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**A COMPARISON BETWEEN SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS' AND  
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS' ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS  
REGARDING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

A Dissertation Submitted  
to the Graduate College  
Arkansas Tech University

in partial fulfillment of requirements  
for the degree of

DOCTORATE IN EDUCATION

in School Leadership

in the Department of Center for Leadership and Learning  
of the College of Education

May 2019

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To my classmates, we did this together. Thank you for sharing your friendship with me. Your friendship will be forever valued. Thank you for sharing this experience. I wish you the best as we part ways at the end of this journey.

## **DEDICATION**

To my husband

Hassan Salloukh

You are my hero, my best friend and the love of my life.

You have always been there with timeless support and encouragement through the challenges of graduate school and work.

I could not have done this without you.

All that you have done for me during our adventure called life has not gone unnoticed.

You are truly the wind beneath my wings.

This is for you habibi.

To my mama

Eliza Foster Prather

You always stressed the importance of learning and told me all things were possible.

Mama you told me to never quit and to get an education so that I did not have to depend on anyone.

You provided me with the strength, the guidance and the love for education and life.

You nurtured me, taught me, and loved me unconditionally.

Even though you have been gone for many years I am forever grateful for the lessons you taught me.

Mama this is for you.



## Abstract

The purpose of this descriptive study was to identify the attitudes and perceptions of speech-language pathologists and school administrators regarding professional development. This study contains both quantitative and qualitative survey data from speech-language pathologists and school administrators currently serving in the public schools in Arkansas. This survey, deployed over a six-week period, contained a series of Likert-type and open-ended questions that were analyzed by the researcher to answer three research questions. There were 182 speech-language pathologists and 103 school administrators who responded to this survey. The participants were chosen from an email list obtained from Arkansas Department of Education and Arkansas Board of Examiner in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology. The study examined needs of the speech-language pathologists in professional development and to what degree this current professional development met the needs of these professionals. Results obtained from the Likert-style questions were analyzed through descriptive analysis and an independent t-test with an alpha level of  $p < .05$  established to accept or reject the 14 null hypotheses. The study also examined the need for more professional development in literacy to be provided. The results of this study indicate that perceptions of professional development differ significantly between speech-language pathologists and school administrators. The data suggests that there is a significant relationship between speech-language pathologists needing professional development in literacy in the schools. Additional analyses with open-ended responses indicate the need for professional development in literacy. Overall, there appears to be weaknesses in professional development provided to speech-language pathologists in the schools.

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **Background of the Study**

A speech-language pathologist (SLP) can play multiple roles in the intervention of curricular programs, which impact students, whole classes of students, and instructional staff (Vicker, 2013). The use of Common Core State Standards (CCSS), Response to Intervention (RTI), as well as standards-based classrooms and high expectations for all students, are bringing changes to classrooms in the schools (Dixon, Yssel, McConnell & Hardin, 2014).

The changes from CCSS, RTI, and attitudes toward standards-based classrooms continues to yield a positive change (Murza & Ehren, 2015). An SLP must be prepared to efficiently collaborate with teachers to support the needs of the diverse language learning needs (Wilson, McNeill, & Gillon, 2016). Wilson et al. (2016), indicated the need for school leaders to provide professional development opportunities in explicit language and literacy instruction for SLPs and teachers.

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) noted in 2010 that literacy problems continue to be a discussion among educators, with the Alliance for Excellent Education pointing out that only 29% of America's eighth-grade public schools' students met the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) standard of reading proficiency for their grade level. SLPs have a unique contribution to provide to the educational team (ASHA, 2010). Spracher (2016), noted that SLPs contribute to the learning of students by providing a vast knowledge base of language development and acquisition that, when combined with skills in using a diagnostic-prescriptive approach to assessment and intervention, is valuable in educational contexts such as literacy.

Literacy skills are relevant for not only students with language-learning disabilities but also for other individuals in the schools (Spracher, 2016). Graves, Brandon, Duesbery, McIntosh, and Pyle (2011) noted that evidence indicates reading difficulties become apparent early in the educational process and tend to evolve into persistent, lifelong struggles with literacy.

Historically, speech sound production has traditionally been considered an SLP's area of expertise (Wilson et al., 2016). Speech-language therapy services have traditionally been viewed as taking place within a specific room or location (Vicker, 2013) with the role of the speech pathologist providing expert advice to a teacher (Wilson et al., 2015).

Before the 1960s, provision of services related to speech focused on fluency, voice and articulation disorders; and later the addition of language disorders was included as part of the roles and responsibilities of the SLP (ASHA, 2010). When SLP services originated before the 1960s, labels were related to the type of population served and the location of the service. For instance, the practitioner was called a *speech correctionist* in a private office setting, a *speech teacher* in school settings, and a *speech clinician* in hospitals and clinics (Black, 1964).

As the profession developed, the term *speech therapist* gained more acceptance; but this distinction caused some confusion with other professionals such as a physical and occupational therapist. Black (1964) noted the current and more desired term of "speech-language pathologist," which was a more descriptive and comprehensive term.

Although the SLP continues to provide traditional services, the roles and responsibilities have changed with legal mandates and an expanded scope of best

practices across different settings (ASHA, 2010). Wilson et al. (2016) note this model continues to be present as SLPs working with an individual or small group of children outside of the classroom.

ASHA, (2010) notes the addition of several professional practices including those with reading, writing, and curriculum, RTI and telepractice. The changes have further been challenged by ASHA to examine and perhaps redefine their roles and responsibilities to make significant contributions to student achievement (Muzra & Ehren, 2015).

Federal laws have moved strongly toward demanding accountability for student performance, with achievement on high-stakes tests as a hallmark for measuring student outcomes for all students (ASHA, 2010). No Child Left Behind (NCLB) placed emphasis on achievement within specific subgroups; such as students who were economically disadvantaged, students from major racial or ethnic groups, students with limited English proficiency and students with special needs (ASHA, 2010; USDOE, 2004). Thus, ASHA (2010) notes that professionals working with students with disabilities are specifically charged with helping them access the general education curriculum.

School administrators must also recognize the need for professional development for SLPs; as their use of CCSS has an impact on academic outcomes, statewide achievement test scores, and annual yearly progress scores (Reed, 2013). The professional development must perform as a learning community focused on improving the frequency and quality of education in their schools' while being intensive, sustained, and collaborative (Walsh, 2012).

### **Statement of the Problem**



School leaders must begin to provide professional development to build and facilitate understanding across disciplines and collaborative co-working (Wilson et al., 2015). Blosser, Roth, Paul, Ehren, Nelson, and Strum (2012) have noted that school leaders often do not recognize CCSS, academic outcomes, statewide achievement test scores, or annual yearly progress scores relate directly to school speech-language services delivery. This relationship gap by administrators may be due to their perception that SLPs focus only on "correcting" speech and language skills that are impaired (Blosser et al., 2012).

According to Glover, McCormack, and Smith-Tamaray (2015), professional development must help teachers and speech-language pathologists to achieve the following: (a) create a common language, (b) ensure shared understandings of communication development and (c) provide ways to integrate activities to support speech and language skills within the school curriculum. The goals embedded in all professional development within any school system must be to facilitate a foundation of understanding and build instructional competencies for all faculty (Dixon et al., 2014).

The present problem in school districts is evident in that professional development is needed for teachers and SLPs to enhance and blend their expertise in literacy. Therefore, this study was an investigation of the professional development provided by school administrators of literacy and reading curriculum for the SLP. Through a thorough review of the literacy curriculum and data generated through surveys and interviews, the study provided a further investigation into the attitudes and knowledge of administrators toward SLPs as well as the potential of SLPs in educating students in literacy in the schools.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to:

1. Examine the perceptions of SLPs regarding professional development provided by administrators for SLPs in public schools relative to literacy curriculum quality; and
2. Clearly identify the perceptions of school administrators regarding professional development of SLPs.

## **Research Questions**

The following question were used to guide this study and to elicit information from practicing school administrators and practicing school speech-language pathologists to obtain a report of the professional development provided in the schools. The research questions are as follows:

1. To what degree does professional development currently provided by school districts meet the professional training needs of school-based SLPs?
2. To what degree does the professional development currently provided by school district emerge as beneficial to the intervention of services to SLPs?
3. What can school administrators do to ensure that all speech-language pathologists are being provided professional development in literacy?

## **Hypotheses**

A comparison between SLPs' and school administrators' responses to the 14-item, 5-point Likert scale was provided by testing 14 null hypotheses that reflect the essence of each survey question.

H<sub>0</sub>1: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding professional development of articulation, TBI, apraxia, etc.

H<sub>0</sub>2: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding professional development methods to assist students with literacy delays.

H<sub>0</sub>3: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding discussing the possibility of being active in literacy intervention.

H<sub>0</sub>4: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding professional development beneficial to SLPs' practice of literacy and curriculum in the schools.

H<sub>0</sub>5: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding identifying the SLPs' roles and responsibilities in literacy within the curriculum.

H<sub>0</sub>6: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding discussing the possibility of being active and collaborating in literacy intervention.

H<sub>0</sub>7: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding discussing the contributions of being active in literacy intervention.

H<sub>0</sub>8: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding professional development methods to assist students with literacy delays.

H<sub>0</sub>9: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding encouragement of professional development in career development.

H<sub>0</sub>10: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding practices of other SLPs' in the area.

H<sub>0</sub>11: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding increasing SLPs professional skills in literacy within the curriculum.

H<sub>0</sub>12: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding professional development opportunities to increase understanding of regular education content areas.

H<sub>0</sub>13: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding a desire for greater amounts of professional development opportunities.

H<sub>0</sub>14: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding professional development and literacy intervention on professional status.

### **Definitions of Terms**

Orientation of the following definitions is needed for a more complete understanding of the literature and the research.

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) – the professional, scientific and credentialing association for more than 191,544 members and affiliates who are audiologists, SLPs, and speech, language, and hearing scientists.

Common Core State Standards (CCSS) – a set of high-quality academic standards in mathematics and English language arts/literacy (ELA) that were created to ensure that all students graduate from high school with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in college, career, and life.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) – Amended from Public Law 94-142 and “enforced by the Office of Special Education Program” requires that recipient of funds “provide qualifying children a free and appropriate education that is made available in the least restrictive environment” (Cambron-McCabe, McCarthy, & Thomas, 2004, p. 192).

International Reading Association (IRA) – Founded as the International Reading Association (IRA), the International Literacy Association (ILA) has worked to enhance literacy instruction through research and professional development for more than 60 years with the belief that literacy is the primary foundation of all learning.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) – IDEA mainstreaming policy which requires school districts to educate students with disabilities in regular classrooms with their nondisabled peers, in the school they would attend if not disabled, to the maximum extent appropriate.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) – Often referred to as “The Nation’s Report Card,” is the largest nationally representative and continuing assessment (since 1969) of what American students know in various subject areas including mathematics, reading science, writing, the arts, civics, economics, geography, U.S. history, and Technology and Engineering Literacy.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) – Legislation proposed by President George W.

Bush:

reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESAE) and incorporated major reforms in education in the areas of assessment, accountability, and school improvement. The law requires States to develop standards in reading and math, and assessments linked to those standards for all students in grades 3-8. (USDOE, 2002, p.1).

Professional Development – Activities that are an integral part of the school and local educational agency strategies for providing educators with the knowledge and skills necessary to enable students to succeed in a well-rounded education and to meet the challenging State academic standards that are sustained intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data-driven, and classroom-focused.

Response to Intervention (RTI) – A multi-tiered approach to the early identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs. The RTI process begins with high-quality instruction and universal screening of all children in the general education classroom. RTI is designed for use when making decisions in both general education and special education, creating a well-integrated system of instruction and intervention guided by child outcome data.

Speech Clinician – [A] “...favored term and briefly used to describe individuals working in clinics and hospitals, later rejected by school personnel and administrators due to its connotations of medical service” (Black, 1964, p.2).

Speech Correctionist – “An archaic, descriptive, and to some extent, an objectionable title given to individuals employed in public school speech programs” (Black, 1964, pp. 2- 3).

Speech-Language Pathologist – [A] “...desired title for individuals employed in the profession although some hold the belief that the title represents the medical aspect of the profession” (Black, 1964, p. 2). These individuals are “...capable of detecting, preventing, diagnosing, prescribing for, and remediating disordered communication” (Van Hattum, 1985, p. 7).

Speech teacher – [A] “... term frequently used as a result of previously grouping all persons working in the schools as teachers; this term is inaccurate, defining these individuals as teachers of general speech” (Black, 1964, p. 2).

Speech Therapist – [A] “... supportive title describing individuals working in the profession, the title presents the probability of confusion with other professions such as physical therapy and occupational therapy” (Black, 1964, p.2).

### **Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations**

Patton (2005) reminds us that there are no perfect research designs. There are always tradeoffs. In conducting this study, the following assumptions were made: (a) the participants in the study freely provided the researcher with the ratings of importance regarding the professional development; (b) the respondents based their ratings on the importance of the professional development competencies objectively; (c) the participants fully understand the questions they will be asked; (d) participants have a sincere interest in participating in the research. The study will be limited to a sample of public-school administrators and public-school speech pathologists in Arkansas.

The researcher received a total of 238 electronic mail addresses from a master list of K-12 district administrators provided by the Arkansas Department of Education, and a total of 2,951 electronic emails addressed from a master list of Speech-language Pathologists provided by the Arkansas Speech-Language and Hearing Board of License agency. Subsequent to the removal of invalid electronic mail addresses, a total number of 3,189 valid electronic mail addressed were placed in the *Survey Monkey*©. The generation of electronic-mail to elicit responses from a potential participant pool to ask them to participate in the study voluntarily constituted a limitation of this study.

This was a descriptive study that generated quantitative and qualitative results related to the district administrators' view of professional development provided to SLP in literacy curriculum. SLPs' views of professional development were also obtained. The survey instrument used a web-based design, with no one-on-one interactions between the researcher and the participants. The mixed quantitative and qualitative research design provided participant responses related to their experience in professional development, and delivery of speech pathology services in literacy curriculum. The surveys were Likert scales with open-ended questions.

### **Significance of the study**

In qualitative research, Mertens (2005) suggests research questions form from the inadequacies of current theory and research. From the review of the literature in Chapter Two, it is evident there is a gap between professional development and SLPs using literacy in actual therapeutic practice. Murza and Ehren (2015) noted in their study that professional development practice in the schools have to change if SLPs want to affect student outcomes. The study further notes that a focused professional development



program is needed for SLPs interested in collaborating and moving toward innovation of services (Muzra & Ehren, 2015). Muzra and Ehren, (2015) reported that with the current focus on accountability in education, it can be argued that it is now more critical than ever that school leaders demonstrate evidence of the impact of professional development on student learning.

Schools are democratically organized, data-driven, problem-solving systems where all personnel take part in the teaching/learning process (Obiakor, Harris, Mutua, Rotatori, & Algozzine, 2012). With constant and ever-increasing calls for more accountability of student achievement, especially in the areas of literacy and language, administrators need to understand the foundational underpinnings of language and literacy and the value SLPs can bring through intervention and collaboration (Blosser et al., 2012). Collaboration with SLPs improves students' ability to access the curriculum and contributes to communication, language arts, and literacy (Blosser et al., 2012).

The school administrator must provide professional development and the opportunities for teachers and SLPs to develop a collaborative program to ensure that students can learn in all school environmental settings (Zygouris-Coe & Goodwiler, 2013). Walsh (2012) reported that students demonstrate improved academic achievement trends with the implementation of collaboration across a school system. Moreover, Walsh (2012) found that effective professional development, facilitated at the school level by professional learning communities, was key to the positive effect of collaboration. It has also been noted that these sustained results reinforced factors supportive of collaboration with the annual school improvement planning process (Walsh, 2012).

The goal of providing professional development to SLPs in the schools is to help students maximize their performance and to achieve an outcome of success (Obiakor et al., (2012). Students in classrooms where teachers offered more opportunities to engage in comprehensive strategies were associated with positive changes in achievement scores (Sailors & Price, 2010). Because a curriculum infused with literacy impacts students, the research (Sailors & Price, 2010) indicates that professional development that focuses on collaboration between SLPs and faculty warrant the attention of school administrators to ensure the success of the students in the schools.

School administrators and curriculum specialists in the schools are responsible for planning, implementing and evaluating an educational program relevant to the needs of the students' population. The need for students to become proficient in reading and literacy skills is a crucial issue when planning the curriculum and professional development (Vicker, 2013). School leaders know the key predictors of early literacy success are taught effectively and efficiently through a strong curriculum and instruction program (Vicker, 2013).

SLPs, as a part of their job duties, work with teachers to assist student learning in literacy and reading (Wilson et al., 2016). Wilson, McNeill, and Gillon (2015) noted the need for teachers and speech-language pathologists to blend their expertise to assist with the provision of explicit and differentiated oral and written language instruction during the first years of school (grades K-3).

School administrators must work to enhance the support of the SLP in the public schools as collaborators of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and Response to Intervention (RTI) through professional development, which includes literacy and

reading (Blosser et al., 2012). The pleas for collaboration and cross-disciplinary integration of literacy sources is stressed by many sources including the American Speech Language Hearing Association (ASHA) as well as the International Reading Association (IRA) (Gosse, Hoffman, & Invernizzi, 2012).

Research by Ehren, Blosser, Roth, Paul, and Nelson (2012) indicates that SLPs play a significant role in providing teaching strategies to improve linguistic and metalinguistic foundations of curriculum learning for students with disabilities, as well as other learners who are at risk of school failure. Ehren et al. (2012) note that SLPs perform an endless number of tasks related to prevention assessment and intervention. The SLPs can focus on the language underpinnings of the CCSS when working with students in direct intervention. Ehren et al. (2012) emphasized the collaborative effort the SLP played with CCSS and RTI enabled the SLP to work with the teacher to develop classroom techniques to use with students who are at different proficiency levels across the standards.

Ehren et al. (2012) report that SLPs have a direct role in implementing the CCSS with students who are struggling with language/literacy as well as in supporting classroom teachers. The CCSS are intended to serve as academic standards for all students, including those with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) (Ehren et al., 2012). CCSS ensures that students with disabilities are provided instructions in which the standards are used as a method of effective implementation to improve access to mathematics and English language arts standards (Ehren et al., 2012).

ASHA (2010), noted in their professional issues statement, the need for professional development in the schools to be accountable for student outcomes and use

the scientifically-based practices required by No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as well as current curriculum and instructional strategies.

Wilson et al. (2016) noted the importance of educationally relevant specialists including SLP and teachers provided professional development in language and literacy instruction. To enhance the support of the SLP in the public schools as collaborators of CCSS, school leaders must move toward speech services and professional development that includes literacy to improve program quality and assist in increasing awareness of the relationship between academic performance and communication disorders (Wilson et al., 2016).

## **CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

### **Literacy and Common Core State Standards**

The ability to read and comprehend text is a crucial skill required for the academic achievement and life success of our students in the globally connected and information-driven society (Connor et al., 2011). Carson, Gillon, and Bouslead (2011) further stated an alarming percentage of more than 70% of students reach fourth grade unable to read and comprehend text at or above proficient levels, and this rate is higher for students who attend high-poverty schools.

Carson et al. (2013) further noted the international prevalence statistics provided by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) suggest that up to one in three children struggles with the acquisition of basic reading and writing skills. Carson et al., (2013) also noted that one way to ensure achievement in reading occurs is to ensure the

key predictors of early literacy success are taught effectively and efficiently in the classroom curriculum.

Carson et al. (2013) also note that phonological awareness is a predictor for early reading success. The study was completed through a quasi-experimental design employed to measure phonological awareness, reading, and spelling development of 125 five-year-old children. Thirty-four children received 10 weeks of phonetical awareness instruction from their teachers. Ninety-five children continued with their usual reading program, which included phonics instruction but did not target phonological awareness (Carson et al., 2013).

