

IMPLEMENTING STRUCTURES TO IMPROVE COLLECTIVE TEACHER EFFICACY
CONNECTED TO LITERACY PRACTICES

by

ROBIN CHRISTIAN

(Under the Direction of Jami Royal Berry)

ABSTRACT

This qualitative action research study examined the impact of implementing structures focused on improving teachers' collective teacher efficacy in literacy in an urban elementary turnaround school. The purpose of the study was to address the need to build and implement structures that support improving collective teacher efficacy connected to literacy practices. Participants included teachers, school, and district leaders in one urban elementary school. The study was guided by three research questions: 1) What is the relationship between leadership behaviors and school-wide collective teacher efficacy connected to literacy practices in one urban turnaround elementary school? 2) How do teachers describe the impact of the implementation of additional support structures for literacy instruction on their efficacy in one urban turnaround elementary school? and 3) How do action research team members describe the process of creating and implementing structures that support collective teacher efficacy connected to literacy practices in one urban turnaround elementary school? Data were collected through interviews, questionnaires, observations, and focus groups. The study adds to the body of research on how school wide collective teacher efficacy can have a positive impact on building teacher capacity and knowledge in the teaching of literacy in urban schools using

job-embedded professional learning. Findings indicate the following: leadership behaviors have the ability to influence collective teacher efficacy and strong support structures as well as systems of job-embedded professional learning, create supportive and collaborative work environments.

INDEX WORDS: Collective Teacher Efficacy, Implementing structures, Job-Embedded Professional Learning, Leadership Behaviors

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DEDICATION

To

My husband Neal, thank you for your patience and understanding.

To my beautiful mother in heaven, Doris Jean Brown. You have continued to remain my anchor in the midnight hour. Your voice of encouragement was my sounding board to never quit on this journey. I pray that your soul is even happier knowing that I finally accomplished what you always wanted me to have. You are the reason that I started on this journey.

Kennedy and Kenneth, Jr., my two beautiful children; Kennedy, you constantly told me that I could do it and your many obstacles that never stopped you, often provided me with the resilience to keep going. To my son Kenneth, your way of quietly saying that you are proud of me gave me the calmness that I often needed to press on. To my Godson, Caden, you made me laugh when I often wanted to cry. Your FaceTime calls often calmed my nerves.

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My brother, Raybin Brown. Your strength and determination anchored me to overcome any doubt, fears, or feelings of defeat.

Isaiah 40:31- But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In urban schools across the United States, educators are faced with complex demands on appropriate practices in which to close the literacy achievement gap as students enter school lacking a strong literacy foundation. Results from the 2019 National Assessment of Education Progress, commonly known as the Nation's Report Card and published by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), indicate only thirty-five percent of fourth-graders and thirty-four percent of eighth-graders were classified as proficient readers (NCES, 2019). Urban schools contend with the complexities of closing the literacy gap of students from communities with high rates of poverty as well as closing the achievement gap between Blacks, White, and Hispanics. Despite efforts to close the literacy achievement gap, (NCES, 2019) reveal that the percentage of White fourth-graders scoring proficient or higher in literacy is approximately double that of Hispanics, and two and a half times higher than Blacks (47% for Whites, 23% for Hispanics, and 20% for Blacks). From the No Child Left Behind Act (2002), which was a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), to the 2015, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), teachers and school leaders have unfortunately resorted to a repetitive model of teaching literacy towards a high stakes test.

As students begin matriculating throughout elementary school, teachers most often engage in a wide variety of professional development in order to meet the complex needs of struggling readers. At the national and federal level, approximately \$2.6 billion is being spent on professional development and locally approximately \$8,000-\$12,000 per school district (Calvert,

2016). A 2014 study conducted by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which surveyed approximately 1,600 teachers, characterized most professional development as “irrelevant, ineffective, and not connected to their core work of helping students learn” (Calvert, 2016, p. 2).

One of the main facets beyond teachers and urban public schools learning how to meet the needs of struggling readers is to explore how collective teacher efficacy connects to improving literacy practices in a culture, which fosters collaboration and trust. Collective efficacy, defined as the “collective self-perception that teachers in a given school make an educational difference to their students over and above the educational impact of their homes and communities” (Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004, p. 190). As leaders across the nation seek ways in which to improve student achievement in schools educating mainly minorities and in marginalized communities; commonly known as turnaround or other labels by the state, research supports the need to improve collective teacher efficacy as a high yield strategy to improve student performance. Meyers and Smylie (2017, p. 503) contend, “turnaround efforts focus primarily on improving test scores rapidly by leveraging generic programs and practices that may not be appropriate to context or may not promote fundamental changes in school organization and operations that are not likely to result in significant lasting improvement.” The duplication of generic literacy programs across schools found in many district turnaround initiatives is in direct contrast to organizational change and how school contexts should be accounted for. In a recent study conducted by the International Reading Association (2020), of the 1,443 surveyed, the number one greatest challenge in the teaching of literacy is the disconnect between the school curriculum and students’ actual needs in terms of literacy support and instruction.

Schools and teachers in districts across the nation have been forced to teach literacy using commercial or generic lessons and scripts, which have had a negative impact on students benefiting from the full extent of gaining literacy knowledge. Policies resulting in quick fixes to reading test scores, have resulted in literacy instruction which is focused on teaching to the test, and classroom assessments aligned to match the format of high stakes assessments (Levitt, 2017, para. 4). As Soler (2016, p. 424) suggests, “the centralization and increased policy-based governance of the teaching of reading has in turn, heightened political control and infringed on the classroom teacher’s professional jurisdiction in this area.” With the increased focus on fidelity to core scripted literacy programs during NCLB, policy mandates, and reform initiatives, teacher frustration increased which led to feelings that efforts were based on the ability to follow adopted literacy prescribed curriculums. DeWitt (2018, p. 4) explains that given the challenges that schools face such as “increased accountability, mandates, budget cuts, students experiencing trauma, mental-health issues, and the increased focus on academic rigor, the days of teachers working in solitary confinement should be in the past.” Campbell and Lawson (2018) explain that top-down, scripted, and compliance-oriented implementation strategies and protocols, which treat teachers as implementation puppets, often lead to factors diminishing and impeding teacher agency. Teacher agency, defined as the capacity of teachers to act purposefully and constructively to direct their professional growth and contribute to the growth of their colleagues, is closely tied to improving a school’s collective teacher efficacy (Calvert, 2016). Collective efficacy works because “it influences student achievement indirectly through a constellation of productive patterns of behavior on the part of the adults in the building” (Donohoo & Katz, 2017, p. 21).

Improving school wide collective teacher efficacy as a change strategy for improving student achievement is a rather new approach to seeking results than traditional approaches such as federal and state turnaround measures. As more research evolves related to determining factors of student achievement, collective teacher efficacy is ranked as the number one factor influencing student achievement (Hattie, 2016). Collective teacher efficacy refers to “educators’ shared beliefs that through their combined efforts they can positively influence student outcomes, including those who are disengaged, unmotivated, or disadvantaged” (Donohoo, 2018, p. 323). Federal policies and state mandates have not yielded dramatic improvements in large scale improvement in closing the literacy achievement gap across our nation (O’ Reilly et al., 2019; Center for Educational Progress, 2020), however focusing on implementing effective structures supporting and improving school wide collective efficacy allows a group of educators within a building to take on complex challenges such as improving literacy for high needs schools.

The current federal policy, ESSA (2015), calls for “comprehensive literacy instruction which includes an emphasis on continuous professional learning for teachers” (Dennis, 2017, p. 396). Literature further affirms that teachers have higher engagement when allowed to exchange ideas and reflect with colleagues, all which lead to higher levels of collective teacher efficacy (Dennis, 2017). As districts across the nation continue to confront the national gap in literacy, school policy and reform shifts could pay closer attention to new trends showing collective teacher efficacy as the strongest predictor of improving student achievement in order to improve the national literacy crisis. Creating systems and implementation structures to provide teachers an opportunity to gain additional knowledge is a critical lever in improving school wide collective teacher efficacy towards the belief that all students can read. The International

Reading Association (2020) surveyed approximately 1,400 teachers across the nation, and 61% of the respondents stated they could benefit from having additional time to collaborate and confer with other teachers facing similar challenges in order to improve teacher literacy practices. Collaboration is a key component of improving collective teacher efficacy and is one of the seven characteristics of professional learning. Donohoo (2017, p. 54), explains “teachers most valuable professional learning results from collaborating with their colleagues.”

The Problem

The urgency to shift towards improving literacy practices at Southeast Academy through job-embedded professional learning and the implementation of supporting structures to strengthen school-wide collective teacher efficacy, is based on the fact that close to seventy percent of Georgia’s students are not reading proficiently by fourth grade (Get Georgia Reading, 2020). Further research communicates that children who are not reading proficiently by third grade are four times less likely to graduate high school on time and more than half of all students who did not graduate on time were not reading proficiently in third grade (Workman, 2014). The underlying obligation to produce students ready for post-secondary education and the workforce is directly correlated to improving the literacy proficiency rates of students across the state of Georgia.

Based on a 2019 report by the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education, 58% of third graders in the state of Georgia are not reading with proficiency. Costing the state of Georgia approximately \$1.3 billion annually in the workplace, of adults with the lowest literacy levels, 43% live in poverty, with 70% receiving adult welfare services (GPE, 2019). Research has also shown that third grade reading proficiency widens the achievement gap which exist between black and white students as well as students living below poverty (Georgia Partnership

for Excellence in Education, 2019). The impact of low proficiency in literacy in the early stages of elementary learning will have negative results in later years of schooling. Third grade literacy proficiency in the state of Georgia aligns and translates into a 30% higher graduation rate (GPE, 2019).

Overview of the Research Site Context

Southeast Academy is located in a large urban school district and situated minutes from a large downtown area within a major southern city. The school is considered a public elementary district turnaround school and sits in an historic community of the inner most city near the downtown area of this major southern area. Southeast Academy is a high-poverty school (GOSA, 2020) and is located within a large urban school district which serves approximately 52,000 students across eighty-seven schools; 73% African American, 16% white, 8% Hispanic, and 2% Multi-racial. Southeast Academy serves approximately 280 students in grades pre-kindergarten through 5th grade; 96% African American, 2% and 2% White, 1% Multi-Racial and 1% White. Southeast Academy is considered a high-poverty Title I school, with a free and reduced lunch percentage of ninety-six percent. Sixteen percent of the total student population receive special education services. Less than 5% of the total school population receive services in our gifted program. Students attending Southeast Academy reside in subsidized housing; including three housing units for low-income residents, duplexes, and rental homes. Over half of the students attending Southeast Academy are raised in single parent households or by grandparents with a median household income of approximately \$21,120, making it one of the lowest in the area of the southern city. Forty-six percent of the population in the Southeast Academy community lives below poverty level. The school's student mobility rate is twenty-four percent.

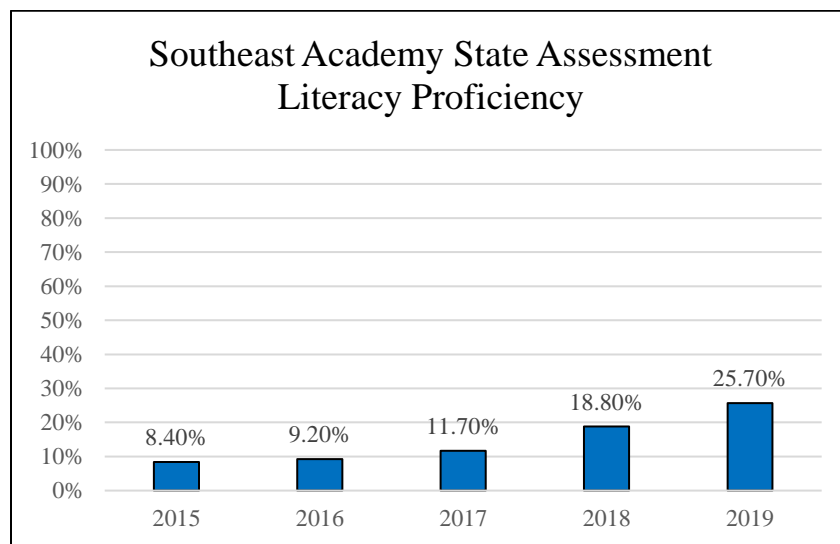
The staff is comprised of forty-six full-time and twelve part-time employees. Sixty percent of the staff have advanced degrees, masters and above. The school turnover and attrition rate has shown steady improvement each year. Over fifty percent of the staff have more than two additional endorsements in areas ranging from reading, math, ESOL, and gifted. Only a third of the teachers have been at the school five or more years. The staffing efforts of the school have been impacted by the need to replace, recruit, and retain highly qualified staff to meet the complex needs of students as a district turnaround school. The school's administrative team is comprised of the school principal, two Assistant Principals, and one school business manager. The school also staffs a full-time social worker and counselor.

While the community is undergoing major gentrification, parent choice to competing charter schools was based on perception and prior school history. The name of the school was changed in 2016 in an attempt to rebrand the school based on prior perception of being a school with low teacher morale and major discipline issues. The school was named a *Beating the Odds* school for two consecutive years while in school turnaround status and removed from the state Turnaround Eligible List for possible state takeover. The CCRPI score (College and Career Performance Index), which is defined as a school's accountability score as measured by the particular state education department in which the school is connected to, for Southeast Academy, was a 38.4 in 2015 and improved to 71.4 with one of the highest student growth percentiles in the southern state in three years. In 2019 the school's CCRPI score decreased to 50.2 due to missing targets in several subgroup areas related to literacy performance in content mastery. In 2018, approximately 47.6 % of students accessed on the state assessment scored at the beginning level in literacy, while in 2019 the percentage of beginning readers increased to 51.5%.

Prior to 2016, Southeast Academy was known as one of the lowest performing schools in the southern region of the state. In the fall of 2015, new leadership took on the helm of school turnaround efforts with an intentional focus on efforts to improve teaching and learning primarily in the area of literacy. In five years, from 2016-2019, the percentage of proficient readers improved as illustrated in Figure 1, however approximately half of the students at Southeast Academy are beginning readers.

Figure 1

Southeast Academy: State Literacy Proficiency Rates 2015-2019



Beginning in the fall of 2016 through 2018, Southeast Academy was involved in district aligned intensive and targeted turnaround measures to provide support to the lowest performing students in literacy including extended learning day, Saturday school, prescriptive literacy programs, school wide professional development and targeted professional development for teachers. While the initial focus of turnaround efforts within Southeast Academy and the change in leadership yielded positive academic growth for the school, a continued gap in literacy proficiency continued to exist. Based on 2019 state assessment data, literacy proficiency outcomes revealed approximately 51.52% of students were beginning readers; over half of the

students served. Prior attempts in improving literacy practices have included focusing on best practices related to implementing guided reading, training and coaching using data-driven small group instruction in literacy, an emphasis on using Accelerated Reader to motivate students to read, and specialized literacy tutors for students reading at least two grade levels below. A large whole scale reading adoption of the Fountas and Pinnell’s responsive reading model was implemented during the 2019-2020 school year, with efforts focused on building teacher capacity in effective reading methods. Initial data over the course of the first year of implementation continues to show wide gaps in literacy outcomes (see Figure 2, Figure 3, and Figure 4).

Figure 2

2nd Grade Fountas and Pinnell BAS-Literacy Student Results

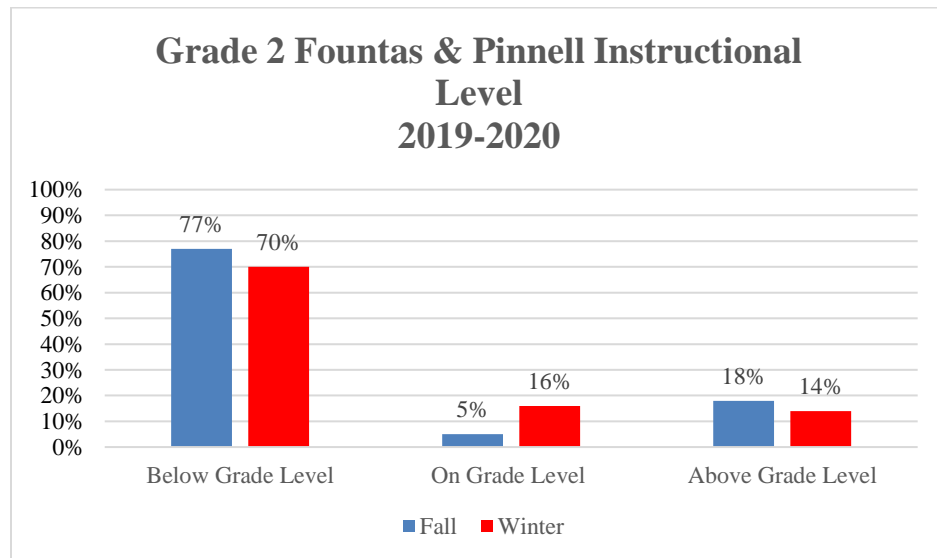
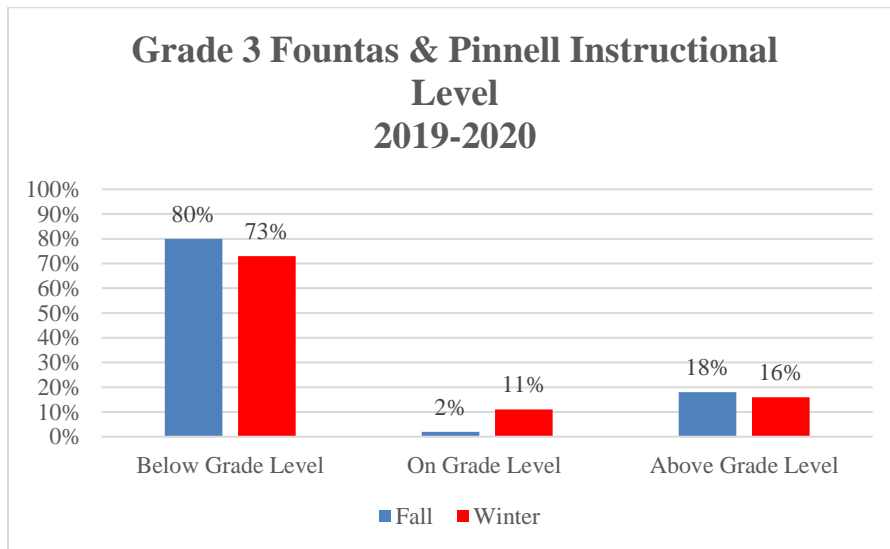
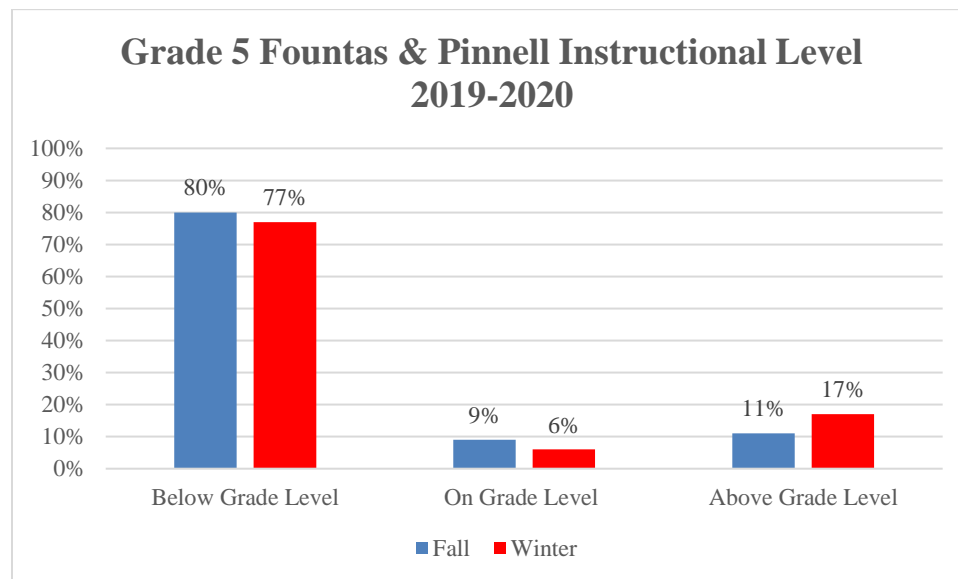


Figure 3*3rd Grade Fountas and Pinnell BAS-Literacy Student Results***Figure 4***5th Grade Fountas and Pinnell BAS-Literacy Student Results*

While incremental growth in literacy has occurred, highly effective teacher practices with strong collective teacher efficacy was not consistent throughout the school. As a result of inconsistent patterns of collective teacher efficacy, Southeast Academy students continued to

perform below the district and the state in literacy performance, which is aligned to the teaching of literacy, inconsistent structures of instructional coaching, and isolated job-embedded professional learning. Based on 2019 data, only 18.8% of Southeast Academy’s 3rd graders were reading at or above the grade level target, compared with the district’s 3rd grade proficiency of 42.1%. In 2019, reading proficiency data revealed that approximately 52.8% of students at Southeast Academy were performing at the beginning level in literacy as compared to 34.3% for the district and 23.7% for the state of Georgia. Recent STAR (*Standardized Test for the Assessment of Reading*) outcomes for Southeast Academy continue to show wide gaps of literacy proficiency (see Figures 5 through 8).

