & Witt, 2009, p. 34). A team and each member on the team must decide on those interventions and must have input. The plan should be approved when there is collaboration and feedback. Feedback should include assessment data, strategies, and research-based interventions that demonstrate progression and/or proficiency, which are essential to the Tier II process (NMPED, 2013d).

School districts with limited resources in New Mexico often fall short while implementing an efficient RtI program. LA Rocco and Murcia (2009) studied the implementation side of RtI. The researchers’ findings accentuated the deficiencies in teacher training and administrative support for teachers’ feelings of frustration and anxiety as they attempted to implement the interventions. Teachers in LA Rocco and Murcia’s (2009) study were anxious and frustrated with the RtI model. In order for the model to be successful, they

stated, “teachers must embrace RtI, examine whether they are using research-based practices, and modify their teaching” (LA Rocco & Murcia, 2009, p. 22).

Moreover, administrative support is critical. Administrators in the NMSD should be well-trained in the RtI process and as shown in the findings some administrators have yet to achieve complete efficacy in the process. In this study, both of the principals interviewed maintained that LLES was in need of resources for the successful implementation of the RtI. The current principal stated that NMPED needs to fund the RtI program and must provide professional development for teachers.

NMSD and LLES. La Loma is the largest elementary school in the North Mountain School District with a student population of 633. The school is 100 percent Title I and 100 percent of the students receive free and reduced lunch. The school also has the highest percentage of ELL students in the District. The school has a dual language program that has shown student gain in English proficiency. In addition, the K-3 Plus program helped students show academic progress if the student had participated for two successive years. In a recent audit from the New Mexico Public Education Department, LLES received zero (indicates no concern) points in Academic Expectations and Classroom Environment. The audit also revealed a score of one (concern without haste) point in Differentiated Instruction and two (great concern to be addressed immediately) points on Response to Intervention and Student Assistance Team.

In this study, I found commonalities among teachers in each of the three groups: novice, intermediate and veteran, and among all certified regular education teachers. I was interested in understanding how and when novice teachers were being trained in the RtI process. Only a small percentage of teachers could remember being trained in RtI by the

school district and only one teacher had received training in RtI by the undergraduate university she attended. Most teachers could recall a possible training session conducted during a Wednesday, early-dismissal day but generally referred to district professional development as superficial. One teacher stated that the superintendent decided in which area the teachers would receive training and RtI had not been a professional development priority.

What would a novice teacher do if she suspected a student had a learning disability versus requiring a Tier II RtI intervention? Would that teacher be able to generate a plan for intervention? Generally, teachers could not explain the RtI process although they did know that there were three tiers. The teachers did not consistently identify interventions and could not explain a system for verifying that those interventions were being implemented. This relates to professional development. If pre-service teachers are not taking classes that assist them in identifying and developing interventions, and if the school district is not providing professional development in RtI, then it is difficult for teachers to be efficacious in the process.

Who would a teacher ask for assistance? Most teachers stated that they turn to other teachers, especially grade-level teachers when they were unsure of a process or procedure. Principals also encourage teachers to seek assistance from their fellow teachers. As a new teacher to the district, I was not offered any training sessions in RtI nor was I assigned a mentor. In some of the schools, a binder with relevant information is given to new teachers, but to my knowledge there is no manual other than the NMPED RtI Manual that gives teachers in the district information about the Response to Intervention (RtI) process. Only one teacher said that she utilized the *NMPED RtI Manual*. The current principal mentioned that she helped work on the first NMPED training manual, but also admitted that teachers did

not come to her for assistance with the RtI process. The teachers also noted that with the large student population and only one administrator in the school, they did not think of “bothering the principal.”

I also expected commonalities among the three administrators who were interviewed. The principals spoke about the RtI being an un-funded mandate imposed on the school districts by the NMPED. Both principals spoke about the need for more resources. The former principal was a bit more guarded in the responses to the interview questions and thought cautiously before responding. The current principal and current Special Education Director were more frank about their beliefs in the deficiencies in the RtI and SAT process and the need for more professional development by the state and by the district.

Typical student/parent/teacher at LLES. Based on the findings of this study and an analysis of the existing data, a portrait of the typical student, parent, and teacher emerged. The typical student at LLES would be a male, Hispanic, low-SES, inter-lingual English and Spanish student with an Individual Education Plan who is not proficient in math or reading according to standardized test scores.

The typical parent at LLES would be Hispanic, head a single-parent household, and rely on parents or extended family members to assist in raising their child, have a high school diploma or the equivalency, inter-lingual in Spanish and English and work in the service-industry.

The typical teacher at LLES is from the North Mountain community, female, Hispanic, a graduate of a New Mexico university, Level II teacher, with a BA degree, and has taught at least five years at LLES. The average teacher at LLES has yet to achieve efficacy in Tier II of the Response to Intervention process.

Comparison and Contribution of Findings to Current Research

I sit upon a unique perch in regards to this study. In many ways I am an insider who has had exclusive access to policy-making decisions in the district, and like many of the teachers participating in this study, I am from the community. Yet, I spent over 20 years living outside of New Mexico. That makes me more of an outsider from the perspective of the community and an outsider in the lives of many of the students who are directly affected by the administrative policy decisions I assisted in creating. As a teacher and administrator in the district, I have been privy to information about the living conditions of our students, but I have never been on a home visit. Home visits are no longer common practice in the district and a parent liaison is no longer a position at the school. Pre-school teachers conduct home visits, as do some of the social workers in the district, but the average teacher has not observed students at home.

As administrators we may be able to create a profile of the typical student, parent, and teacher based on data, (as I have done above), but unless we take the time to get to know and understand the triad of teachers, parents, and students that is the foundation of any school then we cannot get to the root of the challenges facing our students. Although the majority of the teachers at LLES are from the community, their educational attainment and middle-class status has separated them from the struggles and challenges the typical student at LLES experiences.

I have been a regular education teacher, an administrator and the former Director of Special Education for the district. As a regular education teacher, I struggled with the RtI process for which my educational classes did not train me and my district did not provide professional development for me to become proficient in the process. Like other teachers at

LLES, I had to do research on my own time. I downloaded the RtI manual from the NMPED and studied the requirements necessary to send my paperwork on to a SAT. Moreover, I also experienced the frustration of having my paperwork returned because of insufficient evidence of interventions or insufficient time for those interventions to be effective.

As an administrator, I participated in many SAT meetings. I believed that many of the SAT meetings were not well organized and happened after-the-fact in an effort to justify the decision to retain or withhold credit for a class. Moreover, I observed that a few teachers exhibited efficacy in the RtI process by providing evidence of research-based interventions, the proper documentation, and could recount detailed information concerning the student. The majority of the teachers could not identify research-based interventions, rather, many submitted paperwork showing accommodations made or stated a certain program that the student was attending without evidence or data. For example, an accommodation like preferred seating was used as an intervention or a program like Reading Rockets was stated as an intervention without explaining the reasoning behind recommending the student for a program like Reading Rockets. Many teachers could not identify to the parents the reasoning behind the interventions and why those interventions were not working.

While I was the Director of Special Education, I personally witnessed the inefficiency of the RtI process from a general education and special education perspective. Both regular education teachers and special education staff were frustrated and complained about the arduous RtI process, especially the Tier II interventions. The findings in this study indicate that this frustration was due to an absence of meaningful and sustained training in RtI and the deficiency of professional development in designing interventions to assist struggling or at-risk students. Regular education teachers experienced frustration at not receiving the proper

training either in their post-secondary institutions or professional development once they entered the school district to generate the proper Tier II interventions and the paperwork the process entailed. The Special Education staff was frustrated at having to sort through piles of paperwork that often needed to be returned because regular education teachers did not generate or document the proper Tier II research-based interventions.

Although the importance of professional development was communicated by administrators at the beginning of any new program or project during district Administrative Council meetings, continuous training was not outlined or discussed. It has not been in the district culture or a goal of the district to sustain on-going professional development. Teachers usually received an initial training or sporadic training on an early dismissal or professional development day.

As the study findings indicate, the teachers must rely on other teachers to re-train or assist them. This is often an informal process and not a district directive of a Train the Trainers program. The teacher “trainers” may not necessarily be veteran teachers or department chairs. In the last two school years, the Superintendent has designated a mandatory week of professional development on topics that have not been solicited by the staff and have not included RtI or the SAT process. In addition, the NMPED has not provided professional development in the last three years to the staff as solicited by the Director of Special Education.

Recommendations and Practice Implications for Future Research

Inter-lingual students. The North Mountain School District struggles with the academic and cultural proficiency of its diverse student population, has had a history of insufficient and unsustainable professional development, and has had difficulty in

administering the Response to Intervention process. The district also has a shortage of teachers with Bilingual and TESOL endorsements to teach and assist the sizeable ELL population. Nearly 18 percent of the 633 student population is English language-learners, but this statistic does not include the students who are inter-lingual. The Hispanic population is 84 percent of the total school population. Little research on inter-lingual students has been conducted. In this district, if an estimated half of the Hispanic students are inter-lingual (42%) and half of the Native American population is inter-lingual (4.25%) then a total of 64.25 percent of the students at LLES are English language-learners.

An additional challenge that LLES faces is that 40 percent of the teachers have TESOL endorsements and 28 percent have Bilingual Endorsements. There are not enough properly endorsed teachers to deliver instruction to the ELL and inter-lingual students. Native American students also confront grave challenges, as NMSD does not have a language program in any of the pueblo languages. In addition, the local Native American pueblo language is not written and is only taught at the local Bureau of Indian Education school. At LLES, only four percent of the teachers are Native American and only one of the teachers is from the local pueblo. More research on inter-lingual Spanish/English and Native American Pueblo languages must be conducted.

Parents. Since the State of New Mexico or NMSD does not keep demographic information on parents, a further study could include a survey of parents. Although I did not conduct my own survey of parents, I did obtain direct data on household income or educational attainment, a study of residents conducted by a local health organization in the county provided data that parallels that of parents at LLES.

Additional schools and districts. A pilot study that I conducted at North Mountain District concentrated on all three elementary schools in the district. At LLES, the survey was not properly disseminated and the pilot study did not take into account the one survey from LLES that was returned to me a month after the pilot study was finished. This study was confined to one non-charter public elementary school in the North Mountain School District. While the study focused on certified regular education teachers separated into three categories: novice, intermediate, and veteran teachers, not all teachers were interviewed. For the purposes of this study, a proportional percentage of the teachers was selected as representatives of each of the three categories and were purposefully chosen to be interviewed. In addition, three administrators - the current principal, the former principal, and the district Special Education Director - were interviewed. While the RtI process involves a Student Assistance Team that includes a counselor, parents, and an administrator only certified teachers regular education teachers were interviewed as the teachers serve the primary role in the Tier II stage of the RtI process. Further research should include the other elementary schools in the district and other districts in Northern New Mexico that serve a similar population of students.

Native Americans. Although some statistics on Native American students were incorporated into this study, a more significant addition to a future study should include more information on Native American students and the challenges they face in Northern New Mexico and nationwide. A deeper understanding of indigenous knowledge and Native versus Western education is necessary (Cajete, 2000). A subsequent study could be conducted at BIE schools or with the Native American students who attend public schools.

Charter schools. Charter schools have sprung up in the U.S. and in New Mexico in many incarnations. There are 79 charter schools in New Mexico and three charter schools that are included in the NMSD. Another two charter schools in the community are State charter schools and two charter schools will open in the community within the next two years. A future study should include the demographics and students in charter schools. It would have been noteworthy to explore the student demographics and interview teachers at the two charter elementary schools in the District and the State charter school. For example, charter school demographics would reveal the inverse of the student population with regards to the Hispanic and Caucasian populations. Neither of the district charter elementary schools is a Title I school. They do not provide services for ELL students and the free and reduced lunch count is 30 percentage points lower than LLES. Furthermore, six percent of the students in special education at LLES are D level (the highest level of support) while the other two charter schools serve 3.5 percent and .93 percent of level D students (NMPED, 2012-2013b). While speaking with the director of the school with .93 percent, I was told that they could not accommodate D level students because the school lacked the resources. While I was the Special Education Director, parents often called me to complain that the charter schools were encouraging them to enroll at LLES and other district non-charter schools because the district had more resources. Since charter schools receive public funding, they are not able to refuse to admit students with disabilities, low-SES or ELL students although they are refusing admittance to these students. They are discouraging attendance at their schools by encouraging students to attend the regular public schools.

Rural vs. urban. This study was conducted in a rural community in Northern New Mexico. The majority of the residents do not live within the town limits but rather in the

county proper. Students who attend LLES may live within a three-mile radius of the school. Human and economic resources are limited and many people must travel away from the county to receive health services.

Due to the small sample size, this study is not generalizable to all rural school districts in New Mexico or rural school districts in the United States. Because the school is small and situated in a rural context with limited economic and human resources it is not generalizable to urban districts in New Mexico or the United States. A future study could incorporate larger urban districts in New Mexico or states that have large Hispanic or ELL populations in states like California, Arizona, Texas, New York or Florida.

Conclusion

Response to Intervention has been a New Mexico Public Education Department mandate for nearly seven years, a relatively young program but a model nevertheless that should already be successfully implemented in districts nationwide. RtI is not the silver bullet that will magically reform LLES or schools in New Mexico or the United States. Districts that successfully institute an RtI system with properly trained teachers and administrators who efficaciously develop and implement RtI interventions may possibly reduce the need for students to enter special education. Teachers at LLES are not unlike teachers in other districts around the national and state that struggle with understanding the RtI system and do not receive proper training or professional development. New Mexico universities must also provide training in the proper development of the RtI program. RtI is an unfunded mandate that will require the NMPED to provide the district with more resources to implement the program properly.