The results of the study indicate those children who received phonological awareness instruction demonstrated superior literacy outcomes compared to the children who followed the usual literacy curriculum (Carson et al., 2013). Carson et al. (2013) noted that children with speech-language impairments showed significant improvements in phonological awareness, reading, and spelling but had a different pattern of response to instruction compared to children with typical language. Carson et al. (2013) concluded that teaching children to become efficient readers in their classrooms is paramount to their future academic learning and lifelong success.

American Speech Language Hearing Association (ASHA), (2010) additionally reported that Alliance for Excellent Education (2009) has pointed out that only 29% of America's eighth grade public school students meet the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) standard of reading proficiency for their grade level. ASHA (2010) further notes that approximately 8 million of the 32.5 million students in fourth through 12<sup>th</sup> grade read below the minimum or basic standard for their grade level

established by the NAEP. NAEP also reported that 2% of all eighth graders read at an advanced level (ASHA, 2010).

Sailors and Price (2010) noted that results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) indicate that while reading achievement of fourth and eighth graders has continued to rise, the gap in performance scores between all ethnicities: white, Asian/ Pacific Islander, African American, Hispanic, and Native American peers continues to grow.

The Carnegie Corporation of New York's Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy revealed that as many as half of secondary school students could not read all but the most basic texts (King, Lemons, & Hill, 2012). Foster and Miller (2007) further suggest that high school achievement outcomes could be accurately predicted by performance scores as early as second grade for many students. The purpose of their study was to specify the developmental trajectories for phonics and early text comprehension of children from kindergarten through third grade.

Foster and Miller (2007) administered the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, developed under the sponsorship of the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. A total of 12,621 students were included in this analysis. The students included kindergarten through third grade (Foster and Miller, 2007). Foster and Miller (2007) reported of the total number of students selected to be in the study during the base year, this 12,621 represents an 83% participating rate over the four years.

The participants were divided into three school readiness groups based on the assessment of literacy skill development at the time of entrance into kindergarten. The groups were tracked on phonics and text comprehension development through the third

grade. Foster and Miller (2007) obtained results that indicate students in the average and high literacy readiness groups achieved high scores in decoding (phonics) by the end of the first grade. The students in the low readiness group did not match these scores until the third grade. Although the phonics gap was mostly closed in the third grade, a second very significant comprehension gap was exposed (Foster & Miller, 2007). This study supports the idea that there is an overlap in the developmental stages of literacy (Foster & Miller, 2007).

Sailors and Price (2010), stated it is imperative that all children become proficient in their ability to read and are provided opportunities to engage in higher-level thinking. Sailors and Price (2010) completed a study in Texas by testing two models of professional development for classroom teachers as a way of improving their practices and increasing the reading achievement of their students.

The Sailors & Price (2010) study was composed of 44 participating teachers, grades 2- 8, from three school districts. These teachers learned to teach their students cognitive reading strategies through one of the two models of professional development listed above. The participants included teachers from the second grade (n=6), third (n=3), fourth (n=6), fifth (n=5), sixth (n=3), seventh (n=11), and eight (n=8) grades (Sailors & Price, 2010). These teachers represented a variety of subjects. One group attended a traditional two-day summer in-service and the second group attended a workshop and received classroom-based support from a reading coach (Sailor & Price, 2010). Random-effects, multilevel pretest-posttest comparison group designs, and multilevel modeling analytic strategies were used to determine the effects of the two models (Sailors & Price, 2010).

The results of the Sailor and Price (2010) study suggest that students in classrooms in which teachers offered more opportunities to engage in comprehension strategies were associated with positive changes in their reading achievement scores. The study also found that teachers should not only provide students with the opportunity to engage in cognitive reading strategies but also construct explanations around those strategies with the students (Sailor & Price, 2010). Sailor and Price (2010) also noted the results indicated that students in classrooms in which teachers offered more opportunities to engage in comprehension strategies were associated with positive changes in their reading achievement scores. The study also indicated the more chances the teachers offered to their students, the more the students seemed to engage in constructed explanations around those strategies (Sailor & Price, 2010).

ASHA notes that CCSS are intended to serve as academic content standards for all students, with SLPs helping students develop, access or use skills and strategies to learn the curriculum (Reed, 2013). Reed arrived at the above conclusion through his review of the ASHA position statement in which ASHA believes that CCSS will impact SLPs with the development of IEPs and the domain of English Language Arts and Literacy that are reliant on the student's communication competence. Reed (2013) noted that ASHA had published several articles that provided useful information about CCSS and how they impact students with disabilities.

The purpose of CCSS is that language should not be taught in isolation, but instead, developed and incorporated throughout the day so that conventions, vocabulary strategies, and other techniques become a seamless part of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in the classroom (Zygouris-Coe & Goodwiler, 2013). Reed (2013) further



reports that the ASHA article notes the domains of English Language Arts and Literacy are particularly reliant on a student's communication competence. This article also states that the SLP plays a critical role in supporting curriculum mastery (Reed, 2013). SLPs are responsible for helping students to develop, access, or use skills and strategies necessary to learn the curriculum (Reed, 2013).

Reed (2013) further notes that ASHA has identified some key points that educators and school administrators are not recognizing: (a) the CCSS, (b) academic outcomes, (c) statewide achievement test score, and (d) annual yearly progress scores relate directly to school SLP service delivery. Reed (2013) notes this lack of awareness may be due to the administrators' and other educators' perceptions that SLPs focus only on correcting speech and language skills that are impaired. As SLPs implement these CCSS into their services, students' goals must be developed in concert with and reflect the identified goals of the CCSS (Reed, 2013).

Spracher (2000) provides a clarification of the roles and responsibilities of SLPs related to reading and writing in children and adolescents in the article *Learning About Literacy: SLPs Play Key Roles in Reading, Writing* published in the ASHA Leader. Spracher (2000) stated that this article was written to provide information about the development of the new position statement and the roles that SLPs play in the development of literacy.

ASHA (2010) identified the interrelationships across the language processes of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Spracher (2000) indicates that the ASHA position statement includes information about the multiple and reciprocal linkages. The connections between spoken and written language are well established because the

spoken language provides the foundation for the development of reading and writing (Spracher, 2000).

Spracher (2000) reported that spoken and written language have a reciprocal relationship, such that each build on the other to result in general language competence, starting early and continuing through childhood into adulthood. Children with spoken language problems frequently have difficulty learning to read and write (Spracher, 2000). Spracher further noted that children with reading and writing problems often have difficulty with spoken language; instruction in spoken language can result in growth in written language.

Spracher, (2000) also reported that instruction in written language could result in growth in spoken language. Spracher, (2000) notes that ASHA has developed a new position statement and guidelines. Spracher further suggests that when children have a hard time acquiring language, they are at a high risk for difficulty in learning to read and write and to listen and speak.

Spracher (2000) reported that literacy is perhaps the most critical factor contributing to academic and economic success and plays a vital role in social interactions. SLPs contribute significantly to the literacy achievement of students with communication disorders, as well as other learners who are at risk for school failure or those who struggle in school settings (ASHA, 2010).

Preparing educational professionals to provide language-literacy instruction is critical to advancing children's learning outcomes (Wilson, McNeill, & Gillon, 2016). The implementation of CCSS has created an awareness of the value of partnering with colleagues (Blosser et al., 2012). SLPs and teachers must be prepared to collaborate and

provide inclusion of services for the creation of communication friendly classrooms (Wilson, McNeill, & Gillon, 2015).

In a study completed by Wilson et al. (2015) the researcher sought to examine the knowledge and perceptions of student teachers and the student SLPs in the areas of language concepts, junior school literacy curriculum, service delivery, and professional collaboration. This study was completed through an online survey of 58 student primary school teachers and 37 student SLPs in their final year of professional study (Wilson et al., 2015).

The results of this study indicate that these groups possessed a limited understanding of each other's expertise in literacy curriculum and spoken language concepts (Wilson et al., 2015). Wilson et al. (2015) noted the participants demonstrated acceptance of indirect methods of classroom-based service delivery but were less accepting of direct methods of classroom-based service delivery. The teachers and SLPs reported minimal experience with collaboration during their pre-service education (Wilson et al., 2015). The results of this study indicate the need for pre-service inter-professional education with a focus on children's early literacy learning to prepare SLPs and teachers for collaborative instruction that enhance children's communication (Wilson et al., 2015).

Blosser et al. (2012) further reported that CCSS apply to SLPs and speech-language service delivery with communication playing a vital role in all aspects of the curriculum. The SLP must develop an awareness of the content standard and objectives that students are expected to learn (Blosser et al., 2012).

Blosser et al., (2012) suggests that English Language Arts make sense as a starting point because they include reading, writing, speaking, listening and language, all of

which require critical communication skills for attainment. Blosser et al. (2012) note that SLPs must ensure that their goals and objectives include information regarding the CCSS. Ehren, Blosser, Roth, Paul, and Nelson (2012) reported that SLPs should focus on the language underpinnings of the standards when working with teachers. School-based SLPs play a critical role in supporting curriculum mastery by offering assistance in addressing the linguistic and metalinguistic foundations of curriculum learning (Ehren et al., 2012). Ehren et al. (2012) reviewed a research article of Scott and Windsor (2000) that studied the language performance in a naturalistic context. Scott and Windsor (2000) noted that language performance could be characterized by a general measure of productivity, fluency, lexical diversity, and grammatical complexity and accuracy.

In the study by Scott and Windsor (2000) the extent to which ten general language performance measures differentiated school-age children with language learning disabilities from chronological-age and language-age peers. The study consisted of children producing both spoken and written summaries of two educational videotapes that provided models of narrative or expository (informational) discourse (Scott & Windsor, 2000). Productivity measures, including total T-units, total words, and words per minute were significantly lower for children with language learning disabilities than for chronological-age children (Scott & Windsor, 2000). Scott and Windsor (2000) noted fluency and lexical diversity (number of different words) measures were similar for all children. Scott and Windsor (2000) found that grammatical complexity as measured by words per T-unit was significantly lower for language learning disabled children. The study concluded that the effects of discourse genre and modality were consistent across

groups with written summaries being shorter with more errors than spoken versions (Scott & Windsor, 2000).

Reading is essential in our society (Sailors & Price, 2010). Those who struggle with literacy face severe academic perils early in life and economic inequity later (Sailors & Price, 2010). Carson et al. (2013) reported that ensuring children become proficient readers through effective classroom instruction is a critical issue in literacy. International prevalence statistics suggest that up to one in three children struggles with the acquisition of basic reading and writing skills (Carson et al., 2013). If a child is identified as being at risk for or having a reading problem, effective instruction is imperative in developing or improving the skills necessary to become a proficient reader (Kerins, Trotter, & Schoenbrodt, 2010). RTI in its purest form is described as a method of determining if a child responds to scientific, research-based intervention (Kerins et al., 2010). Kerins et al. (2010) noted this method alleviates the question of poor or inadequate instruction as the cause of a student's inability to achieve academically.

### **History of Speech-Language Pathologists (SLP) in Schools**

Speech sound production has traditionally been considered an SLP's area of expertise (Wilson et al., 2016). Speech-language therapy services have traditionally been viewed as taking place within a specialized room or location (Vicker, 2013). Vicker (2013) reported that this type of intervention model is called "pull-out" because the child is removed from the classroom curriculum for a specific amount of time. Vicker (2013) reported that there will always be a need for some children to receive at least partial services using this model. This setting is used for formal assessment procedures, for specific interventions that might be difficult to manage in a classroom setting, and for

individual students who need an environment that is quieter and contains less distraction than their regular classroom (Vicker, 2013). Merritt and Culatta (1998) note that the national trend emphasizes collaborative intervention with general education classrooms where the impaired student can engage in extensive and meaningful verbal interactions with peers and teachers on a more regular basis.

The role of the speech pathologist has been based on providing expert advice to a teacher (Wilson et al., 2015). At the inception of school practice, provision of services focused on fluency, voice, and articulation disorders, with later inclusion of language disorders (ASHA, 2010).

Although the SLP continues to provide the traditional services, the roles and responsibilities have changed with legal mandates and an expanded scope of best practices across different settings (ASHA, 2010). ASHA (2010) indicates that Response to Intervention (RTI) and telepractice have been added to several professional practices including those with reading, writing, and curriculum. Wilson et al. (2016) emphasized the prevailing models of service delivery adopted by SLPs were reportedly working with an individual or small group of children outside of the classroom.

Integrated therapy is somewhat different in focus, although it also occurs in the classroom and is sometimes called "push-in." Therapy goals are embedded in the curriculum with the SLP supporting a variety of children in an activity (Vicker, 2013). Language performance in naturalistic contexts can be characterized by general measures of productivity, fluency, lexical diversity, and grammatical complexity and accuracy (Scott & Windsor, 2000).

Scott and Windsor (2000) evaluated the extent to which ten general language performance measures differentiated 60 school-age children with language learning disabilities from chronological-age and language-age peers. Scott and Windsor (2000) found that productivity measures, including total T-units, total words, and words per minute, were significantly lower for children with language learning disabilities than for chronological age children. Fluency and lexical diversity measures were similar for all children Scott and Windsor (2000). Grammatical complexity, as measured by words per T-unit, was significantly lower for language learning disabilities (Scott & Windsor, 2000).

This quantitative study conducted by Scott and Windsor (2000) indicates the importance of expanding contexts for language sampling with these children. The SLP might teach the whole class specific lessons due to his/her expertise in that subject area (Vicker, 2013).

There are several critical roles of school-based SLPs including the substantive work in supporting curriculum mastery (Ehren et al., 2012). Ehren et al. (2012) further noted that SLPs perform a myriad of tasks related to prevention, assessment, and intervention.

ASHA (2012) provides a list of the critical roles of SLPs in the schools including being an integral member of school faculties. The functions of the SLPs also included helping students meet the performance standards of a school district or state and defining their roles and responsibilities and in ensuring appropriate services to students ASHA (2012).

Wium and Louw (2013) noted the traditional pull-out role of SLPs in schools is outdated and there is now a current move for replacement of traditional SLP services using the collaborative model of service. Wium and Louw (2013) discussed the changing needs of the roles of SLPs working in the schools. The policy in South Africa indicates a shift from supporting the child to helping the teacher, but also places more emphasis on the support of all learners in literacy to address past inequities (Wium & Louw, 2013). The research reviewed the model of collaboration at the learner level (student) by focusing on prevention and support; and the collaboration at the teacher level with training, mentoring, monitoring, and consultation (Wium & Louw, 2013). Collaboration can also occur at the district level where the focus is mainly on the development and implementation of support programs for teachers in areas of literacy (Wium & Louw, 2013). Wium and Louw (2013) further note that SLPs are required to provide language and literacy support to all learners in the classrooms. SLPs have a complex, multifaceted role to play with students who demonstrate the full range of reading difficulties in general education classrooms to students with significant intervention and support needs (Blosser et al., 2012; Ehren et al., 2012).

SLPs must be well prepared to collaborate effectively with teachers to support the diverse language learning needs of children (Wilson et al., 2016). Wilson et al. (2016) examined inter-professional education programs to prepare teachers and SLPs to work collaboratively to meet the diverse language literacy learning needs of children. This study investigated the efficacy of an inter-professional education program focused on explicit instruction in the language skills that underpin early reading and spelling acquisition (Wilson et al., 2016).



The combined program incorporated student teachers and student SLPs working together on case-based instructional planning supplemented with structured opportunities for the groups to share their respective expertise in curriculum and linguistic knowledge (Wilson et al., 2016).

Student teachers (n = 18) and student SLPs (n = 27) were randomly assigned to this intervention or a comparison intervention that replaced the structured opportunities to share curriculum and linguistic knowledge with spending time together focused on non-language/literacy-based activities (Wilson et al., 2016). Wilson et al. (2016) reported the study highlights the need to consider the preparation of educationally relevant specialists such as SLPs alongside the preparation of teachers to provide explicit language and literacy instruction.

As SLPs become knowledgeable about curriculum and teachers become knowledgeable about language concepts, collaborative design of language and literacy instruction emerges. (Wilson et al., 2015). The emphasis on curriculum and literacy acquisition and prevention activities including RTI are some of the most significant changes that are occurring in the evolving practice of SLPs (ASHA, 2010).

When SLPs begin to collaborate with general and special education teachers to integrate the CCSS into the daily school routine, a framework to optimize student outcomes, foster independence, and support future goals will develop (Blosser et al., 2012). Blosser et al. (2012) reported there are six principles noted in the ASHA position that can guide SLPs' efforts to integrate the CCSS in school-based programs. Blosser et al. (2012) notes these principles provide guidance on how to link the CCSS with students' current goals and demonstrate optimal ways to collaborate with teachers.

The principles include (a) focus on student outcomes; (b) ensure educational relevance; (c) establish distinct but complementary roles; (d) tools; and (e) address the continuum of need; and (f) focus on the academic standard does not preclude functional skill (Blosser et al., 2012). For these collaborative designs to develop and this framework to exist, the SLP must understand the demands of the curriculum at all grade levels and across the school, district, and state requirements (ASHA, 2012).

SLPs provide unique contributions to the curriculum with the background in linguistic and metalinguistic foundations of curriculum learning through literacy (ASHA, 2010). ASHA (2010) recognizes the interrelationships across the language processes of listening, speaking, reading, and writing to contribute to the literacy achievement of students with communication disorders, as well as other learners who are at risk for school failure or those who struggle in school settings.

SLPs provide services to support the instructional program at a school by working with general education teachers who are primarily responsible for curriculum and instruction (ASHA, 2010). The challenge to raise the bar on attainment of educational goals indicates that SLPs must work toward contributing to the goals of educational reform to prepare students for the new job market and responsible citizenship (ASHA, 2010).

The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA, 2004) articulates the schools' responsibility to ensure students with disabilities have access to the core curriculum of general education in the least restrictive environment (LRE) (Dixon, Yssel, McConnell, & Hardin, 2014). Dixon et al. (2014) noted that classrooms are ever-changing with CCSS as well as multicultural diversity, different learning styles, multiple intelligences,

and rapid social and technological changes. Dixon et al. (2014) further notes that the ever-changing classroom landscape includes standards-based classrooms, high expectations, and accountability for all students.

The CCSS serve as academic content standards for all students (Ehren et al., 2012). Historically, educators, school administrators, and SLPs did not understand the breadth of the SLP's role and responsibility regarding: (a) the CCSS, (b) academic outcomes, (c) scores on statewide achievement tests, and (d) annual yearly progress scores (Blosser et al., 2012). Blosser et al. (2012) further suggest school administrators and SLPs might not recognize these aspects relate directly to school speech-language services. These services may not be identified as a result of the perception of the SLPs' focus on only "correcting" speech and language skills that are impaired (Blosser et al., 2012). Blosser et al. (2012) emphasize that getting beyond this limited view of the roles of school-based SLPs requires an understanding that communication plays an essential role in all aspects of the curriculum, as well as in success at home, school, work, and community.

Blosser et al. (2012) suggest that educators, school administrators, and even some SLPs may not recognize that these aspects relate directly to school speech-language services delivery. As members of the educational team, SLPs develop an awareness of the content standards and objectives their students are expected to learn (Blosser et al., 2012). CCSS focuses on literacy by providing support for English language arts and literacy in the areas of history/social studies and science/technical subjects (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012).

SLPs' role in the schools and education have expanded and SLPs must strategize different methods to use in providing services to the many students who need help to succeed in school (ASHA, 2010). Because of SLPs' additional services, the CCSS provides an opportunity for SLPs to play roles as leaders in school settings (Ehren et al., 2012). The CCSS also provides a context to clarify the role of SLPs in schools and to help the profession move away from the narrow role of "speech teacher" (Ehren et al., 2012). Ehren et al. (2012) noted that SLPs might have to initiate these collaborative efforts, engage colleagues in discussions about their contributions, and be proactive about their involvement with the standards. Additionally, CCSS and RTI provide a window for SLPs to become involved in the general curriculum used in schools (ASHA, 2010). ASHA (2010) reported that SLPs could play a significant role in the RTI process across all tiers.