Figure 5

2nd Grade 2019-2020 STAR Literacy Data

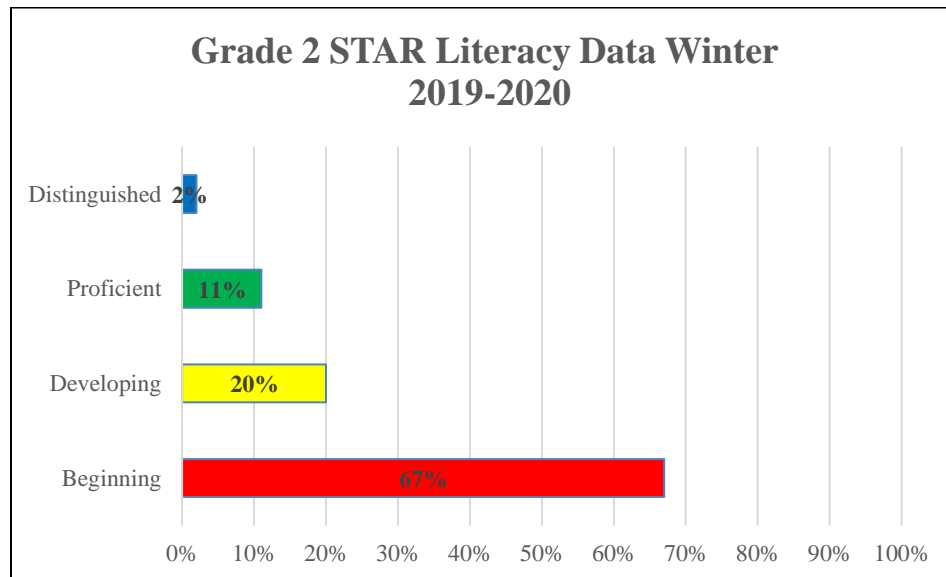


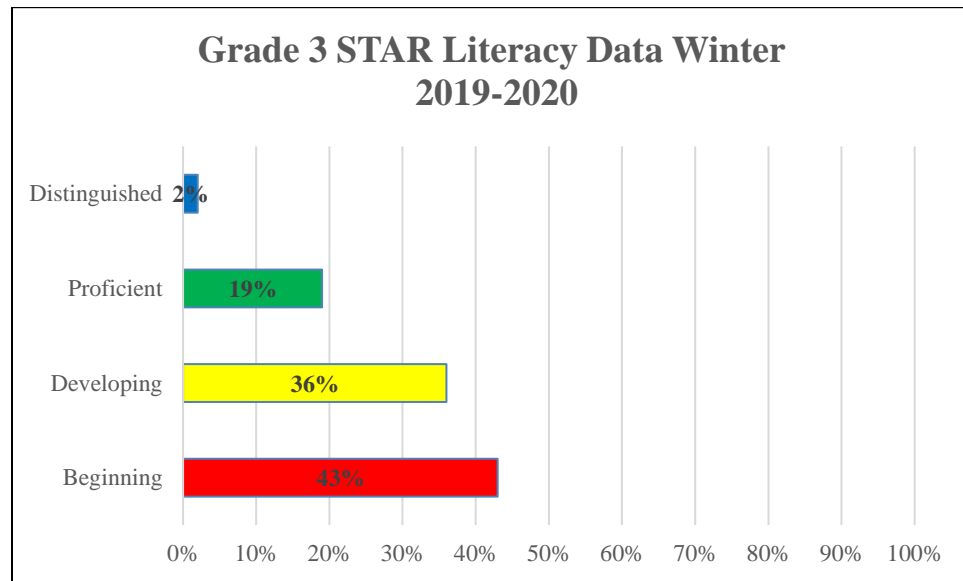
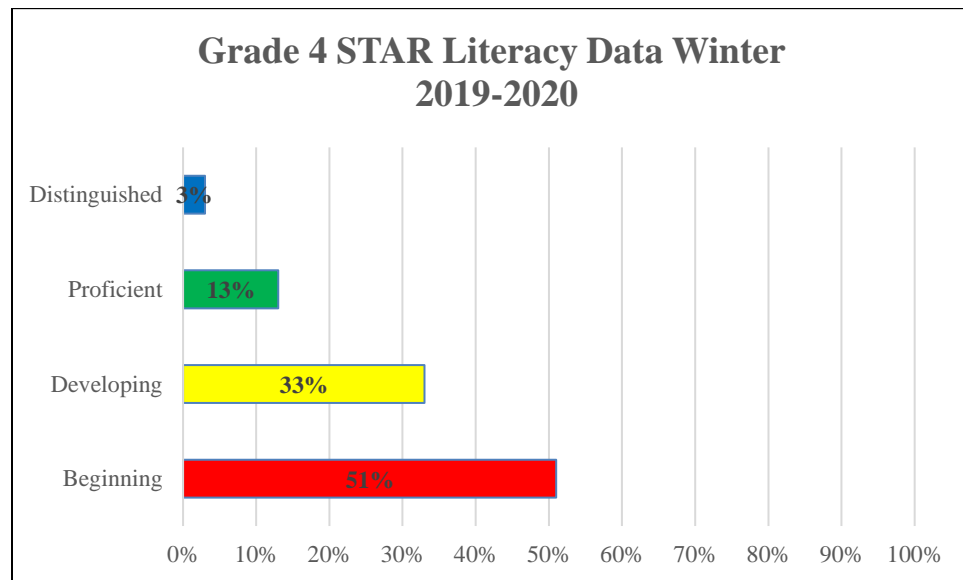
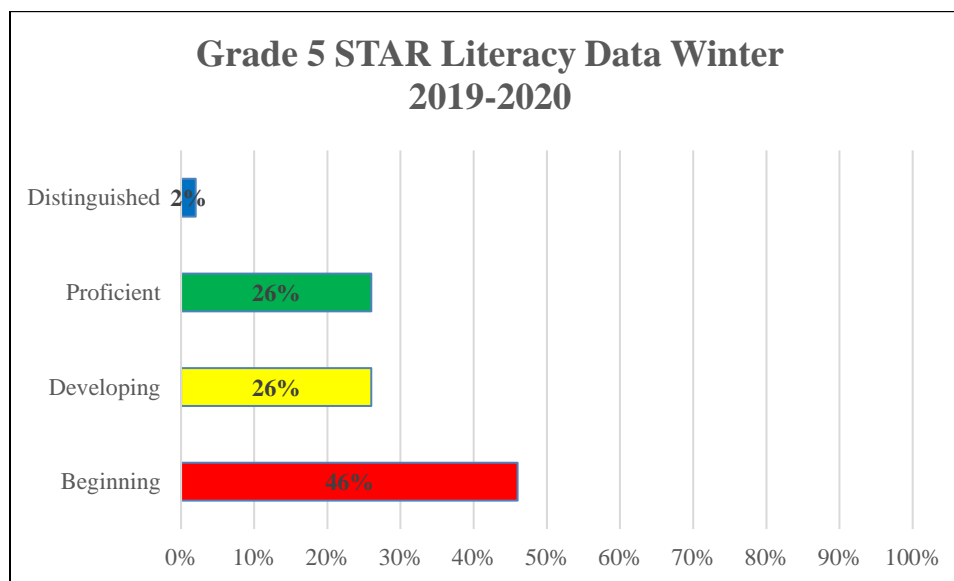
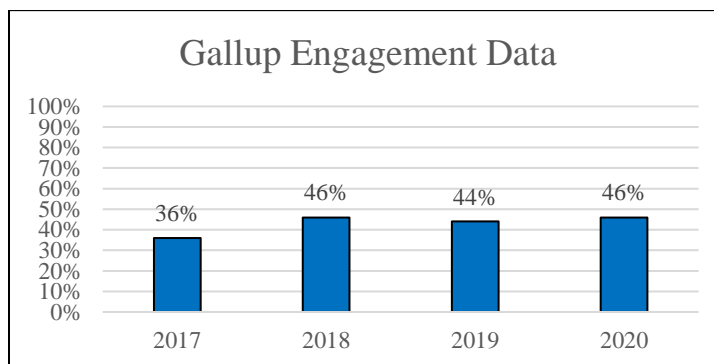
Figure 6*3rd Grade 2019-2020 STAR Literacy Data***Figure 7***4th Grade 2019-2020 STAR Literacy Data*

Figure 8*5th Grade 2019-2020 STAR Literacy Data*

The practices at Southeast Academy had been targeting students, while more emphasis was needed to focus on improving the collective efficacy of teachers' beliefs that teachers are capable of improving literacy outcomes for students based on the day-to-day literacy teaching practices. Staff engagement as measured by three years of Gallup data continued to be under fifty percent (See Figure 9).

Figure 9*Southeast Academy Gallup Data for Staff Engagement 2017-2020*

Fontas and Pinnell (2018, p. 9) articulate, “with common language and common goals, a school becomes a community within which all members act as a team and focus attention on achieving a shared vision, rather than operating as a building of solitary professionals operating in fragmented directions.” This study used an action research process to develop structures, systems, and processes to enable teachers to develop teacher agency and a stronger belief in the ability to teach struggling readers. By improving literacy practices, this research study focused on yielding stronger school wide collective teacher efficacy literacy practices.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this action research study was to build and implement structures that support improving collective teacher efficacy connected to literacy practices in one urban elementary school. The expectation was to provide intentional structures, systems, and processes to engage and connect teachers and school leaders in effective design team implementation of instructional practices to improve literacy practices of teachers. This action research study also aimed to develop stronger collective teacher efficacy in supporting struggling readers by engaging in job-embedded cycles of peer coaching and professional development.

Research Questions

In order to address the purpose of this action research study, the following research questions guided this inquiry:

1. What is the relationship between leadership behaviors and school-wide collective teacher efficacy connected to literacy practices in one urban turnaround elementary school?
2. How do teachers describe the impact of the implementation of additional support structures for literacy instruction on their efficacy in one urban elementary

school?

3. How do action research team members describe the process of creating and implementing structures that support collective teacher efficacy connected to literacy practices in one urban elementary school?

As the study involved supporting literacy teachers creating goals and working collaboratively with leaders in order to improve literacy practices and school-wide collective teacher efficacy, key terms were used by the researcher to define specific concepts. The following section defines how these terms are used in the action research study at Southeast Academy.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were used for the purpose of this action research study and are defined below:

- “Collective Teacher Efficacy” is defined as the collective self-perception that teachers in a given school make an educational difference to their students over and above the educational impact of their homes and communities (Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004, p. 190). For the purposes of this study, *Collective Teacher Efficacy* is related to how teachers’ beliefs at Southeast Academy have an impact on the ability to improve literacy practices in order to support struggling readers.
- “Guided Reading” the Fountas and Pinnell method, is defined as a small group instructional context in which a teacher supports each reader’s development of a system of strategic actions for processing new texts at increasingly challenging levels of text (Fountas and Pinnell, 2017).
- “Job-Embedded learning” is defined as professional development as a part of a teacher’s

daily practice and learning opportunities tailored to meet the teacher's learning needs (Zepeda, 2019).

- “Master Teacher Leader” in the context of Southeast Academy, is a building level instructional leader serving in a support role to provide coaching, modeling, observation, and feedback. Jim Knight (2018, pgs. 2-3) explains that “effective instructional coaches collaborate with teachers to get a clear picture of current reality, identify goals, pick teaching strategies to meet goals, monitor progress, and problem solve until goals are met.”
- “Literacy Practices” as defined by the context of this study and in use at Southeast Academy are the day-to-day teaching strategies used by literacy teachers at Southeast Academy aligned to supporting students reading below grade level.
- “Peer Coaching” is defined as a professional learning structure that employs teachers as partners in developing and trying new strategies and analyzing student learning resulting from classroom instruction. *Peer Coaching*, for the purposes of this study at Southeast Academy, is structured as the non-evaluative support in the planning and observation cycle of the coach and the coachee; primarily the master teacher leader or the school leader and the teacher.
- “Professional Learning” is defined within the context of the study at Southeast Academy as literacy teachers and building/district leaders engaging in the work of learning new strategies and techniques through collaboration in job-embedded day-to-day teaching practices.
- “School Leaders” in the context of Southeast Academy is the administrative team, consisting of the principal and assistant principal. The researcher in this study is the

building level principal.

Theoretical Framework

Figure 10

Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory Model



The theoretical framework closely aligned with this study is Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory as seen in Figure 10. The theory asserts, "teachers' perceptions of both self and organization influence their actions" (Tshannen-Moran & Barr, 2004). Underpinning this assertion of the closely aligned theoretical framework is the understanding that the belief systems of a school staff result in cultures which can be uplifting or demoralizing to the school's social and continuous improvement system (Good & Brophy, 2003). Collective teacher efficacy, defined as the "collective self-perception that teachers in a given school make an educational difference to their students over and above the educational impact of their homes and communities" (Tshannen-Moran & Barr, 2004, p.190). Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory

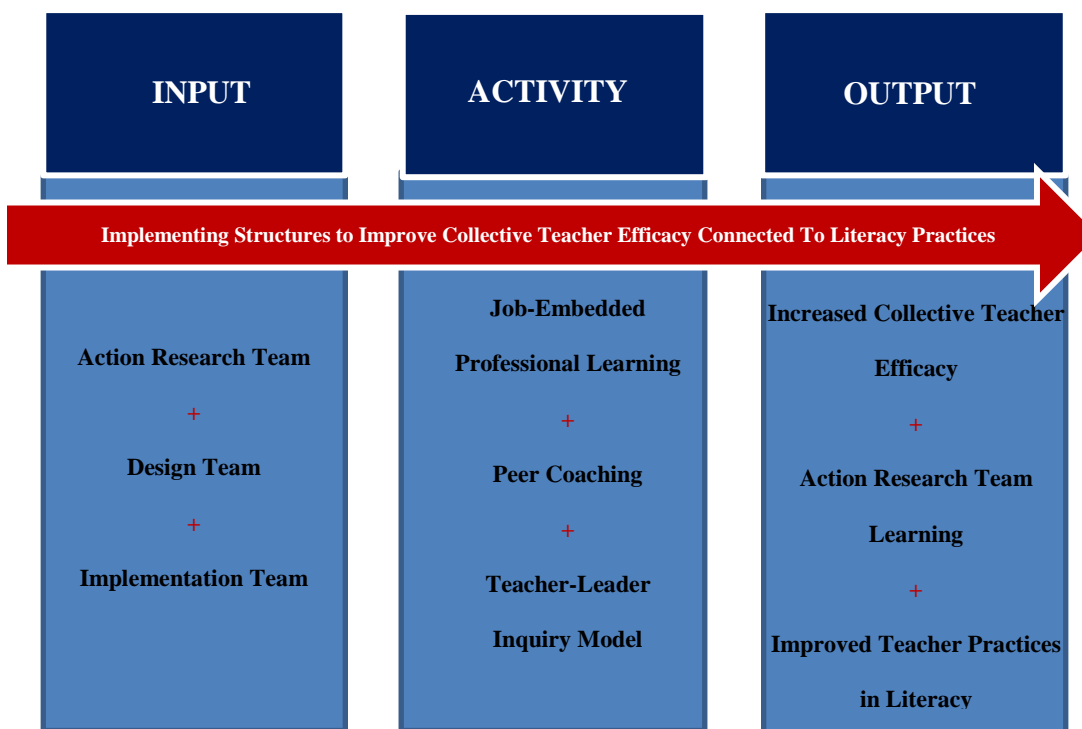
(SCT) is based on the premise that behavior functions within a triadic reciprocal relationship involving “cognition, behavior, and the environment” (Goddard et al., 2015). The SCT theoretical framework affirms that people learn through a combination of observing others, making sense of what they see, and reacting to conditions within their environment (Goddard et al., 2015) as seen in Figure 10.

Collective teacher efficacy is grounded directly in Bandura’s (1986, 1997) social cognitive theory, and applies directly to this research as teacher efficacy may also be defined as teachers’ judgement of their capabilities to meet desired student goals, even among students who may be difficult or unmotivated (Tshannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Bandura’s (1977, p. 477) social cognitive theory defined collective teacher efficacy as “a group’s shared belief in its conjoint ability to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainment.” Tschannen-Moran and Barr (2004) explain that self-efficacy beliefs are context specific, whereas people may not feel equally efficacious for all situations. Collective teacher efficacy, as a Social Cognitive Theory, is essential to the improvement of schools as it brings cohesion of diverse-minded individuals towards shared goals and also increasing the self-efficacy among individuals (Dewitt, 2018).

Conceptual Framework

Figure 11

Input, Activities, Output Conceptual Framework



The conceptual framework in Figure 11 indicates how the action research team engaged in the job-embedded professional learning at Southeast Academy. The implementation of the job-embedded professional learning followed the *Input, Activities, Output* framework. The action research team engaged in job-embedded professional learning activities centered on strategies to promote aligned instructional strategies in literacy. The action research team engaged in three peer-coaching cycles with job-embedded literacy professional learning. Led by school leaders at Southeast Academy, the master teacher leaders worked closely with literacy teachers in effective use of *Guided Reading* strategies to support struggling readers in each class. A teacher-leader inquiry model was implemented as an additional focus in continuously reflecting on systems,

structures, and processes developed in the peer-coaching cycles with a goal of identifying which strategies were appropriately implemented based on observation and feedback yielding improved collective teacher efficacy.

The collaborative inquiry cycle is a progressive cycle in which each successive cycle leads to better and deeper understanding, more refined practices, and greater impact on student learning and achievement (Donohoo & Katz, 2017). At Southeast Academy, teacher strengths and instructional coaching techniques were not consistent across the school. The study aimed to improve the collective efficacy of the staff in empowering them with the necessary tools and strategies to improve literacy through collaborating and attempting new teaching practices. Prelli (2016) conducted a study, which affirms that the creation of teams engaged in such structures as the collaborative teacher inquiry framework within a school community to support teachers in learning best practice strategies for all learners is an opportunity for leaders to empower teams while increasing and promoting higher levels of school wide collective teacher efficacy.

The outcomes of the implementation of the inquiry-based peer coaching cycles improved collective teacher efficacy, literacy teacher's use of effective literacy practices, the implementation of effective systems to support teachers, and stronger professional and collegial relationships with master teachers, teachers, and school leaders.

Overview of the Methodology

Action research is a highly collaborative and job-embedded form of professional learning that engages teachers as researchers with and active inquiry with reflection on practices (Zepeda, 2019). For the purpose of this study, action research was used in order to implement change using a systemic approach, as explained by Zepeda (2019), as an effective tool to open up

reflection. Action research is defined as “an approach to learning through engaging with a group of peers which provides reflective space, support and challenge to work through a problem” (Coghlan & Brannick, p. xx). The focus of the action research in the study at Southeast Academy aligned with the need to equip teachers with strengthening literacy practices while also allowing for collaboration and reflection, yielding stronger collective efficacy in the ability to support struggling readers.

Throughout the study, the action research team engaged in data collection, which included interviews with participants, observations, and interviews. Data collection was used to determine codes and emerging themes to gather additional insight from classroom observations and reflection notes from peer coaching sessions. The action research team and the implementation team field notes from literacy design team meetings were analyzed for teacher trends of implementation of new professional learning. The action research team data from literacy observations were used to analyze trends of collective teacher efficacy and implementation from classroom observations. The qualitative study used observation data from planning sessions and implementation of specific action steps as defined within the cyclical steps of the peer coaching proposed plan. Qualitative data were also used from interviews with the focus group to determine pre and post implementation of action steps and the impact on teachers’ collective teacher efficacy. A team protocol was used to gauge initial data of levels of collective teacher efficacy at the end of each intervention cycle to compare and determine success criteria of action research goals.

Intervention

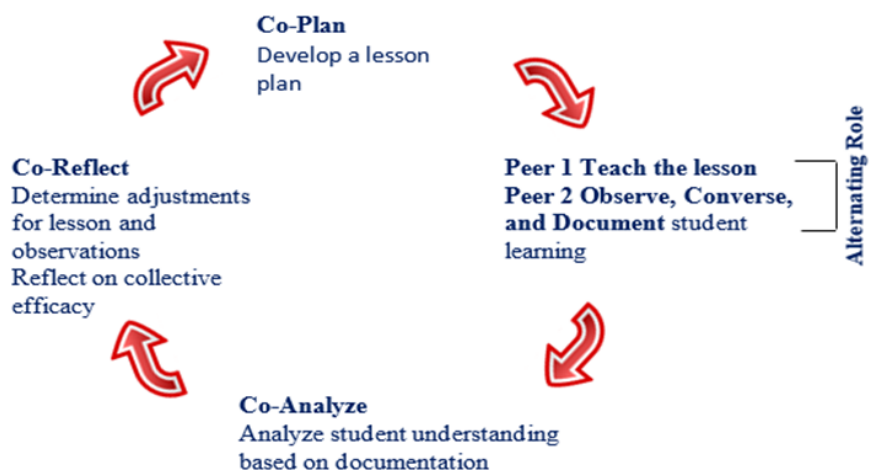
The primary intervention of this action research study involved cycles of professional learning communities and peer coaching cycles as seen in Figure 1.12. Donohoo (2017, p. 67)

explains that collective efficacy is enhanced through peer coaching as it “reduces isolation and provides a mechanism through which teachers gain deeper insights into student learning while trying new approaches.” The group comprised of five literacy teachers in grades first through second grade, one master teacher of literacy, two assistant principals, and the principal as the researcher. The focus of the group was to learn effective implementation of guiding reading strategies through job-embedded professional learning followed up with one-on-one planning sessions with a member of the design team in order to develop a literacy plan. The peer coaching cycle continued with the teaching of the lesson with observation and documenting of student learning through characteristics of effective readers. The cycle continued with the analysis of student understanding based on notes with a co-reflection cycle in order to determine teaching adjustments needed. The team led job-embedded bi-weekly professional learning with the action research implementation team using documentation notes from the master teacher leader, assistant principals, and principal. The action research team utilized the Team Success Analysis Protocol (Appendix G) in order to identify trends of successful implementation. During implementation of the Team Success Analysis Protocol, members of the Action Research Team identified, shared, and analyzed experiences in which they successfully achieved an outcome that was important to them. Escobedo (2012, p. 83) found that teachers who experienced higher numbers of celebrations in schools had “positive views on the effects of the celebrations on their collective efficacy beliefs and the overall competence of the faculty.”

Figure 12

Peer Coaching Cycle Framework

Adopted from Enhancing Collective Efficacy through Professional Learning (2017)



Note: The Peer Coaching Cycle was used to create systems and structures of planning, modeling, teaching, and reflecting on implementation of new professional learning in improving literacy practices.

Significance

A continued gap in literature exists as it relates to the sources of efficacy in which teachers serving low-achieving students rely on to make judgements on their teaching abilities (Mosoge et al, 2018; Wang, et. al, 2017). On the basis of Eell's research conducted in 2011, Hattie (2016) ranked collective efficacy as the number one factor influencing student achievement, with an effect size of 1.57, which according to the Visible Learning Research, is more than double the effect size of feedback and three times more likely to influence student achievement than student motivation and concentration, persistence, and engagement. The study provided additional context and literature on effective systems and structures which will add to

the body of research on improving school-wide collective teacher efficacy using professional learning structures aimed at improving literacy practices.

The impact on teachers' uses of new learning to improve their belief and collective efficacy will provide an additional body of research to support future contexts of environments seeking to learn new ways of creating structures to improve literacy practices. In the spring of 2020, the onset of COVID-19 introduced another complex set of issues further adding to the academic achievement of marginalized communities. In a recent 2019 study conducted by McKinsey & Company, the impact of remote learning for those receiving average online instruction, will result in up to three to four months of learning loss for students and up to seven to eleven months of loss in less than desirable remote instruction (Dorn et al., 2017). The need for teachers to understand and have strong collective teacher efficacy as it relates to literacy practices to support struggling readers is an additional factor contributing to the significance of the study upon the return of a normal school setting for students

Organization of the Dissertation

Chapter 1 gives an overview of the study and provides additional context on the research questions, purpose of the study, research site and the specific methodology and intervention which will be used to conduct the action research. Chapter 2 details the review of literature, with a focus on leadership behaviors supporting collective efficacy, and the impact of structures, systems, and job-embedded professional learning on improving collective efficacy. Chapter 3 presents a detailed overview of the action research methodology used to conduct the study. Chapter 4 describes in-depth context of the study related to the problem and site. Chapter 5 describes the data collection for each research question and provides results for each action research cycle. Chapter 6 provides outcomes of the major findings of the study related to the

literature and research questions. Chapter 6 also provides limitations of the study with implications and recommendations for practitioners, researchers, and policy makers, concluding with summary and final thoughts.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

The purpose of this action research study was to examine the impact of leadership behaviors and school-wide structures and processes associated with improving collective teacher efficacy in literacy practices. The study focused on implementing a set of job-embedded professional learning structures and processes aligned to improving the collective teacher efficacy for teachers focusing on literacy practices.

Research Questions

There were three focused research questions which guided this study:

1. What is the relationship between leadership behaviors and school-wide collective teacher efficacy connected to literacy practices in one urban turnaround elementary school?
2. How do teachers describe the impact of the implementation of additional support structures for literacy instruction on their efficacy in one urban elementary school?
3. How do action research team members describe the process of creating and implementing structures that support collective teacher efficacy connected to literacy practices in one urban elementary school?

Collective Teacher Efficacy

The literature on collective teacher efficacy suggests that improving collective teacher efficacy as a change strategy for improving student achievement is a rather new approach to

seeking results than traditional approaches such as federal and state turnaround measures.

Collective teacher efficacy refers to “the collective self-perception that teachers in a given school make an educational difference to their students over and above the educational impact of their homes and communities” (Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004, p.190). Donohoo (2017, p. 1) affirms “when teachers have a strong collective efficacy and beliefs about student learning, it outranks every other factor in regard to impacting student achievement including socioeconomic status, prior achievement, home environment, and parental involvement.” In a historical review of the literature and to gain a deeper understanding of collective teacher efficacy the research points to Bandura (1977) as a concept of self-efficacy, which is “the conviction that one can successfully execute the behavior required to produce outcomes” (p.193). As early as Bandura’s (1977) study, teacher self-efficacy has been a factor in school improvement for many years. Teacher self-efficacy refers to a teacher’s belief that he or she can perform the necessary activities to influence student learning (Donohoo, 2017; Perry & Shiel, 2021).

A series of new studies within the past decade have resulted in a new construct, collective efficacy, as a tool to improve student learning in schools and continues to gain attention from researchers from across the United States. Eells (2011) conducted the first meta-analysis of studies on collective efficacy by synthesizing all available and relevant studies in order to quantify the correlation between collective efficacy and student achievement. Based on the findings of the meta-analysis, “collective efficacy was strongly and positively associated with student achievement across subject areas, when using varied instruments and in multiple locations” (Eells, 2011, p. 110.) As a result of over 400 studies conducted, researcher John Hattie (2016) ranked collective teacher efficacy as the number one factor influencing student achievement with an effect size of 1.57.

Collective teacher efficacy is beyond three times more powerful than and predictive than socioeconomic status and three times more likely to influence student achievement than student motivation and concentration, persistence, and engagement (Donohoo, 2017; Hoy et al., 2002). Collective efficacy focuses on improving a group's beliefs in its competence for successful outcomes (Donohoo, 2017; Mosoge et al., 2018). Characterized by teachers' attitudes that together they can make a difference for students, collective efficacy is context specific because beliefs are formed based on analysis of teacher's perceptions about the teaching competence of the school staff, and the difficulties within the educational task facing the school (Donohoo, 2017). Teacher efficacy and collective efficacy are interchangeable as one influences the other. Teacher efficacy uses the individual as the unit of analysis; collective teacher efficacy uses the teaching staff or school as its unit of analysis (Mosoge et al., 2018). Staff who lack collective efficacy attribute failure to lack of ability and believe that they are not capable of meeting the needs of the students they serve (Donohoo, 2017). Donohoo and Katz (2020) further contend, "when collective efficacy is lacking, it affects behavior in ways that stifle the spread, depth, sustainability and ownership of change initiatives" (p.17). Donohoo (2017) provides further understanding of the environmental characteristics which fosters collective teacher efficacy yielding positive student outcomes include as:

Putting forth greater effort and persistence aimed toward students experiencing difficulty, trying new teaching approaches based on effective pedagogy, conveying high expectations to students through high teacher expectation, fostering learner autonomy through student-centered teaching, decreasing disruptive behavior, and increased commitment (p.14).