Throughout my collection and analysis of the data, I did not find that teachers at LLES appreciated or respected their students any less than other teachers in communities inside or outside of Northern New Mexico. The data revealed that the teachers I interviewed were highly educated and motivated educators. LLES teachers spend many additional hours outside of the work day to develop lessons for their students. Many teachers investigate best practices and conduct educational research on their own time to better understand Federal and State mandates. If they are not efficacious in RtI, (from their perspective) it is not because they do not want to be, it is because of the deficiency in professional development opportunities, training, and resources. Their situation reflects that of the students at their school. Students are not proficient because of the lack of academic opportunities, social capital, and resources.

However, having a successful RtI system in place is not merely a technical or professional development issue; it is a matter of social justice. All children have a right to a Free and Appropriate Public Education that includes a proper RtI system in place. As long as RtI does not perform its function in NMSD or in any other school district, the most vulnerable student population will not receive social justice.

If I were the Superintendent of NMSD I would certainly consider the results of this study as a starting point to reform the RtI system throughout the district. I would begin by investigating what is occurring in the other elementary and secondary schools in the district. I would meet with administrators, principals, and leadership teams at each school. I would institute a mandatory survey of all certified teachers to find out who among the teaching staff has the proper training or professional development to become trainers. If the survey did not result in enough trainers, I would identify key teachers at each school and send them to State

or National RtI training. That group of core teachers would train other teachers and continuously progress monitor the staff to make sure that they were properly developing and delivering research-based interventions. Although RtI is an unfunded mandate, by investing in professional development for a few key teachers, the model of Train the Trainers would pay off in the future. I would also meet with officials of the College of Education where the majority of my teachers have graduated from and express the desire for pre-service teachers to be given an introduction on RtI. In addition, I recommend that they be trained in how to assist at-risk and struggling students by developing interventions or by employing vignettes to help them understand what can be done to assist vulnerable populations of students.

This study has opened the door to further studies on the subject of Response to Intervention. As soon as I concluded the interviews with the certified regular education teachers, I was ready to seek further information from the teachers that I did not interview through a survey or other data collection methods. A future study should seek to survey the teachers who did not volunteer to participate in this study. In addition, future studies should include further information on parents, charter schools, Native American students, inter-lingual students and the challenges they confront, and the possible replication of the study in urban schools.

References

- Ackerman, D.J., & Barnett, W.S. (2005, March). *Prepared for kindergarten: What does “readiness” mean?* National Institute for Early Education Research. Rutgers University. Retrieved March 28, 2011 from <http://www.nieer.org>
- Ashton, P. & Webb, R. (1986). *Making a difference: Teacher’s sense of efficacy and student achievement*. New York, NY: Longman Publishing Group
- Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review*, 84, 191-215. Retrieved July 8, 2012 from <http://psycnet.apa.org/index.cfm?fa=search.displayRecord&uid=1977-25733-001>
- Bandura, A. (1993). Perceived self-efficacy in cognitive development and functioning. *Educational Psychologist*, 28 (2), 117-148.
- Bandura, A. (1994). Self-efficacy. In V. S. Ramachaudran (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of human behavior* (Vol. 4, pp. 71-81). New York: Academic Press. Retrieved July 8, 2012 from <http://www.uky.edu/~eushe2/Bandura/BanEncy.html>
- Barbero, L. (2006). *Response to intervention: BIE’s vision for implementation*. Reading First PowerPoint Presentation.
- Barkan, J. (2011, Winter). Got dough? How billionaires rule our schools. *Dissent Magazine*. Retrieved February 7, 2011 from <http://dissentmagazine.org/article>
- Bassey, M. (1999). Case study research in educational settings. *Doing Qualitative Research in Educational Settings*. Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Benjamin, E. (2011). *Response to intervention: Understanding general education teacher knowledge and implementation*. Educational Policy Studies Dissertations. Department

- of Educational Policy. University of Georgia. Paper 78. Retrieved May 2, 2012 from http://digital archive.guse.edu/eps_diss/y8
- Bills, G., & Vigil, N. (2008). *The Spanish Language of New Mexico and Southern Colorado*. A Linguistic Atlas. Albuquerque, NM: UNM Press.
- Bogden, R., & Biklen, S. (1998). *Qualitative research for education*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Bower, D.F. (2008). *Leadership and the self-organizing school. Systems Thinkers in Action: A Field Guide for Effective Change Leadership in Education*. Leading Systematic School Improvement No. 10. Lanham, MD: Roman & Littlefield Education.
- Brown-Chidsey, R., & Steege, M. (2005). *Response to intervention: Principles and strategies for effective practice*. New York, NY: Guilford Publications.
- Bryant, D.P., & Barrera, M. (2009). Changing roles for educators within the framework of response-to-intervention. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 45(1), 72-79. Retrieved September 26, 2010 from ERIC
- Burgner, D. (2010). *A case study: How middle school administrators, teachers, and special education support staff collaborate to address the academic and social needs of slow-learning students* (Dissertation). Retrieved September 26, 2010 from ProQuest. (NIU No. AAT 3404823).
- Cajete, G. (2000). Indigenous knowledge: The pueblo metaphor of indigenous education. In *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision*, M. Batiste (Ed.), 192-208. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Carmine, E.G., & Zeller, R.A. (1979). *Reliability and validity assessment*. No. 17 in QASS Series. Newbury Park, CA; Sage Publications.

- City-data (2003-2010). [North Mountain] County. Retrieved February 28, 2012 from [http://www.city-data.com/county/\[North Mountain\]_County_NM](http://www.city-data.com/county/[North Mountain]_County_NM)
- Cobos, R. (2003). *A dictionary of New Mexico and southern Colorado Spanish*. Santa Fe, NM: Museum of New Mexico Press.
- Collier, V. & Thomas, W. (2004, Winter). The astounding effectiveness of dual lingual education for all. *NABE Journal of Research and Practice*. 2:1
- Consortium on Reading Excellence (2006). *RtI regional conference: Participant resource guide*. Consortium on Reading Excellence. Berkley, CA: CORE.
- Cresswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Second Edition. Thousand Oakes, CA: Sage Publications.
- Crothers, L.M., Hughes, T.L., & Morine, K.A. (2008). *Theory and cases in school-based consultation: A resource for school psychologists, school counselors, special educators, and other mental health professionals*. New York: Rutledge Taylor & Francis Group.
- Cummins, J. (1984). Basic interpersonal communicative skills and cognitive academic language proficiency. Retrieved May 2, 2013 from <http://iteachilearn.org/cummins/biscalp.html>
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2003). Keeping good teachers: Why it matters what leaders can do. *Educational Leadership*, 55(5), 6-11.
- Darling-Hammond, L., Berry, B. T., Haselkorn, D., & Fideler, E. F. (1999). Teacher Recruitment, Selection and Induction. In L. Darling-Hammond & G. Sykes (Eds.), *Teaching as the Learning Profession* (pp. 183-232). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Deprés, B. (2008). *Systems thinkers in action: A field guide for effective change leadership in education*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Education.
- Dillon, E. (2007, July 17). *The students behind NCLB's 'disabilities' designation*. Washington D.C.: Education Sector. Retrieved on December 10, 2011 from http://www.educationsector.org/analysis/analysis_show.htm?doc_id=509392.
- Duhon, G., Mesmer, E., Gregerson, L., & Witt, J. (2009, February). Effects of public feedback during RTI team meetings on teacher implementation integrity and student academic performance. *Journal of Schools Psychology*, 47 (1), 19-37. Retrieved September 26, 2010 from EBSCO.
- East, B. (2006, May). *Myths about RtI implementation*. National Association of Directors of Special Education (NASDSE). Retrieved March 2, 2012 from <http://www.rtinetwork.org/learn/what/mysthsaboutrti>
- Espinosa, L.M., Thornburg, K., & Mathews, M. (1997). Rural kindergarten teachers' perceptions of school readiness: A comparison with the Carnegie study. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, v25 n2 p119-25 Win. Retrieved August 22, 2012 from <http://www.eric.ed.gov/?id=558655>
- Fuchs, D., & Fuchs, L.S. (2006a, January/February/March). Introduction to response-to-intervention: What, why, and how valid is it? *Reading Research Quarterly*, 93-99. Retrieved September 26, 2010 from EBSCO.
- Fuchs, L.S., & Fuchs, D. (2006b). A framework for building capacity for responsiveness to intervention. *School Psychology Review*, 35 (4), 621-626. Retrieved September 26, 2010 from EBSCO.

- Fuchs, D., Compton, D.L., Fuchs, L., Bryant, J., & Davis, G.N. (2008). Making “secondary intervention” work in a three-tier responsiveness-to-intervention model: Findings from the first-grade longitudinal reading study of the national research center on learning disabilities. *Read Write* (21), 413-436. Retrieved September 26, 2010 from EBSCO.
- Individuals with Disabilities Act (2004). Retrieved September 21, 2009 from <http://idead.ed.gov>
- Gándara & Contreras (2009). *The Latino education crisis: The consequences of failed social policies*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Gándara, P. Rumberger, R., Maxwell-Jolly, J., & Callahan, R. (2003). English learners in California Schools: Unequal resources, unequal outcomes. *Educational Policy Analysis Archives*, 11(36). Retrieved March 21, 2013 from <http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v11n36/>
- Gerston, R., Baker, S.K., Shanahan, T., Linan-Thompson, S., Collins, P., & Scarcella, R. (2007). *Effective literacy and English language instruction for English learners in the elementary grades: A practice guide*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Services, U.S. Department of Education.
- Glatthorn, A., & Joyner, R. (2005). *Writing the winning thesis or dissertation: A step-by-step guide*. 2nd Ed. Thousand Oakes, CA: Corwin Press.
- Goddard, R.G., Hoy, W.K. & Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2000). Collective teacher efficacy: Its meaning, measure and impact on student achievement. *American Education Research Journal*, 37, 479-507.

- Goldenberg, C. (2013). *Unlocking the research on English learners: What do we know-and don't yet know-about effective instruction*. American Educator. Summer 2013, pp. 4-11.
- Goldenberg, C., Hicks, J., & Lit, I. (2013, Summer). Dual Language Learners: Effective instruction in early childhood. *American Educator*, 26-29.
- Gresham, F.M. (2002). Responsiveness to intervention: An alternative approach to the identification of learning disabilities. In R. Bradley, L. Donaldson, & D. Hallahan (Eds.), *Identification of learning disabilities: Research to practice*, 467-519. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Gresham, F. M. (2005). Response to intervention: An alternative means of identifying students as emotionally disturbed. *Education and Treatment of Children*, 28, (4). Retrieved May 30, 2012 from http://www.pent.ca.gov/rti/rti_gresham.pdf
- Gubrium, J., & Holstein, J. (2003). *Postmodern interviewing*. Thousand Oakes, CA: Sage Publications.
- Haager, D. (2007, Summer). Promises and cautions regarding using response to intervention with English language learners. *Learning Disabled Quarterly*, 30, 213-218.
- Harris, R. (2012, February 10). *Caught between two languages*. Winter 2012. Catalyst Chicago. Retrieved May 2, 2013 from <http://www.catalyst-chicago.org/news/2012/02/10>
- Hart, P. (2006, October). Why Juan can't read. *Texas Monthly*, 34 (10), 104. Retrieved April 16, 2013 from <http://connection.ebscohost.com/c/articles/22362563>
- Heckman, J.J. (2008). Schools, skills, and synapses. *Economic Inquiry*, 46, 289-324.

IDEA (2004). Individuals with disabilities education act. US Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs. Retrieved April 8, 2011 from idea.ed.gov

IDEIA (2004). Individuals with disabilities education improvement act. US Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs. Retrieved April 8, 2011 from idea.ed.gov

Jensen, E. (2009). *Teaching with poverty in mind: What being poor does to kid's brains and what schools can do about it*. Retrieved June 2, 2013 from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/109074>

Johnson, S. M. (2006, July). *The workplace matters: Teacher quality, retention, and effectiveness*. National Education Association. Retrieved, November 26, 2012 from <http://www.nea.org>

Kids Count. (2010). *New Mexico voices for children*. New Mexico Kids Count Data Book. Retrieved February 5, 2011 from <http://datacenter.kidscout.org/nm>

Kratochwill, T., Volpiansky, P., Clements, M., & Ball, C. (2007). Professional development in implementing and sustaining multitier prevention models: Implications for response to intervention. *School Psychology Review*. 36(4), 618-631. Retrieved September 26, 2010 from EBSCO.

LaParo & Pianto (2000). Predicting children's competence in the early school years (A meta-analytic review). *Review of Educational Research*. 70(4), 443-484.

