

RTI Implementation and Differentiation for Primary School English Language  
Learners

by  
Shelly Sue Budziszewski  
December 2012

A culminating project submitted to the Department of Education and Human  
Development of  
The College at Brockport, State University of New York in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements  
for the degree of Master of Science in Education

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### Significance

After many years of an increasing number of students being referred to special education and being classified too quickly, educators sought to reevaluate the assessment results and better meet students' educational needs (Elizalde-Utnick, 2008). Response to Intervention (RTI) provides a way to eliminate the over-referral of students to special education and keep students in the general education setting with the necessary support services. To better understand RTI, one should envision a pyramid (See Figure 1).

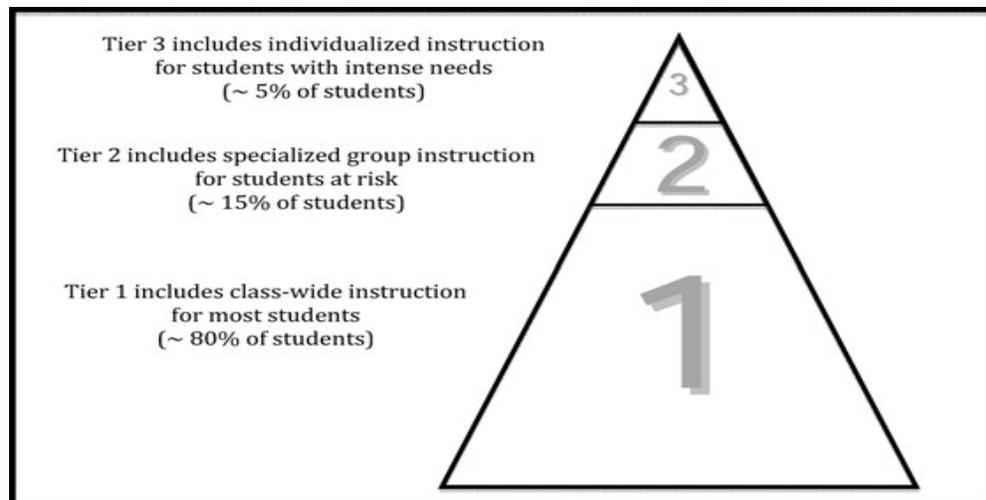


Figure 1. Response to Intervention (RTI) Tier Structure (Mellard, McKnight, & Jordan, 2010).

The pyramid's large base represents Tier One, where the entire student population receives quality classroom instruction. The middle of the pyramid is Tier Two, in which students receive specialized group instruction due to their at risk status, as derived from teacher evaluation or assessment results. Represented in Tier

Two, is about “15 percent of students for whom the core curriculum is insufficient” (Mellard, McKnight, & Jordan, p.218) for a rate of progression and performance level equal to their peers. Tier Three is the very top of the pyramid, a small percentage of only 5 percent of students who receive individualized instruction for severe educational needs (Mellard, McKnight, & Jordan). The specialized instruction in Tier Three requires a great deal of careful progress monitoring and is intended to be short-term so these high risk students can move down to Tier Two (Mellard, McKnight, & Jordan).

However, beyond the basic structure of RTI, many details remain to be worked out in order to make RTI both practical and effective (Orosco & Klingner, 2010). If the instruction does not have clear levels of increased instructional intensity when students move up the tiers, students’ needs will not be properly met (Mellard, McKnight, & Jordan, 2010). Since RTI is not one-size-fits-all, considerations about population size and students’ cultural differences must also be made when implementing RTI (Orosco & Klinger). Specifically with English Language Learners (ELLs), no matter the amount of quality instruction, including modifications, at Tier One, individualized instruction may need to be implemented at Tier Two (Elizalde-Utnick, 2008).

RTI is commonplace within many of today’s school districts, particularly at the elementary level (Mellard, Mcknight, & Jordan, 2010). Individual states provide information to guide districts in the creation and implementation of RTI, thus creating a great many differences in RTI models (Mellard, McKnight, & Jordan). It would

behoove educators and policymakers to streamline RTI for all students, finding interventions that are successful based on data and research that we can share. In addition, with an increasing number of ELLs in school districts across our state and nation, the streamlining of RTI will be especially beneficial for ELL students who often qualify for Tier 2 interventions.

The RTI method has a foundation in progress monitoring, or frequent testing of the student's skill achievement improvement. Yet, we cannot assume that when a child is not making progress, they have "an internal deficit of some kind" (Orosco & Klingner, 2010, p. 271). For instance, a language barrier may delay a child's academic development.

The number of children, ages 5–17, who spoke a language other than English at home increased considerably between 1980 and 2009 from 4.7 to 11.2 million, an increase from 10 to 21 percent of the school-age population (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). In 2009, about 24 percent of the students who spoke a non-English language at home were identified as having difficulty with English (U.S. Department of Education).

Teachers of ELLs, students whose native language is not English and are acquiring English as an additional language, need to be extra cautious when these students fall below the cut score. To make gains in the acquisition of literacy skills, ELLs need teachers who use effective instructional techniques. This often means that "teachers adjust their instruction when students experience difficulty" (Elizalde-Utnick, 2008, p.20).

Elizalde-Utnick (2008), discussing the use of the RTI framework with ELLs, stated that educators need to “systematically document and publish their RTI interventions with ELLs...[in order to] determine the utility of instructional strategies with both ELLs and non-ELLs” (2008, p.20). This conclusion directly correlates to my own ponderings about the scripted RTI interventions at my school district. I would like to investigate, through systematic documentation, the implementation of Tier 2 intervention lessons and modifications made with ELLs. Through this documentation I will identify when RTI ELA interventions should be modified to create more effective instruction for ELLs. Through the publication of this analysis, I hope to see these modifications to a scripted program be utilized or further studied all students, ELLs and native speaking students.

### **Research Questions**

The purpose of this study is to determine how one English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher assistant implements RTI scripted ELA interventions at the primary (K–2) level. I will focus on understanding when and how literacy instruction for English Language Learners within the RTI model is modified. This study will contribute to the literature by presenting a qualitative, in-depth description of one teacher’s RTI implementation with English Language Learners. The research will be guided by the following questions:

At what points do I identify the need for changes to the district’s scripted RTI ELA interventions for ELLs?

How do I modify the letter-sound, phoneme (awareness) segmentation, and fluency intervention instruction for ELLs?

What do I hope to accomplish through the modified changes?

### **Rationale**

Since RTI has no defined program outside the three tiers, each district can create a program to best meet the needs of their student populations. In the district of this study, RTI is a precise and scripted program. The Primary School RTI committee is made up of the principal, school psychologist, a classroom teacher from each grade level, one reading specialist, and periodically, other administrators. Students are assessed using the AIMSweb program in September, January, and May on a variety of ELA and Math skills. This benchmarking program, based on direct, frequent, and continuous assessment, is administered weekly for progress monitoring by graduate students from a local university. Students whose scores fall below a defined national norm score are considered to be in the at risk score range. These students are automatically placed in Tier 2 RTI groups. Students are provided interventions based on the areas in ELA and/or Math which they scored low. The intervention schedule, instruction scripts, and materials are provided by the district. Students in Tier 2 are instructed by classroom or support teachers in small groups of no more than five students. Students in the Tier group are progress monitored, or tested and scored on a group of skills, weekly. Students who fall into the some risk score range for their grade levels are monitored and not added to the Tier 2

intervention group. Students who receive a grade in the no risk score range are given enrichment support services.

In the district for the study, the number of ESL students fluctuates throughout the year based on the transient lifestyle of many non-native families. In 2011-2012, the total number of ESL students at the district being studied ranged between 52 and 43. As a diverse district with a significant population of ELLs, the district has created a free-standing ESL program, using the Language Assessment Battery-Revised (LAB-R) and New York State English as a Second Language Aptitude Test (NYSESLAT) for assessment.

“The free-standing program in this district serves language learners by teaching the English language based on language acquisition theories. Identified students are pulled out of the regular classroom for intensive language instruction with ESL staff. The number of minutes of instruction is determined by New York State standardized testing including the LAB-R and the NYSESLAT. ELLs spend most of the day in the general education classroom listening to [and] absorbing the (English) language.” (Cheektowaga-Maryvale U.F.S.D., 2009).

The ESL program is staffed by two Teacher of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) teachers, two ESL teaching assistants, and one Spanish and ESL dually-certified teacher. One teacher works solely at the Primary School and one teaching assistant works solely at the Intermediate School. There are rotating schedules for the rest of the ESL staff – one teaching assistant covers both the Primary, Intermediate, and Middle School, one teacher covers both the Middle and High School, and the dually certified teacher covers one class at the High School. This scheduling has been created in order to make sure that all ESL students are receiving the correct number of minutes of instruction determined by the LAB-R or

NYSESLAT. Children are tested every January using a district-created assessment to better determine the areas in which they need more support for the NYSESLAT in March and April. The NYSESLAT assesses ELLs in Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking. Students are also classified as Beginner, Intermediate, or Advanced students based on the LAB-R or NYSESLAT. Lessons are developed from the district-created assessment based on the proficiency level of the student, student groupings, and areas of concern. The teachers and teacher assistants in the ESL program have been assigned to do RTI interventions, based on the fact that ELLs' English language proficiency creates difficulty when placed in the general education class RTI groups with native speaking peers.

I believe that the RTI scripted interventions prescribed based on AIMSweb benchmark test scores and a student's grade level are not always most appropriate for meeting the needs of ELL students. For example, in my district, students who are non-readers are assigned a fluency intervention because of their at risk score on the fluency assessment. I believe this type of intervention is not appropriate based on both the students' English language proficiency and their academic skills. RTI assignments based solely on the grade level expectations are, in my opinion, not meeting the students' needs. The grade level the ELLs are in is based on their age, not their English language proficiency or academic skills.

### **Purpose**

The initial motivation to study the topic of ELLs and RTI came from my assignment, as an ESL teaching assistant, to provide two groups of Primary School

ELL students with RTI Tier 2 intervention instruction. I believe that the scripted interventions that are prescribed based on the students' benchmark test scores and grade level are not always appropriate for meeting the needs of ELL students.

Orosco and Klingner (2010) state, "a one-size-fits-all approach to RTI cannot... [meet] the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students" ( p. 271). Therefore, the assessment and instructional methods which the district deemed appropriate for helping English-speaking students not fall further behind in ELA may not be effective with English Language Learners.

In documenting both the point in which I determine a need for change to the scripted intervention and the modifications I will make to the RTI script or activities, correlations will be found. These findings will be useful for the development and design of future interventions to better suit the ELL population, in addition to the non-ELLs.

### **Study Approach**

A qualitative self-study was determined the best methodology for this study based on the amount of teacher instruction and decision making the RTI process requires. In this study, I was given an intervention schedule, instruction scripts, and materials to use to provide Tier 2 intervention instruction to ELLs. I, as the teacher-researcher, will seek to document the times I determined a need for change to the scripted intervention and the modifications thereafter made. The primary instrument for data collection will be a detailed journal. Detailed data collection and analysis procedures are outlined in Chapter Three.

## Summary

Two things are becoming more prevalent in today's school districts-Response to Intervention and English Language Learners. This self-study will show how one English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher assistant implemented RTI scripted ELA interventions at the primary (K-2) level. The focus on when and how RTI literacy instruction for English Language Learners is modified will be analyzed and reported on.

## Definitions

ELA- English Language Arts

English language learners (ELL)-"People whose native language is not English and who are acquiring English as an additional language" (Pinnell & Fountas, 2009, p.544).

ESL-English as a Second Language

fluency-"The way an oral reading sounds, including phrasing, intonation, pausing, stress, rate, and integration of the first five factors" (Pinnell & Fountas, 2009, p.544).

fluency in reading-"To read continuous text with good momentum, phrasing, appropriate pausing, intonation, and stress" (Pinnell & Fountas, 2009, p.544).

fluency in word solving-"Speed, accuracy, and flexibility in solving words" (Pinnell & Fountas, 2009, p.544).

intervention-"Intensive additional instruction for children not progressing as rapidly as expected; usually on-on-one tutoring or small group (one-on-three) teaching" (Pinnell & Fountas, 2009, p.545).

letter-sound (correspondence)-"Recognizing the corresponding sound of a specific letter when that letter is seen or heard (Pinnell & Fountas, 2009, p.545).

phoneme-"The smallest unit of sound in spoken language" (Pinnell & Fountas, 2009, 546), "it is represented in print with slashes (eg., /s/ and /th/)" (Tompkins, 2010, p.487).

phoneme (or phonemic) awareness-“The ability to hear individual sounds in words and to identify individual sounds” (Pinnell & Fountas, 2009, p.546)

RTI-Response to Intervention-a multi-tiered prevention and intervention model used by United States public educators (Orosco & Klingner, 2010)

TESOL- Teacher of English to Speakers of Other Languages

## CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This review outlines of the structure of Response to Intervention for the reader. Next, an understanding of the process of learning to read based on a bottom-up reading model and the writings of Fountas and Pinnell is presented. A discussion of English Language Learners (ELLs) and some of the aspects unique to their reading acquisition process follows. Finally, tying all the topics together, is a discussion of RTI literacy interventions for ELLs. Current research surrounding this topic will be discussed throughout as a springboard for the importance of my research as a continuation of these past research studies. Subheadings provide a guide to each of these areas of discussion as related to the major research questions in this study.

### **Response to Intervention**

In the public health prevention model, sections of the population with the greatest risk of disease receive the most intensive care (Mellard, McKnight, & Jordan, 2010). Adapting the medical prevention model to education, RTI was created with a system of tiers, or levels of differing instruction. Response to Intervention, more frequently referred to by its acronym RTI, is a multi-tiered approach that seeks to prevent and intervene when a student's academic struggle is identified (Orosco & Klingner, 2010). One can view RTI as an umbrella over initiatives such as NCLB, Reading First, Title One, and ESL to create coherence as well as better meet students' needs (Mellard, McKnight, & Jordan, 2010). In the past, teachers would wait for student failure and then refer students for academic intervention services or special

education, often too late for many students, as the best years for reading instruction were lost (Orosco & Klingner, 2010).