Collective teacher efficacy is further enhanced in a school setting when environmental characteristics are evident in the culture of the school.

Contributing Sources of Collective Teacher Efficacy

Four sources, which shape strong collective efficacy beliefs, include mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and affective states (Goddard et al., 2015). Mastery experiences yields the highest level of collective efficacy (Donohoo, 2017; Goddard, et al., 2000; Mosoge et al, 2018). Mastery experiences of collective efficacy are shaped when teams experience success and attribute the success to causes within their control, yielding the belief in the team that effective performances may be repeated (Donohoo, 2017; Goddard et al., 2000). Vicarious experiences are the second most powerful source of collective efficacy (Donohoo, 2017). Vicarious experiences occur when school staffs see others who confront similar opportunities and challenges, yielding the belief that obstacles to student achievement can be overcome (Donohoo, 2017; Goddard et al., 2000). Social persuasion, the third source of creating a strong collective efficacy is grounded in groups being encouraged by credible and trustworthy persuaders to innovate and overcome challenges (Donohoo, 2017; Goddard et al., 2000). Social persuasion when implemented at the collective level consists of members of the school staff “persuading other teachers that they can constitute a team” (Donohoo, 2017, p. 8). The fourth and least influential source shaping collective efficacy is affective states, which includes feelings of excitement or anxiety associated with an individual’s perceptions of his or her capability or incompetence (Donohoo, 2017; Goddard et al., 2000).

Mastery experiences, the most influential source of collective teacher efficacy and which are based on individuals’ authentic experiences have different forms. Wang et al. (2017, p.140) communicates that “the perception that past performance has been successful raises efficacy

beliefs, which contributes to the expectation of proficient performance in the future; while on the contrary, repeated failures in the past lowers confidence in delivering desired outcomes in the future.” Wang et al. (2017, p. 141) also reiterates that teachers often perceive and interpret mastery experiences in very different ways, and these experiences may not necessarily occur in performing specific tasks within the scope of teaching, but “in perceiving different kinds of accomplishments or achievements outside of teaching as well.” Mastery experiences at the organizational level involves the school developing goals and engaging in learning activities as a school community to improve their teaching. As a school experiences short term success and wins in student outcomes, the organization begins to believe that they can make a difference and momentum continues building confidence and resiliency yielding an improvement in school wide collective teacher efficacy (Pierce, 2019). Schools with a high sense of collective efficacy undertake challenging activities and persist with high needs students based on the group’s ability to see past the issue and focus more on the goal (Donohoo, 2017).

Vicarious experiences related to collective teacher efficacy is commonly known as role modeling based on providing teachers with a way of determining competency through comparison of practices with others. Wang, et al. (2017) and Donohoo & Katz (2017) explain that seeing people similar to themselves succeed raises observers’ beliefs that they also possess the capability to succeed, particularly if they share similar background, experiences, or training with the person doing the modeling. Sources of vicarious experiences for teachers may include experiences of observing colleagues’ classes, images portrayed in the media, images from professional literature, and conversations in teachers’ lounges in schools (Tschannen-Moran, 2004).

Social persuasion, commonly known as verbal persuasion, as it relates to collective teacher efficacy, refers to the concept that individuals and teachers can be persuaded to believe that they have the capability to succeed (Wang et al., 2017). Wang et al. (2017) reiterates that social persuasion in improving collective teacher efficacy may be reinforced if the positive appraisals are based on realistic terms and evaluation. It is important to reiterate that the effect and power of verbal persuasion is dependent upon the credibility, trustworthiness, and expertise of the persuader (Wang et al., 2017).

Affective, physiological, and emotional aspects of collective teacher efficacy refer to the concept that the level of emotional and affective states a person experiences in a situation add to self-perception of competence. Wang et al.(2017) explains that to teachers, feelings of relaxation and positive emotion in the classrooms signal self-assurance and the anticipation of future successful performance. The emotions derived from teachers' experiences vary depending on success in the classroom. For teachers experiencing collective efficacy through vicarious experiences feelings of relaxation and positive emotion in the classrooms signal self-assurance and the anticipation of future successful performance (Wang et al. 2017). Bandura (1997) provides an additional historical context by explaining that high levels of stress and fear can often times be debilitating leading to thoughts of being inept, which leads and generates feelings of not being successful in the classroom. Prelli (2016) contends that teachers working to address the needs of all students and meet student success criteria could begin to experience anxiety.

Job-Embedded Professional Learning

National studies suggests that effective professional learning is a critical lever in improving schools (Wei et al., 2009). Early research from the 1990's conducted by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996), revealed a direct existing correlation

between education of students and knowledge and influence of teachers. National policy makers from the federal and state levels have mandated professional learning in state law by allocating funding and increased accountability. Since the inception of the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) and the reauthorization of the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015), federal legislation has attempted to influence teacher quality and professional learning (Zepeda, 2019). In 2020, approximately four billion dollars was spent in the United States on external providers of professional development in the United States, an increase from three billion dollars in 2015 (Statistica, 2018). While billions in federal funding is spent on professional development each year, little evidence exists which correlates with overall collective or individual teacher efficacy (Zepeda, 2019). Horn and Goldstein (2018) report that approximately \$18 billion dollars a year is spent on professional development in the United States each year.

Professional learning is powerful when specifically designed to influence the educators' beliefs about their ability to affect student learning (Donohoo & Katz, 2017). The teacher must exhibit the confidence in teaching literacy concepts and skills to students to "yield positive student outcomes and produce readers" (Garfield & Pittman, 2017, p. 72). Evidence supports the premise that teachers are not prepared to teach literacy skills to students, particularly those students who struggle to understand the basic components of literacy: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (Garfield & Pittman, 2017). Our classrooms in the 21st century are increasingly more diverse, therefore our collective responsibility is grounded in providing literacy success for all students. Experiential and hands-on practice in literacy instruction purports to increase teacher efficacy, which has a positive impact on student outcomes (Garfield & Pittman, 2017). Zepeda (2019) "job-embedded professional learning is a continuous thread which is found throughout the culture of a school and is not an add-on series

of unrelated workshops offered before or after school with an external consultant who packs up after delivering knowledge” (p.20). The researchers focus on job-embedded professional learning to improve collective teacher efficacy in high needs schools is further supported by a 2014 study conducted by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, whereas the majority of the 1,600 teachers surveyed characterized their professional development as “irrelevant, ineffective, and not connected to the core work of helping students learn” (Calvert, 2016, p.2). Zepeda (2019) provides additional context on four essential conditions for job-embedded professional learning:

Learning needs to be consistent with the principles of adult learning with realistic goals, teachers needing to know that feedback will be constructive in order for trust to evolve, time within the regular school needing to be available within the context of the day and sufficient resources including funding and time (p. 27).

Creating the necessary conditions for job-embedding learning has the potential to yield a culture of continuous improvement in schools.

Peer Coaching

Coaching supports effective job-embedded learning (Zepeda, 2019). As the researcher implements targeted intervention to improve collective teacher efficacy around literacy practices, the focus on creating a peer-coaching model is a major component of the action research study. The background and context of school-based coaching is grounded on working in combination with other support structures in schools. Peer coaching seeks to “reduce isolation and provides a mechanism through which teachers gain deeper insights into student learning while trying new approaches” (Donohoo, 2017, p. 67; Sterman, 2018). Coaching is based on an action-oriented change strategy which promotes growth in teacher practices. Zepeda (2019) provides additional layers of strong coaching characteristics as:

Supporting teachers in the development of deeper understanding of content knowledge, extending thought processes needed to see different points of view about strategies, helping to develop critical thinking skills through problem posing and problem-solving to get at looking at the impact of instruction on student success, helping teachers boost student performance, providing translations of research and making connections to classroom practice, and giving feedback on performance in becoming closer to meeting objectives (p.111).

Coaching promotes collegiality and further supports improving teacher practice and inquiry.

Aguilar (2013) further summarizes that “coaching can build, will, skill, knowledge, and capacity because it can go where no other professional development has gone before; into the intellect, behaviors, practices, beliefs, values, and feelings of an educator” (p. 8). Zepeda (2019) affirms “given the complexities of teaching, the increasing needs of students, and the higher forms of accountability, all teachers can gain benefit from a coach” (p.11). Sterman (2018) further affirms that peer coaches assist colleagues in visioning new teaching strategies and entering into pathways of school wide transformational change.

Peer coaching is a specific form of job-embedded professional learning which involves teachers and teacher leaders working closely together on a shared goal. Peer coaching provides “opportunities for teachers to support and learn from each other and to engage in realistic discussions about teaching and learning” (Zepeda, 2019, 116; Donohoo, 2017). Zepeda further explains that peer coaches “often provide guidance, encouragement, and motivation to continue learning from the events that unfold in the classroom” (Zepeda, 2019, p. 116; Stearman, 2018). In a longitudinal study conducted by Olivero et al. (1997) on the impact of coaching, training combined with coaching interventions increased productivity by 85 percent. Zepeda (2019)

affirms, “in school communities that support and nurture peer coaching, leadership among teachers can be developed and sustained over time” (p. 118).

Implications of Covid-19 on Job-Embedded Professional Learning

At the onset of Covid-19, school leaders and educators across the country were left perplexed as to how to meet the demands of providing an education to all students using digital and remote learning. Educators had to shift pedagogy from face-to-face teaching to remote learning without proper training while also balancing other demands. The psychological impact left teachers with low collective teacher efficacy and leaders seeking ways in which to continue to support teachers with an additional layer of a focus on social emotional wellness. As explained by Dorn et al. (2020, p. 2), “the United States educational system was not built to deal with extended shutdowns like those imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic and teachers, administrators, and parents have worked hard to keep learning alive; nevertheless, these efforts are not likely to provide the quality of education that’s delivered in the classroom.” Kaden (2020) articulated that the paradigm shift caused rippled effects and public education may have changed in ways which are yet to be determined. As schools and districts remain in vastly different situations based on local district decisions to remain in a hybrid, virtual, or face-to-face setting, the focus on teachers’ ability to meet the academic and social emotional needs of students is worth investigating. Prior to COVID-19, professional learning remained an area of concern as accountability measures and other ways of assessing a school’s effectiveness was at the forefront for school leaders across the nation. As the pandemic continues, Dorn et al. (2020); Kaden (2020) communicate that school shutdowns could not only cause disproportionate learning losses for black and Hispanic students, as well as compounding existing gaps. Early predictions suggest

that students could possibly lose up to seven to 11 months of learning based on the shift to online and remote teaching (Dorn et al., 2020).

In a recent survey conducted by Student Achievement Partners in August 2020, approximately 400 teachers were surveyed on the triumphs, needs, opportunities and concerns of teachers trying to navigate instruction during the pandemic. Results from the study concluded that 80 percent of the educators indicated an interest and capacity to pursue professional learning opportunities virtually to meet the new demands of students (Kaden, 2020; Rivero, 2020).

Kaden (2020) further explains that professional learning is a great place to start with supporting teachers based on the ability to reach educators with just-in-time professional learning needed which is collaborative and sustainable. Kaden (2020) provides a rationale that educators should engage in professional learning using the same technology used with students with the goal of increasing comfort levels as well as further discovery of the opportunities which the new technology can offer.

As districts shift to meet the demands of students, a focus on supporting teachers is also at the forefront in engaging teachers in effective professional learning in order to provide appropriately aligned teaching and learning. Giffon (2020) recommends that states begin with examining internal professional practice frameworks to determine which standards and indicators emphasize virtual learning past practices. Other facets of providing effective professional learning with the shift in teachers learning and collaborating in a virtual space is to use recorded videos of teacher practice in order to provide feedback specific to instruction with opportunities for deeper reflection and explicit coaching (Giffon, 2020). While schools continue to seek new and innovative ways of meeting the complex needs of teaching and learning in a new online environment, the researchers focus on providing an additional focus of job-embedded

professional learning during Covid-19 aimed to meet the shifts in schools yielded by the pandemic.

Leadership Behaviors

Leading professional learning in high needs schools is layered with an additional responsibility in improving a school's collective teacher efficacy. The professional school leader is often a busy executive pulled in several areas of leading schools, which often lead to didactic rather than dialogic forms of professional learning (Loughland & Ryan, 2020). Fullan and Quinn (2016) explains that the leader who helps develop focused collaborative capacity yields the greatest contribution to student learning. Loughland and Ryan (2020, p. 7); Spencer (2016) further explain that "dialogic approaches to supporting professional learning plays a major role in exhibiting action and respecting the professionalism of teachers with a sense of ownership to the whole team in the learning process. Loughland and Ryan (2020) further affirms that leaders need to learn the skill of listening to team members and teachers in order to understand current pedagogical challenges. Zepeda (2019, p. 4) affirms "leaders must be steadfast in providing professional learning opportunities that are differentiated to the unique and developmental needs of teachers that considers the context of the school, the characteristics of the faculty, and the needs of the students."

Leading professional learning in high needs schools can come with additional issues for school leaders to balance. Transformational leadership practices promote high levels of collective efficacy. Prelli (2016) discusses the study of Ross and Gray; where teacher efficacy was a direct correlation to a commitment to school goals existed, thus showing transformational leadership actions having a positive impact on improving collective teacher efficacy. School leaders play a critical role in maintaining the necessary rhythm and discipline of the collaborative

inquiry cycle in improving school wide collective teacher efficacy (Donohoo & Katz, 2017). Goddard et al. (2015) conducted a study with results showing that a principal's instructional leadership significantly predicts collective efficacy by influencing teachers' collaborative work while ensuring the creation of conditions for teachers to learn what they need to learn so that teachers feel confident in creating the conditions for students to learn what they need to learn. Robinson et al. (2008) explains, "the leadership dimension that is most strongly associated with positive student outcomes is that of promoting and participating in teacher learning and development while also providing teams with a deep understanding of the conditions required" (p. 667). Donohoo (2017) and Sterman (2018) explain that leaders are responsible for setting the conditions so that teachers feel the discrepancy between the current and desired state.

While a compelling number of studies have supported the positive link of principal leadership and student achievement (Goddard et al., 2015; Robinson et al., 2008; Wallace Foundation, 2013; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2003), the literature gap exists on what teachers do to become more effective because of strong leadership (Goddard et. al, 2015). Leaders of schools with strong collective efficacy "demonstrate an awareness of responsiveness to the personal aspect of teachers and consistently protect teachers from issues and influences which detract from teaching time or focus" (Donohoo, 2017, p. 33). The literature on exemplary leadership practices of schools with strong collective efficacy emphasizes four highly effective practices within schools exhibiting collective efficacy. Creating opportunities for meaningful collaboration, continuum of collegial relations, empowering teachers, and teacher involvement in decision-making practices, are four leadership practices which are prevalent in schools with high collective efficacy (Donohoo, 2017). School leadership ranks high on the list of priorities for school reform (The Wallace Foundation, 2013). School leaders in high collective efficacy

environments supports a collaborative environment which engages everyone in the decision-making process. Goddard et.al (2015) supports the findings that a principal's instructional leadership significantly predicts collective efficacy by influencing teachers' collaborative work. An effective leadership pillar of improving collective efficacy is "when leaders stand back and trusts the process of teachers innovating together creating a belief in empowerment over efficiency, choice over decisiveness, and autonomy over control" (Donohoo, 2017, p. 40).

School leaders of environments with high levels of collective teacher efficacy have a strong sense of safety and trust amongst teachers, allowing them the vulnerability to respect and listen to one another and willing to share knowledge and ideas (Pierce, 2019). Zepeda (2019) further affirms that in order for peer coaching to occur at high levels in a building, principals must allocate resources, arrange for initial and ongoing training, and provide emotional support and encouragement.

School leaders play a key role in creating non-threatening, evidence-based instructional environments by promoting a culture of collaboration focused on "knowing thy collective impact" (Donohoo et al., 2018, p. 43). Leaders influence a strong environment of collective teacher efficacy by modeling social sensitivity and paying closer attention to verbal and nonverbal cues; exercising situational awareness in order to have a pulse on the culture of school teams while anticipating potential barriers which may result from collaboration (Donohoo et al., p. 43). Leaders also influence collective efficacy by "setting expectations for formal, frequent, and productive teacher collaboration by creating high levels of trust for collaboration to take place" (Donohoo & Katz, 2017, p. 42; Sterman, 2018). As it relates to Hattie's (2016) Visible Learning research and findings, it is important to note that teachers within a school may not feel efficacious as defined by the influences related to collective efficacy, however leaders play a

pivotal role in creating an improvement process where opportunities exist to learn and strengthen the group (DeWitt, 2018; Peery & Shiel, 2020).

The Leadership standard in the *Standards for Professional Learning* (Learning Forward, 2011, p. 29) emphasizes the importance of having “skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems for professional learning”. Spencer (2016); Pirtle and Tobia (2014) articulates the importance of school leaders participating in professional learning communities as equal participants and not in a role where they are checking to make sure that a top-down protocol is followed. Zepeda (2019, p. 133); Sterman (2018) further explains “when a principal is a member of the group and can function as an equal with teachers in discussing and sharing information related to teaching and learning, a positive value is placed on the principal and provides the group with a sense of legitimacy and importance within the school’s culture” (p. 9). In a large-scale study conducted by Buttram and Riddle (2016) on the role of principals in professional learning communities, findings suggest when principals are absent from professional learning, unintended messages surface that the teachers’ work together is not important to the work and success of the school. Additional findings of the study and additional literature also communicate the need for school leaders to influence the success of professional learning communities by allocating and managing resources for successful teacher collaboration and development (Buttram & Riddle, 2016; Thesin & Jones, 2017; Zepeda, 2019).

Conditions and Collaboration

Systems and structures promoting strong collective teacher efficacy have a cycle of continuous improvement as a monitoring tool. Improving systems related to improving a school’s collective efficacy is grounded on how a school functions as an interdependent system of initiatives which operates in a culture that supports continuous improvement grounded in best

practices (Fountas & Pinnell, 2018). Leading professional learning in a high needs school requires active engagement rather than passive learning by participants (Zepeda, 2019).

Collective efficacy can be developed through effective professional learning and Donohoo (2017) communicates the “importance of understanding the significance of collective efficacy when planning for professional learning.” Visone (2016) articulates that the professional learning mindset allows space for the creation and distribution of the collective knowledge of the staff, whereas the whole staff becomes greater than the sum of its individual educators. The culture of continuous improvement is the framework of professional learning in a school which seeks to improve the collective efficacy of the staff. Collective efficacy in literacy practices as defined by literary experts Fountas and Pinnell (2018) means that all educators in a school take ownership and responsibility for the literacy success of students. Fountas and Pinnell (2018) further explain that in highly collective efficacious learning environments, the adults are invested in the learning enterprise, believing that their own collective efficacy will improve literacy outcomes for all students. Donohoo (2017) affirms, “by creating and sharing knowledge while collectively searching for solutions to problems, teachers build confidence in the team’s collective capability to handle difficult situations and motivate students” (p. 59).

Often used interchangeably with staff development and teacher training, the term professional learning is a “complex array of interrelated learning opportunities” (Desimone, 2011, p. 69). Calvert (2016, p.16) provides clarity in defining professional development versus professional learning; “professional development is what teachers receive and professional learning recognizes teachers as agents of their growth while emphasizing that learning is an experience driven largely by the learner.” In a large-scale study, Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) examined the nature of professional development opportunities available to teachers across the

United States, and key findings yielded a lack of effective professional development and collaboration for teachers to improve practices. Further supported by Green and Allen (2015, p. 53), “a disparity exists among schools in the type and quality of professional learning offered.”

Teacher networks, collaborative teacher inquiry, and peer coaching can be utilized to “influence staff’s interpretations of their effectiveness” (Donohoo, 2017, p. 55). Wang et al. (2017) conducted a study which found that providing learning teams or networked learning communities which the teachers can identify with, were ways in which teachers could develop an identity and receive support from others for advice, resources, and encouragement. Effective teacher professional learning is significant for the ongoing support and motivation of teachers (Loughland & Ryan, 2020). Durksen et al. (2017) purports the need for additional research on the examination of what actual collaboration looks like in practice, which yields effective professional learning improving teaching practices. Zepeda (2019) explains, “collaborative professional development can transform a group of isolated individuals into a faculty of colleagues” (p. 25). While a school’s collective teacher efficacy has a significant impact on student achievement, the effect size of teacher collective efficacy is an outcome of a conducive professional learning culture and not the antecedent (Loughland & Ryan, 2020).

The use of protocols to support and deepen conversations within job-embedded learning assists teams with performing a variety of tasks, including identifying and solving instructional problems (Donohoo, 2017). Fichtman et al. (2011) explain, “protocols systematize conversation that occurs between educators to intentionally focus their dialogue on students and their learning” (p.13). Donohoo (2017) affirms, “some protocols are designed to help teams in developing a shared vision, building trust, gaining consensus, and sharing and celebrating

accomplishments, while others are designed to engage participants in deep reflection about the connections between teaching and learning” (p.69).

The gap in research further provides the significance of the researchers focus on providing additional literature on conditions which contribute to the design and practice of teacher professional learning. In a large-scale study conducted by Thessin (2015, p.16) it was revealed from data gathered from both high-functioning and struggling teams, that preconditions need to be in place before the “guidance of an improvement process and the provision of professional learning would foster collective work to improve instruction.” Thessin (2015) further explains that schools and districts should take the necessary time to pre-assess schools’ readiness for professional learning and provide additional supports for schools and teams within schools that are differentiated to meet the varying learning and school culture needs.

Collaborative Inquiry Framework

The Collaborative Inquiry Framework is a four-stage model; plan, act, assess, and observe (Donohoo, 2017). The framework involves teams developing shared knowledge and co-constructing new understandings through “learning by doing”. Gutierrez & Kim (2018) explain “fundamental to the adult learning environment is the process of collaborative inquiry where participants critically reflect on their own experiences” (p.214). As leaders model the various stages of the framework, leaders and teachers will grow in valuing collaborative inquiry as a powerful professional learning structure to have a positive impact on improving collective teacher efficacy (Donohoo, 2017; Prelli, 2016). Collaborative teacher inquiry is a promising practice that can positively influence educators’ interpretations of their effectiveness and thus enhances collective efficacy (Donohoo & Katz, 2017).

The collaborative teacher inquiry process involves teachers working together to solve “complex challenges of professional practice by questioning what they already know and do in an area of demonstrated student learning need and requires teams to consider whether or not the evidence shows that their actions have had an effect on student learning” (Donohoo & Katz, 2017, p. 25; Gutierrez & Kim, 2018). The collaborative inquiry cycle is a progressive cycle in which each successive cycle leads to better and deeper understanding, more refined practices, and greater impact on student learning and achievement (Donohoo & Katz, 2017). Prelli (2016) conducted a quantitative study which affirms that the creation of teams engaged in such structures as the collaborative teacher inquiry framework within a school community to support teachers in learning best practice strategies for all learners is an opportunity for leaders to empower teams while increasing and promoting higher levels of school-wide collective teacher efficacy.

Chapter Summary

The literature related to this action research study suggests collective teacher efficacy is better supported in schools when leaders provide the necessary support structures and systems in place for job-embedded professional learning to occur. Conditions for collaboration to occur takes time, resources, and personnel. Zepeda (2019) reiterates “building a strong culture of professional learning inside schools takes work and time” (p.9). The literature review provided the researcher with specific strategies, tools, and protocols to promote improving collective teacher efficacy.

Job-embedded professional learning during the day, with protected time for leaders and teachers, provides opportunities to improve collective efficacy in a school. The literature review supports the importance of structures and opportunities for collaborative work.

Goddard et al. (2015) explain “given that social cognitive theory specifies the importance of vicarious experience to efficacy beliefs, one of the most powerful forms of intensive teacher collaboration that principals can support is teachers’ observations of other classrooms to form common understandings of good teaching practice” (p. 526).

Chapter 3 describes the methodology including the data collection approach, data analysis and the research design plan with interventions. Furthermore, specific information about the action research timeline and members will be shared.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this action research study was to examine the impact of leadership behaviors, structures, and processes associated with improving collective teacher efficacy in literacy practices. To address the purpose of the study, the following research questions guided the action research:

1. What is the relationship between leadership behaviors and school-wide collective teacher efficacy connected to literacy practices in one urban turnaround elementary school?
2. How do teachers describe the impact of the implementation of additional support structures for literacy instruction on their efficacy in one urban elementary school?
3. How do action research team members describe the process of creating and implementing structures that support collective teacher efficacy connected to literacy practices in one urban elementary school?