LaRocco, D., & Murdica, P. (2009, October). *Understanding teacher's concerns about implementing response to intervention (RTI): Practical implications for educational leaders*. Paper presented at the 40th Annual Northeast Educational Research

- Association Conference October 21-23, 2009. Rocky Hill, Connecticut. Retrieved September 26, 2010 from ERIC.
- Lohman, J. (2007, January 17). *Response to intervention plans*. OLR Research Report. Retrieved February 10, 2012 from <http://www.cga.ct.gov/2007>
- Lose, M. (2007). A child's response to intervention requires a responsive teacher of reading. *The Reading Teacher*, 61(3), 276-279. International Reading Association. Retrieved September 26, 2010 from ERIC.
- Mármol, M. (2011, April 4). *Factors affecting high concentration of special education students in the [North Mountain Schools]*. Presented to the [North Mountain] School Board of Education.
- Maxwell, J. (2005). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. 2nd ed. Applied Social Research Methods Series Volume (42). Thousand Oakes: Sage Publications.
- Mehaffie, K.E., & McCall, R.B. (2002, April). *Readiness for kindergarten: A brief report*. University of Pittsburgh. Office of Child Development. Retrieved March 21, 2011 from <http://www.gettingready.org>
- Miller, D., & Lolic, E. (2011, March). *RTI and LD identification*. National Center for Learning Disabilities. Retrieved May 2, 2012 from <http://www.nclld.org/es/learning-disability-resources/Id-talks/transcript/rti>
- Moore, W.P. & Esselman, M.E. (1992). Teacher efficacy, empowerment, and a focused instructional climate does student achievement benefit? ED350252. Retrieved June 11, 2013 from ERIC.
- National Center on Response to Intervention (2010). *What is RTI?* Retrieved February 6, 2012 from <http://www.rti4success.org>

National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (2007). *The growing number of limited English proficient students*. Retrieved March 4, 2013 from

<http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/files/uploads/4/GrowingLEP>

National Education Goals Panel. (1995). *Five Dimensions of Readiness*. Retrieved September 21, 2011 from <http://www.NEGP.org>

New Mexico Department of Health (2009). NM state of health. Retrieved September 21, 2011 from www.health.state.nm.us/pdf/SoHiNM%202009

New Mexico Public Education Department (2000-01). *New Mexico's ranking among the states*. Retrieved May 22, 2013 from <http://www.ped.state.nm.us/div/fin/school.budget>

New Mexico Public Education Department, Quality Assurance Bureau (2009, Fall). *The student assistance team (SAT) and the three-tier model of student intervention: A guidance and resource manual for New Mexico's response to intervention (RtI) framework*. Retrieved September 2009 from <http://www.ped.state.nm.us>

New Mexico Public Education Department (2010). *[North Mountain school district] beginning of the year counts*. Student Teacher Accountability Reporting System. Retrieved February 2, 2012 from <http://www.ped.state.nm.us/>

New Mexico Public Education Department (2010-2011a). *School grading report*. [School B]. [North Mountain School District]. Retrieved February 2, 2012 from <http://webapp2.ped.state.nm.us/SchoolData/SchoolGrading.aspx>

New Mexico Public Education Department (2010-2011b). *School grading report*. [School C]. [North Mountain School District]. Retrieved February 2, 2012 from <http://webapp2.ped.state.nm.us/SchoolData/SchoolGrading.aspx>

- New Mexico Public Education Department (2010-2011c). *School grading report*. [School A] [North Mountain School District]. Retrieved February 2, 2012 from <http://webapp2.ped.state.nm.us/SchoolData/SchoolGrading.aspx>
- New Mexico Public Education Department (2011a, April 12). *Public education department audit of 2011-2012 school district data*. [Memorandum].
- New Mexico Public Education Department (2011b, April 14). *New Mexico Public Education Department Announces Audit of 34 School Districts*. [News Release].
- New Mexico Public Education Department (2011c, April 27). *Initial findings of the public education department's audit of 2011-2012 school district data*. [Memorandum].
- New Mexico Public Education Department (2011-2012). *School accountability report*. [North Mountains School District]. Retrieved May 22, 2012 from <http://www.ped.state.nm.us/ayp2011/index.html>
- New Mexico Public Education Department (2012a). *[La Loma] elementary school teacher census*. [North Mountains School District]. Student Teacher Accountability Reporting System.
- New Mexico Public Education Department (2012b). *Parent and child rights in special education*. Special Education Bureau. Retrieved July 15, 2012 from www.ped.state.nm.us/seb/technical/Parent%20and%20Child%20Rights.pdf
- New Mexico Public Education Department (2012c, July 12). *Developing early literacy in New Mexico*.
- New Mexico Public Education Department (2012-2013a). *Membership – District detail report 2012-2013*. [North Mountains School District]. Student Teacher

- Nunn, G., & Jantz, P. (2009). Factors within response to intervention implementation training associated with teacher efficacy beliefs. *Education, 129*(4), 599-607. Retrieved September 26, 2010 from ERIC.
- Nunn, G., Jantz, P., & Butikofer, C. (2009, September). Concurrent validity between teacher efficacy and perceptions of response to intervention outcomes. *Journal of Instructional Psychology*. Retrieved April 10, 2012 from http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0FCG/is_3_36/ai_n42026377/
- Phillips, V., & Weingarten, R. (2013, Summer). The professional educator: Six steps to effective teacher development and evaluation. *American Educator, 36*-39.
- Piaget, J. (1953). *The origin of intelligence in the child*. London: Routledge and Kegan.
- Powell, K.C., & Kalina, C.J. (2009). Cognitive and social constructivism: Developing tools for an effective classroom. *Education, 130* (2), 241-250. Retrieved July 20, 2012 from ERIC.
- Rebell, M. & Wolff, J. (2012, January 18). We can overcome poverty's impact on school success. *Education Week*. Vol. 31, Issue 17, p. 24-25. Retrieved June 18, 2013 from <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2012>.
- Redmond, B.F., & Rupp, A.C. (2012, July 10). *Self-efficacy and social cognitive theories*. Penn State University. Retrieved July 17, 2012 from <https://wikispaces.psu.edu/display/PSYCH484/7.+Self-Efficacy+and+Social+Cognitive+Theories>
- Richmond, B.F. (2010). *Self-Efficacy Theory: Do I think that I can succeed in work?* Work Attitudes and Motivation. The Pennsylvania State University: World Campus. Retrieved July 11, 2012 from <http://cms.psu.edu>.

- Richards, C., Pavri, S., Golez, F., Canges, R., & Murphy, J. (2007, Fall). Response to intervention: Building the capacity of teachers to serve students with learning difficulties. *Issues in Teacher Education*, 16 (2), 55-64. Retrieved February 26, 2012 from ERIC.
- Rickenbrode, R., & Walsh, K. (2013, Summer). Lighting the way: The reading panel report ought to guide teacher preparation. *American Educator*, 30-35.
- Rinaldi, C. & Samon, J. (2008, May 18). English language learners and response to intervention: Referral considerations. *Council for Exceptional Children*. Teaching Exceptional Children (40)5, 6-14. Retrieved May 5, 2012 from <http://www.redorbit.com/news/education/1390797>
- Roberts, S. (2001). *Remaining and becoming: Cultural crosscurrents in an Hispano school*. New York: Routledge.
- Russell Bailey, L. (2010, March). *Teacher perceptions of student support team and response to intervention effectiveness*. A dissertation presented to the faculty of the School of Education. Liberty University. Retrieved October 12, 2012 from <http://www.digitalcommons.liberty.edu/doctoral/318>
- Senge, P. (2000). *Schools that learn: A fifth discipline fieldbook for educators, parents, and everyone who cares about education*. New York, NY: Doubleday Dell.
- Shinn, M.R. (2007). Identifying students at risk, monitoring performance, and determining eligibility within response to intervention: Research on educational need and benefit from academic intervention. *School Psychology Review*, 36 (4), 601-617. Retrieved September 26, 2010 from EBSCO.

- Shoreline School District (2013). *Response to intervention (RtI)*. Shoreline Public Schools Instruction Department. Retrieved January 2, 2013 from <http://www.schools.shorlineschools.org/instruction/response-to-intervention>
- Silverman, S., & Davis, H. (2009). *Teacher efficacy*. The Gale Group. Retrieved July 17, 2012 from <http://www.education.com/reference/article/teacher-efficacy/>
- Sun, J., Nam, J., & Vanderwood, M. (2010). *English language learners (ELL) and response to intervention (RTI): Information for K-6 educators*. National Association of School Psychologists. Helping Children at Home and School III. Retrieved March 4, 2013 from http://www.nasponline.org/.../S7H4_English_Language_Learners_and_Response
- Torgeson, J. K. (2006, January). *Leaving fewer children behind in reading: Requirements at the classroom and school level*. Bureau of Indian Affairs Literacy Conference. [PowerPoint presentation].
- Tough, P. (2008). *Whatever it takes*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. p.190
- Town Government. [North Mountain] (2012). *History*. Retrieved May 29, 2012 from [http://www.\[northmountain\]gov.com/history.php](http://www.[northmountain]gov.com/history.php)
- Tschannen-Moran, M., & Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2001, February 13). Teacher-efficacy: capturing an elusive construct. *Teacher and Teacher Education*, 17. Pergamon. Retrieved July 8, 2012 from http://mxtsch.people.wm.edu/Scholarship/TATE_TSECapturingAnElusiveConstruct.pdf

- Urrea, E. D., & Gradoville, M. (2006). *Variation in the future tense of New Mexican Spanish*. Retrieved April 30, 2013 from <http://www.studentors.utexas.edu/salsa/proceedings/2006/Gradoville.pdf>
- U.S. Census Bureau (2007-2011). Selected social characteristics in the United States; 2007-2011 American community survey 5-year estimates. Retrieved May 8, 2013 from <http://www.factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview>
- U.S. Census Bureau (2009). *New Mexico poverty statistics*. Retrieved April 5, 2011 from <http://www.uscensus.gov>
- U.S. Census Bureau (2010). *Quick Facts*. Retrieved February 29, 2012 from <http://www.quickfacts.census.gov>
- U.S. Department of Education (2004). *Building the legacy: IDEA 2004. Individuals with Disabilities Act: Part B*. Retrieved September 2009 from <http://idea.ed.gov/>
- U.S. Department of Education (2013). *Title I – Improving the academic achievement of the disadvantaged*. Retrieved May 2, 2013 from <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg1.html>
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1962). *Thought and language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Vogt, W.P. (2007). *Quantitative research methods for professionals*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Waters, J.T., Marzano, R.J. & McNulty, B. (2003). *Balanced leadership: What 30 years of research tells us about the effect of leadership on student achievement*. Aurora, CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning.
- Wedl, R. (2005, July). Response to intervention: An alternative to traditional eligibility criteria for students with disabilities. The latest in a series of reports on the changing

- face of public education. *Education Evolving*, 1-24. Hamline University: St. Paul, Minnesota. Retrieved February 17, 2012 from <http://www.educationevolving.org>
- Williams, D.T. (2003). *Closing the achievement gap: rural schools*. Retrieved April 29, 2011 from <http://www.eric.ed.gov>
- Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2000, April 28). *Changes in teacher efficacy during the early years of teaching*. American Educational Research Association annual meeting, New Orleans, LA. Retrieved July 15, 2012 from <http://wps.ablongman.com/wps/media/objects/290/297451/changes%20in%20efficacy.pdf>
- Yin, R.K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and method*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Zehler, A., Fleischman, H., Hopstock, P. Stephenson, T., Pendzick, M., & Sapru, S. (2003). *Descriptive study of services to LEP children and LEP children with disabilities: Summary of findings related to LEP and SpEd-LEP children*. Policy Report. US Department of Education. Arlington, VA: Development Associates, Inc.
- Zelenka, V. (2010). *A case study of literacy instruction delivered to kindergarten struggling readers within the response to intervention model in three classroom settings* (Dissertation). Retrieved January 26, 2012 from ProQuest. (KSU No. AAT 3408162).

Glossary of Terms

Accelerated Math	Renaissance Learning progress-monitoring software tool for math intervention (www.renlearn.com/Accelerated-Math) Available since 1998 utilized as enrichment for individual or small group work (www.edsurge.com/accelerated-math).
AIP	Academic Improvement Plan
Apple Tree	Classroom behavior plan
Baldrige	Malcolm Baldrige Education Criteria for Performance Excellence educational program addresses eleven core values (Walpole and Noeth, 2002, www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/baldrige.pdf)
BIP	Behavior Improvement Plan
Data Folders	Requirement of Baldrige Education Criteria to satisfy requirement of data-driven decision making.
DIBELS	Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills. Set of assessments used for universal screening and progress monitoring in grades K-6 (www.dibels.uoregon.edu/)
Discovery	Short-cycle assessment.
ELL	English Language Learners
Foro Abierto	Spanish equivalent of Open Court core language arts and reading series published by McGraw Hill
Fountas & Pinnell	One-on-one assessment to determine independent and instructional Benchmark reading levels. Published by Heinemann Assessment
GLAD	Guided Language Acquisition Design
Guided Reading	Fountas & Pinnell reading program implemented in small group to differentiate instruction. Published by Heinemann.
IDEA	Individual with Disabilities Education Act
IDEIA	2004 Reauthorization of the IDEA
IDEL	DIBELS assessment for native Spanish Speakers

IEP	Individual Education Program
IQ	Intelligence Quotient
K-3 Plus Program	Kindergarten to third grade program part of NM House Bill 198. Designed to extend school year to provide instruction in literacy, numeric and social skills development (www.ped.state.nm.us/EarlyChildhood/k3plus)
Kagan Strategies	Cooperative learning strategies (www.teach-nology.com/currenttrends/cooperative_learning/kagan)
Low-Performing	Defined by Fuchs (2008) as those students who require increasingly intensive, individualized interventions.
MAP	Measures of Academic Progress a Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) educational short-cycle assessment.
Math Expressions	Core math series published by Houghton Mifflin.
MSA	Math and Science Academy
NEOs	Renaissance Learning writing program
NMSBA	New Mexico Standards Based Assessment
Open Court	Core language arts and reading series publish by McGraw Hill
PDP	Professional Development Plan. Requirement of NMPED for certified teachers.
Phonics Blitz	Reading lessons for students in grades 4-12 who have mild or moderate decoding weaknesses (www.rgrco.com/phonics/2nd-edition).
Reading Rockets	Reading intervention program
RtI or RTI	Response to Intervention
SAT	Student Assistance Team
Second Step	Character education program
SIOP	Sheltered Instructing Observation Protocol
SLD	Specific Learning Disability

Slow-Learner	Defined by Burgner (2010) as those students who do not qualify for special education but continue to struggle in the regular education setting.
STAR Math	Renaissance Learning computer program to measure student achievement in math.
STAR Reading	Renaissance Learning computer program to measure student achievement in reading.
Struggle	Defined by Bryant and Barrera (2009) as students who even after the use of best practices has been documented by the teacher and class instruction has been adjusted to meet the students' individual needs, require more intensive instruction than general education can provide.
Teach Me ____ Grade	Educational application for Apple tablet or telephone.
TESOL	Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages
TIENET	Technology for Improving Education developed by Maximus. Student data-base for special education information and Student Assistance Team forms.
Tier I	Universal screening, appropriate core instruction, and universal interventions.
Tier II	SAT process and individualized scientific research-based interventions.
Tier III	Special Education and an IEP for each student.
Title I	Federal program improving academic achievement of disadvantaged students.
Traffic Lights	Classroom behavior plan.
WIDA	World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment language proficiency assessment.
Woodcock Muñoz	Norm-referenced language survey measuring reading, writing, listening, and comprehension.