There are many theories and research models that have evolved to support the curriculum in the schools. Chall's model of reading development grew out of her seminal research on the effectiveness of different beginning reading approaches (Chall, 1983). In Chall's most famous work, *Learning to Read: The Great Debate*, the model began as a review of research in beginning to read (as cited in Stahl, 2000). In her 1967 book, Chall summarizes her findings on the debate between the proponents of phonics and proponents of meaning-based approaches to reading (as cited in Stahl, 2000). Chall's study concludes that whole learning the alphabetic code (phonological awareness, word analysis, decoding, and sound/symbol relations) is essential in beginning to learn to read; it is not all-important (as cited in Stahl, 2000). Other crucial factors include language,

excellent teaching, and instructional materials on an appropriate level of difficulty (Stahl, 2000).

Chall received funding from the Carnegie Foundation and spent over two years of work on this project(as cited in Stahl, 2000). Chall not only reviewed the research literature on the effectiveness of phonics instruction but also visited classrooms to examine what various kinds of instruction looked like (Stahl, 2000). Stahl (2000) further noted that Chall also analyzed the mainstream and new approaches to beginning reading and interviewed proponents of various programs. Her conclusion indicated early and systematic instruction in phonics leads to better achievement compared to later and less systematic approaches (as cited in Stahl, 2000). Chall and Feldman's 1966 study was one of three that reviewed the implementation of commercial programs (Kamil, Pearson, Moje, & Afflebach, 2011). The Chall and Feldman study found little relationship between what teachers reported they were doing and what they did. However, there was a strong relationship between what they did and what the students' learned (as cited in Kamil et al., 2011). In the model that is supported by Chall (1983) there are three significant stages of literacy development that are heavily relied on by educators and researchers (as cited in Foster & Miller, 2007).

Foster and Miller (2007) reported that Chall's Stage 0 is the prereading stage, which spans from 0 to 6 years of age. This stage covers a greater period of time and a greater series of changes than any other of the stages (Chall, 1983). This stage is characterized by children's growth in knowledge and use of spoken language (Chall, 1983). For example, the student learns words sound the same at the beginning and/or the

end, that spoken words can be broken down into parts, and the parts can be put together to form whole words (Foster & Miller, 2007).

In Stage 1, which is the initial reading or decoding stage, the student has become more automatic or fluent in the decoding of words and can attend to comprehension and meaning (Foster & Miller, 2007). The essential aspect is the learning of an arbitrary set of letters and associating these with the corresponding parts of spoken words (Chall, 1983).

However, at Stage 2 the proportion of new words learned through reading matches or exceeds the learning of new words via audition (Foster & Miller, 2007). Stage 2 Confirmations, Fluency, Ungluing from Print Grades 2-3 consolidates that what was learned in Stage 1 enabling students to apply knowledge gained to read words and stories (Chall, 1983). Chall (1983) notes there are also other stages including Stages 3 (grades 4-6) through Stage 5 (age 18 and above). Chall's (1983) model of reading development derived out of the seminal research on the effectiveness of different beginning reading approaches. A stage model such as Chall's (1983) model has important implications for individualization of instruction because development at each stage is dependent upon adequate development at the prior stages.

### **Impacts of Collaboration and RTI**

The call for increased collaboration and cross-disciplinary integration of literacy services has been issued by many sources including ASHA and the International Reading Association (IRA) (Gosse, Hoffman, & Invernizzi, 2012). Accordingly, the work within the broader context of education, such as literacy, curriculum, and RTI, requires close collaboration with educators in the integration of literacy services (ASHA, 2010; Spracher, 2016). A report issued by the Committee on the Prevention of Reading

Difficulties in Young Children recommends that SLPs collaborate with reading professionals through early identification and coordinated instruction (Gosse et al., 2012).

Gosse et al. (2012) further noted ASHA recommends SLPs should be working closely with reading specialists, literacy coaches, and special education teachers because all these professionals contribute important roles in changing the trajectory of national literacy trends. These specialized groups provide the foundation for collaboration. It is equally important to work with administrators, teacher and support services personnel to identify and meet students' needs (ASHA, 2010).

Furthermore, the blending of knowledge, perspectives, and experiences to create new knowledge has been highlighted as an essential part of real collaboration (Wilson et al., 2015). Therefore, SLPs must work effectively and collegially with many different constituencies within the school and the broader community to bring to the effort the unique contributions for which their academic programs have prepared them (ASHA, 2010). Partnerships with parents/guardians and the students themselves are also a focus, with specific requirements driven by IDEA (ASHA, 2010).

With the increased challenges of the CCSS, work in schools requires SLPs to partner with others, to meet the students' needs (Ehren et al., 2012). Ehren et al. (2012) further noted that the shared responsibility among educators has tailor-made opportunities for teachers and SLPs to combine their expertise and experience to create high-quality instruction. Teachers and SLPs have different but complementary skills that contribute to developing a child's language and learning (Glover, McCormack, & Smith-Tamaray, 2015). Glover et al. (2015) noted that teacher knowledge and skills relate to the

curriculum, literacy and teaching practice, but SLPs take a linguistically analytical approach to language.

Glover et al. (2015) completed a mixed-methods research design study to investigate the needs of teachers and SLPs and their preferences for service delivery when working with primary school-aged children. There were two phases to this study (Glover et al., 2015). In Phase One, all teachers (Schools  $n = 16$ ) and SLPs ( $n = 36$ ) were invited to complete a questionnaire with responses obtained from 14 teachers and 6 SLPs (Glover et al., 2015).

In the second phase, a subsample of participants ( $n = 4$ ) contributed to a focus group (Glover et al., 2015). Glover et al (2015) noted that teachers and SLPs expressed a desire for increased training and more collaborative practice. The teachers and SLPs also voiced frustration at perceived systemic inadequacies concerning funding, personnel, and resources (Glover et al., 2015). Glover et al. (2015) note the results of this study suggest that a change to service delivery needs to be considered at an individual, interpersonal and organizational level. Changes to the service delivery model will produce better outcomes for children with speech and language disorders, increase support from their families and the professionals that work with them (Glover et al., 2015).

SLPs often question their role in supporting students who have not formally qualified via IDEA for speech or language services but who might still exhibit weaknesses in speech/language, emergent literacy, or early phonics development (Foster & Miller, 2007). Foster and Miller (2007), noted that one strategy used by SLPs in public schools has been to provide instruction in classrooms that contain at least one IDEA-identified student. Foster and Miller (2007) report that many clinicians work to



cluster students with speech and language disorders into one or more classrooms and provide the instruction to the entire class, considering this a form of inclusion.

In either case, Foster and Miller (2007) note that clinicians feel they are reaching many potentially disabled or low-literacy-readiness students through complete classroom instruction. This approach was believed to be important because SLPs often question their role in supporting students who have not formally qualified for speech or language services but who might still exhibit weaknesses in speech/language, emergent literacy, or early phonetics development (Foster & Miller, 2007). As a form of inclusion, SLPs in the classroom work to cluster their students and provide the instruction to the entire class (Foster & Miller, 2007).

Wilson et al. (2016) noted that there is an increased emphasis on creating classroom instruction to meet the diverse learning needs of all student. Wilson et al. (2016) further observed the political and philosophical shifts toward a more integrated and inclusive form of education have resulted in providing classroom instructions to meet these diverse learning needs of all students.

The increase in collaboration and inclusion is based on a national survey that reported low rates of classroom-based work (Wilson et al., 2016). The study by Wilson et al. (2016) refers to a study that was completed by Brandel and Loeb (2011).

Brandel and Loeb (2011) completed a study through an online survey with almost 2,000 SLPs responding. The study examined the student, SLP, and workplace characteristics that may influence the SLPs' recommendations (Brandel & Loeb, 2011). However, these same SLPs reported that current students on their caseload with severe to moderate disabilities participated in interventions 2-3 times a week for 20-30 minutes in

groups outside of the classroom (Brandel & Loeb, 2011). The students with the least severe disability received intervention one time a week for 20-30 minutes in groups outside of the classroom (Brandel & Loeb, 2011).

Brandel and Loeb (2011) reported that student characteristics, rather than SLP or workplace characteristics, were the factors they considered the most when making these recommendations. The researchers concluded the limited variety of intervention program intensities and service delivery models used suggests that student characteristics may not be the most important factor considered when making intervention recommendations (Brandel & Loeb, 2011). Brandel and Loeb (2011) concluded that caseload size and years of practice appear to influence SLPs' recommendations regarding which program intensity and service delivery models to use. Collaborative efforts for the CCSS can occur in a variety of instructional settings to address diverse student needs and are compatible with RTI frameworks and other service delivery models (Ehren et al., 2012; Reed, 2013).

The SLP works with the teacher to develop classroom techniques, implement the standards, and assist with differentiated instruction for students who are at different proficiency levels across the standards (Ehren et al., 2012). Therefore, as collaboration is integral to supporting the child's communication, social, emotional and academic development, SLPs must work with teachers, other professionals, and parents to meet the learners' needs (Wium & Louw, 2013).

Providing resources and support is vital as children learn differently. Therefore, teachers need to utilize a variety of strategies to adapt lessons and efficiently plan to cater to all students' learning abilities (Boyle, Scriven, Durning, & Downes, 2011). The

cognitive strategies implemented in the classroom are designed to promote independent student thinking (Boyle et al., 2011).

The first step of providing services in the classroom involves building a collaborative working relationship between two professionals (Vicker, 2013). The benefits of collaboration include: (a) consistency of approach, (b) transfer, and (c) sharing of knowledge and skills among professionals (Glover et al., 2015). Vicker (2013) noted that consultation is one method SLPs may initially use in working with a teacher or a team within a classroom focus.

The collaborative role opens the doors for a more intensive, on-going involvement with the education of the students (Vicker, 2013). The team can focus on improving communication support in many curricular areas for all students: (a) at the core level of instruction, (b) targeting skills for a select group of students, or (c) focusing on students with specific challenges. In all three areas, the students could benefit from the experience and skills of an SLP (Vicker, 2013). Collaboration is a two-way process that requires teachers and SLPs to discuss specific learners, learning objectives, and how these can be achieved as well as sharing knowledge and expertise in the planning and assessment of learners (Wium & Louw, 2013).

Evidence indicates that reading difficulties become apparent early in the educational process and tend to evolve into persistent, lifelong struggles with literacy (Graves, Brandon, Duesbery, McIntosh, & Pye, 2011). The quasi-experimental study that Graves et al. (2011) completed examined the RTI Tier 2 evidence-based intensive reading instruction for sixth-grade students with and without learning disabilities who

were below basic level in literacy. The study completed by Graves et al. (2011) also explored the development of response-to-intervention model in middle school.

The study occurred in a large inner-city urban setting, where 100% of the students received free lunch, and 90% were considered English learners at some point in their school history (Graves et al., 2011). Graves et al. (2011) noted the students received intensive small-group instruction and intervention for thirty hours across ten weeks. Credential candidates in special education provided the small-group instruction in the treatment condition (Graves et al, 2011).

Results on oral reading fluency indicated more significant improvements for treatment students and students with learning disabilities benefited as much or more than the other struggling sixth graders (Graves et al., 2011). Graves et al. (2011) suggest that students benefit from intensive small-group instruction in phonemic awareness, decoding, fluency building, reading comprehension, and vocabulary enrichment. Explicit instruction with strategic reading and writing exercises should be incorporated into daily lessons and can be enhanced by including progress monitoring (Graves et al., 2011).

RTI is a general education initiative that takes place before placement in special education (Hazelkorn, Bucholz, Goodman, Duffy, & Brady, 2011). The RTI model provides an opportunity to work with children deemed at risk in the academic area, to assess their needs, and to apply theoretically sound evidence-based treatment to learning (Kerins, Trotter, & Schoenbrodt, 2010).

RTI was derived from the reauthorization of IDEA in 2004 (Greenfield et al., 2010) and represents a model that focuses on prevention, identification, and intervention (Sanger, Snow, Colburn, & Grogen, 2012). Sanger et al. (2012) note that it is critical for

SLPs and other educators to collaborate, plan, and implement RTI for students who struggle and are identified as at-risk and performing below expected grade levels. RTI is used as part of an evaluation model for identifying students with specific learning disabilities (Sanger et al., (2012).

The first two tiers of RTI require general education teachers to use research-based instruction with all students and then to evaluate the effectiveness of that instruction (Hazelkorn et al., 2011). In theory, this system of academic interventions and assessment is designed to serve two principal purposes including prevention of academic failure and diagnosis of learning disabilities (King et al., 2012).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (2001) legislation stated that schools must employ “highly qualified” teachers, as well as requiring schools to have all students meet academic standards (Greenfield, Rinaldi, Proctor, & Cardarelli, 2010). Not long after the passing of NCLB (2001), additional federal reform came through the 2004 reauthorization of the IDEA (Greenfield et al., 2010). IDEA (2006) provides local education agencies the authority to discontinue the use of the ability-achievement discrepancy method and instead use RTI as part of the evaluation procedure for identifying students with specific learning disabilities (Graves et al., 2011; Hazelkorn et al., 2011).

The original goal of RTI was to reduce the number of students identified for special education services primarily for reading problems (Hazelkorn et al., 2011). Since the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975), the definition and identification of children with high incidence disabilities have remained subjective (Hazelkorn et al., 2011). The subjectivity has led to the emergence of two trends the

dramatic increase of students identified as having learning disabilities and the higher percentages of minorities in special education than those found in the general population (Hazelkorn et al., 2011). In response, alternative methods were suggested to ensure the accurate and efficient identification of students with disabilities (Hazelkorn et al., 2011).

RTI is a systematic method for assessment and instruction of students which uses progress monitoring to help pinpoint students who may need intervention (Peck & Scarpati, 2007). The original goal of RTI was to reduce the numbers of students who were identified for special education services primarily due to reading problems (Hazelkorn et al., 2011). The RTI approach has gained significant exposure as the preferred alternative to special education because of the systematic method for assessment and instruction of students, which uses progress monitoring to help pinpoint students who may need intervention (Hazelkorn et al., 2011). Graves et al. (2011) notes the RTI approach suggests that general education and special education teachers work together to systematically assess problems and intervene as part of the general education cycle.

The goal of the multi-tiered model is prevention and early intervention to minimize failure in otherwise groups of children at risk for learning (Kerins et al., 2010). RTI is a data-driven, decision-making model that has the potential to provide continuous feedback about students in ways that have instructional implications (Hazelkorn et al., 2011). RTI provides tiers of evidence-based instruction through which students move based on their level of academic needs (King et al., 2012). The RTI model is multi-tiered with at least three tiers (Hazelkorn et al., 2011) to prevent academic failure (King et al., 2012).

King et al. (2012) provided a summary of research conducted at the secondary level and included a set of considerations for secondary administrators regarding RTI implementation. In secondary schools, the need for effective models of delivering the intervention to struggling readers is alarmingly apparent (King et al., 2012). Two large-scale studies have assessed the effectiveness of RTI in middle schools throughout multiple school years (King et al., 2012). One study conducted by Vaughn et al. (2010) tested a standard protocol model of RTI in seven urban middle schools in the southwestern United States (as cited in King et al., 2012). In the study sixth grade teachers received professional development concerning vocabulary and comprehension instruction to ensure adequate Tier 1 instruction (King et al., 2012).

Vaughn, et al. (2010) used state test scores as the basis for assigning 241 struggling students to a Tier 2 intervention involving standardized small-group instruction in vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension for 50 minutes a day throughout the entire school year. The student receiving Tier 2 instruction exhibited more significant gains on the measure of literacy skills than students in a comparison condition (King et al., 2012).

King et al. (2012) reported that two supplemental literacy programs were implemented with ninth graders who had been identified by the participating schools (n= 34) as reading 2 to 5 years below grade level. The researchers randomly assigned students (n = 5,595) to one of two experimental interventions or a control condition (King et al., 2012).

In the experimental content teachers instituted either Reading Apprenticeship Academy Literacy or Xtreme Reading (King et al., 2012). Both interventions were

designed to enhance reading comprehension, vocabulary, writing, phonics, and fluency (King et al., 2012). The students received the interventions as a substitute for an elective-level class for 225 minutes per week for one academic year at the cost of approximately \$2,000 per student (King et al., 2012). King et al. (2012) reported that at the end of the ninth grade, students receiving the reading interventions demonstrated statistically significant gains in reading comprehension ( $ES = 0.09$ ), grade point average ( $ES = 0.07$ ), and on standardized English language arts tests ( $ES = 0.11$ ).

Tier 1 uses high-quality universal instruction and assessment that is provided to all students in the general education setting (Hazelkorn et al., 2011; Sanger et al., 2012). Progress is monitored and students who fail to respond at this level are provided with more intensive supplemental instruction at Tier 2 (King et al., 2012).

Tier 2 contains more specialized and specific strategies used within the classroom for those students who have not progressed as expected in Tier 1 (Hazelkorn et al., 2011; Sanger et al., 2012).

Tier 3 is the stage at which a multidisciplinary team conducts a comprehensive assessment to learn whether the child has a disability and is eligible for special education (Hazelkorn et al., 2011). The academic interventions become more intensive at each tier as data were collected to determine the effectiveness of the intervention (Hazelkorn et al., 2011).

Regarding prevention, RTI addresses academic problems before they occur by ensuring that research-based general education and appropriate interventions are provided to all students (King et al., 2012). Greenfield et al. (2010) reported in their study that federal policies to increase student achievement and improve teacher quality underlie this



study. After the first year of implementation, eight elementary teachers were interviewed about how they viewed RTI reform effort (Greenfield et al., 2010).

The Greenfield et al. (2010) study noted the following question as a part of the research: After the first year of implementation, how do educators view the RTI change process? Greenfield et al. (2010) analyzed the data using a consensual qualitative methodology. The results indicated that teachers positively viewed the reform effort but expressed concerns about the implementation of RTI (Greenfield et al., 2010).

Greenfield et al. (2010) noted the majority of teachers associated the following positive outcomes with the first year of reform: (a) using data to inform instructional planning; (b) using progress monitoring to measure the effectiveness of the instruction; and (c) better knowing “when” to refer English language learners for special education services. In summary, RTI forces schools to adopt universal screening and continuous progress monitoring while examining and refining their instructional practices and delivery options (Greenfield et al., 2010).

The roles of SLPs in RTI have received minimal research, although researchers have described the advantages of the instructional approach for struggling students (Sanger et al., 2012). SLPs must become more involved with RTI efforts by assisting in preventing or mitigating learning difficulties in students by ensuring that basic language and emergent literacy skills are in place so that young students are prepared to meet the CCSS (Ehren et al., 2012). SLPs subsequently help students who are struggling with the acquisition of the CCSS across tiers (Ehren et al., 2012). As school districts explore RTI, they will want to foster these broader roles by SLPs who can be used an invaluable resource at all levels of the RTI model (Vicker, 2013).

The language and literacy expertise of SLPs, as well as the diagnostic-prescriptive approach of SLPs, may be beneficial in Tiers 1, 2, and 3, by providing consultation, assessment, professional development, and intensive interventions (King et al., 2012). SLPs' assistance in Tier 1 includes helping with ongoing screening, progress monitoring, assessment, and general and specialized education in a classroom setting (Sanger et al., 2012). Roles in Tier 2 consist of specialized or evidence-based interventions through small groups, progress monitoring, and other specialists to provide ongoing curriculum-based instruction (Sanger et al., 2012). In Tier 3, SLPs provide intensive curriculum-based interventions using a variety of service delivery models (Sanger et al., 2012).

This reconceptualization of the function of SLPs presents one way that school administrators may be able to reconfigure current job responsibilities to enhance the impact of existing staff (King et al., 2012). The SLPs' services are valued for their capacity to clarify the connections between language, literacy, and academic success. These connections enable SLPs to provide useful feedback to policy-makers and other professionals in school settings (Sanger et al., 2012).

SLPs are highly qualified to assess and provide direct and collaborative instruction for children exhibiting reading difficulties or those considered at risk for reading problems (Kerins et al., 2010). The study conducted by Kerins et al. (2010) consisted of 23 first-grade students identified as having below average reading abilities and/or poor phonemic awareness through classroom-based and standardized assessments and were randomly divided into two groups. Kerins et al. (2010) reported one group received explicit phonemic awareness training with the SLPs and multisensory reading instruction from a special educator in conjunction with classroom instruction. The

remaining group received classroom reading instruction exclusively (Kerins et al., 2010). Kerins et al. (2010) found no significant differences when comparing the results of a classroom-based intervention to students receiving classroom intervention plus 16 hours of additional intensive instruction. Both groups demonstrated overall improvements in reading efficiency, including segmenting and blends (Kerins et al., 2010). RTI provides an opportunity for SLPs to address academic achievement through their work with language literacy, curriculum and learning in school (Sanger et al., 2012).