This chapter provides a detailed analysis of the theoretical and conceptual framework, action research, selected intervention, research design, data collection methods, and an overview of the reliability, and limitations of the research.

Qualitative Research

A qualitative study was employed for this study in order to deepen understanding of the systems, processes, leadership behaviors and the impact job-embedded professional learning has

on improving collective teacher efficacy of literacy practices. Creswell (2012) explains in qualitative research, the problems need to be explored to obtain a deeper understanding. As explored in this action research study, the primary researcher seeks to determine the impact of specific interventions on improving collective teacher efficacy in literacy practices. The action research design approach to this study aligns with the qualitative data needed to address improvements in an educational setting, teaching, and the learning of students (Creswell, 2012). Glanz (2014) further explains, “qualitative research captures behavior occurring in naturalistic settings and does not involve purposeful manipulation of subjects for experimental purposes” (p.80). Tracy (2010) explains that a good qualitative research study, “is relevant, timely, significant, interesting, or evocative” (p.840).

Qualitative data researchers analyze words to describe the central phenomenon of the study and includes themes (Creswell, 2012). Creswell (2012) articulates that qualitative researchers, “analyze the words to group them into larger meanings of understanding, such as codes, categories or themes” (p.20). Tracy (2010) further explains that qualitative research seeks to improve practice and is intellectually implicative for the scholarly community. Another significant finding which aligns with this action research study, is the qualitative approach which will add additional knowledge on how schools can enhance practices to improve collective teacher efficacy in literacy practices. As explained by Tracy (2010) qualitative research “seeks to provide new conceptual understandings which can be used for future researchers with theoretical significance” (p.846).

Theoretical Framework

The action research study conducted is grounded in the theory of action that if certain environmental shifts occur, then behavior and cognition of individuals will yield positive

outcomes. Grounded in the context of Bandura's (1986, 1997) Social Cognitive Theory, the action research study of creating systems and support structures to improve collective teacher efficacy in literacy, asserts that people learn through a combination of observing others, making sense of what they see, and reacting to conditions within the environment (Goddard et al., 2015). This study began with the principal as the primary researcher. The first step implemented was the creation of the Action Research Team, which included the Design Team and Implementation Team. The actions of creating systems and structures to support teachers' knowledge, skills, practices, and the collective attitudes and beliefs on teaching literacy was directly aligned to the theory of influencing targeted environmental factors.

Members of the Design Team comprised of the principal as the primary researcher, two Assistant Principals, and one master teacher leader for literacy serving primary grades, kindergarten through second grade. The make-up of the Implementation Team included five first and second grade literacy teachers. The involvement of school leaders and teachers collaborating on systems and structures to support teachers in improving literacy practices, directly related to the foundation of the Social Cognitive Theory aligned to personal, behavioral and environmental factors. The Action Research Team focus on leadership behaviors, job-embedded professional learning, and enabling conditions for collaboration, yielded opportunities for members of the Action Research Team to work collaboratively as a cohesive team in using feedback, modeling, and peer coaching in improving the collective efficacy of teaching literacy. The focus of environmental factors related to the study aligns directly with the Action Research Team creating opportunities for time in the master schedule to engage in coaching, planning, and peer modeling to support teachers' collective efficacy in improving literacy supports.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the Action Research Team focused on an input, activity, and output flow. The input phase of the study included the Design and Implementation Team, consisting of the principal as the primary researcher, two Assistant Principals, one master teacher leader of literacy for primary grades kindergarten through second and five first and second grade literacy teachers. The Action Research Team engaged in job-embedded professional learning on effective literacy teaching practices, the implementation of school structures of support to improve collaboration and job-embedded peer coaching through planning and observation, and the use of a teacher-leader inquiry model to reflect on improved literacy practices. The output phase of the action research aimed to increase collective teacher efficacy related to improved literacy practices, increase leadership capacity of gaining knowledge on systems and structures to support improved collective teacher efficacy, and a deeper understanding of effective job-embedded professional learning structures which have a positive impact on school wide collective teacher efficacy.

Action Research

Action research was the method employed for this study. Coghlan and Brannick (2014) define action research as “a family of related approaches that integrate theory and action with a goal of addressing important organizational, community and social issues together with those who experience them” (p. 20). Zepeda (2019) affirms, “action research is a highly collaborative and job-embedded form of professional learning that engages teachers as researchers, actively inquiring and reflecting on their practices (p.170). Employing action research for this particular study aimed to improve collective teacher efficacy in improving literacy practices. Glanz (2014, p. 17) articulates that action research “creates a system wide mind-set for school improvement

and professional problem-solving ethos as well as having a direct impact on practice.” The action research of this study aligned with the goals of Southeast Academy in seeking to improve collective teacher efficacy towards improving literacy practices through the creation of job-embedded professional learning, the analysis of leadership behaviors impact on promoting collective teacher efficacy, and a focus on creating systems and structures of collaboration and support for teachers in improving literacy practices. Glanz (2014, p. 16) explains, “action research is a kind of research that has reemerged as a popular way of involving practitioners, both teachers and supervisors, so that they better understand their work.”

Action Research Design Team

The Action Research Design Team included the principal as the primary researcher, two additional administrators, and one instructional support staff. The design team was comprised of the two assistant principals and the kindergarten through second grade master teacher leader for literacy. The research design team developed and facilitated interventions in order to guide the action research study.

Action Research Implementation Team

The Action Research Implementation Team included five teachers. The five teachers consisted of two first grade teachers and three-second grade teachers. All teachers taught literacy instruction daily. The action research implementation team implemented guided reading strategies using job-embedded professional learning and engaging in systems of coaching, support, and new structures of collaboration at Southeast Academy.

Action Research Timeline and Intervention

The action research timeline began in September 2021 through the end of December 2021. The initial meeting with the Design Team was held in September 2021 for the purpose of

discussing the problem and discussion of research questions. The design team reviewed the school professional learning schedule and mapped out action research intervention cycles, which included three days of job-embedded professional learning, one in each action research cycle. The design team analyzed the current job-embedded collaborative planning schedule and made changes to support the implementation of the action research study.

The primary researcher held a second meeting with the entire action research team to provide an overview of the action research cycle and the collaborative peer-coaching model which was used to support new learning and the implementation of guided reading. Three action research cycles occurred between September 2021 and December 2021. Each cycle involved the four phases of constructing, planning action, taking action, and evaluating action. At the conclusion of each cycle, the action research team engaged in a Team Success Protocol (Appendix G) in order to calibrate areas of growth with the goal of improving collective teacher efficacy. Data collection included responses from interviews, planning notes, observations, and questionnaires after professional learning.

Job-Embedded Professional Learning

The action research team engaged in job-embedded professional learning with an outside literacy expert with a focus on implementing guided reading in literacy classrooms. The first session provided an overview of guided reading and the importance of using data to support the use of leveled text. Two additional guided reading professional learning sessions occurred and aligned to focus areas as determined after each action research cycle. The design team debriefed with the literacy expert after each day of professional learning in order to grow and enhance internal leadership behaviors, systems, and structures of support when leading planning sessions with members of the implementation team. The Action Research Team engaged in a series of

job-embedded professional learning activities focused on implementing guided reading in small groups as a responsive teaching strategy. The facilitative professional learning sessions were held at the beginning of each of the three cycles as a guide to support teachers on the implementation team.

Peer Coaching Cycle

The action research was comprised of three cycles of implementing the Peer Coaching Cycle (Donohoo, 2017). The planning phase of implementing the Peer Coaching Cycle began with initial planning with the Action Research Team in September 2021 and ended with three cycles through December 2021. The action research team's focus of using the Peer Coaching Cycle was enhanced through building trust, collaboration, and a clearer structure on how to effectively use job-embedded professional learning time. Donohoo (2017, p. 67) articulates, "peer coaching not only reduces isolation, but it also provides a mechanism through which teachers gain deeper insights into student learning while trying new approaches." The design and implementation team engaged in using the four elements of the Peer Coaching cycle : involving co-planning teaching/observing, conversing/documenting student performance, co-analyzing student understanding, and co-reflection to decide on instructional adjustments to make in guided reading literacy practices. Following each professional learning session, the Action Research team engaged in a full peer coaching cycle as seen in Figure 1.12, which consisted of co-planning of the guided reading lesson with a member of the design team, followed by teaching of the lesson with observation and documenting of student learning through characteristics of effective readers. Each cycle continued with the analysis of student understanding and instructional practices based on observation notes with a co-reflection cycle in order to determine teaching adjustments needed.

Job-Embedded Planning, Observation, and Feedback

During the action research study, allocated and protected time was given for members of the design and implementation team to have uninterrupted time within the school day to engage in the full cycle of peer coaching. The master schedule provided for up to 90 minutes of scheduled time of planning and reflection. Zepeda (2019, p. 23) offers, “job-embedded learning is professional learning which occurs at a school as educators engage in their daily work activities; closely connected to what teachers are asked to do in the classroom so that the skills and knowledge gained from such learning can be immediately transferred to classroom instructional practice.” The design team also approached this facet of intervention as an opportunity to reflect on improving internal leadership practices, systems, and structures to yield improving collective teacher efficacy.

Table 1*The Intervention Plan*

Intervention	Action Research Team Activities	Anticipated Outcomes	Connection to Problem/Theoretical Framework	Timeline	Data Collection
Job-Embedded Professional Learning on Guided Reading	<p>The design team collaborated and planned with literacy expert to conduct professional learning on implementation of guided reading in the classroom.</p> <p>Teachers on the implementation team engaged in professional learning focused on guided reading.</p>	<p>Teachers improved instructional practices using guided reading. Improved collective teacher efficacy in literacy practices.</p>	<p>Provided teachers with experiences, which improved engagement related to personal, behavioral, and environmental factors.</p> <p>Increase in mastery experiences yields higher levels of collective teacher efficacy (Goddard, et. al, 2000).</p>	<p>Once during Cycles I, II and III</p> <p>September 27, 2021; October 27; 2021; December 1, 2021</p>	<p>Notes from PLC meetings; Focus group responses; Semi-Structured interview responses; Notes from Team Success Protocol; Open-ended survey/questionnaire at the end of professional learning</p>

Intervention	Action Research Team Activities	Anticipated Outcomes	Connection to Problem/Theoretical Framework	Timeline	Data Collection
Peer Coaching Cycle Framework	Leaders utilized the peer coaching cycle to plan, observe, debrief, and adjust instructional strategies related to guided reading.	<p>Improved structures and systems of support related to planning, observing, coaching and adjusting instructional strategies in guided reading, literacy.</p> <p>School leaders gained additional knowledge on structures and systems of support which support improving guided reading and collective teacher efficacy.</p>	<p>Provided leaders with structures to support teachers and increase teachers' cognition and behaviors which align directly with Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory.</p> <p>Provided teachers with a safe space to collaborate and build relationships.</p>	Ongoing throughout Cycles I, II, and III.	Notes from Peer Coaching Planning Sessions, Focus Group Interviews, Semi-Structured Interviews, Observation notes from peer observations, Notes from Team Success Protocol

Intervention	Action Research Team Activities	Anticipated Outcomes	Connection to Problem/Theoretical Framework	Timeline	Data Collection
Job-Embedded Planning, Observation, and Feedback	<p>Leaders scheduled time in the master schedule for up to 90 minutes of job-embedded professional learning, time for planning, and peer observation/feedback.</p> <p>Teachers engaged in planning and reflecting sessions during the school day.</p> <p>Provided teachers and members of the design team with appropriate tools and resources to plan, observe, and reflect on guided reading practices.</p>	<p>The time, support, and resources provided allowed teachers and members of the Design Team the time to develop trust and collaboration in a risk-free setting.</p> <p>School leaders gained additional knowledge on which structures and systems of support had a positive impact on improving collective teacher efficacy in literacy practices.</p>	<p>Bandura’s focus as people learn through a combination of observing others, making sense of what they see, and reacting to conditions within their environment (Goddard et al., 2015).</p> <p>Provided the conditions for learning to occur, which directly relates to Bandura’s focus on environmental factors which have an impact on improving collective teacher efficacy.</p>	Ongoing throughout Cycles I, II, and III.	Observation notes from planning, observation and feedback; focus group responses; semi-structured interview responses; team success protocol notes

Research Design

The action research study followed a meta-cycle of phases, as explained by Coghlan and Brannick (2014). As described by Coghlan and Brannick (2014, p. 12), “in any action research project there are multiple action research cycles operating concurrently.” The research design, which closely aligned to this action research, was the four-step process as defined by Coghlan and Brannick (2014) as illustrated in Figure 13. The context of the research happens in real time

and the focus is on having a deeper understanding of the proposed research (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014). As members of the Action Research Team began what Coghlan and Brannick (2014) describe as the collaboration of the action research, the constructing of the issues serve as the foundation of the dialogic steps in order to articulate further steps. The phase of planning action takes further collaboration from all members of the Action Research Team. The taking action phase of the research is the next phase in which plans are implemented and interventions approached collaboratively. The evaluating action phase of the action research is an intended and unintended approach, as described by Coghlan and Brannick (2014, p.11) and involves “a deep analysis to determine if the original constructing fit; if the actions taken match the constructing; if the action was taken in an appropriate manner; and what feeds into the next cycle of the constructing, planning and action.”

The action research design follows a dual approach to engaging in meta-learning involving a reflection phase of the study. Coghlan and Brannick (2014) explain that it is critical to evaluate how the action research project is going and what is being learned throughout the process. Three critical forms of reflection: content, process, and premise are applied within the action research design phase as a meta-cycle of inquiry. The content is what is being framed, planned, acted on, and evaluated (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014). Coghlan and Brannick (2014, p. 13) further explain that the process is where the researcher thinks about strategies and processes and the premise of reflection is where the critique of underlying assumptions and perspectives are found. A major component of this research design was the researcher and Action Research Team engaging in a reflective process, whereby as explained by Glanz (2014, p.24), “a process by which educational leaders take the time to contemplate and assess the efficacy of programs,

products, and personnel in order to make judgements about the appropriateness or effectiveness of these aspects so that improvements or refinements might be achieved.”

Figure 13

The Action Research Process



In the case of this action research study, the content reflection refers to the professional learning, peer learning cycles, leadership behaviors, and the job-embedded structures framed as the interventions. The process reflection of the action research study is the actual planning of interventions occurring within each cycle. The premise reflection is the critical aspect of the Action Research Team adjusting literacy practices and structures which support improving school-wide collective teacher efficacy.

Case Study

Baxter and Jack (2008) explain that a case study is an approach to research that facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources. As explained by Creswell (2012, p.465) a case study is “an in-depth exploration of a bounded system based on extensive data collection.” A key characteristic of a case study is that findings are stated verbally, not numerically (Glanz, 2014). The case study may be a single individual, several individuals, or in a group, a program, events, or activities (Creswell, 2012; Glanz, 2014). For this action research study, the Action Research team engaged in a series of steps and interventions towards improving collective teacher efficacy. Creswell (2012) describes the “case” as often involving a process which consists of a series of steps that form a sequence of activities.” This qualitative action research was grounded in a case study as it is related to the context within improving the collective teacher efficacy of literacy practices at Southeast Academy. Baxter and Jack (2008, p. 544), explain, “qualitative case study methodology provides tools for researchers to study complex phenomena within their contexts.” The focus of this action research as a qualitative case study is supported by what Yin (2003) describes as seeking to cover contextual conditions which are relevant to the study. As it relates to this action research study, the Action Research team seeks to use the context of Southeast Academy as a single case approach to qualitative research.

Contextual Setting

This action research study focused on creating systems and structures of support with leadership behaviors, and implementing job-embedded professional learning to support improving collective teacher efficacy in literacy practices. The action research took place at Southeast Academy, which serves approximately 300 students in grades pre-k through 5th grade.

Southeast Academy is considered a high poverty school. Approximately forty-six percent of the population surrounding Southeast Academy lives below poverty, and ninety-four percent of the population is African American and two percent are White. Approximately forty-six percent of the population surrounding Southeast Academy lives below poverty. Southeast Academy is located in an inner-city community and serves the majority of students from subsidized housing. The school staff is comprised of more than half with advanced degrees and a variety of endorsements in specific content areas. Southeast Academy is considered a Title I school and has been identified by the school district as a school with a high percentage of students on free and reduced lunch. While Southeast Academy has undergone major transformation through school turnaround efforts in leadership and perception, additional efforts are needed to improve the collective teacher efficacy related to improving literacy practices. Southeast Academy is considered a Tier III school by the school district based on continued low student achievement and under half of the staff being actively engaged based on recent Gallup scores.

The action research study began the first full year of face-to-face instruction following virtual learning options due to the world impacted by a global pandemic, COVID-19, commonly known as coronavirus. The pandemic caused school closures beginning in March 2020 and throughout the next year, even as schools transitioned to virtual and hybrid options, student and teacher engagement decreased. At the onset of the 2021-2022 school year, Southeast Academy continued to be impacted by teacher and student absences due to the spread of Covid-19.

Purposeful Selection

In qualitative research, Creswell (2012, p.206) reiterates, “the intent is not to generalize to a population, but to develop an in-depth exploration of a central phenomenon. To deepen the understanding of the phenomenon, the qualitative researcher purposely or intentionally selects

individuals and sites in which to explore and research (Creswell, 2012). Creswell (2012, p. 206) further explains that purposeful sampling applies to individuals and sites. For this action research study, purposeful qualitative sampling was used in order to select the people within the organization as Creswell (2012) explains, who can best help us in understanding the phenomenon. Creswell (2003, p. 100) further states, “purposeful sampling leads to showing different perspectives on the problem, process, or event.” In qualitative research, it is critical to purposefully select participants that will best assist the researcher in understanding the problem and the research questions (Creswell, 2003; 2012).

The participants in this action research study included one master teacher leader of literacy with 26 years of teaching experience and a coaching endorsement. The teachers involved in the study ranged from having zero to 11 years of teaching experience. One teacher in her first year of experience at Southeast Academy had only received school-based training in literacy. The other teachers had a wide range of previous professional learning in literacy. Teachers and members of the action research team aimed to include participants with direct supervision or teaching of literacy to a group of students. The selected two administrators who participated in the study were chosen based on involvement in creating structures of support for job-embedded professional learning and the implementation of the peer-coaching framework. The purposeful selection of members of the action research team aligned with the goal of creating opportunities for peer observations to occur with non-evaluative feedback.

The principal as the primary researcher led the purposeful selection inviting members of the action research team to participate in the study. The primary researcher implemented a purposeful sampling selection to further learn about the phenomenon and as Creswell (2012, p.206) describes, or “to an understanding that provides voice to individuals who may not be

heard otherwise. An email was sent to all first and second grade teachers, two assistant principals, and one master teacher leader, inviting them to an informational meeting on August 17, 2021 (Appendix C). The meeting provided an overview of the study, procedures, risks and benefits, and protocols for privacy. The researcher provided an opportunity for participants to ask questions. An informed consent form (Appendix B) was given to all participants. All invited participants agreed to participate and signed informed consent forms. A copy was given to all participants and signed informed consent forms were maintained in a safe location. Participants were provided with pseudonyms to protect identity.

Table 2*The Research Plan*

Research Question	Data Collected and Reviewed	Data Analysis Approach	Timeline
What is the relationship between leadership behaviors and school-wide collective teacher efficacy connected to literacy practices in one urban turnaround elementary school?	Focus Group Interviews Feedback and notes from Design Team Meetings	Transcribed by researcher using codes	September 2021-December 2021
How do teachers describe the impact of the implementation of additional support structures for literacy instruction on their efficacy in one urban elementary school?	Semi-structured interviews Feedback and notes from Team Success Protocol with action research team Questionnaire feedback after professional learning sessions	Transcribed by researcher using codes	September 2021-December 2021
How do action research team members describe the process of creating and implementing structures that support collective teacher efficacy connected to literacy practices in one urban elementary school?	Focus Group; Semi-structured interviews; Observation Notes from guided reading planning and observation tool Feedback meeting notes from Design Team meetings; Feedback and notes from Team Success Protocol with action research team	Transcribed by researcher using codes	September 2021-December 2021

Data Collection Methods

This qualitative action research employed qualitative data collection measures. In qualitative research data collection, Creswell (2012) suggests that the research relies on general interviews or observations, “so as not to restrict the views of the participants.” Creswell (2012, p. 205) further explains, “qualitative data collection consists of collecting data using forms with general, emerging questions to permit the participant to generate responses, gathering word or image data, and collecting information from a small number of individuals.” Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) emphasize that qualitative research data collection involves using multiple methods for triangulation. The researcher transcribed data from interviews, notes, observations, and documents as sources to provide appropriate data collection and analysis. Table 2 illustrates the alignment of research questions and data collection methods used.

Focus Group Interviews

Focus group interviews (Appendix D) were used to gather data collection for research questions one and three. Focus group interviews were held with members of the school leadership team; consisting of two assistant principals conducted by the principal; the primary researcher. Focus group interviews were held prior to cycle one and at the end of cycles two and three. Focus group interviews were held to determine the effectiveness of leadership behaviors, structures of support for improving collective efficacy towards improving literacy practices, and the effectiveness of professional learning and peer coaching cycles. Creswell (2012, p. 218) explains, “focus groups are advantageous when the interaction among interviewees will likely yield the best information and when interviewees are similar to and cooperative with each other.” Open-ended questions were used based on Creswell (2012) explanation of seeking to gain the best voice from the participant with unconstrained perspectives and opinions. Creswell (2012)

explains that an additional advantage to interviews is it allows the researcher control over the line of questioning. Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) further assert, “the goal of focus groups is to create a candid conversation that addresses, in depth, the selected topic” (p.19).

Interviews

One-on-one semi-structured interviews (Appendix E) were held for data collection with research question two with teachers in order to gain additional perspectives based on individual experiences. Interviews were held at the beginning of cycle one and at the end of cycles two and three to gain knowledge on the effectiveness of interventions on improving collective teacher efficacy of literacy practices.

While time consuming, the purpose of one-on-one interviews is for the researcher to ask questions and record answers from one participant at a time (Creswell, 2012). Creswell (2012, p. 218), reiterates that one-on-one interviews are ideal for interviewing participants who may not be hesitant to speak and who can share ideas comfortably. Glanz (2014, p. 127) explains, “interviews enable the researcher to learn the complexities of participants’ experiences from their point of view.” Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) affirm “semi-structured interviews are used to facilitate more focused exploration of a specific topic” (p. 193).

Observations

Observation notes from peer coaching cycles were used with research questions two and three. The purpose of observation notes in this qualitative research study was to gain additional information on the effectiveness of implementing interventions after professional learning and peer coaching cycles one, two, and three. The implementation plan for this action research engaged in three cycles of peer coaching cycles with members of the Action Research Team. Observers from the Design Team and peers on the implementation team had the opportunity to

use observation data to determine the effectiveness of interventions and new learning. Observation notes from school leaders provided additional data on the effectiveness of established structures of job-embedded professional learning. Creswell (2012, p. 213), defines observation as “the process of gathering open-ended, firsthand information by observing people and places at a research site” which in this study was Southeast Academy. Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) affirm, “observation, or participant observation, is a central and fundamental method in qualitative inquiry and is used to discover and explain complex interactions in natural social settings” (p.194). An observation tool was specifically used for look-fors based on the planning for peer observation cycle aligned to interventions for improving literacy practices (Appendix F). Within this action research study, the primary researcher acted as a participant observer by taking part in activities in the setting being observed (Creswell, 2012). Throughout the action research study, members of the Action Research Team engaged in what Creswell (2012, p. 215) describes as changing observational roles, whereas researchers adapt their roles to the situation. Descriptive and reflective field notes were used as the method to record observations.

Meeting Notes

For research questions one, two, and three, meeting notes were used from design team meetings, team success protocol (Appendix G) sessions, and professional learning sessions to plan guided reading. Notes from professional learning sessions were used to provide follow-up steps needed for continuous improvement in planning and reflection of leadership behaviors and necessary shifts needed in job-embedded structures for opportunities to collaborate and improve literacy practices. Team success protocol notes were used to determine the growth of collective teacher efficacy as members of the action research team began to see literacy practices

strengthen. Notes from design team meetings were used to support necessary changes in action research cycles related to systems and structures supporting job embedded professional learning.

Questionnaire

Questionnaire data were used for research question two in order to gauge immediate feedback from action research team members after professional learning sessions on small group guided reading job-embedded training (Appendix H).