Three tiers, in the shape of a pyramid, are often used to express how to best meet students' instructional needs (Mellard, McKnight, & Jordan, 2010). The trend seems to indicate that three tiers work well to meet students' instructional needs (Mellard, McKnight, & Jordan, 2010). Tier One, the base of the pyramid that encompasses the entire student population, is where the classroom teacher provides evidence-based, district wide curricular instruction to all students (Orosco & Klingner, 2010). Universal screening is administered to assess students' learning based on the classroom teaching and determine who is not responding to Tier One instruction (Healy, Vanderwood, & Edelston, 2005). Tier Two, the middle of the pyramid, is representative of a smaller section of the student population that is not making progress (Orosco & Klingner, 2010). When classified as a Tier Two student, "intense selected instructional interventions" (Healy, Vanderwood, & Edelston, 2005, p.56) are provided by the classroom teacher or another educational professional (Orosco & Klingner, 2010). Tier Three, the top of the pyramid, the smallest section of the student population, is identified after academic progress is not made with Tier Two interventions (Orosco & Klingner, 2010). When in Tier Three, teachers may administer individualized interventions or begin a special education evaluation and referral (Orosco & Klingner, 2010). Student progress is assessed on a regular basis so that those students not improvement their scores based on their intervention instruction will not fall further behind (Orosco & Klingner, 2010).

Providing high quality instruction in Tier One is important because Tier Two and Tier Three interventions are costly (Mellard, McKnight, & Jordan, 2010). All interventions should be high quality, seeking to meet the small group or individual student needs with integrity (Healy, Vanderwood, & Edelston, 2005). As a student moves up “through the tiers, the intensity of the interventions they receive increases” (Orosco & Klingner, 2010, p.270). Instructional intensity does not just mean that educators increase the instructional time or decrease the group size, but that many other considerations are made for high-quality interventions (Mellard, McKnight, & Jordan, 2010). After determining the appropriate number of intervention minutes, frequency, and group size appropriate for the student, teachers should think about other ways to increase instructional intensity. When planning for interventions, teachers would benefit from greater task segmentation where broad goals are made, from which focused goals can be developed and achieved (Mellard, McKnight, & Jordan, 2010). Additionally, teachers can decrease the transition time for prolonged focus on one area and increase the time allowed for varied opportunities to practice or respond to new teaching (Mellard, McKnight, & Jordan, 2010). Finally, teachers should make good use of positive corrective feedback so that students deepen their subject knowledge and are moved along within their natural learning progression (Mellard, McKnight, & Jordan, 2010).

Interventions are most often focused on student needs in the core content areas of ELA and Math. For the purpose of this literature review, only the foundation of RTI ELA interventions will be discussed as this is the focus of this study. ELA

interventions for RTI are based on the belief in a bottom-up model of reading, or an instructional model of reading that involves learning reading skills independently in order to proceed to processing text, sometimes known as part to whole (Feng, 2010). RTI's use of skill based instruction does not support a top-down model of reading, also known as a concept-driven model, which is an instructional model of reading which proposes comprehension drives the ability to decode (Feng, 2010).

Healy, Vanderwood, and Edelston (2005) monitored the progress of ELL students in a three-tier intervention for phonological awareness and nonsense word fluency. From one urban school district, the lowest performing ELLs were chosen to participate, yielding fifteen students. These students were placed in intervention groups of no more than five students. For nineteen weeks, the students were instructed and progress monitored weekly on both phonological awareness and nonsense word fluency. Upon completion of the study, twelve students exited the intervention based on improvement scores that reached a level of proficiency. However, three students were referred to Tier Three for more intense and individualized instruction. From this study, although there was a great amount of improvement or success in Tier Two interventions for particular low-achieving students, small group instruction was not a complete solution. Researchers noted the limitations of their study based on the fact that all students were from low SES families. Further study, including students from a variety of SES levels or students who are involved in Tier Two then moved to Tier Three, would be beneficial.

Kamps, Abbott, Greenwood, Wills, Veerkamp, & Kaufman (2008) wanted to explore the effectiveness of Tier Two and Tier Three direct instruction interventions versus less structured interventions. From thirteen schools, 83 kindergarten students were selected to participate in the study based on mid-year assessments results that labeled these students at risk for reading failure. Of the 83 participants, 24 students reported English as their second language. The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) was the primary measure of students' outcomes. The Woodcock Reading Mastery Test–Revised (WRMT-R) was also used to assess students for this study. All students in the direct instruction intervention achieved benchmark level scores on all subtests of the WRMT-R by the end of the study. Among all the interventions, nonsense word fluency and oral reading fluency scores showed the most significant improvement as a result of direct instruction. In the discussion section, the researchers outlined the reasons why several schools were yielding such positive results from their implementation of the RTI model (Kamps, et al., 2008). First, it was key for students to be identified as at risk in kindergarten and begin their interventions in a timely manner to prevent them from falling further behind their typically developing classmates. Second, researchers noted the use of creative and flexible scheduling to provide sufficient time for small group instruction. Also, a team of both special and general education teachers collaborated for instruction and resources. The researchers recommended the school's effective use of "explicit instruction of early literacy skills" (p.111). Finally, but of great importance, the schools were effectively monitoring the progress of students to make up-to-date

intervention decisions. According to Kamps et al., teachers should focus on the structure of activities and instructional clarity in addition to the curriculum to become more effective with RTI.

### **Reading Process**

When we look at today's reading instruction, there is a trend in American education. In elementary school, students learn to read or have lessons that focus on how to read accurately, fluently, and with comprehension (Lenski, 2011). Once students move on to secondary education, they are required to read to learn, or use their reading skills, limited or proficient, to read new types of texts for understanding (Lenski, 2011). The shift in reading requirements and text type causes a great deal of confusion and many students leave high school without strong reading abilities (Lenski, 2011). For this reason, it is important that students receive high-quality reading instruction in the primary grades. Without the acquisition of basic reading skills in the younger years, students will continue to struggle and fall further behind their peers.

Since RTI is based on a bottom-up model of reading only, Fountas and Pinnell's bottom-up reading model will be used to discuss elements of the reading process. Other researchers may support the top-down model of reading, which is not a property of RTI. However, since this study is based on the use of RTI, only the bottom-up reading model descriptions of letter-sound relationship, phoneme segmentation, and fluency are discussed below. These components and a variety of

writings and materials by Fountas and Pinnell are used in the district of this study for literacy instruction and interventions.

**Letter-sound relationship.** Students must be taught to look at print to distinguish letters by their unique features and relate them to their distinctive sound (Pinnell & Fountas, 2009). When students are successful readers, they will recognize the letters and letter clusters, identify the sounds associated with them, and use the letter sounds to decode and read the words (Pinnell & Fountas). This use of letter-sound relationship is flexible yet automatic while a student is reading continuous print (Pinnell & Fountas).

**Phonological awareness/phoneme segmentation.** “Phonological awareness is the awareness of the constituent sounds (phonemes) of words in learning to read and spell” (Pinnell & Fountas, 2009, p.174). Phonemes are the smallest units that make up the spoken language; forty-four phonemes are identified by Pinnell and Fountas (2009).

To deconstruct text for the reading of continuous print, readers will also take note of word parts-base and root words, prefixes and suffixes, and all kinds of endings (Pinnell & Fountas). The use of larger word parts in decoding is the sign of an efficient young reader (Pinnell & Fountas). A solid phonological awareness understanding will support later reading skills such as word recognition, decoding, comprehension, and fluency (Healy, Vanderwood, & Edelston, 2005).

**Fluency.** Characteristics of fluent reading include appropriate pausing, such as in the use of punctuation, grouping words into phrases, conveying meaning

through intonation and the stressing of certain words, the rate of reading, and processing smoothly (Pinnell & Fountas). Instantly processing print without labored thought is one of the signs of a proficient reader (Pinnell & Fountas). Fast processing, or the instant, efficient, and coordinated deconstruction of print without strenuous effort, is one of the components within fluency that helps to identify a proficient reader (Pinnell & Fountas). Fast processing and fluent reading are distinctively different, although often referred to in the same context (Pinnell & Fountas).

### **ELLs and the Reading Process**

This self-study assumes that, “just like their English speaking peers, [ELLs] need explicit teaching of the five components of literacy: phonemic awareness and phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, and writing” (Blatchley & Lau, 2010, p.28). It is important for ELLs to get a good grasp on phonological awareness, a foundational understanding of letter sounds, which most native English speakers receive in prekindergarten or kindergarten (Healy, Vanderwood, & Edelston, 2005). However, even with quality instruction in Tier One, some students will still struggle and require instructional intervention. Phonological awareness skills appear to transfer in a positive manner across languages (Healy, Vanderwood, & Edelston, 2005, p.56). Yet, some sounds in the English language do not appear in other languages, while other sounds appear in other languages that are not present in English (Pinnell & Fountas, 2009). Reading lessons should include a phonics

component to address these language differences as well as student specific letter-sound relationship difficulties (Pinnell & Fountas, 2009).

Often, ELLs do not show significant progress in reading fluency due to the slower development of skills beyond word-level processing (Haager, 2007). Also, ELLs' oral English speech may vary from the patterns of native speakers, but these variations should not be emphasized unless it impedes an ELL's comprehension (Pinnell & Fountas, 2009). If ELLs are using phrasing, intonation, and word stress that make sense to them, they are developing fluency in an appropriate developmental pattern (Pinnell & Fountas, 2009).

Effective reading comprehension strategies are more difficult for ELLs to develop due to the need for extensive vocabulary instruction and syntax knowledge development (Blatchley & Lau, 2010). ELLs need an increased amount of independent reading practice, at their levels, accompanied by discussion to increase their comprehension skills (Blatchley & Lau, 2010). Background knowledge development should be an ongoing process with non-native English speakers (Blatchley & Lau, 2010).

### **Identifying Reading Difficulties in ELLs**

Assessing ELLs along the same scale as general education students can often be difficult. For general education testing of an ELLs' skills, a district looking to hire a bilingual psychologist for testing can be costly, and the alternative of using non-verbal assessment is greatly limited (Healy, Vanderwood, & Edelston, 2005). In this way, it has become common practice to use the same assessment for non-English

speaking students as for their English speaking peers. But, can we consider these assessment results valid since they are conducted in English (Haager, 2007)?

Regardless of validity and fairness, many ELLs are placed into an RTI system using these English assessments. Since RTI was designed with the English speaking students in mind, special considerations need to be made for ELLs.

Blatchley and Lau (2010) reviewed the current research literature in order to provide teachers real strategies for improving their assessment methods to provide high-quality assessment-informed instruction in Tier 1, 2, or 3. First, the researchers identified that ELLs were lagging behind their native English speaking peers in several academic skills. However, this low achievement was not because of “indifference, low motivation, or limited intelligence” (2010, p.27), but rather, the inability to navigate a new language, culture, and school curriculum. It is very important to investigate if an ELLs’ difficulty is due to the second language acquisition process or a learning disability (Elizalde-Utnick, 2008).

Blatchley and Lau (2010) summarized that universal screening methods that are used for the entire school population were not objective. This conclusion directly correlates to the method of comparing ELLs’ test results to their monolingual peers on state achievement tests (Escamilla, 2009). After only three years or less in the American education system, ELL are required to take achievement tests entirely in English and these results are used in high-stakes decision making (Escamilla). ESL teachers will certainly cry foul in both of these testing scenarios. Universal screening needs to compare students of similar cultural background, native language, or English

proficiency level to be considered an objective screening tool (Blatchley & Lau, 2010). In order to get “an accurate picture of the student’s skill levels relative to the classroom curriculum” (p. 28), the literature review suggests use of a more in-depth screening tool be used after the initial universal screening identifies a student as at-risk. An in-depth screening tool is characterized by measures of the student’s native and English language proficiency, the use of a family interview to determine family, health, and gathering a full developmental history, information on the student’s educational history with both academic and social measures, classroom observations, and interviews with the student and teachers. From this in-depth, secondary screening one can determine to what extent an ELL is receiving instruction at their appropriate level and if there is a reasonable match between the student’s academic progress and their language.

When looking at screening and instruction, Blatchley and Lau (2010) were led to study RTI in relation to ELLs. “The theoretical foundation of RTI is quite appealing and suitable for the unique and diverse challenges presented by the struggling ELL student” (2010, p.29). The researchers determined that a data-based system for decision making was positive for all. The researchers’ suggest the use of a universal assessment, the need for a secondary in-depth screening, and the modified instruction in with RTI to be most effective with the ELL population.

### **ELLs and RTI**

When it comes to assessment-informed instruction, Blatchley and Lau boldly proclaim what may seem obvious: “...when instructing English learners in English,

the teacher must modify instruction to take into account students' English language proficiency" (2010, p.28). Gersten and Baker (2000) synthesized previous researchers' empirical research to give educators clear guidelines on how to modify instruction for ELLs. The researchers used multivocal synthesis, the gathering of professional work groups including researchers, administrators, teachers, and other educational support staff, to discuss and draw conclusions from a limited set of research that represented multiple perspectives. The final research flushed out five critical instructional components for making modifications for ELLs. First, teachers must provide an explicit vocabulary lesson before and within each instructional focus. Second, visuals assist greatly in reinforcing concepts and vocabulary for ELLs. Also, peer-tutoring and cooperative grouping benefits the ELLs in any classroom. Fourth, use of an ELLs' native language can be effective if used strategically throughout instruction. Last, the teacher must be sure to match the cognitive and language demands of the instruction to each ELLs' specific skill set.

Since RTI data is now acceptable for use for a special education referral, Klingner and Edwards (2006) compiled the current research regarding the cultural considerations that need to be made when using RTI with ELLs to make the data collection fair and valid. Moving beyond the reading skills instruction and multiple opportunities to read, the researchers cite "accommodation, incorporation, and adaptation" (2006, p.109) as important components in a culturally responsive literacy program. Accommodation calls teachers to have a better understanding and use of the styles of communication comfortable and familiar to the ELL students.

Incorporation is characterized by a mutual understanding between the teachers and students that each culture brings unique and positive learning styles to the classroom. Adaptation is the ability for teachers and students to adapt to the learning community norms that have been established by the administrator and other governing agencies. The implementation of these three frameworks allows teachers to provide a more culturally linguistic classroom setting. As the instructor, my cultural considerations, including my classroom setting, will be part of my study.

Looking specifically at one school using RTI with ELLs, Orosco and Klingner (2010) investigated how RTI was used with kindergarten, first, and second grade ELLs, the challenges with RTI, and how RTI affected the teachers' decision-making surrounding classroom literacy instruction. The researchers sought to view the overall implementation of RTI versus those who have focused on the results of literacy interventions. The case study was conducted in a school district with over one-third of the population being Latino ELLs, with only 8% of those ELLs reading at a proficient or above-proficient level. The first take-away from this study is to incorporate a solid understanding of the language acquisition process along with the prescribed intervention to assure success with ELLs in RTI. In order to intertwine language acquisition and literacy, teachers need to be adequately prepared with the specific knowledge of how to instruct ELLs based on their specific cultural and linguistic needs. The educator or educator's district should take the time to learn about ways "to modify current evidence-based reading practices...from a culturally responsive perspective to accommodate" (2010, p.282) their specific ELLs' needs.