Appendices

Appendix A Response to Intervention (RtI) Self-Assessment Survey	125
Appendix B New Mexico Annual Yearly Progress (AYP)	127
Appendix C NMPED School Grading	129
Appendix D TIER I.....	132
Appendix E NMPED TIER II.....	133
Appendix F NMPED RtI Framework	134
Appendix G NMPED Behavior Fact Sheet	135
Appendix H NMPED SAT Fact Sheet.....	136
Appendix I NMPED TIER III.....	137
Appendix J NMPED RtI Fact Sheet	138
Appendix K Interview Protocol for Regular Education Teachers	139
Appendix L Interview Protocol for Former School Principal	142
Appendix M Interview Protocol for Current School Principal.....	144
Appendix N Interview Protocol for District Special Education Director	146
Appendix O District Permission to Conduct Research.....	148
Appendix P Recruitment Flyer	152
Appendix R Research Prospectus	159

Appendix A

Response to Intervention (RtI) Self-Assessment Survey

Male ____ Female ____	Date: _____
Have you received training in RtI? Yes _____ No _____	How many years have you taught? _____
Have you taught Special Education? Yes _____ No _____	Level of Education B.A./B.S. _____ M.A./M.S. _____ Beyond M.A. _____

Please answer the following questions candidly. If you are do not know the answer without asking or researching, please leave blank:

1. What is Tier II of the Response to Intervention Process?
2. What system is in place to regularly verify that Tier II interventions for reading, math or behavior are implemented?
3. How do you use information gathered from MAP and NMSBA assessments to make instructional adjustments?
4. How do you monitor student achievement and behavior? Give examples?
5. What are some Tier II strategies (reading, math or behavior) you use in your class?

Please circle the response that most accurately describes your own experience with RtI:

6. To what extent do you understand the three-tier model of Response to Intervention (RtI)?

I understand it completely.....I mostly understand it, but occasionally have questions/concerns.....I do not understand it at all.....I have never thought about it

7. To what extent do you understand your role in the RtI model?

I understand it completely.....I mostly understand it, but occasionally have questions/concerns.....I do not understand it at all.....I have never thought about it

8. I demonstrate self-confidence to motivate the learning of my students?

Strongly Agree.....Agree.....Disagree.....Strongly Disagree

9. I have received sufficient training in the Response to Intervention model?

Strongly Agree.....Agree.....Disagree.....Strongly Disagree

10. The administration provides support to the Response to Intervention process?

Strongly Agree.....Agree.....Disagree.....Strongly Disagree

Instructions: Please read the Statement of Participation below. If you agree to participate, please fill out the survey without asking or researching the answers. Place the completed survey in the envelope attached and seal the envelope. Return the envelope to your building principal. Thank you.

Statement of Participation

A District employee is a graduate student in the College of Education at The University of New Mexico. As an assignment for the graduate Educational Leadership program, he/she is conducting a series of surveys/interviews in which he/she would like for you to participate. You of course may decline at this time or at any time during the process whenever and for whatever reason. Please be aware that the survey is designed so that the student can develop and practice skills necessary for conducting research. Thank you for your participation.

Appendix B

New Mexico Annual Yearly Progress (AYP)

Under the Federal *No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act*, all states, school districts, and schools must reach 100 percent academic proficiency by school year 2013-14. To ensure this goal will be met, schools must strive for improvement each year to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), and this improvement must be measured. To this end, students in grades 3-8 and grade 11 are tested each year with the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment (NMSBA). The results of the tests are used by the New Mexico Public Education Department to determine school designations of “Meets AYP” or “AYP Not Met.”

In order to receive a “Meets AYP” rating, **all** of the following criteria must be met; if a school fails to meet any **one** of the 37 data points within the criteria, the school is rated “AYP Not Met.”

- All students in the school, and students in each of eight “subgroups” (Caucasian, African-American, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific, Native American, English Language Learners [ELL], Special Education students, and students qualifying for free and reduced lunch benefits [FRLP]), must reach the Annual Measurable Objective (AMO). AMOs are set targets indicating the number of students who test proficient or above in reading and math. AMOs increase every year, and reach 100 percent in 2013-14. Table below demonstrates AMOs for elementary school grades K-5:
-

AMOs for Grades K-5 (NMPED, 2007)

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Reading	49%	59%	63%	67%	77%	81%	90%	100%
Math	33%	44%	50%	57%	68%	79%	89%	100%

- New Mexico uses a non-linear model for determining improvement in AYP. The model applied emphasizes an initial gradual increase in performance in the beginning years a significant increase in the middle years and slight increases in the final years, leading to 100 percent proficient by 2014. Consistent with the statute, NM’s intermediate goals increase in equal increments. (NMPED, 2012a)
- A minimum of 95 percent of all students in each school and 95 percent of students in each subgroup must take the tests. This is called the “participation rate.”
- Elementary and middle schools must meet a 92 percent attendance rate; high schools must meet a 90 percent graduation rate (or meet or exceed the previous year’s graduation rate).

After 1st year of not making AYP – the school, in partnership with its district and local community, will be encouraged to: (a) perform a data analysis to determine why it did not make AYP, (b) amend its Educational Plan for Student Success (EPSS), and (c) further develop and implement strategies to improve student achievement. In addition, the Public Education Department will provide technical assistance, as requested, during this process.

After 2nd Year of not making AYP (designated School Improvement I) – the school must develop an improvement plan and offer parents the option to choose a school that is not in School Improvement.

After 3rd Year of not making AYP (designated School Improvement II) – the school must provide supplemental education services (SES) such as after school programs, tutoring and summer services, based on budget availability. The school must also continue to offer school choice and provide transportation or pay the cost of transportation, based upon budget availability, for students who choose to enroll in a school that is not in School Improvement.

After 4th Year of not making AYP (designated Corrective Action) – in addition to the requirements listed above the school and district must also implement one or more of the following:

- Replace staff as allowed by law
- Implement a new curriculum
- Decrease management authority of the public school
- Appoint an outside expert to advise the public school
- Extend the school day or year
- Change the public school's internal organizational structure

After 5th Year of not making AYP (designated Restructuring I) – in addition to the requirements listed above, the school, district and PED must develop a plan including one or more of the following actions:

- Re-open the public school as a charter school
- Replace all or most of the staff, as allowed by law
- Turn over the management of the public school to the Public Education Department
- Make other governance changes

After 6th year of not making AYP (designated Restructuring II) – in addition to the requirements listed above, the school, district and PED must implement the plan developed in Restructuring I.

Appendix C

NMPED School Grading

School Grading is part of a state and federal statute that mandates accountability for all public schools. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) enacted in 1965, which was reauthorized in 2001 as *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB), requires schools to show annual improvement in mathematics and reading. In 2011, New Mexico lawmakers enacted additional requirements that schools demonstrate progress through a grading system similar to that applied to students, A-B-C-D-F [§22-2-1, §22-2-2, and §22-2E-1 to §22-2E-4] [6.19.8.1 NMAC – N, 12-15-11]. Schools and districts under the jurisdiction of the Public Education Department (PED) must participate in school grading. These include:

- School districts, New Mexico has 89 districts.
- District schools, New Mexico has 750 non-charter schools
- Charter Schools, in 2011 New Mexico had 48 locally-authorized, and 33 state-authorized charter schools.

Non-PED schools are exempt from school grading, including private, home, and Bureau of Indian Education schools.

AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) served as the primary gauge of school success from 2004 to 2011. In 2012 New Mexico's school grading model was approved by the U.S. Department of Education to serve as the state's ESEA accountability method for future years, replacing Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

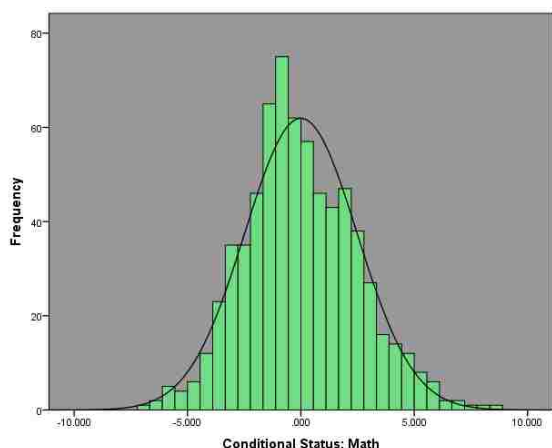
Key distinguishing features favor school grading over AYP:

- Partial credit is given for all indicators. In AYP, targets must be met by schools in an all-or-none fashion to get any credit. A school that scored near the threshold was treated no differently than a school that grandly missed the mark.
- AYP goals had become unreachable, with 87 percent of our schools failing to make targets. Therefore variability did not exist for assisting parents and community members to differentiate successful from poorly performing schools.
- The goal of accountability is to assist in the reform of poorly performing schools, while highlighting the methods of successful schools. The AYP model was too limited to inform this process. School grading, however, contains a rich set of feedback indicators that help schools identify weak areas, plan, and improve.
- Schools get to see how well they are growing students' learning over time. Moreover, they can differentiate whether their highest achieving students are learning better than their lowest achieving students.
- A letter grade is an easy metric to understand and compare.
- VAM (Value Added Modeling) provides a much more equitable system for comparing schools and seeing what their true effect has been (see discussion of VAM below).

The Standards Based Assessment (SBA) has been used since 2005 and was designed to assess whether students meet grade-specific standards developed by New Mexico professionals. The New Mexico Alternate Performance Assessment (NMAPA) was similarly designed for special education students who meet qualifications for specialized testing. In school year 2014-2015 New Mexico will implement a new set of assessments designed to meet the state standards initiative known as the Common Core.

Points assigned on each part of the report card

Each component of a school's grade is assigned points. The final point values are now part of New Mexico state law. The points for each component are summed to assign a grade. Additionally, the points from all components total 100 for each school, which is used to determine the school's overall grade. The boundaries of points that determine the grade for each component are appended at the end of this document, as well as the total point spans for A, B, C, D, and F.



Example of point conversion:

Rather than assigning points for the school grade on raw proficiencies, similar to AYP, the PED assigns a score based where a school is in relation to all other schools in NM. The graph shows that a school that achieved proficiencies that placed them in the top 10 percent of the schools (90th percentile) would earn a score of 5.4 on a 6 point scale. The 50th percentile was used to set the criterion for a “C” in 2011.

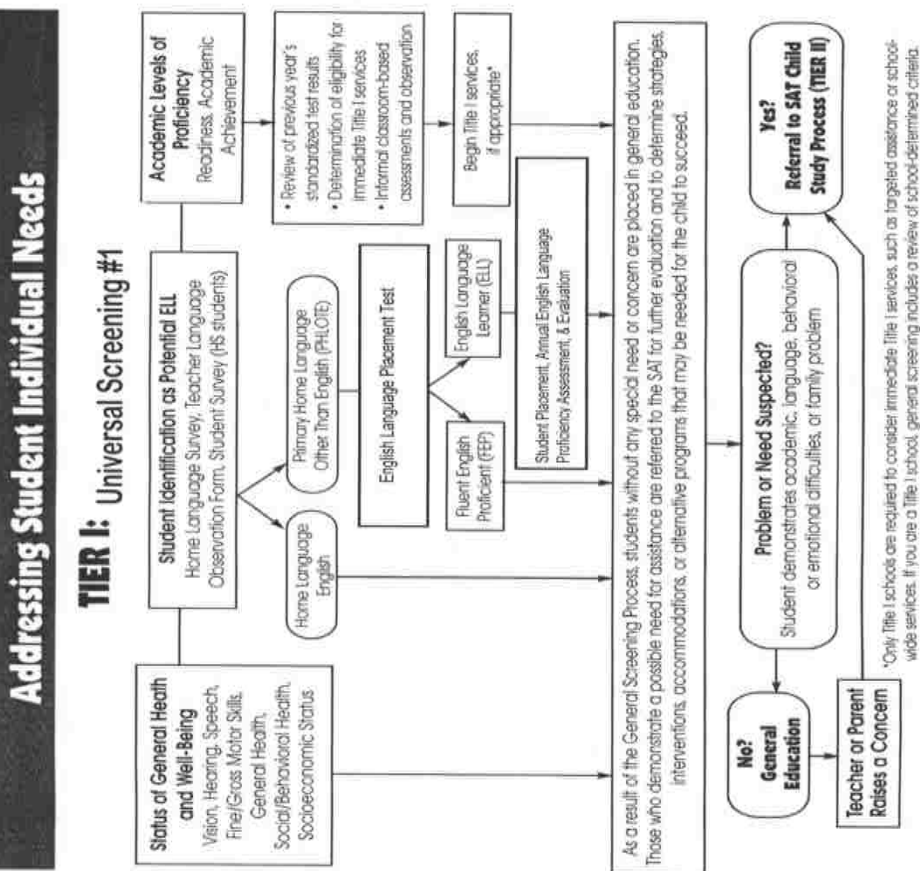
This process of setting grade boundaries using the grade distribution was important the baseline year (2011) to get an accurate picture of realistic goals for improvement. The cut points now remain the same for all schools and do not change. However, given dramatic change in either performance or assessments, the cut points will be reset. There are different points and grading schemes for high schools and elementary/middle schools. Because the two grading systems weigh certain components differently, the point values have slightly different interpretations. For that reason it is better to look at the grade than the points.

Points are assigned in terms of how well a school performed when compared to a target. Some indicators have absolute criteria (attendance and graduation), while others (Current Standing, School Growth, Student Growth, College and Career Readiness) are based on the state distribution in each of these indicators. For indicators with absolute criteria, points are assigned based on the ratio of the school's performance to the target. For the

other indicators, we rank every school in relation to all schools in the state. For example the school that is in the 80th percentile has scored better than 80 percent of their peers. This percentile is then used to compute what portion of the available points the school earned. If the indicator is worth 10 points, the school has earned eight points.