Data Analysis

Creswell (2012, p.238) suggests, “the organization of data is critical in qualitative research based on the large amount of information which will be gathered during the study.” Creswell (2012) adds that data collection involves the use of a matrix or table to assist the researcher in organization of data and materials. The data analysis of this qualitative research study involved the use of transcribing data, coding, and using themes. Glanz (2014, p. 166) further explains, “qualitative data analysis requires that the researcher be comfortable with developing categories and making comparisons and contrasts.” Transcription is the process of converting audiotape recordings or field notes into text data (Creswell, 2012). Creswell (2012, p.239) explains “during qualitative data collection, the researcher will collect text or words through interviewing or by writing field notes during observation.”

For this action research, the use of interviews and field notes were used to collect data for all research questions. One of the first steps in data analysis is the exploration of the data (Creswell, 2012). Creswell (2003) also suggests that data be used to analyze data for material that can yield codes which address topics for an audience to find revealing or which can address a larger theoretical perspective on the research. Saldaña (2021) reiterates “a code in qualitative data analysis is most often the word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative,

salient, essence-capturing or evocative attribute for a portion of language based on visual data” (p. 5). During the process of transcribing and coding, the primary researcher selected specific data to use and voided data that did not specifically provide evidence for emerging themes. Creswell (2012, p. 247) explains, “describing and developing themes from the data consists of answering the major research questions and forming an in-depth understanding of the central phenomenon through description and thematic development.”

Reliability and Validity

Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) seminal work on understanding the impact and layers of trustworthiness in qualitative research, yielded four general criteria which should be embedded in a qualitative study: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility seeks to answer the question of how congruent the findings are with reality (Stahl and King, 2020). Tracy (2010) suggests, “credibility refers to the trustworthiness, and plausibility of the research findings” (p. 842). Based on the perception held within the research field, Stahl and King (2020, p. 26) communicate that “reading qualitative research can be a highly variable experience and the use of thick description intends for the reader to have texts so rich in details that the event or the object of description is palpable.”

Triangulation of the data was used in this action research study to build reliability. According to Creswell (2012), triangulation is the “process of corroborating evidence from different individuals, and methods of data collection in descriptions and themes in qualitative research” (p.259). Stahl and King (2020) affirm that building credibility through triangulation is using multiple sources to test the credibility of one’s qualitative research. This action research study used multiple sources to collect data, including one-on-one interviews, focus group

interviews, observations, and notes/documents from meetings during three cycles of the action research.

Transferability in qualitative research is known as the ability to maintain patterns and descriptions from one context and making the research applicable to another similar context (Stahl & King, 2020). Stahl and King (2020) explain, “transferability is only possible when a thick description provides a rich enough portrayal of circumstance for application to others’ situations with methods and time frames fully described” (p. 27). The transferability of this action research study was able to yield multiple opportunities for data sources to be replicated by engaging in three cycles of interventions with varied members of the Action Research Team. The context of the multiple grade levels and school setting also increased the transferability of this action research study.

Dependability as a part of trustworthiness is trust in trustworthiness (Stahl & King, 2020). The dependability of qualitative dependability is often based on the researchers’ anticipation of review by a peer and may be inspected, which is commonly known as bracketing (Stahl & King, 2020). Peer debriefing and allowing input on field notes and observation documents, supports member-checking, which yields higher levels of dependability. For this action research study, dependability was increased by the use of data submitted from other members of the Action Research Team. The data from the primary researcher was used in collaboration with data collected from peer coaching notes from members of the Design Team, as well as observations from the Implementation Team. School administrators serving on the action research team collaborated with the principal on analyzing feedback notes and documents from peer coaching cycles and observation field notes from guided reading observations, yielding high dependability for this action research study.

Confirmability as it relates to transferability is seeking to get as close to the objective reality for qualitative research (Stahl & King, 2020). The qualitative researcher seeks to improve confirmability in “relying on constructs like precision and accuracy in their research practice and the involvement of other researchers” (p. 28). In this research, the confirmability of the action research is explored and attempted in the focus of using constant emerging themes and the use of research from the natural environment of Southeast Academy and participants in the action research study.

Subjectivity Statement

The researcher’s subjectivity in this study derived from her professional experiences. As an African American female who attended a prestigious college for black women, her beliefs towards removing barriers for students of poverty was shaped as she entered the teaching profession. The researcher had also completed her student teaching in the same district where she began her career in education, from an elementary teacher to currently serving as the principal of Southeast Academy. As a teacher, the researcher taught in a community with housing projects and violence, however her students consistently achieved at high levels. As her career transitioned into that of a principal, she began to specifically shift her thinking towards how school leaders influence teachers’ belief and efficacy that they could have a positive impact on literacy outcomes for students. Her over twenty plus years in the classroom and experiences in serving as a leader in two different environments, led to the passion for ensuring that structures and systems are in place from a leaders’ vantage point to support improving collective teacher efficacy in literacy, for all children. Her experience in urban schools shapes the focus of this action research study by seeking to find solutions to low collective teacher efficacy and improving teacher beliefs in impacting literacy for students.

Limitations

The limitations are the potential weaknesses or problems with a research study which are identified by the researcher (Creswell, 2012). Creswell (2012, p. 199) explains that the limitations of a study may be loss or lack of participants, small sample sizes, and other factors such as familiarity. Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) explain, “limitations of a study are those characteristics of design or methodology that impacted or influenced the interpretation of findings from research” (p. 207). The limitations of this action research study included the principal serving as the primary researcher, which may impact participants being vulnerable and open during interviews. The small sample size of the participants was also a limitation of the action research study. The small sample size of the number of lower grade levels participating in the study was also a limitation as it may be difficult to generalize findings for upper elementary grade teachers. However, the analysis of data collection could support future research in understanding how to improve collective teacher efficacy in literacy practices.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided detailed information related to the methodology of the action research study. Based on the purpose of the study, which aimed to identify job-embedded structures and systems which could impact improving collective teacher efficacy connected to literacy practices, the researcher used focus group and interviews as well as observational data and meeting notes to gather information to support the proposed research questions.

The researcher also provided detailed information on data collection and analysis, including research subjectivity and limitations of the study. The next chapter presents the context of Southeast Academy, with detailed information which situates the problem within the context

of the site. Information and details of the action research cycle are provided with the background of the participants on the team.

CHAPTER 4

THE CASE

The purpose of this action research study was to examine the impact of leadership behaviors, structures, and processes associated with improving collective teacher efficacy in literacy practices. To address the purpose of the study, the following research questions guided the action research:

1. What is the relationship between leadership behaviors and school-wide collective teacher efficacy connected to literacy practices in one urban turnaround elementary school?
2. How do teachers describe the impact of the implementation of additional support structures for literacy instruction on their efficacy in one urban elementary school?
3. How do action research team members describe the process of creating and implementing structures that support collective teacher efficacy connected to literacy practices in one urban elementary school?

The Context

Southeast Academy is an urban elementary school, situated in the inner-city area of a large southeast school district, serving approximately 285 students; grades pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. The school district serves approximately 52,000 students in grades pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade in both traditional and charter school settings. The school district is comprised of clusters which are made up of elementary, middle, and a feeder high

school pattern made up of geographic location. The majority of the schools within the Southeast Academy school district are considered Title I and approximately seventy-five percent of the student population across the school district qualifies for free and reduced lunch. The socioeconomic shift and demand for affordable housing within the inner city of Southeast Academy, is causing many of the schools in the inner hub of the district to have a decline in student enrollment. A huge disparity in household income exists between the community of Southeast Academy and other parts of the inner city. For example, the average/median household income for the neighborhood for Southeast Academy is approximately \$29, 200, as compared to a neighboring school community less than five miles away with a median income of approximately \$90,000. Within the same district as Southeast Academy, several communities have household incomes over \$100,000. Students attending Southeast Academy come from a variety of dwellings with over 80% of the students attending from the four subsidized housing apartments and duplex units.

The recent gentrification of Southeast Academy has led to a wider divide in household income and poverty levels within the community, whereas 96% of the students qualify for free and reduced lunch as compared to the district average of 75%. For example, Southeast Academy has a capacity to enroll 628 students, however only 277 students are currently enrolled, yielding a low 44% utilization of facilities rate based on a recent 2021-2022 master facilities plan conducted by the school district. Based on longitudinal trend enrollment, over the past four years, the enrollment averages approximately 280 to 300 students. Currently, Southeast Academy serves approximately 277 students in grades pre-kindergarten through 5th grade; comprised of 96% African American; 2% White; 1% Multi-Racial; and 1% Hispanic. In 2014, Southeast Academy, based on a number of issues, including low student achievement and other

factors contributing to a negative reputation in the district, faced possible school closure.

Community advocates saved Southeast Academy from school closure by district leadership and school board officials, and new leadership was brought in to transform and improve student achievement. During this same time, the district faced confronting low student achievement across many schools within the school district. In 2015, as a result of a failed attempt to close Southeast Academy, the school district rezoning resulted in the smallest attendance zone for students across the entire school district. One additional school with close proximity closed, with the majority of the students attending a neighboring school with higher student achievement. At the onset of 2015, new school leadership, the primary researcher in this action research study, focused on rebuilding the school culture and removing negative perceptions of Southeast Academy being an unsafe school. In 2016, the new principal, the researcher in this study, collaborated with the school's governance team of parents, teachers, and community partners and successfully submitted a school proposal to district leadership and changed the name of the school in an effort to set out on a new vision for improving community perception. Southeast Academy is one of only a few schools in the district with more than three highly competitive sought-after charter schools with higher student achievement. As a result of gentrification and a decline in affordable housing for parents in low-income households, the majority of new residents to the Southeast Academy community, either enroll children in one of the three competitive charter schools or private. Within the last three years, the average home in the community ranges from approximately \$350,000 to \$800,000. New home construction, as a result of gentrification, is in deep contrast to the subsidized housing of the students which attend Southeast Academy.

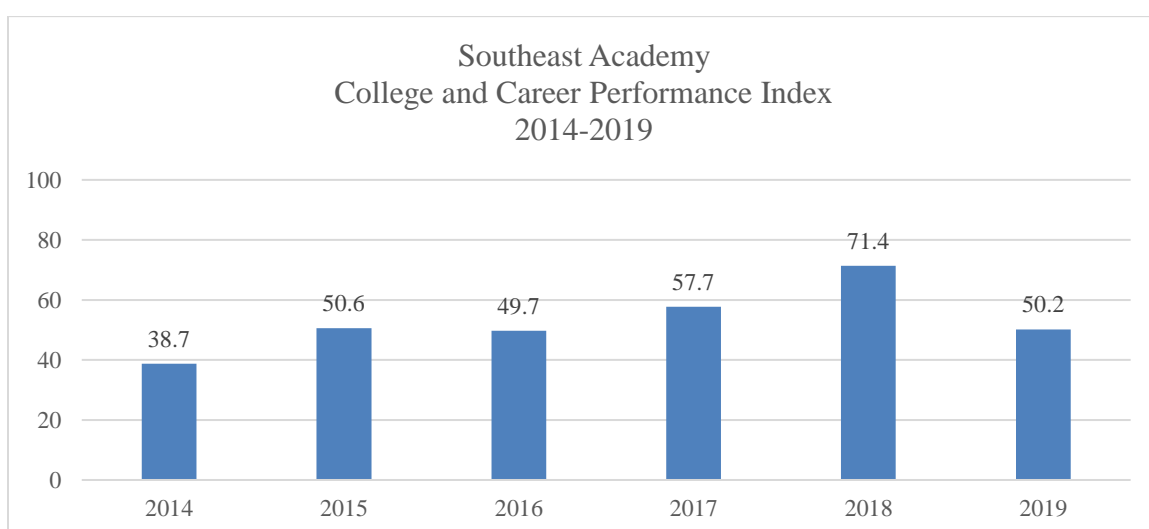
Problem Framing in the Context

In 2016, the school district launched robust efforts, strategy, and resources aimed to turn around and improve the lowest performing schools in the district. At the beginning of the 2015 school year, Southeast Academy was identified through state assessment outcomes as the second lowest performing elementary school in this southeast region state; with only seven percent of the students proficient in the area of literacy and a College and Career Readiness Index (CCRPI) score of 38 out of 100. In 2015, Southeast Academy was identified by the Governor's Office of Student Achievement as a school eligible for state takeover based on continued years of low student achievement and a designation of a "Focus School" with resources and personnel assigned by the state to support school leadership in improving student achievement. Student outcomes based on the 2015 state literacy assessment for third through fifth graders, revealed that only 8.4% of the students were proficient. The primary researcher as the principal began in August 2015 and established clear expectations surrounding instruction. The primary focus for improvement was on literacy with additional resources aligned to support professional learning for literacy, targeted intervention, and support for students performing below the 25th percentile in literacy, and collaboration with state designated personnel to remove Southeast Academy from the state eligible takeover list. Beginning in the fall of 2016 through 2018, Southeast Academy was involved in intensive turnaround efforts; extended learning day, Saturday school, prescriptive literacy programs, and specially trained reading teachers hired to support the lowest performing students with additional support services. By 2018, Southeast Academy had been rewarded a state recognition for high incremental gains and growth in literacy student achievement as well as removal from the state eligible turn around list.

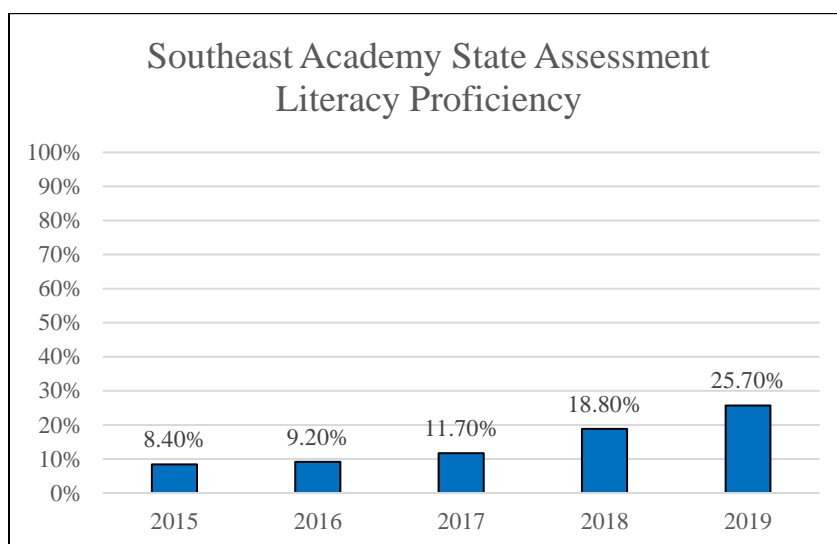
State and district designated staff were removed from mandatory professional learning with school administration and Southeast Academy's College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI) score, increased to 71.4, yielding an almost 40-point increase. In 2019, due to a decrease in student growth in literacy and additional content indicators, the state College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI) score, decreased to 50.4 as seen in Figure 14.

Figure 14

College and Career Readiness Index



State literacy proficiency rates increased from 8.4% in 2015 to 25.7% to 2019. While incremental and significant growth in literacy outcomes for students occurred from 2016-2019, approximately 75% of the students at Southeast Academy were beginning readers based on state assessment outcomes as seen in Figure 15.

Figure 15*State Literacy Proficiency Rates 2015-2019***Problem Framing Based on the Site**

Literacy achievement at Southeast Academy had become stagnant for two consecutive years. The next level of continued growth for literacy aligned to the need for teachers to shift for the first time in years. Teacher capacity and collective teacher efficacy in providing literacy instruction for varied academic levels, would need to shift and align with the needs of all students. The state of low teacher efficacy and staff engagement from year to year were often based on a significantly high number of students that were often two and three grade levels below in literacy. Based on Gallup organizational engagement scores from 2016 through 2020, the average Gallup staff engagement score was consistently below 50%. While Southeast Academy was removed from the state eligible list for possible state takeover in 2018, literacy data continued to be stagnant. Based on 2018 Grade 3 Lexile data for Southeast Academy only 27% of students achieved a grade level appropriate Lexile of 670 or higher, and only 18% in 2019. Based on 2018 Grade 5 Lexile data for Southeast Academy, only 30% of students achieved a grade level appropriate Lexile of 920 or higher, and 31.6% in 2019. Southeast

Academy consistently scored well below the school district and the state in literacy performance and proficiency.

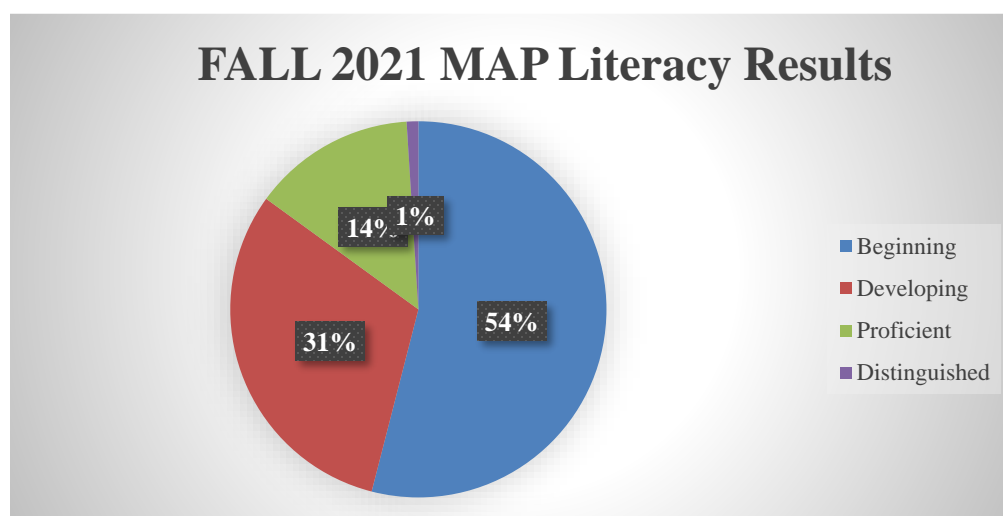
The transformational efforts of school change led by the primary researcher as the new principal, often resulted in high teacher turnover. Within the first four years of the primary researcher serving as the principal of Southeast Academy, more than half of the teaching staff was different. School turn-around efforts often led to mixed beliefs on how to support students in improving literacy outcomes. The principal researcher as the principal was held accountable for implementing several districtwide and turn-around school initiatives, which were often given short implementation timelines for evidence in teaching practices. The different teaching and learning expectations provided by the district were difficult to gain buy-in and in-depth understanding during an often short forty-five-minute planning for teachers at Southeast Academy. School support staff, including administrators and instructional school-based content coaches were asked to guide, plan, and facilitate district and turn-around initiatives, which took a significant amount of time to plan and effectively support teacher efficacy and a risk-free space for authentic two-way trust. In response to additional time needed beyond the school day to provide professional learning due to not having a well-structured planning cycle, teachers at Southeast Academy rarely gained more knowledge related to improving literacy scores. The lack of job-embedded time provided to improve collective teacher efficacy school wide, often led to high teacher turnover and low teacher engagement. While Southeast Academy provided competitive stipends for professional learning beyond the school day, including Saturday professional learning on research-based strategies to improve literacy outcomes, what often occurred was an overall decrease in the school-wide impact on collective teacher efficacy. The

urgency and various demands of implementing prescribed literacy instructional strategies resulted in a plateau of literacy data.

Fall 2020 and 2021 diagnostic literacy data support the findings that literacy student achievement at Southeast Academy had become stagnant. Based on student outcomes on the Fall 2021 administration of the MAP literacy assessment (Measures of Adequate Progress), 54% of the students assessed in 2nd-5th grades scored at the beginning level; reading below grade level.

Figure 16

Fall 2021 MAP Literacy Results- 2nd through 5th grade

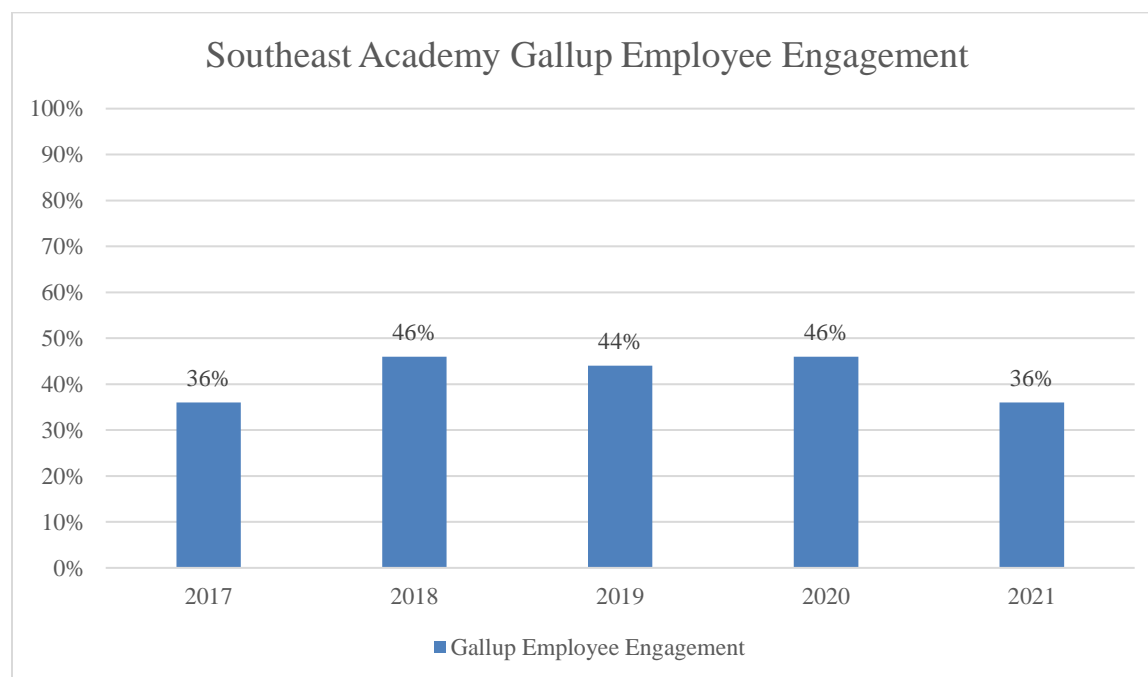


The need for a renewed shift in structures and systems to deepen collective teacher efficacy existed at Southeast Academy. As the primary researcher and principal at Southeast Academy for the past six years, I knew that an urgent need existed to address the efficacy issue that our teachers often felt as it related to being adequately prepared with effective literacy strategies to improve student achievement. The goal was to create the appropriate structures, systems, and job-embedded professional learning in order to improve collective teacher efficacy, yielding greater outcomes for school-wide collective teacher efficacy. At the onset of the school year in 2021, school wide engagement as measured by Gallup, showed that approximately 36%

of the staff at Southeast Academy were actively engaged employees, a decline from 46% the previous school year in 2020 (See Figure 17).

Figure 17

Gallup Staff Engagement



While incremental growth in literacy achievement at Southeast Academy was evident, staff engagement continued to show the need to work on collaborative systems and job-embedded professional learning opportunities for teachers. On the district administered Gallup Employee Engagement survey, only 21 out of 40 employees agreed that “*at work, I have the ability to do my best.*” On the same district administered Employee Engagement survey, only 18 out of 40 employees agreed, “*at work my opinions seem to count.*” The often-disengaged staff at Southeast Academy, and prior ‘quick-fix’ turn around strategies resulted in the principal, as the primary researcher, selecting the focus of creating structures of support and job-embedded professional learning with an emphasis on improving collective teacher efficacy as the primary focus for this action research study.

The Story and Outcomes

The timeline of this action research study spanned from August 2021 through December 2021. In August of 2021, an interest email invitation was shared with all first and second grade literacy teachers, the school's primary grades Master Teacher Leader for literacy, and members of the instructional administrative team. All invited first and second grade literacy teachers, the school's primary grades Master Teacher Leader for literacy, and members of the instructional administrative team consisting of two Assistant Principals, attended the interest meeting. During the interest meeting, I engaged the attendees in a discussion on the state of literacy at Southeast Academy and compelling data with historical trends of literacy achievement which led into an overview of the action research study. Expectations of the AR team were shared with participants and each attendee received two copies of the consent to participate form. All interest meeting participants were given one week to return the consent form. Within the first week, all invited literacy teachers, the primary grades master teacher leader, and the two assistant principals, returned consent to participate forms.

Action Research Team Members

The action research team for this study was made up of a diverse group of literacy teachers, administrators, and support staff from Southeast Academy. At the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year, a variety of new and veteran teachers and support staff were hired at Southeast Academy, including the literacy master teacher leader and one second grade teacher. One first grade teacher had only been at Southeast Academy half of the year prior. The Action Research Design Team (DT) consisted of Ms. Hill, an Assistant Principal, Mr. Smith, another Assistant Principal, and Ms. Adams, the kindergarten through 2nd grade master teacher leader. The Action Research Implementation Team (IT) consisted of five teachers; two first grade

teachers and three-second grade teachers. Each member of the implementation team taught literacy daily to students.