Teachers will improve ELLs' reading achievement with the careful integration of both basic and high-order thinking, direct instruction, and skill practice with "phonemic awareness, letter knowledge, word recognition, fluency, vocabulary development, and comprehension" (2010, p.282). Finally, Orosco and Klingner found it hard to ignore the inadequate curriculum and limited availability of resources for RTI with ELLs. Without the understanding of an ELL's specific literacy needs, how to respond to these needs, and a lack of resources, RTI cannot be successful for ELLs.

Gunn, Biglan, Smolkowski, and Ary (2000) studied student reading outcomes based on the implementation of a comprehensive reading intervention. The study included 256 Kindergarten through third grade students, sixty-two percent of whom were Hispanic ELLs enrolled in a direct English instruction program for at least 25 minutes a day. After initial screening using the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) and an oral reading fluency measure, students were identified as possessing or not possessing a reading skills deficit. Students were either placed in an intervention focusing on reading skills instruction or put in the control group, receiving no additional reading skills instruction. The intervention instruction was built on the following research based components of early reading instruction: phonological awareness, letter-sound knowledge, decoding, and fluency. The interventions were taught by a project instructional assistant on a pull-out basis. The intervention instruction was characterized by direct teaching, modeling, independent practice, and immediate feedback until students' showed mastery of the skill.

Participants were assessed and reassessed for growth in the spring of the same year and spring a year later using the oral reading fluency measure used in the initial screening and Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement (WJ-R ACH). Although both groups made gains, the students in the intervention group showed more significant average score gains in all areas of testing than those in the control group. Table 6 outlined the following score gains for intervention group versus the control group: word identification 15.82 v. 13.13, word attack 10.13 v. 5.71, oral reading fluency 36.77 v. 29.64, vocabulary 9.98 v. 7.65, comprehension 12.70 v. 10.86 (Gunn, et al. 2000). These findings were in line with other studies in concluding that supplemental reading instruction provides student's with greater skills to become proficient readers. The researchers could not definitively state that the interventions had any greater effect on the Hispanic versus non-Hispanic participants, leading to the overall conclusion stated above. However, the study did show that ELL students speaking little to no English at the onset of the study showed great improvement in their oral language skills, in addition to their reading skills, at the conclusion of the study. Further study on the improvement of oral language skills would show whether the gains were due to the intervention or other factors. Also, when looking at the ELL participants, future research over a longer period of time would show whether or not early reading interventions were effective in the long term-across grade levels and a various content areas. Participants showed greater gains after two years in the intervention rather than after just the first year, leading to the conclusion that longer term interventions are more effective with beginning readers. The scaffolding of the

instructional components was also noted in the success of the intervention.

Interventions were planned such that letter-sound relationship led to phonics, which was used in building decoding skills and, finally, fluency; all of which supported comprehension due to the instructional progression.

A study by Linan-Thompson, Vaughn, Prater, and Cirino also investigated the use and effectiveness of Tier 2 interventions with ELLs (2006). Researchers sought to focus on the ELLS in RTI who did not respond to research-based, intensive interventions, or what they labeled non-responders. One hundred and three first grade Spanish-speaking ELL students from eleven schools with either bilingual or English immersion programs met the criteria to participate in this study. Only 75 participants remained for the second year of assessing because of the transient lifestyle of ELL students. The Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery–Revised (WLPB-R) was used to measure students’ improvements in the areas of both word attack and comprehension skills. This study resulted in 91% of the experimental group meeting the criteria for what the study labeled as success, or improvement in word attack and passage comprehension scores on the WLPB-R. According to this study, these results show the great success of using a supplemental reading intervention versus the existing instructional program with ELLs. The ELLs failure rate in the RTI program was consistent with the monolingual students in the RTI program. It should be noted that these intervention results were garnered from an instructional schedule of fifty minutes a day, lasting seven months. Researchers questioned if the frequency and setting of the intervention could be altered to garner the same results.

However, it seems that the 39 students who received interventions in an English immersion program were more successful, as two of the 64 students in the Spanish taught intervention were still at risk by the end of the study. From this study we might conclude that becoming English literate while learning the language was more effective than transferring the skills from another language. Further research needs to be done with comparing native-language versus second-language interventions.

### **Summary**

Response to Intervention was created to assist teachers in identifying struggling ELA and Math students, intervening with additional, specific instruction and more clearly classifying students with special education needs. The three intervention tiers increase in instructional intensity in order to help students achieve proficiency in their specific areas of previous deficit. While research has shown the success of RTI and reasons why schools achieved student improvement, there are certain precautions and instructional decisions to consider regarding assessing and instructing ELLs within the RTI framework. Orosco and Klingner (2010) showed the importance of understanding language acquisition in addition to the reading acquisition process. As shown by Gunn et. al. (2000) the components of reading that work for native speakers, letter-sound relationship, phonemic segmentation, fluency, and comprehension, still apply to non-native speakers learning to become literate in English. Using a supplemental reading program for interventions in addition to the classroom curriculum was most effective with ELLs was concluded by Linan-

Thompson et. al. (2006). Such previous research and discussion questions lead to my self-study of one teacher's decision making surrounding ELLs' interventions.

### CHAPTER 3: METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This self-study noted how I, an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher assistant, implemented RTI scripted ELA interventions at the primary (K–2) level. I focused on understanding when and how I modified the literacy intervention for English Language Learners (ELLs). This presentation of a qualitative, in-depth description of one teacher’s RTI implementation with ELLs is intended to contribute to the currently small pool of RTI research that focuses on ELLs. Through this self-study, I identified, analyzed, and reported on the most effective instructional strategies for ELA interventions with ELLs. The research was guided by the following questions:

At what point do I identify the need for change to the district’s scripted RTI ELA interventions for ELLs?

How do I modify the letter-sound, phoneme segmentation, and fluency intervention instruction for ELLs?

What do I hope to accomplish through the modified changes?

In this chapter, I identify the paRTiCipant and explain the context for the study in greater detail. In addition, explanations regarding the study’s confidentiality and the tools for collecting and analyzing data are outlined.

#### **Participants**

This self-study has one participant. I am a young, female teaching assistant with certifications in Childhood Education (1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade), Early Childhood Education (Birth to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade), and Special Education (1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade). I am not

certified in ESL, therefore I receive support from the program's Teacher of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) for lesson planning, alignment to the NYS ESL standards, as well as, the administration and scoring of assessments. I have received my Bachelor's degree and am working on my Master's degree in Childhood Literacy. I was hired by the district in October 2012 as a teaching assistant, so I had been instructing the students in this study for six months prior to data collection. I worked at the Primary School five days a week in the morning, the Intermediate School four days a week in the afternoon, and the Middle School one afternoon a week. The rotation of the schedule was made to make sure all ELLs in the district were receiving the prescribed amount of ESL minutes per week. As a teaching assistant, I facilitated both push-in classroom support and pull-out small group instruction.

### **Context**

The study took place in an urban community in Western New York. The school district is near an international airport and large city. The neighborhood is crowded with many small homes and businesses in a small area.

The district reported 2,134 students Pre-Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade for the 2010-2011 school year ("The new york," 2012). The school district has a main campus with High School (9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade), Middle School (6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade), Intermediate School (3<sup>rd</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup> grade), Administrative Office, and Community Education Building. The Primary School (Pre-Kindergarten through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade) is at a separate location, less than 2 miles away. The Primary School will be

the main focus of this study. The last NYS Report Card 2010-2011 showed the Primary School having 455 students for Pre-Kindergarten through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, with an average class size of 20 (New York state district report card, 2012). Within the population of the Primary school, 3 percent of the students are Limited English Proficient (New York state district report card, 2012). The Primary School reported that 41 percent of the students were eligible for free or reduced lunch (New York state district report card, 2012). Conclusions can be drawn about the school that the average social economic status is low based on the high percentage of free or reduced lunch eligibility reporting.

At the Primary School, the TESOL and ESL teaching assistant share a regular size classroom with a bathroom and sink area. The classroom has a variety of work areas with student desks, two tables with several chairs, and reading nook with bean bags. The reading area is stocked with leveled readers, easy readers, and cultural texts. The classroom is equipped with a SMARTboard, one teacher computer with printer, and one student computer.

The Primary School has fifteen ELLs in grades Kindergarten through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade; eight students in Kindergarten, four students in 1<sup>st</sup> grade, and three students in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. The students reported are only the non-native English students who are receiving services; students in their transition year, the year following exiting the program, or who do not qualify for services are not reported. Students in the ESL program have a variety of English proficiency levels. ESL groupings are based on grade level and then proficiency level. Students are seen both on a pull-out and push-

in basis. Beginner ELLs receive 360 instructional minutes a week, while advanced ELLs receive 180 instructional minutes a week.

I was assigned two RTI groups for ELA interventions. These students were grouped based on their RTI needs, not English Language Proficiency. These groupings were formed after the district's AIMSweb assessments in January and based on students' scores in the at risk range. For the purpose of this study, only the ELA, not Math, intervention instruction and modifications will be reported and analyzed. Group A was made up of two 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students, both Beginner ELLs. Group B was made up of four kindergarten students, one Beginner ELL and three Intermediate ELLs. Students in these groups were from countries in the Caribbean, Middle East and Far East Asia and speak little to no English at home. Most of these students do not receive schoolwork support from parents; some do get help from older siblings.

### **Confidentiality**

The confidentiality of the students and teacher is protected in this self study. No student can be identified by the data or descriptions given. Only the ELA intervention instruction and modifications will be reported and analyzed. No one student's informal outcomes or formal assessment scores will be shared.

### **Instruments**

A typical schedule of interventions prescribed by the school for Kindergarten is: Monday-ELA Extension Activities, Tuesday-Letter Naming Fluency and Letter Sound Fluency, Wednesday-Phoneme Segmentation Fluency, Thursday-Nonsense

Word Fluency, Friday-Progress Monitoring. A typical schedule of interventions prescribed by the school for first and second grade is: Monday- ELA Extension Activities, Tuesday-Oral Reading Fluency and Making Words, Wednesday-Oral Reading Fluency and Fluency Activity, Thursday-Nonsense Word Fluency, Friday-Progress Monitoring. Prior to this six-week study, changes were made to the district-created RTI schedule based on student and teacher availability for pull-out as well as the collaborative recommendations of the TESOL, RTI coordinator/teacher-on-special-assignment, Primary School principal, and myself, the ESL teacher assistant. The RTI schedule continued to be reworked throughout the course of the study due to schedule conflicts with the classroom schedule for holidays or other special events.

For the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade RTI, my Group A, my schedule was: Monday- Letter Naming Fluency (LNF), Letter Sound Fluency (LSF), Oral Reading Fluency (ORF), Tuesday- Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF), Oral Reading Fluency, Wednesday- Oral Reading Fluency, and Friday-ESL/ELA Extension Activity, Progress Monitoring. This schedule is comprised of both Kindergarten (LNF, LSF, and PSF) and 1<sup>st</sup> grade (ORF) Tier 2 RTI intervention lessons. The Tier 2 RTI interventions lessons for 2<sup>nd</sup> grade do not match the students' English language proficiency skill level nor their abilities as tested by the AIMSweb benchmark. The changes in this schedule because the grade-level materials were not appropriate for these students was determined by both the TESOL, RTI coordinator/teacher-on-special-assignment, and myself, the ESL teacher assistant.

For Kindergarten RTI, Group B, my schedule was: Monday- Letter Naming Fluency, Letter Sound Fluency, Tuesday- Phoneme Segmentation Fluency, Wednesday- Letter Naming Fluency, Letter Sound Fluency, Phoneme Segmentation Fluency, and Thursday- ESL/ELA Extension Activity, Progress Monitoring. It is noteworthy that Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF) is left out of the RTI schedule for both groups. Nonsense Word Fluency was deemed inappropriate for ELLs by the district and therefore ELLs are not tested on Nonsense Word Fluency.

The progress monitoring at this district is facilitated by literacy students from a local university. All students in intervention groups are pulled out of the class for an AIMSweb progress monitoring assessment, which usually takes only a few minutes. Neither the classroom teachers, nor the support staff giving the interventions, are responsible for the progress monitoring. However, intervention teachers are given the results to keep record of, review, and then use to tailor their intervention instruction. Teachers are given a check sheet for keeping track of to whom and when interventions were given, similar to an attendance record.

Each type of intervention comes with an instructional guide for teachers. The instructional guide, which correlates directly to the schedule, includes materials needed and the steps the teacher should follow with instructional time approximations. Next to the steps the teacher should follow for the intervention are instructional examples with rules for activities provided or specific teacher phrasing. The specific lesson script, schedule, and materials used during Chapter Four: Data Analysis will be included in the appendix.

The RTI schedule, printed by the district, was used to create a the lesson plan record (Appendix A). I noted if the lesson was taught as prepared, modified, or not taught at all. In addition to the lesson plan record, a detailed journal (Appendix B) helped keep track of the points where I identified the need for change and how I modified the intervention instruction for ELLs. Daily and weekly reflection on the students' progress monitoring results helped inform the modifications needed. My third research question was answered during the analysis of the data.

### **Procedures**

This study was conducted over nine weeks. During the data collection period, three weeks had no intervention instruction (one week there is no school and two weeks were devoted to state assessments) resulting in six weeks of data collection. The ELA interventions take place four days per week with two different groups- a group of two 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students and a second group made up of four kindergarten students, referred to as Group A and Group B respectively. Data was collected during March, April, and May, 2012.

### **Limitations**

The purity of the investigation may be limited by having the teaching assistant also serve as the researcher and data analyzer. I must seek to maintain supreme honesty in my reflection, remain emotionally detached for data analysis, and be unbiased in the reporting.

### **Data Analysis**

Following the completion of the study, a qualitative document analysis (Bowen, 2009) was completed on the RTI schedule. The RTI schedule was coded for when lessons were taught as prepared, modified, or not taught at all. The RTI schedule was used to create lesson plan record (Appendix A), noting the modified lessons in green highlighted text or otherwise different lesson taught in regular text. From the lesson plan record (Appendix A), a constant comparison (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) occurred, in which categories were derived from the data. Every modified lesson was analyzed to determine why it was modified, how it was modified, and what the modifications accomplished in the detailed journal (Appendix B). The answers to the research questions were repeated throughout the study and the constant comparison concluded with the totaling of the frequency of categorized answers from Week 1, Week 2, Week 4, Week 6, Week 7, Week 8, and Week 9.

From the detailed journal (Appendix B) and data totals the cluster analysis (Tryon, 1939) resulted in the identification of some correlations. When looking at the collected data, I triangulated the points at which I identified the need for changes. I also looked for similarities between literacy intervention modifications. Narrative representations of the teacher decision making provided specific examples of both the identified time of need for changes and what modifications were done. A cluster analysis of the data includes comparisons between the modifications made for both grade levels of ELLs.