### **Professional Development**

Research has noted that the goals of professional development are to facilitate the development of foundational understanding and instructional competencies for the topic presented (Dixon et al., 2014). Professional development, or now more commonly called professional learning, is a significant component in facilitating changes (Murza & Ehren, 2015). Professional development, when efficiently facilitated, can allow the SLP to experience the positive aspects of inclusion and collaboration (Boyle et al., 2011).

Professional development is provided from several resources including the state level or state education agency (SEA), which establishes: (a) regulations, (b) broad policies, and procedures, and (c) provides statewide professional development opportunities (Hoffman, Ireland, Hall-Mills & Flynn, 2013). Also, local education agencies (LEAs) implement regulations, policies, and procedures established by the SEA (Hoffman et al., 2013). Beyond these provided by SEAs and LEAs, Hoffman et al. (2013) noted that other professional resources might offer tangible support.

Glover et al. (2015) reported that SLPs desire increased knowledge regarding the curriculum to integrate activities to support children's speech and language skills within

the school curriculum. In the research completed by Glover et al. (2015) the researchers noted the benefits of collaboration and a transfer and sharing of knowledge and skills between professionals. Glover et al. (2015) used a mixed methods study that explored the current practices and investigated perceptions of need and preferences for delivery of services in mainstream schools. The results of the study indicate a need for joint training opportunities and shared resources to improve support of the students. Glover et al. (2015) noted the findings of this study suggest that change to service delivery needs to be considered at an individual, interpersonal and organizational level to enable better outcomes for children with speech and language delays and increased support for their families and the professionals who work with them.

Professional development opportunities must allow teachers to practice the strategy in a workshop, assuring the SLPs of greater success (Dixon et al., 2014). Dixon et al. (2014) noted that professional development that focuses on increasing teacher and SLP skills and gives SLPs the chance to practice new strategies should make a difference.

In the research completed by Dixon et al. (2014), it was further noted that the professional development opportunities must not only introduce the topic, but they must also allow teachers to practice the strategy in a setting in which they have the opportunity to write and review their lessons assuring them of greater success in the classroom.

Dixon et al.'s (2014) study focused on teacher efficacy as a way to explain teacher willingness to differentiate instruction. Two school districts participated in this study (Dixon et al., 2014). Dixon et al. (2014) reported that district 1 was characterized by its large, suburban, white-collared demographic makeup with a population of 4,000 students in grades 9 – 12. District 2 was located in a midsize industrial city that was

predominately blue-collared in demographics and had a diverse student body (Dixon et al., 2014).

Five different teachers in each of the four schools (two- elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school in each district were asked to participate (Dixon et al., 2014). The Dixon et al. (2014) study included forty-five teachers who were recommended to participate in the research project. Four teachers did not return their information and were dropped from the analysis (Dixon et al., 2014). Of the 41 participants who completed materials, 34 were female, and seven were male, all 41 reported Caucasian as their ethnicity, 18 were elementary teachers, 13 were middle school teachers, and 10 were high school teachers (Dixon et al., 2014). The Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (TSES), which consists of 24 items with a Likert-type response format of nine choices, was the instrument used to generate the data (Dixon et al., 2014). Dixon et al. (2014) found that a greater number of professional development hours in the differentiation of instruction was positively associated with both teacher efficacy and teacher's sense of efficacy beliefs. The Dixon et al. (2014) study demonstrated that teacher efficacy is an important dimension in implementing the process of differentiation regardless of what level or what content area the teacher taught.

School-based literacy coaches may provide professional development as a strategy frequently used in schools (Biancarosa, Bryk, & Dexter, 2010). This study was a 4-year longitudinal study on the effects of Literacy Collaboration, a school-wide reform model that relies on one-on-one coaching of teachers for improving student literacy learning (Biancarosa et al., 2010).

Biancarosa et al. (2010) noted that kindergarten through second-grade students in 17 schools were assessed twice annually with DIBELS and Terra Nova. The scores from the study's first year, before coaching began, offered a baseline for assessing the value added to student learning over the following 3 years (Biancarosa et al. (2010).

Biancarosa et al. (2010) used a hierarchical, crossed-level, values-added effects model, which compared student literacy learning over three years of LC program implementation. The findings warrant a claim of substantial effects on student learning for the LC coaching model (Biancarosa et al, 2010).

The benefits of literacy coaching have shown that school changes occur not only in professional context but also from the mentoring of a more experienced coach with those who are not as experienced (Biancarosa et al., 2010). Coaching, like professional development, is responsible for changes in practice and outcomes (Sailors & Price, 2010).

The strategy for enhancing both teacher and SLP preparation for effective literacy instruction may be the inclusion of inter-professional education among teachers and SLPs (Wilson et al., 2016). SLPs and teachers in the schools must have more professional development opportunities to develop effective collaborative practices that will support students' literacy development (Wilson et al., 2015).

Further, SLPs must have robust professional development in literacy and the curriculum used in the schools to ensure there is a more curriculum-relevant intervention and collaboration in the educational system (Zygouris-Coe et al., 2013). Zygouris-Coe et al. (2013) conducted a qualitative study with a sample of eight secondary school teachers, two teachers from each major content area at a large high school in a southwestern state.

The results of their study indicate that professional development for literacy is within the SLPs' purview to provide and that SLPs can provide a more curriculum appropriate intervention (Zygouris-Coe et al., 2013).

Appropriate training can provide the information and skills needed to feel effective in their roles and meet the demands of their positions (Berry, Petrin, Gravelle, & Farmer, 2011). The participation in relevant professional development results in reduced levels of stress with increased levels of competency and effectiveness (Berry et al., 2011). Further, Berry et al. (2011) note that professional development provides support by providing opportunities for SLPs to grow as professionals; and, thus has an indirect effect on their intent to stay.

The study conducted by Berry et al. (2011) focused on rural areas from special education administrators and teachers. The researchers developed both administrator and teacher surveys which were conducted by telephone interviews by incorporating the results from a focus group, a literature review of the research on rural special education retention, and the comments from a review of the instrument by a panel of national experts (Berry et al., 2011). Berry et al. noted the participants were employed in rural districts over a span of two school years.

The researchers sent letters to all administrators responsible for special education services in each rural district with follow-up phone calls yielding 373 administrators in 43 states who agreed to participate in the research for a participation rate of 76% (Berry et al., 2011). Berry et al. (2011) reported the interviewers administered a survey to individual teachers by telephone interview, with researchers randomly selecting fifty-five districts from the identified districts to create a sample size of 200 to 500 teachers. A

total of 203 special educators from 33 states volunteered to participate in the study (Berry et al., 2011). According to Berry et al. (2011), the results of this study prescribe special areas of professional development that would provide teachers with the necessary and desired training to assist them with the responsibilities of their positions. These areas of professional development to support rural teachers in their positions include: (a) working with paraprofessionals and parents, (b) low-incidence disabilities, (c) emotional and behavior disorders, (d) classroom management, (e) skills in collaboration and inclusive practices, and (f) curriculum content (Berry et al., 2011).

Muzra and Ehren (2015) noted that professional development or professional learning is a central means of implementing school reform and changing practices. With the current focus on accountability in education, it can be argued that it is now more important than ever that school leaders demonstrate evidence of the impact of professional development on learning (Muzra & Ehren, 2015). SLPs should use student outcome data as a focus on outcomes that are consistent with the practice and policy of evidence-based practice (Muzra & Ehren, 2015).

Muzra and Ehren (2015) conducted research supporting the assessment and delivery of high-quality Professional Learning for school professional including SLPs and a specific model for measuring change. In this study, Muzra and Ehren (2015) discussed an evidence-based method for evaluating Professional Learning in schools to inform both designers and consumers to use human and financial resources wisely.

The Muzra and Ehren (2015) study was conducted through a survey of 233 professional learning facilitators and 416 teachers from a randomly selected sample of 1,000 schools. The concerns-based adoption model (CBAM) was used to evaluate a



professional learning initiative (Muzra and Ehren (2015). Muzra and Ehren (2015) found that professional learning facilitators and change facilitators working with school-based SLPs should reflect on their current practices in targeting professional development.

The results of the study indicate that the current approach to professional learning is problematic (Murza & Ehren, 2015). High-Quality professional development should target improvement in student outcomes and should be focused, ongoing, supported, and evaluated (Muzra & Ehren, 2015). The study was completed by working closely with district administrators who had expressed a desire to understand the needs of school-based SLPs in order to move their implementation of the innovation to the next phase (Muzra and Ehren, 2015).

Muzra and Ehren (2015) suggest professional development practices in the schools have to change if SLPs want to affect student outcomes when seeking to implement new approaches, techniques, or program models. SLPs need to advocate for and be willing to engage in high-quality professional development that can affect student outcomes (Muzra & Ehren, 2015). A change in mindset surrounding professional development in the schools is first necessary to build capacity for a different and improved approach to professional development (Muzra & Ehren, 2015).

## **Summary**

Schools are democratically organized, data-driven, problem-solving systems where all personnel take part in the teaching/learning process (Obiakor, Harris, Mutua, Rotatori, & Algozzine, 2012). The school personnel include: (a) administrators, (b) teachers, (c) support staff such as school social workers, (d) psychologists, as well as (e)

SLPs, and (f) paraprofessionals who deliver supervised instruction and report the outcomes of that instruction to teachers (Obiakor et al., 2012).

There is no better time than now to help school administrators understand the foundational underpinnings of language and literacy and the knowledge SLPs can bring through intervention and collaboration (Blosser et al., 2012). Collaboration with SLPs improves students' ability to access the curriculum and contributes to communication, language arts, and literacy (Blosser et al., 2012). The SLP must play multiple roles in the intervention and curricular programs which impact individual students, whole classes, and instructional staff (Vicker, 2013).

The School administrator must provide professional development and opportunities for teachers and SLPs to develop a collaborative program to ensure that students can learn in all school environmental setting (Zygouris-Coe et al., 2013). Walsh (2012) reported that students demonstrate improved academic achievement trends with the implementation of collaboration across a school system.

Moreover, it was found that effective professional development facilitated at the school level by professional learning communities was key to the positive effect of collaboration, and the sustained results reinforced factors supportive of collaboration with the annual school improvement planning process (Walsh, 2012). Also, it is essential to note collaboration is not merely two or more people working together, but more importantly it is how two or more people can effectively work towards a shared goal (Leader-Janssen, Swain, Delkamiller, & Ritzman, 2012).

The goal of providing professional development to SLPs in the schools is to help students maximize their performance and to achieve an outcome of success (Obiakor et

al., 2012). Students in classrooms where teachers offered more opportunities to engage in comprehensive strategies were associated with positive changes in achievement scores (Sailors and Price, 2010).

While literacy, RTI, and CCSS impact students, the research indicates that professional development, as well as SLP and teacher education, warrant the attention of school administrators ensuring the success of students (Sailors & Price, 2010). A curriculum is a local, national, and international conversation, whose words are used by those who directly and indirectly are making the curriculum a part of the context of learning (Pacheco, 2012). In conclusion, teaching children to become efficient in literacy is paramount to their future academic learning and lifelong success (Carson, Gillon, & Boustead, 2013).

### **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

#### **Participants**

The target participants for this study were 238 public school administrators in the state of Arkansas and the 2,951 SLPs in the state of Arkansas. The unit analysis of this study were the school districts that consisted of the school administrators and the school SLPs. Participants sought were SLPs and school administrators in each of the 238 school districts in Arkansas. The sample was taken from school administrators and SLPs in Arkansas who completed the survey. Each public-school school administrator in Arkansas received a link to the survey via email. SLPs received a link to the survey via email.

#### **Research Design**

This descriptive study used a mixed method approach to identify Speech-Language Pathologists' (SLPs) and school administrators' attitudes and perceptions related to increasing the focus of literacy during professional development and its impact on the curriculum. A 5-point Likert Scale (strongly agree to strongly disagree) was employed to ascertain the attitudes and perceptions of SLPs regarding their roles in curriculum design as an important topic in schools' professional development. A similar scale was employed to determine school administrators' attitudes and perceptions regarding the emphasis of literacy in the schools' professional development.

As a method of gaining more insight into the SLPs and the administrators' attitudes related to professional development, a qualitative component was included in both surveys, which included a number of open-ended questions. These questions explored the administrators' and the SLPs' role in curriculum and literacy. (As suggested by Patton in 2015, who noted that qualitative methods are also the methods of choice in extending and deepening the theoretical propositions and understandings that have emerged from previous field studies).

A demographic survey was also included to gather data on the SLPs' and administrators' backgrounds, knowledge, and amount of professional development provided. The survey was generated through the use of a web-based system. The researcher confirmed that the generated informed consent, survey instrument, and subsequent invitation notices and follow up letter of appreciation were properly entered on the survey instrument. Online responses were used to enhance confidentiality and improve efficiency in obtaining study results.

When deciding the research methodology, quantitative methods are best used when identifying factors that influence an outcome or to test a theory or explanation (Creswell, 2003). Instead, when a concept or phenomenon needs to be understood, a qualitative design is recommended (Creswell, 2003). This research involved surveys from school administrators and speech-language pathologists in schools in Arkansas. Since this study asked open-ended questions and Likert questions looking for rich descriptions about the professional development experiences of SLPs, a mixed methods research design was deemed appropriate.

### **Instrumentation**

This study used 5-point Likert scale (strongly agree to strongly disagree) to generate the data regarding SLPs' perceptions of their schools' professional development in literacy. The survey consisted of fourteen 5-point Likert items and 13 demographic and open response questions. The protocol designed for the study included questions aimed at gathering information about how the participants perceived any prior professional development they had received, the need for additional professional development for literacy strategies and changes they perceive will be beneficial for future professional development. The information from these surveys were incorporated into the implication and suggestions for further study.

Each survey question was designed to address the following research questions:

1. To what degree does professional development currently provided by school districts meet the professional training needs of school-based SLPs?
2. To what degree does the professional development currently provided by school district emerge as beneficial to the intervention of services to SLPs?

3. What can school administrators do to ensure that all speech-language pathologists are being provided professional development in literacy?

The questions for the survey were peer reviewed by colleagues and the researcher's committee chair. The peer reviews were completed by two district administrators and two SLPs. The surveys were piloted by four practicing professionals including two SLPs and two school administrators in one school district.

The pilot surveys were completed at the convenience of the participants. The participants reported that the survey took them approximately 10 to 15 minutes. Once the survey was completed the survey was emailed back or personally delivered. The pilot survey results were assessed using the Cronbach's Alpha. Cronbach's Alpha is designed as a measure of internal consistency of items in the survey (UCLA: Statistical Consulting Group, 2018). It varies between zero and one. The closer the alpha is to one, the greater the internal consistency of the items in the questionnaire (UCLA: Statistical Consulting Group, 2018). The Cronbach's Alpha generated an overall score of 0.845 indicating internal consistency of the items (UCLA: Statistical Consulting Group, 2018).

### **Hypotheses**

A comparison between SLPs' and school administrators' responses to the 14-item, five-point Likert scale was provided by testing 14 null hypotheses that reflect the essence of each survey question.

H<sub>01</sub>: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding professional development of articulation, TBI, apraxia, etc.

H<sub>0</sub>2: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding professional development methods to assist students with literacy delays.

H<sub>0</sub>3: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding discussing the possibility of being active in literacy intervention.

H<sub>0</sub>4: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding professional development beneficial to SLPs' practice of literacy and curriculum in the schools.

H<sub>0</sub>5: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding identifying the SLPs' roles and responsibilities in literacy within the curriculum.

H<sub>0</sub>6: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding discussing the possibility of being active and collaborating in literacy intervention.

H<sub>0</sub>7: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding discussing the contributions of being active in literacy intervention.

H<sub>0</sub>8: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding professional development methods to assist students with literacy delays.

H<sub>0</sub>9: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding encouragement of professional development in career development.

H<sub>0</sub>10: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding practices of other SLPs' in the area.

H<sub>0</sub>11: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding increasing SLPs professional skills in literacy within the curriculum.

H<sub>0</sub>12: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding professional development opportunities to increase understanding of regular education content areas.

H<sub>0</sub>13: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding a desire for greater amounts of professional development opportunities.

H<sub>0</sub>14: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding professional development and literacy intervention on professional status.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Before initiating the study, the researcher requested all electronic-mail addresses of K-12 school administrators and public school SLPs throughout Arkansas from the Arkansas Department of Education and Arkansas Speech-Language and Hearing Board of License. The Arkansas Department of Education and Arkansas Speech-Language and Hearing Board of License forwarded 3,189 electronic mail addresses available on the 2017-2018 membership list to conduct this study.

In order to prepare for the solicitation of study participants, the researcher removed incomplete electronic-mail addresses from the file. Given the nature of



professional services provided by audiologists and SLPs and their likelihood of connection to the researcher, the electronic mail addresses of public-school administrators and SLPs in Garland County were not included on the list of participants solicited and recruited for the study.

The surveys were generated through the use of a web-based system. Quantitative data was collected from school administrators using a survey developed through, *Survey Monkey*®. The survey contained a demographic section, a Likert Scale, and open response questions. These surveys were sent to Arkansas school administrators and SLPs. The school administrators were emailed the survey (Appendix C) using the email speech-language from the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) to gather the email addresses.

Each school administrator was asked to identify his/her years of experience being an administrator, the professional development that is provided to their SLP, and the level of knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of school SLPs. The school administrators responded to a Likert Scale sharing their level of comfort of SLP's roles and responsibilities and needs for professional development in literacy and curriculum. The final option of the survey was an open response addressing: the types of supports they currently have in place to help bridge the gap of understanding of speech language pathologist professional development requirements and what they feel would help them to be prepared in additional professional development in their schools.

SLPs in Arkansas were sent a survey (Appendix D) using *Survey Monkey*® like the one sent to the school administrators. Like the school administrators survey, there was a demographic section, a Likert Scale, and open response questions. The surveys

were sent using the Arkansas Board Examiners for SLPs email list. Unlike the school administrator's survey, these surveys asked the SLPs to reflect on the needs of professional development in schools and their roles and responsibilities in literacy and curriculum in the schools. The SLPs were asked to complete a demographic section requesting years of experience, the size of their caseload, the number of students that are language delayed, and their educational level. They also responded to specific questions of the additional roles they perform including Response to Intervention, inclusion, collaboration, and literacy instruction.

Each participant received electronic-mail including the following items; (a) notice of informed consent providing information about the research and highlighting the invitation to enter the survey website; (b) the website link to the *Survey Monkey*© survey instrument, and, when applicable, (c) subsequent invitation notices to participants who were unresponsive to the invitation. Data obtained from the study would prevent the identification of individual participants.

The generation of electronic-mail to the participants asking them to participate in the study voluntarily constituted the initiation of the study. Following one week, a subsequent invitation to enter the website and complete the *Survey Monkey* © survey instrument was forwarded by electronic mail to school administrators and school SLPs who had not completed the online assessment. During the study period, subsequent notices were generated following the proposed schedule of the five weeks.

### **Data Analysis**

Once the data were gathered in the demographic section, the Likert Scale responses were analyzed for similarities and differences between Arkansas school

administrators. The surveys completed by SLP were examined for similarities and differences regarding their perception of school administrators providing professional development in literacy. After the school administrators and SLP's surveys were analyzed within their groups, the surveys were compared between school administrators and SLPs. The surveys were analyzed for similarities and differences between Arkansas SLPs. The surveys were analyzed to determine any gaps in understanding professional development in literacy and curriculum for SLPs. The qualitative portion of this study helped determine the demographic representation of the school administrators and the SLPs.