Ms. Adams, the literacy master teacher leader for kindergarten through second grade, was in her first year at Southeast Academy. Prior to joining Southeast Academy, she had worked in a neighboring school district in a more affluent community and in two other districts, with over twenty years in public education. Ms. Adams brought a wealth of experience supporting teachers and held a coaching endorsement. She has a wealth of training in several literacy programs and professional learning. Despite her being new to the school, her prior experiences and ability to build relationships helped the implementation team with authenticity in trying new literacy practices. At the onset of the action research study, Ms. Hill had the most experience at Southeast Academy other than the principal, who was the primary researcher. Prior to serving in the role of the Assistant Principal, she served as a math specialist and math instructional coach for a combined six years at Southeast Academy and eleven years in education. Ms. Hill's knowledge of the school and her time spent through the continued transformation of Southeast Academy, provided the background context needed when exploring prior interventions and initiatives that did not yield improved collective teacher efficacy. Ms. Hill's knowledge of the logistics and scheduling for daily professional learning at Southeast Academy was an asset to the action research study supporting the implementation of job-embedded professional learning during the school day. Ms. Hill provided more math support at Southeast Academy, however, she desired to grow in her lens of supporting improving collective teacher efficacy, yielding greater involvement in the action research study. At the onset of this action research study, Mr. Smith was in his third year at Southeast Academy. Prior to serving as an Assistant Principal, he

served in the role of supporting teachers within the Special Education Department. Mr. Smith transitioned to another district in the middle of the year and was unable to complete the study.

The researcher selected first and second grade teachers as members of the implementation team based on prior literacy data and the academic gap that the students presented due to the pandemic. Approximately 60% of the total population of first and second graders currently enrolled at the beginning of the academic year and at the beginning of this action research study had an entire prior year of virtual learning in kindergarten or first grade. The foundational aspect of literacy and the gaps presented in diagnostic literacy data presented the need for teachers to have the collective efficacy needed when implementing literacy practices. The master teacher leader for literacy for primary grades was selected as a member of the design team based on her being new to the school and the enthusiasm and knowledge she possessed to support teachers in developing literacy practices. Members of the action research implementation team are provided below and their responsibilities with context at Southeast Academy.

Michelle Jones

Michelle Jones was a first-year first grade teacher at Southeast Academy. She had recently received her undergraduate degree in teaching the summer before joining the school. Michelle was a vibrant first year teacher and easily accepted feedback. Ms. Jones enjoyed being an active member of the research implementation team and collaborated well with her team and master teacher leader in job-embedded professional learning.

Erin Reed

Erin Reed, a first-grade teacher, was in her ninth year of teaching and the beginning of her third year of teaching at Southeast Academy at the beginning of this action research study.

She had prior experience teaching 3rd and 5th grade and transitioned to Southeast Academy from a neighboring mostly rural district. Ms. Reed enjoys teaching primary grades and serves as the grade chair for her team this year. Ms. Reed easily grasped new teaching strategies related to implementing guided reading and volunteered to model for her peers for feedback.

Lynn Bright

Lynn Bright, a 2nd grade teacher, was a veteran teacher at Southeast Academy in her 11th year of teaching. Lynn had taught first and fourth grade in prior years. At the beginning of the action research study, Lynn taught the self-contained early intervention class, serving a smaller group of students needing additional support in literacy. Lynn enjoyed professional learning and working with the master teacher leader and additional job-embedded opportunities to collaborate.

Dallas Johnson

Dallas Johnson, a 2nd grade teacher, was in her first year of teaching at Southeast Academy at the beginning of the action research study. Dallas taught eleven years prior to serving at Southeast Academy, and most recently taught at a neighboring charter school serving students with slightly different backgrounds. Dallas brought a wealth of experience related to literacy from her prior experiences.

Kate Robinson

Kate Robinson was in her first full year of teaching first grade at Southeast Academy. She started one year prior and began the second half of the school year. Kate was energetic and consistently eager to learn new ways of supporting literacy for her students. Kate had previously done her student teaching at a nearby school in the same district serving students with a higher socioeconomic status. Ms. Robinson enjoyed the intentional time provided to support her in implementing guided reading.

Action Research Cycles

Implementing Coghlan and Brannick's four phases of action research (2015): constructing, planning action, taking action, and evaluating action, the action research team began cycle 1 in September 2021. The action research team actively engaged in three research cycles from September 2021 through December 2021. The initial meeting involved the "constructing phase", which involved the Design Team meeting with the principal as the primary researcher establishing the urgency of need and focus to improve collective teacher efficacy; using literacy outcomes, teacher engagement results, and a review of prior professional learning structures for literacy, as baseline data. During the "planning action phase" the primary researcher met with the action research team and revisited school wide data in literacy, structures and systems of support for literacy teachers, and revisited structures of job-embedded professional learning at Southeast Academy. The next meeting with all members of the Action Research Team occurred in September 2021 to collaborate on the purpose of creating a professional learning community focused on improving the collective efficacy of literacy practices at Southeast Academy.

The Action Research Team reviewed the action research process for this action research study and what each step entailed related to roles and responsibilities of Action Research Team members. The primary researcher met with the Implementation Team and established the cycle of peer coaching as the model of engagement and collaboration for each action research cycle which would be used to support the implementation of guided reading by the Implementation Team. The "taking action" and "evaluating action" phases were implemented during three action research cycles, from September 2021 through December 2021. Interventions were implemented for each action research cycle and assessed during the "evaluating action" in order to influence

concurrent action research cycles. A fluid and organized process was used by the Design Team to evaluate the effectiveness of each action research cycle and reflect on job-embedded systems of support provided to Implementation Team members, which included data collection and analysis of planning notes, observations, and team success protocols. Focus group and semi-structured interview results were also used to support the effectiveness of each action research cycle. Each action research cycle lasted approximately three weeks followed by one week in which focus group, semi-structured interviews, and action research team protocols were facilitated by the primary researcher.

Cycles of Action Research

Cycle 1: Cycle 1 of the research study began on September 27, 2021, and ended on October 15, 2021. The first professional learning session occurred on September 29, 2021, and was facilitated by an outside literacy expert in the field of literacy and supporting teams in improving school wide implementation of guided reading. The AR team attended the training. The focus of the training centered around a comprehensive overview of our school wide literacy data based on metrics from internal literacy diagnostic assessments, supporting teachers with having a deeper understanding of the strategies aligned with teacher and student behaviors of guided reading, and understanding the importance of using guided reading to support students in improving literacy outcomes. Additional focus areas of the training provided an overview of aligned resources to support effective implementation of guided reading, selecting appropriate text levels for students, and small group literacy instruction using guided reading as a primary focus for literacy instruction. Based on prior trainings with the literacy expert on all of the aforementioned focus areas, the design team decided to differentiate the support that members of the implementation team would need in professional learning sessions. Based on a questionnaire

administered after the professional learning session, when asked to respond to “what additional steps are needed to support the implementation of guided reading in your classroom”, one participant responded: “I need someone to come into my classroom to show me how to get guided reading started with my students.”

The next step involved creating a launch date of implementation for guided reading which would take place after all professional learning peer planning sessions. First and second grade teachers; the implementation team, met with the master teacher leader to plan the first launch of guided reading instruction using the peer observation guided reading planning and observation tool (Appendix F). Each member of the implementation team received a copy of the tool in order to fully engage in the process. The focus of the first session involved using student data to group students for guided reading and plan aligned small group instruction for one group of students with the goal of seeing two groups by the end of the action research study. The focus strategy of the observation included timely transition of students and teacher introduction of the reading strategy with students. The master teacher leader and members of the design team observed teachers and provided follow-up feedback in job-embedded professional learning sessions for guided reading. The design team met on September 29, 2021, to provide clarity on the peer observation process and check for readiness with job-embedded structures, resources, and tools for planning. A follow-up design team meeting occurred on October 11, 2021, to debrief observations and effectiveness of job-embedded structures and systems of support provided to the implementation team. Members of the design team provided feedback that more time was needed to support the planning of guided reading. One design team member commented that “while the relationship and collaboration piece is coming together, I think it is critical that we differentiate the support that the teachers need.” Another design team member

commented that “we need to look at the schedule again to see if teachers are given enough time to go through one guided reading cycle.”

The AR team met on October 19, 2021, to calibrate successes of the first action research cycle using the Team Success Protocol (Appendix G). Based on written feedback, the team provided reflections on strengths of cycle one with responses by teachers: “I have been able to see all of my guided reading groups this week based on the support provided”. Another teacher responded: “I was able to conduct my first running record for my students.” One leader on the team responded: “teachers have been more engaged in the guided reading planning process since using the new guided reading planning and observation tool.” The AR team ended the meeting with a consensus to use the next cycle of the action research study to provide more time for planning and implementation of new structures associated with implementing guided reading structures using the peer coaching cycle. The AR team requested that the outside literacy expert extend her time the following cycle by engaging in observations to gauge and provide input to the Design Team on specific support needed in the implementation of guided reading strategies.

Cycle 2: Cycle 2 of the research study began on October 25, 2021, and ended on November 12, 2021. Members of the implementation team met with the master teacher leader for literacy during job-embedded professional learning time to plan effective guided reading instruction. During the planning sessions with members of the implementation team, the focus was on how to effectively move towards seeing two groups of students using the guided reading planning and observation tool. Each session involved selecting aligned text levels for targeted groups of students and creating the purpose of the lesson before, during, and after each guided reading lesson. On October 27, 2021, the outside literacy expert, engaged in classroom observations with design team members, using the guided reading planning and observation tool

followed by a half-day debrief session with the design team. All members of the implementation team were observed during the guided reading component of literacy instruction. Specific times were provided to each member of the implementation team prior to the observation. Based on the observations conducted, clear evidence of prior planning based on lesson plans and leveled texts were readily available and used during guided reading instruction existed. Students were actively engaged and three of the five teachers on the implementation team demonstrated increased knowledge of using guided reading strategies and using strategies planned in job-embedded professional learning. The consensus of the design team and the literacy expert was more time needed in the area of modeling specific components of guided reading based on observations. The master teacher leader for literacy followed up with the next job-embedded professional learning providing specific feedback and planning for the next cycle of guided reading support. The design team met to discuss challenges and areas to pivot to support the implementation of effective structures to support collect teacher efficacy connected to literacy practices at Southeast Academy. Feedback from the session with design team members included members reflecting: “a need to honor that members of the implementation team are in different places as it relates to effective guided reading and feeling confident in executing strategies”, and “the need for more differentiation of professional learning based on where teachers are in the process”. The action research team engaged in the second Team Success Protocol and shared successes of the second action research cycle. Teacher responses included, “ I found it helpful to engage in effective planning to help move students and intentional lesson planning with team and master teacher leader was very helpful”, and another teacher responded, “I found it helpful to have more time to plan and the extended time allotted to get more groups in guided reading”. A member of the design team responded, “having the schedule created to protect time to do the full

peer coaching cycle with all members of the implementation team was a huge success”. The action research team discussed the feedback from the observation day with the literacy expert with the consensus and request for modeling of effective guided reading strategies as the focus of the third action research cycle professional learning cycle.

Cycle 3: Cycle 3 of the research study began November 29, 2021, and ended on December 17, 2021. The focus of the third action research cycle was on providing modeling to support teachers in improved collective teacher efficacy when implementing guided reading strategies. The modeling session occurred on December 1, 2021. The design team collaborated with the literacy expert on which guided reading lessons would be appropriate to teach and one additional member of the implementation team volunteered to teach a lesson in order for peer observations to occur. All members of the design team and members of the implementation team were able to observe and provide feedback on each lesson. The visiting literacy expert was able to model in real time several of the areas of growth from prior action research cycles. The implementation team members were able to engage in debrief sessions with the literacy expert and discuss new learning and observation from the modeling sessions. Reflection from the debriefing sessions included teachers “being amazed at how quickly she was able to get as much as she got to within the 15-minute time frame for each guided reading session”. Another member of the action research team commented on the implementation member’s modeled lesson and reflected that “I loved the engagement of the students”. Another member of the action research team commented that, “I loved watching the explicit teaching, prompting, and reinforcing and being able to see it modeled in real time by a teacher in the building.” The next phase in the action research cycle involved a follow-up planning with the design and implementation team with the goal of implementing any new learning from the model lesson

day. The master teacher leader of literacy used the next professional learning sessions to plan, observe, and debrief using the peer observation cycle. Based on observations conducted after the modeling sessions, teachers were more effective in pacing and implementing guided reading with at least two groups each literacy block. During one observation, it was noted that the teacher “was much more relaxed and was able to take running record notes of students’ reading behaviors.” Additional post-modeling observations noted, “major improvement in the reading strategy mentioned throughout the lesson and with every student both individually and independently”.

The design team met on December 13, 2021, to discuss the implementation of the last and final action research cycle. When asked to describe the coaching support in literacy practices, primarily guided reading, for teachers at Southeast Academy and any new areas of strength, one member of the design team responded: “after the modeling session with the literacy expert and teacher, I have seen great improvements in the implementation of guided reading practices and the follow-up professional learning sessions with teachers have been a great refresher when planning.” The action research team met on December 16, 2021, and used the Team Success Protocol to celebrate intervention steps which supported the implementation of guided reading during the third action research cycle. Action research team members shared that, “the modeling of guided reading by the literacy expert and a teacher in the building was very helpful in showing me how to do it in my own class.” Another member of the action research team responded: “seeing our kids successful from what we are doing in guided reading is the highlight for me.” Prior to the team adjourning, the primary researcher, the principal in this study, asked participants what they wanted to see moving forward to support improving collective teacher efficacy in improving literacy practices. One member of the action research

team responded: “to continue to implement this level of support and collaboration.” Another participant asked for “continued uninterrupted support in professional learning and common planning time with the master teacher leader for literacy.”

Team Success Protocol

Each action research cycle was followed by the use of the Team Success Analysis Protocol (Appendix G). The Action Research Design Team utilized the Team Success Analysis Protocol to identify trends of successful implementation. During the implementation of the *Team Success Analysis Protocol*, members of the Action Research Implementation Team identified, shared, and analyzed experiences in which they successfully achieved an outcome that was important to them. Escobedo (2012, p. 83) found that teachers who experienced higher numbers of celebrations in schools had “positive views on the effects of the celebrations on their collective efficacy beliefs and the overall competence of the faculty.”

Interviews

Focus group interviews were designed to create a space for authentic conversation on the impact of each action research cycle (Appendix D). Three focus group interviews were held; at the end of each research cycle after all interventions had taken place. When members of the focus group, which consisted of the design team, were asked specific questions related to the structures supporting collective teacher efficacy, when asked “to describe the first thing that comes to mind when you think of the leadership behaviors associated with literacy practices at Southeast Academy,” leader responses included “evolving,” “supportive,” and “detailed and specific in support for teachers.” When asked “how connected as a school leader do you feel when it comes to improving collective teacher efficacy in literacy practices?”, one participant shared “sometimes it depends on the teacher because those we have relationships with already

may be more willing than new teachers that may be more apprehensive.” When asked to “tell me about the current practices which leaders provide at Southeast Academy in supporting professional learning to teachers in the area of literacy,” one participant responded, “a designated time is provided during the school day to meet and plan with teachers.” Additionally, focus group responses from all three cycles, were consistent with the need to provide more differentiated support for teachers. When asked “what operational or instructional barriers do you feel have an impact on improving collective teacher efficacy in literacy practices?” one participant responded: “time constraints of the day and being able to provide the necessary coaching support for certain teachers.” Another participant shared: “for new teachers to the building, leaders need more time to develop relationships.” When asked “to describe the job-embedded coaching support for literacy teachers,” participants shared a common emerging theme of a significant amount of support both from within the school, district, and others in the field of literacy. One participant responded, “we provide support during the school day, during both the 45- and 90-minute planning block, as well as opportunities to plan with district and outside literacy vendors supporting literacy.” Another participant added: “we use this time to debrief observations and plan for next steps in literacy instruction.” Focus group participants were given the opportunity to provide additional context related to leadership behaviors which impact collective teacher efficacy in improving literacy practices. One participant responded: “I feel that I need to continue to grow my own lens related to literacy practices while supporting teachers.” Another participant shared: “For me being new to the building and serving in a teacher leader role, I also have to spend time developing relationships.” Another participant shared: “I think when it comes to collective teacher efficacy, we need to build teacher leaders along the way in order to help internalize our new literacy practices related to guided reading.”

Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews with the implementation team were held three times during the action research cycle with first and second grade teachers. The first semi-structured interview session was held at the beginning of the action research study, and after action research cycles two and three. Participants were asked to “describe the current professional learning structure as it relates to improving literacy practices.” One participant responded: “we currently have district and school level literacy professional learning which helps us to use our data to group students for instruction.” When asked to “describe the perfect day in the teaching of literacy using guided reading structures”, an emerging theme of pacing was consistent in responses. One participant responded: “no interruptions, goes planned as designed, and to get through a reading lesson as designed.” An additional participant stated: “smooth transitions with no interruption where I get to see guided reading goals met daily.”

Modeling emerged as a theme for participants when asked to “describe what changes, if any, they would make as it relates to supporting teachers in feeling like they have the ability to improve literacy practices at Southeast Academy.” One participant responded: “it would be beneficial to seeing it first, to see if it is feasible.” Another participant responded: “More practice with modeling would be helpful.” Responses shared by the implementation team during semi-structured interviews were genuine and honest. One respondent shared that: “I feel that we need a little more grace to implement guided reading with fidelity. Another respondent shared: “I feel that we are creating a positive impact on literacy at our school as we are going through this process.”

Observations

To fully support the implementation of the peer coaching cycle, observations were

conducted based on the targeted intervention and planning session. Three cycles of observations were completed. Observations were done by members of the design team, primarily the master teacher leader for literacy, during the guided reading component of literacy. Visits lasted approximately 15 minutes and observers used the guided reading planning and observation tool for recording (Appendix F). Observation forms were emailed to me electronically after teacher and observer debrief sessions. Observation feedback was used by the design team to discuss the impact of the action research intervention being implemented and used to plan next steps in supporting teachers and analyzing the impact on shifts made in job-embedded professional learning systems and processes. For example, based on observer's notes conducted during the first action research cycle, the observer noted: "make sure to set the reading strategy before reading". In another observation it was noted that: "remember to set the purpose of the story throughout and revisit at the end of the story." An additional observation noted: "revisit the reading strategy throughout the text with students who are struggling so they can make connections with the reading strategy".

Based on repeated observations conducted of implementation team members, follow up planning sessions addressed next steps and future professional leaning learning sessions. Peer observations were also conducted to provide teachers with opportunities to see specific strategies being implemented in action. One participant on the implementation team noted in response to what was observed during a peer observation: "I was amazed as to how much she (the teacher being observed) was able to get done in one 15-minute guided reading session." Another participant responded: "Fluidness was in her room, and I would like to now look more at my grouping for guided reading."

Researcher Notes of Participant Observation

Professional learning sessions, collaborative planning, and action research team meetings using the team success protocol, provided time for the team to develop authentic relationships. Carla became the natural leader of the group. As the facilitator of several peer coaching cycles, she immediately became extremely proud of the growth seen in several of the new teachers. While new to the school herself, Carla was able to quickly immerse herself in a teacher leader role by being a consistent support person for all teachers involved in the study. Samantha was very observant during the research and used this action research study to improve her own literacy knowledge as well as the ability to coach and support teachers in improving collective efficacy. She was always reflective and honest in her feedback. Even though Charles was a part of the study for one research cycle due to a job promotion, he provided a significant amount of advice in how to structure the literacy professional learning with the district and the outside consultant. Charles consistently analyzed how the first cycle impacted teacher growth and was authentic and honest when providing additional guidance on needed shifts in job-embedded structures and systems to better coach and support teachers.

Michelle, a first-year teacher, was eager to plan and receive feedback. She was always very collaborative and when answering questions she was appreciative of the support provided throughout the action research study. She consistently made quick shifts and improvements in her teaching practices. Erin, who had several years of teaching experience, had to acclimate herself back to using guided reading structures prior to Covid-19. She was the first teacher to volunteer to model new guided reading practices and became a lead on the implementation team in how to effectively plan and manage groups of students. Kate, a first-year teacher, was one who honestly voiced her need for supports in how to effectively plan and implement guided

reading groups using data. Kate worked well with the master teacher leader in planning and when answering questions she would often suggest needing additional modeling and support in transitioning with her students from a management perspective. Kate was always energetic in team success protocol sessions and eager to share the successes of her students. She even commented in one of her interviews: “the perfect day in the teaching of literacy using guided reading structures is when guided reading goes as planned and everyone reaches their goals and expectations.” Lynn, a teacher with several years of teaching experience at Southeast Academy, displayed an authentic desire to support her students. Serving what was considered a low number of students due to foundational deficits in literacy, her students as a whole needed the most support in reading. Lynn often displayed a strong desire to plan individually with the master teacher leader and additional support personnel in order to provide more data-driven guided reading practices. Lynn often exerted her frustration with needing more support and embraced as much support in modeling and selection of resources to provide scaffolded support with her students. When asked “how professional learning structures should be implemented to support guided reading?”, she responded: “it’s a loaded question and even with my population of students, at times it can be overwhelming, so for me I need more modeling.” Dallas, a teacher with several years of teaching experience, but in her first year at our school, was often reserved in her participation in action research team meetings. During planning sessions and professional learning, Dallas was often quiet and observant. She often wanted more flexibility in how to implement guided reading, however she immersed herself in using aligned resources to support her students and engaged well with the master teacher leader for literacy to implement structures and look-fors. She was often concerned about the autonomy needed to engage students past the time allocated for guided reading implementation.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a deeper analysis of the action research cycles, which occurred from September 2021 through December 2021. The chapter detailed the context of the case and the story outcomes. The description of each action research cycle provided the timeline and targeted implementation steps in using guided reading supports to improve collective teacher efficacy. Using job-embedded professional learning structures and systems of support through a peer coaching model, the design team aimed to improve collective teacher efficacy in literacy practices. Planning and observation notes, team protocols, focus group responses, semi-structured interviews, and short open-ended questionnaires, were collected during action research cycles.

Observation notes of participants were used by the researcher to determine the impact of each action research cycle on members of the team. The action research team was highly engaged throughout the process and promoted authentic collaboration in improving practices. The next chapter will provide details of the findings of the case study aligned to the research questions.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

The purpose of this action research study was to examine the impact of leadership behaviors, structures, and processes associated with improving collective teacher efficacy in literacy practices. To address the purpose of the study, the following research questions guided the action research:

1. What is the relationship between leadership behaviors and school-wide collective teacher efficacy connected to literacy practices in one urban turnaround elementary school?
2. How do teachers describe the impact of the implementation of additional support structures for literacy instruction on their efficacy in one urban elementary school?
3. How do action research team members describe the process of creating and implementing structures that support collective teacher efficacy connected to literacy practices in one urban elementary school?

This chapter describes the data collected using multiple sources to support findings for each research question. Responses to focus group and semi-structured interviews, observations, notes from team success protocols, and questionnaire results were analyzed and summarized into themes. The researcher used an inductive coding process to create emerging themes, and coded by hand. Saldaña (2021) explains, “coding inductively is entering the analytic enterprise with an open mind approach that spontaneously creates original codes the first time data are reviewed”

(p.41). The researcher used inductive coding and created categories from responses. Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) explain, “the inductive approach involves the reduction of information that has been collected by organizing it with the help of a coding scheme into significant patterns and themes” (p.233). The frequency of category codes by participants provided the researcher with emerging themes. Analysis of the data yielded seven emerging themes. The frequency of responses provided the researcher with evidence to select seven emerging themes (see Table 3).

Table 3

Summary of Findings Through Themes Connected to Research Questions

Research Questions	Theme
What is the relationship between leadership behaviors and school-wide collective teacher efficacy connected to literacy practices in one urban turnaround elementary school?	Theme 1: Authentic Relationships Promote Collective Teacher Efficacy Theme 2: Systems and Processes Impact Collective Teacher Efficacy Theme 3: Leaders Need Protected Time for Collaboration
How do teachers describe the impact of the implementation of additional support structures for literacy instruction on their efficacy in one urban elementary school?	Theme 1: Modeling of Literacy Practices Promotes Collective Teacher Efficacy Theme 2: Time Influences Effective Implementation of Guided Reading
How do action research team members describe the process of creating and implementing structures that support collective teacher efficacy connected to literacy practices in one urban elementary school?	Theme 1: Collaboration and Support Yields Stronger Collective Teacher Efficacy Theme 2: Greater Autonomy and Risk-Taking Increases Collective Teacher Efficacy

Data Collection Connected to Research Questions

Research Question 1: Relationship between Leadership Behaviors and School wide Collective Teacher Efficacy

Leadership Behaviors and Collective Teacher Efficacy. To determine the relationship between leadership behaviors and school wide collective teacher efficacy, focus group interviews, and notes from design team meetings were used. In analyzing the data from focus group interviews and design team notes, three major themes emerged. Leaders described three emerging areas as having an impact on the relationship between leadership behaviors and school wide collective teacher efficacy:

1. Need for authentic relationships between teachers and leaders
2. Need for clear systems, structures, and processes
3. Need for protected time to plan and collaborate

Theme 1: Need for Authentic Relationships. Leader participants all described the importance of establishing strong and authentic relationships in order to improve school wide collective teacher efficacy. Respondents shared how difficult it was in the beginning of the action research study to create a risk-free environment to share in a safe space. Two of the three respondents communicated the importance of developing relationships with teachers in order to grow practices and improve collective teacher efficacy. When asked to describe the connectedness with teachers in order to improve collective teacher efficacy, one participant explained:

I think it sometimes depends on the teachers in the building. I do feel like those that we have stronger relationships with we see that there's more trust within that relationship to be able to grow and move the work forward, but newer teachers to our building or teachers that may

just be apprehensive, I don't see the work move quite as fast in but I do feel like it lends back to the relationship.