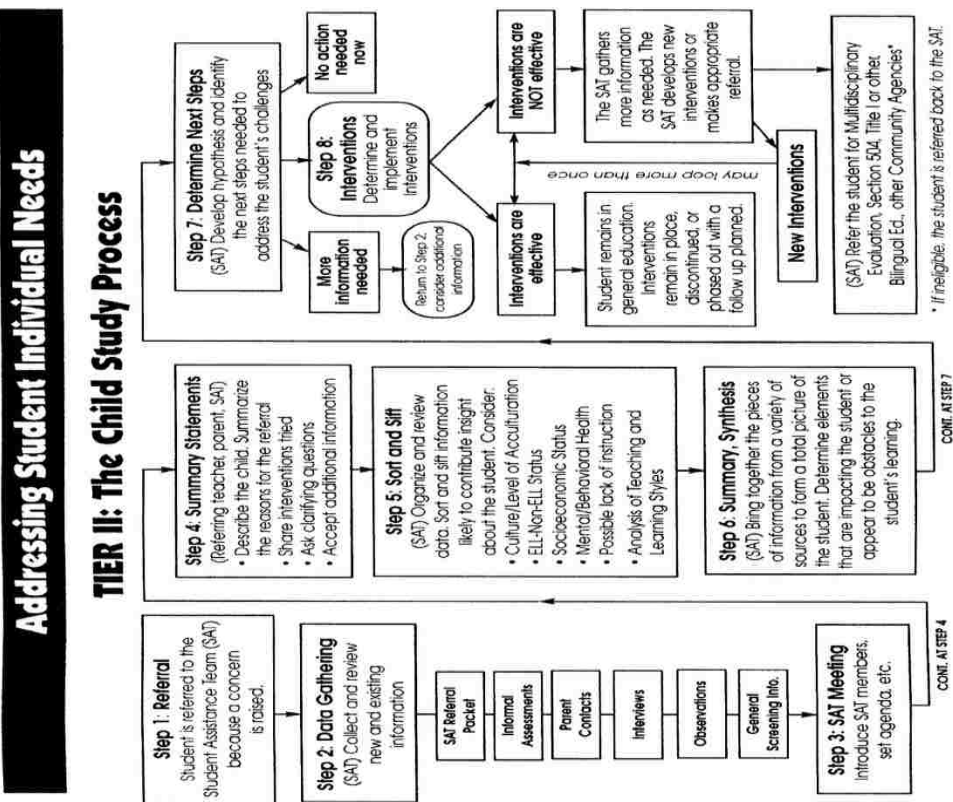
Appendix D

TIER I



Appendix E

NMPED TIER II



Appendix F

NMPED RtI Framework

The RtI Framework Levels of Intervention Intensity Matrix for Academics

This chart illustrates how instructional and assessment elements within an RtI framework increase in intensity as students are served in higher tiers.

	Low Intensity		High Intensity		
	Tier 1: Regular Education		Tier 2: Regular Education with Supplemental Services, Prescribed by the SAT		Tier 3: Special Education
Program Emphasis	Use core program and explicitly teach to standards	Use differentiated instruction as necessary	Supplement core with re-teaching or intervention components of core	Replace current core program with intervention program	Implement specially-designed instruction and related services
Time (Opportunity to Learn)	Schedule and deliver 60-90 minutes of daily core instruction depending on school/class schedule	Increase opportunities for students to respond during core instruction. Use corrective feedback.	Add a supplemental instructional period twice a week (Ex: 90+30 min. or 60+30 min.)	Increase supplemental instruction period to 3-5 times a week	Implement specially-designed instruction and related services based on IEP service schedule
Grouping for Instruction	Use combination of whole, small, and flexible group instruction	Use small-groups for guided practice/ reteaching/ and tiered assignments	Recommend reducing group size down to two to three students	Provide individualized instruction	Implement specially-designed instruction in environment set forth in the student's IEP
Assessment (Universal Screening and Progress Monitoring)	Observations Classroom Assessments Student Work Samples NM Standards-Based Assessments (NMSBA) Short-Cycle Assessments		Observations Classroom Assessments Student Work Samples NMSBA Short-Cycle Assessments Curriculum-Based Measures (CBMs)		Observations, Student Work Samples, NMSBA, Short-Cycle Assessments, CBMs, Diagnostic Tests

Appendix G

NMPED Behavior Fact Sheet



Addressing Student Behavior **Fact Sheet**

In order for a school to be a safe and an orderly place for teaching and learning, it must have a code of conduct, or school rules. Some schools may also have school-wide programs that teach, support, and reinforce positive student behaviors in order to establish a climate in which appropriate behavior is the norm and learning is maximized. However, some students who do not respond positively to classroom or school-wide rules and programs may need individualized support.

Where does the individualized support process start?

In New Mexico, the school's Student Assistance Team (SAT) is the starting point to address behavior for an individual student in regular education who is not responding positively to classroom or school-wide behavioral interventions. Thus, a student with frequent, persistent, or severe behavioral challenges needs to be referred to the SAT. The SAT will have a meeting with the student's parents (and the student, if appropriate) to talk about the concern. For students already eligible and receiving special education services, the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team will meet with the parent and student, if appropriate, about this concern.

Then what?

The SAT or the IEP Team may determine that it is in order to study the situation more effectively, it must analyze what triggers the problematic behavior through conducting what is known as a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA). The SAT or IEP Team will designate one or more school staff to conduct the FBA which generally consists of record reviews, observations, and interviews. An FBA is important because it may identify underlying reasons for the problematic behavior. The results of the FBA provide a foundation for the SAT or IEP Team as it develops informal interventions or a more formalized Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP) for the student, depending on the severity of the behavior.

What is a Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP)?

A BIP is a written plan with specific strategies, interventions, and supports designed to teach acceptable behaviors while decreasing or eliminating opportunities for the student to engage in inappropriate behaviors. For example, a student who is physically aggressive at recess may have a BIP that combines teaching her self-control or conflict resolution skills along with strategies for staff to more effectively manage the student during recess. The SAT or IEP Team will include in the BIP a method by which to collect data, monitor, and evaluate the student's BIP at specific intervals, making adjustments based on the student's response to this individualized intervention.

Where can I learn more?

- To learn how to design and implement a school-wide system of positive behavioral supports and interventions for all students go to Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) at www.pbis.org. A companion to PBIS is the School-Wide Information System, (SWIS), a program to assist schools in collecting discipline referral data and using it to drive decision-making about the school plan. www.swis.org
- The New Mexico Public Education Department has published a comprehensive technical assistance manual for schools in how to conduct an FBA and develop a BIP for an individual student. Please see *Addressing Student Behavior: A Guide for Educators* at the Rtl link at www.ped.state.nm.us
- If you have questions about the code of conduct and/or positive behavioral supports at your school, please contact the school principal.

Appendix H

NMPED SAT Fact Sheet



The Student Assistance Team (SAT) **Fact Sheet**

Special education services are not the only source of assistance for students who struggle academically and/or behaviorally in the schools. Students can be proficient in the general education program if the school has a formal system to catch students early and provide them with an intervention, as well as give support to the teacher in implementing the intervention. In New Mexico, the school team who fulfills this role is called the Student Assistance Team (SAT).

Tell Me More

The SAT is a cooperative, school-based group of people that assists students, parents, and teachers in seeking positive solutions for concerns about individual students. Its purpose is to provide supplementary support to students who are experiencing difficulties that are preventing them from benefiting from general education, because they are either performing below or above expectations in academics and/or behavior. The SAT's role is to be a support and a resource to the parents and the teacher—not to replace or relieve the teacher of his or her responsibility for educating the student.

Who Makes Up the SAT?

The SAT is made up of the student's teacher and a core group that anchors the team. Core team members may vary by school, but should include at minimum professional staff from school administration, regular education, and specialists and/or resource areas as needed. A varying number of other individuals may serve on the team, depending on the types of concerns and expertise needed. Parental permission is not required to conduct a SAT meeting, but parents are always invited to participate in a SAT meeting about their child. Students may be invited, as necessary.

What Does the SAT do?

The SAT addresses problems found through universal screening and progress monitoring of all students, or those brought up as concerns by parents, teachers, or other staff through a cooperative team effort. The SAT designs interventions for those students who show need for individual consideration through what is called a *SAT Intervention Plan*.

Is the SAT Special Education?

No. While the SAT may refer to a special education evaluation a student who has an obvious disability or one who does not show a significant response to a SAT Intervention Plan in the regular education setting, the SAT is **not** a special education evaluation or service. The SAT encourages and supports teachers in implementing and documenting interventions before considering a referral to special education. The SAT may also assist in reducing the number of students facing retention.

Where Can I Learn More?

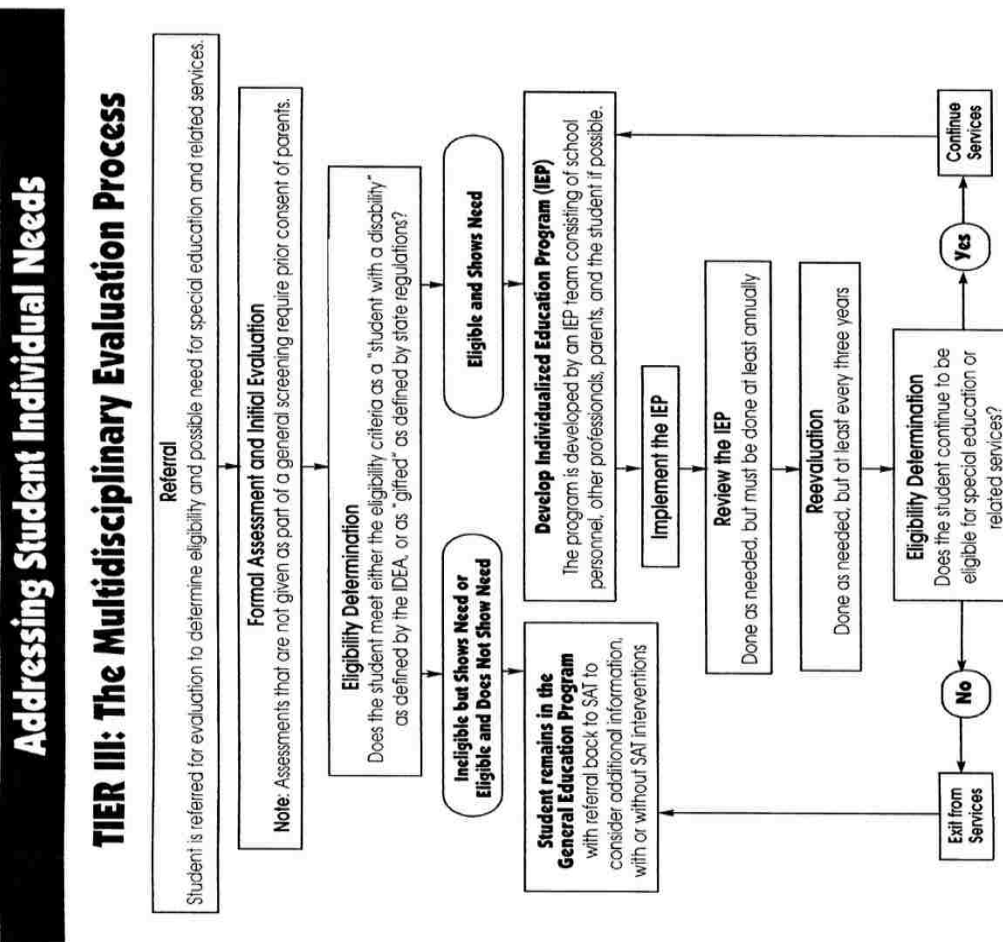
Please see the New Mexico Public Education Department's (NMPED's) technical assistance manual: *The Student Assistance Team and Three-Tier Model of Student Intervention—New Mexico's RtI Framework*. www.ped.state.nm.us. Check the A-Z Directory for this title.

If you have questions about the SAT process at your child's school, or want to make a referral to the SAT, please contact the school principal.

New Mexico Public Education Department: SAT and the Three-Tier Model of Student Intervention - 146 -

Appendix I

NMPED TIER III



Appendix J

NMPED RtI Fact Sheet



Response to Intervention (RtI) **Fact Sheet**

What is Response to Intervention (RtI)?

RtI is a **framework** being used across the country as school systems seek ways to provide early assistance to students experiencing academic and/or behavioral difficulty. It is a problem-solving approach for guiding instruction for **all** students who need assistance—both general and special education. It is also a process that schools may use as part of the eligibility determination that a student is specific learning disabled (SLD) and needs special education and related services. RtI involves providing a student or small groups of students with high-quality academic and/or behavioral interventions matched to their needs, and then monitoring the students' progress frequently to see if there is a significant and positive response. How the students respond then serves as a guide for making educational decisions. Although *RtI* is a relatively new term, it simply represents a best practice for educating students using a scientifically-based and systems approach.

How does RtI work?

In New Mexico, schools must use a three-tier approach to match students with an appropriate level of instruction and/or intervention.

- In **Tier 1**, all students receive appropriate, standards-based instruction including any classroom, grade-level or school-wide interventions, as well as monitoring and screening for potential problems. Tier 1 interventions are provided in the general education classroom.
- In **Tier 2**, students who have not responded significantly to Tier 1 are referred to the school's Student Assistance Team (SAT) and may receive an individual intervention plan. This plan could include more intense instruction, individually or in a small group, and is provided in addition to the general education curriculum at Tier 1.
- In **Tier 3**, a student qualifies for special education services and receives specially-designed instruction and related services through an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

In all tiers, students are universally screened and/or progress monitored to see if the instruction and/or intervention are effective.

What does *universal screening and progress monitoring* mean?