**Summary**

Use of the district materials occurred only during the collection of data. Data analysis occurred only on the district-created schedule and documents created by myself, the teacher-researcher. Using a variety of research analysis methods, the lesson plan record (Appendix A) and detailed journal (Appendix B) from the period in which the self-study was conducted were thoroughly analyzed. The analysis resulted in the identification of at what point I recognized a need for changes to the RTI plans for my ELL students, how specifically the RTI plans were modified to better accommodate my ELLs' needs, and finally, what resulted from the modifications that I implemented.

## CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

### Research Results

This self-study followed how I, an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher assistant, implemented Response to Intervention (RTI) scripted English Language Arts (ELA) interventions at the primary (K–2) level. I focused on understanding when and how I modified the literacy intervention for English Language Learners (ELLs). Two groups, formulated and assigned by the district based on their RTI needs, not English Language Proficiency, were studied. These groupings were formed after the district’s AIMSweb assessments in January and based on students’ scores in the at risk range. Group A is made up of two 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students, both Beginner ELLs. Group B includes four kindergarten students, one Beginner ELL and three Intermediate ELLs. By presenting a qualitative, in-depth description of one teacher’s RTI implementation with English Language Learners, I intend to contribute to the currently small pool of RTI research that focuses on ELLs. Three research questions guided this study.

At what point do I identify the need for change to the district’s scripted RTI ELA interventions for ELLs?

How do I modify the letter-sound, phoneme segmentation, and fluency intervention instruction for ELLs?

What do I hope to accomplish through the modified changes?

Each research question will be addressed separately with specific references to the data. For each research question, Group A results will be presented, followed by

Group B results, and concluded with Group A and B major commonalities and differences in research results.

This chapter will present the data results from the constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) of the detailed journal (Appendix B) that was derived from the document analysis (Bowen, 2009) of the RTI scripted lesson plan record (Appendix A). A cluster analysis (Tryon, 1939) of the data, grouping objects of similar kind into respective categories, in this case comparisons between the modifications made for both grade levels of ELLs. Thick description will be used for readers to further analyze and understand the data presented.

### **Need for Change**

A simple rundown of the reasons I, the teacher researcher, identified a need for change to the district's scripted RTI ELA interventions (Letter Naming Fluency (LNF), Letter Sound Fluency (LSF), Oral Reading Fluency (ORF), Tuesday-Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF)) for ELLs is presented in Table 1. The reasons for change were determined after a constant comparative analysis of the lesson plan record (Appendix A), a document resulting from the document analysis of the RTI scripted schedule. In the following table, Group A represents two 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students, both Beginner ELLs, while Group B represents four kindergarten students, one Beginner ELL and three Intermediate ELLs. The most frequent reasons for change are listed first, followed by all of the additional reasons for change, occurring in order of decreasing frequency.

Table 1

*When a Need for Change to RTI ELA Lessons Were Identified*

Q: At what point do I identify the need for change to the district’s scripted RTI ELA interventions for ELLs?	
<u>Answers for Group A</u> (ordered by frequency of answer occurrence)	<u>Answers for Group B</u> (ordered by frequency of answer occurrence)
Motivation/Engaging—7	Motivation/Engaging—7
Schedule—6 (every week on Tuesday)	Needed repetition—6
More appropriate level for student’s—6 (Assigned Reading above students’ level, Blocks-appropriate level, Picture Cards-appropriate level)	Reading Time Needed—6
Reading Time Needed—6	Lack of reading fluency—5
Lack of reading fluency—5	Group Need—5
Reading Need-sight words—4	Schedule—5 (5/6 weeks on Tuesday)
Needed repetition—2	More appropriate level for student’s—4 (Assigned Reading above students’ level, Blocks-appropriate level, Picture Cards-appropriate level)
Group Need—2	NYSESLAT test prep—2
NYSESLAT test prep—2	Reading Need-sight words—1

**Need for change-Group A.** In Group A, I identified lack of motivating and engaging lesson content as the point for needed change for seven lessons. Since the RTI ELA intervention lesson plans are scripted, they are comprised of vocabulary and language patterns common and understandable to native English speakers. A direction from the Kindergarten RTI lesson plans “review the letters and their sounds” (Maryvale Union Free School District, 2011), would be simple for a native

English speaker but may be completely incomprehensible to a Beginner ELL. The concept of “review” and the difference between letter names and letter sounds is something not within Group A’s understanding without additional teacher explanation. With a group made up of two Beginner ELLs, I noted that these scripts often were confusing to the students, causing a lack of interest and motivation to participate. On the same note, the manipulatives provided targeted a native English speaker. The picture flash cards, such as cheese, jet, and skunk, for PSF were black and white pictures of items unfamiliar or not yet in these ELLs’ fluent vocabulary. Therefore the manipulatives, like the scripts, were confusing to the ELLs in this study, leading to little interest and little motivation to learn.

Another major reason revealed for modifying the scripted RTI ELA interventions for Group A, occurring for six lessons, was the schedule. A need for change due to the schedule is further defined as the lack of availability of time to meet with or make up previously missed RTI lessons with ELL students. Notable, in Group A, the need for modification based on the schedule occurred every week of the six week study on Tuesday. On two occasions, Group A received intervention instruction in both LNF and LSF on Monday, thus resulting in my decision to move the group forward to the ORF intervention lesson planned for Wednesday on Tuesday. On the other four occasions that scheduling was the reason for modification in Group A, it was due to the fact that intervention class was cancelled on Monday, due to upcoming New York State English as a Second Language Aptitude Test (NYSESLAT) state testing. When class was cancelled on Monday, Tuesday resulted

in my decision to make up LNF intervention instruction in addition to teaching the regular scheduled LSF intervention instruction.

Group A's RTI lessons were found to need modification for six out of sixteen lessons due to content not being appropriate for the students' English language proficiency level and lacking time on task reading. The books assigned for the ORF intervention were on a second grade reading level, including content, sight words, and topics not appropriate for at-risk, English-speaking students. The use of books above the students' independent or instructional reading level would not have been beneficial to their ORF growth. Due to the schedule including four ELA interventions (Letter Naming Fluency (LNF), Letter Sound Fluency (LSF), Oral Reading Fluency (ORF), Tuesday- Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF), not counting the day spent on two Math interventions not included in this study, I noted that the students were not getting a lot of time on task reading. I intended to increase their time on task reading in RTI due to the lack of time reading during my RTI instruction as well as knowing that little time in class could be devoted to the ELLs' individual reading needs and little to no independent reading practice was being done at home.

Lack of reading fluency was determined to be another reason for modification to the RTI ELA lessons for five lessons for Group A. The difficulty with reading fluency was not only determined by the students ORF score on the AIMSweb benchmark test in January but my observations of reading word by word without phrasing, lack of rereading with fluency after use of reading strategy to determine an

unknown word, and little to no comprehension of what was read. Oral speaking fluency was an area of difficulty for Group A, thus reading fluency would also be difficult. Certainly, I could see the correlation between these areas of struggle for my students, thus I added more instructional time to the RTI scripted schedule. The specifics of how instructional time was adjusted are discussed later in the chapter.

Group need was another reason that I modified- two times for Group A. For Group A, the need of the group was vowels on both occasions. Prior to this study, I found that these 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students were struggling with the concept of vowels and consonants, a concept already mastered by their 2<sup>nd</sup> grade peers. In the weeks prior to collecting data for this study, I instructed the students on vowels /a, e, u/. In Week One and Week Two of interventions I continued with vowel review.

**Need for change-Group B.** In Group B, I identified lack of motivating and engaging lesson content as the point for needed for seven lessons. As mentioned with Group A, the RTI ELA intervention script was made up of vocabulary and language patterns for native English speakers. With a group of one Beginner ELL and three Intermediate ELLs, I noted the same trouble as with Group A-students were often confused, leading to low interest and little motivation to participate. I noticed that the repetitiveness of activities left the students yawning and with heads down. For example, in the scripted RTI ELA intervention lesson plans for Kindergarten the Alphabet Linking Chart was to be used once a week, and always in the same mode: “While tracing the uppercase letter say the name. While tracing the lowercase letter say the name. Name the picture (A, a, apple; B, b, ball) and say the letter sound”

(Maryvale, 2011). I modified lessons to include more motivating and engaging components. The specifics of what was used to increase the motivation/engagement for ELLS are discussed later in the chapter.

Group B's RTI ELA scripted interventions were found to need modification because of the need for repetition for six lessons. Needed repetition could be further defined as a need for reinforcement, or repetition, of things taught and practiced in the general education classroom. Modifying due to a need for repetition correlates to the requests I received from the general education teachers of these kindergarten students. In the classroom, Group B students were receiving content appropriate to their level of English language proficiency, content that could be mastered by the students. Reinforcement of Group B's classroom lessons occurred with topics such as letter sounds or good reader strategies during the modified lessons. The good reader strategies taught, such as check the picture for clues to the difficult word or stretch out the letter sounds in the word, were consistent with the classroom teacher's guided reading instruction.

Reading Time Needed was a reason for modification on six occasions for Group B. This reason for modification occurred six out of six times in conjunction with ORF intervention lessons. ORF was added to the RTI ELA schedule for Group B at the classroom teachers' request. At the time of the study, near the end of the school year, the classroom teachers were moving their Kindergarten students into reading independent and instructional texts. The classroom teachers believed these identified Tier 2 students would benefit from ORF intervention instruction from me

one day a week. Although Oral Reading Fluency is not a RTI intervention or assessed during progress monitoring for Kindergarten students, the classroom teacher and I agreed that the ELL students, in the beginning level of emergent reading, would benefit from additional guided reading/independent reading time. Also, as emergent writers, these ELLs would benefit from some guided writing activities. To accommodate for additions to my schedule, the classroom teacher added the ELLs to her classroom RTI groups, thus giving the students a double dose, or double RTI lesson time. Therefore, when Reading Time Needed occurred as a reason for modification with Group B, this was because it was not a part of their Kindergarten RTI scripted schedule.

Lack of reading fluency was determined to be another reason for modification to the RTI ELA lessons on six occasions for Group B. As discussed with Group A- oral speaking fluency was an area of difficulty, thus reading fluency would also be a difficult. Therefore, I added more instructional time to the RTI scripted schedule. The specifics of how instructional time was adjusted are discussed later in the chapter.

Group need was a reason that I modified seven times for Group B. In the case of Group B, the group need was vowel sounds on two occasions and writing on three occasions. Short vowel sounds were a need I had determined throughout observation and informal assessment of the students during LSF and while decoding text. Writing was a need identified by the classroom teachers while the ELLs worked in the general education classroom as well as the TESOL in reference to the upcoming NYSESLAT. Students were observed having difficulty with translating oral ideas into

written text, spelling sight words, identifying the sounds in the words for improved invented spelling skills, proper punctuation, and simple grammar rules.

Occurring for five lessons, the need for modification to the scripted RTI ELA interventions for Group B was the schedule. Schedule, the same as defined above for Group A, was identified as a lack of availability of time to meet with or make up previously missed RTI lessons with ELL students. The schedule changes occurred five out of the six weeks on Tuesday. Once, the schedule was adjusted to include Wednesday's PSF lesson on Tuesday because LNF and LSF both were taught on Monday. Once, the schedule was adjusted to include NYSESLAT test prep on a Tuesday, as my lesson for Monday had covered both the regularly scheduled LNF and Tuesday's LSF lesson. For three of the schedule changes, class cancelled on a Monday for NYSESLAT testing or scoring. When class was cancelled on Monday, Tuesday resulted in my decision to make up LNF intervention instruction in addition to teaching the regular scheduled LSF intervention instruction.

For Group B, more appropriate level for students was cited as a reason for modification for four lessons. I determined the Kindergarten materials for LNF, LSF, and PSF intervention lessons to be appropriate for this group of Kindergarten students on all occasions. I determined these materials to be appropriate based on the Intermediate English language proficiency classification as well as the students working with the same materials assigned to their English speaking peers. For Group B, just like Group A, the only materials needing modification were the books for ORF. ORF is not a part of the Kindergarten RTI ELA schedule or assessment, and

the reasons for adding ORF to Group B's schedule will be discussed in a section to follow. Since ORF is part of the 1<sup>st</sup> grade RTI ELA schedule, it would be inappropriate to have the Kindergarten students to read the assigned books for ORF, on a 1<sup>st</sup> grade reading level. Therefore, it was necessary that I modify the books for the ORF intervention. How I modified the ORF materials for Group B will be discussed in the next section.

**Need for change-Group A & B comparison.** In both the Group A and Group B, I identified a need for change to the district's scripted RTI ELA interventions to be to the lack of motivating and engaging lesson content for seven lessons for each group. This was the most frequent reason for change to the district's scripted RTI ELA interventions, specifically for ELLs. As written above, the specifics of why motivation and engagement were an issue for ELLs participating in the RTI ELA interventions were the same for both groups.

While Group A had a higher frequency of the need for modification based on the schedule, six lessons, than Group B, five lessons. Both Group A and Group B always had schedule as the reason for modification on the same day of the week-Tuesday. In the future, it may be important for administration to look at scheduling difficulties, particularly on Mondays, when planning for the RTI scripted schedule.

Group A had a reading need for more sight word practice on four occasions; whereas this was identified as a need for modification for Group B sight word practice occurred only once. The difference in the area of sight word practice is due to the difference in grade levels. Students in Group B are immersed in a classroom of

students learning and constantly reviewing sight words. However, students in Group A are in a classroom with students who have already mastered sight words. I made my decision to include sight word practice for Group A based on the reasons stated above. The lack of sight word knowledge was supplemented during RTI ELA interventions, not a formal component of the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade scripted RTI ELA intervention lessons.

Group B's interventions lesson was modified six times because of a need for repetition, unlike Group A, who had 'Needed Repetition' as a reason for modification only twice. Like with sight words, the difference in the need for repetition is due to the difference in grade levels. Group B was receiving classroom instruction on the same topics covered in intervention lessons, while Group A was being instructed on a new topic than was occurring during classroom instruction. Thus, repetition was more frequent for Group B. The specifics of the need for repetition with Group B were discussed previously in this section.

The need to modify my lessons for NYSESLAT test prep occurred on two occasions for both Group A and B. In Weeks One and Two, NYSESLAT test prep for both groups consisted of activities for Speaking, as that section of the test was administered during Week Five of this study. It was important to take time to instruct and practice the speaking component of the NYSESLAT as students do not receive any type of specific speaking instruction or testing in the general education classroom. The school's Teacher of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and I wanted the ELLs to be prepared for the types of questions and

responses that would be deemed correct on the NYSESLAT. NYSESLAT test prep for Group A included a game of *Hangman* using sight words and test vocabulary. This activity was to help prepare the students for the Reading and Writing sections of the test which took place on Monday of Weeks Seven and Eight of this study.