The newest leader on the team shared the same feelings by stating:

Being new to the building, I see both of those things. I think that it does depend on the teacher and their relationships as well as what they feel they need to improve on. Some teachers feel very strongly that they're at their peak and they know what they're doing when in turn sometimes some growth needs to happen. So, it really depends on you know, who you're talking with. Then other teachers, who are wonderful in their craft want to move themselves forward and so they're even pushing for better success with their students as well.

The same leader when asked what additional factors leaders contribute to improve collective teacher efficacy responded:

For me being new, it's building more relationships. I think, you know, this is my first year here. So it's been a quick start and I just feel I need to build even greater relationships with the new friends that I've made.

Another participant shared:

There are some people who have great relationships. And so that work, you know, somewhat easily moves forward, but then you also have teachers that don't have a strong of a relationship with the leadership and that tends to slow down the process and when we're not able to provide that coaching support regularly that can be a barrier.

In the first design team meeting, within cycle one, one of the areas of strength shared by the team was that the relationship and trust piece at Southeast Academy was starting to strengthen and grow with teachers and members of the design team.

Theme 2: Need for clear systems, structures, and processes. All three participants of the design team shared the need to improve systems, structures, and processes in order to better support teachers improving collective teacher efficacy related to literacy practices. One leader shared a strength of having a structure in place to create a common language of support:

So while I can't always be in the planning sessions with the teachers, Miss Adams and I work closely, she's able to share those documents with me regularly so that I can be up to speed as to how she supported each grade level within planning as well as any particular actions or noticing that she has with individual teachers. So that when I'm going into the classroom, I can follow up on those same areas for support and be able to speak the same language to not be saying something different than what Miss Adams is already doing. That's something that we're striving to do better. So it's been very helpful to be able to see those notes in those rolling agendas from Miss Adams to know what's going on in those sessions since I can't always be in every single planning session.

Another leader shared specific suggestions on how to continue improvement in building a strong culture of collective teacher efficacy based on leadership behaviors. She explained that:

I think one thing we've seen and will continue to see is that we as a leadership team we have to speak the same language and we have to believe the same thing and desire to have the same outcomes. And that's the only way that we're going to move the work forward. So I think we've been able to see those small steps of success over these first two cycles because we have been able to come back calibrate on what we're expecting, what it should look like, what it should sound like. I think that that's also helping the teachers being able to hear a common language and a common expectation in building so that it's not different. I think that's one thing that we learned in our first cycle and we've improved upon and I now see

that we're more moving in a clean cycle fashion. If that's even the right phrase to use, but we're able to start to see that we're working more efficiently because the expectation from us as a team is the same and we are all looking for the same thing versus a disconnect within those and then seeing different things and trying to be proactive and fixing them versus just reactive. From the beginning to say, yes at Southeast Academy this is what guided reading looks like in our building.

Another leader shared additional insight on how structures of support should be differentiated to support the varying levels of implementation in order to support improving collective teacher efficacy:

I also think just the structure of being able to individualize what we do for teachers and not have just a one-size-fits-all for each grade level or for the school, we know we may start there, but because of time and personnel and having additional hands can truly go in and model for teachers and meet one-on-one with teacher A, which teacher B doesn't really need that. Maybe they just need a check-in point, the bandwidth that we have sometimes limits our ability to grow in that individual aspect for providing support to teachers, which thus comes back that teachers feel as though, you know, we may not have been in their classrooms as much we planned with them, we didn't get into that classroom to have that modeling aspect or the co-teaching. So I think that's a barrier for us as a small school. But just as a school in general, as you're looking at scheduling and the additional hands that you have, that can provide that support.

Design team meetings held supported the need for more structures in differentiating support for teachers needing additional support in implementing guided reading. One participant shared: “Based on our last two cycles, two of the six teachers need an additional planning time in

order to understand how to implement guided reading within the time frame”. Another participant shared: “While we are improving in our guided reading practices, I think that as a team, we need to honor that teachers are in different places, our new teachers need more support in using data to create groups.”

Another leader elaborated on the need to create more intentional structures of support for teachers and explained:

I would just say being able to really ensure that we set some real clear strategic goals around where our teachers are to best meet their needs. In terms of improving their own individual practice would be an area that we can just continue to grow in as a school.

Theme 3: Need for Protected Time to Plan and Collaborate. An additional emerging theme which evolved through focus group interviews and design team meetings, was the need for leaders to have protected time to plan and collaborate with teachers. All three leaders shared experiences where the day was interrupted, not enough time to effectively support teachers, or shortened planning times. One leader shared: “I think one thing we haven't talked about is the time constraint of a day. I think that's one of our major issues as you know, as a whole not just our school. I think everybody feels that time constraint, but absolutely”. Another leader participant shared additional context on the need to have more time to plan and collaborate for effective coaching of guided reading by adding: “I would say along with the time constraint being a little bit more specific. I would say the leader like us being able to have that time to truly be able to do coaching support and having that coaching cycle”. As leaders responsible for other facets of the school, two of the three participants shared specific insight on the impact of needing protected time to plan and collaborate with teachers:

For me it has been being pulled. I haven't been able to be in as many second-grade

planning, meetings and following up with second grade, as much as I have wanted to, as well as other meetings that pull me away from the team. Their planning is in the afternoon and a lot of the meetings, take place in the afternoon. Unfortunately, so it's I feel like second grade has been my hardest hard group to get to. My other groups are pretty easy. So that has been the biggest obstacle in trying to get to my second grade in particular.

Another leader further explained: “Okay, I can echo that as well from Miss Adams, you know, just being able to truly be in instruction and not being pulled in other directions. Often times things happen, whether that be from the district, or a parent, or a student, whatever may be happening, which takes away from being able to truly be in those instructional sessions.”

Leaders also expressed the need for more time to support the modeling of new practices or assurance for teachers to know how guided reading practices are being implemented. One leader participant shared:

My teachers that I've met with have asked for extra time with me at certain grade levels because they just want the reassurance. I guess in knowing somebody else with eyes on it is looking and saying, yes, that's exactly what you're doing. That's exactly what you're looking at in each standard and with your data, and you're doing a great job. So sometimes it's just reassurance, other teachers are happy with the time they have with me just to have another set of eyes or to kind of look at the standards related to guided reading more closely and decide what is best.

Two of the leader participants shared a common theme of needing more protected time to model guided reading practices for teachers and provide immediate feedback in the moment. One leader shared:

I would say that we're still striving to get to a place where we're doing more of that job embedded support versus having an after-school meeting or an after-school PL, but really striving to be in the moment with them, because I do think that that's where teachers can grow and that's where you see the change happen is when you can show them in the moment that this is what should be doing. Then, you're able to have those aha moments. So whether that be in the classroom or like Miss Adams, was saying, when she meets with them, I think we can do even more where teachers come prepared to model. What does that guided reading look like or let's pretend like, I'm the student and you're going to test me on this. What questions would you be asking me? So that again we can catch those in the moment and be able to provide support because I do see teachers change their practice when they're able to hear and see it happen in front of them and then take it back to the classroom versus just hearing it or seeing it separately.

Research Question 2: Impact of implementation structures for teachers

Impact of additional support structures for teachers. To determine the impact of additional structures and systems of support for implementation of guided reading for teachers, the researcher used semi-structured interviews, notes from team success protocols, and feedback notes from questionnaires after professional learning. In analyzing data, two major themes emerged:

1. Need for additional modeling of strategies.
2. More time needed for effective implementation.

Theme 1: Need for additional modeling of guided reading strategies. Teacher participants described a need for additional modeling of guiding reading strategies. Five out of five teachers responded throughout all action research cycles, the need for modeling of effective guided

reading strategies. One participant responded:

I think a lot of times, you know, as teachers we're really visual. So I think that it would be beneficial to like see someone actually doing it first and to make sure that it would be something that's actually feasible, because I think a lot of times we think, oh, this is a great idea and then you realize later on, like so can they actually do this? So, of course, I would think that it would need to be kind of like piloted to see if it would actually work and then I guess to see if it really is beneficial because in our minds we say well guided reading, every day will be great. But really to see if it can be proven that it is beneficial.

Another participant echoed in responding:

For me, I am more of a visual learner. So, just being able to see it in, like, with actual students. So, like doing our PL's, we've had like, where teachers have modeled, but being able to just go in and see it actually happening how the teacher incorporates all of the pieces, basically, just her time management within the guided reading lessons and just having those opportunities to kind of shadow a peer.

A new teacher in her first year of teaching at Southeast Academy provided a similar response to the need for more modeling of effective guided reading strategies:

I think honestly it would just be a matter of more modeling and truly getting that hands-on experience of what exactly our resource wants our lessons to look like because I think just as our students want explicit examples of what their success should look like teachers want the same.

Questionnaire responses for additional supports needed also included the request for more modeling. One response included: "I need someone to come into my classroom to model how guided reading should look."

Theme 2: More time needed for effective implementation. All five of the teachers participating in this action research study, identified the sense of urgency related to needing additional time to implement effective guided reading strategies. In order to improve collective teacher efficacy, teachers needed to feel an adequate level of ease when implementing guided reading in order to improve literacy practices. One teacher responded:

The perfect day, of course time is always a factor with just different things that happen. But we have been our expectation is two groups for each reading block and personally, I don't feel like it's enough time to get through a whole lesson with one group. So the perfect day would be just having enough time to go through an actual guided reading lesson from the beginning, all the way to word work. So just having that and being able to be, you know, just get everything done with both groups. So that would be the perfect lesson and just saying that time to actually, you know, if they're struggling in that specific time, just being able to talk through it and not really checking the clock and worry about ok, do I have enough time to do this and just kind of being able to do the full length of the lessons.

A veteran teacher participant with experience in guided reading, shared the same sentiment related to needing more time to feel confident in effectively implementing guided reading with fidelity. She shared:

My thing is always time, you know, in a perfect day, you're like, it should be done in this amount of time. But when you get that learner in front of you and you need to take that extra time to really dig deeper with them, you know, when that light bulb comes on, you like. Oh, I want to stay here with them and just see, but it is with me. It's the time. If I had a little bit more time. I think that would really, really help because the support is in place.

When respondents were asked to describe the perfect day in the teaching of literacy using new guided reading structures, five out of five teachers responded the need for more time to effectively implement structures with fidelity. One teacher shared feeling overwhelmed and the need for the following:

When it comes to a perfect day, it would be smooth transitions. It would be no interruptions. And would be like, kids going to their designated area and scholars getting designated things done with little to no support from me, a lot of independence and then it would also look like, especially with the guided reading, but I'm working with those individuals. It looks like we work together yesterday. And today they got it, you know, perfect day would be like, wow, like everyone's reaching the expectations which are set this high. So that would be the perfect day.

Research Question 3: Process of the action research team creating and implementing structures to support collective teacher efficacy.

The Action Research Team Process. To determine how members of the action research team members described the process of creating and implementing structures that support collective teacher efficacy connected to literacy practices, the researcher used participant responses from focus group and semi-structured interviews, as well as observation notes, team success protocol and design team responses. In analyzing and triangulating data, two themes emerged. Action research team members described the process of creating and implementing structures to support collective teacher efficacy as:

1. Supportive and Collaborative
2. Need for More Autonomy and Risk-Taking

Theme 1: Supportive and Collaborative. Results from using the Team Success Protocol indicated a strong sense of action research team members feeling supported and strong collaboration between the design and implementation team; teachers and leader participants. The protocol was administered three times, after the completion of each research cycle. The purpose of administering the team success protocol was to create and share positive experiences related to improving collective teacher efficacy. One teacher shared one success as being: “Collaborating and planning with both the master teacher and grade level team was so helpful as I was able to plan more intentionally for guided reading.” Another teacher responded, “I enjoyed the collaboration of engaging in peer observations with a colleague and it helped me to understand how I could tweak my groups more”.

Based on observation notes from the guided reading planning and observation tool, design team leaders provided evidence of the strong effectiveness of using the peer coaching cycle to collaborate and support members of the implementation team with fidelity of new guided reading practices. One design team member wrote: “I am amazed at how quickly the teacher was able to get as much as she got in with the 15-minute time frame, especially after the modeled peer lesson.” All members of the design team provided additional context providing evidence of strong support for teachers during the action research process. Based on focus group interviews, all participants of the design team agreed that extensive job-embedded coaching support was provided to teachers. When asked to describe the job-embedded coaching support for literacy teachers at Southeast Academy, all participants shared ways in which teachers were supported with job-embedded coaching. One participant responded: “we get a lot of the support from within our building from us as a team. But also we have district support for literacy that provides that and like Mr. Smith said earlier, we have our outside vendors that also support.”

Semi-structured interview responses provided evidence that all members of the implementation team expressed appreciation for the support and collaboration within this action research study. Five out five teachers and all members of the design team shared examples of support structures and collaboration improving guided reading practices. One participant on the implementation team expressed:

So the PL's that we have weekly with the master teacher leaders are very helpful as we get to plan the lessons for the next week and then really talk about it, having the opportunity to really, you know, speak with each other, about the things that are working, things that are not working, having a person coming in and seeing everybody, and being able to give us feedback on those different things is very helpful.

Another teacher on the implementation team shared similar feelings of being supported throughout this action research process. She shared: "I think, you know, we do a really good job of supporting and regrouping and talking and having people in our room, and we really do a lot on a weekly basis and monthly basis to support our literacy." When asked to describe the support provided to teachers in improving the belief that they can have a positive impact on the teaching of literacy at Southeast Academy, one teacher responded: "I think our school is very supportive with guided reading, that's been a big focus of ours. We have a lot of hands on when it comes to that focus in our classrooms.

Theme 2: Need for more autonomy and risk-taking. Results and responses from semi-structured interviews revealed that four out of five participants on the implementation team shared concerns related to not having the autonomy to make decisions related to guided reading literacy practices based on the set structure related to timing and pacing of instruction. Additional data from observation notes from the guided reading planning and observation tool

provided evidence that all five teachers on the implementation team continued to show inconsistencies with pacing and the ability to consistently complete the expected two guided reading cycles daily; providing guided reading to struggling readers three times a week. When teachers were asked for suggestions on implementing literacy practices focused on using guided reading, one teacher from the implementation team responded:

I think that people feel like very boxed in by time and I think that may sometimes get in the way of them implementing it with fidelity because of the time you feel like you have to crunch it in. And so the time still worries me because you know, you feel like I got to get these things in and sometimes we miss those real teachable moments because your mind tells you oh, I have to move on to the next thing.

Another teacher on the implementation team shared her feelings of anxiety related to implementing guided reading as prescribed. When asked to share ways in which additional support for teachers could be provided that could have a positive impact on the teaching of literacy and improving collective teacher efficacy, she shared: “I think just reassurance and teachers just that making sure they have what they need, that they're confident in. It does take a lot of practice. So, you know, I think we're so focused on getting it right that we're afraid to kind of mess up. So just reassurance from those from the outside.”

Results from Action Research Cycle 1

Results from action research cycle one indicated a need to slow down the pace of implementation with a focus on ensuring members of the implementation team had a deeper understanding of what guided reading entails. Design team meeting notes provided evidence that the design team needed to focus on revisiting the meaning of guided reading and how those structures would be implemented within the literacy block. One member of the design team

shared: “We need to backtrack and provide more support with implementing guided reading, with modeling and support in additional planning sessions.” After the first professional job-embedded workshop with an outside literacy expert, teachers on the implementation team shared the need for more support in getting guided reading started with the structure provided. In a debrief with the design team, members shared needing more time to effectively engage in the peer coaching cycle. Observation notes also provided evidence that teachers were implementing at different levels based on background experience with guided reading or being new to teaching. In response to the need for teachers needing additional support and time with implementing guided reading, one member of the design team shared: “I would just say being able to really ensure that we set some real clear strategic goals around where our teachers are to best meet their needs is the best approach to making the shift.”

Results from the first action research cycle also provided evidence that more time should be spent on developing authentic relationships between members of the design and implementation team in order to have honest conversations about effective guided reading instruction. Responses of all participants shared in some way the need for relationship building and trust. One member of the design team shared: “me being new to the school, some teachers feel comfortable working with me while I can tell with others it is taking a little more time”. When asked what changes could be made as it relates to supporting teachers in improving literacy, one teacher responded: “I honestly just think having the relationships to reach out to other peers and co-workers in the building just that relationship building so that everyone is comfortable asking questions and receiving help.”

Results from Action Research Cycle 2

During the onset of action research cycle two, the design team observed guided reading lessons to provide more targeted support with implementation of guided reading practices. Observation notes provided evidence of the need to provide more modeling of effective guided reading strategies and a differentiated approach with teachers in providing structures of job-embedded learning with members of the implementation team. The need for members of the implementation team to see guided reading in action was the consensus of the debrief by the design team. One member wrote in observation notes: “It is highly suggested that several teachers observe a strong teacher with an in-depth knowing of implementing guided reading for new or less experienced teachers.”

In a design team debrief, notes were shared suggesting the need for “teachers to rotate with other teachers who demonstrate needed competencies for implementing guided reading in future peer observations.” At the end of action research cycle two, it was evident that teachers were committed to implementing guided reading and collective teacher efficacy began to surface. As one observer noted: “teachers had guided reading lesson plans readily available, including lesson plans, books, and materials ready for full implantation, however teachers had a difficult time implementing guided reading with two groups within the structure.”

While inconsistencies in implementing guided reading were evident, the design team noted that teachers were arriving at professional learning sessions with a more positive mindset and openness to plan guided reading. Two members of the implementation team also volunteered to model lessons for colleagues on the design team, which indicated that team members were willing to share successes and felt more at ease sharing guided reading strategies. When design team members were asked to describe the job-embedded coaching support for literacy teachers

one participant responded:

They seem to be more comfortable with me when we're meeting to make sure that, its so funny, some groups are very open and say oh my gosh. I'm so glad you're here. And then other groups are saying, oh my gosh, do we have more time? And so it's hard to make sure we're hitting what we need to in the time we've got.

Results from Action Research Cycle 3

As the team collaborated and planned more extensively using the guided reading tool and observation form, by the end of action research cycle 3, increases in collective teacher efficacy supported efforts in providing more modeling and differentiated coaching support. Structures became more efficient after necessary changes were made to provide more time for design team members to have uninterrupted job-embedded 90-minute professional learning time. Focus group responses supported this finding. One leader responded:

I think that we've tried to create a system to put in place. That's provided some consistency for the teachers and being able to like Sally said, to have the professional learning from our outside literacy expert, as well as providing individualizing group and grade level support and having consistency within a structure that we put in place, which we didn't have before.

When leaders were asked to describe job-embedded coaching support at Southeast Academy, evidence provided shows a strong impact that improving systems and structures of support had a on improving literacy practices and collective teacher efficacy. One design team participant provided additional context:

I think the PLC time when we meet is very valid. I think that that is the best time to be with teachers. When they're, they've just either come out of the literacy block, or they've

already experienced it that day to be able to talk about it. I tried to plan where I could follow up with them right after I had observed them or modeled with them so I could get immediate feedback that way, they're not sitting on it all day, and then having to catch back up. I think it is definitely. I could see that being a plus for Southeast Academy.

Another participant shared the same sentiment of feeling strongly that improved structures of support yielded improved opportunities for teachers to improve literacy practices. She responded:

I think also in some of the biggest growth we saw was when they were able to go, observe in other classrooms and have that immediate debrief session. That was a very powerful time for our teachers. So I do think that it's really important for them to be able to have conversations while it's actually happening. Or right after it happened so that they're able to make adjustments and changes in the moment.

Evidence at the end of the third action research cycle also showed more connectedness, collaboration, and stronger collegial relationships. During the last focus group interview, design team members were asked to describe connectedness as a school leader as it relates to improving collective teacher efficacy. All design team members agreed that connectedness and relationships had significant growth the course of implementing this action research study. One participant responded: "I have seen a major improvement in working together and a willingness to quickly pivot to make things happen".

At the end of action research three, while opportunities for improvements in allocating additional time to engage in peer coaching and individualized feedback existed, collective teacher efficacy in literacy practices for teachers greatly improved. Leaders on the design team consistently reflected on how to make necessary changes after each cycle to better support

teachers in growing literacy practices. The design team was able to learn ways of improving structures and systems of job-embedded support. At the end of action research cycle three, one leader provided additional context which provided a strong summary of the findings of this process. She explained:

It is important to have a system and knowing that having less, but having structure within the system really helped us to yield more results in the end. And so I think it's important that you know, we continue to as leaders create that framework and structure that allows space for all of those things to happen and it helped teachers, I think know the priorities and where to focus their time because it was something that was constantly coming to the forefront each week. And I think that important and often times as leaders that can go to the wayside because there's so many different things happening. So I would just say continuing having that structure in place. So the teachers kind of know what to expect and then are also able to then prepare effectively to be part of that work.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an analysis of the findings of this action research study. The researcher connected research questions with data from each action research cycle. Data collected from observations, focus group and semi-structured interviews, notes, and protocol feedback, provided the researcher with triangulated data to support findings and the impact of each action research cycle. Findings provide evidence of the strong impact of creating and supporting job-embedded professional learning on improving collective teacher efficacy. Additional findings suggest that improved and reflective leadership behaviors have a strong impact on creating the necessary conditions and structures for teachers to improve collective teacher efficacy in literacy practices. The next chapter provides further discussion of the major

findings related to the analysis of literature from Chapter 2 and synthesized with findings discussed in Chapter 5. The researcher will also present along for practice on the local and federal policy level.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this action research study was to examine the impact of leadership behaviors and school wide structures and processes associated with improving collective teacher efficacy in literacy practices. The study focused on implementing a set of job-embedding professional learning structures and processes aligned to improving the collective teacher efficacy for teachers focusing on literacy practices.

Research Questions

There were three focused research questions which guided this study:

1. What is the relationship between leadership behaviors and school-wide collective teacher efficacy connected to literacy practices in one urban turnaround elementary school?
2. How do teachers describe the impact of the implementation of additional support structures for literacy instruction on their efficacy in one urban elementary school?
3. How do action research team members describe the process of creating and implementing structures that support collective teacher efficacy connected to literacy practices in one urban elementary school?

Summary of the Findings

This action research study provided deeper insight on the impact of leadership behaviors on improving collective teacher efficacy related to literacy practices. Coghlan and Brannick (2014) state, “action research is a collaborative process which focuses on research in action, rather than research about action” (p. 6). The research focus also analyzed the impact structures

and systems of job-embedded coaching had on improving collective teacher efficacy in one urban elementary school. Collective teacher efficacy “deals with a group’s beliefs in its competence for successful outcomes” (Donohoo, 2017, p.3) The action research team consisted of the school’s administrative team and primary first and second grade teachers. This qualitative study of action research used focus groups, semi-structured interviews, notes, questionnaires, and feedback from protocol sessions to triangulate data to yield emerging themes.

The researcher guided the action research team in three cycles of action research using guided reading strategies as a foundation of interventions. The design team led peer coaching cycles with the design team and held meetings weekly to provide targeted support using periodic changes in intervention using a cyclical approach to problem solving. Action research “is a sequence of events, comprised of iterative cycles of gathering data collaboratively, jointly analyzing the data and taking action leading to further joint data-gathering” (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014, p.6). The findings provided evidence of the strong impact of leadership behaviors, structures, and systems of job-embedded coaching, on improving collective teacher efficacy and literacy practices.