Quantitative methods are best used when identifying factors that influence an outcome or to test a theory or explanation (Creswell, 2003). Quantitative methods require the use of standardized measures so that the varying perspectives and experiences of people can be fit into a limited number of predetermined response categories to which numbers are assigned (Patton, 2015). The advantage of a quantitative approach is that it is possible to measure the reactions of a great many people to a limited set of questions, thus facilitating comparison and statistical aggregation of the data (Patton, 2013). By contrast, qualitative methods typically produce a wealth of detailed information about a much smaller number of people and cases.

The challenge of qualitative analysis lies in making sense of massive amounts of data (Patton, 2015). Patton (2015) notes that in analyzing qualitative data, guidelines exist but there are no recipes or principles to provide direction; however, there are significant patterns that can be used to construct a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveals. Marshall and Rossman (2006) remind researchers that

qualitative analysis does not proceed in a linear fashion and it is not neat. However good practice and procedures enhance the credibility of qualitative research. Patton (2015) reports that quantitative research approach provides the ability to measure the reactions of a great many participants to a limited set of questions, thus facilitating comparison and statistical aggregation of the data. Qualitative and quantitative methods involve differing strengths and weaknesses, they constitute an alternative, but not mutually exclusive, strategies for research (Patton, 2015).

All the submitted surveys and background information were gathered electronically using *Survey Monkey* ©. The survey of the school administrators' and SLPs' reactions to items on the survey were analyzed. The responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics generated from each survey and demographic portions of each survey. The study examined the mean scores, standard deviations, and differences for each instrument item related to the school administrator and SLP responses. An independent t-test was employed to identify any differences between the administrators' mean score responses and the SLPs' mean score responses. An alpha level of  $p < .05$  was established to accept or reject the null hypothesis. Additional analyses were conducted using the open-ended questions to describe the characteristics of the participating administrators and SLPs further. The responses to items on the survey were examined for any other perceptions, trends or consensus statements.

### **Ethical Procedures**

Permission to conduct the research was secured from the Institutional Review Board at Arkansas Tech University before collecting any data. There were no known risks associated with participation in the survey. Prior to participating in the survey,

participants were informed in writing that the survey would be strictly voluntary and that they could withdraw from the survey at any time. I offered no monetary or other compensation awards to individuals involved in the study. Any decision made by an individual regarding whether or not to participate did not result in any penalty or loss of benefits, or negatively impact his/her position as a school official.

Participants were provided with a notice of informed consent concerning the type of study, assurance of fair treatment, and the freedom not to participate. Participants had the opportunity to ask questions either via email or phone prior to participating in the emailed survey. Participants indicated consent by clicking to proceed with the survey beyond the initial information page. In the event of any publication or presentation from the research, no personally identifiable information is to be shared.

Once the data were collected from the surveys, access to the data links in *Survey Monkey* was deleted. The researcher and the research chairperson were the only people to have access to the initial survey data. Immediately upon completion of the research publication, the researcher will destroy the survey data. The archival data used will be available to the public.

## **CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS**

The purpose of this study was to identify and compare the attitudes and perceptions of Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) and school administrators regarding their schools' professional development related to literacy in the curriculum. Using a mixed-methods design, this descriptive study addressed the following research questions:

1. To what degree does professional development currently provided by school districts meet the professional training needs of school-based SLPs?

2. To what degree does the professional development currently provided by school district emerge as beneficial to the intervention of services to SLPs?
3. What can school administrators do to ensure that all speech-language pathologists are being provided professional development in literacy?

A 14-item, five-point Likert Scale (strongly agree to strongly disagree) was employed to ascertain the attitudes and perceptions of SLPs regarding their roles in curriculum design as an essential topic in their schools' professional development. A similar scale was employed to determine school administrators' attitudes and perceptions regarding the emphasis of literacy in the schools' professional development.

In addition to the Likert Scale, 13 demographic and three open-ended questions were included in the survey for both SLPs and school administrators. The questions for the survey were peer-reviewed by colleagues and the researcher's committee chair. Two school administrators and two SLPs completed the peer reviews. The surveys were piloted by four practicing professionals including two SLPs and two school administrators in one school.

The participants reported the survey took them approximately 10 to 15 minutes. Once the pilot surveys were completed, the results were statistically analyzed for internal consistency using the Cronbach's Alpha. The Cronbach's Alpha generated an overall score of  $r = 0.845$  indicating internal consistency of the items.

Before initiating the study, I requested all electronic-mail addresses of K-12 school administrators and public school SLPs throughout Arkansas from the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators (AAEA) and Arkansas Board of Examiners for Speech-Language and Hearing. The Arkansas Department of Education and

Arkansas Speech-Language and Hearing Board of License forwarded 3,189 electronic mail addresses available on the 2017-2018 membership list for the purpose of conducting this study.

The surveys were generated through the use of a web-based system. Quantitative data were collected from School administrators using a survey developed through, *Survey Monkey*®. (Appendix C). The administrators' survey contained a demographic section, a Likert Scale and open response questions. Each school administrator was asked to identify his/her years of experience being an administrator, the professional development that was provided to their SLP, and the level of knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of school SLPs. The school administrators were asked to respond to a Likert Scale sharing their level of comfort of SLP's roles and responsibilities and needs for professional development in literacy and curriculum. The final option of the survey was an open response addressing the types of supports currently in place to help bridge the gap of understanding of speech-language pathologist professional development requirements and what the respondents feel would help them to be prepared in additional professional development in their schools. One-hundred-three school administrators responded to the survey.

SLPs in Arkansas were also sent a survey (with questions matching the administrators) (Appendix D) using *Survey Monkey*®. Like the school administrators' survey, a demographic section, a Likert Scale, and open response questions were included. Unlike the school administrator's survey, these surveys asked the SLPs to reflect on the needs of professional development in schools and their roles and responsibilities in literacy and curriculum in the schools. The SLPs were asked to

complete a demographic section requesting years of experience, the size of their caseload, the number of students that are language delayed, and their educational level. They were also asked to respond to specific questions of the additional roles they perform including RTI, inclusion, collaboration, and literacy instruction. There were 182 SLPs who responded to the surveys.

A quantitative comparison of the responses between SLPs' and school administrators' responses to the 14-item, five-point Likert scale was provided by testing 14 null hypotheses that reflect the essence of each survey question:

H<sub>0</sub>1: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding professional development of articulation, TBI, apraxia, etc.

H<sub>0</sub>2: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding professional development methods to assist students with literacy delays.

H<sub>0</sub>3: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding discussing the possibility of being active in literacy intervention.

H<sub>0</sub>4: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding professional development beneficial to SLPs' practice of literacy and curriculum in the schools.

H<sub>0</sub>5: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding identifying the SLPs' roles and responsibilities in literacy within the curriculum.



H<sub>0</sub>6: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding discussing the possibility of being active and collaborating in literacy intervention.

H<sub>0</sub>7: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding discussing the contributions of being active in literacy intervention.

H<sub>0</sub>8: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding professional development methods to assist students with literacy delays.

H<sub>0</sub>9: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding encouragement of professional development in career development.

H<sub>0</sub>10: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding practices of other SLPs' in the area.

H<sub>0</sub>11: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding increasing SLPs professional skills in literacy within the curriculum.

H<sub>0</sub>12: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding professional development opportunities to increase understanding of regular education content areas.

H<sub>0</sub>13: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding a desire for greater amounts of professional development opportunities.

H<sub>0</sub>14: There will be no difference in the perceptions between SLPs and school administrators regarding professional development and literacy intervention on professional status

An Independent *t*-test was employed to identify any statistically significant differences between the school administrators' mean score responses and the SLPs' mean score responses. An alpha level of  $p < .05$  was established to accept or reject each of the 14 null hypotheses. This analysis is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

*A Comparison between Speech-Language Pathologists' and School Administrators' Perceptions Regarding Professional Development and Literacy in the Curriculum*

Survey Questions (See Appendices)	SLPs ( <i>n</i> = 182)		School Administrators ( <i>n</i> = 103)		<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i>
	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Question 1	2.47	1.04	2.67	.69	1.772	.049*
Question 2	1.99	.91	1.69	.59	3.387	.001***
Question 3	2.36	1.09	2.02	.80	3.045	.003**
Question 4	2.19	1.05	1.95	.81	2.106	.036*
Question 5	2.07	1.01	2.01	.69	.549	.583
Question 6	2.08	.96	1.98	.70	.974	.331
Question 7	2.11	.96	1.76	.57	3.812	.001***
Question 8	2.01	.83	1.90	.68	10.62	.289

Question 9	2.40	1.13	2.21	.86	1.573	.117
Question 10	1.71	.75	2.03	.55	4.085	.001***
Question 11	2.03	.97	1.85	.59	1.942	.053
Question 12	2.37	1.10	1.96	.64	4.002	.001***
Question 13	2.04	.94	2.39	.96	2.948	.003**
Question 14	2.72	.90	2.10	.76	.759	.448

<sup>a</sup>Note: Based on a five-point Likert Scale (5=Strongly Agree to 1=Strongly Disagree)

\* $p < .05$ , two-tailed test \*\* $p < .01$ , two-tailed test \*\*\* $p < .001$ , two-tailed test

As indicated in Table 1, there were statistically significant differences between the SLPs' and the school administrators' perceptions in eight of the 14 survey questions.

### **Survey Question 1**

*I am more concerned about professional development of articulation, TBI, apraxia, etc.*

The relationship of traditionally provided professional development for SLPs, and the perceptions of this training were inspected for each difference between SLPs and school administrators. SLPs and school administrators indicate concerns with the training SLPs receive with a mean SLP index of ( $M = 2.47$ ,  $SD 1.04$ ) and school administrators ( $M = 2.67$ ,  $SD .69$ ). The obtained value of the  $t$ -test indicates a statistically significant difference in perceptions of traditional professional development ( $t$ -value = 1.772,  $p = 0.49^*$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

### **Survey Question 2**

*I would like to know if there are professional development methods to assist students with literacy delays.*

The survey questions attempted to gain information into professional development methods that might be presented to assist treating students with literacy delays. SLPs and school administrators indicate differences in the perceptions of availability of professional development methods to assist students with literacy delays with a mean SLP index of ( $M = 1.99$ ,  $SD .91$ ) and school administrators ( $M = 1.69$ ,  $SD .59$ ). The obtained value of the  $t$ -test indicate a statistically significant difference in perceptions of traditional professional development methods to assist in treating literacy delays ( $t$ -value = 3.387,  $p = .001^{***}$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

### **Survey Question 3**

*I would like to discuss the possibility of being active in literacy intervention.*

Research question number three gained perceptions of SLPs being actively involved in literacy intervention in the schools. SLPs and school administrators indicate differences in the possibility of being active in literacy intervention with a mean SLP index of ( $M = 2.36$ ,  $SD 1.09$ ) and school administrators ( $M = 2.02$ ,  $SD .80$ ). The obtained value of the  $t$ -test indicates a statistically significant difference in perceptions of traditional professional development of active involvement in literacy intervention ( $t$ -value = 3.045,  $p = .003^{**}$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

### **Survey Question 4**

*I would like for my school district to provide more professional development beneficial to my practice in literacy and curriculum in the schools.*

School administrators and SLPs demonstrated difference perceptions related to this question with SLPs believing that more professional development in literacy is needed for them to play a more significant role in literacy and curriculum in the schools

with the SLPs ( $M = 2.19$ ,  $SD = 1.05$ ) and school administrators ( $M = 1.95$ ,  $SD = .81$ ) scores obtained. The obtained value of the  $t$ -test indicates a statistically significant difference in perceptions of traditional professional development related to active involvement in literacy intervention and curriculum ( $t$ -value = 2.106,  $p = .036^*$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

#### **Survey Question 5**

*I would like for my district administrators to clearly identify my roles and responsibilities as a SLP in literacy and curriculum.*

School administrators and SLPs demonstrated similar perceptions related to this question of the clear identification of the roles and responsibilities of SLPs in literacy within the curriculum with SLPs ( $M = 2.07$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ) and school administrators ( $M = 2.01$ ,  $SD = .69$ ). The obtained value of the  $t$ -test indicates there is no statistically significant difference in perceptions of identification of SLPs roles and responsibilities in literacy ( $t$ -value = .549,  $p = .583$ ). There will be no statistically significance difference between SLPs and school administrators regarding the identification of roles and responsibilities of SLPs in literacy.

#### **Survey Question 6**

*I would like for my school district to support my ability to participate and collaborate with other staff in literacy and curriculum.*

School administrators and SLPs demonstrated similar perceptions related to this question of SLPs participating and collaborating with other staff in literacy with SLPs ( $M = 2.08$ ,  $SD = .96$ ) and school administrators ( $M = 1.98$ ,  $SD = .70$ ). The obtained value of the  $t$ -test indicates there is no statistically significant difference the support of SLPs

participating and collaborating with other staff in literacy within the curriculum ( $t$ -value = .974,  $p$ = .331). There will be no statistically significance difference between SLPs and school administrators the support of SLPs participating and collaborating with other school staff in literacy.

### **Survey Question 7**

*I would like for my contributions at the school to be an important part of the literacy and curriculum development for students.*

Research question seven indicates that school administrators need to understand the contributions that SLPs provided in literacy and curriculum development for students. SLPs and school administrators indicate differences in the possibility of being active in literacy intervention with a mean SLP index of ( $M = 2.11$ ,  $SD .96$ ) and School administrators ( $M = 1.76$ ,  $SD .57$ ). The obtained value of the  $t$ -test indicates a statistically significant difference in perceptions of traditional professional development of active involvement in literacy intervention ( $t$ -value = 3.812,  $p$ = .001\*\*\*). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

### **Survey Question 8**

*I would like my district administrators to provide professional development that allows me to align my interventions to the curriculum.*

School administrators and SLPs demonstrated similar perceptions related to this question of the aligning SLP interventions to the curriculum with SLPs ( $M = 2.01$ ,  $SD .83$ ) and School administrators ( $M = 1.90$ ,  $SD .68$ ). The obtained value of the  $t$ -test indicates there is no statistically significant difference in perceptions of professional development related to SLPs aligning interventions to the curriculum ( $t$ -value = 10.62,  $p$ =

.289). There will be no statistically significance difference between SLPs and school administrators regarding the identification of roles and responsibilities of SLPs in literacy.

### **Survey Question 9**

*The school administrators encourage my career development.*

School administrators and SLPs demonstrated similar perceptions related to this question of the school administrators encouraging SLP career development with SLPs ( $M = 2.40$ ,  $SD = 1.13$ ) and school administrators ( $M = 2.21$ ,  $SD = .86$ ). The obtained value of the  $t$ -test indicates there is no statistically significant difference in perceptions of school administrator's encouragement related to SLP career development ( $t$ -value = 1.573,  $p = .117$ ). There will be no statistically significance difference between SLPs and school administrators regarding the encouragement of school administrators in regard to SLPs career development.

### **Survey Question 10**

*I would like to know what other SLPs are doing in this area.*

The question indicates that school administrators are interested in knowing what SLP services in literacy and curriculum are used in other school districts. SLPs and school administrators indicate differences in knowing what other SLPs are doing in this area of literacy. SLPs ( $M = 1.71$ ,  $SD = .75$ ) and school administrators ( $M = 2.03$ ,  $SD = .55$ ). The obtained value of the  $t$ -test indicates a statistically significant difference in perceptions of traditional professional development perceptions related to knowing what other SLPs are doing in this area. ( $t$ -value = 4.085,  $p = .001^{***}$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

### **Survey Question 11**

*I would be interested in increasing my skills in literacy and curriculum.*

School administrators and SLPs demonstrated similar perceptions related to the SLP increasing skills in literacy and curriculum with SLPs ( $M = 2.03$ ,  $SD .97$ ) and school administrators ( $M = 1.85$ ,  $SD .59$ ). The obtained value of the  $t$ -test indicates there is no statistically significant difference in perceptions of increasing SLP skills related to literacy and curriculum ( $t$ -value = 1.942,  $p = .053$ ). There will be no statistically significance difference between SLPs and school administrators regarding the interest in increasing skills in literacy and curriculum.

### **Survey Question 12**

*I would like to have more professional development opportunities that provide a greater understanding of content that the regular education teachers are required to teach.*

This research question reviews the perceptions of school SLPs to have more understanding in the curriculum and content areas of regular education. SLPs and school administrators indicate differences in this area SLPs ( $M = 2.37$ ,  $SD 1.10$ ) and school administrators ( $M = 1.96$ ,  $SD .64$ ). The obtained value of the  $t$ -test indicates a statistically significant difference in perceptions of traditional professional development related to understanding the content that regular education teachers are required to teach ( $t$ -value = 4.002,  $p = .001^{***}$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

### **Survey Question 13**

*I would like to have more time built into my schedule for professional development opportunities.*



The need for professional development is reviewed to determine the perceptions of the SLPs and school administrators toward more professional development time. SLPs and school administrators indicate differences in the possibility of being active in literacy intervention with a mean SLP index of ( $M = 2.04$ ,  $SD .94$ ) and school administrators ( $M = 2.39$ ,  $SD .96$ ). The obtained value of the  $t$ -test indicates a statistically significant difference in perceptions between administrators and SLPs related to adding time to their schedule for traditional professional development ( $t$ -value = 2.948,  $p = .003^{**}$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

#### **Survey Question 14**

*I would like to know the effect of literacy intervention and professional development on my professional status.*

School administrators and SLPs demonstrated similar perceptions related to this question of the effect of literacy intervention and professional development on professional status with SLPs ( $M = 2.72$ ,  $SD 1.90$ ) and School administrators ( $M = 2.10$ ,  $SD .76$ ). The obtained value of the  $t$ -test indicates there is no statistically significant difference in perceptions of effect of literacy intervention and professional development related to SLPs professional status ( $t$ -value = .759,  $p = .448$ ). There will be no statistically significance difference between SLPs and school administrators regarding the effect of literacy intervention and professional development on my professional status.

#### **Additional Analysis**

The survey consists of an additional three questions that were open response questions. The data was analyzed to review the responses obtained from school administrators and SLPs. The open-ended questions were developed to gain information

about the opinions of how school administrators are serving the SLPs in the school.

There were also topics of interest for SLPs included determining what areas might be of interest for professional development.

Merriam (2009) recommended qualitative researchers use open coding when analyzing data. After reading each of the comments several times, the data was divided into sets. The data sets were analyzed with open coding and making notes in the margins while highlighting information that seemed important to the research questions (Merriam, 2009). After completing the open data analysis on a piece of data, the notes were reviewed and grouped into common terms and codes that seemed to go together utilizing axial coding (Merriam, 2009).

This analysis presented the major themes or categories from each piece of data. After working through each piece of information coding and categorizing, the data was searched, once again, for commonalities while ensuring that attention was paid to any discrepant cases. There was no identified discrepant information found through the analysis and member checking.

The total impact of any one category was determined by providing the mean rating of the total number of SLPs and school administrators who commented. In the final phase of the data analysis, the findings were summarized using applicable visuals, such as tables. Although there were qualitative computer programs available to help analyze the data, the data was sorted and hand-coded the material using different colors to highlight words and phrases. The themes were identified through the coding process in each of the three open-ended questions. The themes are displayed in Table 2.