### **How Modified**

The way in which the district's scripted RTI ELA interventions (Letter Naming Fluency (LNF), Letter Sound Fluency (LSF), Oral Reading Fluency (ORF), Tuesday- Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF) were modified for ELLs by the teacher researcher are outlined in Table 2. The mode of modification was chosen by the teacher researcher and then analyzed for category of modification and frequency through constant comparison (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) of the detailed journal (Appendix B), derived from the document analysis of the lesson plan record (Appendix A). In the following table, Group A represents two 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students, both Beginner ELLs, while Group B represents four kindergarten students, one Beginner ELL and three Intermediate ELLs. Modes of modification occurring most frequently are listed first, followed by all the additional ways modified, occurring in order of decreasing frequency.

Table 2

*How RTI ELA Lessons Were Modified*

Q: How do I modify the letter-sound, phoneme segmentation, and fluency intervention instruction for ELLs?	
<u>Answers for Group A</u> (ordered by frequency of answer occurrence)	<u>Answers for Group B</u> (ordered by frequency of answer occurrence)
Book at students' level—6	Book at students' level—6
Game—6	Game—6
Reread for fluency—5	Reread for fluency—6
Followed Script (Alphabet Tracing Book or Alphabet Linking Chart) —4	Writing—5
Sight Words at student's level—3	Followed Script (Alphabet Tracing Book or Alphabet Linking Chart)—4
Worksheet—2	SMARTboard—2
Writing—2	Magnet Letters—2
SMARTboard—1	Use of flashcards—1
Speaking with Picture prompts—1	Speaking with Picture prompts—0
Use of flashcards—1	Worksheet—0
Magnet Letters—0	Sight Words at student's level—0

**How modified-Group A.** The most frequent mode of modification, occurring six times for Group A, was teacher choice of a book at the student's independent or instructional reading level. As discussed in the more appropriate level for students example in the Why Modified-Group A section, the study revealed that on several occasions the assigned reading was above the students' levels. In Group A's modified plans, I replaced the assigned books with books that were at the individual

student's independent and instructional reading level, Fountas and Pinnell Level aa and A. The books chosen included sight words that the students had learned or were working on. The books chosen were written about topics the students enjoyed- animals and sports. Using the independent and instructional level texts allowed for more effective time on task reading.

Another frequently repeated mode of modification was replacing the RTI scripted lessons with games-six lessons for Group A. This choice of modification was based on the group dynamic, two young, energetic boys. Thus, this group lent itself to game play opportunities and building social skills well. The games chosen were often used to meet both ELA and ESL goals. The modified plans show that I selected the game *Name That Word* for Group A to play. In this game the students have to read a picture vocabulary card and describe it to the other players. This game reinforced the ability to fluently read and speak commonly used English vocabulary. In addition, this game met and practiced the ESL goals of speaking and listening.

Group A's RTI lessons were modified to include Alphabet Tracing Book or Alphabet Linking Chart numerous times. Although the modified plans identified this as a change to the RTI scripted schedule, the detailed categorizes this type of modification as "Followed Script." Although the RTI ELA script was used with the Alphabet Tracing Book or Alphabet Linking Chart, it was not done on the day assigned; therefore, it was a modification. This was also a modification because it was often used as a reinforcement activity.

Substituting sight words on the appropriate level for 2<sup>nd</sup> grade fluency reading passages was used as a means of modification for Group A. I omitted the use of the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade fluency reading passages because of their level of difficulty, or frustrational reading level, for Group A. These readings were replaced with sight words from the district's list of Kindergarten sight words. I chose the sight words used and made flashcards to use with Group A for fluency practice. This modification occurred on three occasions, always during the ORF intervention lesson. Sight word flashcards were used in Week Two, Six, and Eight for a basic recognition and repetition activity.

It was noted above that Group A's RTI ELA lessons needed modification two times due to group need. The group need that I identified for Group A on both occasions was vowels. To meet the need for additional vowel instruction, I used worksheets. As previously mentioned, vowels /a, e, u/ were included in my instruction in the weeks prior to collecting data for this study. For /i/ in Week One and /e, i, o/ in Week Two, I used flashcards with color pictures to instruct and worksheets for guided practice. The worksheets included short consonant-vowel-consonant words with matching pictures. The words had missing vowels, allowing the student a choice of two possible vowels to complete the word.

Group A's lessons were modified on two occasions through the addition of writing. They were also instructed using the phoneme blocks with whiteboards in Week One and Seven. Included in the RTI manipulatives were three Making Words blocks, or three blocks, each with a beginning, middle, and end phoneme. The students rolled the three blocks and wrote the phonemes on their personal

whiteboards. They then determined if the written word was or was not a real word. If the word was real, the students used the simple Consonant-Vowel-Consonant (CVC) word, like c-a-t or r-o-b, in a complete sentence. I would assist and monitor the students with this activity as needed.

The SMARTboard was used to modify for Group A once. In Week One, I chose to include the SMARTboard in the ORF intervention for Group A. Using the *Pop & Spell* game from [www.pbskids.org](http://www.pbskids.org), the students were able to practice their sight words in a different medium.

On one occasion I modified Group A's lesson by using picture prompts. The picture prompts were color pictures which the students were instructed to tell a story about, thus using the picture as the basis for the story. This modification was chosen after I needed to modify for NYSESLAT test prep, as discussed previously. I used the picture prompts with the students to address and practice the NYSESLAT tested modality of speaking.

**How modified-Group B.** Group B shared the most frequent mode of modification as Group A, also occurring for six lessons-teacher choice of a book at the student's independent or instructional reading level. As discussed above in the Why Modified-Group B section, the study revealed that the assigned reading materials for ORF were above the students' levels. Group B was composed of Kindergarten students, while ORF has materials designed for 1<sup>st</sup> graders. For Group B, I had to select and assign more appropriate books rather than include 1<sup>st</sup> grade texts that were at the students' frustrational reading level. I chose books that were at the

students' independent and instructional reading levels-Fountas & Pinnell Level aa or A.

Also occurring frequently as a mode of modification for Group B was replacing the RTI scripted lessons with games. This type of modification was documented in five lessons for Group B. This choice of modification was based on the group dynamic, four young students who work well together. This group dynamic easily transitioned from traditional intervention lessons to game play and social skill building activities. The games chosen were often used to meet both ELA and ESL goals. For Group B, the modified plans show I chose to use the game *Alphabet Bingo*. This game was used to practice, reinforce, and informally assess both LNF and LSF.

Group B's RTI ELA lessons were modified on five occasions due to Group Need. One of the identified needs of the group was vowels. To meet Group B's need for additional vowel instruction, I used magnet letters to modify on two occasions. I put five short CVC words on the board, missing their vowel. I had the group work together to determine where each vowel would go, using all five magnet letter vowels. Another of the group needs for Group B was writing. To meet Group B's need of writing, I added writing lessons to the RTI scripted schedule that previously included no lessons with a writing component. The modified lessons included explicit writing activities on five occasions. During Week Six, I had Group B put together word association puzzles, or two things that go together such as dog-bone, bird-nest, or fork-spoon. After putting the puzzles together, I had students use the

words to write two complete sentences. In Week One and Seven, Group B was instructed using phoneme blocks, or three blocks with a beginning, middle, and end phoneme. The students wrote the phonemes on their personal whiteboards, and then determined if the written word was or was not a real word. If the word was real, the students used the simple CVC word in a complete sentence. I noted that the use of the personal whiteboards was a success for independent writing practice and informal assessment, therefore used them again in Week Eight. The students chose from a pile of known sight words, and then wrote a complete sentence using the sight word on their personal whiteboards.

The SMARTboard was the mode of modification for Group B twice. In Week One, I chose to include the SMARTboard in the ORF intervention for Group A. Using the *Pop & Spell* game from pbskids.org, the students were able to practice their sight words in a different medium. In Week Six, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Group played the same game from pbskids.org as well as the *Alphabet* on starfall.com for LNF and LSF. I used a variety of games from cookie.com with Group B to modify the LNF, LSF, and PSF intervention during Week Nine.

**How modified-Group A & B.** I modified the plans by having the students reread for fluency-five occasions for Group A, six occasions for Group B. This frequency matches the number of times I identified a need for modification to be the ‘Reading Need-fluency’, as previously discussed in Why Modified above. My plans show the rereading of the teacher selected independent and instructional texts as

fluency practice for both groups. I noted that both groups often requested to reread familiar texts and enjoyed partner reading with other students or myself.

In Week Seven, the RTI instruction was modified by using flashcards for both Group A and B. This was the only occasion when flashcards were the mode of modification. The flashcards used were alphabet flashcards, a material not include in the RTI materials provided by the district. I choose these flashcards because of their large print and colorful photos for first letter association. I enjoyed using these alphabet flashcards because of their print, pictures, and color with both groups for LNF and LSF, as well as vocabulary building, versus the black and white flashcards provided by the district,

### **Accomplishments through Modification**

The accomplishments resulting from the modification of the district's scripted RTI ELA interventions (Letter Naming Fluency (LNF), Letter Sound Fluency (LSF), Oral Reading Fluency (ORF), and Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF)) are listed in Table III. After the teacher researcher determined a need for modification and choosing an appropriate modification, the RTI ELA intervention was given. I noted in her detailed journal the accomplishments that were actualized, not simply intended, through modifications made to the scripted RTI ELA interventions. Through constant comparison of the detailed journal (Appendix B), derived from the document analysis of the RTI scripted lesson plan record (Appendix A), the following data totals for accomplishments through modification were determined. In the following table, Group A represents two 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students (both Beginner ELLs) while Group B is

represents four kindergarten students (one Beginner ELL and three Intermediate ELLs). Modification accomplishments occurring most frequently are listed first, followed by all of the additional accomplishments from modifications made, occurring in order of decreasing frequency.

Table 3

*Accomplishments through Modifications*

Q: What do I hope to accomplish through the modified changes?	
<u>Answers for Group A</u> (ordered by frequency of answer occurrence)	<u>Answers for Group B</u> (ordered by frequency of answer occurrence)
Met Group Needs--16 (everytime!)	Met Group Needs--18 (everytime!)
Independent Reading--4	Motivated/Engaged Students--7
Motivated/Engaged Students--4	Independent Reading--5
Technology Use--2	Technology Use--3
ESL goal -reading--12 -writing--4 -listening--16 (everytime!) -speaking--16 (everytime!)	ESL goal -reading--12 -writing--7 -listening--18 (everytime!) -speaking--18 (everytime!)

**Accomplishments through modification-Group A & B. All**

accomplishment goals for both Group A and B were the same for this study.

Therefore, the results for this research question will only be presented in a Group A and Group B comparison summary.

As desired, the accomplishment resulting from modified lessons was that the groups' needs were met. Both groups' needs were met in every lesson-sixteen out of

sixteen lessons for Group A and eighteen out of eighteen lessons for Group B. Modification to RTI is the identification of instructional factors that need improvement through continuous educator planning, evaluating, creating (Mercier Smith, Fien, Basaraba, & Travers, 2009). Meeting the groups' needs through modification is a result or accomplishment of my planning, evaluating, and creating. Meeting student needs through modification is not what I believe to be surprising or groundbreaking for future research. However, the goal of the interventions is to meet students' needs and, in my opinion, that would not have been accomplished if I had not done modifications. I attribute the ability to meet student needs to the small group modifications for these specific ELL students. This leads me to believe that there needs to be more freedom for teachers to make professional judgments regarding the modification of RTI scripts, schedules, and materials.

Both groups were also able to achieve seven lessons with increased student motivation and engagement through the modifications. The increase in motivation and engagement was monitored through teacher observation. When motivation and engagement were increased, I found the students to be excited, actively participating, retaining new information more easily, recalling previously taught information more quickly, and having an overall happy demeanor. When lessons were modified to increase ELLs' motivation and engagement and I noted the aforementioned positive emotions from the students, I found myself to be enjoying the lesson, feeling unrestricted by the RTI script, and proud that my modifications were yielding positive results. Lesson plan modifications that garnered increased student motivation and

engagement were noted by the teacher researcher to be used again during the intervention instruction time. Lesson plan modifications that were used repeatedly for increased student motivation and engagement included use of the technology such as self-monitoring *Hot Dots* cards or the SMARTboard and educational group game play.

The increase in independent reading time was also a positive effect. Both Group A and Group B were able to read independently during seven lessons each. The independent reading was categorized by students reading independent or instructional level texts for at least half of the intervention instructional time. The notable accomplishment was the ELLs' ability to have more time on task reading, something which is not always easy to schedule in the general education classroom or easy for ESL student to complete at home due to a lack of materials and parental language barrier. Students were monitored by the teacher for decoding accuracy as well as paired together for rereading. While the first, or initial, reading of text helped the students to practice decoding strategies, rereading the then familiar text assisted the student with their fluency.

Through modifications, technology was incorporated into the RTI ELA lessons. Technology use was noted as an accomplishment due to the Common Core's call for "use technology and digital media strategically and capably" (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010, p. 7) in order to make students college and career ready. For Group A, technology use was incorporated into two lessons, and for Group B it was

incorporated into three lessons. Technology included both use of the SMARTboard and *Hot Dots*, an electronic independent self-monitoring game. As discussed in the above How Modified section, the SMARTboard was used to play online games for LNF, LSF, and PSF practice.

Modifying the RTI ELA scripted lessons also allowed for the inclusion of many ESL goals in the modalities of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Through the modifications, ESL goals in speaking and listening were able to be met in every lesson by both groups. The ESL goal of reading was met in twelve lessons for both groups, while writing was met in four lessons for Group A and seven lessons for the Group B.

#### **Data Across All Research Questions**

**Motivation/engagement.** In the seven cases when I decided that modification was needed due to lack of motivating and engaging lesson content, the mode of modification was often the same. Both the SMARTboard and games were used by Group A and B to increase student motivation and engagement as shown below in Table 4.

Table 4

*Motivation/Engagement Modifications Used*

6			
			5
		2	
1			
Group A SMARTboard	Group A Game	Group B SMARTboard	Group B Game

Notes: The number in this table represents the number of occasions in which the lesson included the modification listed in that column, either SMARTboard use or Game play.

I decided to use online literacy websites with games for LNF, LSF, and PSF that could be used with the SMARTboard to increase student motivation and engagement. I also used group games such as Hangman and Memory for ORF of sight words to interest and encourage the groups. Hot Dots, or independent, self-monitoring card games, were also used to increase motivation and engagement for LNF, LSF, and PSF for both groups on one occasion.