As students receive instruction, teachers may divide what they expect students to achieve by the end of year into shorter, measurable steps. Then teachers test, or *universally screen*, all students three to four times a year to check their growth towards those shorter steps. These tests are called *short-cycle assessments*. Teachers also test students receiving Tier 2 and 3 services more frequently (example: a five-minute test every couple weeks). This is called *progress monitoring*. The teachers' progress monitoring documentation, which may include graphs or data charts, serves as useful information for adjusting the instruction and/or intervention, or for referring students to the next tier of help, as necessary.

Where can I learn more?

- New Mexico's RtI website. www.ped.state.nm.us. Check the A-Z Directory for the link.
- The New Mexico Public Education Department's (NMPED's) technical assistance manual: *The Student Assistance Team and Three-Tier Model of Student Intervention—New Mexico's RtI Framework*. www.ped.state.nm.us. Check the A-Z Directory for this title.
- National Center on Response to Intervention: www.rti4success.org
- RtI Action Network www.rtinetwork.org

If you have questions about the implementation of the RtI framework at your school, please contact the school principal.

New Mexico Public Education Department: SAT and the Three-Tier Model of Student Intervention - 145 -

Appendix K

Interview Protocol for Regular Education Teachers

Instructions: Please read the Statement of Participation below. If you agree to participate, please answer the interview questions the researcher will be asking. Thank you.

Statement of Participation

A District employee is a graduate student in the College of Education at The University of New Mexico. As a requirement of her dissertation research study for the graduate Educational Leadership program, she is conducting a series of interviews in which she would like for you to participate. You of course may decline at this time or at any time during the process whenever and for whatever reason. Please be aware that the interview is a requirement for the completion of the student's dissertation. Thank you for your participation.

Interview Protocol for Regular Education Teachers

Time of Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Position of Interviewee:

Interview Questions:

1. Tell me about yourself and your experience as a regular education teacher.
2. Have you/do you teach students in special education in your class right now. Do you receive assistance administering their accommodations?
3. What do you know about the Response to Intervention Process (RtI)?
4. Did any of your university courses include instruction on the RtI or SAT process?
5. Since you started working in the district, have you received professional development in RtI? If yes, When did you receive the training and for how long?
6. If you need additional training or professional development what have you done to ask for or receive assistance?
7. What is Tier II of the Response to Intervention Process?
8. Can you remember a time when the RtI worked and did not work for a particular student whom you taught?
9. What system is in place to regularly verify that Tier II interventions for reading, math or behavior are implemented?
10. How do you use information gathered from MAP and NMSBA assessments to make instructional adjustments?

11. How do you monitor student achievement and behavior? Give examples?
12. What are some Tier II strategies (reading, math or behavior) you use in your class?
13. To whom do you turn for help when you are unsure of how to proceed with a student who is struggling or needs additional assistance?
14. Is there any additional information that you would like to share concerning the RtI process?

Vignettes:

1. Maria is 10 years old in the fourth grade. She has lived in the US for four years and has been in the District for three years. Both her parents are from Mexico and do not speak fluent English. Maria has a limited vocabulary and mixes up English and Spanish in her writing. She is not a fluent reader and her reading comprehension is two grades below the average cut score. She is also struggling with multi-syllabic words. Maria has not shown adequate progress as compared to her classmates on standardized or summative assessments.
2. Chris is a 9 year old boy in the 3rd grade. He is articulate and participates in class discussions. He does not volunteer to read aloud. You have noticed that when he is read to his comprehension is proficient to advanced, yet when he reads his fluency and comprehension are at a 1st grade level. Although he expresses his ideas orally, his spelling and writing are also at a 1st grade level. He has demonstrated proficient levels in standardized math assessments but not in reading.
3. Jorge is a 5 year old Kindergartener. His phonological awareness is not in the average range of a student in Kindergarten. He does not participate in the class and hesitates when asked a direct question. He is having difficulties in expressing himself and his speech is unintelligible. He has demonstrated proficient levels on standardized assessments.
4. Stacy is a 6 year old girl in the 1st grade. Her reading fluency and comprehension are at a 4th grade level. On her own, she reads fiction chapter books and non-fiction books on a wide-range of subjects. She has an extended vocabulary and her writing is proficient to advanced. Her math skills are at a 1st grade level. She completes her assignments with ease and then becomes engrossed in a book, but it is difficult to get her back on task. In addition, she is having trouble making and sustaining friendships.

Appendix L

Interview Protocol for Former School Principal

Instructions: Please read the Statement of Participation below. If you agree to participate, please answer the interview questions the researcher will be asking. Thank you.

Statement of Participation

A District employee is a graduate student in the College of Education at The University of New Mexico. As a requirement of her dissertation research study for the graduate Educational Leadership program, she is conducting a series of interviews in which she would like for you to participate. You of course may decline at this time or at any time during the process whenever and for whatever reason. Please be aware that the interview is a requirement for the completion of the student's dissertation. Thank you for your participation.

Interview Protocol for Former School Principal

Time of Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Position of Interviewee:

Interview Questions:

1. Tell me about yourself and your experience as the principal at LLES.
2. How long were you the principal at LLES?
3. What was your experience with the Response to Intervention Process (RtI)?
4. What was your role in the Student Assistance Team (SAT)?
5. Since you started working in the district, did you receive professional development in RtI? If yes, When did you receive the training and for how long?
6. What was done at LLES in terms of professional development during your tenure? What was its impact?
7. Was there mentoring of novice teachers? If so, what was its impact?
8. What system was in place to regularly verify that Tier II interventions for reading, math or behavior were implemented?
9. Did teachers turn to you for help you when they were unsure of how to proceed with a student who was struggling or needed additional assistance? Can you recall how you assisted a particular teacher?
10. Is there any additional information that you would like to share concerning the RtI process?

Appendix M

Interview Protocol for Current School Principal

Instructions: Please read the Statement of Participation below. If you agree to participate, please answer the interview questions the researcher will be asking. Thank you.

Statement of Participation

A District employee is a graduate student in the College of Education at The University of New Mexico. As a requirement of her dissertation research study for the graduate Educational Leadership program, she is conducting a series of interviews in which she would like for you to participate. You of course may decline at this time or at any time during the process whenever and for whatever reason. Please be aware that the interview is a requirement for the completion of the student's dissertation. Thank you for your participation.

Interview Protocol for Current School Principal

Time of Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Position of Interviewee:

Interview Questions:

1. Tell me about yourself and your experience as the principal at LLES.
2. How long have you been the principal at LLES?
3. What has been your experience with the Response to Intervention Process (RtI)?
4. What is your role in the Student Assistance Team (SAT)?
5. Since you started working in the district, have you receive professional development in RtI? If yes, When did you receive the training and for how long?
6. What is being done at LLES in terms of professional development? What has been its impact?
7. Is there mentoring of novice teachers? If so, what has been its impact?
8. What system is in place to regularly verify that Tier II interventions for reading, math or behavior are implemented?
9. Do teachers turn to you for help you when they are unsure of how to proceed with a student who is struggling or needs additional assistance? Can you recall how you assisted a particular teacher?
10. Is there any additional information that you would like to share concerning the RtI process?

Appendix N

Interview Protocol for District Special Education Director

Instructions: Please read the Statement of Participation below. If you agree to participate, please answer the interview questions the researcher will be asking. Thank you.

Statement of Participation

A District employee is a graduate student in the College of Education at The University of New Mexico. As a requirement of her dissertation research study for the graduate Educational Leadership program, she is conducting a series of interviews in which she would like for you to participate. You of course may decline at this time or at any time during the process whenever and for whatever reason. Please be aware that the interview is a requirement for the completion of the student's dissertation. Thank you for your participation.

Interview Protocol for District Special Education Director

Time of Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Position of Interviewee:

Interview Questions:

1. Tell me about yourself and your experience as the Director of Special Education at the North Mountain District.
2. How long have you been Director at NMD?
3. Do you have experience with the Response to Intervention Process (RtI)?
4. Have you participated in any Student Assistance Teams (SATs)?
5. Since you started working in the district, have you suggested or been a part of the development of professional development in RtI for teachers? If yes, When did they receive the training and for how long?
6. What is being done at NMD in terms of professional development? What has been its impact?
7. Have there been changes in SY2012-2013 in the intake process for SAT referrals?
8. What system is in place to regularly verify that SAT referral packets are complete?
9. Have regular education teachers turned to you or your staff for help when they are unsure of how to proceed with a student who is struggling or needed additional assistance? Can you recall how you or your staff assisted that particular teacher?
10. Is there any additional information that you would like to share concerning the RtI process?

Appendix O

District Permission to Conduct Research

Application No. _____ (Leave blank)

Date Received _____ (Leave blank)

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF INSTRUCTION



APPLICATION TO CONDUCT EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH IN THE



As the District's decision will be based on information provided in this application, it is the researcher's responsibility to provide all requested information on this form. If more space is needed to answer any question, please attach additional sheets. Supplementary materials may be attached, as appropriate. All applications must be typewritten.

Name of Researcher: Madelyn P. Mármol **Date:** January 3, 2013

Mailing Address: 285 State Road 240, Taos, NM 87571

Office Phone: 575-751-3608

Home Phone: 575-737-0580

Position: Teacher

Project Title: Teacher Efficacy within the Response to Intervention (RTI) Framework

Study Design: Qualitative Research, Case Study

What question does your study seek to answer? How does teacher efficacy affect the Student Assistance Team (SAT) process and the delivery of the Tier II interventions?

Please describe the ways in which the [REDACTED] would directly benefit from your study.

The [REDACTED] would directly benefit from the insight regular education teachers would provide regarding Tier II of the Response to Intervention Process.

Is this study legally mandated? It is in fulfillment of my dissertation requirements for the University of New Mexico Educational Leadership Program.

If so, by what agency or authority? (Please be specific)

Approximated dates of data collection:

From: Spring 2013

To: Fall 2013

Expected completion date of final report:

Fall 2013

Please list the school(s) in which the study, if approved, will be conducted.

[REDACTED]

Please explain your selection of this school(s):

It is the largest elementary school in the [REDACTED] with the largest number of Special Education students and research shows that the recommendations to Special Education after the RtI process occur in the elementary school.

Please indicate the number of participants and the approximate amount of time which would be required of each participant: (i.e. one time, per month of year)

	Students (by grade)	Teachers (by grade)	Principals	Parents	Other (Specify)
Number of Participant	0	Approximately 12-30	1	0	Former Principal SPED Director SAT Team
Time per Participant	0	Approximately 2 to 3 hrs.	Approximately 2 to 3 hours	0	2 to 5 hours

What funding do you possess to cover costs to the school or district?

No funding is necessary. I intend to interview teachers, principals, and SPED director during preparatory periods or before or after school hours.

Describe the specific procedure to be used to select participants (random selection of classes is preferred over random selection of students).

Regular education certified teachers will be purposefully sampled. Teachers will be placed in one of three categories: novice, intermediate, or veteran based on years of experience and a percentage from each category will be selected to be interviewed. Former and Current Principals and SPED director will be asked to participate. Current Principal will give consent, days or times of a SAT meeting.

Please describe school records that you wish to examine and indicate how they relate to your study.

I will only utilize public school records for demographics on students, teachers, and parents.

Please describe and attach the instruments, forms, questionnaires, or tests to be used to collect data and explain how those instruments relate to the study.

Proposed interview questions attached.

Who will be responsible for administering tests or questionnaires and how will they be administered?

I will be solely responsible for the questions and dissemination (if needed) of information.

List the facilities at each school that you will need (e.g., tables, chair, room, etc.)

Classroom, meeting room or office.

How will the data be physically tabulated?

Information/recording information will be gathered by me and locked in a fire proof safe cabinet or stored on a pass-protected computer.

What analytical tools will you use in your design?

Qualitative study.

Will you request use of the District computer in either data collection? _____ or data analysis? _____

If yes, explain:

No

Do you plan to send parent permission forms?

Yes _____ No X_____

My sample population does not include students.

If yes, please attach a copy. If the project is approved, the Office of the Director of Instruction will require a copy of the signed permission forms.

How will you report the results of the study, and to whom? (If approved, the researcher will provide the results of the study to the district.)

The results will be provided to my dissertation committee. If the district requires a copy of my dissertation I will provide a copy.

To this application, attach the following:

1. A copy of all questionnaires, forms, tests, and communication, which will be distributed to participants.

2. A parent permission form, if appropriate.
3. A brief summary of your research proposal or dissertation prospectus, if applicable.
4. A copy of your university's approval of your research on human subjects, if it is required by the university.

Statement of Researcher:

In submitting this application, I assure the [REDACTED] that I will conduct the research in all respects according to the conditions under which this application may be approved, including the Guidelines for Research Projects in the [REDACTED]. In compliance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Acts of 1974, I will present to the Director of Instruction's Office of the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] that identifiable data collected for this study will be kept confidential. Upon completion of this research, I will present to the Director of Instruction's Office of the [REDACTED] a copy of the findings and an abstract of my final report.

Approval of Supervisor or Study Advisor (if appropriate)

I have reviewed this research request, the description of the research study and the attached instruments, and give my approval to this study.

Name: [REDACTED]

Position: [REDACTED]

School/Instruction: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Superintendent's Signature

[REDACTED]

Director of Instruction

[REDACTED]

Date

[REDACTED]

Date

Appendix P

Recruitment Flyer

TEACHERS: I am a graduate student in the College of Education at The University of New Mexico. As a requirement of my dissertation research study for the graduate Educational Leadership program, I am conducting a series of interviews in which I would like for you to participate. You of course may decline at this time or at any time during the process whenever and for whatever reason. Please be aware that the interviews are confidential and are a requirement for the completion of my dissertation. Below is the prospectus of the research study.

PROSPECTUS: DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Madelyn P. Mármol

Topic: Teacher Efficacy within the Response to Intervention (RtI) Framework

Research Problem: How does teacher efficacy affect the Student Assistance Team (SAT) process and the delivery of the Tier II interventions?