Major Findings Related to the Literature Reviewed

The findings in this study related to leadership behaviors, structures and systems of support related to job-embedded coaching support and its impact on improving collective teacher efficacy related to literacy practices. Donohoo (2017) explains, “the context of change must be at the collective level rather than the individual level” (p. 48). Donohoo et al. (2018) explain, “by promoting a culture of collaboration focused on “knowing thy collective impact,” leaders have the potential to support student achievement in ways that positively influence teachers’ collective efficacy beliefs” (p. 42). The action research focused on creating conditions and systems of

support which may have a direct impact improving collective teacher efficacy related to literacy practices.

Finding 1: Leadership behaviors influence collective teacher efficacy connected to literacy practices.

School leaders involved in this action research guided the process of this study by serving as design team members. Results from focus group interviews, design team meetings, and observation planning tools provided data supporting the positive impact leadership behaviors had related to this action research study. The connections among effective leadership practices and positive efficacy are critical because of well-established relationships between achievement and collective teacher efficacy (Ross & Gray, 2016). Leaders planned action research cycles and reflected at the end of each research cycle on next steps to further support teachers on the implementation team related to guided reading literacy practices. As leaders and teachers worked closely on improving literacy practices, collective teacher efficacy became stronger. Spencer (2016) reiterate that school leaders must work collaboratively with teachers in order to create meaningful and sustainable change. Within this action research, leaders consistently shifted to improve structures and systems of support for teachers. Goddard et al. (2015) conducted a study with results showing that a principal's instructional leadership significantly predicts collective efficacy by influencing teachers' collaborative work while ensuring the creation of conditions for teachers to learn what they need to learn so that teachers feel confident in creating the conditions for students to learn what they need to learn. Leaders in this action research study made schedule changes and provided opportunities for uninterrupted opportunities to plan and debrief literacy practices of guided reading. Prelli (2015) conducted a study which explained, "actions by leaders such as providing opportunities for collaborative sharing or

teachers to observe peers implementing best practice strategies would strengthen the beliefs of teachers to be successful with the most challenging of situations” (p.178). In this study, leaders felt confident at the end of the action research that they contributed to a positive action research process and contributed to improving collective teacher efficacy related to literacy practices.

Finding 2: Job-embedded professional learning directly influences improving collective teacher efficacy connected to literacy practices

Job-embedded professional learning was implemented as one intervention throughout his action research process in creating a structure to support improving guided reading practices. Occurring during the day, Zepeda (2019) explains, “job-embedded learning opportunities support reflection, feedback on practice, and forms of action research and inquiry so that teachers can think about what they do in their classrooms to impact student learning.” As more opportunities were made available for teachers to engage in this job-embedded action research, an improvement in literacy practices occurred, which had a direct impact on collective teacher efficacy. In a 2014 study conducted by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the majority of the 1,600 teachers surveyed characterized their professional development as “irrelevant, ineffective, and not connected to the core work of helping students learn” (Calvert, 2016). The ongoing improvements of job-embedded professional learning within this action research, had a positive impact on improving collective teacher efficacy related to improving literacy practices. Wang et al. (2015) and Donohoo and Katz (2020) explain the second most powerful form of collective teacher efficacy, vicarious experiences, or role modeling “serves as a powerful tool for promoting efficacy by providing individuals a means of assessing adequacy through comparison with others and seeing people similar to themselves succeed raises observers’ belief that they also possess the capability to succeed, particularly if they share similar background and

experiences” (p.141). The more opportunities that teachers engaged in opportunities to observe peers and engage in modeling of effective teaching strategies during job-embedded professional learning, collective teacher efficacy improved related to literacy practices.

Finding 3: Differentiated peer coaching support has a strong impact on improving collective teacher efficacy connected to literacy practices

Peer coaching was used to support, guide, and differentiate new learning within this action research cycle. During the action research process, peer coaching enhanced collaboration and improved effective implementation of guided reading, yielding improved collective teacher efficacy. Peer coaching provides “opportunities for teachers to support and learn from each other and to engage in realistic discussions about teaching and learning” (Zepeda, 2019, 116; Donohoo, 2017). As the action research team engaged in cycles of peer coaching, the strongest form of collective teacher efficacy, mastery experiences, had a strong impact on literacy practices. Tschannen and McMaster (2009) found, “professional development formats that supported mastery experiences through forms of coaching had the strongest effect on efficacy beliefs for reading instruction as well for implementation of new strategies.” Donohoo and Katz (2017) further contend, “when teams experience success through mastery experiences, collective efficacy increases, and teams come to expect that they can repeat effective performances” (p.25). Differentiating peer coaching cycles throughout the action research process allowed design team members to individualize specific needs of grade level teams in improving guided reading literacy practices.

Finding 4: Supportive and collaborative conditions enhance collective teacher efficacy connected to literacy practices

Collaboration as an action research team was pivotal in implementing new practices and working through cycles of interventions. As teams planned together, observed one another in peer coaching cycles, and engaged in job-embedded professional learning, collaboration improved, and collective teacher efficacy improved. In a study conducted by Nguyen and Ng (2020), a major finding revealed, “the sharing of resources, practices, or strategies to implement new initiatives, yields strong collaboration among teams” (p. 646). Battersby and Verdi (2015) further reiterate, “in order for teachers to benefit from professional learning, learning should take place through collaboration in the context of teaching” (p.25). Collaboration amongst leaders also provided opportunities to make improvements to barriers impeding the implementation of peer coaching opportunities. As design and implementation team members engaged in sharing of best practices and successful growth in guided reading practices, the most powerful area of collective teacher efficacy, mastery experiences, improved for teachers. Mastery experiences occur when “teams experience success and attribute it to causes within their control, collective teacher efficacy increases and teams come to expect that effective performances can be repeated” (Donohoo, 2017, p. 8).

Major Findings Related to the Research Questions

Finding 1: Leaders identified the need for protected time to plan and collaborate.

Focus group interviews and design team meeting notes indicated a need for leaders to have protected time to plan and collaborate with teachers. Throughout the action research process, the emphasis was placed on ensuring improved structures and protected job-embedded professional learning time for teachers, however leaders stated they often felt disconnected when

pulled for school issues or emergencies or not having the time to plan to adequately prepare to differentiate teacher support. Buttram and Farley-Ripple (2016) emphasize the importance of leaders protecting time to plan and coordinate with teachers to avoid sending an unintended message that teachers working together is not critical to the focus of change. The collaboration time was protected for teachers by scheduling collaborative planning time built into the master schedule, however this time was difficult for leaders to find the space to plan and pull additional resources to provide follow-up. An additional need related to protecting or finding additional time for leaders, often occurred when teachers needing individualized support and leaders were in other meetings or pulled for other school based operational needs.

Finding 2: Teachers require additional time to effectively improve guided reading literacy practices and improve collective teacher efficacy.

As the design team created instructional strategies and professional learning to improve guided reading practices, teachers focused on trying new guided reading techniques to support students. Reflection and action research debrief meetings provided additional context that resulted in needing more time to internalize and understand new planning structures and guided reading instructional strategies. Semi-structured interviews and observation planning tool notes provided evidence that teachers needed to be given additional time to learn and improve practices. As teachers were given more time and space to embrace new learning with collaborative space to plan with peers and colleagues, guided reading practices improved, yielding an increase in collective teacher efficacy.

Finding 3: Empowering teachers with autonomy and opportunities for risk-taking improve collective teacher efficacy.

The action research employed, provided teachers with a guided reading framework planning tool to plan, engage in collaborative planning with members of the design team, observation, and debrief. Semi-structured interviews and observation notes from the planning tool suggested a need for teachers to be provided with more autonomy and risk-taking when planning guided reading lessons. As the action research evolved, the more opportunities that teachers were given to plan with more autonomous input, the more teachers began to improve how they perceived their impact on using effective guided reading practices. Providing teachers with a gradual release of more autonomy and creating structures of support along the way, proved to have a positive impact on improving collective teacher efficacy.

Limitations of the Current Study

As the action research study evolved, several limitations were noted. The research occurred at one specific site in one urban elementary school setting yielding the inability to replicate these findings across the context of other schools. The primary researcher served as the school principal, and while participants were reminded to be open and honest without concern for perspective, this contributing factor may have had an impact on results. Another limitation is the small sample size of participants in limited grade levels. Three administrators and six grade level teachers across two grade levels is a small sample size, yielding a limited ability to generalize findings of the action research study.

Implications

The purpose of this study was to learn how leadership behaviors and systems of structures and support of job-embedded professional learning may impact improving collective

teaches efficacy related to literacy practices. The literature suggests that leadership behaviors have a profound impact on improving collective efficacy and the importance of creating the necessary conditions for teachers to collaborate. The results of this study indicate that leaders influence collective teacher efficacy by being a shared participant in all phases of planning, supporting, and creating the necessary time and space for teachers to improve literacy practices. The participants of this study showed an increase in collective teacher efficacy when structures of support such as peer coaching, modeling, and collaborative planning were provided.

Participants also showed greater collective teacher efficacy when more autonomy and risk-taking were allowed in planning and teaching. Teachers felt more empowered to bring in ideas and input. The increase in teachers feeling more confident in the teaching of guided reading practices, have the potential to improve teachers' collective teacher efficacy, leading to greater student learning outcomes. As a result, possible implications for practitioners exist for local schools, district, and researchers.

Implications and Recommendations for Practitioners

As schools across the nation continue to face challenges of improving literacy outcomes for students, school districts must focus on improving the collective efficacy of teachers in having the belief that they have the ability to close the achievement gap. The findings in this study provide evidence that using action research to create systems and structures of job-embedded may have a positive impact on improving collective teacher efficacy. Findings also suggest that leaders play a major role in creating the necessary support structures and systems for job-embedded professional learning to occur. Using teams of teachers within the context of an action research team within schools could create the necessary conditions to enhance collaboration and support for teachers in improving literacy practices. Replicating the structure

of how design teams operated in this study, could provide schools with protected time for leaders to meet and develop intervention cycles of continuous improvement for school-based leadership teams. As teams are developed at the school level, protected time could also be developed for schools to create teacher leaders to support the work as leaders improve teacher capacity in improving guided reading practices. Recommendations for practitioners at the school level should also include creating non-negotiable time on the master schedule with built in opportunities to observe and learn through peer observations for modeling and support. The structure should be protected and leaders given the time to connect with teachers on next steps and identifying additional follow-up opportunities for growth implementing literacy practices.

Implications and Recommendations for Districts

Southeast Academy is considered one of the smallest schools with low enrollment within its school district. Findings from the literature and results of this action research study recommend that districts focus on building collective teacher efficacy in order to make large scale change and improvements in schools. Isolating improving efficacy for individual teachers lack the impact of creating large scale change by singling out teachers that often display strong efficacy in the teaching of literacy. Districts could support the implementation of job-embedded professional learning across multiple schools while engaging in action research on a specific school related barrier aligned with creating systems of support structures. An additional recommendation for districts is to engage principals at the district level in action research on effective ways to improve collective teacher efficacy. District leaders could lead professional learning networks for leaders in small groups to try new ways of creating opportunities for teachers to improve collective teacher efficacy.

An additional recommendation is for district leaders to begin to give new initiatives to improve literacy time to evolve at the school level. Often a sense of urgency creates a lack of collaboration at the school level which interferes with improving collective teacher efficacy. Districts providing leaders with the necessary time and space to impact sustainable change and ease of implementation at the school level, has a negative impact on the successful implementation of new practices. Collective teacher efficacy has the potential to improve if districts create opportunities for leaders to engage in authentic collaborative job-embedded professional learning with teachers on improving literacy practices.

Implications and Recommendations for Researchers

Future studies on employing a cyclical action research approach to improve collective teacher efficacy could be replicated in a similar school focusing on upper grades. The action research focus of this study targeted first and second grade teachers. A replicated study targeting upper elementary would determine if the same findings would exist for teachers supporting older students with larger gaps in literacy. Results of future studies could target the impact of professional learning on guided reading and student outcomes in literacy. Future research for a larger group of teacher participants across a building would gain additional results and findings on ways to improve collective teacher efficacy across an entire school compared to two grade levels.

Recommendations for Policy Makers

As schools across the nation continue to seek innovative and research-based strategies to close the even wider gap of literacy for students, it is important that policy makers equip teachers with the necessary tools and supportive structures to improve practices. Traditional models of engaging in workshops will need to become structures of more job-embedded action-oriented

collaborative structures for teachers. As the nation faces teachers feeling overwhelmed and frustrated with accountability measures placed on improving literacy outcomes, policy makers will need to revamp the current structure to be able to support states and local districts with innovative structures to engage teachers in collaborative and meaningful professional learning. Recommendations for policy makers involve teachers having a voice with state standards and local curricula. Policy makers could embark on a national needs assessment on which states use action research as a tool to support schools in improving collective teacher efficacy. Creating more resources of support for states to use and decreasing compliance tools would add more value to what schools are currently provided to show evidence of aiming to improve professional learning structures for leaders and teachers.

Chapter Summary and Final Thoughts

Collective teacher efficacy has been found to be the number one indicator of improving student achievement (Hattie, 2016). This study aimed to describe how leadership behaviors impact school wide collective teacher efficacy connected to literacy practices and how certain structures and systems of support impact collective teacher efficacy connected to improving literacy practices. Leaders are responsible for providing the necessary conditions and framework for teachers to engage in authentic and collaborative job-embedded professional learning.

Findings from this study suggest that when teachers are provided opportunities to engage in action research cycles with supportive structures, collective teacher efficacy in guided reading practices improves. Findings also suggest that schools should engage in reflective opportunities as a team to discuss what is working and how improvements can be made to support safe structures of autonomy and risk-taking. Improving literacy practices and the space and structure to do so, must be embedded in job-embedded professional learning with protected time to

provide teachers with uninterrupted authentic collaboration in order to impact collective teacher efficacy.

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Appendix A**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA IRB APPROVAL****Notification of Approval**

To: Robin Christian

Link: [PROJECT00004275](#)

P.I.: Jami Berry

Title: Implementing Structures to Improve Collective Teacher Efficacy
Connected to Literacy Practices

ACTIONS TO This submission has been approved. You can access the correspondence
letter using the following link:

TAKE: [Correspondence for PROJECT00004275.doc.pdf\(0.01\)](#)

Appendix B**CONSENT FORM****UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
CONSENT FORM*****Implementing Structures to Improve Collective Teacher Efficacy Connected to Literacy
Practices***

You are being asked to take part in a research study. The information in this form will help you decide if you want to be in the study. Please ask the researcher(s) below if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information.

Principal Investigator:

Dr. Jami Berry
Department of Lifelong Education,
Administration, and Policy
Contact Information: JamiBerry@uga.edu

Co-Investigator

Robin Christian
Department of Lifelong Education,
Administration, and Policy
Contact Information: rcc56199@uga.edu

We are doing this research study to learn more about systems and structures of support, leadership behaviors, and the impact of job-embedded professional learning on improving collective teacher efficacy on literacy practices. The study is being conducted in order to gain additional evidence and insight to provide similar schools with additional knowledge on how teachers and leaders can create collaborative systems, improved leadership practices, and effective strategies in improving collective teacher efficacy in order to improve literacy practices. The research questions are:

What is the relationship between leadership behaviors and school-wide collective teacher efficacy connected to literacy practices in one urban turnaround elementary school?

How do teachers describe the impact of the implementation of additional support structures for literacy instruction on their efficacy in one urban elementary school?

How do action research team members describe the process of creating and implementing structures that support collective teacher efficacy connected to literacy practices in one urban elementary school?

You are being invited to be in this research study because you provide direct literacy instruction to students and/or you provide direct support to staff providing literacy instruction to students. The eligibility criteria for this study is that you must be the literacy teacher of record for assigned students in grades 1st-5th grade and/or provide direct support for staff providing literacy instruction to students in grades 1st-5th grade.

If you agree to participate in this study:

- We will collect information about processes and structures related to professional learning in literacy and the impact of peer coaching framework in literacy. This information will be collected in the form of responses from focus groups, semi-structured interviews, observations, and open-ended questionnaire.
- We will ask you to participate in job-embedded professional learning in literacy and collaborate in peer coaching on effective literacy practices. It will take about 30-45 minutes weekly and will occur mostly during the school day. **A very limited number of professional learning will occur after the school day.**
- The total *estimated* number of hours of participation: **48**
- All activities related to the study will occur at the school site.
- Observations may occur at times using a video camera (only at the permission of the involved parties).
- Semi-structured interviews and focus group responses will be audiotaped for coding purposes and pseudonyms will be used to protect anonymity.
- All interviews will be conducted via Zoom and will be recorded.

Participation is voluntary. You can refuse to take part or stop at any time without penalty. The decision to refuse or withdraw from the study will not have any negative impact on your employment and/or evaluation of performance. Your decision to participate will have no impact in your participation in additional programs and you will continue to be given the opportunity to

engage in any offered professional learning, job-embedding peer coaching and all support structures provided within the study and/or aligned with improving collective teacher efficacy in literacy practices.

There are questions that may make you uncomfortable. You can skip these questions if you do not wish to answer them. There are no foreseeable risks associated with being involved in the study.

The potential benefits to being a participant in this study is an increase in our school's collective teacher efficacy and an individual participant's knowledge of how to effectively support teachers with improved school wide structures and processes. Individual participants will also improve literacy practices based on engagement in professional learning. Your responses may help us understand how to improve internal structures in creating better structures for teachers to engage in job-embedded planning and improve leadership behaviors related to effective professional learning structures in literacy. The ultimate outcome and your involvement could yield better outcomes for students in literacy, therefore having a positive impact on our society as a whole.

We will take steps to protect your privacy, but there is a small risk that your information could be accidentally disclosed to people not connected to the research. To reduce this risk we will maintain confidentiality and use pseudonyms. Observation notes will immediately be submitted to the principal investigator and locked in a file cabinet with access only by the primary researcher. Identifiers will be used to protect confidentiality. We will only keep information that could identify you by a unique identifier. The information will not be used or distributed for future research. Even though the investigator will emphasize to all participants that comments made during the focus group session should be kept confidential, it is possible that participants may repeat comments outside of the group at some future time. This research involves the transmission of data over the Internet. Every reasonable effort has been taken to ensure the effective use of available technology, however confidentiality during online communication cannot be guaranteed.

Please feel free to ask questions about this research at any time. You can contact the Principal Investigator, Dr. Jami Berry at 404-668-5106 or JamiBerry@uga.edu. If you have any complaints or questions about your rights as a research volunteer, contact the IRB at 706-542-3199 or by email at IRB@uga.edu.

If you agree to participate in this research study, please sign below:

Name of Researcher	Signature	Date
Name of Participant	Signature	Date

Please keep one copy and return the signed copy to the researcher.

Appendix C

Email Requesting Participation in Study

Dear _____ Staff:

I am a graduate student under the direction of Professor Dr. Jami Berry in the Department of Lifelong Education, Administration and Policy at The University of Georgia. I invite you to participate in a research study entitled *Implementing Structures to Improve Collective Teacher Efficacy Connected to Literacy Practices*. The purpose of this action research study is to examine the impact of leadership behaviors, structures, and processes associated with improving collective teacher efficacy in literacy practices. We obtained your contact information from our district email server and staff list.

You're eligible to be in this study because you are an administrator, teacher, or support staff member of literacy at our school.

Your participation will involve participating in focus group interviews, semi-structured interviews, participation in professional learning focused on guided reading, and peer coaching cycles. The action research study will focus on using feedback to analyze themes and patterns gathered. All research will be conducted on site and will take about 45-60 minutes weekly over the course of up to four months. There are no foreseeable risks anticipated in your participation in this study. The potential benefits of your participation in this study will assist with the field of education having a more in-depth awareness of strategies and structures elementary schools can implement in order to improve collective teacher efficacy in literacy

No incentive or compensation is involved in this study.

If you would like additional information about this study, please feel free to call me 404-216-9114 or send an e-mail to rcc56199@uga.edu.

Thank you for your consideration!

Sincerely,

Robin Christian

If you would like to opt out of further contact, please send an email to rcc56199@uga.edu communicating your desire to not receive any further communication.

Appendix D

Focus Group Interview Protocol Implementing Structures to Improve Collective Teacher

Efficacy Connected to Literacy Practices

1. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think of the leadership behaviors associated with literacy practices at Southeast Academy?
2. How connected as a school leader do you feel when it comes to improving collective teacher efficacy in literacy practices at Southeast Academy? – probe for connections
3. Tell me about the current practices which leaders provide at Southeast Academy in supporting professional learning to teachers in the area of literacy?
4. What operational or instructional barriers do you feel have an impact on improving collective teacher efficacy in literacy practices at Southeast Academy?
5. How would you describe the job-embedded coaching support for literacy teachers at Southeast Academy?
6. Is there anything else that you would like to add as it relates to leadership behaviors which impact collective teacher efficacy in improving literacy practices?

Appendix E

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol Implementing Structures to Improve Collective Teacher Efficacy Connected to Literacy Practices

1. Describe the current professional learning structure as it relates to improving literacy practices at Southeast Academy?
2. Describe the perfect day in the teaching of literacy using guided reading structures in your classroom?
3. What changes, if any, would you make as it relates to supporting teachers in feeling like they have the ability to improve literacy practices at Southeast Academy?
4. Describe the current level of support that you receive weekly as it relates to improving your literacy practices as a teacher at Southeast Academy?
5. If your principal were to create a structured professional learning structure for teachers in implementing literacy practices focused on using Guided Reading in small groups, describe how you think that should be implemented?
6. Is there anything else you want me to know as it relates to the support provided for teachers in improving the belief that they can have a positive impact on the teaching of literacy at Southeast Academy?

Appendix F

Guided Reading Planning and Observation Tool

Guided Reading for Small Group Instruction Observation Tool for Peer Coaching Framework

Coaching Observation Form: Guided Reading

Coaching Cycle Goal:

Previous Next Steps to be addressed in this Lesson:

Observation Notes:

PREPARATION	EVIDENCE
Identify reading strategy	
Select appropriate level text that will give students opportunities to practice	
BEFORE READING (5 min)	EVIDENCE
Book Introduction (quick gist statement) Name the reading strategy (make it specific) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • model strategy • explain strategy and give an example • guided practice Address potential challenges in text (vocab, concepts, format/structure) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-2 • show in context of text and how you might gather clues about these words 	

DURING READING (10-12 mins)	EVIDENCE
<p>Student independently apply strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • coach students individually/as needed • take notes on reading behaviors used/not used (can be used for teaching point after reading) 	
AFTER READING	EVIDENCE
<p>Begin a comprehension conversation!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deep retell • targeted question(s) tied to target <p>Diagnose/Follow-up on confusion -</p> <p>prompt as needed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • opportunity to follow up on anything observed during reading <p>Ask a mix of Qs - Factual, Inferential,</p> <p>Critical</p> <p>Prompt for Habits of Discussion</p> <p>Other Notes (Grows/Areas for Growth/Follow-Up)</p>	

Appendix G

Action Research Team Success Protocol

Team Success Analysis Protocol

Adapted from: Collective Efficacy: How Educators' Beliefs Impact Student Learning

(Donohoo, 2017)

Total Time- 1 hour

Step 1 (5 minutes)

Group Configuration: Action Research Team

Together the team will identify and write a short description of a success they have experienced in terms of their work (with colleagues, students, peer coaching cycle, professional learning)

(Using chart paper as a whole team)

Guiding Questions:

What are the specifics of the success? What made the experience different from others like it?

What did it mean in terms of your team's work (as teachers, as leaders, as support staff)?

Step 2 (25 minutes)

Group Configuration: Mixed- Members of the Design and Implementation Team

In groups of two to four, participant take turns describing their team's successful experiences in as much detail as possible. As each presenter shares his or her team's story, the others take notes and are provided with an opportunity to ask clarifying questions. During this round, each

participant is provided the opportunity to reflect upon the successes shared. The purpose of this step is to uncover why teams were successful- to see more in the successes. (Using notecatcher)

Guiding Questions:

What did your team think? What was different about planning for literacy? Why did your team decide to do differently?

Step 3 (10 minutes)

Group Configuration: Same as above

The group reflects on the success stories and discusses what they heard each presenter say and offer additional insights and analysis of the successes. **The group of four to five identifies and lists the factors that contributed to each team's successes. The group then discusses briefly how what they have learned might be applied to the work of the entire staff.**

Step 4 (10 minutes)

Group Configuration: Action Research Team

Appendix H
Open-Ended Questionnaire

How would you define guided reading?

Describe the professional learning opportunities that you have been involved in at Southeast Academy focused on guided reading?

How would you describe the impact on your literacy practices closely aligned to using guided reading for small group instruction as it relates to participating in professional learning at Southeast Academy?

What do you find as the most effective strategy related to guided reading that you have gained by being involved in professional learning at Southeast Academy?

What suggestions would you provide to improve professional learning experiences at Southeast Academy? (Probe for structures, time of day, impact on collaboration)

Please feel free to add additional comments/feedback related to literacy professional learning sessions offered at Southeast Academy.