Table 5

*Motivation/Engagement Modification Accomplishments*

Goal Met	Motivated/Engaged Students	Met Group Needs	ESL goal-Speaking	ESL goal-Listening	Technology Use
Group A	7	7	7	7	2
Group B	7	7	7	7	3

Notes: The number in this table represents the number of occasions in which the students met the goal listed in the corresponding column.

In the table above the following accomplishments which resulted from modifying using engaging games or the SMARTboard are listed: the observation of more engaged and motivated students, teacher notation of group needs being met, and the ESL goal of speaking and listening being met every time. Each time the SMARTboard or *Hot Dots* game were used to modify for increased motivation the additional accomplishment of technology use was added.

**Repetition.** In the six cases when I decided to modify based on a need for repetition for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Group, it was always for LNF, LSF, or PSF. Therefore, when LNF, LSF, or PSF occurred twice in one week it was cited as modified because of ‘Needed Repetition’. The following table indicates what weeks there was repetition, or intervention instruction twice where it was only prescribed on the RTI schedule once, and what was repeated, LNF, LSF, or PSF.

Table 6

*Modified Lesson Repetitions*

Needed Repetition	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9
LNF	X					X	X	X	X
LSF	X	X				X	X	X	X
PSF	X	X						X	X

Group B received repetition in the areas of LNF, LSF, or PSF because of their grade level. In Kindergarten these students are constantly immersed in LNF, LSF, and PSF and assessed just as readily. In order to keep them on grade level, I found it necessary and constructive to repeat these skills. These foundational skills are not taught in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, the grade of Group A, so my modifications focused on areas of need specific to their grade level to help them in their classroom instruction.

In Week One, Six, and Nine repetition came in the form of games or the SMARTboard, discussed in the above subsection Motivation/Engagement. In Week Two, I used magnet letters on the whiteboard for a group instructional lesson that repeated instruction in LSF and PSF. In Week Seven, I repeated my LNF and LSF instruction using flashcards with letters and color pictures. During the initial LNF, LSF, PSF intervention lesson in Week Eight the students struggled and were unfocused. I repeated the same lesson the next day using the same materials-Alphabet Linking Chart and color picture cards with no letters or words.

## Summary

In this self-study, I, the teacher-researcher, identified many points in which I needed to modify the district's scripted RTI ELA lesson plans for student in the ESL program. Due to the creation of the program with native English speaking student in mind, the RTI ELA lessons were found to need modification in areas such as lack of motivating and engaging content and materials, in appropriate level for students, more time on task treading, and a need for repetition. In addition to modifying the lesson plans, at times I also needed to modify the schedule and student materials. All occurrences of lesson plan, schedule, and manipulatives modification were recorded and analyzed. The ways in which modification occurred also varied. Most frequently, I modified the RTI ELA lessons by changing the assigned books to books at the ELLs' independent or instructional reading level, playing an educational small group game, or adding a fluency rereading or writing component. The modifications that occurred throughout this self-study accomplished some important goals for both myself as the teacher and my students. Most importantly, ELLs' needs were met through the modifications. Also there was a noted increase in the time spent independently reading, students were more engaged and motivated, and technology use was added to the RTI lessons. I also tracked the time NYS ESL goals were met in conjunction with RTI goals, noting that listening and speaking goals were met with every modified RTI lesson. Through this self-study data analysis conclusions and implications for future teacher researchers can be made.

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Response to Intervention (RTI) is a means for school districts and educators to eliminate the over-referral of students to special education, keep students in the general education setting to receive core instruction, and also provide the necessary support services for students who are not achieving the goals set for instruction in the general education classroom. My study determined how one English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher assistant implemented RTI scripted ELA interventions at the primary (K–2) level. This study focused on my RTI implementation with English Language Learners. I focused on understanding when and how literacy instruction for Kindergarten and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade English Language Learners was modified within the RTI model. The research was guided by the following questions:

At what points do I identify the need for changes to the district’s scripted RTI ELA interventions for ELLs?

How do I modify the letter-sound, phoneme (awareness) segmentation, and fluency intervention instruction for ELLs?

What do I hope to accomplish through the modified changes?

As the ESL population increases in school districts across our state and nation, streamlining RTI schedules, lessons, and manipulative student materials would be especially beneficial for teachers of ELL students who qualify for Tier 2 interventions.

## Conclusions

This self-study resulted in six notable conclusions. The conclusions will be presented in order of the research question to which they relate. First, I identified the need for change to the scripted RTI ELA interventions for ELLs many times, concluding that ELLs require modifications when using scripted lessons and manipulatives. Also with the first research questions, I noted motivation and engagement to be a point at which modification needs were identified. Answering the first and second research question, I concluded that school administration needs to consider, and revisit, multiple factors when determining scripted RTI schedules. The self-study also revealed that technology was an important mode of modification used in today's classroom for ELLs. Through the modified changes, I concluded that a goal of RTI should be a strong partnership between the providers of Tier One, Two, and Three instruction to increase the success of the ELL student.

**ELLs require modifications when using scripted lessons and manipulatives.** Group A's RTI lessons were found to need modification for six lessons due to content not being appropriate for the students' English language proficiency level. The books assigned for the ORF intervention were on a second grade reading level, including content, sight words, and topics not appropriate for at-risk, English-speaking students. The use of books above the students' independent or instructional reading level would not have been beneficial to their ORF growth. Researchers Blatchley & Lau (2010) reported the same: ELLs need an increased amount of independent reading practice, at their reading levels. For Group B, more

appropriate level for students was cited as a reason for modification for four lessons. I determined the Kindergarten materials for LNF, LSF, and PSF intervention lessons to be appropriate. However, materials for ORF needed modification because there were no lessons or materials provided for Kindergarten ORF. With lessons needing modification on regular basis due to the content not matching ELLs' proficiency levels, it is important the teacher be aware of the matching of students' proficiency levels and materials provided. I determined the lessons and materials, mainly assigned texts, to be not appropriate for the ELLs based on my personal observations of the students, my knowledge of their assessment scores, and collaboration with TESOL teacher.

**Motivation and engagement were important identified points for change to the RTI scripted lesson plans and manipulatives.** The district's scripted RTI ELA interventions were found to lack motivating and engaging lesson content for seven lessons for both Group A and Group B. Examples of low motivation and engagement with the RTI lesson plans were reported in Chapter 4 as too much repetitiveness in activities, directions that were confusing to ELLs, and manipulatives that were not child-friendly. I conclude that no matter the grade level, primary level intervention instructors of ELLs do not need instructional scripts. Rather, instructors should be provided a lesson guide with examples of how lesson should be taught, thus allowing for teacher decision making and flexibility to address lack of student motivation and engagement. In addition, the materials provided need to be assessed to see that they are both engaging and motivating in order to result in effective

instruction. Instructors should then look at the goal of the intervention instruction-increased, on-grade level test scores. Materials, like the instructional script or guide, should be flexible to allow for teacher decision making and adjustment to better meet students' needs.

**Administrators need to consider, and revisit, multiple factors when determining scripted RTI schedules.** In order to provide the required ELA interventions to my students, I was required to change the schedule on six occasions for Group A and five occasions for Group B. For both Group A and Group B the schedule change occurred always on a Tuesday. As concluded by researchers Kamps, Abbott, Greenwood, Wills, Veerkamp, & Kaufman (2008), creative and flexible scheduling is an important component to a successful RTI program. It would be important for administration to periodically review scheduling difficulties when planning for the RTI scripted schedule. Administrators should regularly meet with the RTI committee to review the schedule in order to make adjustments to the particulars of the schedule, such as what time interventions occur, how long interventions are taught, what conflicts arose and how to effectively correct and avoid such conflicts in the future.

**Technology is the mode of modification for today's classroom.** When embarking on this self-study I thought I would use the SMARTboard more. However, during my analysis I noted that I only used the SMARTboard to modify RTI ELA lessons once for Group A and twice for Group B. This was surprising to me, as technology in the classroom is becoming more prevalent as a push by the Common

Core Standards states such technology use make students college and career ready (National, 2010). Yet, with only one training on the use of the SMARTboard for instructional purposes, I found myself to be unprepared for how to strategically and skillfully use the SMARTboard for RTI instruction. A district or state created consortium of websites with SMARTboard lesson materials or instructional games that meet students RTI needs in LNF, LSF, PSF, ORF, or other measures including Mathematics would extremely helpful for a teacher new to SMARTboard use.

**The partnership between the providers of Tier One, Two, and Three instruction is important to the success of the ELL student.** In RTI's Tier One, comprised of the entire student population, the classroom teacher provides evidence-based, district wide curriculum instruction to all students (Orosco & Klingner, 2010). Tier Two and Three, servicing small sections of the student population not making sufficient progress in Tier One, work to support, reinforce, and build upon the instruction in Tier One (Mellard, McKnight, & Jordan, 2010). In this self-study, I, the Tier Two provider, frequently collaborated with Group B's Tier One provider, the classroom teacher. Our collaborations included discussions of the high quality instruction the ELLs were receiving in Tier One and the sharing of assessment data. Through these meetings the classroom teacher and I determined that Group B required more time on task reading, additional fluency practice, and a writing component in their RTI ELA lessons. Confirmed by research, ELLs do not show significant growth in reading fluency due to slower development beyond word-level processing (Haager, 2007). In this self-study I did not collaborate with Tier Three

instruction providers, as none of my students were receiving services in Tier Three. However, just as it is important for collaboration between Tier Two and Tier One providers, it is equally important for this collaboration model to extend to Tier Three. As discussed in my example with Group B, collaboration provided a means for sharing assessment data, lesson taught, and determining the course of future instruction. With this collaboration model, I found interventions, in addition to the classroom curriculum to be most effective. Students' needs were not only being met on one occasion, but often two occasions. Tier Two interventions that I provided were an opportunity for ELLs for additional time to practice or respond to new teaching (Mellard, McKnight, & Jordan, 2010). My instruction provided guided or independent practice with materials that were different from the general education classroom, such as color flashcards provided or Hot Dots.

**Timely assessment, instruction, and teacher planning are key to preventing students from falling further behind.** In this self-study, ELLs in Group A were in the fortunate group who were able to be assessed, identified as at-risk, and put into an intervention program as soon as possible. On the contrary, ELLs in Group B were in second grade, entering school after the preferred entrance into intervention time of kindergarten. However, these students were assessed, along with their peers, with the AIMSweb program at the beginning of the school year for one student, and upon entrance to the district for the other student. Therefore, the district was able to make sure these students were identified as at-risk as soon as possible and begin an intervention program soon after. This conclusion is confirmed by previous

researchers who state that it is important to identify students at-risk early, in kindergarten when possible, and begin their interventions in a timely manner to prevent them from falling further behind (Orosco & Klingner, 2010). The district also determined the least restrictive environment for the at-risk ELLs to be in a small group, allowing for decreased transition time & increased time to practice or respond to new teaching (Orosco & Klingner, 2010). This assisted in my ability to meet the ELLs' needs with integrity, increased intensity (Orosco & Klingner, 2010). Although the lesson plans were scripted, it was determined by the district that modifications to the RTI lesson plans by ESL staff for ELLs was appropriate, as discussed above. When planning, researchers recommend the setting of broad goals from which focused goals can be developed and achieved (Mellard, McKnight, & Jordan, 2010). In this way, I regarded the broad goals as those of the district, the end of the year AIMSweb assessment score. The focused goals were formulated per group as well as per student to show individual student improvement over the weeks, while not necessarily hitting the end of the year district goal, or score considered in the norm range for an average student in the same grade.

### **Implications for Student Learning**

Through this self-study, two implications for student learning were determined. Following the conclusion discussed above, how student learning can be adjusted to better meet the modification need of motivation and engagement will be discussed. Also, the creation of an RTI program, lessons, script or teacher guide, and

materials, with the ESL population as the target audience would be a good addition to a school's RTI program.

**Motivated and engaged students are important for students' success.**

Motivation and engagement were identified as the most frequent point for change to the RTI scripted lesson plans and manipulatives. Therefore, the self-study was able to show that teachers should modify RTI to include activities and games that lend themselves to a more motivating and engaging learning experience. In the future, educators should come together with the RTI committee to offer suggestions of what modifications should be made permanent or included in the RTI scripted lessons. On a similar note, scripted lesson plans in which teachers noted low student motivation and engagement should be discussed to determine if those lessons need to be deleted from the RTI program. In this scenario, RTI programs would be reviewed and revised on a regular basis, annually or bi-annually would be best.

**RTI lessons, script or teacher guide, and materials created specifically for use with ELLs would be a good addition to the scripted RTI program.** Since the number of ELLs is increasing and the use of RTI is greater than ever, it may be extremely useful for districts with a high ELL population to create an RTI program specific for ELLs. Just as RTI has been programmed to meet the needs of all low-achieving learners with a one-size-fits-all scripted lesson program and assessment system, can a similar system be created for ELLs? In the case of this self-study, the same modified lesson was used by both Group A and Group B on three occasions. I modified the PSF lesson with making words dice lesson twice to include writing on

whiteboards, the LNF, LSF, PSF lessons on two occasions to use the self-correcting technology of the Hot Dots game, and LNF, LSF lessons to use colorful, simplified vocabulary Alphabet Flashcards. It may be important to consider creation of a RTI program for Kindergarten-level ELLs, 1<sup>st</sup> grade-level ELLs, and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade-level ELLs. These scripts and materials would stem from the same components of the current program of LNF, LSF, PSF, and ORF. However, RTI for ELLs might include more picture prompts, simplified directions, connections to their culture, and increased instructional time. With a program streamlined for ELLs in RTI, groupings could be made per grade level to include ELLs from multiple classrooms under the instruction of a general education teacher or ESL professional.

### **Implications for My Teaching**

Through my self-study, I have concluded three implications for teaching. First, it is important, and imperative, to meet the needs of ELLs through modification of RTI. Also, teachers who both investigate and collaborate to better meet ELLs' learning difficulties will be more successful. Lastly, Tier Two needs the option of fluid movement of students to other RTI instructional levels to meet the needs of ELLs working off-grade level.

**As with all instruction for ELLs, RTI instruction will need to be modified based on student need.** In this self-study, Group A had only one lesson taught without modification to lesson, schedule, or materials and sixteen lessons taught with modification to lesson, schedule, or materials. Group B showed just two lessons taught without modification to lesson, schedule, or materials and eighteen lessons

taught with modification to lesson, schedule, or materials. Therefore, it is important that teachers of ELLs acknowledge the need to modify as part of their professional responsibility. Based on the students' English language proficiency, the need for modifications may vary. ELLs labeled as beginners with need an increased amount of modified RTI lessons compared to an ELL labeled advanced. Teachers will need to review and prepare for RTI with ELLs prior to instruction.