Methodology:

RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY: Social Constructivism

RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE: Qualitative

RESEARCH TYPE: Case Study

RESEARCH SITE: La Loma Elementary School of the North Mountain School District. The largest elementary school in the District.

RESEARCH METHODS: The research will make primary use of interviews of certified regular education teachers in one elementary school of a rural northern New Mexico school district (North Mountain School District). In addition, if consent is granted, the former and current principals of the school will be interviewed as well as the Special Education Director of the District. The principal investigator will observe SAT team meetings with the exclusion of students.

Committee

Dr. Arlie Woodrum, Chair
Dr. Allison Borden, UNM Professor
Dr. Viola Florez, UNM Endowed Chair
Dr. Anne Tafoya, SPED Director, APS

Time Line

Defend Proposal: Fall 2012
IRB Approval: Spring 2013
Research: Spring/Summer 2013
Dissertation Defense: Fall 2013

PLEASE CALL ME AT 575-779-6243 or email me at madelynmarmol@hotmail.com or mmarmol@unm.edu within ten days if you are interested in being a participant in this study. Thank you for your consideration.

Appendix Q

Consent Form

The University of New Mexico
Consent to Participate in Research

Teacher Efficacy within the Response to Intervention (RtI) Framework

03/24/13

Introduction


You are being asked to participate in a research study that is being done by Madelyn P. Mármol, who is the Principal Investigator and, from the Department of ELOL. This research is a case study of how teacher efficacy affects the Student Assistance Team (SAT) process and the delivery of the Tier II interventions within the Response to Intervention (RtI) framework.

The Student Assistance Team (SAT) process is when teachers and parents come together to help low-performing students or students with possible learning disabilities. The Response to Intervention (RtI) model has three steps. Tier I is a common curriculum for all students, Tier II is specific interventions or help for some students, and Tier III is concentrated interventions or help for a few students or students in a special education program. I will be researching three important parts in the success of the RtI model and in student achievement: collaboration or a partnership, professional development or training, and teacher efficacy or effectiveness. My case study will center on the Tier II step of the three-step model.

Tier II interventions are most effective when the Student Assistance Team (SAT) works together and when everyone plays an important role in the success of a student. The SAT is important in the RtI model and the base of the Tier II process. So, the members of the SAT must be well-trained in how to create interventions and in the Tier II process. General education teachers have the main responsibility for planning and carrying out Tier II interventions so teacher efficacy or effectiveness is extremely important.

When carried out properly, RtI is a complete process that may end the need for special education. No single model provides a perfect solution to helping low-performing students or students with learning disabilities. Tier II interventions can be successful and prevent students from entering special education when teachers work together and receive on-going training.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a certified regular education teacher. The current principal, former principal, and the District Special Education Director will

HRPO #: 13-098	Page 1 of 6	Version: 032413
APPROVED: 03/26/13	OFFICIAL USE ONLY	EXPIRES: 03/20/14
 Human Research Protections Office The University of New Mexico Institutional Review Board (HRRC/MCIRB)		

also be asked to participate in this study. I will also observe Student Assistance Team (SAT) meetings that would include parents, teachers, a counselor, and the principal for background and practical knowledge. I will not observe a SAT team if any student is involved. The total expected participants includes 15 to 30 regular education teachers, 3 administrators, and 10 to 15 members of a Student Assistance Team (SAT).

This form will explain the research study, and will also explain the possible risks as well as the possible benefits to you. We encourage you to talk with your family and friends before you decide to take part in this research study. If you have any questions, please ask one of the study investigators.

What will happen if I decide to participate?

If you agree to participate, the following things will happen:

I will present information explaining the study at a staff meeting. A recruitment flyer will be distributed at the staff meeting inviting teachers to contact me via email or phone if they would like to participate in the interview. When the volunteer participants have contacted me, I will begin to schedule interviews. At the start of the interview I will introduce my study, describe the procedures, review the consent form, allow for questions, and then request a signature of the informed consent.

I will contact each of the three administrators in person to ask them if they will participate in the study. I will introduce my study, describe the procedures, review the consent form, and allow for questions. At the start of the interview I will request a signature of the informed consent.

I will contact the principal to ask for dates and times of a Student Assistance Team meetings that I may observe. At the Student Assistance Team (SAT) meetings, I will introduce my study, describe the procedures, review the consent form, and allow for questions. At the start of the meeting I will request a signature of the informed consent from each member of the (SAT).

How long will I be in this study?

You will participate in this study for no more than 2 to 5 hours total. The 2 to 5 hours will take place over a two week period. You will be asked to interview no more than two to three times

HRPO #: 13-098	Page 2 of 6	Version: 032413
APPROVED: 03/26/13	OFFICIAL USE ONLY	EXPIRES: 03/20/14
 UNM Human Research Protections Office The University of New Mexico Institutional Review Board (HRRC/MCIRB)		

during that two week time period. It will take me up to six months to schedule and conduct the interviews and to attend the SAT meetings.

What are the risks or side effects of being in this study?

I do not anticipate any physical, psychological, or economic risks through this study. The anticipated risk of social harm is minimal, and exists only in the event of an unanticipated break of the confidentiality standards and data security procedures described in this application. The very minimal risk involved with participation is the very minimal chance that a potential breach of privacy may occur with the interviews or observations. I have taken steps to protect this risk by conducting interviews in private rooms or offices and erasing digital audio recordings of the interviews from the digital recorder immediately or shredding notes immediately after downloading the information onto my encrypted folder on my personal password-protected computer.

There are risks of stress, emotional distress, inconvenience and possible loss of privacy and confidentiality associated with participating in a research study. For more information about risks and side effects, ask the investigator.

What are the benefits to being in this study?

My goal is to understand teacher efficacy or effectiveness and its effect on the Student Assistance Team process and the delivery of the Tier II interventions within the Response to Intervention process. My intention is to understand the teachers' understanding of the process from beginning interventions and then recommending or not recommending student placement into Tier III of the Response to Intervention model or Special Education.

I do not expect that teachers or administrators will receive direct benefits from this study, however, if you participate, you will get an opportunity to talk about professional issues and personally reflect on your experiences. During the interviews, you may learn more about your own beliefs about the Response to Intervention model that you may want to share with other educators.

What other choices do I have if I do not want to be in this study?

HRPO #: 13-098	Page 3 of 6	Version: 032413
APPROVED: 03/26/13	OFFICIAL USE ONLY	EXPIRES: 03/20/14
 UNM Human Research Protections Office The University of New Mexico Institutional Review Board (HRRC/MCIRB)		

As a participant you will receive an overview of the research process and the informed consent form. You are welcome to ask questions about the study. Participation is voluntary and participation can be withdrawn at any time.

How will my information be kept confidential?

We will take measures to protect the security of all your personal information, but we cannot guarantee confidentiality of all study data.

Information contained in your study records is used by study staff and, in some cases it will be shared with the sponsor of the study. The University of New Mexico Institutional Review Board (IRB) that oversees human subject research and/or other entities may be permitted to access your records. There may be times when we are required by law to share your information. However, your name will not be used in any published reports about this study.

I will take steps to protect confidentiality by conducting interviews in private rooms or offices and erasing digital audio recording of the interviews from the digital recorder immediately after downloading the information onto my encrypted folder on my personal-password-protected computer. I will also shred all notes from the observations immediately after downloading the information onto my encrypted folder on my personal-password-protected computer. All files will be destroyed after completion of the dissertation.

What are the costs of taking part in this study?

Not applicable to this study.

Will I be paid for taking part in this study?

Not applicable to this study.

How will I know if you learn something new that may change my mind about participating?

You will be informed of any significant new findings that become available during the course of the study, such as changes in the risks or benefits resulting from participating in the research or new alternatives to participation that might change your mind about participating.

Can I stop being in the study once I begin?

HRPO #: 13-098	Page 4 of 6	Version: 032413
APPROVED: 03/26/13	OFFICIAL USE ONLY	EXPIRES: 03/20/14
 Human Research Protections Office The University of New Mexico Institutional Review Board (HRRC/MCIRB)		

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You have the right to choose not to participate or to withdraw your participation at any point in this study.

Whom can I call with questions or complaints about this study?

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints at any time about the research study, Madelyn P. Mármol, or his/her associates will be glad to answer them at 575-779-6243 or Dr. Arlie Woodrum at 505-277-2956.

If you need to contact someone after business hours or on weekends, please call the same as above and ask for Madelyn P. Mármol.

If you would like to speak with someone other than the research team, you may call the UNMHSC HRPO at (505) 272-1129.

Whom can I call with questions about my rights as a research participant?

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you may call the UNMHSC HRPO at (505) 272-1129. The HRPO is a group of people from UNM and the community who provide independent oversight of safety and ethical issues related to research involving human participants. For more information, you may also access the IRB website at <http://hsc.unm.edu/som/research/hrrc/irbhome.shtml>.

CONSENT

You are making a decision whether to participate in this study. Your signature below indicates that you read the information provided (or the information was read to you). By signing this consent form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights as a research participant.

I have had an opportunity to ask questions and all questions have been answered to my satisfaction. By signing this consent form, I agree to participate in this study. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you.

Name of Adult Subject (print) Signature of Adult Subject Date

HRPO #: 13-098	Page 5 of 6	Version: 032413
APPROVED: 03/26/13	OFFICIAL USE ONLY	EXPIRES: 03/20/14
 UNM Human Research Protections Office The University of New Mexico Institutional Review Board (HRRC/MCIRB)		

Initial for audio Date
recording
agreement

Initial for Date
permission to
take observational notes.

INVESTIGATOR SIGNATURE

I have explained the research to the participant and answered all of his/her questions. I believe that he/she understands the information described in this consent form and freely consents to participate.

Madelyn P. Mármol

Name of Investigator/ Research Team Member (type or print)

(Signature of Investigator/ Research Team Member) Date

HRPO #:
13-098

Page 6 of 6

Version:
032413

APPROVED:
03/26/13

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

EXPIRES:
03/20/14



UNM | Human Research Protections Office
The University of New Mexico Institutional Review Board (HRRC/MCIRB)

Appendix R

Research Prospectus

Madelyn P. Mármol

August 15, 2012

PROSPECTUS: DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Topic: Teacher Efficacy within the Response to Intervention (RtI) Framework

Research Problem: How does teacher efficacy affect the Student Assistance Team (SAT) process and the delivery of the Tier II interventions?

Problem Statement: North Mountain School District is five percent over the national average for students with disabilities. In addition, the school has double the number of students in gifted education as any other school district of its size in the State of New Mexico. Principals and/or counselors in the school district have referred an exorbitant amount of SAT documentation to the District diagnosticians who review records and conduct evaluations to determine Tier III or special education eligibility.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this qualitative research study is to identify teacher efficacy in their professional decision making process regarding the initial SAT process and Tier II interventions. If teachers understand the RtI process and are properly trained then North Mountain School District should be closer or below the national average of students who qualify for Tier III. The analysis of the existing data and new findings will determine the efficacy of Tier II in the RtI process implemented by teachers in the largest elementary school in the District.

Methodology:

RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY: Social Constructivism

RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE: Qualitative

RESEARCH TYPE: Case Study

RESEARCH SITE: La Loma Elementary School of the North Mountain School District. The largest elementary school with the largest percentage of special education students in the District.

RESEARCH METHODS: The research will make primary use of interviews of certified regular education teachers in one elementary school of a rural northern New Mexico school district (North Mountain School District). Teachers will be placed in one of three categories: novice, intermediate, or veteran based on years of experience and a percentage from each category will be selected to be interviewed.

Committee

Dr. Arlie Woodrum, Chair

Dr. Allison Borden

Dr. Viola Florez

Dr. Anne Tafoya

Time Line

Defend Proposal: Fall 2012

IRB Approval: Fall 2012/Spring 2013

Research: Spring/Summer 2013

Dissertation Defense: Fall 2013

Tables

Table 1

La Loma Elementary School Proportion Number of REGED Teachers to be Interviewed

Teachers by Category	Total	Special Education Teachers	Regular Education Teachers	Overall Percentage of Teachers	Percentage of Regular Education Teachers	Proportionate Number of Regular Education Teachers to be Interviewed
Novice Teacher 0-5 years of experience	12	2	10	26%	27%	3
Intermediate Teacher 6-14.5 years of experience	22	7	15	47%	41%	6
Veteran Teacher 15-35 years of experience	13	1	12	27%	32%	4
TOTALS	47	10	37	100%	100%	13

Table 2

Novice Question and Vignette Responses

QUESTIONS	NOVICE 101	NOVICE 102	NOVICE 103
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular Education Inclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular Education Dual Language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular Education Dual Language
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, Inclusion Teacher Assistance from SPED teacher and SPED EAs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One Student SAT Process 	No
3	I don't know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Didn't know much (beginning of year) Knows Tiers SAT 	Knows Tiers
4	No	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes One class on diversity
5	No	No	No
6	TIENET Training	SPED Teacher	Copy of Guideline for RtI from NMPED
7	Gave explanations of interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application form Documenting what has been done 	SAT Process
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sometimes works Sometimes doesn't Gave examples 	Described case where it didn't work	It works
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participant repeated the question System=Interventions Forms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeat the question Guided Reading Small group intervention (assess daily) System=Interventions Title I program (Reading Rockets) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asked to repeat question System = SpEd Department
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DIBELS Guided Reading Benchmark Assessment 	Dual Language Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small groups DIBELS/IDEL
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apple Tree (visual aide) Data Folders Guided Reading benchmark 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily assessments Open Court assessments (Foro Abierto) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observation Formal assessments (DIBELS) Alphabet/spelling tests