*Table 2*

*Coding Scheme to Categorize SLPs and School Administrator Comments*

(a) Roles and responsibilities of SLPs	
Category label	Criteria
RTI	Refers to RTI screening, committee, and planning
Student Advocacy	Refers to leadership, designee, student advocacy
Planning and preparation	Refers to due process, child find, progress reports, Medicaid billing
SLT services	Refers to speech-language therapy, evaluations, screenings
Collaboration	Refers too collaboration, inclusion
Dyslexia	Refers to dyslexia intervention, ESL services
Professional development	Refers to professional learning communities, professional development
Nonprofessional duties	Refers to recess, bus and lunch duties, clubs, sports
Literacy intervention	Refers to interventions that are used for literacy
(b) Strengths and weaknesses of professional development	
Category label	Criteria
Student served	Refers to the number of students served
Literacy improvement	Refers to literacy intervention and identifying delays
Time and collaboration	Refers to time spent in professional development and collaboration
ESL, and other services	Refers to ESL, Literacy intervention
Professional Development needs	Refers to what professional development is needed

Obtaining PD	Refers to ways that professional development can be utilized
Lack of PD	Refers to the limited PD offerings and lack of targeted PD
Contract SLPs	Refers to the utilization of contract SLPs
Inconsistencies	Refers to inconsistencies, time and funding

(c) Future literacy intervention by SLPs

Category label	Criteria
Plays Role	Refers to the role in the direction and development of SLPs
Crucial needs	Refers to the benefit of literacy to the specific needs of students
SLP involvement	Refers to the positive benefits of SLPs involvement
Developing training	Refers to developing and providing knowledge and training
Contracted SLPs	Refers to contracted SLPs
Collaboration	Refers to push in services, working with other school staff
No changes	Refers to no changes in SLP services
Dyslexia intervention	Refers to the need for SLP to be involved in dyslexia intervention

### Weekly Roles and Responsibilities of SLPs

There were 174 SLPs and school administrators who responded to the open-ended questions of the roles and responsibilities required of school SLPs in a typical week. The responses included 119 SLPs (68%) and 55 school administrators (32%) including principals and superintendents. This open-ended question reviewed the duties and responsibilities that SLPs complete in a typical week in the public schools (Table 3).

Table 3

*Summary of Comments about Roles and Responsibilities of SLPs*

Category	SLP ( <i>n</i> =119)	Response Percent	School Administrator ( <i>n</i> =55)	Response Percent
SLT services	37	31	10	11
Collaboration	36	30	14	15
RTI	35	29	21	38
Planning and prep	32	27	3	5
Student advocacy	20	17	3	5
Other responsibilities	16	13	3	5
Literacy intervention	12	12	4	7
Dyslexia	9	8	2	4
PLC and PD	7	6	1	2

When asked to explain the roles and responsibilities of SLPs the responses fell into nine main categories (excluding miscellaneous responses or no answers). SLPs responses to this question varied from simplistic answers which noted roles and responsibilities as 'speech-language therapy' to more sophisticated responses which highlighted the contextual nature of an issue, and how the experiences of the individual influenced the perception of the weekly responsibility of the SLP (Table 4).

Table 4

*Roles and Responsibilities of SLPs*

Category Label	Responses from SLPs.
<b>RTI</b>	I do attend some RTI meetings. RTI for articulation and language

Refers to RTI screening, committee, and planning	I serve on building RTI committees
<b>Student Advocacy</b> Refers to leadership, designee, student advocacy	Supporting students by working with teachers. Special education department chair. Special education designee.
<b>Planning and preparation</b> Refers to due process, child find, progress reports, Medicaid billing	IEP meetings, screening, evaluations, documentation, parent communication teacher communication, and coordinating with other professionals. Duties, IEP meetings, paperwork/billing Creating social stories/visual aids for students needing support, completing assessments, writing IEPs and completing all paperwork for students I am case manager for, daily notes/Medicaid billing, planning for sessions.
<b>SLT services</b> Refer to speech-language therapy, evaluations, screenings	I work in high school. I do not do literacy intervention and don't have time too. I do weekly consults, classroom collaboration, direct therapy, and testing. Direct speech therapy intervention and evaluations with required paperwork to develop IEP with meetings. Primarily speech-language duties.
<b>Collaboration</b> Refers too collaboration, inclusion	Collaboration with the resource teacher. Collaboration with teachers and special education teacher. Inclusion, collaboration.
<b>Dyslexia</b> Refers to dyslexia intervention, ESL services	The bulk of my caseload is dyslexia intervention. I provide dyslexia therapy and speech therapy. I am also a Certified Academic Language Therapist, but I do not officially use that certification in my role as a public school SLP.
<b>Professional development</b> Refers to professional learning communities, professional development	Professional Learning Communities. I am currently one of the Lead SLPs for my District. I see overages for SLPs and also provide support by mentoring new to the district and CF SLPs, planning PD, researching best practices to share with the group, purchase tests/protocols/ materials, etc.

	I am responsible for attending staff PD.
<b>Nonprofessional duties</b>	Kids clubs.
Refer to recess, bus and lunch duties, clubs, sports	Lunch duty, grade level meetings, faculty/SPED meetings.
	Recess, early morning duty.

When school administrators were asked to explain the roles and responsibilities of SLPs, the responses fell into eight main categories (excluding miscellaneous responses or no answers). The school administrators' responses to this question varied from simplistic answers which noted roles and responsibilities such as 'speech-language therapy' to more sophisticated responses which highlighted the contextual nature of an issue and how the experiences of the individual influenced the perception of the weekly responsibility of the SLP (Table 5).

Table 5

*School Administrators Views of the Roles and Responsibilities of SLPs*

Category Label	Responses from School Administrators.
<b>RTI</b>	RTI
Refers to RTI screening, committee, and planning	Our SLP is involved in RTI time
<b>Student Advocacy</b>	Leadership team.
Refers to leadership, designee, student advocacy	Student advocate.
<b>Planning and preparation</b>	Data analysis, and some teaching assignments
Refers to due process, child find, progress reports, Medicaid billing	Overseeing, structuring.
	SLT.

<b>SLT services</b>	Refer to speech-language therapy, evaluations, screenings	Speech Therapy.  She works in the classroom with the regular education teachers to help them provide interventions that might help prevent a student from later being identified as needing speech. Mostly the SLP works with the lower grades on phonics and phonemic awareness.
<b>Collaboration</b>	Refers too collaboration, inclusion	RTI Collaboration with teachers and parents.  Collaboration with PLC teams, consultation with me if needed.
<b>Dyslexia</b>	Refers to dyslexia intervention, ESL services	Collaboration, Inclusion, Language and speech therapy. No responses for this section.
<b>Professional development</b>	Refers to professional learning communities, professional development	PLC.  AS a building principal for the district I am working, I have no control over the SLPs professional development, how many hours she works on my campus. I take what I can get.
<b>Nonprofessional duties</b>	Refer to recess, bus and lunch duties, clubs, sports	Whatever is required. Head football coach.

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School administrators noted that SLPs are involved in RTI, speech development, planning and preparations, collaboration, and inclusion. The school administrators revealed that other duties that SLPs were involved in during the week included attending grade-level meetings, Medicaid billing, bus and lunchroom duty, serving on committees, and professional development.

There was a large discrepancy in the results of the open-ended questions in this area. The SLPs view many of the roles and responsibilities as being a significant part of the work that school administrators did not report as being part of the weekly roles and responsibilities. Both groups of participants did indicate that professional development and professional learning communities are the least familiar roles and responsibilities.



The two groups did agree that the most common roles and responsibilities were speech-language services, collaboration, and RTI.

The SLPs noted that they spent a great deal of time in planning and preparation which includes time preparing lessons, special education due process paperwork, child find, progress notes, and Medicaid billing. The direct speech and language services were noted as an area in which SLPs spend a great deal of their time. Collaboration and RTI also continue to take much of their time weekly. The SLPs noted that there is minimal involvement in dyslexia services, professional learning communities, and professional development on a weekly basis. SLPs reported that there are a lot of roles present in nonprofessional duties in which the SLPs noted included kids' clubs, lunch, recess, and bus duty. The SLPs frequently stated the various responsibilities of grade-level meetings, and faculty/SPED meetings.

The school administrators noted that the SLPs in their schools are involved in RTI the most and that the SLPs weekly roles also included speech therapy and collaboration. One school administrator stated, “She works in the classroom with the regular education teachers to help them provide interventions that might help prevent a student from being identified as needing speech. Mostly the SLP works with the lower grades on phonics and phonemic awareness.” The school administrators note that SLPs do not spend much time in planning and prep, student advocacy, dyslexia, literacy intervention, or other responsibilities.

Overall more SLPs completed the questionnaire than school administrators. The SLPs list of roles and responsibilities included speech-language services, screening, evaluations, due process, and conference paperwork. The SLPs noted RTI, collaboration,

inclusions, committee meetings with other staff, and occasional literacy instruction. The responses between the SLPs and school administrators indicate that SLPs spend the majority of their time in speech therapy services and planning and preparation.

### **Strengths and Weaknesses of SLPs Professional Development for Literacy**

One-hundred-sixty-eight SLPs and school administrators responded to the open-ended questions of the roles and responsibilities required of school SLPs in a typical week. The responses included 116 SLPs (69%) and 52 school administrators (31%), including principals and superintendents. This open-ended question reviewed the strengths and weaknesses of professional development provided to SLPs in the public schools (Table 6). The number and percentages provide the totals of the respondents in each of the categories.

Table 6

#### *Summary of Strengths and Weaknesses of SLPs Professional Development*

Category	SLP (n=116)	Response Percent	School Administrator (n=52)	Response Percent
Lack of PD	28	24	8	15
Inconsistencies	15	13	5	10
Literacy involvement	13	11	10	19
Obtaining PD	10	9	4	8
Students Served	6	5	4	8
Time and Collaboration	6	5	4	4
Contract SLP	6	5	4	8
PD needs	5	4	0	0
ESL, other services	4	3	0	0

When asked to explain the strengths and weaknesses of professional development in literacy, SLPs responses fell into nine main categories (excluding miscellaneous responses or no answers). SLPs responses to this question varied from simplistic answers which noted ‘a need for more professional development’ to more sophisticated responses which highlighted the contextual nature of an issue, and how the need for professional development impacted their careers as SLPs (Table 7).

Table 7

*Strengths and Weaknesses of Professional Development for SLPs*

Category Label	Responses from SLPs.
<b>Student served</b> Refers to the number of students served	<p>Weakness: Most literacy programs need to be done consistently multiple times a week. This is difficult to do as a sped service. With high caseloads, having literacy kids 4-5 times a week is too much. I see them and do what /I can when I have them.</p> <p>Weakness: I honestly do not have time to think about it _ 55+ student caseload, 20= pending evaluations, conferences, and daily paperwork. I would like to do better incorporating literacy into my therapy.</p> <p>Weakness: I have my hands full with language intervention at my school. I do not have time to do literacy intervention. I feel there should be another SLP who does literacy intervention.</p>
<b>Literacy improvement</b> Refers to literacy intervention and identifying delays	<p>Strength: Our SLPs have plenty of time built into their schedule for PD. I would like to see our SLPs involved more in literacy. I believe that literacy is a part of language development and the SLPs are the best professionals at increasing that language development. SLPs are great with the areas of reading.</p> <p>Strengths: I need to be included in our literacy training. My administrators offered a training opportunity to me, but it was in the summer when I was working at another location. I did let them know that I would like to be included if training is offered again.</p> <p>Strengths: I would love to know my role in improving literacy with children with language delays and how to</p>

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	implement therapy to improve literacy-pull our versus push in services.
<b>Time and collaboration</b> Refers to time spent in professional development and collaboration	Weakness: I would be nice to know the clear boundaries of what they want the speech therapist to work on in terms of literacy and what the district wants the resource classroom, RTI team, or general ed. Classroom to work on in terms of literacy. There are a lot of unclear lines. Weakness: It needs more of a teamwork approach. Weakness: Lack of collaboration and understanding of how different programs overlap.
<b>ESL and other services</b> Refer to ESL, Literacy intervention	Weakness: It tends to be too advanced for the level of reading the students I work with are currently at. I have mentioned this in several trainings. Strength: Our school has two separate literacy specialists just for elementary age students, so I feel like our literacy development is very good. Our district has 26 ESL students and serving them for literacy without actual ESL intervention is difficult. Strength: I do not do much literacy other than whole language because it is not needed in my district. Strength: Our district provides literacy training. Strength: I have more literacy training than most of the classroom teachers. Weakness: Literacy associated with preschoolers. Weakness: I'm not involved with the teacher's and their weekly Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings. I think it would benefit our students if I were involved in some ways. Weakness: I am the only SLP at my school, so there are not district PDs for me. Strength: RISE training; Weakness: Teachers are not given enough time to learn all the concepts involved. Weakness: I would like to have more PD on literacy and how I can participate in the process. Weakness: I am not aware of many opportunities other than very general information or intensive long-term training. Doesn't seem to be much in between. Weakness: There are very few courses for ST participating in literacy throughout the year. There isn't any time allowed in ST schedules for collaboration and planning. Weakness: I am completely on my own at getting PD, and therefore literacy PS isn't always easy to find.
<b>PD needs</b> Refer to what professional development is needed	
<b>Obtaining PD</b> Refers to ways that professional development can be utilized.	
<b>Lack of PD</b> Refers to the limited PD offerings and lack of targeted PD	

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<b>Contract SLPs</b> Refers to the utilization of contract SLPs	Weakness: I select my own professional development for my own needs. The district does not determine that for me. I am self-employed. Weakness: I have to seek out and pay for my own professional development.
<b>Inconsistencies</b> Refer to inconsistencies, time and funding	Weakness: No money for PD. Weakness: Time Weakness: Time factors, administration understanding of roles of SLP, teacher understanding of the role of SLP. Strengths: Normal and disordered language development knowledge.

When asked to explain the strengths and weaknesses of professional development in literacy, school administrator responses fell into nine main categories (excluding miscellaneous responses or no answers). School administrator responses to this question varied from simplistic answers which noted ‘a need for more professional development’ to more sophisticated responses which highlighted the contextual nature of an issue, and how professional development would impact the SLPs (Table 8).

Table 8

*Strengths and Weaknesses of Professional Development*

Category Label	Responses from School Administrators.
<b>Student served</b> Refers to the number of students served	Weakness: SLPs have so many students, therefore increasing their requirements creates an even more shortage for districts. Strength: Allows one more person to be directly involved with the success of each student. Strength: Small group and one to one interventions.
<b>Literacy improvement</b> Refers to literacy intervention and identifying delays	Strength: Improved literacy intervention. Weakness: Over-identification of speech-language deficits. Strength: It will help to build bridges between classroom teachers and the SLPs. Strength: The SLPs will know what is taking place in the classroom with students that she serves and will know how to meet their needs.

<b>Time and collaboration</b> Refers to time spent in professional development and collaboration	Weakness: Time constraints, lack of literacy background. Strength: Excellent team leader
<b>ESL and other services</b> Refer to ESL, Literacy intervention	Weakness: Time to offer; Strength: Collaboration Weakness: Creating the time within the master schedule. Weakness: Inconsistencies
<b>PD needs</b> Refer to what professional development is needed	No responses.
<b>Obtaining PD</b> Refers to ways that professional development can be utilized.	Strength: Webinars, conferences and support from APSRC and the educational cooperative specialists. Strength: We are a PLC school. Strength: Training through the Coop and all leadership committee members attended.
<b>Lack of PD</b> Refers to the limited PD offerings and lack of targeted PD	Weakness: Lack of targeted PD, need more offerings in our area. Weakness: I am not aware of or involved in PD for our SLP. I have not made any attempt to change that. Weakness: Need more PD on literacy in supporting teachers.
<b>Contract SLPs</b> Refers to the utilization of contract SLPs	Strength: We have a contracted SLP, and she attends our school PD as well as takes courses on her own. Weakness: My district contracts with our SLP, so PD is expected of them in order to renew their contract. Weakness: I cannot make changes in this area because the SLPs are not school employees.
<b>Inconsistencies</b> Refer to inconsistencies, time and funding	Weakness: Time Weakness: Not enough. Weakness: Unknown.

The open-ended responses for the strengths and weaknesses of the professional development included open-ended answers that were recorded into fitting categories. Of the respondents that participated in the survey question, the SLPs responded that the lack of professional development was a weakness in their school district. School administrators indicate that literacy involvement in professional development is a

weakness in the school district and needs to be increased. The weakness in professional development in the school indicates that school administrators need to provide more professional development in the literacy to further develop the goals of the SLPs.

One SLP who responded noted that weakness is that most literacy programs need to be done consistently, multiple times a week. Many respondents found the lack of professional development and obtaining professional development to be a weakness. The inconsistencies with the professional development provided is a weakness as well. A strength that was supported by many was the support of the school administrators to obtain training. She stated, "This is difficult to do as a special education service. With high caseloads, having literacy kids 4-5 times a week is too much. I see them and do what/I can when I have them." Another SLP noted that a strength to literacy professional development is "Our SLPs have plenty of time built into their schedule for PD. I would like to see our SLPs involved more in literacy. I believe that literacy is a part of language development and the SLPs are the best professionals at increasing language development."

School administrators noted several strengths and weaknesses of professional development provided in the schools in their open-ended responses. Many of the school administrators responded that the large caseloads of the SLPs in a weakness in time for additional professional development. Many others responded that time constraints are a weakness in the professional development provided. One school administrator reported, "I need for PD on literacy in supporting teachers." Another school administrator indicates, "There is a lack of targeted PD and need more offerings in our area." Other school administrators noted that professional development in literacy would improve

literacy intervention and help to build bridges between classroom teachers and SLPs.

The time constraints were often noted as weakness by the school administrators.

SLPs and school administrators noted that professional development is lacking on literacy. School administrators noted strengths with RISE training provided to their staff including SLPs. SLPs reported that there is little training available for them to obtain professional development in literacy. SLPs also noted concerns in providing literacy intervention based on large caseloads and feeling that there is sufficient literacy intervention in their schools. School administrators noted that more professional development in this area would provide more collaboration and bridge the distance between the therapy room and the classroom.

#### **Future Literacy Intervention in the Schools by SLPs**

There were 166 SLPs and school administrators who responded to the open-ended questions of the roles and responsibilities required of school SLPs in a typical week. The responses included 116 SLPs (69%) and 50 school administrators (31%) including principals and superintendents. This open-ended question reviewed the duties and responsibilities that SLPs complete in a typical week in the public schools (Table 9).

Table 9

#### *Future of Literacy Intervention for School SLPs*

Category	SLP (n=116)	Response Percent	School Administrator (n=50)	Response Percent
Crucial Needs	22	19	10	20
SLP Involvement	19	16	11	22
Developing Training	14	12	7	14
Plays Role	10	7	11	22



Collaboration	9	8	0	0
No Changes	8	7	0	0
Dyslexia Intervention	8	7	0	0
Other Ideas	5	4	0	0
Contracted SLPs	0	0	1	2

When asked to explain the future of literacy intervention in the public schools for SLPs, the responses fell into nine main categories (excluding miscellaneous responses or no answers). SLPs responses to this question varied from simplistic answers noting ‘innovative’ to more sophisticated responses which highlighted the contextual nature of an issue, and how the need for professional development impacted their careers as SLPs (Table 10).

Table 10

*Future of Literacy Intervention by SLPs in the Schools*

Category Label	Responses from SLPs.
<b>Plays Role</b> Refers to a role in the direction and development of SLPs	I would love to be involved directly with literacy but have no supports and am not viewed as important as I do not have a regular teaching license. Key role. I believe we will be the literacy specialists.....
<b>Crucial needs</b> Refer to the benefit of literacy to the specific needs of students	I can see myself using literacy to support the skills that we are working on in speech. I could be a resource, especially in our primary grades and preschool grades, on language development and literacy skills. Supporting language impaired students.
<b>SLP involvement</b> Refers to the positive benefits of SLPs involvement	I see the SLPs role as targeting the underlying processes that make reading comprehension possible. I want to be fully involved in literacy intervention. That is the path I would like to be a part of, but I do not believe my admin will ever allow it. Using what the school teaches to implement.

<b>Developing training</b> Refers to developing and providing knowledge and training.	I would not feel prepared to provide literacy instruction due to the fact that the classroom and special education teachers have been the staff to primarily provide literacy instruction and I have not had PD on the current curriculum. Hopefully, with training and when my ST caseload allows time, I can be involved in the literacy intervention process. I need more training in this area.
<b>Contracted SLPs</b> Refers to contracted SLPs	No response
<b>Collaboration</b> Refers to push in services, working with other school staff	Direct therapy, collaboration with teachers, and inclusion to help the teacher in the classroom teacher literacy. Working in conjuncture with the reading specialist. I see myself as a resource to help brainstorm and provide strategies to the interventionists and teachers. I will also use literacy in therapy to enrich my sessions.
<b>No changes</b> Refer to no changes in SLP services.	I have a variety of training. I normally tend to go back to the basics for students who have wholes in learning and start from the bottom up. Continuing to treat and educate and make kids the best version of themselves.
<b>Dyslexia intervention</b> Refers to the need for SLP to be involved in dyslexia intervention	Same. Mainly through dyslexia intervention. I wish I knew more in regard to dyslexia and overall literacy intervention. I'm expected to know about it but have had little training or education in regard to literacy. Continue as an SLP and work with dyslexic students.