**Teacher investigation and collaboration regarding ELLs' language proficiency and skills is key to successful teaching.** Teachers need to investigate an ELL's difficulty and determine if the difficulty stems from second language acquisition or a learning problem/disability (Elizalde-Utnick, 2008). These investigations cannot be valid unless a teacher is using lessons and materials to match the student's current level of English language proficiency. Once the valid investigation of student difficulty has occurred, teacher response through teaching methods appropriate to meet the students' needs can begin. With a variety of methods and materials available to assist teachers in meeting students' language and learning difficulties today, teacher collaboration would be quite useful. Teacher collaboration for instruction and resources was noted as important for a successful RTI program in a study by Kamps, Abbott, Greenwood, Wills, Veerkamp, & Kaufman (2008). Finding new materials to use from a variety of internet sources, collaboration among professionals working with ELLs, and the use of the ESL professionals at your school district would be a good way to accomplish the goal of on-level lessons and materials. Working with a variety of investigation assessment tools and lesson plan sources with

an assortment of manipulatives, the ELLs' proficiency level and district RTI goals can be met.

**Make RTI Tier Two fluid for students not on grade level.** Success in Tier Two interventions was not a complete solution, as in the study by Healy, Vanderwood, and Edelston (2005), as the district goal was not attainable for most students. In the future, it may benefit teachers to use materials from a lower grade level to both instruct, progress monitor, and benchmark ELLs. For example, the second-grade ELLs in Group A may have benefited from being moved down to the first grade or Kindergarten scripted RTI ELA lessons for Tier Two. However, in the case of ELLs in a secondary school setting, it would be appropriate for him/her to be assigned to lower-grade level RTI, yet modification would be needed. The concepts taught in the lessons in Kindergarten, for example Letter Naming Fluency (LNF), Letter Sound Fluency (LSF), would still be highly applicable to a secondary school ELL. In my opinion, a beginner ELL in a secondary school setting cannot be taught reading comprehension strategies when they do not know how to read English and have not had the foundational instruction that Fountas and Pinnell (2009) state as key to reading development. Thus the RTI schedule and scripts would meet the goal of the ELL in question. In the case of materials for the secondary school ELL doing Kindergarten LNF and LSF RTI interventions, modifications would have to occur so that the RTI provider would meet the student's language needs in age-appropriate manner. In both cases, student would need to be progress monitored on the RTI skills in grade-level in which they are being instructed, not the grade-level in which their

age has classified them. Although some modifications to materials may still be needed with a fluid RTI grade-level instructional system regarding ELLs, the broad goal would be met, meeting the student's needs.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Suggestions for future research also resulted from this self-study. Researchers may seek to study the commonalities between the goals set forth for RTI and ESL. Other commonalities may be researched in the area of second language development and reading skills acquisition.

**Look for commonalities between the goals of RTI and ESL.** Letter-sound relationship, phonemic segmentation, fluency, and comprehension proved to be good RTI categories for instructing and assessing ELLs. Are these concepts productive for native language learners and ELLs alike? If there is a disconnect between concepts that are not conducive to language acquisition and learning for ELLs, researchers should identify areas teacher can delete or modify to therefore meet the student's needs. Such a study might have to be done on a district by district basis due to the difference in curriculums at varying districts. Is there a repetition between RTI and ESL instruction? Is it a necessary repetition of skills for ELLs? This has been noted in this self-study in the case of Group B, in which I reinforced general education classroom concepts. Further in-depth research regarding the ways in which this repetition can be more effective would result in some important implications for both general education and ESL teachers. What areas could be combined with RTI and ESL to meet the need of the student when taking the NYSELAT? I would recommend

that researchers look for ways in which the goals of RTI and ESL are similar. If these goals and skill areas are repetitive, teacher planning and student learning would certainly benefit from the use of targeted lessons with both RTI and ESL goals in mind.

**Look for commonalities of second language development and reading skills acquisition.** Researchers in the field of language acquisition may find it conducive to team up with those proficient in their knowledge of the reading acquisition process to find similarities and differences in the way ELLs acquire both language and reading skills. Commonalties found between second language development and reading skills acquisition could create some important implications for both general education and ESL teachers. There may also be recommendations for modifications necessary to the curriculum for students labeled as beginners, such as what skills would be foundational for both language and reading development as well as what might be contrary to the development of language or reading due to concepts taught in the other area. Teachers would be well-informed with a concise study of these commonalities and differences in language and reading skill development.

### **Final Thoughts**

Response to Intervention and English Language Learners are prevalent in schools today. Due to the creation of RTI with the native English speaking student in mind, my RTI instruction required modification in many areas based on the needs of ELLs. I modified the lesson plan scripts, as well as the schedule and student

materials. The modifications in this self-study accomplished important goals for both me, the teacher-researcher, and my students. Most significantly, ELLs' needs were met through the modifications.

## References

- Blatchley, L. A., & Lau, M. Y. (2010). Culturally competent screening and special education referral: A systematic approach. *Communique (0164775X)*, 38(7), 27-29.
- Bowen, Glenn A. Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method. (2009). *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2). doi: 10.3316/QRJ0902027.
- Cheektowaga-Maryvale Union Free School District. (2009). CR PART 154 Comprehensive Plan: Type of Program: FREESTANDING ESL.
- Elizalde-Utnick, G. (2008). Using the response to intervention framework with English language learners. *Communique (0164775X)*, 37(3), 18-21.
- Escamilla, K. (2009). English language learners: Developing literacy in second language learners—report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 41(4), 432-452. doi:10.1080/10862960903340165
- Feng, L. (2010). A short analysis of the nature of reading. *English Language Teaching*, 3(3), 152-157.
- Gersten, R., & Baker, S. (2000). What we know about effective instructional practices for English-language learners. *Exceptional Children*, 66(4), 454.
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing.

- Gunn, B., Biglan, A., Smolkowski, K., & Ary, D. (2000). The efficacy of supplemental instruction in decoding skills for Hispanic and non-Hispanic students in early elementary school. *Journal of Special Education, 34*(2), 90.
- Haager, D. (2007). Promises and cautions regarding using response to intervention with English language learners. *Learning Disability Quarterly, 30*(3), 213-218.
- Healy, K., Vanderwood, M., & Edelston, D. (2005). Early literacy interventions for English language learners: Support for an RTI model. *California School Psychologist, 105*, 5-63.
- Kamps, D., Abbott, M., Greenwood, C., Wills, H., Veerkamp, M., & Kaufman, J. (2008). Effects of small-group reading instruction and curriculum differences for students most at risk in kindergarten. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 41*(2), 101-114.
- Klingner, J. K., & Edwards, P. A. (2006). Cultural considerations with response to intervention models. *Reading Research Quarterly, 41*(1), 108-117.  
doi:10.1598/RRQ.41.1.6
- Lenski, S. (2011). What RTI means for content area teachers. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 55*(4), 276-282. doi:10.1002/JAAL.00034
- Linan-Thompson, S., Vaughn, S., Prater, K., & Cirino, P. T. (2006). The response to intervention of English language learners at risk for reading problems. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 39*(5), 390-398.
- Maryvale Union Free School District. (2011). RTI Lesson Plan Script: Kindergarten.

Mellard, D., McKnight, M., & Jordan, J. (2010). RTI tier structures and instructional intensity. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice (Blackwell Publishing Limited)*, 25(4), 217-225. doi:10.1111/j.1540-5826.2010.00319.x

Mercier Smith, J. L., Fien, H., Basaraba, D., & Travers, P. (2009). Planning, Evaluating and Improving Tiers of Support in Beginning Reading. *TEACHING Exceptional Children*, 41(5), 16-22.

National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers. (2010). *Common core state standards*. Retrieved from National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers website: <http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards>

The New York state district report card: Accountability and overview report, 2010-11. (2012). Retrieved from: <https://reportcards.nysed.gov/schools.php?district=800000052326&year=2011>

Orosco, M., & Klingner, J. (2010). One school's implementation of RTI with English language learners: "Referring into RTI". *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 43(3), 269-288.

Pinnell, G. (2006). Every child a reader: What one teacher can do. *Reading Teacher*, 60(1), 78-83. doi:10.1598/RT.60.1.9

Pinnell, G., & Fountas, I. (2009). *When readers struggle: Teaching that works (k-3)*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Tompkins, G. (2010). *Literacy for the 21st century: A balanced approach*. (5th ed.).

Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon

Tryon, R. C. (1939). *Cluster analysis*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2011). *The*

*Condition of Education 2011* (NCES 2011-033), Indicator 6.

Appendices

Appendix A: Lesson Plan Record

Week 1 (Week 25-3/26 to 3/30)

1 <sup>st</sup> group	2 <sup>nd</sup> group
<b>M</b> LNF, LSF-Alphabet Tracing Book, Vowel (i) Review	<b>M</b> LNF, LSF-Alphabet Linking Chart, Alphabet Matching game
<b>T</b> PSF-Making Words dice w/ whiteboards, pbskids.org with SMARTboard ORF, used book at appropriate level, reread for fluency	<b>T</b> PSF-Making Words dice w/ whiteboards
<b>W</b> ORF- sight word recognition ESL/ELA Extension Activity-UNO game	<b>W</b> ESL/ELA Extension Activity-sequencing cards and speaking
<b>F</b> Students Absent	<b>TH</b> LNF, LSF, PSF- Hot Dots

Week 2 (Week 2-4/2 to 4/6)

1 <sup>st</sup> group	2 <sup>nd</sup> group
<b>M</b> LNF, LSF-Alphabet Tracing Book, Vowel (e, i, o) Review, Hot Dots	<b>M</b> LNF, LSF-Alphabet Tracing Book, Vowel Review
<b>T</b> ORF- sight word recognition	<b>T</b> ESL/ELA Extension Activity-write sentence for sequencing cards ORF, used book at appropriate level, reread for fluency
<b>W</b> ESL/ELA Extension Activity-Name That Word game	<b>W</b> LSF, PSF-Vowel Review w/ whiteboards
<b>F</b> No School	<b>TH</b> Early Dismissal

Week 3 (Week 27-4/9 to 4/13)

1 <sup>st</sup> group	2 <sup>nd</sup> group
<b>M</b> No School	<b>M</b> No School
<b>T</b> No School	<b>T</b> No School
<b>W</b> No School	<b>W</b> No School
<b>F</b> No School	<b>TH</b> No School

Week 4 (Week 28-4/16 to 4/20)

1 <sup>st</sup> group	2 <sup>nd</sup> group
<b>M</b> ESL-new student, introduction day!	<b>M</b> LNF, LSF-Alphabet Tracing Book, Vowel Review ORF, used book at appropriate level, reread for fluency
<b>T</b> NYS ELA Assessment	<b>T</b> NYS ELA Assessment
<b>W</b> NYS ELA Assessment	<b>W</b> NYS ELA Assessment
<b>F</b> ESL/ELA Extension Activity-play Name That Word board game	<b>TH</b> NYS ELA Assessment

Week 5 (Week 29-4/23 to 4/27)

1 <sup>st</sup> group	2 <sup>nd</sup> group
<b>M</b> NYSESLAT	<b>M</b> NYSESLAT
<b>T</b> NYSESLAT	<b>T</b> NYSESLAT
<b>W</b> NYS Math Assessment	<b>W</b> NYS Math Assessment
<b>F</b> NYS Math Assessment	<b>TH</b> NYS Math Assessment

Week 6 (Week 30-4/30 to 5/4)

1 <sup>st</sup> group	2 <sup>nd</sup> group
<b>M</b> NYSESLAT	<b>M</b> NYSESLAT
<b>T</b> LNF, LSF-Alphabet Tracing Book ORF-sight words	<b>T</b> LNF, LSF-Alphabet Tracing Book ESL/ELA Extension Activity-write sentence for associations puzzle
<b>W</b> ORF- sight word recognition, used book at appropriate level, reread for fluency	<b>W</b> SMARTboard LNF, LSF-starfall.com, Alphabet PSF-pbskids.org, Pop & Spell
<b>F</b> ESL/ELA Extension Activity- Hangman with sight words and vocabulary	<b>TH</b> ORF, used book at appropriate level, reread for fluency

Week 7 (Week 31-5/7 to 5/11)

1 <sup>st</sup> group	2 <sup>nd</sup> group
<b>M</b> NYSESLAT	<b>M</b> LNF, LSF-Alphabet Bingo
<b>T</b> LNF, LSF-Alphabet Flashcards PSF-phoneme blocks w/ whiteboards	<b>T</b> NYSESLAT
<b>W</b> NYSESLAT	<b>W</b> LNF, LSF-Alphabet Flashcards PSF-phoneme blocks w/ whiteboards
<b>F</b> Teacher Sick Day	<b>TH</b> NYSESLAT

Week 8 (Week 32-5/14 to 5/18)

1 <sup>st</sup> group	2 <sup>nd</sup> group
<b>M</b> NYSESLAT	<b>M</b> NYSESLAT
<b>T</b> PSF-decodable words ball	<b>T</b> LNF, LSF-Alphabet Linking Chart PSF-pictures cards, initial and final sound ORF, used book at appropriate level, reread for fluency
<b>W</b> ESL/ELA Extension Activity- Sequencing Cards and Storytelling	<b>W</b> LNF, LSF-Alphabet Linking Chart PSF-pictures cards, initial and final sound ORF, used book at appropriate level, reread for fluency
<b>F</b> ORF- sight word recognition, used book at appropriate level, reread for fluency	<b>TH</b> ESL/ELA Extension Activity-sight word recognition, Whiteboards- sight word writing and use in sentence

Week 9 (Week 33-5/21 to 5/25)

1 <sup>st</sup> group	2 <sup>nd</sup> group
<b>M</b> NYSESLAT scoring	<b>M</b> NYSESLAT scoring
<b>T</b> LNF, LSF-Alphabet Tracing Book ORF, used book at appropriate level, reread for fluency	<b>T</b> LNF, LSF-Alphabet Bingo ORF, used book at appropriate level, round robin/read aloud for fluency
<b>W</b> PSF-Say & Slide ORF, used book at appropriate level, reread for fluency	<b>W</b> PSF-Say & Slide ORF, used book at appropriate level, reread for fluency
<b>F</b> ESL/ELA Extension Activity- American Game	<b>TH</b> LNF, LSF, PSF-cookie.com games with SMARTboard

Appendix B: Detailed Journal

Week 1 (Week 25-3/26 to 3/30)