QUESTIONS	NOVICE 101	NOVICE 102	NOVICE 103
	assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DIBEL Scores ○ Running Record 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dual Language assessments • Math Expressions assessments • DIBELS/IDEL • Progress monitor • Benchmark assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student participation • Behavior charts • Call parents • Meet with principal
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small group • Guided Reading • Math Expressions • Re-teach lesson • Manipulatives • One-on-one 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small group • Guided Reading • Benchmark assessments • One-on-one • K3+ Program • Manipulatives • Minute Math 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualized instruction • One-on-one • Small group • Repeating lessons • Homework • Talk to students • Talk to parents • Counselors/social workers talk to class • Vice-principal
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Interventionist • Speech Therapist • SpEd Teachers • Mentor Teacher • Other Teachers/Collaborate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentor • Grade level meeting daily • Family members who are colleagues • Internet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade level group • Dual Language team • Title I personnel • Bilingual teacher • Social worker • Principal
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to learn terminology • TIENET training • How to do SATs • Should have learned in college • More training on SPED programs 	No	More training

VIGNETTES	NOVICE 101	NOVICE 102	NOVICE 103
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmark Assessment • Visual aides • Guided Reading • Call a SAT meeting • Reading Rockets (Tier II intervention) • Parents • Dual Language Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before/After school tutoring • Start a SAT • Talk to previous teachers • Pullout flashcards • Play Games • Show Pictures • Talk to parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at scores • Talk to parents • Fill out SAT forms • Bilingual Teacher • One-on-one • Small group • Start from the beginning/basic
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess • Guided Reading (Tier II interventions) • SAT team • Benchmark Assessments • Reading Rockets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage • Work on spelling • Work on comprehension • Small Group • Writing • Talk to parents • Find books that interest student 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual • Small group • Read aloud with peers • Visual aides • Decodable books • Flash cards
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech therapist • Call a SAT • DIBELS • Guided Reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manipulatives • Play Games • Buddy/Partner • Talk to parents • Speech teacher • Start SAT process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech therapist observation • Circle time • Build self-confidence • Extra time • Play games • Partner • Talk to parents • Flashcards
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second Steps Program (behavior) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancement • Encourage other activities • iPad • Challenge in other subjects • Teach to other students • Games/websites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancement • SAT team • Small group for math • Set goals • Self-confidence • Partner • Encourage • Motivate • Tutoring in math • Flashcards

Table 3

Intermediate Question and Vignette Responses

Questions	Intermediate 101	Intermediate 102	Intermediate 103	Intermediate 104	Intermediate 105	Intermediate 106
1	Regular Ed. Teacher	Inclusion Teacher Regular Ed. Teacher	Regular Education	Regular Education	Inclusion Dual Language	Inclusion Regular Education Dual Language
2	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • Not received much assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No assistance in classroom • Pull out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No • Pull out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • SPED Assistant
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knows Tiers • Explained Tier I/II • Tier II: DIBELs & F & P Benchmark Assessment 	Different Tiers Knows Tiers	Knows 3 Tiers and percentage of population in each tier	Knows 3 tiers does not know exact details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knows tiers • Not familiar w/all types of interventions • SAT process? or language barrier 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knows tiers • Concerned no RtI interventions for Dual Language early childhood
4	No	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little bit BA • More in MA 	MA a portion No	No	No
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • State level training • Solution Tree – PLCs and RtI • Differentiated Instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baldrige (like RtI) • SAT process • K3+ • RtI a couple of yrs. ago 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 45 minutes SY12-13 • None previous 	No	Some training Hour here or there	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short training 5 yrs. ago • Some training in SAT • SPED diag. said no retentions in early childhood
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitates PLC leadership team • Plans PD • Guided Reading Training • Train each other • Continue 	Ask principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPED Teacher • Reading Interventionist 	Not asked for RtI training hasn't had the need	Counselor Need visual aid for interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal • Asked for SAT and intervention training last two years – has not received

Questions	Intermediate 101	Intermediate 102	Intermediate 103	Intermediate 104	Intermediate 105	Intermediate 106
	training Accelerated Reader GLAD					
7	Knows Tier I/II	SAT Team	Knows Tier I/II	Not clear	Not sure	Does not know
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absolutely SAT process Testing for SPED 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes Reading Rockets or Reading lab Guided Reading Gave examples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can Remember Did not know best way to address problems 	Worked using SAT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can't Recalled SAT sent back 	Rtl in groups
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What system? System is broken SAT process broken "SAT process is broken right now" "We don't see every student that needs extra support." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asked to repeat question Student data report Report cards Guided Reading folder "going through transition" 	Clarification? No System <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accelerated math Reading Rockets DIBELS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SAT team Progress monitoring Through SPED Dept. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guided Reading benchmark testing DIBELS Discovery WIDA ACCESS Woodcock Muñoz 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeat question Reading Rockets DIBELS SAT process Gave example of student
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DIBELS F & P Benchmark Assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> STAR Need to update technology Collaboration 	NMSBA addresses weaknesses and strengths of students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MAP use data Benchmark Assessment Have to request data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NMSBA received too late for current SY Discovery to target specific areas of need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DIBELS Data profile
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Running Records DIBELS Small group intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Running Records Guided Reading Samples of work Positive reinforcement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apple Tree Better behavior = stronger academics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charts Report Cards DIBELS progress monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data folders Baldrige Disciplined: procedures, classroom management, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Folders Behavior on individual basis Handle minor incidents in class

Questions	Intermediate 101	Intermediate 102	Intermediate 103	Intermediate 104	Intermediate 105	Intermediate 106
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behavior not a problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behavior booklet 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents receive notes or phone conversations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> rules, homework One-on-one High expectations “a lot of our students are on survival mode all of the time” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major incidents to principal
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> F & P LLI system F& P prompting guide Reading Rockets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open Court Orton Gillingham Syllable cards Project Read DIBELs Small groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> F & P books Used example of student with behavior problems Accelerated math 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not using Tier II strategies Cannot define 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small group Kagan strategies Numbered heads together Round Robins MSA Peer tutoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning games Learning centers Daily observations GLAD strategies Collaboration time
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with classroom teachers Parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peers Previous teacher SPED teacher Community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grade level teachers Veteran teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dual Language teachers Open Court intervention materials Lead teachers PLC teachers Principal 	SPED teacher	Grade level collaboration
14	Fix system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time to collaborate Classroom helper Training for parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weak in RtI process Confused between Tiers I/II - Activities - Terminology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not enough knowledge on RtI Failing in follow through with RtI No RtI PD Not assessed in PDP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need more training Kept up to date with changes More visual aids 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More PD Hands on – show us Help each other Use District resources instead of going out of district

Vignettes	Intermediate 101	Intermediate 102	Intermediate 103	Intermediate 104	Intermediate 105	Intermediate 106
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SAT meeting Not disability, language Dual Language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessed in Spanish Hands on Partner Label items Guided Reading Small group Real-life connections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult w/Spanish speaker TESOL strategies SYOP Vocabulary Speak slowly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dual Language? Should be in DL ESL teachers DL teachers Phonics approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guided Reading benchmark assessment in English and Spanish Peer tutoring Dual Language Flashcards Word notebooks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bilingual teacher Talk to parents Tutoring Dual Language Work on self-esteem
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess Tier II interventions Possible Dyslexia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SAT Possible Dyslexia Possible assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumed learning a new language Practice English Small group Partner Read & speak more 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SAT Possible enhancement Talk to SPED Continue to monitor SAT process long 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fluency testing Timed reading Comprehension games Comprehension strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read story to student alone ahead of time Parents read aloud at home Needs confidence Practice
3	Assessed by SLP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Find? Information from cum folder Story time Play games Check hearing – eyesight SAT Parents Speech therapist OT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Normal stage Talking Language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speech usual problem Speech teacher SAT Home? English 2nd language? Bilingual teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speech therapist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumed Spanish speaker Dual Language class Interventions in home language
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SAT Enhance curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop friendships Classroom helper Parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing Partner Pair off 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhancement SAT Work with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects with reading – pop-up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage student Enhancement

Questions	Intermediate 101	Intermediate 102	Intermediate 103	Intermediate 104	Intermediate 105	Intermediate 106
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test for enhancement • Work with parents • Behavior will improve with like students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAT • Enhancement • Extend learning to other subjects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • w/students who need extra boost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lower students • Teacher helper • Gave example of similar student 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • books, reports • Incorporate math • Limiting reading time 	

Table 4

Veteran Question and Vignette Responses

Questions	Veteran 101	Veteran 102	Veteran 103	Veteran 104	Veteran 105
1	Regular Education Inclusion	Regular Education Dual Language	Enhancement Regular Education	Regular Education Inclusion	Inclusion Regular Education
2	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • Assistance from SPED teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • Yes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • SPED Teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • EA assigned and SPED teacher
3	Knows tiers and SAT process	Knows Tiers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Said knew/investigated • Did not articulate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAT process • Go through a lot of paperwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knows Tier I/II • SAT
4	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No RtI • SAT process 	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No • SAT process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No • Training on how to identify but not on paperwork
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word of mouth • Speaking w/SPED teacher • Haven't had RtI training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • When process began • Couple of Wed. afternoons • Periodic updates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • Part of District training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some training – 2 yrs. ago - probably a day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • Several trainings 4/5 yrs. ago • Process slowed down • Long time to receive services
6	Collaboration with SPED teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Interventionist • SPED teacher • Colleague 	Research on-line	Ask for PD “it’s more of what the administration wants us to be trained in rather than what we’re asking for training in”	SPED Teacher “held my hand”

Questions	Veteran 101	Veteran 102	Veteran 103	Veteran 104	Veteran 105
7	Knows Tier II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document • Knows Tier II process 	Knows Tier II “Double dip”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Something different from the whole group • Bridge the gap • Other activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Rockets – based on DIBELs scores • Classroom performance • Data folders
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helped for SAT process • Tested for Tier II 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes student ended up referred to Tier III and placed • Lengthy procedure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • Continue to assist and monitor after graduation from Tier II 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No Reading Rockets • No person for RtI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes and no • Not enough people in place for channels to be followed • Turnaround slowed down
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not an actual system • Teachers document 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAT process • Parent, counselors, administrator, teachers involved • Tier II accommodations • Testing for SPED 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don’t have a system • Beginnings of a system not full-fledged system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeat question • Ton of testing • Guided Reading • Progress monitoring • DIBELs • Teacher Observations • Classroom instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data folders • Test students • Title I specialists
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discovery – item analysis report and rating – specific target areas • Related to Common Core 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IDEL • ACCESS • Woodcock Muñoz • Math end of unit assessment & quizzes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STAR reading and math • Progress monitor on DIBELs • High frequency word lists • Nonsense words/syllables • Phonemic awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NMSBA results too late • Reflect on instruction • Discovery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualize • Differentiated instruction • One-on-one
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discovery • No behavior monitoring system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portfolio w/samples • Graphs 	Daily teacher observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take grades • Daily work • Homework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily and weekly basis • Apple Tree

Questions	Veteran 101	Veteran 102	Veteran 103	Veteran 104	Veteran 105
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fluency & Guided Reading 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discipline program Principal 	
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small group Small class size Group work Peer tutoring Journaling Accelerated math NEOs Everything more modified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperative learning Peer Teaching Small group <i>Silabas</i> Hands-on games Manipulatives Math games 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Double dip (second small group or individual) iPad programs Computer programs Guided Reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More lenient with SPED students Shortened assignments Flash cards Adapt Anything it takes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer tutoring Close proximity Abbreviate the lesson Visual Audibly Kinesthetically Integrate subjects Music Movement
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SPED teacher Parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff PLC Grade Level discussions once a week Team effort 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grade level teachers Collaboration time SPED teacher District-wide meetings Teachers from other schools Research on-line 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grade level team Meet once/twice week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colleagues Brainstorm
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More specific training Enhancement teacher sends out information strategies for Tier II and SAT documentation 	Not right now	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Systems not designed in way helpful to RtI Schedule interferes with RtI process More resources RtI dependent on pull out and only one pull out program Guided Reading No math program “Time is our biggest enemy” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process lengthy Shortened time Example: SAT in Sept. okayed for enhancement assessment in May “we’ve cheated this child” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change process “once you’ve made improvements, give everybody a chance to get used to it before you change it again”

Vignettes	Veteran 101	Veteran 102	Veteran 103	Veteran 104	Veteran 105
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dual Language placement • Testing in native language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dual Language • Phonemes • Syllables • Guiding Reading (start all over again) • Back to the Beginning • <i>Special Assistance (not necessarily SPED)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small group • Focus on language arts or written skill development • Exposure to highly verbal students • Encourage reading • Vocabulary acquisition • Help others in Spanish • Large group – listening • “Learning happens when we listen” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dual Language • Test in native language • Talk to bilingual teacher • Academic failure or language barrier? • Test her fairly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer tutor • Develop vocabulary • Opportunities to express in Eng./Span. • Ability level in home language • Dual Language • Tier II • Tutor • Disability in home language?
2	Guided Reading – identify struggles – level to match needs and work from there	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible learning disability • Referred to Speech • Tested for SPED 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diagnostics • Dyslexic • Probing • Provide opportunities for hands-on, phonics, rhyming activities • Provide accommodations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading interventionist • SAT process • Continue oral exams • Not embarrass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mimic teacher reading • Phrase • Gave example of student
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age? • Missed prior to entering school? • Think strategies • Possible referral for SAT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning disability • Referred to Speech • Teacher focus on specific needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hearing or vision issues • SAT • Parents • Developmental issues? • When did speech start • Rhyming games 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech therapist observation • Might be English learner • Study speech patterns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choral reading • Sing song • Clap, pattern • Team • Positive reinforcement • Integrate • Patterning • Left/Right brain • Fine motor • Trick into learning
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make math exciting • Build on self-esteem • Help others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tie math into reading – increase interest • Tested for enhancement • Difficult without data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAT • Gifted and Talented • Broad range of reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typical gifted • Enhancement teacher pull out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obviously gifted • Parents • Documenting • DIBELs • Cooperative • Sociable