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School administrators' responses fell into nine main categories (excluding miscellaneous responses or no answers) when answering the future of literacy intervention for SLPs. School administrator responses to this question varied from simplistic answers such as 'developing' to more sophisticated responses which highlighted the contextual nature of an issue, and how the need for professional development impacted the SLPs employed in their school districts (Table 11).

Table 11

*Future of Literacy Intervention by SLPs in the Schools*

Category Label	Responses from school administrators.
<b>Plays Role</b> Refers to the role in the direction and development of SLPs	I play a role in the direction and development of these professionals. I am going to involve my SLPS more in PLCs in order to increase collaboration with the homeroom teachers. I would love to explore the idea of using the SLP for literacy interventions.
<b>Crucial needs</b> Refer to the benefit of literacy to the specific needs of students	I would like to use all staff as efficiently as possible, so it would be great to expand the use of our SLPs in the schools. I would like to see the literacy interventions comparative to those that are suggested and implemented by the regular ELA teachers. Would like to see them in the classroom instead of pulling students out.
<b>SLP involvement</b> Refers to the positive benefits of SLPs involvement	I am all for it. I think they can be a great asset to teachers. Our SLPs has an extensive knowledge of games and activities that can be implemented in the classroom to improve language and vocabulary. Involved 100%
<b>Developing training</b> Refers to developing and providing knowledge and training	Need more understanding for usage. Somewhat familiar but still unsure how to correlate More involvement.
<b>Contracted SLPs</b> Refers to contracted SLPs	Our SLPs are contracted through an area provider.
<b>Collaboration</b> Refers to push in services, working with other school staff.	No responses
<b>No changes</b> Refer to no changes in SLP services	No responses

**Dyslexia intervention**      No responses  
Refers to the need for SLP  
to be involved in dyslexia  
intervention

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The open-ended responses for the future of literacy interventions in the schools included open-ended answers that were recorded into fitting categories. Of the respondents that participated in the survey question, the SLPs responded that the lack of professional development was a weakness in their school district. School administrators indicate that literacy involvement in professional development is a weakness in the school district and needs to be increased. A weakness in the professional development indicates that obtaining more professional development is needed.

According to the survey open-ended response question, SLPs responded that literacy intervention in the future is crucial to the needs of the students. Many of the SLPs did note that there does need to be more training in literacy. Other respondents noted that the future of literacy intervention in the schools would be in the area of dyslexia. SLPs did respond to the importance of SLP involvement in literacy in the schools but felt that there is a need for developing training. One SLP responded, "I would love to be involved directly with literacy but have no supports and am not viewed as important as I do not have a regular teaching license." Another SLP noted, "Hopefully, with training and when my Caseload allows time, I can be involved in the literacy intervention process."

School administrators responded to this open-ended question. According to the survey, school administrators believe literacy will play a crucial role in the future as SLPs begin to have a more significant role in literacy within the curriculum. The school

administrators noted that they are unsure exactly how SLPs can be utilized in the future for literacy intervention. The school administrators answered this question with short answers such as 100% involved to the response of one school administrator who notes, “I am going to involve my SLPS more in PLCs in order to increase collaboration with the homeroom teachers.” Another responded with “I would love to explore the idea of using the SLPs for literacy intervention.”

### **Study Results**

The research questions this study sought to answer included the following questions: (a) To what degree does professional development currently provided by school districts meet the needs of school-based SLPs; (b) To what degree does the professional development currently provided by school district emerge as beneficial to the SLPs? ; and (c) What can school administrators do to ensure that all speech-language pathologists are being provided professional development in literacy? This chapter presented the results of the survey in an attempt to answer those questions. Results obtained from the background section and the actual survey tool were analyzed through descriptive statistics and one-way t-test analysis of variance. This chapter presented the descriptive analysis findings from the background questionnaire section of the survey and analyses of the responses of participants' response. The data suggests that there is a significant relationship between SLPs needing professional development in literacy and curriculum in the schools. Additional analyses were conducted with open-ended responses that indicates that SLPs would like more professional development in literacy and curriculum. Indicating. Overall, there appears to be weaknesses in professional development with SLPs noting the limited time and not being included in literacy training.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Summary

The research questions on which this qualitative study was based are (a) To what degree does professional development currently provided by school districts meet the professional training needs of school-based SLPs?; (b) To what degree does the professional development currently provided by school district emerge as beneficial to the interventions of services to SLPs?; and (c) What can school administrators do to ensure that all speech-language pathologists are being provided professional development in literacy? The research questions were addressed through a comparison of the attitudes and perceptions of school administrators and SLPs through fourteen 5-point Likert questions and 13 demographic questions.

An independent t-test was conducted to compare the mean scores on the Survey for School Administrators and SLPs to determine if the attitudes and perceptions related to professional development and the emphasis on literacy were of statistical significance. All calculations assumed a 95% confidence interval and statistical significance were determined with a  $p$ -value of  $\leq .05$ . Analysis of the data revealed that there was a significant relationship between professional development and an emphasis on literacy. These analyses yielded eight statistically significant differences in attitudes between administrators and SLPs and six comparisons that were not significant.

Question 1 yielded a significant difference with school administrators yielding a higher mean score ( $M = 2.64$ ,  $SD = .69$ ) than SLPs ( $M = 2.47$ ,  $SD = 1.04$ ). The question concerned the more traditional professional development that is provided for SLPs including articulation, TBI, apraxia and other areas of professional development. SLPs have traditionally received this professional development and the difference in the results may be due to school administrators viewing this professional development as important to the growth of the SLPs professionally. SLPs expressed a concern in the lack of professional development due to money and support.

The results of Question 2 related to the question of possible professional development methods to assist students with literacy delays. There was a statistically significant difference with this question with SLPs ( $M = 1.99$ ,  $SD = .91$ ) and school administrators ( $M = 1.69$ ,  $SD = .59$ ). SLPs are concerned about the need for more professional development to assist students with literacy delays that they are seeing on their caseloads. Many of the SLPs in the open-ended questions expressed a desire to help with literacy however, the participants noted that due lack of professional development in this area the SLPs were unsure what to do with literacy delays. One of the participants noted, "I would like to have more PD on literacy and how I can participate in the process. I have expressed my concerns about this."

The results of Question 3 yielded a statistically significant difference with SLPs being more interested in the possibility of being active in literacy intervention. The SLPs ( $M = 2.36$ ,  $SD = 1.09$ ) and school administrators ( $M = 2.02$ ,  $SD = .80$ ). This difference is likely to be the result of SLPs being interested in literacy intervention in the schools. The open-ended questions provided an insight into the thoughts of the SLPs and school administrators into this area of professional development. Many of the SLPs noted that they would like to be involved in literacy intervention. One SLP stated, "I provide therapy based upon testing results and classroom-based performance. My goals are to remediate language. I use literacy for multiple tasks: vocabulary, tasks, sequencing tasks, sentence understanding, paragraph understanding, summarizing information, inferencing, deductive reading and prediction." School administrators noted there is a need for more understanding for usage. Another school administrator stated, "I would love to explore the idea of using the SLPs for literacy interventions. However, I am not sure how this would logistically apply to me."

The results of Question 4, which states: I would like for my school district to provide more professional development beneficial to my practice in literacy and curriculum in the schools were statistically significant. The results also yielded a significant difference in the need for providing more professional development in literacy and curriculum in the schools. The SLPs

( $M = 2.19$ ,  $SD = 1.05$ ) and school administrators ( $M = 1.95$ ,  $SD = .81$ ) indicates that SLPs are interested in professional development in the schools which will be beneficial to providing more literacy and curriculum in the services provided in the schools.

SLPs view the professional development in literacy as important because it allows them to provide literacy interventions in the schools while also providing the best services to students. The school administrators who were interviewed noted that inconsistencies, time, and money are hindering the professional development that is provided to school staff. One of the school administrators noted, “She attends PD for literacy as it applies to her program.” Another of the school administrators stated, “I have a literacy facilitator attend professional development.” The SLPs reported, “I would like to have more PD on literacy and how I can participate in the process. I have expressed my concerns about this.” Another SLP stated, “There are very few courses for SLPs participation in literacy throughout the year. There isn’t any time allowed in ST schedules for collaboration and planning.”

The results of Question 5, which states that I would like for my district administrators to clearly identify my roles and responsibilities as a SLP in literacy and curriculum has no statistically significant difference. The results yielded no statistically significant difference with SLPs ( $M = 2.07$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ) and School Administrators ( $M = 2.01$ ,  $SD = .69$ ). The survey results continue to indicate no difference between the SLPs and school administrators. There were SLPs who believed that the school administrators understood what they did and did not believe that they were needed to participate in literacy within the curriculum. The school administrators were viewed in the open-ended questions noting that SLPs had large caseloads with speech intervention and were not participating in literacy in the schools.

Question 6 surveyed the perceptions of SLPs and School administrators on the need of school districts supporting the SLPs ability to participate and collaborate with other staff in literacy and curriculum. The SLPs ( $M = 2.08$ ,  $SD = .96$ ) and school administrators ( $M = 1.98$ ,  $SD = .70$ ) suggesting that there is no statistically significant difference in the results of the



perceptions of SLPs and school administrators supporting SLPs ability to participate and collaborate with other staff in literacy within the curriculum. The open-ended responses indicated that SLPs were participating with other staff in collaboration of RTI. The school administrators noted that SLPs were active in collaboration in the schools with the SLPs collaborating with teachers in RTI processes and with students who are in special education services.

The results of Question 7 indicate a statistically significant difference with the important contributions at the school in literacy and curriculum development. The SLPs ( $M = 2.11$ ,  $SD = .96$ ) and school administrators ( $M = 1.76$ ,  $SD = .57$ ) suggested a difference in attitudes. The survey results continued to indicate a significant relationship in need for SLPs desire to participate and collaborate with other staff in literacy and curriculum. One participant noted, “I would love to be involved directly with literacy but have no supports and am not viewed as important as I do not have a regular teaching license.”

There were other SLPs who felt SLPs need to be more involved because of the training in the foundations of language development. The SLPs believed they could provide teachers with much needed insight into students, how to differentiate instruction, and how to provide intervention with documentation of those interventions. The school administrators indicated a need for more training and more involvement in these areas.

Question 8 reviewed the perceptions of the SLPs views of district administrators providing professional development that allowed for the alignment of interventions to the curriculum. There was no statistically significance difference in the scores obtained by the SLPs ( $M = 2.01$ ,  $SD = .83$ ) and school administrators ( $M = 1.90$ ,  $SD = .68$ ). The results of this question indicate that the participants did not differ on their perceptions of the professional development with the alignment of SLPs’ interventions to the curriculum. The open-ended responses noted that SLPs believe the professional development they are currently provided is within what is needed for their interventions with the schools. The school administrators noted that they are being provided professional development in the schools.

The results of Question 9 notes that school administrators encourage my career development. This question views the perceptions of the SLPs ( $M = 2.40$ ,  $SD = 1.13$ ) and school administrators ( $M = 2.21$ ,  $SD = .86$ ) toward career development being encouraged. There are some differences in the open-ended responses with one SLP noting “the school administrator does not provide for my professional development.” Another SLP stated, “My school administrator is supportive and provides me with any professional development I need.” A school administrator noted, “I do not provide professional development for my SLPs. They are required to get it on their own.” These results indicate there is no statistically significant difference in the results that were obtained.

The results of Questions 10, which addressed an interest in what other SLPs are doing in this area, indicated a desire by the school administrators to have a better understanding of what other school districts are implementing with SLPs with a statistically significant difference of SLPs ( $M = 1.71$ ,  $SD = .75$ ) and school administrators ( $M = 2.03$ ,  $SD = .55$ ). These attitudes are also indicated in the open-ended responses where many of the school administrators expressed a desire for a better understanding of SLPs being used in this area and the need for more training. Others noted this is a good idea and would like to see improvement in this area.

Question 11 surveyed the perceptions of the interest in increasing skills in literacy and curriculum. The results of this question indicated that there is no statistically significant difference. The SLPs ( $M = 2.03$ ,  $SD = .97$ ) and school administrators ( $M = 1.85$ ,  $SD = .59$ ) notes that both groups of participants tended to agree on the need for SLPs increasing their skills in literacy within the curriculum. This is also present when the open-ended responses were analyzed with SLPs noting that they would like to participate in literacy interventions within the schools. The school administrators reported they would like to see the SLPs being more involved with literacy.

The need for more professional development opportunities to provide a greater understanding of content used by the regular education teachers was surveyed in Question 12.

The analyses also indicated a statistically significant difference between administrators and SLPs for more professional development opportunities to provide a greater understanding of content areas of the general education curriculum. The SLPs ( $M = 2.37$ ,  $SD = 1.10$ ) and school administrators ( $M = 1.96$ ,  $SD = .64$ ) indicated that SLPs are more interested in professional development in regular education content than the administrators. One school administrator stated, “A lack of targeted PD.” Another school administrator noted, “I am not aware of or involved in PD for our SLPs. I have not made any attempt to change that.” The SLPs reported, “I would like to be included in our literacy training. My administrators offered a training opportunity to me, but it was in the summer when I was working at another location. I did let them know that I would like to be included if training is offered again.” Another SLP participant reported, “PD is very limited because SLPs are not often viewed as essential in the educational process.”

Question 13 generated a statistically significant difference between SLPs and administrators regarding scheduling opportunities. This question attempted to determine SLPs’ and administrators’ attitudes toward more time built into the schedule for professional development opportunities. The difference in the SLPs ( $M = 2.04$ ,  $SD = .94$ ) and school administrators ( $M = 2.39$ ,  $SD = .96$ ) are likely due to school administrators believing there needs to be more time provided for professional development. Many of the school administrators noted that there is not enough time to provide more professional development. The school administrators also noted there is a need for more professional development on literacy in supporting teachers. The SLPs noted overwhelming caseloads, as well as the due process paperwork taking so much time to complete.

The results of Question 14 indicate that there is no statistically significant difference in the perceptions and attitudes of knowing more about the effects of literacy and intervention of professional development on my professional status. The SLPs ( $M = 2.72$ ,  $SD = .90$ ) and school administrators ( $M = 2.10$ ,  $SD = .76$ ) noted there is little difference in their perceptions and

attitudes on gaining more knowledge of the effects of literacy and intervention of professional development on the SLPs professional status. During the open-ended responses the SLPs did not state how professional development would impact their professional status with the exception of noting they are already overloaded with large caseloads and have many duties they are responsible for. The school administrators noted they would be interested in SLPs being more involved but did not have much knowledge of how this would be possible in their schools.

The comment and open-ended questions were examined to determine areas in which professional development could improve. The open-ended questions reviewed the weekly roles and responsibilities of school SLPs. The comments indicate that SLPs are involved in many roles and responsibilities each week in the schools. Many are involved in RTI and student advocacy including planning and prep for due process conferences and meeting with the parents in addition to speech therapy services. School administrators and SLPs also noted that many are involved in the collaboration, dyslexia services, literacy intervention, and other responsibilities including recess and early morning duty and faculty meetings.

The open-ended questions and comments analyses indicate many strengths and weaknesses of professional development provided for literacy. The SLPs were concerned about the number of students who are on their caseloads and having to provide services for more students. There were concerns that literacy programs need to be completed consistently multiple times a week; and thus, viewed as difficult to provide when students were in special education services. Many SLPs noted there is not enough time when they have fifty-five plus students on their caseload with required paperwork for due process and Medicaid billing. Many SLPs did see strengths for professional development in literacy to be added to their schedules. They believe that literacy is a part of language development and that SLPs are the best professionals at increasing language development. The SLPs also noted they would love to know their role in improving literacy with children with language delays and would like to implement “push in” or services in the classroom as part of their therapeutic services. The SLPs expressed concerns with

time and collaboration and believed that it would be a weakness for the SLP to participate in literacy interventions as classroom teachers already work on literacy. Several SLPs noted their school districts provide literacy training. Other SLPs stated there is a lack of professional development and if there is any, they are required to obtain it on their own. One contract SLP considered obtaining professional development at her own expense is a negative factor to further her professional growth.

The school administrators noted many of the same responses with SLPs having large caseloads and not having time to provide additional services. The school administrators did believe reducing caseloads would help improve literacy intervention and build bridges between the classroom teachers and the SLPs. The analyses revealed that school administrators and SLPs viewed time and collaboration caused by time constraints and lack of literacy background as a weakness for professional development. School administrators noted that they view the use of webinars and educational cooperatives as a strength for professional development.

The final open-ended question and comment reviewed the future literacy intervention in the schools that could be provided by school SLPs. SLPs noted they would love to be involved directly with literacy, but there is no support at their school district. Others noted they see themselves as playing a pivotal role in literacy in the future. One SLP noted she/he could see SLP services as using literacy to support the skills that used during speech therapy. SLPs do see the future roles in literacy but do not feel prepared to provide literacy instruction due to no professional development on the current curriculum. The SLPs believe collaboration will be used more frequently in the future with more services provided with the classroom teacher. Other SLPs do not believe there will be any changes.

The school administrators believe there is a need to involve school SLPs by using professional learning communities to start a collaboration with the homeroom teachers and SLPs. The analyses also found school administrators considered this to be a crucial need and would like

to expand the use of SLPs in the schools. School administrators noted it would be an asset to the school district to have the SLPs involved in literacy in the schools.

### **Conclusions and Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to: examine the perceptions of SLPs regarding professional development provided by administrators for SLPs in public schools relative to literacy curriculum quality and clearly identify the perceptions of school administrators regarding professional development of SLPs. In the position statement, ASHA supports the need for SLPs to be active in literacy and curriculum in the schools (ASHA, 2010). Muzra and Ehren (2015) note that there is more professional development needed for literacy in the schools. The present study determined a relationship between the need for professional development in literacy in the schools.

Data analyses revealed that there was a statistically significant relationship between SLP and school administrator responses on eight of the survey questions. These questions indicated the need for professional development for SLPs in literacy. The statistically significant relationship indicated that all believed that professional development is needed. The remaining six questions revealed that there is no statistically significant relationship. The data revealed that SLPs and school administrators believed in the increased availability of professional development in literacy and curriculum. However, the data indicated administrators and SLPs did not agree on providing additional literacy intervention in the school. The survey questions that demonstrated no significance were related to the SLPs lack of interest and time constraints to participate in literacy intervention in the schools. The open-ended and comment responses indicated SLPs were interested in providing literacy interventions in the schools. However, they were concerned about the time limits faced because of large caseloads and other duties present. SLPs also expressed interested in increasing knowledge in literacy and content area curriculum of the regular education curriculum as part of their professional development.

### **Implications for Practice**

Ultimately, the results of this research could be used to identify specific leadership practice common among school districts. Although a conclusive identification of these practices did not occur, some trends did emerge leading to the following possible implications for practice:

1. School administrators should have professional development activities that provide literacy and curriculum to SLPs employed in their school to support literacy involvement. The Arkansas Department of Education and school administrators might use identified literacy needs and the ASHA position statement from the literature to develop detailed guidelines and professional development for the involvement of SLPs in literacy and curriculum.
2. School administrators and the Arkansas Department of Education might use the results of this study to advocate for the development of a clear, consistent, comprehensive, and detailed protocol to identify the roles and responsibilities of SLPs in literacy and curriculum.( Hopefully, as there is a better understanding of the roles and responsibilities, this knowledge will contribute to better professional development opportunities and alignment of literacy and curriculum to SLP interventions.
3. The Arkansas Department of Education, school administrators, and the Arkansas Speech, Language and Hearing Association (ArkSHA), might focus some professional development session in literacy, differentiated instruction, and RTI. Additionally, school districts might consider using the results of this study to increase the participation of school SLPs in general education programs to provide more significant participation in the general education curriculum.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study is limited by the online, electronic survey through *SurveyMonkey*©. While every effort was made to reach every SLP and school administrator in the State of Arkansas through the assistance of the Arkansas Department of Education and the Arkansas Board of Examiners for Speech Language Pathology and Audiology, there was no method for determining if the survey reached a school administrator or SLP, whether they opened the survey or simply deleted the survey.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

The comparisons between school administrators' and SLPs' self-ratings on the surveys identified the need for professional development in literacy and curriculum is needed. Future research might focus more on the types of professional development provided to school SLPs. Another recommendation would be to replicate this study with a focus on more continuous measure of professional development effectiveness by utilizing the professional development provided to school SLPs by obtaining three years of data from the educational cooperative records of professional development.