1 <sup>st</sup> group	Why did I modify?	How did I modify?	What did this accomplish?
<b>M</b> LNF, LSF-Alphabet Tracing Book, Vowel (i) Review	Group Need-Vowels	Followed script for Alphabet Tracing Book  Worksheet for Vowels	Met Group Needs  ESL goal-listening, speaking, reading
<b>T</b> PSF-Making Words dice w/ whiteboards, pbskids.org with SMARTboard ORF, used book at appropriate level, reread for fluency	Schedule-Did LSF yesterday-moved to next day's plans-PSF  Motivation/Engaging  Additional Reading Time Needed  Reading Need-fluency  Assigned Reading above student's level	Use of SMARTboard  Writing  Book at students' level  Reread for fluency	Met Group Needs  Technology Use  Independent Reading  Motivated/Engaged Students  ESL goal-reading, writing, speaking, listening
<b>W</b> ORF- sight word recognition ESL/ELA Extension Activity-UNO game	Assigned Reading above students' level	Book at students' level	Met Group Needs  Independent Reading  ESL goal-speaking, listening
<b>F</b> Students Absent			

2 <sup>nd</sup> group	Why did I modify?	How did I modify?	What did this accomplish?
<b>M</b> LNF, LSF-Alphabet Linking Chart, Alphabet Matching game	Motivation/Engaging	Followed script for Alphabet Linking Chart  Game	Met Group Needs  Motivated/Engaged Students  ESL goal-reading, speaking, listening
<b>T</b> PSF-Making Words dice w/ whiteboards	Schedule-Did LSF yesterday-moved to next day's plans-PSF  Group Need-Writing	Writing	Met Group Needs  ESL goal-reading, writing, speaking, listening
<b>W</b> ESL/ELA Extension Activity-sequencing cards and speaking	NYSESLAT test prep  Motivation/Engaging	Game	Met Group Needs  Motivated/Engaged Students  ESL goal-speaking, listening
<b>TH</b> LNF, LSF, PSF- Hot Dots	Needed repetition  Motivation/Engaging	Game/use of technology to self-monitor	Met Group Needs  Motivated/Engaged Students  Technology Use  ESL-listening, reading

Week 2 (Week 2-4/2 to 4/6)

1 <sup>st</sup> group	Why did I modify?	How did I modify?	What did this accomplish?
<b>M</b> LNF, LSF-Alphabet Tracing Book, Vowel (e, i, o) Review, Hot Dots	Group Need-Vowels Motivation/Engaging	Followed script for Alphabet Tracing Book Worksheet for Vowels Game/use of technology to self-monitor	Met Group Needs Technology Use Motivated/Engaged Students ESL goal-listening, speaking, reading
<b>T</b> ORF- sight word recognition	Schedule-Did LSF yesterday-moved to next day's plans-ORF Reading Need-Sight Words	Sight Words at students' level	Met Group Needs ESL goal-reading, speaking, listening
<b>W</b> ESL/ELA Extension Activity-Name That Word game	NYSESLAT test prep Motivation/Engaging	Game	Met Group Needs Motivated/Engaged Students ESL goal-speaking, listening
<b>F</b> No School			

2 <sup>nd</sup> group	Why did I modify?	How did I modify?	What did this accomplish?
<b>M</b> LNF, LSF-Alphabet Tracing Book, Vowel Review	Group Need-Vowels	Followed script for Alphabet Tracing Book Magnet Letter for Vowels-fill in missing Vowel	Met Group Needs ESL goal-listening, speaking, reading
<b>T</b> ESL/ELA Extension Activity-write sentence for sequencing cards ORF, used book at appropriate level, reread for fluency	Schedule-Did LSF yesterday-moved to NYSESLAT test prep Group Need-Writing Reading Need-fluency Additional Reading Time Needed	Writing with picture prompts Book at students' level Reread for fluency	Met Group Needs Independent Reading ESL goal-reading, writing, speaking, listening
<b>W</b> LSF, PSF-Vowel Review w/ whiteboards	Needed repetition Group Need-Vowels	Magnet Letter for Vowels-fill in missing Vowel, write missing Vowel	Met Group Needs ESL goal-speaking, listening, writing
<b>TH</b> Early Dismissal			

Week 3 (Week 27-4/9 to 4/13)

1 <sup>st</sup> group	2 <sup>nd</sup> group
<b>M</b> No School	<b>M</b> No School
<b>T</b> No School	<b>T</b> No School
<b>W</b> No School	<b>W</b> No School
<b>F</b> No School	<b>TH</b> No School

Week 4 (Week 28-4/16 to 4/20)

1 <sup>st</sup> group	2 <sup>nd</sup> group
<b>M</b> ESL-new student, introduction day!	<b>M</b> LNF, LSF-Alphabet Tracing Book, Vowel Review ORF, used book at appropriate level, reread for fluency
<b>T</b> NYS ELA Assessment	<b>T</b> NYS ELA Assessment
<b>W</b> NYS ELA Assessment	<b>W</b> NYS ELA Assessment
<b>F</b> ESL/ELA Extension Activity-play Name That Word board game	<b>TH</b> NYS ELA Assessment

Week 5 (Week 29-4/23 to 4/27)

1 <sup>st</sup> group	2 <sup>nd</sup> group
<b>M</b> NYSESLAT	<b>M</b> NYSESLAT
<b>T</b> NYSESLAT	<b>T</b> NYSESLAT
<b>W</b> NYS Math Assessment	<b>W</b> NYS Math Assessment
<b>F</b> NYS Math Assessment	<b>TH</b> NYS Math Assessment

Week 6 (Week 30-4/30 to 5/4)

1 <sup>st</sup> group	Why did I modify?	How did I modify?	What did this accomplish?
<b>M</b> NYSESLAT			
<b>T</b> LNF, LSF-Alphabet Tracing Book ORF-sight words	Schedule-No Class yesterday-make up for LNF, LSF  Reading Need-Sight Words	Followed script for Alphabet Tracing Book  Sight Words at students' level	Met Group Needs  ESL goal-reading, speaking, listening
<b>W</b> ORF- sight word recognition, used book at appropriate level, reread for fluency	Reading Need-Sight Words  Reading Need-fluency  Assigned Reading above student's level	Sight Words at students' level  Book at students' level  Reread for fluency	Met Group Needs  Independent Reading  ESL goal-speaking, listening, reading
<b>F</b> ESL/ELA Extension Activity-Hangman with sight words and vocabulary	NYSESLAT test prep  Motivation/Engaging	Game	Met Group Needs  Motivated/Engaged Students  ESL goal-speaking, listening, writing, reading

2 <sup>nd</sup> group	Why did I modify?	How did I modify?	What did this accomplish?
<b>M</b> NYSESLAT			
<b>T</b> LNF, LSF-Alphabet Tracing Book ESL/ELA Extension Activity-write sentence for associations puzzle	Schedule-No Class yesterday-make up for LNF, LSF  Group Need-Writing	Followed script for Alphabet Tracing Book  Writing with picture prompts	Met Group Needs  ESL goal-reading, speaking, listening, writing
<b>W</b> SMARTboard LNF, LSF-starfall.com, Alphabet PSF-pbskids.org, Pop & Spell	Needed Repetition  Motivation/Engaging	Use of SMARTboard	Met Group Needs  Technology Use  Motivated/Engaged Students  ESL goal-speaking, listening
<b>TH</b> ORF, used book at appropriate level, reread for fluency	Additional Reading Time Needed  Reading Need-fluency	Book at students' level  Reread for fluency	Met Group Needs  Independent Reading  ESL goal-reading, writing, speaking, listening

Week 7 (Week 31-5/7 to 5/11)

1 <sup>st</sup> group	Why did I modify?	How did I modify?	What did this accomplish?
<b>M</b> NYSESLAT			
<b>T</b> LNF, LSF-Alphabet Flashcards PSF-phoneme blocks w/ whiteboards	Schedule-No Class yesterday- make up for LNF, LSF, No Class tomorrow-PSF  Blocks-appropriate level	Use of flashcards  Writing	Met Group Needs  ESL goal-reading, speaking, listening, writing
<b>W</b> NYSESLAT			
<b>F</b> Teacher Sick Day			

2 <sup>nd</sup> group	Why did I modify?	How did I modify?	What did this accomplish?
<b>M</b> LNF, LSF-Alphabet Bingo	Motivation/Engaging	Followed script for Alphabet Tracing Book  Game	Met Group Needs  Motivated/Engaged Students  ESL goal-listening, speaking, reading
<b>T</b> NYSESLAT			
<b>W</b> LNF, LSF-Alphabet Flashcards PSF-phoneme blocks w/ whiteboards	Needed Repetition  Blocks-appropriate level  Group Need-Writing	Use of flashcards  Writing	Met Group Needs  ESL goal-speaking, listening, reading, writing
<b>TH</b> NYSESLAT			

Week 8 (Week 32-5/14 to 5/18)

1 <sup>st</sup> group	Why did I modify?	How did I modify?	What did this accomplish?
<b>M</b> NYSESLAT			
<b>T</b> PSF-decodable words ball	Schedule  Motivation/Engaging	Game	Met Group Needs  Motivated/Engaged Students  ESL goal-speaking, listening, writing, reading
<b>W</b> ESL/ELA Extension Activity-Sequencing Cards and Storytelling	NYSESLAT test prep  Motivation/Engaging	Speaking with Picture prompts  Game	Met Group Needs  Motivated/Engaged Students  ESL goal-speaking, listening
<b>F</b> ORF- sight word recognition, used book at appropriate level, reread for fluency	Reading Need-Sight Words  Reading Need-fluency  Assigned Reading above student's level	Sight Words at students' level  Book at students' level  Reread for fluency	Met Group Needs  Independent Reading  ESL goal-speaking, listening, reading

2 <sup>nd</sup> group	Why did I modify?	How did I modify?	What did this accomplish?
<b>M</b> NYSESLAT			
<b>T</b> LNF, LSF-Alphabet Linking Chart PSF-pictures cards, initial and final sound ORF, used book at appropriate level, reread for fluency	Schedule-No Class yesterday-make up for LNF  Picture Cards-appropriate level  Additional Reading Time Needed  Reading Need-fluency	Book at students' level  Reread for fluency	Met Group Needs  Independent Reading  ESL goal-reading, speaking, listening
<b>W</b> LNF, LSF-Alphabet Linking Chart PSF-pictures cards, initial and final sound ORF, used book at appropriate level, reread for fluency	Needed Repetition  Picture Cards-appropriate level  Additional Reading Time Needed  Reading Need-fluency	Book at students' level  Reread for fluency	Met Group Needs  Independent Reading  ESL goal-speaking, listening
<b>TH</b> ESL/ELA Extension Activity-sight word recognition, Whiteboards-sight word writing and use in sentence	Group Need-Writing  Reading Need-Sight Words	Writing	Met Group Needs  ESL goal- listening, speaking, writing, reading

Week 9 (Week 33-5/21 to 5/25)

1<sup>st</sup> group Why did I modify? How did I modify? What did this accomplish?

<b>M</b> NYSESLAT scoring			
<b>T</b> LNF, LSF-Alphabet Tracing Book ORF, used book at appropriate level, reread for fluency	Schedule-No Class yesterday-make up for LNF  Additional Reading Time Needed  Reading Need-fluency  Assigned Reading above student's level	Followed script for Alphabet Tracing Book  Book at students' level  Reread for fluency	Met Group Needs  Independent Reading  ESL goal-reading, speaking, listening
<b>W</b> PSF-Say & Slide ORF, used book at appropriate level, reread for fluency	Reading Need-fluency  Assigned Reading above	Book at students' level  Reread for fluency	Met Group Needs  Independent Reading  ESL goal-speaking, listening, reading
<b>F</b> ESL/ELA Extension Activity-American Game	Motivation/Engaging	Game	Met Group Needs  Motivated/Engaged Students  ESL goal-speaking, listening

2<sup>nd</sup> group Why did I modify? How did I modify? What did this accomplish?

<b>M</b> NYSESLAT scoring			
<b>T</b> LNF, LSF-Alphabet Bingo ORF, used book at appropriate level, round robin/read aloud for fluency	Schedule-No Class yesterday-make up for LNF  Motivation/Engaging  Additional Reading Time Needed  Reading Need-fluency	Game  Book at students' level  Reread for fluency	Met Group Needs  Motivated/Engaged Students  Independent Reading  ESL goal-reading, speaking, listening
<b>W</b> PSF-Say & Slide ORF, used book at appropriate level, reread for fluency	Additional Reading Time Needed  Reading Need-fluency	Book at students' level  Reread for fluency	Met Group Needs  Independent Reading  ESL goal-speaking, listening
<b>TH</b> LNF, LSF, PSF-cookie.com games with SMARTboard	Needed Repetition  Motivation/Engaging	Use of SMARTboard	Met Group Needs  Technology Use  Motivated/Engaged Students  ESL goal-speaking, listening

Data Totals-frequency of occurrence  
1<sup>st</sup> Group

Why did I modify?	How did I modify?	What did this accomplish?
Motivation/Engaging--7 Schedule--6 (every week on Tuesday) More appropriate level for students--6 (Assigned Reading above students' level, Blocks-appropriate level, Picture Cards-appropriate level) Reading Need-fluency--5 Reading Need-sight words--4 Additional Reading Time Needed--2 Group Need--2 NYSESLAT test prep--2	Book at students' level--6 Game--6 Reread for fluency--5 Followed Script (Alphabet Tracing Book or Alphabet Linking Chart)--4 Sight Words at student's level--3 Worksheet--2 Writing--2 SMARTboard--1 Speaking with Picture prompts--1 Use of flashcards--1	Met Group Needs--16 (everytime!) Motivated/Engaged Students--7 Independent Reading--6 Technology Use--2 ESL goal -reading--12 -writing--4 -listening--16 (everytime!) -speaking--16 (everytime!)

2<sup>nd</sup> Group

Why did I modify?	How did I modify?	What did this accomplish?
Motivation/Engaging--7 Additional Reading Time Needed--6 Needed repetition--6 Reading Need-fluency--5 Group Need--5 Schedule--5 (5/6 weeks on Tuesday) More appropriate level for students--4 (Assigned Reading above students' level, Blocks-appropriate level, Picture Cards-appropriate level) NYSESLAT test prep--2 Reading Need-sight words--1	Book at students' level--6 Reread for fluency--6 Game--5 Writing--5 Followed Script (Alphabet Tracing Book or Alphabet Linking Chart)--4 SMARTboard--2 Magnet Letters--2 Use of flashcards--1	Met Group Needs--18 (everytime!) Motivated/Engaged Students--7 Independent Reading--6 Technology Use--3 ESL goal -reading--12 -writing--7 -listening--18 (everytime!) -speaking--18 (everytime!)