School administrators noted in the comments that more research is needed to know the impact that SLPs would have on literacy in the schools. The research would provide a comprehensive means of evaluating the skills SLPs have gained in higher education and the effect that this would have on literacy in the schools. A recommendation for future research is to study the different educational programs' curricula in the universities to determine the number of programs that provide a review of the qualification of SLPs to assist in more curriculum provided in the schools.



Another recommendation would be to conduct a study that reviews the participation of SLPs in RTI. SLPs are increasingly involved in RTI by conducting screenings and providing strategies. Future research might also focus on determining how the school districts can utilize SLPs in the RTI process in the schools.

Of great interest in this study was the fact that, although the majority of school administrators rated themselves relatively highly effective in professional development on the survey for school administrators, the SLPs tended to rate the school administrators lower in their professional development provided in literacy and curriculum. Future research might focus on replicating this portion of the study with larger sample sizes. Other follow-up studies might focus on why school administrators appeared to rate themselves higher in professional development effectiveness than SLPs rated them.

This study focused on the comparisons between school administrators' and SLPs' perceptions of professional development. Future studies might focus on generating information that also includes inclusion and collaboration of SLPs into regular education classrooms. Additionally, studies in these areas might focus on determining how the school districts view SLPs in inclusion and collaboration.

The ultimate goal of this research study was to identify professional development practice that would allow the school administrators to have the most positive impact on student achievement. This study indicates that further research is needed to identify the implications of professional development in literacy. One issue from the research involving this sample is clear: SLPs believe there is more professional development needed in literacy and curriculum and there is currently little provided at the school, district, educational cooperative, or state level.

## **Summary and Concluding Remarks**

The results of this study show that there is a need for more professional development in literacy and curriculum. The results of this study indicate that SLPs are interested in literacy and curriculum. The study results note that SLPs have roles and responsibilities including traditional services including therapy, evaluations, as well as other school duties including meetings and recess duties.

SLPs are interested in having professional development in literacy and curriculum. A few school districts offer the opportunity to train the SLPs with the general education staff in literacy, but the majority of the SLPs note that there are weaknesses with literacy programs and challenges with speech therapy being a special education service. Other school SLPs believe literacy is a crucial part of language development and is essential to increase language development. The results of this study indicate that SLPs have a desire to be involved in literacy and curriculum but are often left out of the trainings.

The future of literacy intervention appears to be optimistic with SLPs believing their future involvement will increase with speech services being fully involved. The results of this study indicate a future of SLPs involved in literacy and curriculum. School administrators will play a role in this future of literacy by providing SLPs professional development with the general education staff to enhance their skills in literacy and curriculum.

Professional development is crucial for SLPS to effectively assist in literacy and curriculum in the schools. School administrators need to provide more professional development in literacy and curriculum to further utilize the SLP service in the schools.

The ASHA position statement indicates that expanding professional development opportunities to include literacy and curriculum are a vital recommendation resulting from this study (ASHA, 2010). Once the professional development opportunities have occurred, school administrators will be able to utilize the expertise of the SLPs in their schools effectively. Hopefully, this study will lead to the Arkansas Department of Education and the Arkansas Speech-Language and Hearing Association to plan and implement professional development opportunities for school SLPs to gain a better understanding and knowledge of literacy and curriculum in the schools. Because these issues are important to school administrators and SLPs, there is hope that the results may facilitate further conversation among the educational leaders and assist in an increase of professional development opportunities.

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61-67.

## Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter



ARKANSAS TECH  
UNIVERSITY

**Office of Sponsored Programs  
and University Initiatives**

Administration Building, Room 207  
1509 North Boulder Avenue

Russellville, Arkansas 72801

Office: 479-880-4327  
[www.atu.edu](http://www.atu.edu)

October 17, 2018

10/17/18

To Whom It May Concern:

The Arkansas Tech University Institutional Review Board has approved Masanori Kuroki's IRB application, "A Comparison between Speech Language Pathologists' and School Administrators' Perceptions Regarding Professional Development." The approval date is October 17, 2021. The approval code is Salloukn\_101718.

Thank you,



Masanori Kuroki,  
Ph.D. Institutional  
Review Board  
Chair

Appendix B: IRB Amended Application

**From:** Masanori Kuroki mkuroki@atu.edu

**Subject:** Re: Amended IRB Proposal for Melinda Salloukh

**Date:** November 1, 2018 at 10:54 AM

**To:** Wayne Williams wwilliams17@atu.edu, Sara Bailey sbailey19@atu.edu

**Cc:** John Freeman jfreeman44@atu.edu, Melinda Salloukh msalloukh@atu.edu, Lisa Sturdivant lsturdivant@atu.edu

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Dear Wayne,

Thanks for your email. The change in Ms. Salloukh's application is minor, so I do not require a formal review again. The application remains approved.

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**From:** Wayne Williams

**Sent:** Thursday, November 1, 2018 10:48:28 AM

**To:** Sara Bailey; Masanori Kuroki

**Cc:** John Freeman; Melinda Salloukh; Lisa Sturdivant

**Subject:** Amended IRB Proposal for Melinda Salloukh

Ms. Baily and Dr. Kuroki:

The purpose of this attached amendment to Ms. Salloukh dissertation titled, *A Comparison Between Speech Language Pathologists' and School Administrators' Perceptions Regarding Professional Development* is the need to add to her administrative participants. Her original IRB stated only school district superintendents; however, we realize it will be the principals who will be most responsible for and aware of the agenda and focus of the districts' Professional Developments. Ms. Sulloukh wishes to add these principals as participants for her study to get additional and perhaps more insightful data for her study. There are no other changes other than adding principals as participants. Your consideration of this amendment to this IRB application will be appreciated. See below from the IRB:

ANY CHANGES IN THE PROJECT AFTER APPROVAL BY THE IRB MUST BE RESUBMITTED AS A MODIFICATION FOR REVIEW BY THE IRB BEFORE APPROVAL IS GRANTED. MODIFICATIONS DO NOT CHANGE THE PERIOD OF INITIAL APPROVAL.

Wayne W. Williams, Ed.D.  
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## Appendix C: Survey for School Administrators

The purpose of this questionnaire is to review the perceptions of professional development in literacy provided to Speech Language Pathologist's (SLPs) in the schools.

The survey items were developed to gain responses about professional development of SLPs in the schools.

Check yes to the box that reflects your opinions most.

For example:

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ No Opinion
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Please respond to the items in terms of your present concerns, or how you feel about your involvement with **professional development**. There is not one single definition of the **professional development** so please think of it in terms of your own perception of what it involves. Remember to respond to the items in the survey in terms of your present concerns about your involvement or potential involvement with professional development.

Thank you for taking time to complete this task.

1. I am more concerned about professional development of articulation, TBI, apraxia, etc.
  - ☐ Strongly agree
  - ☐ Agree
  - ☐ No Opinion
  - ☐ Disagree
  - ☐ Strongly Disagree
2. I would like to know if there are professional development methods to assist students with literacy delays.
  - ☐ Strongly agree
  - ☐ Agree
  - ☐ No Opinion
  - ☐ Disagree
  - ☐ Strongly Disagree
3. I would like to discuss the possibility of being active in literacy intervention.
  - ☐ Strongly agree
  - ☐ Agree
  - ☐ No Opinion
  - ☐ Disagree
  - ☐ Strongly Disagree
4. I would like for my school district to provide more professional development beneficial to my practice in literacy and curriculum in the schools.
  - ☐ Strongly agree
  - ☐ Agree
  - ☐ No Opinion
  - ☐ Disagree
  - ☐ Strongly Disagree

5. I would like for my district administrators to clearly identify the roles and responsibilities of my SLPs in literacy and curriculum.
- ☐ Strongly agree
  - ☐ Agree
  - ☐ No Opinion
  - ☐ Disagree
  - ☐ Strongly Disagree
6. I would like for my school district to support my ability to participate and collaborate with other staff in literacy and curriculum.
- ☐ Strongly agree
  - ☐ Agree
  - ☐ No Opinion
  - ☐ Disagree
  - ☐ Strongly Disagree
7. I would like for my contributions at the school to be an important part of the literacy and curriculum development for students.
- ☐ Strongly agree
  - ☐ Agree
  - ☐ No Opinion
  - ☐ Disagree
  - ☐ Strongly Disagree
8. I would like my district administrators to provide professional development that allows me to align my interventions to the curriculum.
- ☐ Strongly agree
  - ☐ Agree
  - ☐ No Opinion
  - ☐ Disagree
  - ☐ Strongly Disagree
9. The school administrators encourage my career development.
- ☐ Strongly agree

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ No Opinion
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

10. I would like to know what other SLPs are doing in this area.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ No Opinion
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

11. I would be interested in increasing my skills in literacy and curriculum.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ No Opinion
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

12. I would like to have more professional development opportunities that provide a greater understanding of content that the regular education teachers are required to teach.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ No Opinion
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

13. I would like to have more time built into my schedule for professional development opportunities.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ No Opinion
- ☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

14. I would like to know the effect of literacy intervention and professional development on my professional status.

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Agree

☐ No Opinion

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

**Demographic and open response questions:**

1. In your opinion, how do you feel you as district administrator are doing in serving your school SLP.

☐ Poor

☐ Fair

☐ No Opinion, NA

☐ Good

☐ Excellent

2. In which of the following areas is your school SLP involved? (Select all that apply).

☐ Common Core State Standards

☐ Universal Design for Learning (UD)/Differentiated Instruction

☐ Value Added Assessments

☐ Response to Intervention

☐ Literacy Intervention

☐ Speech language therapy

3. What is your comfort level (1 very comfortable; 3,4,5 somewhat true of me know; 6,7 not comfortable) with SLPs participating in literacy and curriculum in the schools?

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

☐ 6

☐ 7

4. How many hours a week do you provide for your SLPs in professional development.

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ 6

5. Which one of the following categories best describes your employment status?

- ☐ Employed full-time
- ☐ Employed part-time
- ☐ On leave of absence
- ☐ Contract SLP

6. Identify the degrees you have earned. (count only actual degrees not equivalences or certificates and do not include degrees expected but not year conferred. Select all that apply)

- ☐ Bachelor's
- ☐ Master's
- ☐ Education Specialist
- ☐ PhD
- ☐ Ed.D.
- ☐ Other doctorate

7. Which one of the following best describes where you work?

- ☐ City/Urban area
- ☐ Suburban area
- ☐ Rural area
- ☐ Not employed

8. How long have you been employed as a district administrator not counting this year?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5 or more

9. Explain other roles and responsibilities that you require for your SLPs during your typical week (ex. RTI, inclusion, collaboration, and literacy instruction):

10. What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of professional development in literacy for SLPs? Have you made any attempt to do anything about the weaknesses?
11. Can you summarize for me where you see yourself in relation to the use of literacy intervention by SLPs in the schools in the future?

Thank you for your help!

## Appendix D: Survey for Speech Language Pathologists

The purpose of this questionnaire is to review the perceptions of professional development in literacy provided to Speech Language Pathologist's (SLPs) in the schools.

The survey items were developed to gain responses about professional development of SLPs in the schools. Check yes to the box that reflects your opinions most.

For example:

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ No Opinion
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Please respond to the items in terms of your present concerns, or how you feel about your involvement with **professional development**. There is not one single definition of the **professional development** so please think of it in terms of your own perception of what it involves. Remember to respond to the items in the survey in terms of your present concerns about your involvement or potential involvement with professional development.

Thank you for taking time to complete this task.



1. I am more concerned about professional development of articulation, TBI, apraxia, etc.
  - ☐ Strongly agree
  - ☐ Agree
  - ☐ No Opinion
  - ☐ Disagree
  - ☐ Strongly Disagree
2. I would like to know if there are professional development methods to assist students with literacy delays.
  - ☐ Strongly agree
  - ☐ Agree
  - ☐ No Opinion
  - ☐ Disagree
  - ☐ Strongly Disagree
3. I would like to discuss the possibility of being active in literacy intervention.
  - ☐ Strongly agree
  - ☐ Agree
  - ☐ No Opinion
  - ☐ Disagree
  - ☐ Strongly Disagree
4. I would like for my school district to provide more professional development beneficial to my practice in literacy and curriculum in the schools.
  - ☐ Strongly agree
  - ☐ Agree
  - ☐ No Opinion
  - ☐ Disagree
  - ☐ Strongly Disagree

5. I would like for my district administrators to clearly identify my roles and responsibilities as a SLP in literacy and curriculum.
- ☐ Strongly agree
  - ☐ Agree
  - ☐ No Opinion
  - ☐ Disagree
  - ☐ Strongly Disagree
6. I would like for my school district to support my ability to participate and collaborate with other staff in literacy and curriculum.
- ☐ Strongly agree
  - ☐ Agree
  - ☐ No Opinion
  - ☐ Disagree
  - ☐ Strongly Disagree
7. I would like for my contributions at the school to be an important part of the literacy and curriculum development for students.
- ☐ Strongly agree
  - ☐ Agree
  - ☐ No Opinion
  - ☐ Disagree
  - ☐ Strongly Disagree
8. I would like my district administrators to provide professional development that allows me to align my interventions to the curriculum.
- ☐ Strongly agree
  - ☐ Agree
  - ☐ No Opinion
  - ☐ Disagree
  - ☐ Strongly Disagree
9. The school administrators encourage my career development.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ No Opinion
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

10. I would like to know what other SLPs are doing in this area.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ No Opinion
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

11. I would be interested in increasing my skills in literacy and curriculum.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ No Opinion
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

12. I would like to have more professional development opportunities that provide a greater understanding of content that the regular education teachers are required to teach.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ No Opinion
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

13. I would like to have more time built into my schedule for professional development opportunities.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ No Opinion

- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

14. I would like to know the effect of literacy intervention and professional development on my professional status.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ No Opinion
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

#### **Demographic and Open-End Responses**

1. In your opinion, how is your district administrator doing in serving you as a school SLP.
  - ☐ Poor
  - ☐ Fair
  - ☐ No Opinion, NA
  - ☐ Good
  - ☐ Excellent
  
2. In which of the following areas are you involved? (Select all that apply).
  - ☐ Common Core State Standards
  - ☐ Universal Design for Learning (UD)/Differentiated Instruction
  - ☐ Value Added Assessments
  - ☐ Response to Intervention
  - ☐ Literacy Intervention
  
3. What topics might interest you as professional development:
  - ☐ Embedding language proficiency standards
  - ☐ Developing academic vocabulary that supports the curriculum
  - ☐ Reading leadership teams and collaboration
  - ☐ Content area literacy
  
4. What is the number of students you serve that have language delays?
  - ☐ 0-10
  - ☐ 10-20
  - ☐ 20-30
  - ☐ 30-40
  - ☐ 40-50
  - ☐ 50 +

5. How many different students do you personally treat in a typical month? (count each student only once).
- ☐ 0-10
  - ☐ 10-20
  - ☐ 20-30
  - ☐ 30-40
  - ☐ 40-50
  - ☐ 50+
6. What is your role in Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)/Response to Intervention (RTI) or pre-referral?
- ☐ Conduct screenings
  - ☐ Provide consultation
  - ☐ Provide direct services within general education
  - ☐ Provide strategies to classroom teachers
  - ☐ Not applicable; I don't participate in MTSS/RTI or pre-referral
7. How many hours a week do you spend in professional development.
- ☐ 1
  - ☐ 2
  - ☐ 3
  - ☐ 4
  - ☐ 5
  - ☐ 6
8. Which one of the following categories best describes your employment status?
- ☐ Employed full-time
  - ☐ Employed part-time
  - ☐ On leave of absence
  - ☐ Contract SLP
9. Identify the degrees you have earned. (count only actual degrees not equivalences or certificates and do not include degrees expected but not yet conferred. Select all that apply)
- ☐ Bachelor's
  - ☐ Master's
  - ☐ Education Specialist
  - ☐ PhD
  - ☐ Ed.D.
10. Which one of the following best describes where you work?
- ☐ City/Urban area
  - ☐ Suburban area
  - ☐ Rural area

☐ Not employed

11. How long have you been employed as a district administrator or Speech Language Pathologist, not counting this year?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5 or more

12. Explain other roles and responsibilities that you are responsible for during your typical week (ex. RTI, inclusion, collaboration, and literacy instruction):

13. What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of professional development in literacy in your situation? Have you made any attempt to do anything about the weaknesses?

14. Can you summarize for me where you see yourself in relation to the use of literacy intervention in the schools in the future?

Thank you for your help.

## Appendix E: School Administrators Survey

Principal Investigator: Melinda Salloukh

This survey is being distributed to every school district in the state of Arkansas. Your participation in this survey is VOLUNTARY, but we would greatly appreciate your assistance. You may withdraw from this survey at any time.

We invite you to take part in a research study, A Perception of Professional Development in Literacy to Speech Language Pathologists at Arkansas Tech University, which seeks to understand the attitudes and perceptions regarding professional development provided to Speech Language Pathologists in the school districts in Arkansas. The purpose of this research is to review the perceptions of Professional Development in literacy provided to Speech Language Pathologists in the school districts in Arkansas. You are being offered the opportunity to take part in this research study because of your role as a school administrator in a public-school district in Arkansas.

Please be assured that your individual responses will remain strictly confidential. No school administrator or school district information will be released. There are no known risks associated with this survey. Any decision made by an individual regarding whether or not to participate will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits, or negatively impact his/her position as a school official. In the event of any publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally identifiable information will be shared.

Before making the decision to participate in this research, you should have reviewed the information in this form and had the opportunity to ask any questions you may have. If you decide to participate in this survey, you will give your consent by pressing the “Next” button below.

The questionnaire should take approximately 10 -15 minutes to complete. We are confident that you find the overall results of our study interesting and applicable to improving professional development in literacy in our state. Thank you for participating in our survey. Your feedback is important. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant or general questions or concerns about the research, please contact Melinda Salloukh a graduate student working under the supervision of Dr. Wayne Williams at 501-463-0239 or Dr. Wayne Williams at 479-964-0583.

## Appendix F: Speech Language Pathologist Survey

Principal Investigator: Melinda Salloukh

This survey is being distributed to every school district in the state of Arkansas. Your participation in this survey is VOLUNTARY, but we would greatly appreciate your assistance. You may withdraw from this survey at any time.

We invite you to take part in a research study, A Perception of Professional Development in Literacy to Speech Language Pathologists at Arkansas Tech University, which seeks to understand the attitudes and perceptions regarding professional development provided to Speech Language Pathologists in the school districts in Arkansas. The purpose of this research is to review the perceptions of Professional Development in literacy provided to Speech Language Pathologists in the school districts in Arkansas. You are being offered the opportunity to take part in this research study because of your role as a speech language pathologist in a public-school district in Arkansas.

Please be assured that your individual responses will remain strictly confidential. No speech language pathologist or school district information will be released. There are no known risks associated with this survey. Any decision made by an individual regarding whether or not to participate will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits, or negatively impact his/her position as a speech language pathologist. In the event of any publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally identifiable information will be shared.

Before making the decision to participate in this research, you should have reviewed the information in this form and had the opportunity to ask any questions you may have. If you decide to participate in this survey, you will give your consent by pressing the "Next" button below.

The questionnaire should take approximately 10 -15 minutes to complete. We are confident that you find the overall results of our study interesting and applicable to improving professional development in literacy in our state. Thank you for participating in our survey. Your feedback is important. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant or general questions or concerns about the research, please contact Melinda Salloukh a graduate student working under the supervision of Dr. Wayne Williams at 501-463-0239 or Dr. Wayne Williams at 479-964-0583.